

The Northern Busway Extension

Project Outline

Current Situation

The Northern Busway in its current form became fully operational in February 2008. It includes five stations on the North Shore plus the physical busway. The busway itself is located east of the Northern Motorway on a separate right of way from the Constellation Station (just south of Constellation Drive) to just north of the Auckland Harbour Bridge. From north to south, the five busway stations are Albany, Constellation, Sunnynook, Smales Farm, and Akoranga. Park and Ride is provided at the Albany and Constellation Albany Stations.

The busway operates in both directions with the exception of the section south of the Akoranga Station which operates in the southbound direction only.

Between the Albany and Constellation Stations southbound buses currently use the motorway hard shoulder.

Busway Extension

The Northern Busway Extension refers to the extension of the current two-way busway facility from its current terminus at the Constellation Station to Silverdale along the alignment shown on the attached Location Plan provided by the NZTA. The total distance is approximately 13km.

The Northern Busway Extension is located on the eastern side of the Northern Motorway with the (possible) exception of the section between Greville Road and Lonely Track Road where it switches to the western side in order to provide direct access to the Albany Station and associated Park and Ride.

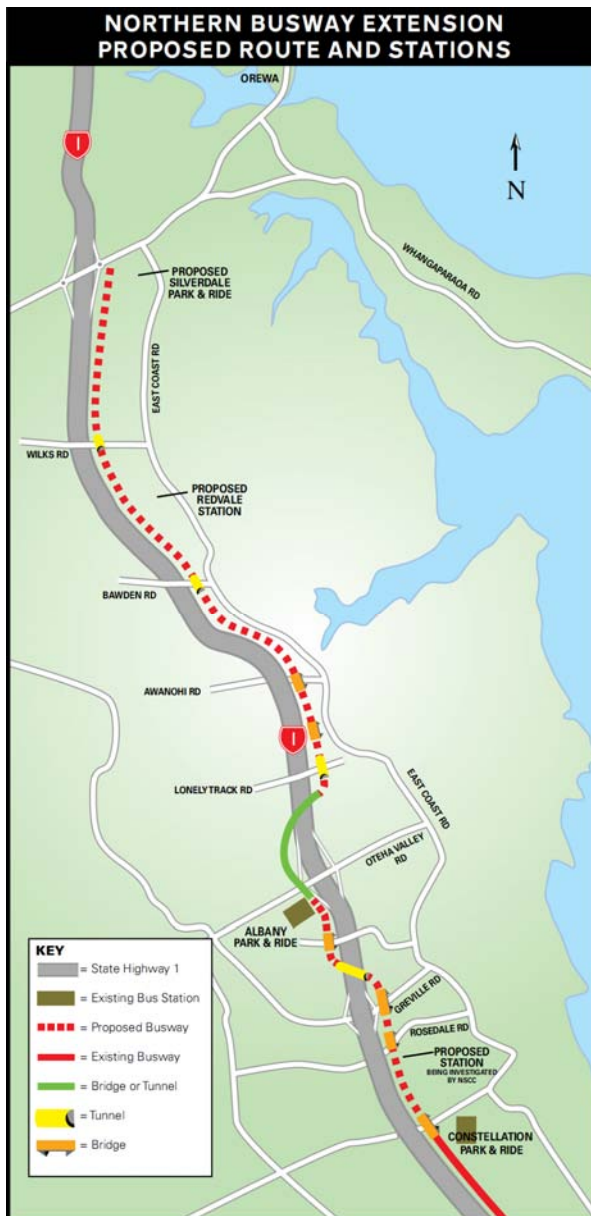
The extension is being designed to accommodate a possible future conversion to light rail. It includes three potential new stations at Greville Road (or Rosedale Road), Redvale and Silverdale. These are discussed below under Project Status. All three could potentially provide Park and Ride.

Project Status

Busway Alignment

The documentation required to issue a Notice of Requirement is largely complete. The NZTA has, however, put the project on hold pending internal review and justification of the “off-line” concept (the route in the vicinity of the Albany Station), and whether land should be protected for a busway on a separate right-of-way north of Oteha Valley Road, Albany (the alternative is to rely on shoulder bus lanes between Silverdale and Albany).

North Shore City Council officers have emphasised the importance of providing direct busway access to the Albany Bus Station which is located next to the Albany Centre currently under development.



Northern Busway Extension Location Plan

Route Protection

The NZTA currently anticipates issuing a Notice of Requirement for the busway extension towards the end of this year subject to Board approval of the preferred option. This will enable the acquisition of all the additional land required to future-proof the busway extension.

Additional Busway Stations

Discussions were also held on the need for North Shore City to join with the NZTA in seeking a NoR for an additional bus station between the Constellation and Albany Stations. The need for and preferred location of an additional station was subsequently investigated by the City Council. This investigation concluded that an additional station on this section of the busway would best be located adjacent to either Rosedale Road or Greville Road. A station at Greville Road is likely to offer the better longer term patronage potential, particularly if accompanied by the provision of Park and Ride on NZTA-owned land fronting Greville Road. The land concerned is adjacent to the assumed station location and is within the current motorway designation.

North Shore City Council concluded that as a station at Greville Road appears able to be constructed on NZTA-owned land and there is no imperative to protect land at Rosedale Road (the land which could potentially be needed at Rosedale Road is already largely developed in any case), there is no need for the Council to join with the NZTA in seeking a NoR at this time. The Council's subsequent resolutions included the following:

- "That Council will continue to liaise with the New Zealand Transport Agency and ARTA over extension of the Northern Busway and the need for a future bus station north of Constellation Drive.
- That the New Zealand Transport Agency be requested to liaise with the North Shore City Council over any plans to use or dispose of the potential Greville Road Station site."

A station at Redvale in Rodney District would be located next to the proposed new Redvale Interchange between the Northern Motorway and PENLINK. Land is available at the proposed Redvale Station location to provide a small Park and Ride facility serving the Dairy Flat area and lifestyle blocks west of the motorway.

The proposed Silverdale Station and the associated Park and Ride facility (approximately 400 spaces) are to be located on land in the south-eastern corner of the Silverdale Interchange. Much of the land required is in private ownership.

North of Silverdale buses will be able to operate on the Hibiscus Coast Highway or continue along the motorway to a planned new interchange at Wainui Road serving Silverdale North.

Indicative Costs and Staging plus Strategic Benefits

The preliminary estimated construction cost is currently \$730 million (excluding land). The estimated land acquisition cost is approximately \$60 million. This consists of approximately \$52 million for the Constellation to Albany section and \$8 million for the extension from Albany to Silverdale.

The currently proposed staging is:

Stage 1: Constellation Station to Albany Station 2020
Stage 2: Albany Station to Redvale Station 2030
Stage 3: Redvale Station to Silverdale Station beyond 2030

The benefits relate primarily to the extension of a rapid transit facility operating in an exclusive right-of-way and isolated from traffic congestion, serving a rapidly growing area north of North Shore City. Residential development in the Hibiscus Coast area is placing increasing pressure on the Northern Motorway and the North Shore's arterial road network. The provision of a good quality public transport alternative is an essential component of a strategy to reduce dependence on travel by car to and through North Shore City.

Issues

1. The alignment of the busway extension between Greville Road and Oteha Valley Road and specifically whether it is located east or west of the Northern Motorway in the Albany Area.
2. The extent of the corridor to be protected for a future separate busway.