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North Shore Transport bus travelling down a very rough Beach Rd towards Milford, 1940s perhaps?
Photo courtesy of Al Howden.

A new North Shore Bus Network from 30 September 2018 Frequent Service Milford to Midtown Skybus service from Smales Farm to the Airport already live

Auckland's bus network has been gradually redesigned over the past 18 months and the North Shore, the last piece in this bus jigsaw, will come into effect on 30 September.

The familiar routes that have been around since the 1950s, with Milford sitting on routes that started at the top of the Bays and ran all the way to Takapuna and across to Auckland City around once an hour, will become history. The new network will emphasise shorter routes that often feed into rapid transit at the Northern Busway. There will often be the need to transfer to complete a journey but greater frequency should still mean shorter overall trip times and, with integrated ticketing through Hop cards, passengers transferring will not be disadvantaged in terms of fare cost.

What's in it for Milford?

Things look good for Milford on paper:

- One Frequent Service Route 82 (every 15 minutes, 7am-7pm)
- One Connector Service Route 856 (every 30 minutes, 7am-7pm, although more frequent in peak time)
- One Local Service Route 845 (every 60 minutes) running through the town centre.

- There are a couple of other routes through Milford feeding Smales Farm (842) and Akoranga stations (843) but they are either peak time only or not very frequent.

Turn over to page 2 for a map of the new network for Milford.

You can go online to Auckland Transport for more information here: <https://at.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/new-public-transport-network/>

Frequent Service Route 82

The new frequent service 82 departs Milford every 15 minutes (from 7am to 7pm) for mid-city via Takapuna. This is a real improvement on the current mishmash of routes that service Milford. It has the potential to be a service where you can just turn up and catch a bus. We understand that, because of the lack of room for buses to layover in Takapuna, it was decided to start and end the service in Milford. Which is great news for us!

Buses will begin and terminate in Milford Rd beside the Milford Mall (the current bus stop). From Milford Rd, they will loop around the Milford commercial centre (Milford Rd, Ihumata Rd, Omana Rd, left into Kitchener Rd), stopping at the bus stops below New World and outside Venice Restaurant before heading towards Takapuna. In the city, the bus will drop off in Midtown (Wellesley Street).



Connector Service Route 856 (every 30 minutes, 7am-7pm, although more frequent in peak time). This is the old 858 that will still meander along to Smales Farm, the hospital and round the lake to Takapuna where it will terminate rather than head across to Midtown.

Local Service Route 845 (every 60 minutes). This serves the western side of Lake Pupuke, Milford, Takapuna and some residential areas along the way. Apparently, when AT consulted on North Shore buses 18 or so months ago, the boarding information showed that this was a surprisingly well-used service and very popular especially with retired people in the area.

CHANGES TO THE NORTHERN EXPRESS ROUTES

The NEX bus that runs up and down the Busway into Lower Albert Street is Auckland’s only true Rapid Transit route. We should thank the local politicians who pushed this concept from idea to completion in the 2000s. George Wood was the mayor of North Shore City at the time – so thank you George! After 10 years, AT are taking the opportunity to provide two express services that will deliver passengers to Midtown as well as Downtown.

NX1 – this is the original NEX route, Busway to Lower Albert Street, and will not change.

NX2 – this new route will duplicate the Busway run but drop passengers into Wellesley Street. It closes a big gap in the express service which is fantastic. NX2 replaces the existing 881 but does not go to the hospital or Newmarket. The 966 route through Ponsonby and Karangahape Rd will provide this service.

Bus route change from 30 September

One change Milford people will see is that the 856 bus to and from Castor Bay (previously 858) will no longer travel in a dog-leg from the Inga Rd/Omana Rd roundabout up to Craig Rd and Milford Rd. Instead, buses will turn right into Omana Rd at the Inga/Omana roundabout, then left at the Omana/Ihumata roundabout on the way to Milford Rd.

Milford Residents Association submitted to Auckland Transport in support of the status quo route (passenger convenience, the very narrow nature of Omana Rd between the two roundabouts, the safety of pedestrians crossing the road near both roundabouts and difficulties for buses negotiating the roundabouts). AT did not agree with MRA but two of their engineers met us to advise of the improvements they will be making to footpaths, raised road medians and pram-bays in Omana and Ihumata Rds to keep traffic slow and pedestrians safe.

What we also found out is that their role in the New Network Project is to ensure every roundabout on the new bus network is fit for purpose. However, there is a different team working on the bus stops for the new routes and we have asked to meet this team to discuss the new bus stop that will be installed between the Inga Rd roundabout and the bridge. As a general comment, we can expect to see more double decker buses Auckland-wide which understandably involves a similar exercise checking for powerlines and trees along each new double-decker route.

On the Buses – Skybus to the Airport

By Norma Bott

Last week, Glenys, Dale and I had the chance to catch the new Skybus service out to the Domestic Airport at Mangere. As it was the school holidays, the traffic on the motorway was not heavy and we travelled in the middle of the morning.

The bus arrived at Platform 3A, Smales Farm, only a couple of minutes after the advertised time (10:08). There were others waiting at the stop so we weren't the only ones taking advantage of the wonderful service. Some of the people waiting had no baggage so we made the assumption that they were going out to meet passengers from incoming flights.

We had taken advantage of the \$1 per trip for July so were very pleased with ourselves saving on petrol and other means of transport to the airport. I was a bit surprised that half the bus was designated to baggage racks and trays and the other half was seating. But at this time of day only about 50% of the seats on the bus were being used. The racks were big enough for large cases and even surfboards (and there was one of these).

The trip took us just under 45 minutes from Smales Farm to the Domestic Airport and is advertised as taking a bit longer during peak traffic times. So, if you are using this service, take this into consideration when calculating what time you need to be at the airport.

Albany to Airport – with stops at Albany (Bus Stop 4259 Civic Crescent), Smales Farm (Platform 3A) and Akoranga (Platform 4A)

4am to 6am every 60 minutes.

6am to 8pm every 30 minutes

8pm to 9pm every 60 minutes.

Airport to Albany – with stops at Akoranga, Smales Farm and Albany

5am to 7pm every 30 minutes

7pm to 10pm every 60 minutes.

Adult Price \$25 one way \$46 return

Seniors \$20 one way \$36 Return.

For further details and times see www.skybus.co.nz Ph. 0800SKYBUS
Ticket sales at one of the Ticket Booths at Auckland Airport or on the bus.

Mercurial Milford Beach

Living on the edge of the sea at Milford means we all get regular reminders of the power of nature. The torrential rain and rough seas last Saturday/Sunday meant that, overnight, the sand shifted around the beach dramatically. While the Holiday Road ramp hadn't even been a step-up on Saturday morning, on Sunday afternoon it presented a chest-height obstacle and people were helping each other scale it.



The paradox is that, after tuning into Coastguard's Nowcasting and hearing the wind at Tiritiri Matangi was peaking at 50 knots on Saturday night, we have since enjoyed a series of gloriously calm, mostly rain-free days. And the king high tides were matched by king low tides which suddenly gave Milford Beach a 'wide open spaces' feel, as these photos taken by Kevin Dunsford on 17 July 2018 show.



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