



Customer First

*Building a foundation of resilience
for future generations*

Guarin Coetzee

Acting Director Customer

Kelly Skelton

Acting GM Design & Engineering



Who we are

Whether people choose to drive, walk, cycle, bus, train or ferry, we support viable options that make these journeys quicker, easier and safer.

We are:

- council-controlled organisation (CCO)
- responsible for effective, safe and efficient transport system for Auckland
- stewards of \$33 billion of transport-related assets
- and deliver multi-mode services.

Development of the city's infrastructure

...to leave a legacy

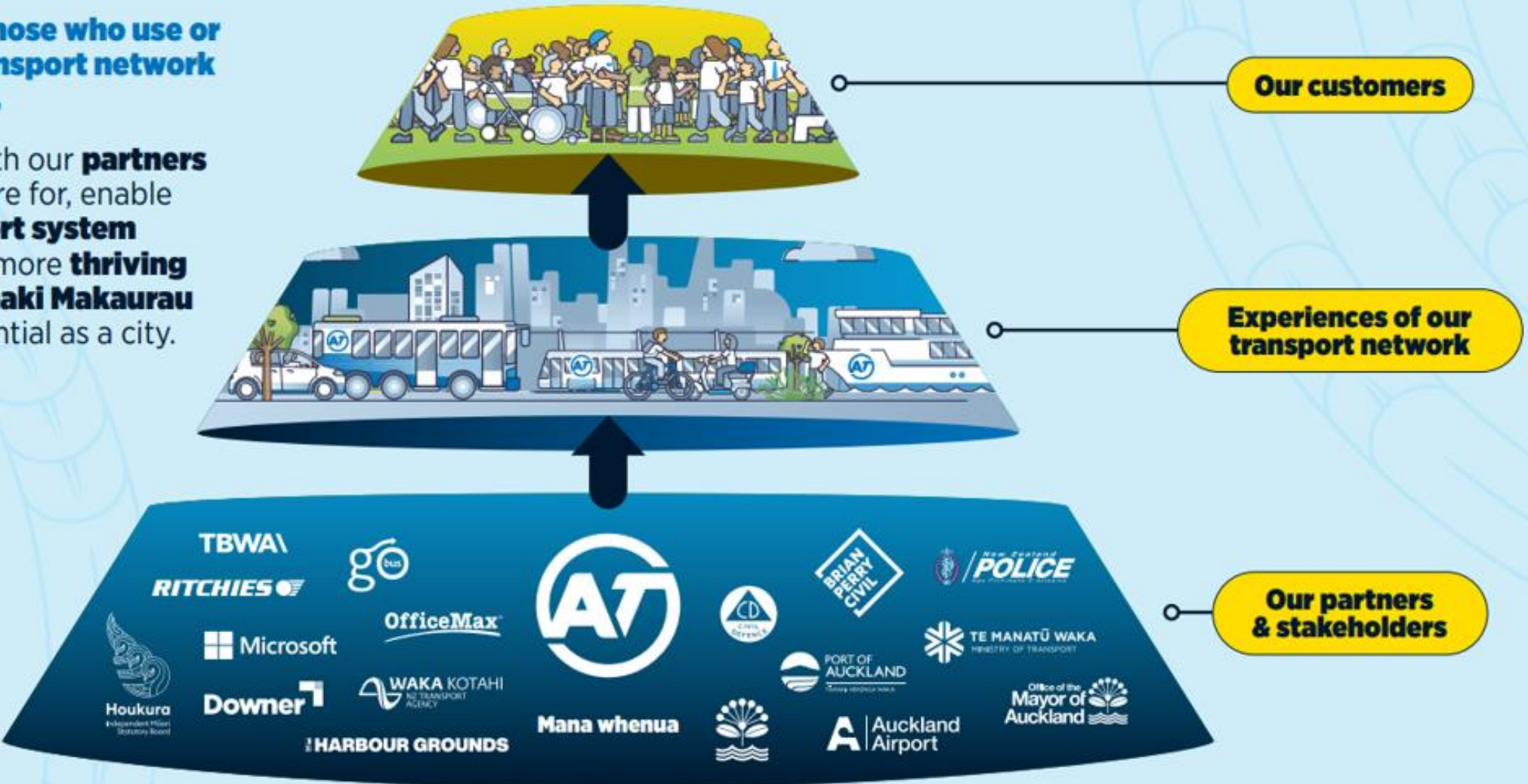
Aucklanders' needs



The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

Our customers are those who use or interact with the transport network in Tāmaki Makaurau.

We work together with our **partners & stakeholders** to care for, enable and deliver a **transport system** that contributes to a more **thriving and sustainable Tāmaki Makaurau** and unlocks our potential as a city.



**Customers' voice needs
to reach our engineers
and project managers**





**Keeping Tāmaki Makaurau
moving and connected**



Transport Infrastructure Projects

**Customer
First**





City Rail Link



Eastern Busway



← Aniwera ki kupa 50m
Lift to Concourse
← Putanga - Way out
to Belford Square and Pitt Street

1

City Rail Link

What is CX?

Customer Experience (CX)

The *'how'*



Communications and Engagement

The *'why and what'*



Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– People using AT services and infrastructure (AT's customers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Communities and stakeholders impacted by projects and change
Key Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– <i>'How will people use this?'</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– <i>'What does the community need and how can we mitigate impacts of change?'</i>

Pukekohe Station Upgrade



Before



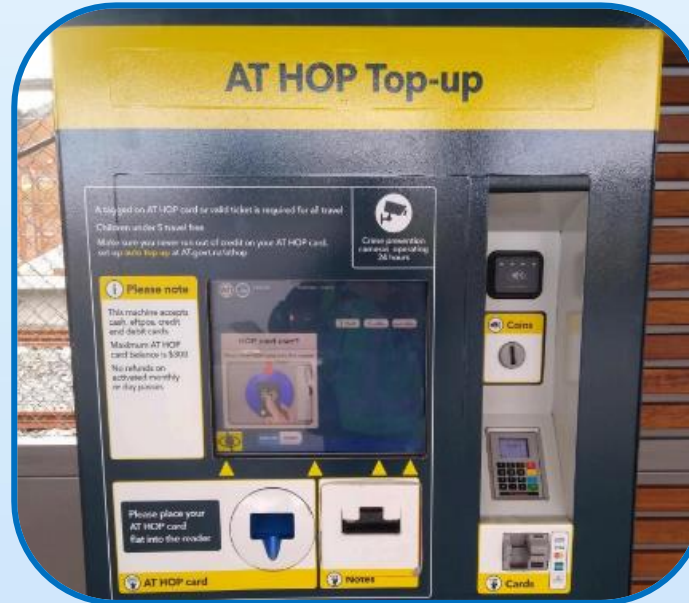
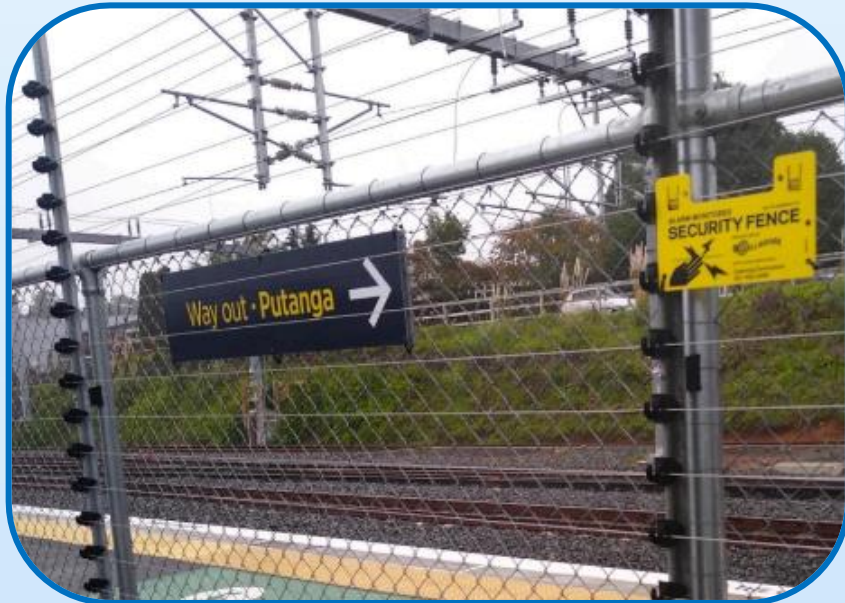
After

"It's up to Auckland City standard, it's not a forgotten provincial station."

Frequent Pukekohe train user



Pukekohe Station Upgrade



Customer focused enhancements required:

- Exposed electric fence perceived as a health & safety risk
- Standalone HOP machine did not meet customer requirements
- Poor design - fencing obstructed train arrival information



CX initiatives

- Existing customer insights
- Customer focus groups
- Site visits to Albany, Smales Farm and Constellation bus stations
- Interviewed customer service staff
- Identified pattern behaviour

Benefits of including CX early

- Customer data will inform and validate options
- Better customer outcomes
- CX value recognised



Northern Busway Enhancements

Customer First approach

1. Current projects
2. Processes
3. Customer Experience Guide
4. Support colleagues
5. Measures of success
6. ...



2. Processes

- CX now mandatory in AT's Enterprise Project Management Framework (high & medium projects)



- Business Case process - formally embed CX in each step
- Benefits Realisation – customer measures

3. Customer Experience Guide

- Developed the first **Customer Experience Infrastructure Design Guide**
- New chapter in AT's Transport Design Manual (TDM)
- Aiming to publish this month on the AT website
- External facing for transport specialists - planners, designers, project managers
- Our goal is to ensure we design transport infrastructure that serves the needs of our customers.



He Kupu Arataki mō te Tārai Wheako Kirihoko o AT

AT Customer Experience Infrastructure Design Guide

How we bring customers into the planning and design of transport infrastructure

Version 1.0—17.02.2026



Creating transport infrastructure that serves the needs of our customers

When we make our promise: 'Keeping Tāmaki Makaurau moving and connected', we commit to delivering positive experiences for all of our customers.

Millions of customers use our infrastructure everyday. From daily commuters going to and from work, to overseas visitors experiencing New Zealand for the first time here in Auckland. What they need and expect from our network is shaped by a multitude of factors such as location, journey purpose, time of day, physical or cognitive ability, gender, identity, language, age, injury or something else entirely. What makes a customer's experience positive or negative depends on how well we respond to these needs.

Infrastructure is integral to our customers' journeys across the city.

The decisions we make to design and build infrastructure require a clear understanding of our customers, allowing us to deliver outcomes that genuinely respond to their needs.

The role of customer experience (CX) in planning and designing transport infrastructure

As a discipline, CX is the practice of intentionally researching, understanding and improving the experiences of customers.

To do this, we use methods and tools such as workshops, surveys, observations, journey mapping and more to learn about our customers' needs and behaviours. These insights help us make more informed decisions about what, where, when, how and, ultimately, why we build.



The earlier CX is involved, the better the outcome

Customer experience hurdles are cheaper, faster and easier to solve when considered from the outset. By embedding CX into projects early, we can deliver infrastructure that achieves better outcomes.

Risks and pitfalls if CX is delayed

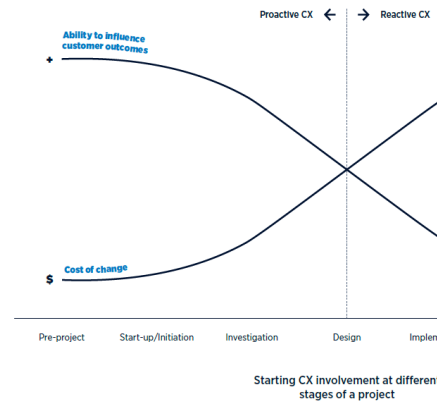
When CX is overlooked or led by assumption, projects may face added costs or encounter unanticipated setbacks. Misunderstanding customer needs can lead to design solutions that don't work.

Bringing CX teams in too late leads to reactionary problem solving and missed opportunities to shape better outcomes. Focusing exclusively on infrastructure, without considering the end-to-end journey or all customer channels, creates confusion and weakens trust. Budget cuts that remove CX elements often result in costly rework, and ignoring customer impacts during stages like construction or disruption can damage confidence long before delivery.

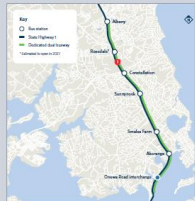
Establishing a baseline

At the beginning of a project, CX needs to collect data to understand where change is needed. This baseline can then be used at completion to validate whether change has been successful—closing the project loop—or identify whether remedial work is necessary.

Documenting these early insights are important, even if these insights are beyond scope, as they form a pool of knowledge that can then be useful for future projects.



Service Enhancements



dedicated service

high-frequency service in the city centre, using customer insights to intensify as

Case (DBC) and capacity issues, brought in to apply on the Northern station and

CX Initiatives

- Analysed patronage trends to identify customer pain points including crowding, circulation constraints, parking frustration, reliability issues and platform congestion.
- Ran customer focus groups at Albany, Smiles Farm and Constellation stations to understand access barriers and test improvement concepts.
- Conducted on site observations and staff interviews to identify real time movement issues and conflict zones.
- Developed customer centred KPIs and a measurement framework to inform design and delivery decisions.

Outcome

- Demonstrated that existing stations already struggle to accommodate customer movements, reinforcing operational modelling.
- Clarified customer issues around safety, wayfinding, comfort and peak time crowding.
- Enabled targeted improvements to station design, access and flow.
- Ensured the refreshed DBC is customer led, future proofed and aligned to long term patronage growth.

Needs addressed



The project must demonstrate it is responding to customer needs

When presented with evidenced recommendations by a CX specialist, projects must either address the recommendations through design change or justify why changes can't be made. AT's CX specialists can help scale the level of change required by the design in coordination with project managers and design leads.

This section outlines a high-level overview of the minimum requirements projects must consider within the design to align with the basic needs of customers in transport environments.

Through the lens of these core needs and customer insights, the CX specialist will apply the feedback into the design accordingly.

Customer experience frameworks
The CX specialists may have an existing framework that identifies these needs. The frameworks are derived from global best practice for consistent infrastructure environments and experiences. These are living documents that will iterate as the network grows in maturity. A CX specialist will use the appropriate frameworks when required.

¹ Source: Public Transport Passenger Rights and Quality of Service in the EU Regulation and Standard. Regulation (EU) No 1831/2017, Standard (UNI en 13816:2002)

The project must evidence a response to relevant customer standards¹



AT has done considerable work developing an understanding of customer needs and behaviours. The project must evidence a response to applicable customer research.

Insight tools overview: Synthesising data into insights

Once data points have been contextualised by journey stage, we can then start grouping, analysing and shaping findings into actionable insights. This can be a highly statistical process of analysis or a quick exercise on a whiteboard. A CX specialist will manage this process, but they may seek project involvement to help validate useful themes.

Grouping findings

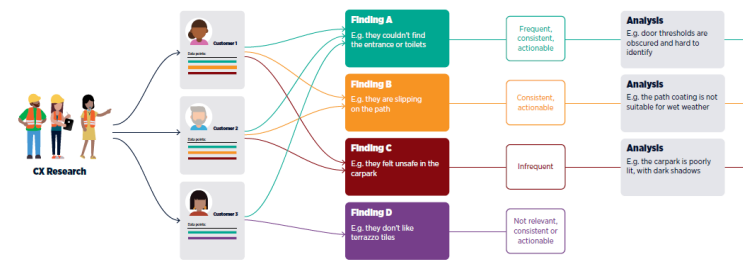
- Frequently occurring findings may be the most obvious to address, however, it's crucial to work hard to remove our own biases.
- Are the findings frequent enough to meet our project benchmark for action?
 - Is the problem AT, public transport in general or something else?
 - Are the patterns inherent to the data, or influenced by participant perspectives or our interpretation?

Analysing data

- We interrogate our findings to understand how they impact our project. During this process, it's important that we are careful in how we critique the data as we filter and sort it.
- Are the findings best addressed by infrastructure or do they point to different solutions?
 - Are the findings in agreement or do they contradict?
 - Do the findings challenge assumptions?
 - Do different tools reveal consistent patterns?

Distilling insights

- Findings alone don't project to resolve. By determine the drivers or which become actionable.
- Insights that are applicable must be addressed.
 - Insights that are one or out-of-scope might be beyond scope, or at the very least, not a document for a later date.



4. Support colleagues

Customer first 'how to' pack:

- Internal facing practical guide
- Shows the value of working with CX leads to ensure customer needs meaningfully shape decisions from the very beginning
- CX tools and case studies



Immersive customer experience:

- Getting into the customer's shoes – training, shadowing research, etc.



5. Measures of success

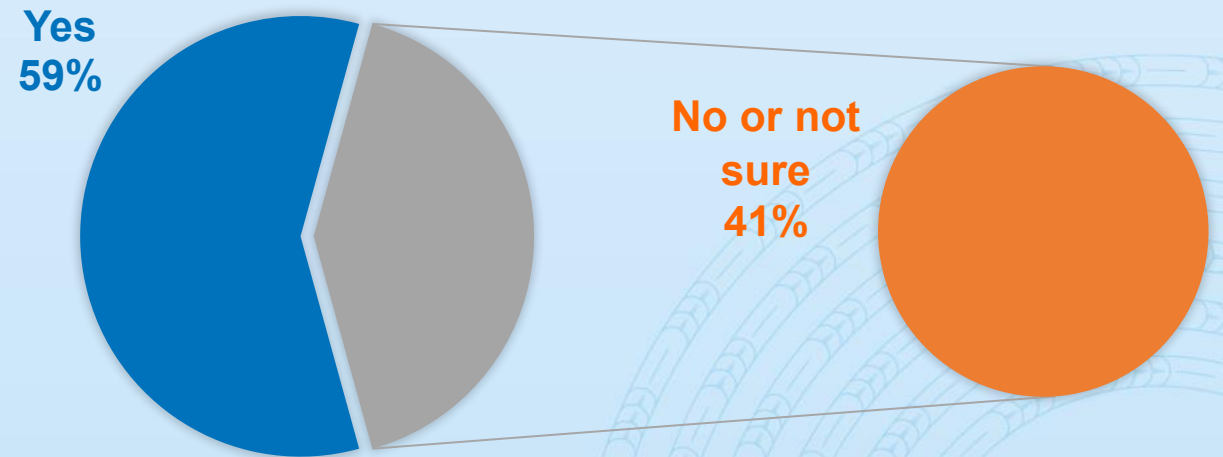
Baseline CX perception survey October 2025

- Differing definitions/perceptions of what we do, and what value we can add to a project.
- Don't necessarily understand how to engage with our team
- Believe there is a lack of process in CX's role within project management structure.

Quant data – In development

- Percentage of med/large projects each year that include CX
- Percentage of people completed CX training

41% of respondents do not know how to engage or work with the CX Design & Standards Team



Customer First



What's next ?





CRL Test Train

City Rail Link (CRL)

Transport reform

Capital programme

Embed our Customer First approach

Great progress, but we have work to do

**AT
communicates
clearly**

up 5% to 48%

**...does what
it says it will**

up 4% to 44%

**...ability to
tackle complex
issues**

up 4% to 39%

**Belief that AT
has a plan to
do this`**

up 4% to 44%

**Local Board
Satisfaction**

up %30 + to 75%





Thank you

