



# **Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit**

## **Phase Two Consultation**

### **Summary Report**

**July 2011**



Report prepared for TransLink by Nancy Spooner Consulting Inc.

# Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit

## Phase Two Consultation

### Summary Report

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## Executive Summary

### Project Overview

TransLink has been exploring the feasibility of constructing and operating a gondola to improve reliability and travel times to and from Burnaby Mountain, and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced by transit. The proposed Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit project would serve SFU students, faculty, staff and visitors, as well as residents and businesses of UniverCity.

The phase of work currently being completed is a planning study (that includes a business case) to determine the costs and benefits of the project and to identify whether a decision to proceed to detailed planning and procurement is warranted.

### Phase Two Consultation (May – June, 2011)

The Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit Phase Two Consultation Report summarizes input from the Phase Two Consultation that took place between May 10 and June 30, 2011. The Phase Two Consultation sought input from stakeholders and the community regarding the following elements of the proposed Burnaby Mountain Gondola: its suitability as a transportation solution to address the challenges of travelling to and from Burnaby Mountain, the locations and visual impacts of gondola towers, and integration with the transit system.

### Key Results

During the Phase Two Consultation from May 10 to June 30, 2011:

**404 people** attended nine meetings, including two public open houses

**561 feedback forms** were received

**110 emails/letters** were received

The following key themes emerged from the feedback received:

#### **Forest Grove Residential Community**

Significant feedback was received about perceived impacts on the Forest Grove community, including loss of privacy, safety, and disruption of peace and quiet under the proposed alignment. In feedback forms, emails, stakeholder meetings and open houses, participants encouraged TransLink to consider alternate alignments or other ways to mitigate these impacts.

#### **Environmental Approval Process**

Potential impacts on the conservation area were a frequent concern on feedback forms and at meetings. While participants were encouraged by the small footprint required to build a gondola, many asked for more information about the environmental approval process and about mitigation measures planned to minimize impacts on wildlife, trees and land.

#### **Environmental and Reliability Benefits**

Many people, particularly those who regularly travel to and from Burnaby Mountain, were enthusiastic about the reduction in GHG emissions, improved reliability and reduction in trip times.

**Safety and Security**

Safety was a frequently mentioned subject in most meetings and on feedback forms. Participants were curious about system attendants, cabin monitoring, performance in adverse weather conditions, falling objects, and rescue systems.

**Costs and Funding**

Participants frequently asked for more information about costs and potential sources of funding for the project. Several people expressed concerns about trying to fund the gondola when the Evergreen Line and other regional transportation priorities have not yet been funded.

**Existing Bus Routes**

While many stakeholders were enthusiastic about improved reliability and reduced travel times, others wondered about the impacts on existing bus routes.

**Noise**

Noise was a frequent topic of conversation, with questions around operation noise, noise from increased pedestrian traffic at top and bottom, and potential impacts on SFU and UniverCity.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Overview

TransLink has been exploring the feasibility of constructing and operating a gondola to improve reliability and travel times to and from Burnaby Mountain, and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced by transit. The proposed Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit project would serve SFU students, faculty, staff and visitors, as well as residents and businesses of UniverCity.

The 30- to 35-person gondola cabins could carry 4,000 or more passengers per hour and per direction in approximately half the time of the current bus trip. Initial capacity would be about 3,000 passengers per hour. Cabins would circulate continuously during operating hours, arriving every 40 seconds in peak periods. By eliminating the need for many buses to travel up the steep mountain grade, the Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit project could eliminate 35,000 to 55,000 hours of diesel bus operation from Burnaby Mountain.

The project would support Metro Vancouver's Sustainable Region Initiative strategy by providing a high-quality rapid transit connection to a major regional destination. It would also reduce GHG emissions from transit operations and encourage additional transit ridership.

The phase of work currently being completed is a planning study (that includes a business case) to determine the costs and benefits of the project and to identify whether a decision to proceed to detailed planning and procurement is warranted.

## 1.2 Consultation Process

TransLink is committed to a consultation program to gather and consider community and stakeholder input on the project. Stakeholder and community feedback is being considered, along with technical and financial considerations, in three phases of project planning:

### **Phase One Pre-Consultation** – *November to December 2010 (complete)*

Involved six small-group meetings of stakeholders, including students, recreational users, environmental advocates and residents. The purpose of this consultation was to provide preliminary information about the project, and solicit input on the ways in which people/groups wish to be consulted.

### **Phase Two** – *May to June 2011 (complete)*

Included seven small-group meetings and two open houses to raise awareness about the project, provide information, and solicit participation and feedback from the community.

### **Phase Three** – *Timing to be determined*

Will take place if a decision is made to proceed with the project. This phase will provide more detailed planning information and solicit feedback to be considered in final design and construction.

### 1.3 Phase One Pre-Consultation (November – December, 2010)

Phase One of the consultation program included six small-group meetings that were held in November and December 2010 to provide information about the project and to solicit input on the ways in which people/groups wish to be consulted. Representatives from the following groups attended pre-consultation meetings:

- SFU Undergraduate Society
- Burnaby Mountain Biking Association
- SFU Community Association
- Stoney Creek Environment Committee
- Forest Grove Community Strata Representatives
- Burnaby Board of Trade

In the small-group meetings, participants were asked to fill out a feedback form. The feedback form asked for input on the preliminary information provided, and for contact information and consultation preferences should the project proceed to the next stage. In total, 31 participants attended the small-group meetings and 27 feedback forms were submitted.

Of the 27 feedback forms received, 19 were supportive of the project for improving public transportation to and from SFU and the UniverCity community. Two people were not supportive, and six were unsure.

For those who answered no or were unsure, the following concerns were identified<sup>1</sup>:

- Impacts on residents – privacy, noise, visual, lights and safety (5)
- Impacts on conservation area/impacts on wildlife, trees and water (3)
- Impacts on property values (2)
- Approval conditional on route (2)

Participants expressed an interest in receiving more information about:

- Environmental impacts/environmental assessment process information (10)
- Location of terminals, towers and route (7)
- Next steps, timeline/what will happen and when (5)
- Costs (2)

The complete Phase One Consultation Summary Report can be found at Burnaby Mountain Gondola Report.

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<sup>1</sup> The number in brackets indicates the total number of responses that mentioned the key theme. It should be noted that a response may have included more than one key theme.

## 2. Phase Two Consultation

### 2.1 Purpose

Key project components such as the preferred route and technology are being recommended by TransLink, based on the evaluation in the feasibility study that is part of the business case. TransLink presented these recommendations and asked for public and stakeholder input in small-group meetings, open houses and online from May 10 to June 30, 2011.

### 2.2 Consultation Topics

Consultation questions were developed, assuming the key project components – such as preferred route and technology – as recommended by the feasibility study. The consultation asked for stakeholder and public input on the following topics:

- The use of a gondola system as a potential transportation solution to address the challenges of travelling to and from Burnaby Mountain
- Location and visual impacts of gondola towers
- Integration with the existing transit system
- Other issues of interest

### 2.3 How Feedback Will Be Used

Input gathered during the consultation has been recorded and summarized in this report. TransLink will be considering this input, along with technical and financial information, as it determines whether or not to proceed with the project. If the project proceeds to the next phase of planning, input would be considered in the next phase, which would include another round of stakeholder and public consultation.

### 2.4 Public and Stakeholder Notification

TransLink invited representatives of stakeholder groups to meetings through email and phone calls. Contact information was gathered during Phase One Pre-Consultation, through TransLink's database, and by contacting the management of stratas and other buildings in Forest Grove. Community open houses were advertised with a mail drop to more than 3,000 addresses in the Forest Grove and Burnaby Mountain neighbourhoods, as well as online, in community newspapers and via email to addresses in a project database. (See Appendix 3 – Advertisement Schedule and Mail Drop Notice of Meetings.)

### 2.5 Consultation Participation

Approximately **404 people** attended nine meetings, including two public open houses.

Date	Meeting Participants	# of Attendees
May 10	Mountainside Village Strata	6
May 11	Pine Ridge Co-op	30
May 16	SFU Community Association	14
May 17	Forest Grove Community Strata & Co-op Representatives	11
May 18	Burnaby Mtn Biking Assoc. & Stoney Creek Environment Committee	9
May 19	Mountainside Village Strata	24
May 20	SFU Undergraduate Society & SFU Graduate Students Society	23
May 25	Community Open House – Cameron Elementary School	202 <sup>2</sup>
May 26	Community Open House – SFU Saywell Hall	85 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>		<b>404</b>

<sup>2</sup> Numbers at open houses are approximate because not all attendees signed in at the registration desk.

## 2.6 Consultation Methods

In stakeholder meetings held on May 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, and at open houses on May 25 and 26, TransLink planning staff presented information to participants through a PowerPoint presentation. At the open houses, the same information was also presented on display boards. The display boards were made available on the TransLink website beginning on May 24. A copy of the display boards can be found in Appendix 2.

### 2.6.1 Display Boards

Display boards provided meeting participants and online visitors with information and background about the following:

- The growing transportation challenge on Burnaby Mountain, and the need to find a solution that provides greater reliability for travellers while reducing GHG emissions
- The technologies that were considered in the feasibility study to meet this challenge and the criteria by which they were evaluated
- The potential routes that were considered in the feasibility study and the criteria by which they were evaluated
- The costs to build a gondola using the recommended technology and route
- Options for location of towers to minimize community and environmental impacts
- Ideas for integrating the gondola with the current transit system

### 2.6.2 Feedback Forms

Meeting participants and online visitors were encouraged to complete a feedback form and return it to TransLink at the meetings, online, or in hard copy by June 30. Results from the feedback form can be found beginning on Page 7 of this report. A copy of the feedback form can be found in Appendix 1.

**172 feedback forms** were received from the stakeholder meetings and open houses

**48 feedback forms** were returned to TransLink in hard copy or via email

**341 feedback forms** were received from Citizens Opposing the Gondola, a group of Forest Grove residents

**110 inputs** were received by TransLink in the form of emails or letters

### 2.6.3 How Feedback Will Be Used

Feedback gathered in Phase Two Consultation has been recorded and will be considered with technical and financial information as TransLink makes future decisions regarding the proposed Burnaby Mountain Gondola. This Consultation Summary Report will be available online at the TransLink site [Be Part of the Plan](#).



### 3. Key Results

TransLink received **561 feedback forms** and **110 submissions** between May 16 and June 30, 2011.

Feedback Forms	Number Received
<b>Total</b>	<b>561</b>
Stakeholder Meetings	
May 16	13
May 17	11
May 18	2
May 20	2
May 25	62
May 26	82
Hard copies or emailed individually	48
From the group Citizens Opposing the Gondola	341
<b>Submissions</b>	
Emails and 1 Letter	<b>110</b>

#### 3.1 Feedback Form Results

The feedback forms were reviewed and tabulated by an independent professional recorder. Results of quantitative questions are shown graphically with comments and open-ended responses grouped by key theme. Numbers may not add up, as some respondents did not respond to all questions and, in some cases, numbers have been rounded.

#### **Participants self-selected into consultation rather than being selected randomly.**

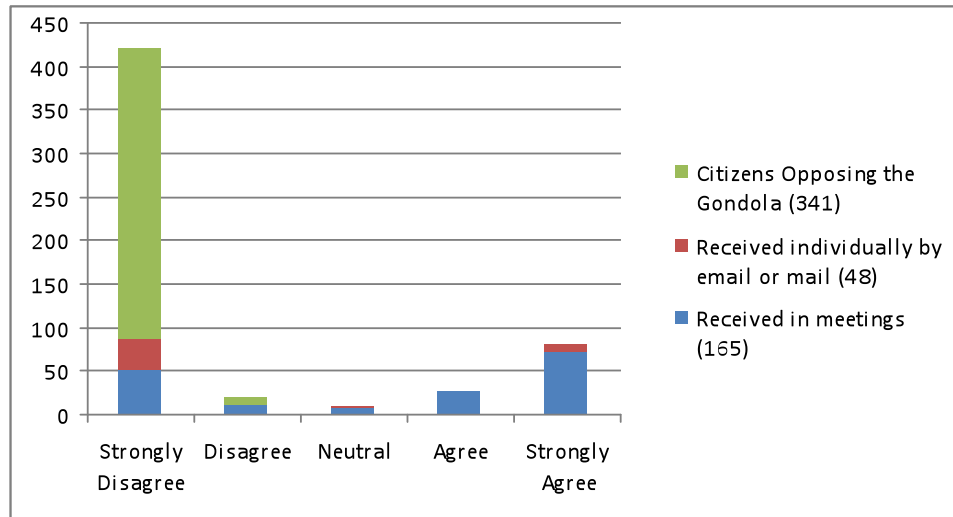
The views represented in this report reflect the priorities and concerns of the consultation participants. They may not be representative of the views of all stakeholders and the public because participants self-selected into Phase Two Consultation. Although results may be presented in the form of percentages, there are no margins of error for this data because there is no probability sample. The sample in question is based on self-selection, for which a sampling error cannot be measured.

## Question 1

**The Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit project is being proposed to improve reliability and travel times to and from Burnaby Mountain, and reduce GHG emissions produced by buses that currently service the area.**

To what extent do you agree that this would be a good solution to solving some of the challenges of travelling to and from Burnaby Mountain?

There were 554 responses received to this question, as illustrated in the following graph:



As a percentage of the total number of feedback forms received:

Strongly disagree	75%
Disagree	3%
Neutral	1%
Agree	5%
Strongly agree	15%

### Comments – Key Themes

Concern about the costs of the gondola (76)<sup>3</sup>

Support for environmental benefits of the gondola/GHG emission reductions (57)

Support for improved reliability of service and higher frequency (38)

Concern about loss of peace and quiet/impacts on Forest Grove residents (57)

Concern about funding priorities for Evergreen and other regional priorities (35)

Concern about gondola safety (including performance in adverse weather conditions) (29)

Concern about loss of property values (24)

Concern about perceived loss of privacy for residents (22)

Concern about increased noise from the gondola and its passengers (20)

Support for rapid transit – faster option than buses (17)

Support for reduction of noise from buses (11)

Concern about lack of or not enough consultation (11)

<sup>3</sup> The numbers in brackets indicate the total number of responses that mentioned the key theme. It should be noted that a response may have included more than one key theme.

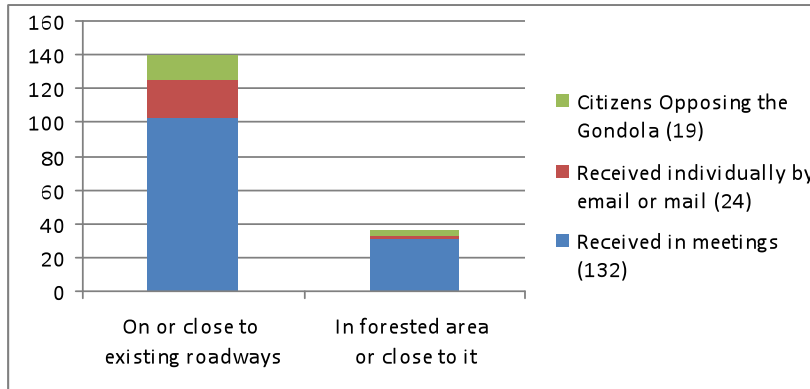
## Question 2

### Tower location options

The gondola would be supported by five towers. There may be an option to select preferred tower locations. Which would you prefer?

- On or close to existing roadways
- In the forested area, or close to it

There were 175 responses received for this question, as illustrated in the following graph:



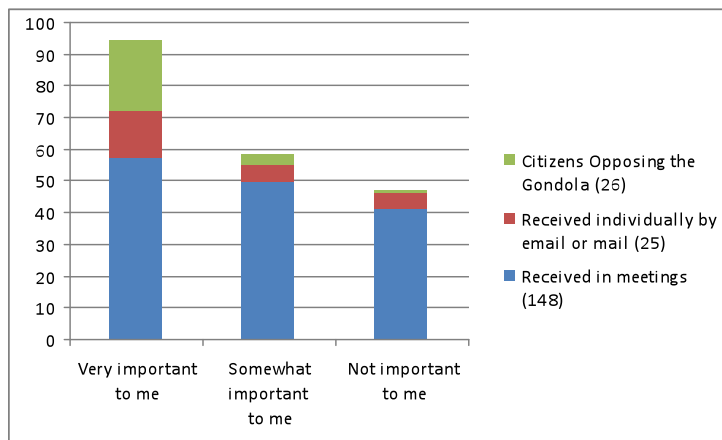
## Question 3

### Visual impact of towers

The visual impacts of towers could be minimized by landscaping or paint treatments. Minimizing the visual impact of these towers is:

- Very important to me
- Somewhat important to me
- Not important to me

There were 199 responses received for this question, as illustrated in the following graph:



## Comments

Thirty-eight people did not respond to the question as posed, but instead commented that there should be no towers.

## Question 4

### Integration with the transit system

If the gondola project proceeds, the bus service will be restructured to accommodate new travel patterns. What factors should we be considering when planning these changes?

### Comments – Key Themes

Increase bus service to the gondola (25)  
Ease of transfer, timing of transfer and speed (21)  
Concern about reduction in bus service (18)  
Accommodation for cyclists (6)

## Question 5

### Other topics of interest

No decision has been made about whether this project will proceed. If it does proceed, more consultation will take place on specific features of design and construction. What topics would you like to see included in the next round of consultation should the project proceed?

### Topics of interest – Key Themes

Impacts on environment/conservation area/nature and wildlife (39)  
Station and tower design (27)  
Funding concerns (24)  
Safety (22)  
Noise impacts – construction/operations/pedestrian traffic (20)  
Impact on residents' lifestyle (18)  
Rights of way and compensation (17)  
Consultation process questions (15)  
Accessibility for cyclists, strollers, walkers (12)  
Questions around operation and maintenance of the gondola (13)

## 3.2 Submissions

TransLink also received 110 submissions in the form of emails, plus one letter. These submissions have been reviewed and summarized as follows:

Support	37	(34%)
Conditional support	13	(12%)
Do not support	43	(39%)
Other	17	(15%)

### Comments – Key Themes

#### Support

Environmental benefits – reduce GHG emissions (12)  
Good idea, thinking outside the box (8)

Will give up car (7)  
Facilitate transportation during snowy days (8)  
Improve transit time (6)  
Tourist attraction (4)

### **Conditional Support**

Would support if alternate alignment/didn't impact Forest Grove residents (9)  
Mitigate environmental concerns (3)  
Mitigate noise (2)

### **Do Not Support**

Negative impacts on residential community (quiet and peaceful lifestyle) (15)  
Safety concerns (accidents, breakdowns, things being thrown out of gondola) (14)  
Concerns about impacts on conservation area (13)  
Concerns about gondola passing over residents' homes (11)  
Loss of privacy (9)  
Noise (9)  
Process questions about consultation (8)  
Impact on property values (7)

## **3.3 Stakeholder Meetings – Key Theme Summary**

The following is a summary of the most frequently mentioned themes from the stakeholder meetings:

### **Forest Grove Residential Community**

Meeting participants expressed concerns about perceived impacts on the Forest Grove community, including loss of privacy, safety, community character, and disruption of peace and quiet. Potential impacts on property values and aesthetic impacts were also frequently raised. There was a strong interest in the possibility of pursuing alternate alignments to minimize these impacts.

### **Environmental Approval Process**

Most of the stakeholder meetings included some discussion about the impacts of a gondola on the conservation area. While participants were encouraged by the small footprint required to build a gondola, many asked for more information about the environmental approval process and about the mitigation measures planned to minimize impacts on wildlife, trees and land. Some stakeholders were also interested in potential compensation for increased trail maintenance that may be required if the gondola encourages higher use.

### **Safety and Security**

Safety was a frequently mentioned subject in most meetings and on feedback forms. Participants were curious about system attendants, cabin monitoring, performance in adverse weather conditions, falling objects, and rescue systems.

### **Costs and Funding**

Many meeting participants were interested in the reason for the increase in the cost estimate to build the gondola, and in potential sources of funding for the project. Several people expressed concerns about

trying to fund the gondola when the Evergreen Line and other regional transportation priorities have not yet been funded.

**Existing Bus Routes**

While many stakeholders were enthusiastic about improved reliability and reduced travel times, others wondered about the impacts on existing bus routes.

**Noise**

Noise was a frequent topic of conversation, with questions around operation noise, noise from increased pedestrian traffic at top and bottom, and potential impacts on SFU and UniverCity.