



2019-09-09

TransLink Board of Directors
400 - 287 Nelson's Court
New Westminster, BC V3L 0E7

Proposed Gondola for Simon Fraser University

The proposed gondola to SFU, regardless of the route chosen, presents a threat to the Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area (BMCA) and to Stoney Creek. The BMCA is a special park within the City of Burnaby that surrounds the Simon Fraser University campus. The covenant between the Province of BC and the City of Burnaby makes it different from other city parks by limiting the activities allowed. It has also been identified by the City as an Environmentally Sensitive Area.

A number of things already impact this wildlife refuge:

- the cumulative effects of developments on the mountain top
- road salt contamination
- encroachments of transmission lines, pipelines, access roads, and mountain bike trails
- disruptions resulting from the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project

For over 25 years, Stoney Creek Environment Committee volunteers have been passionate stewards of their salmon-bearing stream. We oppose the current proposal for several reasons:

1. The Feasibility Study makes it clear that by promoting the tourism aspect of the gondola [*BMGT_Feasibility_Study_04-27-2018.pdf Section 8.3.2*] the proponents misunderstand the rationale for establishing a Conservation Area in the first place. The covenant between the province and the City recognizes the special need for conservation in this area. The gondola must not be justified as a tourist attraction that would increase human activities in the BMCA.
2. While the overall goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by replacing diesel buses seems reasonable, we note some flaws in the business case presented: The current proposal has not looked at fully electric buses as an alternative. That technology is advancing rapidly from several Canadian manufacturers and BC Transit is committed to switching out its entire fleet of buses to fully electric within 10 years. The GHG reduction estimate fails to account for the large emissions from the concrete that would be used for tower pads and terminals.
3. The argument that a gondola would solve the problem of interrupted or delayed bus service to SFU/UniverCity during winter weather [for about 10 days each year according to *Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit Project Background Summer 2011*], is questionable as:
 - a. The majority of those days do not entail a closure and full shut down of bus service.
 - b. Translink have already indicated they will switch out articulated buses and use tire socks during bad weather on Burnaby Mountain, which will help reduce service disruptions.
 - c. A gondola would likely be shut down periodically for maintenance as is the Peak-to-Peak gondola at Whistler.

Copied to:
City Manager
Dir. Corporate Services
Dir. Engineering
Dir. Planning and Building

Referred to:
Environment and Social Planning Committee
(2019.10.10)

4. Stoney Creek begins at the top of the mountain and supports 4 species of salmon, cutthroat trout, and the red-listed Nooksack Dace. In addition, many animals live in the BMCA forest including the red-legged frog, which is a blue-listed species-at-risk.
5. Our bird surveys over the years demonstrate that an increase in human activity in an area results in a reduction in bird populations. Noise from both the construction activities with helicopters and the ongoing presence of a gondola will drive birds further away.
6. The BMCA has already seen a huge increase in the number of trails and the number of people using the area and any further activity will put it in more jeopardy.
7. Local residents in the Forest Grove communities were very much opposed to any gondola project the last time there was public discussion on this subject.

Please give us assurance that TransLink will request that the project be designated as 'reviewable' under the *BC Environmental Assessment Act (BC EAA) Reviewable Projects Regulation* for a Provincial Environmental Assessment of the south part of the BMCA and of the cumulative effects of all stressors on Stoney Creek.

We await your reply,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alan James".

Alan James, BSc, MA
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CC: Hon. George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Katrina Chen, MLA
Burnaby Mayor and Council
Danny Ross, SFU Community Trust
David Suzuki Foundation