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Dear Mayor Hurley and Members of Council,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) at Simon Fraser University. The SFSS is a student-led non-profit organisation that represents and advocates on behalf of over 25,000 undergraduate students across the three campuses of Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Burnaby, Vancouver and Surrey, British Columbia.

The SFSS would like to express its continued support for the Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit project that is currently undergoing round two of public consultations. The Gondola continues to generate much enthusiasm amongst our Members. In Phase One of Translink's public engagement, the plurality of survey respondents (37%) were between the ages of 15-24<sup>[1]</sup>, signaling the strong investment that our students feel in this project.

SFU community members will no doubt be the biggest beneficiaries of this project's successful completion, and we strongly believe that Route 1 is the most efficient and sensible option out of the three routes being proposed. In January 2020, the SFSS hosted a Gondola Open House<sup>[2]</sup>, which revealed overwhelming support for the project, with Route 1 being the clear favourite among students.

Over 88% of our members regularly use public transportation to commute to class, and nearly 95% of SFU undergraduate students consider reliable TransLink services important or very important. SFU is considered to be a commuter campus, and our students rely on transit services to reach campus in a safe, time efficient way on a day-to-day basis. During the winter months, thousands of students find themselves delayed, or even unable to transit to or from SFU due to snow and icy road conditions. It has been found the bus routes to Burnaby Mountain are some of the worst performing buses in the country, with frequent overcrowding, bus pass ups, and bus bunching. Students and community members are missing classes, exams, and in some cases putting themselves in danger trying to travel via car or bus on Burnaby Mountain. Keeping students and community members off the roads will reduce accidents, and keep us all safe<sup>[3]</sup>. Students deserve reliable rapid transit that they can count on to get them to class on time all year round.

The completion of the Burnaby Mountain Gondola will also provide a safe and reliable alternative for students in the event of an earthquake, fire, or other emergency events - a very real possibility due to SFU's proximity to the Burnaby Mountain tank farm. Currently, the limited route options to get on or off campus for both community members and emergency personnel will pose a significant threat to everyone's safety. Additionally, as we find ourselves in the midst of a climate crisis, the SFSS has been in strong opposition to both the Burnaby Mountain tank



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farm, and we recognize that sustainable transit options are the way forward to a cleaner and greener future. In the 2018 feasibility study, it was noted that 50,000 hours of diesel bus operations would be eliminated, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 1700 tons a year<sup>[4]</sup>. As the SFU student population and UniverCity residential community grows in coming years, the Burnaby Mountain Gondola is both an investment in our safety, and in our future.

Of the three proposed routes, Route 1 has the fastest travel time and has the lowest environmental impacts, and students who attended our open house noted that it would be the most feasible route, as commuters from both the Millenium Line and Expo line connect at Production Way-University station already, and the location of the terminus allows easier walkability to SFU buildings. Routes 2 and 3 would both increase travel time for students, and reduce the efficiency of the project.

We are asking for your endorsement and support of the Burnaby Mountain Gondola project and Route 1, to improve the quality of the transit experience for SFU students and community members and make commuting to Burnaby Mountain safer for years to come. We want to see a safer, greener, and more sustainable future for Burnaby residents and SFU community members.

Best,

**Osob Mohamed**

President • Simon Fraser Student Society

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## References

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3. [https://university.ca/wp-content/themes/university-2015/media/GONDOLA\\_FEASIBILITY\\_STUDY\\_FINAL\\_EMAILABLE%20042209.pdf](https://university.ca/wp-content/themes/university-2015/media/GONDOLA_FEASIBILITY_STUDY_FINAL_EMAILABLE%20042209.pdf)
4. Burnaby Mountain Gondola Transit - Feasibility Study (2018). CH2M Hill Canada Ltd.