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Station cut from plans; Councillor raises concerns about potential loss of Cameron station

Larsen, Brooke. *Burnaby Now* [Burnaby, B.C.] 30 Apr 2008: 1.

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Abstract (summary)

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Full Text

The proposed Evergreen Line could leave some Burnaby residents behind, a city councillor says.

Coun. Garth Evans is calling on B.C.'s transportation minister to bring back the Cameron Street transit station after it was axed from TransLink's latest plans for the line.

Early plans for the Evergreen Line - designed to connect Burnaby to the Tri-Cities - included 12 transit stations, with one at North Road and Cameron.

Burnaby council has since approved two condo towers near the site as part of its goal to focus growth near transit stations.

"When we approved it, one reason was that the station was going to be there," Evans said in an interview.

But TransLink's February business case shows eight stations, and no station at Cameron.

Initial plans also called for light-rail technology, but TransLink has said it will use SkyTrain instead.

TransLink spokesperson Doug Friesen said it's too early to say where the stations will be or how many will be built.

The Latest Business Case Includes Planning Work Done More Than Six Years Ago That Was "Only Used for Costing and Modelling Purposes," Friesen Said.

TransLink will consult the public about the stations, he added.

A spokesperson for B.C. Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon said Falcon was not available to answer questions.

But city planning director Basil Luksun said it's not likely the station will be built.

"What they (TransLink) have indicated ... based on their business case review, Cameron station is not included," Luksun said in an interview Monday. "From my understanding, given that it's not a part of the business case, it is unlikely that there is a station at Cameron."

Evans said TransLink likely wants to axe the station to save money.

"I'm told that the cost of a SkyTrain station is \$70 million," he said.

"I'm contemplating putting the arm personally on Kevin Falcon."

Ledingham McAllister is currently building Northgate Village, two high-rise condo towers on the corner of North Road and Cameron. The project also includes 130,000 square feet of shopping space.

Burnaby realtor Michael Kuramoto says closeness to a SkyTrain station is a major selling point for condo-buyers, particularly those who work in Vancouver.

"People that work downtown, they actually can't live downtown or anywhere close to it. So having SkyTrain available as an option, it seems very important. We run across that quite a bit," he said.

Kuramoto, who works for Royal LePage, said he doubts the loss of the Cameron station will have a drastic impact on development or condo sales in Lougheed. He noted that the area already has the Lougheed SkyTrain station.

But a recent city staff report says cutting the station would squelch growth in the neighbourhood.

"The likely loss of this station would not only limit the development stimulus of rapid transit in the north part of the Lougheed Town Centre but also mean inferior service for transit riders in the north part of the Lougheed Town Centre and in the Sullivan Heights area of Burnaby," the report states.(

"LRT with the inclusion of Cameron station would provide better service to the community in the Lougheed Town Centre area."

On April 18, TransLink announced it had picked the northwest route for the line, which will run through Port Moody.(

The southeast route would have seen the route go past the Riverview Hospital lands.(

"Municipal governments in Port Moody, Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Burnaby, New Westminster and Belcarra have all voiced their support for the northwest route," Falcon said in a news release.(

The project is expected to be completed by 2014, he said.(

The Evergreen Line will cost an estimated \$1.4 billion. The B.C. government has committed to spending \$410 on the project, while TransLink has committed \$410 million. The federal government has provided \$67 million to the province for public transit projects, and this money will be used the Evergreen Line.(

FOLLOW THE ROUTE

- Start from the existing Lougheed SkyTrain station.
- Run elevated along North Road to Clarke Road.
- Slip into a tunnel north of Como Lake Avenue.
- Come out at the bottom of the Clarke Road Hill.
- Run elevated across Barnet Highway.
- Transition to street level beside the CP Rail line.
- Continue eastward to the Ioco Road overpass.
- Transition back to an elevated guideway on Lougheed Highway.
- Turn north near Pinetree Way.
- End just north of Guildford Way.

Source: TransLink's February business case

Credit: Brooke Larsen; Burnaby Now

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