



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: September 15, 2021
Submitted by: Engineering and Operations Department – Infrastructure Engineering Services Division
Subject: Feasibility Assessment of a Third SkyTrain Station in Port Moody

Purpose

To provide Council with information about a recently completed feasibility assessment of a third SkyTrain station in Port Moody.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT the report dated September 15, 2021 from the Engineering and Operations Department – Infrastructure Engineering Services Division regarding Feasibility Assessment of a Third SkyTrain Station in Port Moody be received for information.

Executive Summary

- Anticipated growth in the area around Moody Centre and Seaview neighbourhoods are expected to increase potential transit ridership.
- A station at Queens Street would likely be relatively simple and inexpensive to construct because the line was built to accommodate the future station. However, its proximity to Moody Centre Station would limit its ridership potential and its ability to service the Seaview neighbourhood.
- It may be feasible to construct a new station between Queens Street and Barnett Highway, but technical assessments would be required to determine this. Such a station would likely have higher ridership potential and greater ability to service the Seaview neighbourhood. However, feasibility is currently unknown, and costs would likely be much higher.
- Funding from senior levels of government for new individual stations along existing lines has historically not been provided. However, partnerships with private developers have successfully been used to fund some recent station additions at Lincoln Station and at Capstan Station.
- A station at Queens Street may have a cost similar to Capstan Station in Richmond on the Canada Line, with similar potential for developer contributions. However, a station further west, if feasible, would likely have a much higher cost, and a financial assessment would be required to determine if private development could sustain the required levy amounts.

- Further exploration of the potential of a third SkyTrain station would require consultation with TransLink, the completion of technical assessments to determine feasibility and more accurate cost estimates for the various locations, and the completion of financial assessments to better understand the implications on area developments.

Background

At its July 20, 2021 meeting, Council discussed the third reading of the Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment and Rezoning for the proposed development at 1142 Cecile Drive and 300 Angela Drive, also known as Woodland Park. In relation to that discussion, Council then passed the following resolutions:

RC21/368b

THAT staff be directed to report back to Council as soon as possible with potential funding options for a third SkyTrain station (including consideration of a local area development levy, local area property tax levy, provincial grants, debt financing, etc.);

RC21/370

THAT Council request a briefing from TransLink staff regarding feasible location options for a third SkyTrain station west of Moody Centre Station, including high level cost estimates to be used in the aforementioned funding analysis.

In addition, the assessment of the feasibility of a third SkyTrain station is a level 2 priority Council Strategic Plan project. TransLink indicated a need for the City to complete its own assessment in advance of a briefing.

Discussion

The City retained Urban Systems to conduct a high-level assessment of opportunities for a third SkyTrain station within Port Moody west of Moody Centre Station (**Attachment 1**). The assessment was to:

- examine the characteristics of SkyTrain lines;
- review general planning considerations around SkyTrain stations;
- estimate development potential in the area west of Moody Centre Station;
- conduct a high-level modelling exercise of potential ridership; and
- discuss various funding opportunities for a station.

General Line Characteristics

The Millennium Line Evergreen Extension and the Canada Line generally feature average spacings between stations of about 1.2-1.8 kilometres. However, the distance between Burquitlam Station and Moody Centre Station is 4.3 kilometres, which is the longest spacing on the entire SkyTrain system. SkyTrain stations are typically located along straight, flat sections of track, with enough surrounding space to accommodate the station building, stairs, escalators, and other amenities. Within the tunnel west of Barnet Highway, the track is curved, quite steep, and very deep underground, so a station would likely be infeasible therein.

Examples of Other Stations

Inlet Centre Station and Moody Centre Station had about 700,000 and 800,000 annual boardings in 2019, respectively, making them some of the lowest ridership stations in the SkyTrain system. However, ridership at both stations had been rapidly growing prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. High-ridership stations in the SkyTrain system typically have the following features within 800 metres:

- busy areas with diverse commercial, retail, and employment opportunities;
- dense residential areas within walking distance;
- transit connections to other lines; and
- limited parking options.

An examination of residential and employment potential in current development applications identified an additional 7,000 residents and 200 jobs between the Moody Centre and Seaview neighbourhoods. Ongoing work on the OCP Update suggests a potential for an additional 4,500 people and 1,000 jobs, if approved by Council, beyond currently active applications.

Queens Street Station Location

West of Moody Centre Station, the only location currently featuring straight, flat track is near Queens Street, which was protected for a potential future station. However, the Queens Street location is very close to Moody Centre Station, and the two service areas would overlap significantly. A station at Queens Street would also not serve the Seaview neighbourhood particularly well, as it would be beyond the general service area of the station.

A high-level modelling exercise was conducted to estimate potential ridership if a station were added at the Queens Street location. The assessment found that total ridership at both the Moody Centre Station and a hypothetical Queens Street Station would be highest in a scenario with the extra station and more significant growth near the stations. However, because of the overlapping service areas of these two close stations, overall ridership benefits of the extra station would be quite modest, indicating that some ridership would be diverted away from Moody Centre Station. Similarly, the assessment found that, overall, the number of vehicle trips replaced with transit trips due to the addition of the Queens Street station was relatively low.

Alternative Station Location

It may be possible to locate a station west of Queens Street, but the track alignment would not currently support it. Further technical assessments would be required to assess feasibility, and construction costs would likely be much higher because of the potential need to reconstruct portions of the existing track. Due to grades and depth of the SkyTrain track through the tunnel between Barnet Highway and the Port Moody southern border, it does not appear to be feasible to construct a station west of Barnet Highway.

A station further to the west of Queens Street, nearer Barnet Highway, if it could be added, would potentially serve the Seaview neighbourhood more effectively, and the modelling exercise suggested that total ridership, and vehicle trip diversion, could be significantly higher. Such a station would have to be well connected to the nearby neighbourhoods by walking and cycling.

Potential Funding Mechanisms

The memo notes that major transportation infrastructure is typically funded through a combination of mechanisms, such as partnerships with regional agencies and/or senior levels of government, municipal contributions, and partnerships with private industry. Examples of these include the Surrey–Langley SkyTrain extension and the Broadway Subway. However, SkyTrain stations are typically constructed as part of overall lines or extensions of existing lines, and historically, TransLink and senior levels of government have not committed funding to new individual stations on existing lines.

Based on recent station construction costs, it is suggested costs could range from \$50M to \$100M, depending on the location and complexity of a third station. The memo notes that funding approaches can change if stations primarily benefit a specific development area, describing how Lincoln Station was funded through a partnership between City of Coquitlam, Coquitlam Centre Mall, and PPP Canada.

Similarly, the recently announced Capstan Station in Richmond on the Canada Line, which is projected to cost \$52 million, was largely funded through developer contributions collected in the form of a per unit levy on the first 3,250 units. Richmond established the funding strategy through a framework consisting of the City Centre Area Plan (a component of its OCP), its Zoning Bylaw, and the Capstan Station Capital Reserve Fund Bylaw. This framework established a collection of eligibility requirements, incentives, and disincentives for developers, which included a density bonus, park land requirements, and parking rate reductions. Levies were collected significantly earlier than anticipated, enabling the station to be constructed nine years ahead of the original schedule.

If a development levy were to be used to fund a station, the memo notes that a case-study financial analysis would be needed to determine appropriate funding levels needed and reasonableness of various rates based on development economics.

Potential Next Steps

If Council wishes to further examine the potential of a third SkyTrain station, the following work would be required:

- sharing of this work with TransLink and further discussions;
- technical assessments to determine feasibility to construct stations at various locations, to obtain more accurate estimates of costs, and other considerations; and
- financial assessments to better understand the implications on area developments.

Other Option(s)

1. THAT staff report back on a plan to undertake further the technical and financial assessments required to determine feasibility and funding options of the SkyTrain station alternatives outlined in the report dated September 15, 2021 from the Engineering and Operations Department – Infrastructure Engineering Services Division regarding Feasibility Assessment of a Third SkyTrain Station in Port Moody.
2. THAT staff request a briefing for Council regarding requirements for, and feasibility of a third SkyTrain Station from TransLink staff.

Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications. Further information on financial implications would be provided by staff if Council directs staff to undertake further action.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

No public communications have been completed to date on this initiative. Further information on communication and civic engagement requirements would be provided by staff if this report is referred to staff for action.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

Consideration of the development implications of a third SkyTrain Station aligns with the following 2019–2022 Council Strategic Plan Objectives:

- ensure future community growth is carefully considered and strategically managed consistent with the targets approved in our Official Community Plan.
- provide people with a variety of options to move through and around Port Moody safely and efficiently.

In addition, the assessment of the feasibility of a third SkyTrain station is a level 2 priority Council Strategic Plan project.

Attachment(s)

1. Memorandum – Port Moody Third SkyTrain Station Opportunity Review.

Report Author

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Feasibility Assessment of a Third SkyTrain Station in Port Moody.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Memorandum – Port Moody Third SkyTrain Station Opportunity Review.PDF
Final Approval Date:	Oct 4, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Stephen Judd, Manager of Infrastructure Engineering Services - Sep 19, 2021 - 3:42 PM

Jeff Moi, General Manager of Engineering and Operations - Sep 20, 2021 - 5:49 PM

Dorothy Shermer, Corporate Officer - Sep 21, 2021 - 4:05 PM

Kate Zanon, General Manager of Community Development - Sep 21, 2021 - 7:07 PM

Natasha Vander Wal for Rosemary Lodge, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Sep 23, 2021 - 7:35 PM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Sep 24, 2021 - 8:10 AM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Oct 4, 2021 - 1:53 PM