



GEORGETOWNDC.COM



Contact:

Lauren Boston (For Georgetown BID), 202.400.3784, lboston@georgetowndc.com
Andy Fountain (For Rosslyn BID), 770.527.3768, afountain@aboutsage.com

Georgetown-Rosslyn Gondola Deemed Feasible

Study projects a minimum average daily ridership of 6,500 with a capital cost of \$80-90m

Washington, D.C., and Arlington, VA (November 3, 2016) – The Georgetown-Rosslyn Gondola Feasibility Study was released this morning on GeorgetownRosslynGondola.com. The study, conducted by a consulting team led by ZGF Architects over a five-month period, identifies and details the demand, financial, regulatory, design and real estate considerations of an aerial gondola lift connecting the Arlington, Virginia Rosslyn neighborhood and Washington, D.C.'s Georgetown neighborhood.

The consulting team, along with Georgetown Business Improvement District (BID) President and CEO Joe Sternlieb and Rosslyn BID President Mary-Claire Burick, will discuss the study's findings and their implications at a [public information meeting](#) later today from 6 – 7:30 p.m. at the old Georgetown Theater at 1351 Wisconsin Avenue in Washington D.C.

"The charge for this study was not to sell the idea of a gondola, rather it was to evaluate if a gondola is technically feasible, from a multi-disciplinary approach, and to conceptually define the feasibility parameters." said Otto Condon, Principal, ZGF Architects. "With our finding that a gondola is feasible, the decision to move forward is a discussion for both sides of the Potomac to have, both individually and collaboratively."

Key findings include:

- System can operate seamlessly with Metro system, using same fare media and rates, and allowing cost-free direct transfers.
- A projected minimum average daily ridership of 6,500 people (primarily workers and residents) and a capacity of 2,400 people per hour per direction.
- A four minute ride door-to-door with 8-12 people cabins arriving every 20-60 seconds.
- Multiple feasible alignments, with the most favorable station locations along N. Lynn Street in Rosslyn and around the Exxon Gas Station on M Street in Georgetown.
- Significant potential economic benefits on both sides of the river.
- The potential to reduce as many as 100,000 bus trips per year across the Key Bridge
- Estimated \$80-90 million in capital costs assuming high-quality design to enhance the public realm.
- \$3.25 million in annual operating costs assuming operation 365 days a year.
- Relatively high operating cost recovery from fares.

"To put the study findings in context, as the region grows in population, we need to be exploring new ways to efficiently move people. If the Georgetown-Rosslyn gondola was viewed as Georgetown's Metro station, ridership would be higher than over half the Metro stations in the DC-area while capital and

operating costs would be lower,” said Joe Sternlieb, president and CEO, Georgetown BID. “This could be an attractive, cost-efficient regional transportation option that would give thousands of daily commuters, students, residents and tourists a quick, affordable, and reliable way to travel between neighborhoods.”

Regional Economic Benefits

The study suggests economic benefits consistent with transit oriented development can be expected such as increased real property values, restaurant, retail and hotel sales, as well as the likelihood of faster office and residential leasing.

“From an Arlingtonian perspective, you can see how the gondola would help attract businesses that want to locate in accessible urban hubs, residents who want to navigate between neighborhood amenities without cars, and tourists who want to see beautiful skylines and views,” said Mary-Claire Burick, president, Rosslyn BID. “I was also pleased that the renderings from the study incorporate high-quality design that enhances the public realm and is mindful of view sheds.”

Regulatory Approvals and Next Steps

The feasibility study also deemed the gondola to be legally permissible – making it feasible from a regulatory standpoint. Although construction of the gondola would require review by as many as 20 local, state and federal agencies, and require a federal Environmental Impact Statement, there were no findings that the project could not be approved and permitted.

“I have long liked the idea of having a gondola to link Georgetown with Rosslyn and the Metro system,” said Mary Cheh, D.C. Councilmember and Chair of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment. “It is an innovative and forward-thinking way to address transportation issues in the District and our region. This study suggests that the gondola option is both practical and feasible, and I’d like to work with my colleagues to explore next steps toward implementation.”

The gondola project’s next phase will be for leaders on both sides of the river to review the feasibility study and meet to discuss whether and how to proceed to the next phase of planning. The Environmental Impact Study process is estimated to take three to four years. If approved, it would take two years to construct the gondola. Further decisions would need to be made on how the construction and operation of the project would be funded.

“Like Washington D.C.’s leadership, we find the results of the study interesting. We will be reviewing the report and doing significant analysis before making any decisions. We also will be talking with our regional partners. It is important to note that no proposals have been made yet about how the gondola would be funded. Should we decide to continue to explore whether or not to build a gondola, funding proposals would also affect the Board's decision on whether to actually build the project,” said Libby Garvey, Chair, Arlington County Board.

The Georgetown-Rosslyn Gondola idea emerged from the Georgetown 2028 planning process as a potential high-speed transit connection that could efficiently solve many transit issues for the commercial, residential, university, hospital and visitor constituencies in Georgetown and Rosslyn. The gondola project is also consistent with the Realize Rosslyn sector plan, which prioritizes creating a vibrant urban center with multimodal transit options.

The feasibility study was conducted and funded by a partnership that included the District of Columbia Government, Arlington County, Rosslyn Business Improvement District (BID), Georgetown University, Gould Property Company, JBG Companies, Penzance, and Georgetown Business Improvement District (BID). Partners contributed more than \$200,000 to conduct the study.

###

About the Georgetown Business Improvement District

The Georgetown Business Improvement District (BID) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the accessibility, attractiveness and overall appeal of Georgetown. Established in 1999 by its property owners and merchants, the Georgetown BID has more than 1,000 members. The organization is located in the heart of Georgetown in Washington, D.C. and sets a standard of excellence in preserving historic charm while meeting contemporary needs. From marketing and special events, to transportation, economic development, destination management and streetscape, the Georgetown BID contributes to the vitality and quality of life in Georgetown. For more information, visit georgetowndc.com.

About Rosslyn Business Improvement District

The Rosslyn Business Improvement District provides high-quality, customer-oriented services designed to define, enhance and continually improve Rosslyn for those who work, live, visit and do business here. As a resourceful and collaborative organization, we work in partnership with our key stakeholders and Arlington County to create a welcoming, creative thriving environment that supports Rosslyn's residents and a wide range of business types, from innovative start-ups to established Fortune 500 companies and international associations. We take an active leadership role in all that we do, serving as a collaborator, community builder and agent of positive change. For more information, please visit, www.rosslynva.org.