



# Building Up, Not Out: Aerial Cable Car Systems as Urban Mass Transit

### Project Summary:

Our project, *Building Up, Not Out: Aerial Cable Car Systems as Urban Mass Transit*, examines Aerial Cable Cars (ACCs) as a mass transit solution for Durham. It assesses their social, economic, environmental, and operational impacts in that capacity and examines the challenges associated with implementing them. Additionally, it offers some suggestions regarding how the Region might effectively communicate with the public regarding the benefits of using an ACC as a means of north-south mass transit in our area.

### Project Goals:

The goal of this project was to develop an understanding of the current state of ACCs in the urban mass transit context. We sought to understand what the research into this subject reveals as well as how existing projects have been understood by their communities. This work serves the broader goal of helping Durham to develop a north-south transit solution that could accommodate the region’s anticipated growth.

### Methods:

This project involved conducting a review of the scholarly research on ACCs as urban mass transit and then pairing those findings with a media scan that involved looking at journalistic coverage and social media discussions pertaining to ACCs in this context. The team then generated some preliminary strategic communication recommendations based on the findings from the first two phases.

### Outcomes:

Our research suggests that ACCs have a number of potential benefits in the urban mass transit context. Studies to date identify environmental and service benefits, as well as the potential for ACCs to produce economic and social benefits. However, the novel and largely untested nature of the technology in the North American urban mass transit context is a challenge for its proponents.

### Why is this important?:

The available data indicates that Durham’s population will increase significantly by the mid-point of the current century. It is thus crucial that Durham identify an appropriate transit solution that can minimize the disruption in the present while facilitating the region’s future growth. Our work suggest that an ACC may be viable means to meet this challenge.

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