

Banff Eco-Transit Centre

A Science-Based Approach to Visitor and Vehicle Management in Banff National Park

“RESIDENT ONLY VEHICLE PASS”: PART OF A 3-PRONGED APPROACH TO PEDESTRIANIZE BANFF

Based on recent studies (Stantec (2016), Indigo (2017)), increases over the past decade in the number of visitors travelling to Banff National Park has led to vehicle-related congestion in and adjacent to the Town of Banff. While the Town of Banff and Parks Canada have made progress with mass transit initiatives within the Park, traffic congestion in the Town's downtown core, lack of adequate parking, and limited mass transit options to the Park, have clearly reached a tipping point. These studies indicate that the excessive number of vehicles in the Park has contributed to the degradation of the visitor experience and an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from visitor vehicles. Separately, while Parks Canada has made concerted efforts over the past 20 years to improve the Cascade Wildlife Corridor by removing buildings and structures and restricting use of others, research has shown there remains a significant impediment to completing the full connectivity of this important wildlife habitat - the Norquay access road.

To fully address these transit issues, Banff's transportation systems need to be radically transformed towards a more sustainable, wildlife friendly model. In doing so, Banff National Park has the potential to become a national model for reducing greenhouse gases and ecological sustainability.

Building upon mass transit and wildlife corridor and habitat initiatives already undertaken by the Town of Banff and Parks Canada, Banff locals Jan and Adam Waterous (through their family holding company Liricon Capital Ltd.) have been pursuing a 3-pronged strategy to help transform how visitors move through the Park:

- 1) Intercept Parking with 500 stalls at the Banff Train Station
 - a. Located on South Side of railway tracks - scheduled to open summer 2019
 - b. Shuttles to points of interest around Town and Park regulates visitation levels
- 2) Aerial Transit from the Train Station to Norquay Summit, Parking moved down to Train Station
 - a. Norquay access road vehicle traffic dramatically reduced (or road decommissioned) thus protecting Cascade Wildlife Corridor
 - b. Norquay lease size reduced, visitors can access high-alpine without a personal vehicle
- 3) Calgary Airport to Banff Passenger Rail via a Hydrogen-powered Zero-emission Train
 - a. Dedicated line within CPR corridor with 8 departures/day ensures on-time performance
 - b. Eliminates need for personal vehicle in Park

These 3 components bring together decade-old ideas identified by governments and other stakeholders to address Banff's traffic woes. The Waterous' have acted as private sector catalysts to pedestrianize Banff by acquiring property and infrastructure to support the transformation of these collective dreams into a reality. Over the past 3 years, they have purchased the leaseholds for the Banff Train Station, its surrounding lands (32 acres), and, more recently, the Norquay ski hill, and, with the construction of the first intercept lot, have converted the Station into the Banff Eco-Transit Centre.

The logical next step to further leverage these 3 initiatives is to implement a “Resident Only Vehicle Pass” which includes:

- 1) Adding a 2,000 Stall lot on North Side of railway tracks creating a total of 2,500 stalls at Station
- 2) Creating a Banff Bus and Shuttle Terminal within the North Intercept Lot
- 3) Banffites issued a “Resident Only Vehicle Pass”
- 4) Non-hotel guests park at “Day Visitor Intercept Parking” - Hotel guests park in hotel lots.

On March 25, 2019, Jan Waterous proposed to Banff Town Council that should the Town Implement a "Resident Only Vehicle Pass", then Liricon will provide the Town with 2,500 intercept parking stalls rent-free for 30 years when the gondola opens.