



## **Research shows national, community-wide support and ecological benefits from green transit initiatives proposed for Banff National Park**

*Opening of Banff's first intercept parking lot a major milestone for Banff Eco-Transit Hub and an important step toward "Car-Free Banff"*

**September 13, 2019, Banff, AB** – New research shows an innovative approach to sustainable transportation in Banff National Park is overwhelmingly backed by Banff residents, Albertans and Canadians. Surveys show strong public support for new intercept parking and proposed aerial transit to Mt. Norquay and Calgary Airport to Banff passenger rail service to improve walkability, alleviate traffic congestion in the Town of Banff and enhance the Cascade Wildlife Corridor.

[A public engagement study](#) shows that 87 per cent of Banff residents agree vehicle congestion is a problem in Banff; along with 82 per cent of visitors. Each expressed the need for bold and innovative long-term solutions to address the issue. [National polling](#) reinforced support for making Banff's downtown core "Car-Free" and pedestrian friendly.

"Vehicle congestion is a huge problem in Banff. While bus service forms part of a solution, there was considerably stronger support given to the pursuit of more comprehensive long-term solutions," said Dr. Joe Pavelka, sustainable tourism researcher and Mount Royal University Professor.

In fact, 91% of Banffites said a more comprehensive plan is required to manage visitor and vehicle congestion in the Park.

The research was commissioned by Banff residents, Jan and Adam Waterous (Liricon Capital), who are the long-term lease owners of the historic Banff Train Station, the 32-acres of land that surrounds it and Mt. Norquay. The Waterous' vision is to create a multi-modal [Eco Transit Hub](#) at the train station that supports a variety of green transit initiatives. The creation of Banff's first-ever, free, 500-stall intercept parking lot and a free 22-stall RV intercept parking lot are the first steps toward realizing their vision.

"My family has lived in Banff for 22 years and we, like so many of our neighbors, have become concerned about the impact of vehicle congestion in the Park," said Jan Waterous, Managing Partner of Liricon Capital.

“We kept wondering what “they” were going to do about it. We came to the realization that we should stop complaining and join the “they” to try to solve this Park-wide problem,” she added.

Waterous said that while there have been many important ideas put forth by others to tackle vehicle congestion in the past, governments lacked the real estate and infrastructure to bring these platforms to fruition.

“Intercept parking has been Town of Banff policy since 1979, yet prior to the official opening of our lot, not a single intercept lot had been built,” said Waterous. “They didn’t have the real estate to make it happen.”

Liricon is taking a science-based approach to guide every aspect of their project, working with provincial and national research groups.

The Miistakis Institute, a not-for-profit environmental research institute, conducted research that assessed the impact of aerial transit on the Cascade Wildlife Corridor. [Research shows](#) aerial transit has the potential to improve connectivity of the corridor through reduced traffic and an environmental gain should certain mitigations be put in place. Mitigations include limiting traffic on the Norquay access road and human use on the ski slopes during summer.

"Recognizing movement opportunities are limited throughout the Bow Valley, any opportunities for an environmental gain should be considered," noted Dr. Danah Duke, executive director of the Miistakis Institute.

Waterous believes the creation of the Banff Eco Transit Hub, and the opening of Banff’s first free, intercept parking lot, are “necessary but not sufficient steps” toward pedestrianizing Banff National Park.

In March, 2019, Liricon presented a proposal to [Banff Town Council](#) offering to provide an additional 2,000-parking stalls to the Town, for 30 years, for free, once aerial transit became operational. The offer was made conditional on the Town agreeing to move to a resident-only vehicle pass. Liricon explained aerial transit serves two purposes:

- It protects the ecological integrity of the important Cascade Wildlife Corridor; secondly
- It provides a necessary revenue stream to help fund an additional 2000 parking stalls.

“For the first time in Banff National Park’s history, Parks Canada would be able to manage how many visitors converge on a particular site, thus providing the necessary ecological stewardship for these precious UNESCO heritage destinations,” said Waterous.

“A total of 2,500 free intercept parking stalls, the reinstatement of Calgary Airport-Banff passenger rail and aerial transit to Mt. Norquay will move us closer to the possibility of a “Car-Free Banff,” said Waterous. “And our research tells us that this is exactly what Canadians want and expect in a National Park.”

## **Supporting Science and Research**

Liricon Capital is taking a science-based approach to visitor and vehicle management in Banff National Park. The following studies are being used to help guide the project and are available at <https://banffecotransithub.ca/science-and-research/>

### [Banff Intercept-Lot/Car Free National Poll Top Line Summary](#)

Planvision Consulting Ltd.  
July 2019

### [Public Engagement of Banff Railway Lands](#)

Planvision Consulting Ltd.  
July 2019

### [Bighorn Sheep Lambing Study](#)

BIGHORN Wildlife Technologies Ltd.  
August 2019

### [Mount Norquay Gondola Development Proposal: Wildlife Assessment Executive Summary](#)

Miistakis Institute  
February 2019

### [Mount Norquay Gondola Development Proposal: Wildlife Assessment](#)

Miistakis Institute  
February 2019

### [Calgary-Banff Mass Transit Feasibility Study](#)

The Town of Banff by CPCS Transcom Limited  
February 27, 2019

### [Banff Long Term Transportation Study](#)

Town of Banff transportation and congestion study by Stantec  
July 2016

### [Parking Study & Reports](#)

The Town of Banff by Indigo Park Canada Inc.  
September 12, 2016

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