

Banff Eco-Transit Centre

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

Jan Waterous, Liricon Capital Managing Partner, Presentation to Banff Town Council

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Because time is tight—and if I understand correctly a buzzer will go off in exactly 5 minutes--I would like to encourage Council and those in the Galley to review, if they haven't done so already, the 24-page document I submitted in advance of today's presentation so that you can have a more fulsome understanding of how Liricon arrived at the specific request I will speak to today. That document also provides some of the science conducted by the environmental consulting group Miistakis Institute, that shows there is the potential for a positive environmental gain for aerial transit from the train station up to the high alpine, should the necessary mitigations by Parks and ourselves be put in place.

But today, I am here with a very specific request-- to ask Council to consider the adoption of a "Resident Only Vehicle Pass".

We believe that a "Resident Only Vehicle Pass" has the potential to entirely eliminate parking and congestion issues within our community and the National Park as a whole. Briefly, we envision a system whereby all day-visitors park at one of 2 intercept lots at the Banff Train Station and hotel guests proceed to park at their respective hotels. Both groups could walk or shuttle to destinations within Town but must only use buses or shuttles to reach points of interest around the Park.

Now, I don't need to convince this crowd that we have a visitor vehicle problem, but perhaps less understood, is the importance of mandating use of intercept parking if we wish to truly achieve transformational change. Snowmass, Colorado's experience with intercept parking proves this very point. Here, free intercept parking is available on the edge of Town and on surface lots in the Town Centre and free shuttles and buses are provided every 15 minutes to take visitors to the hill and to various other points of interest. But importantly, there are also parking lots that are located within walking distance of the ski hill that are NOT FREE yet the paid lots always fill up first. Paid parking may indeed improve a municipality's tax base (and there is certainly nothing wrong with that), but it is far less effective in actually getting people out of their cars. What does get people out of their cars is when the option to not do so is eliminated. The experience in Zion Canyon in Utah proves just this. Here, all visitors park at the intercept lot on the edge of town and only shuttles and buses are allowed in the National Park.

To ensure there is enough parking for all of Banff's day visitors, and assuming the gondola is approved to provide a necessary revenue stream, we propose that Liricon build an additional intercept lot on the north side of the tracks that could house up to 2000 more vehicles and include a transit depot for Parks and Town buses and shuttles.

And recognizing that a genuine partnership is necessary for a resident vehicle pass to truly succeed, we also propose that should the Town agree to a “Resident Only Vehicle Pass”, then, upon the Gondola becoming operational, we will lease both intercept lots to the Town, rent-free, for 30 years.

For clarification, we are only able to make this offer if the gondola is operational.

While the primary benefit of the gondola is to substantially improve the ecological integrity of the cascade wildlife corridor, its secondary benefit is to allow us to build the second lot and provide parking, for free, for all Park visitors, for 30 years.

We also understand that our ability to ultimately build a gondola is a Parks Canada and not a Town of Banff decision, but we feel confident that the science will ultimately support its construction and this revenue stream will soon be available.

In the meantime, our request today is that you view our proposal as yet another tool in YOUR toolbox to consider in YOUR efforts to tackle Visitor Traffic Congestion. While we are certainly open to other ideas other than a “Resident Only Vehicle Pass” and mandated intercept parking to create transformational change, the experience of other car-free communities tells us that these measures do in fact work. It is our view that a “Resident Only Vehicle Pass” will ultimately enhance the visitor experience, allow residents to take back their community, and most importantly, preserve our Park for future generations.

Thank you for your time today. We really appreciate it.