

## ECO-TRANSIT HUB – INTERCEPT LOT GRAND OPENING SEPTEMBER 13, 2019

### REMARKS BY BANFF MAYOR KAREN SORENSON

- Thank you very much.
- I'm sure we all appreciated the update this morning – I get lots of questions of interest about the Eco Transit Hub
- We know there are a number of milestones ahead, such as the preparation of a proposal for this entire site owned by CP Rail and leased by Liricon.
- Council will be reviewing an Area Redevelopment Plan once all of the necessary assessments and a draft plan is completed.
- However, today we are celebrating how far this project has come already.
- On behalf of the Town, I am thrilled to congratulate Liricon – Jan and Adam – for building the new parking lot near the entrance to town... all without use of tax dollars. Which is still overwhelming to me.
- Council has spent years dealing with the challenge of parking requirements on our set footprint and this gift to our destination is a solution.... to much of the traffic congestion caused by vehicles circling looking for parking
- I was beaming with Jan and Adam when they opened the lot on August 31.
- That's also when they handed over the keys to the Town.
- The Town now operates the Train Station Parking Lot.

- And even though it is still early days, I can confidently say it is already a success.
- Combined on Saturday and Sunday of the long weekend, the Town recorded 57,000 vehicle movements at our two entrances.
- Although we track vehicles coming in and out of town... for those two days we know most people were coming into Banff.
- On the same two days, we saw a drop in the number of vehicles going over the bridge and up Mountain Ave.
- This means people were parking and walking or taking transit.
- Another good indicator is a decrease in congestion and traffic delays coming back over the bridge.
- We have staff who monitor the intersections coming over the bridge into downtown.
- When there are significant line ups, our staff override the traffic signals to extend the cycle to move more vehicles through the intersections.
- On Sunday, we only had to do that twice.
- Normally, on Sundays in summer we do that well over 10 times, sometimes over 20 times.
- After the Train Station Parking Lot opened, we counted 180 stalls occupied on Saturday, then 300 on Sunday.
- And remember, one stall can be occupied by several vehicles in the day, due to turnover.

- For decades, Banff residents have asked for a parking lot on the edge of town to “intercept” visitors so they can quickly park, and enjoy our community in the best way possible – by foot, by bike and by transit.
- As mentioned, my entire time on Town Council, enhancing transit service and stimulating active transportation, have been top priorities.
- I am of course very proud of the development of an excellent Roam Public Transit system. Last year 1.3 million riders - currently at 1.2 riders in 2019 – so set to beat our ridership from last years - Go Roam!!!
- And I am proud of the green commuting ethic of our residents – I challenge you to find another community in Alberta where 17% of residents commute by bicycle and 45% walk through the summer months.
- But the reality is – we could not secure public land to build a parking lot on the edge of town and we do not have the land needed for this, within town limits. It was an unsolvable problem.
- So, we are very thankful that the private sector stepped up and built this incredible gift on these leased CP lands
- Thank you Jan and Adam for advancing a shared vision of a town that embraces environmental responsibility.
- Thank you for helping our residents to be able to get around easier in our busy town

- Thank you for helping visitors have a much more enjoyable experience.
- Rather than looking for parking, circling our small town – which is only 4 square kilometres in size – people can now quickly park here, and stroll the eight minutes to the commercial district, or take the free weekend shuttle to enjoy all that Banff has to offer.
- It is so much nicer to experience out of a vehicle.
- And for everyone, the beautification around the parking lot continues, as the Town plants \$145,000 worth of trees and shrubs.
- In the future, we look forward to even more benefits for the visitors who will use this location as their gateway to Banff... by vehicle and ..... hopefully, by train.
- Mass transit with regular, convenient service from Calgary is also a goal identified in our Banff Strategic Plan.
- And this can be a hub for other enhanced visitor opportunities – heritage commemoration, commercial amenities, and environmental tourism – right here at the Eco Transit Hub.
- Thank you.