



Banff
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**AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
HIGHLIGHTS**

The Vision

FOR THE BANFF RAILWAY LANDS ARP

The Banff Railway Lands Area Re-development Plan (ARP) sets forward a bold vision for the heritage train station lands and Banff. This vision includes:

- Restoring Banff's Heritage to support people and wildlife movement
- Supporting purposeful travel by integrating sustainability, education, and extraordinary experiences
- Developing an innovative, multi-modal transportation platform that public-private-partnerships can leverage to help Banff National Park become North America's first net zero emissions community by 2035.



Supporting purposeful travel

By creating a destination that integrates sustainability (of both people and wildlife movement), education (of both local history and culture), and extraordinary experiences (of both adventure and community connections) we can support purposeful travel through this ARP. This Plan will create a place that infuses the journey with purpose--visitors and residents mutually benefit with stronger connections between cultures and greater respect for the natural environment.

The Plan sets in place the potential for the creation and development of an **Eco-Transit Hub**; a multi-modal, sustainable transportation centre that

supports the re-establishment of the coexistence of **people and wildlife movement**. It restores and transforms the historic Banff Train Station and its surrounding lands as a destination – a “Back to the Future” reimagining. Concurrently the Plan reinstates and builds habitat for wildlife movement.

The Banff Railway Lands supports the *Canada National Parks Act's* first priority, “the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity. The plan also addresses the impacts of high visitation, as identified in the report, *Defining A Way Forward*, which was released by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Southern Alberta Chapter in 2020. At issue is “*With millions of people visiting some parks each year, the impacts of “over tourism” are becoming more acute and intense.*”



Plan Benefits

Underlying the ARP are three key innovative, holistic strategies that balance and enhance both human and ecological dimensions of the Park and Town. While each of the ARP components individually enhance the Town and Park, they are designed to be complementary, so that collectively they provide ecological and visitor experience benefits that are greater than the sum of its parts. The elements of the ARP celebrate Rocky Mountain Parks heritage, and provide an environmental gain both within the ARP Plan Area and across Banff National Park. This integrated vision returns the Railway Lands to being the gateway to Canada’s flagship national park.

1 **CREATING an arrival centre for integrated, multi-modal, low carbon, green transit systems**

that address the impact of personal vehicles degrading the Town’s and Banff National Park’s ecosystem and visitor experience. The arrival centre is both environmentally and economically sustainable and an efficient use of land. The Eco-Transit Hub will include free intercept parking, a shuttle centre, services that support passenger rail, a rental centre for micro-transit and self-propelled transit, and a terminus for potential aerial transit from the Town to Norquay’s base, all of which are adaptable and scalable. These flexible systems will reduce the negative impact of personal vehicles on the Park, accelerate moving Banff National Park to net zero emissions, increase visitor safety, tie into regional transportation networks and encourage active transportation, including walking and cycling. The arrival centre can serve as a platform in the future for the Town of Banff and Parks Canada to optimize transportation networks through reservation systems and demand management, including access restrictions and demand pricing.

2 **ENHANCING the Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridor** within the Plan Area through

restoration of a fragmented and partial brownfield site. This rehabilitation provides an environmental gain, including creating a 15.5 acre contiguous protected conservation area covering $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Plan Area north



The ARP's emphasis on mass transit, including providing free parking, the creation of free community spaces and venues, and supporting active transportation throughout the Park, fosters a just, equitable, safe, accessible and healthy National Park visitor experience.

of the railway tracks. For future consideration, there is the opportunity with partners to further restore the Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridor outside of the Plan Area by removing and restoring the Fenlands Trail parking lot and creating a wildlife underpass north of 40 Mile Creek.

3 DEVELOPING a Rocky Mountain Parks Railway Heritage destination and community hub that offers dining and hospitality opportunities as well as accessible cultural, social, entertainment, and learning venues. Pedestrian-focused open spaces will celebrate and promote the history of the site's train station, landscapes and Indigenous connections with new structures. In partnership with CP Rail, existing cultural heritage buildings will be conserved. These structures are iconic, authentic, yet modern and are all contained in a walkable space that emphasizes scenic views and can accommodate Banff's four million annual visitors.



The Site

“Canada’s Train Station”: This ARP is for the 17.4-hectare (43-acre) site located in the Town of Banff, within the CR (Railway Lands) Land Use District, including the Canadian Pacific Railway right-of-way, the train station, and PS (Public Service) and RSC lands immediately adjacent to the south of the CR District. This Plan Area includes the heritage station building, associated station grounds, and adjacent lands that have mostly been previously disturbed.

The development of the Canadian Pacific Railway linking the country is the single most important project in Canada’s history. The railway’s defining physical achievement was its construction through the Rocky Mountains. Rocky Mountain tourism was started by the CPR when it built the Banff Train Station in 1885 (“If we can’t export the scenery, we’ll import the tourists.” W.C. Van Horne, CPR President 1886) ahead of the federal government later that year forming what would become Banff National Park, Canada’s flagship national park. The Banff Train Station is “Canada’s Train Station”.

Proponents

The ARP’s projects are being advanced by Norquay Mystic Ridge Ltd., the leaseholder of the Banff Train Station Railway Lands and Norquay Ski and Sightseeing Resort, which is owned by Banff locals Jan and Adam Waterous. The transit, environmental, and cultural projects within the Plan Area are being undertaken at Norquay’s sole expense maximizing the value for money for governments should they wish to leverage this platform for additional initiatives. Norquay’s stewardship of these lands is designed to protect and enhance Banff National Park for future generations.



Philosophy

The ARP’s design philosophy addresses past transportation and environmental mistakes in the Plan Area and across the Park. With a clean sheet of paper, the design is sensitive to the surroundings, so that the end product is highly functional and innovative yet looks like it has always been in place. When visitors

learn the project is new, we expect the question - “why was this not done sooner?” The components will be seamless, the design will be intuitive and be in keeping with what visitors expect in a national park.

This best-in-class, integrated mass transit hub marries environmental protection with a welcoming and gathering destination fitting for Canada’s flagship national park. Taken together, the ARP components create a green transit laboratory and research and development model for other Canadian communities to create low-carbon transit systems to fight climate change that also improve the quality of every day life. The ARP initiatives will help to ensure that Banff National Park is a source of national pride and enjoyment today and for future generations.

Equity and Inclusion

The ARP’s emphasis on mass transit, including providing free parking, the creation of free community spaces and venues, celebrating Indigenous connections and supporting active transportation throughout the Park, fosters a just, inclusive, equitable, safe, accessible and healthy National Park visitor experience.

Communities

Key cornerstones of the ARP include directives of statutory and planning principles, which were established in advance of the Plan’s inception. These include consideration for the urban design context and environmental attributes of the site. The core directions established for this land and for the Station in this ARP are to be influenced by the contributions provided by the local and Indigenous communities throughout the project’s public consultation process.



A Research Based Approach

The Banff Railway Lands ARP, which creates an Eco-Transit Hub, has been designed in consultation with leading experts (including transportation, low carbon systems, wildlife, heritage, urban design) using science, research and data, and is based on feedback from the Town of Banff, the Province of Alberta and Parks Canada. The ARP has been planned to ensure it meets government policy objectives, including:

- » Reducing vehicle and visitor impact through innovative mass transit
- » Restoring the Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridor and habitat
- » Celebrating the town’s Rocky Mountain Park setting, railway heritage, Indigenous connections and Rocky Mountain town character.

The ARP’s projects are designed to be interwoven with the Town of Banff’s and Parks Canada’s own priorities on mass transit, wildlife corridors, and cultural heritage to strengthen these environmental and visitor experience initiatives.

VISITOR AND RESIDENT TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS

Banff National Park’s visitor and resident transportation CO₂ emissions total 105,000 metric tons/year, of which 96% are from visitors, and 4% from residents. Sixty-two per cent of emissions occur outside of the townsite, and 38% occur within the townsite (Layzell et al, 2020). For comparison, these emissions are 63 times higher per visitor relative to Zion National Park, Utah which has similar visitation to Banff National Park (Zion has 4.5 million visitors/year vs. Banff National Park’s 4.2 million/year).

CONGESTION DEGRADING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Vehicles are degrading the visitor experience in Banff National Park, with 30% of visitors cutting their trip short due to congestion and crowding, and 20% of visitors not returning for the same reason. Further, 38% of visitors believe that local authorities should do more to address congestion and crowding (Pavelka et al, 2019).

ZION NATIONAL PARK

Zion National Park, like Banff, has a central valley where most visitors congregate, and this leads to increased congestion. More than 20 years ago, Zion created a shuttle-only service to points of interest. By combining intercept parking and a “hop-on, hop-off” service, Zion became the global leader in National Park mass transit.

ZERMATT, SWITZERLAND

For more than 50 years, Zermatt, Switzerland’s most sustainable mountain community, has had a unified, multi-modal transportation system, including passenger rail, intercept parking, aerial transit and shuttles. This seamless transit system, serving visitors and residents alike, allows guests to enjoy a large pedestrian zone in the centre of town.

WHY GLOBAL MODELS FOR SUSTAINABILITY WORK

The core magic of both Zermatt and Zion is they have each created integrated transit systems. Once visitors reach a central arrival hub, they no longer need a personal vehicle.

TECHNOLOGY FURTHER REDUCES EMISSIONS

Zion and Zermatt’s integrated transit systems are low-carbon relative to personal vehicles. However, there is an opportunity to further reduce emissions by applying technology that is in the process of becoming more commercially available, including hydrogen powered trains and electric buses. Should Banff adopt a similar model, leveraging new technology this will help Banff National Park reach net zero emissions.



PLATFORM FOR PUBLIC-PRIVATE-PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE BOTH ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Banff Railway Lands ARP provides the opportunity for governments and the private sector to work together to form public-private-partnerships to advance various projects including, but not limited to:

- » Developing Calgary Airport to Banff passenger rail
- » Creating shuttle-only service to points of interest
- » Establishing reservation systems and dynamic pricing to manage access and demand to points of interest
- » Enhancing the Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridor
- » Restoring Rocky Mountain Parks Heritage Railway Stations.

These partnerships can help support BANFF NATIONAL PARK NET ZERO 2035, a grassroots initiative to make Banff National Park North America’s first net zero emissions community. More information can be found at banffnationalparknetzero2035.ca.

GOALS to Support Three Key Strategies

1 Reduce Vehicle and Visitor Impacts Through Integrated, Innovative Mass Transit Systems

- » Create an integrated, innovative multi-modal mobility model to address the environmental and visitor experience impact of vehicles on the Town and Park. This new model will contribute to both greater ecological integrity and visitor experiences inspired by leading, “best-in-class” environmentally sustainable communities and national parks like Zermatt, Switzerland and Zion National Park, Utah. Develop a “Best Practices Per Visitor” system by following the “Lower Each Visitor Environmental Footprint” (LEVEF) sustainability model while enhancing the visitor experience.
- » Provide seamless transit alternatives, so that once visitors arrive, whether by personal vehicle or train, they do not need personal vehicles to move throughout the destination.
- » Increase visitor safety, particularly during the winter months, through mass transit offerings
- » Enhance the pedestrian experience by returning the Railway Lands to its historic role as the National Park’s arrival centre and transit hub
- » Develop a central and sustainable beginning point for visitors’ National Park experience - the effective gateway to the Park - “Banff Starts Here”
- » Develop opportunities to encourage visitors to walk, cycle, take shuttles, and mass transit to visit points of interest in and around the Town and Park
- » Create a national model to showcase innovative, environmentally friendly mass transit
- » Allow vehicular tourism to be replaced with active and mass transit
- » Construct innovative, ecologically-friendly, adaptable and scalable transportation options including:



• Intercept Parking

- Intercept parking for approximately 1,100 vehicles: 400 new stalls in North Arrival Lot located just north of the tracks (integrated into existing 170-stall Fenlands Recreation Centre lot), 500 existing stalls in South Arrival Lot south of tracks
- Approximately 300 stalls for summer-time ARP demand, approximately 550 stalls for winter-time ARP demand, approximately 600 stalls available for free for summer-time Town and Park visitors with potential to add further 300 stalls within designated parking footprint (and maintain 15 acre Norquay Conservation Area)
- Intercept parking allows the Town of Banff and Parks Canada to develop comprehensive “Best Practices Per Visitor” (decrease the per visitor environmental footprint and enhance the visitor experience) vehicle management systems such as paid parking to decrease congestion in Town and, in combination with shuttle services, visitor impact on wildlife across the Park
- Centralized intercept parking supports shuttle-only service to points of interest, which creates the opportunity to reclaim personal vehicle parking lots adjacent to the points of interest.



Banff Eco-Transit Hub – Intercept Parking, Shuttle Centre, Passenger Rail Visitor Services, Aerial Transit

• **Shuttle Centre**

- Located on north side of tracks in new 400-stall intercept lot, this will initially have 4 bus parking bays but can be expanded within the same designated Shuttle Centre footprint.
- Connected to south side by improved pedestrian level crossing at Norquay Road and potential pedestrian bridge across tracks.

• **Visitors Services to Support Potential Passenger Rail from Calgary Airport to Banff**

- Future passenger rail system on dedicated line will ensure dependable service and allow high frequency schedule
- Potential for alternative energy driven train system, in particular hydrogen powered locomotives
- Should volume of passengers increase, there is potential to enlarge waiting room within the heritage Train Station and increase nearby visitor services.

• **Micro Transit Pavilion**

- Pavilion will provide diverse mobility options, including self-propelled and micro-transit rental options (i.e. bicycles, strollers, wheelchairs, and electric scooters as well as bike storage)
- E-transit micro-mobility, such as electric scooters, has potential to reduce fossil fuel consumption and accelerate emissions reductions and reduce congestion that electric vehicles do not.

• **Visitor Services and Cultural Institutions Pavilion**

- Visitor Services component will provide support services to facilitate vehicle-free movement through the Town and Park
- Traveler services include tour companies, shuttle service options, hotel baggage services, “Grab ‘N’ Go” refreshments for shuttle riders, cyclists and pedestrians.

• **Terminus for Potential Aerial Transit from Station to Norquay Base**

- Iyethka Wiyâbi Gondola would transport all Norquay guests from Town to Base (Iyethka Wiyâbi is Stoney for “Stoney Women” - Gondola path travels across base of Stoney Squaw Mountain). Note this is not a Norquay Summit Gondola, which was not approved by Parks Canada
- Ecological gain by removing all Norquay guest vehicles from Cascade Wildlife Corridor
- Norquay’s 900-stall parking relocated to Train Station, existing 900 parking stalls at Norquay base are reforested and returned to Parks Canada

- Gondola provides revenue stream to ensure multi-decade economic sustainability of free intercept parking, wildlife habitat restoration, heritage building restoration, and off-site improvements
- Gondola is unlikely to increase visitation to Banff National Park but will split gondola market with the Sulphur Mountain Gondola (Pavelka, 2019)
- Parks Canada retains management of public access to Norquay Access Road
- Town to Norquay Base Gondola will also require separate Parks Canada approval process.



2 Restore Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridor and Habitat

- » Enhance the Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridors and biodiversity habitat north of the tracks **within** the Plan Area from its existing condition of being a fragmented and partial brownfield site. Steps to enhance wildlife movement and habitat include:
 - Improve Primary Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridor (runs east-west between the Fenlands Recreation Centre and the TransCanada Highway) by extending the Sand Dune south
 - Guide animal travel on the east side in the Plan Area around the Recreation Centre by extending the berm south about 20 metres and utilizing vegetation to further enhance the landform acting as a natural constraint to movement.
- » Improve Secondary Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridor (runs east-west between the Fenlands Recreation Centre and the CP Rail tracks)
 - Remove barriers bisecting the area, including non-permeable wildlife fences and CP Rail buildings and Railway works materials and install a wildlife permeable fence along the southern perimeter adjacent to the tracks
 - Minimize the impact of the additional parking by creating high density tree pods and screening from the Norquay Road
- Enhance both the corridors by increasing the ease of wildlife movement and permeability in the Plan Area by clearing natural and legacy debris under the forest canopy.
- » Enhance Fenlands Indian Grounds Corridor with 15 acre Norquay Conservation Area
 - Restore wildlife habitat east of the Sand Dune, approximately 15 acres or $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Plan Area north of the tracks, (the “Norquay Conservation Area”), which is the highest value habitat given it is a contiguous part of the corridor, and is situated furthest from the high human use area of the Norquay Road and Fenlands Indian Grounds Recreation Centre and contains the ecologically sensitive Whiskey Creek
 - This will be the largest parcel ever conserved and rehabilitated by a private operator in the history of the Town of Banff and be five times larger than the new 400-stall intercept lot
 - Achieve a net reduction in the disturbed area by restoring and reforesting within the preserved and rehabilitated area the approximately eight acres that are either currently occupied by the working CP Rail yard or treeless on the site of former United

Dairies farm or have been cleared by Fortis to construct their power lines. Since the new 400-stall lot will occupy about three acres (about two acres of treed area, one acre of previously disturbed lands), the restored habitat (eight acres) to removed trees (two acres) ratio will be about 4:1.

» Opportunity to further enhance the Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridors north of the tracks **outside** of the Plan Area

- For future consideration, building upon enhancements to the corridor within the Plan Area, there is the opportunity with partners for further restoration of the primary corridor outside of the Plan Area in the area between the Fenlands Recreation Centre and TransCanada Highway
- Area is currently bisected by the Norquay Road and fragmented by the Fenlands Trail Parking Lot (25 stalls)
- Removing and restoring the Fenlands Trail Parking Lot possible by relocating the 25 stalls to the new North Arrival lot

- Creating a wildlife crossing of the Norquay Road between 40 Mile Creek and the TransCanada Highway was identified as an enhancement to the Fenlands Indian Grounds Wildlife Corridor almost 25 years ago (Duke et al, 1998)
- A box culvert wildlife underpass just north of 40 Mile Creek is likely the most effective wildlife crossing structure (McGuire, 2021)
- Removing and restoring the Fenlands Trail Parking Lot and creating a wildlife underpass north of 40 Mile Creek would increase wildlife movement at corridor scale and larger regional Bow Valley corridor networks (Clevenger et al., 2021).

3 Enhance Railway Heritage and Rocky Mountain Parks Town Character for Visitor Services and Community Hub

- » Develop the area as a destination for four million visitors within an arrivals/reception/services centre that includes dining when arriving or waiting to depart
- » Transform the Train Station to supplement Banff's existing social and special event spaces
- » Celebrate rocky mountain park railway heritage and Indigenous connections
- » Contain development within the legislated growth cap on commercial development for the Town of Banff framework (Railway Lands commercial square footage less than 3% of existing commercial retail and accommodation square footage in Town)

» Heritage station

- Principal components include:
- Railway Heritage District – Historic Cultural Exhibits with Food and Beverage Destinations situated in park-like setting to celebrate historic Queen's Willows
- Partnership with CP Rail to include rescued, relocated and restored historic Rocky Mountain Park Railway buildings with an average age of 100+ years



- Includes Glacier Train Station, Field Train Station, and Field Telegraph Building, all of which are currently in locations inaccessible to the public and falling into disrepair
- Together with the Banff Station Master's House and Banff Ice-House the structures will form a five-building precinct along the south side of Railway Avenue. Each restored building with curated exhibitions and artifacts tracing CP Rail's history in the development of Banff National Park with ancillary food and beverage
- Re-imagined Frank Lloyd Wright's proposal for the Banff Train Station
- Re-created historic Banff Train Station Water Tower
 - Adjacent to historic steam engine and rolling stock
- Rolling stock and steam locomotive
 - For celebrating and interpreting the Dominion Train heritage
- Historic Ticket Booths
 - Will flank the train platform entrance for Information from Parks Canada and Banff Lake Louise Tourism
- » **Plaza and Amphitheatre Community Hub**
 - Wohengitha Amphitheatre (Wohengitha is Stoney for "story telling") is a 300-seat venue adjacent to restored CP Rail Gardens
 - Designed for everyday use and large gatherings
 - En Barhe Îchiyabi Plaza (En Barhe Îchiyabi is Stoney for "The Place of Gathering") is a sheltered square encompassing the outdoor public space
 - In front of the Train Station, which the Wohengitha Amphitheatre will animate
 - Congestion-free gathering place for festivals, concerts, aboriginal culture and special events
 - First major public amenity in Banff since Cave and Basin pool opened in 1914 (and closed in 1994)
 - Visitor Services and Cultural Institutions Pavilion complementing the character of the Station Baggage Area and facing the En Barhe Îchiyabi Plaza
 - Cultural Institutions component will include small satellite locations including the Whyte Museum and Banff Centre to showcase and promote current exhibitions on main campuses.
- » **Residential District**
 - Medium density residential serves as a transition from adjacent lower density residential neighbourhood to the south to the principal commercial district
 - Supports residential expansion to provide housing to Railway Lands workers.

Draft Banff Management Plan 2021

The ARP conforms to the zoning, Zone IV – Outdoor Recreation, and supports all 9 key strategies of the Draft Banff Management Plan 2021.

1. Conserving natural and cultural heritage

- a. Creates 15.5 acre conservation area
- b. Restores 5 iconic CP Railway Rocky Mountain Park heritage buildings

2. True-to-place experiences

- a. Creates Railway Heritage District details central role that CP Railway played in the development of the park
- b. Provides free-of-charge, welcoming, accessible public amenity areas

3. Strengthening Indigenous relations

- a. Celebrates Indigenous connections to Banff by adopting Stoney names for major ARP components
- b. Welcomes Indigenous cultural presentations by adopting Stoney names for performance venues

4. Connecting with Canadians

- a. Showcases curated exhibits and artifacts focus on key aspects the role the railway and the development of Banff National Park
- b. Creates a multi-modal transportation hub impressing visitors that a national park can serve as a “green transit laboratory” for the rest of Canada

5. Managing development

- a. Utilizes a “Lower Each Visitor Environmental Footprint” design model
- b. Creates a 15.5 acre conservation area through restoring a brownfield site

6. Regional connectivity and landscapes

- a. Creates a multi-modal transportation hub to support the public-private partnerships to provide mass transit and active transit options
- b. Enhances the Fenlands Wildlife Corridor including creating a 15.5 acre conservation area

7. Climate change and adaptive management

- a. Creates a multi-modal transportation hub that supports a variety of mass and active transit options and thereby reduce the use of personal vehicles and their emissions
- b. Serves as a platform that supports the BANFF NATIONAL PARK NET ZERO 2035 initiative’s work to transform the park into North America’s first net zero community and thereby be a national showcase on how to reduce emissions.

8. Moving people sustainably

- a. Develops a multi-modal transportation hub that does not solely rely on large-scale mass transit but supports a wide variety of transit options
- b. Creates a central visitor arrival centre that serves as a staging area for sustainable visitor and vehicle management components

9. Park communities

- a. *Creates* a multi-purpose visitor service and heritage learning centre and public open spaces to welcome tourists to the town and park
- b. *Develops* a multi-modal transportation hub to facilitate sustainable travel in the park that communicates that when in a national park you move through the destination differently.