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September 21, 2021
Superintendent
Jasper National Park
Jasper, AB
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Sent via email : pc.jaspersuperintendent-directeurjasper.pc@canada.ca

Greetings Mr. Superintendent

COPA has been notified that Parks Canada is currently conducting a management development study on the viability and the continued use of the CYJA Jasper National Park Aerodrome. We understand that this process will “review ecological, asset maintenance and aviation safety concerns for the Jasper Airstrip to determine if the asset continues to be an appropriate use in the montane grassland ecosystem.” COPA is very eager to offer you and Parks Canada our strongest endorsement that the Jasper Aerodrome continue its role as an aviation destination.

Located between Edmonton and the B.C. interior, and at the northern terminus of The Icefields Parkway and two iconic National Parks, Jasper, AB and the Jasper National Park Aerodrome are ideally positioned to offer an abundance of year-round attractions to locals and aeronautical tourists alike. Being at the eastern entrance to Canadian Rockies and serviced by a national railroad, a year-round highway and an aerodrome presents a myriad of year-round activity opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast. Jasper Park and local sites additionally provide an abundance of amenities to accommodate tourists from across the county and the globe. In this context alone, the Jasper aerodrome can provide private and recreational aviation tourists with immediate access to the Park and the abundant opportunities to experience Canada’s unspoilt splendour.

In the most recent copy of the Park’s development strategy regarding managing of the Park for the next 15(+) years, Park’s Canada says: “As the land manager in Jasper National Park, Parks Canada regulates development and land use activity in the park. In addition to protecting a large undeveloped land base, the national park includes various developments that support park operations, visitor uses and the community of Jasper. The park plays an important role in economic sustainability, and includes a national transportation corridor (the Yellowhead Trans-Canada Highway and the Canadian National Railway) and a trans-provincial oil pipeline.” COPA agrees and wishes to add that we consider this aerodrome sustainable and a very important asset to the Park and regional tourism in providing a key means of arrival to the region.

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General Aviation Economic Impact

The influence of General Aviation on the Canadian economy totals nearly \$9.3 billion, according to an economic impact study conducted by COPA in 2017 (this Study will be provided). The Province of Alberta ranks second after Ontario and ahead of British Columbia in its contribution to the economy. The Jasper Aerodrome is and can continue to be a significant contributor to the continued economic health of the Park and the region. There are several examples of airports across the country who have partnered with their region and township to develop profitable financial strategic plans which enabled the viability of the local airport and benefitted the whole community.

As detrimental as COVID has been on numerous fronts, an opportunity currently exists to ensure a global reach for Parks Canada to promote Jasper National Park, and its Aerodrome to Canadians who have been constrained in their choice of travel destinations.

Safety Consideration

Even though it is not currently open year-round, the Jasper Aerodrome is a vital part of an important safety network of General Aviation aerodromes spread throughout the foothills and the Eastern Rockies. Its contribution to this network is instrumental as its location and links are strategic. Mountain flying does not come without its challenges. Rapidly changing weather is a real hazard to any pilot flying in this part of the country. The accessibility to these small aerodromes plays a vital role in the success of flights through this region when unplanned inclement weather is encountered or inflight emergencies occur. The location of the Jasper Park Aerodrome is crucial in providing pilots and their passengers a safe place to land when faced with these perilous scenarios. Additionally, the airport provides a vital link to hospitals, is used by the STARS medical evacuation system and can also be a tactical site for Government and provincial Search and Rescue operations, and forest fire operations when required.

COPA believes that Parks Canada should continue to support its Jasper Park aerodrome and explore how the airport can maintain its relatively tiny ecological footprint while “working” for the Park and the community. As we exit COVID-19 restrictions the aerodrome should be allowed to continue its role as an access point for regional tourism. The aerodrome should continue to play an important role in the General Aviation aerodrome safety network of the Alberta foothills and the Canadian Rockies.

Sincerely,

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