



building communities together

2022 Business Plan Anahim Lake Airport (1111)

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Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region.

Department/Function Services

The Anahim Lake Airport function was established in 1975 through Bylaw No. 394 and merged with the Nimpo Lake Airstrip Service area through Bylaw No. 1195 in 1981. The taxation boundary was amended in 2013 through Bylaw No. 4840 to more accurately reflect the residents benefiting from the service. Requisition is by means of a tax applied to the assessed value of land and improvements within the specified area. The maximum requisition is the greater of \$55,000 or an amount raised by applying a tax rate of \$0.7322/\$1,000.

The airport achieved Transport Canada certification in 2010, which is necessary to maintain service by a scheduled carrier. A five-year contract to manage the airport was signed with Snooka Aircraft Services (2019-2024).

The role of the airport is significant to the community. It connects this remote area to the provincial, national and international air transportation network. This connection allows the rural location to become more attractive to industrial and commercial interests, improving its potential for economic development, and is generally the mainstay of the many tourism operators in the area.

The airport is vital for RCMP and medevac flights and during emergency events, such as forest fires and floods. The airport became the command post for the Ministry of Forests in the effort to control large interface wildfires near Hotnarko and Big Stick Lake in 2021, the Precipice Valley in 2017, the Heckman Pass of Tweedsmuir Park in 2018.

The airport is served by scheduled service to Vancouver by Pacific Coastal Airlines under an Air Carrier Airport Use Agreement (Jan 2018 – Dec 2021), which also uses Anahim Lake

as the alternate landing site when conditions limit visibility at the Bella Coola Airport. Other regular traffic includes numerous charters and recreational traffic.

The annual budget covers basic operational costs such as insurance and minor maintenance items. Because of its limited tax base, the airport relies on provincial or federal funding for any major improvements. In 2013, the Anahim Lake Airport Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 4833 was adopted to allow the charging of landing fees at the airport in order to further diversify revenue streams. The fees were updated through Bylaw No. 5204 in 2019.

The Anahim Lake Airport Commission (Bylaw No. 4739) provides local guidance to development at the airport. The commission has membership from the local community associations, cattlemen's association and the Ulkatcho First Nation.

As Electoral Area J is the only stakeholder, and the *Local Government Act* requires more than one vote, the entire Board is responsible for the governance of this service.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

2022 Goals

- 1. Goal:** Review the Airport Use Agreement with Pacific Coastal Airlines.
Rationale: The current extension agreement for airport use to facilitate scheduled service expires at the end of December 2021. The agreement defines the terms and costs for the airline and levels of service provided by the airport.
Strategy: The agreement will be reviewed by staff with support from the airport manager and renewed for an additional three-year term if there are no material changes to the existing terms.
- 2. Goal:** Conduct the required external audit of the Safety Management System.
Rationale: Periodic SMS external audits are required by Transport Canada to maintain certification of the airport.
Strategy: Consulting services will be retained to conduct the required audit. Shared consultant travel costs with airports in Williams Lake and Quesnel are expected to provide savings for the airport.
- 3. Goal:** Review the airport fees and charges bylaw.
Rationale: Aircraft landing fees have not been updated since the bylaw was adopted in 2013 and an increase is warranted to generate more revenue directly from airport users.
Strategy: A proposed updated bylaw will be brought forward to the airport commission for consideration.

- 4. Goal:** Develop a concept design and costs for a terminal building expansion.
Rationale: The current space available in the terminal building does not allow for large numbers of visitors, which is now occurring more frequently as the airport traffic increases. Visitors at the airport include passengers on scheduled flights as well as people from chartered flights for adventure tourism such as heli-skiing. The existing building also does not properly service emergency response agencies, such as the BC Wildfire Service and the RCMP during events when the airport is a base of operations.
Strategy: Consulting services will be retained to design expansion options for the building with guidance provided by the airport manager and Regional District staff. A grant application has been submitted to the federal RATI program to assist with design project costs.
- 5. Goal:** Attend runway condition reporting and airport operations training.
Rationale: Proof of training and qualifications is required by Transport Canada to maintain airport certification.
Strategy: Funding for training courses as required is included in the financial plan and will be attended as necessary. The immediate need for 2022 is for the airport manager to attend a runway condition reporting course.
- 6. Goal:** Construct a picnic spot with a gazebo and BBQ on the west side of the terminal.
Rationale: A picnic spot will increase the appeal and use of the airport property.
Strategy: Regional District staff will work with the airport manager to construct the picnic spot.
- 7. Goal:** Increase participation by all Anahim Lake Airport Commission members.
Rationale: Not all Commission members participate regularly in meetings and other airport business.
Strategy: The Airport Commission will work to encourage participation among all Commission members. Regional District staff will ensure they have correct contact information for each Commission member in order to keep members informed about meetings and other airport business.
- 8. Goal:** Perform runway crack filling, seal coating and painting as necessary.
Rationale: Such maintenance must be done regularly to protect the long-term investment in the runway, which is the airport's largest asset.
Strategy: Regional District staff will work with the airport manager to use in-house resources to complete the work.

2023

- 1. Goal:** Acquire grant funding to construct an apron expansion.

Rationale: The existing apron is not able to accommodate the growing numbers of aircraft that are landing and parking at the airport, particularly fire-fighting aircraft and backcountry recreation charter flights.

Strategy: The concept design and cost estimate for the expansion was completed in 2018 and will serve as the basis for grant applications in 2023. If grant funding is obtained, the project may be completed in fall 2024.

2024 Goal

Goal: Apply for grant funding for a runway rehabilitation project.

Rationale: An application will be submitted to the federal Airport Capital Assistance Program for this major project. The lead time on this program is 18 months to two years so the application will go in well in advance of project delivery. The runway has been well maintained, but was last paved in 2000 so will be requiring an overlay by 2025-26.

Strategy: Consultant engineering resources will be required and retained to prepare the design and cost estimates for the ACAP application.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2022 requisition is the same as the 2021 requisition. This amount is maintained through the five-year plan and is possible due to increases in other revenue streams, such as grants and fuel sales.

The 2021 requisition was increased from the 2020 requisition by 1%.

The five-year capital and major maintenance plan for the service identifies a consistent average annual expenditure of about \$20,000 which includes facility and runway improvements. This figure may vary from year to year as new projects are approved.

The service has projected capital reserve funds of \$351,000 at the end of 2021, including a contribution of \$200,000 in 2021. This significant transfer is possible due to high-volume fuel sales from the 2021 wildfire response and will facilitate major capital projects included in the business plan goals.

Fuel sales provide significant revenue for the airport; however, they are highly unpredictable based on commercial and local forest fire fighting activity. The Regional District includes a mark-up of at least \$0.30 per litre to support airport operations and improvements. Preliminary net revenue for 2022 is estimated at \$15,000 based on a long-term average for sales. A major increase in net revenues amounting to approximately \$112,000 were generated in 2021 due to supplying fuel to the fire suppression efforts in the Chilcotin.

Landing fees of \$20 for fixed wing aircraft and \$5 for helicopters on commercial, non-scheduled flights were implemented at the airport in 2013. Preliminary net revenue from landing fees for 2021 is estimated at \$7,500 due the extensive use of the airport for wildfire response activity. Based on the long-term average, net revenue in 2022 is expected to be \$2,000, but this is subject to any updates as proposed in a new fees and charges bylaw.

Significant Issues & Trends

In the challenging times of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the airport adjusted operating procedures and developed safety plans in order to continue to be open and available for aviation services and medevac flights. Many other local government and private airports were not able to maintain service.

As of August 31, airport movements in 2021 were 1,500, up almost 200% from 2020, demonstrating continued regular use and value of the airport as a base for the Ministry of Forests during large interface wildfires. Included in these figures are 13 medevac flights, down from 24 in 2020 for the same period, but still illustrating the ongoing importance of the airport to the well-being of local residents. In 2020, the airport had an annual total of 763 movements, which was well below average due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, as well as 37 medevacs.

Activity at the airport during wildfire fighting operations has been overwhelming in recent years and, while the benefit of increased fuel sales has allowed larger contributions to capital reserves, the situation also highlighted the need for more apron and terminal building space at the airport. Consideration is also being given to establishing a permanent base of operations for the BC Wildfire Service at the airport.

The first private hangar is expected to be constructed at the airport in 2022 and this has the potential to lead to further development. A basic airport master plan has been created to help guide hangar construction locations. Depending on preferred lot size, approximately eight hangar locations could be made available and this would also require construction of a taxi way to allow airside access.

The Cariboo Regional District is a signatory on the Province of BC/UBCM Climate Action Charter and has committed to continuing work towards carbon neutrality in respect of corporate operations.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

Goal: Correct the terrain slopes along the runway extension.

- Completed. The entire runway safety area was graded to meet TP312 5th edition standards.

Goal: Attend runway condition reporting and airport operations training.

- Not completed due to focusing resources on the terrain slopes project and wildfire response activity. Goal is carried forward to 2022.

Goal: Perform runway crack filling, seal coating and painting as necessary.

- Completed.

Goal: Increase participation by all Anahim Lake Airport Commission members.

- Not completed due to COVID-19 restrictions on travel and in-person meetings combined with limited ability for virtual meetings in this rural area.

Goal: Review the Airport Use Agreement with Pacific Coastal Airlines.

- Negotiations in progress as of October. It is expected that the agreement will be renewed; however, amendments to the term and value may be included due to the COVID-19 situation and effects to the travel and tourism industry.

Goal: Increase participation by all Anahim Lake Airport Commission members.

- In progress. Existing members will contact other potential members within the community and a request was sent for the Ulkatcho Band to appoint a representative.

Other Accomplishments

Another unprecedented wildfire season in the Cariboo Chilcotin for 2021 resulted in intense activity at the airport, with fuels sales exceeding even the large volumes sold in 2017. In-aircraft fueling was also requested by the BC Wildfire Service, which required long hours for several weeks through July and August from the airport manager.

The majority of effort in 2020 was spent dealing with Transport Canada and the results from an extensive audit performed in April 2019. The audit identified minor issues with runway condition compliance, but resulted in severe restrictions imposed by Transport Canada, which in turn limited service from scheduled flights, both to Anahim Lake and Bella Coola.

A long-term hangar construction and use agreement was completed with Bella Coola Heli Sports. Construction is expected in Fall 2022 and this will be the first private hangar built on airport lands.

To guide future hangar development, an airport master plan was created to identify feasible locations for construction while also allowing taxi way access and airside security for certification.