



building communities together

2025 Business Plan South Cariboo Regional Airport (1113)

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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 South Cariboo Regional Airport service was established by Supplementary Letters Patent No. 56 and became a function of the Cariboo Regional District in 1981 following successful negotiations with Block Bros Realty who originally constructed the airport to facilitate access to its subdivision development at the 108 Mile Ranch.

The airport has the longest runway (5293 feet) in the South Cariboo and is the main access point to the area for large commercial aircraft as well as medevac, RCMP and forest fire surveillance and suppression flights. A five-year contract (June 2023-2028) to manage the airport is in place with Donahue Airfield Services.

The airport offers both avgas and jet fuel for sale year-round. Currently six private hangars and four aircraft shelters are occupied by local pilots and companies on the property.

In 2013, a new self-serve fueling system was installed and accepts Visa and MasterCard. Since 2010, the airport offers GPS-based approach and departure procedures, which are published in the Restricted Canadian Air Pilot manual due to higher clearance standards imposed by Transport Canada in 2021, which the runway is unable to comply with due to off site obstacles.

Electoral Areas G, H, and L and the District of 100 Mile House participate in this service, which is funded by means of a tax applied to the assessed value of land and improvements within the sub-regional service area. The maximum requisition is \$0.312/\$1,000.

Directors for Electoral Areas G, H, and L and District of 100 Mile House are responsible for the governance of this service and act, along with up to four appointed members, as the South Cariboo Regional Airport Commission, which was established to guide airport development and operations.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

2025 Goals

- 1. Goal:** Complete a master plan for airport development east of the runway.
Rationale: Development of the west side of the airport along Telqua Drive is limited by the amount of land available as well as road access. If the airport property had a direct connection to Highway 97 and utility services available on the east side of the runway, it would enable the Regional District to enter long term land agreements with major users like the Cariboo Fire Centre, and other private hangar developments.
Strategy: Design and engineering consulting services will be retained as necessary to analyze the potential options and confirm a concept plan to guide future development.
- 2. Goal:** Install solar panels on the roof of the Regional District hangar and airport office building.
Rationale: Solar panel technology has matured and is demonstrating good return on the capital investment in addition to the energy savings received. These savings in electrical costs would reduce the operating expenses of the airport buildings.
Strategy: The project will be supervised by the airport manager with support from Regional District staff. Community Works Funding will be allocated in the financial plan for completion of the project.
- 3. Goal:** Review the Obstacle Limitation Surface for the runway.
Rationale: Changes by Transport Canada to the minimum standards for the OLS resulted in the airport approach procedures being moved from the Canadian Airport Pilot (CAP) to the Restricted CAP. This is detrimental to private aircraft that use GPS procedures and can't access the RCAP.
Strategy: The critical issue with the OLS is the height of power poles across Highway 97 and options for relocation may be limited. If the power poles are relocated, numerous trees will also require removal to allow the runway to meet the minimum standard.
- 4. Goal:** Installation of the ADBS pilot information system.
Rationale: The Regional District has entered an agreement with the Canadian In-Flight Information Broadcasting Association to host a transmitter at the airport.

The automated transmitter will deliver weather radar and aircraft location information to pilots equipped with the ADSB system. The transmitter is part of a growing network across Canada to support better in-flight information for aircraft safety.

Strategy: The licence agreement with the CIFIBA was executed in 2024 and equipment should arrive for install in 2025. The cost of the equipment and ongoing subscription fees are accounted for in the airport service financial plan.

5. **Goal:** Upgrade sections of wildlife fencing at several locations on the airport.
Rationale: The existing fence is in poor condition with broken and loose posts in several locations. The eight-foot fence is necessary to discourage wildlife from entering the runway area and potentially creating aircraft hazards.
Strategy: Funding for this work is included in the airport financial plan; however if it is determined that full length fence replacement is required, the upgrades will cease and a much bigger project will be planned for future years.
6. **Goal:** Address the annual flooding into the airport office reception area.
Rationale: Periodic water ingress from the front door area to the reception space is damaging the flooring and needs to be mitigated before the flooring is replaced.
Strategy: Increased maintenance funding is included in the financial plan to support this goal; however if major capital works are deemed necessary they will be planned for future years.

2026 Goal

1. **Goal:** Pursue grant funding for the fuel system relocation project.
Rationale: The fuel system is a key piece of airport infrastructure and the underground tanks are now more than 30 years old, having been installed in 1990. The tanks are inspected regularly; however, planning for their eventual replacement is appropriate. A detailed design and cost estimate was completed to assist with applications for grant funding.
Strategy: Grant applications based on the completed design will be submitted as opportunities arise. Matching funding for grants will be identified in the financial plan as appropriate.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2025 requisition is the same as the 2024 requisition.

The 2024 requisition was increased by 135% from the 2023 requisition for a total of \$971,452. This amount is required to account for the costs of short-term borrowing and ongoing allocations to capital reserves. No additional increase is planned for years 2026-2029.

The requisition was also increased by 10% per year from 2014 until 2018. The South Cariboo Regional Airport Commission recommended these increases to accommodate a larger transfer to capital reserves to help rebuild the fund following a draw for the purchase of land and in anticipation of major future infrastructure replacement costs.

The long-term capital plan, completed in 2012 by EBA Engineering Consultants, identifies more than \$3.4 million in capital investments over the next 5-15 years for the airport.

Currently, the average annual capital and major repair expenditure planned for the airport is \$30,000-\$45,000 plus \$15,000-\$20,000 for runway maintenance. Major projects are undertaken by financial planning several years in advance and supported by grant funding where possible.

The service has projected capital reserve funds of about \$1.13 million at the end of 2024. Transfers out of reserves were not required to facilitate the airside rehabilitation project, which was completed with support from significant infrastructure grant funding.

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 \$0.30 per litre to support airport operations and improvements. Preliminary net revenue for 2024 is estimated at \$21,000 based on a long-term average of 75,000 litres for annual sales. This amount is also included in the budget forecast for 2025. This additional revenue supports capital works at the airport and helps manage short-term requisition increases.

Revenue from landing and tie-down fees is retained by the airport manager under the renewed management and operations contract signed in 2023.

Private hangar development at the airport, through Use and Occupancy agreements, generates revenues of \$12,489, but there is only limited potential to increase significantly beyond the current level unless new property is made available at the site.

Significant Issues & Trends

The critical business plan goal for the airport and the Regional District was achieved with completion of the airside rehabilitation project. The scope of the asphalt overlay also included a full replacement of the airside electrical system, upgrades to the runway lighting and replacing the VASI navigational lighting with a PAPI system. All lighting was upgraded to LED resulting in significant energy savings. These capital projects, along with the AWOS replacement, which occurred in 2018, were identified in a long-term capital plan completed in 2012 by EBA Engineering Consultants. Completing these works

addresses the majority of priority capital projects identified by EBA and ensures the long-term viability of airport infrastructure.

Demand for private hangar space has returned following several low-interest years, probably due to broad economic issues at all levels. As such, there is the potential for a renewed emphasis on preparing space for hangars. Hail damage to aircraft led to construction of a four-bay private sunshade structure and it is expected that interest in this approach to protecting aircraft will expand.

As of August 31, airport movements in 2024 totaled 1436, an increase of approximately 90% from 2023 due mostly to the runway closure in 2023 for the airside rehabilitation project. Included in these figures for 2024 are 27 medevac flights, an increase of 11 medevacs for the same period from 2023, still illustrating the ongoing importance of the airport to the well-being of local residents. In 2023, the airport had a total of 839 movements; 19 of these were medevacs.

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: Fuel system redesign and cost estimate.

- Completed. Final plans are expected in November.

Goal: Determine the feasibility of installing solar panels on the roof of the Regional District hangar and airport office building.

- Completed. A solar array design and cost estimate was completed and is included as a goal for installation in 2025.

Goal: Review the Obstacle Limitation Surface for the runway.

- Not completed. Project was deferred in favour of other priorities.

Goal: Prepare locations and access for future private hangars.

- Completed. An aircraft hangar Use and Occupancy Agreement was entered into with a private developer for a new 10 T-hangar complex.

Other Accomplishments:

The airport manager hosted two fly-in events in 2024; however, both were challenged for attendance due to weather.

The BC Wildfire Service was once again stationed at the airport for several weeks in July in response to local wildfires.

The final pieces of the airside rehabilitation project were completed with runway painting and lighting installed. An opening photo-op event was held in the spring to recognize the project.

Due to the new runway surface, medivac traffic regularly included jet aircraft for the first time in many years.