



building communities together

2025 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.

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 (2024-2029).

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 Anahim Peak in 2023, Hotnarko and Big Stick Lake in 2021, the Precipice Valley in 2017, and 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 (October 2022-2025), 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 grant 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 to further diversify revenue streams. The fees were updated through Bylaw No. 5402 in 2022.

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.

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.

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

2025 Goals

- 1. Goal:** Undertake an updated Obstacle Limitation Surface survey for the airport and surrounding terrain.
Rationale: An updated OLS survey is required every five years by Transport Canada to maintain airport certification.
Strategy: A qualified consultant will be retained to conduct the survey to the necessary standards.
- 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 will be sought to provide savings for the airport.
- 3. Goal:** Review the Air Carrier Airport Use Agreement with Pacific Coastal Airlines.
Rationale: The current three-year contract expires in December 2025 and renewal or extension is required to maintain scheduled flight services.
Strategy: A renewal agreement will be negotiated by Regional District staff with support from the airport manager and brought forward to the Anahim Lake Airport Commission for consideration.

4. **Goal:** Apply for 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 2025. If grant funding is obtained, the project may be completed in 2026.
5. **Goal:** Construct a picnic spot with a gazebo and BBQ on the west side of the new terminal building expansion.
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 and consider external funding opportunities, such as grants or advertising.

2026 Goal

4. **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 be submitted well in advance of project delivery. The runway has been well maintained but was last paved in 2000 so will benefit from an overlay by 2027-28. A detailed design for the addition of runway lights will be included in the project scope.
Strategy: Consultant engineering resources will be required and retained to prepare the design and cost estimates for the ACAP application.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2025 requisition is increased by 2% from the 2024 requisition amounting to \$1069, which is required to deal with increasing contract management costs as well as maintenance at the airport, such as filling runway cracks and brushing.

The 2024 requisition was the same as the 2023 requisition.

This amount is also increased by 2% per year from 2026-2029 through the five-year plan. This minor inflationary increase is made possible due to other additional revenue streams, such as grants, landing fees and fuel sales.

The five-year capital and major maintenance plan for the service identifies a consistent average annual expenditure of about \$30,000 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 \$400,000 at the end of 2024, including a contribution of \$10,000 in 2024. A significant transfer of \$100,000 was possible in 2021 due to high-volume fuel sales from the 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 flights 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 2025 is estimated at \$21,000 based on a long-term average for sales. Net revenues amounting to approximately \$110,000 were generated in 2023 due to supplying fuel to the wildfire suppression efforts in the Chilcotin.

Landing fees of \$30 for fixed wing aircraft and \$15 for helicopters on commercial, non-scheduled flights were implemented at the airport in 2022. Preliminary net revenue from landing fees for 2024 is estimated at \$14,000. Based on the long-term average, net revenue in 2025 is expected to be \$4,500, based on the new fees and charges bylaw.

Significant Issues & Trends

As of August 31, airport movements in 2024 were 934, down substantially from 2023 reflecting a difference in activity during interface wildfires in 2023. Included in these movement figures are 13 medevac flights, down slightly from 15 in 2023 for the same period, illustrating the ongoing importance of the airport to the well-being of residents.

In 2023, the airport had an annual total of 2544 movements as well as 21 total 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 2025 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: Complete the terminal building expansion project.

- Completed. The expansion project doubled the size of the passenger waiting area and reached substantial completion in October.

Goal: Construct a picnic spot with a gazebo and BBQ on the west side of the terminal.

- Not completed. Project was deferred in favour of other priorities such as fencing required for the terminal building expansion.

Goal: Review the Airport Management and Operations contract.

- Completed. A renewal contract with Snooka Aircraft Services was approved by the airport commission in October.

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Goal: Acquire grant funding to construct an apron expansion.

- Not completed. An Airport Capital Assistance Program (ACAP) application was submitted, but federal program advisors were not supportive of the project. Goal is carried forward as a priority for other grant opportunities.

Other Accomplishments

Engagement is ongoing with the Ulkatcho First Nation regarding operational support from the First Nation to help ensure the long-term viability of the airport.

Staff met with the First Nations Health Authority regarding medivac services at the airport and potential benefits and challenges of installing runway lighting to enable night movements.

Several new members on the Anahim Lake Airport Commission participated in the fall meeting in 2024 and these new perspectives and interest were valuable for gathering community input into airport services.