building communities together

2026 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 along the Beef Trail Road and Nimpo Lake areas in 2025, near Anahim Peak in 2023, Hotnarko and Big Stick Lake in 2021, the Heckman Pass of Tweedsmuir Park in 2018 and the Precipice Valley in 2017.

The airport is served by scheduled service to Vancouver by Pacific Coastal Airlines under an Air Carrier Airport Use Agreement (October 2025-2029), 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

2026 Goals

1. **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 2026. If grant funding is obtained, the project may be completed in 2027.

2. **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. If the structure is located appropriately, the installation of solar panels on the roof may be included.
   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. If solar panels are part of the project, Regional District Community Works Funds will be allocated.

3. **Goal:** Purchase additional fuel storage and pump tank.

Rationale: Increasing the airside storage capacity for aviation fuel will allow the airport to better support the BC Wildfire Service during major events, such as took place in September 2025. The remote location of Anahim Lake can lead to challenges obtaining fuel during extreme events and being able to hold more on site will be an important advantage.
Strategy: Purchase will be coordinated by the airport manager with support from Regional District staff. Funding is allocated for the purpose in the function financial plan.

4. **Goal:** Update the airport Fees and Charges bylaw to allow for a per litre levy on fuel bowser sales.
Rationale: During major wildfire response events, heavy aircraft may bring their own fuel bowser support onto the airport due to the capacity of the existing fuel system and priority for other aircraft. By introducing a per litre levy on the bowser supply to aircraft, the airport will still generate important revenue from these sales similar to if they were pumped directly from our own system.
Strategy: The airport commission approved this goal at its meeting in October 2025 and an updated bylaw will be brought forward to the Regional District Board in 2026.

2027 Goal

1. **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. Including the addition of runway lights in the scope of project will also be considered.

2028 Goal

1. **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.

2030 Goal

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.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2026 requisition is the same as the 2025 requisition.

The 2025 requisition was increased by 2% from the 2024 requisition.

Requisition is also not increased from 2027-2030 through the five-year plan. No increase is required 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 $420,000 at the end of 2025, including a contribution of $10,000 in 2025. A significant transfer of $100,000 is planned and made possible in 2026 due to high-volume fuel sales from the 2025 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 2026 is estimated at $21,000 based on a long-term average for sales. Net revenues amounting to approximately $99,300 generated in 2025 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 2025 is estimated at $12,000. From the long-term average, net revenue in 2026 is expected to be $4,500, based on the new fees and charges bylaw.

Significant Issues & Trends

As of September 30, airport movements in 2025 were 2058, up substantially from 2024 reflecting a difference in activity during interface wildfires. Included in these movement figures are 28 medevac flights, up from 15 in 2024 for the same period, illustrating the ongoing importance of the airport to the well-being of residents.

In 2024, the airport had an annual total of 1225 movements as well as 26 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 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: Undertake an updated Obstacle Limitation Surface survey for the airport and surrounding terrain.

- Completed. Updated survey was free of obstacles and sent to NavCanada to confirm instrument procedures.

Goal: Conduct the required external audit of the Safety Management System.

- Completed. Only minor findings were identified and have been resolved.

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

- Completed. A four-year renewal agreement was executed to align with the Snooka Aircraft Services management contract.
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Goal: Apply for grant funding to construct an apron expansion.

- Not completed. Goal is included as a priority for 2026.

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

- Not completed. Challenges with final deficiencies for the terminal building expansion project required this to be deferred until 2026.

Other Accomplishments

The airport received an audit inspection for its Wildlife Management Plan from Transport Canada in April. Several minor findings were addressed through Corrective Actions Plans as required.

There occurred a major BC Wildfire Service activation at the airport from August 30 to September 23, which included the airport and surrounding community being under an evacuation order. During this period the airport sold a monthly record of 170,000 litres of fuel and had an occupancy agreement with BCWS for a bowser and office space.

During the BCWS activation, night operations were conducted and through this staff has since confirmed that night operations are possible unless specifically excluded at the airport through notification in the CFS. This clarifies the ability of medivac flights to utilize the airport at all times rather than just daytime only as is the practice now.

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.