

Smithers Regional Airport Master Plan



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We acknowledge that the Smithers Regional Airport is located on the traditional, unceded territory of the Wet'suwet'en people, whose ancestors have stewarded this land since time immemorial. We recognize the deep history of the Wet'suwet'en Nation in this region and are committed to learning from their stories and building respectful relationships and taking actions to work towards Indigenous reconciliation.

Executive Summary

This Master Plan has been adopted to provide a guide for future development at the airport and to ensure that the airport infrastructure continues to meet the needs of a certified airport and maintains its excellent safety record and service to the public.

It is recognized that the land uses are aspirational. Challenges exist that must be overcome to achieve this long-range plan.

However, with resource expansion in the area, the future is bright both for the airport and the Town of Smithers (the Town).

The Smithers Regional Airport is owned and operated by the Town, regulated by federal jurisdiction (as all airports are), provincial jurisdiction for environment and transportation, and municipal jurisdiction for land use zoning and long-range policy. Economic development is a critical area of concern for the Town, and the airport poses an opportunity as an economic engine to attract and service industry, and subsequently residential growth.

This Master Plan considers future uses for the airport that would generate revenue and a tax base, as well as employment and expanded tourism opportunities.



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1. Introduction

1.1. Role of the Regional Airport

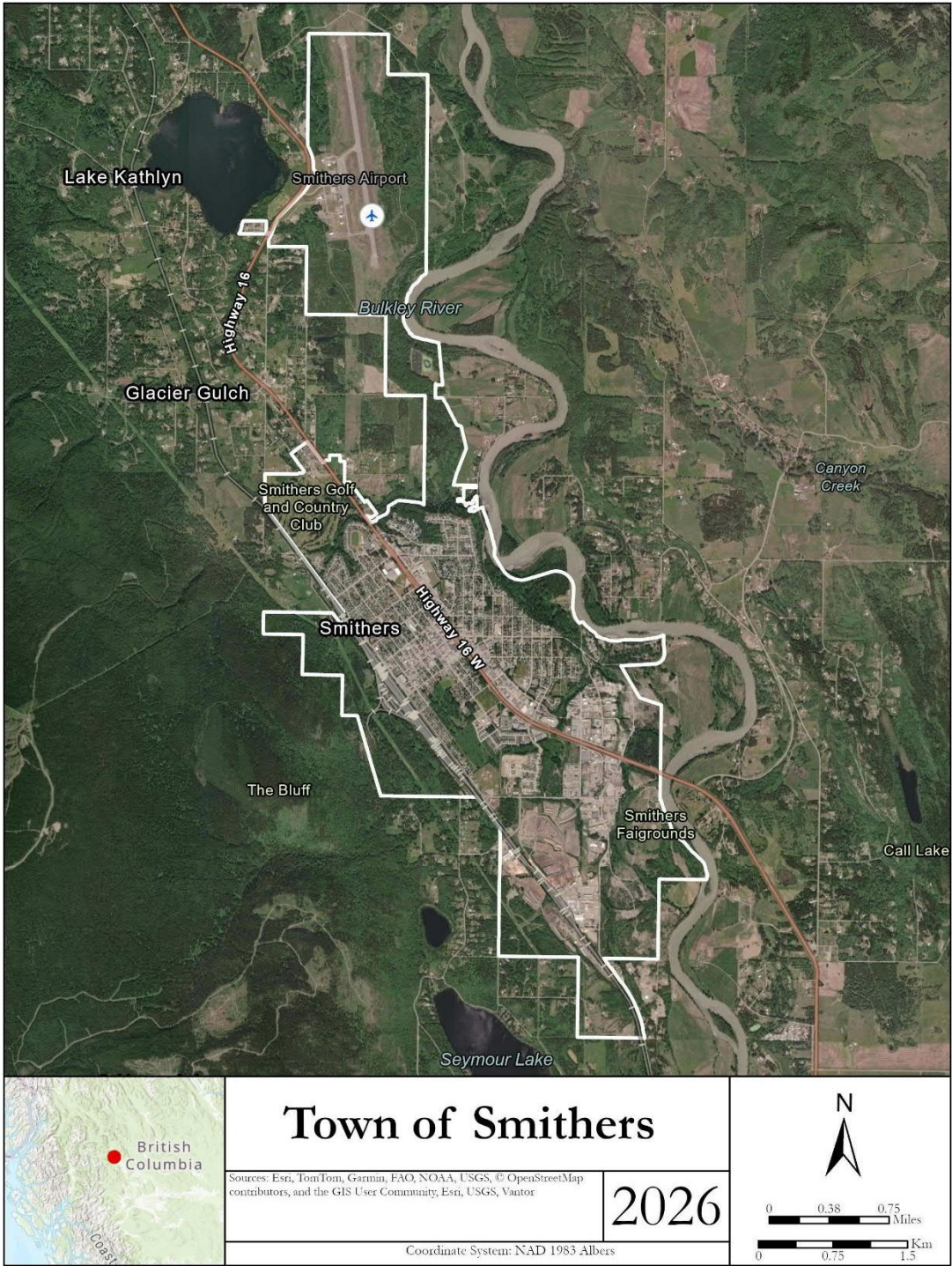
The Smithers Regional Airport was built in its current location in 1942 by the Department of National Defence. This was one of several critical northern airports constructed during World War II. Seen as a strategic northern location, the airport continued in operation and was transferred to Transport Canada post war. As part of the National Airports Policy, the airport was then transferred to the Town in the late 1990s. **Figure 1** illustrates the location of the Airport in relation to the downtown area of Smithers.

A regional airport's role is to connect smaller communities to the broader aviation network, acting as a vital link for economic growth, essential services (like healthcare and aerial firefighting), tourism, and social cohesion. Airports support local jobs, attract business, and provide crucial access particularly for remote areas. Regional airports, such as the Smithers Regional Airport, provide the opportunity to enhance a region's resilience by ensuring continued access to goods, services, and people, even during disruptions.

The Smithers Regional Airport is home to many local businesses, mostly aviation-related, but has also provided an opportunity for the Town to construct their new Fire Training Centre. Significant land remains for economic development, while still protecting land for aviation infrastructure expansion.



Figure 1. Town of Smithers Boundary



1.2. Airports “101”

Airports are unique entities. While they fall under federal jurisdiction, they can, if owned and operated by a local municipality, fall within the municipal policies and bylaws, as well as the Federal Regulations.

Transport Canada has prepared a document, TP1247, Land Use in the Vicinity of Airports¹ that provides an excellent summary of how airports and communities interact.

The critical purpose of TP1247 is to ensure that regulators, municipalities, developers, and residents understand the need to protect the safe and continued operation of the airport. This means not developing or approving for development, any use that may negatively impact the future operations of the airport.

TP1247 also addresses the impact that airports have on the surrounding lands, for example, noise.

The critical areas for airports are the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces. This includes lands around the airport, and the take-off and approach areas for the runways.

¹ <https://tc.canada.ca/en/aviation/publications/aviation-land-use-vicinity-aerodromes-tp-1247>

Figure 2 and **Figure 3** provide illustrations of these areas. This 3D space considers any development that may penetrate any of these areas, including trees, buildings, and structures (including communication towers) or topography (hills and mountains). Each airport is unique and must be assessed for the type of airport certification, the runway length, and the surrounding areas.

There are five specific hazards for airports.

1. Birds and Wildlife;
2. Structures or Natural Features that exceed the height for that airport;
3. Exhaust Plumes (smoke or steam visible or invisible);
4. Solar Array Installations; and
5. Any use that may cause electronic interference.

The Smithers Regional Airport Management Team and the Town continually monitor developments, wildlife, and anything that could impact the safe and continued operation of the airport.

Figure 2. Obstacle Limitation Surfaces – Diagram 1

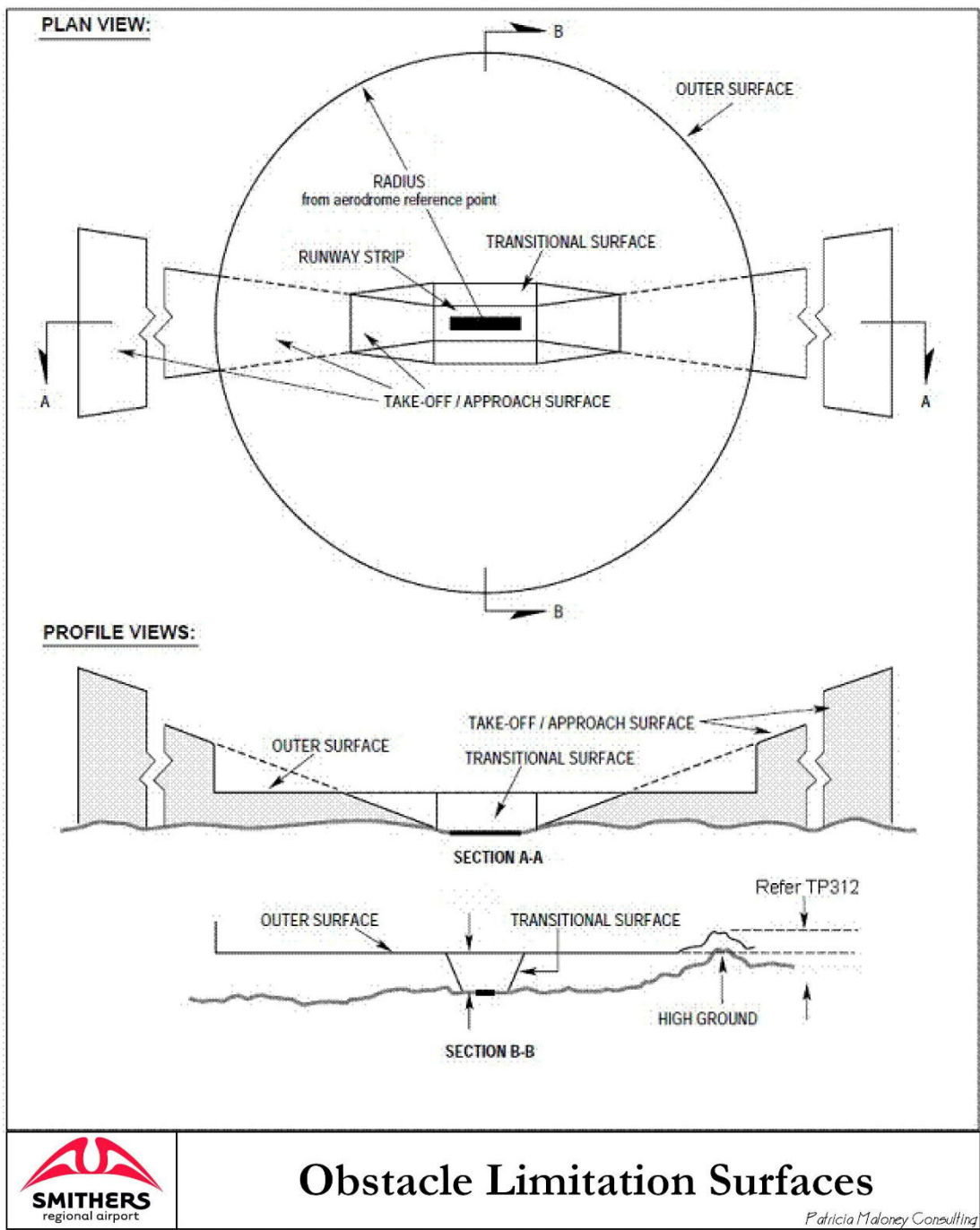
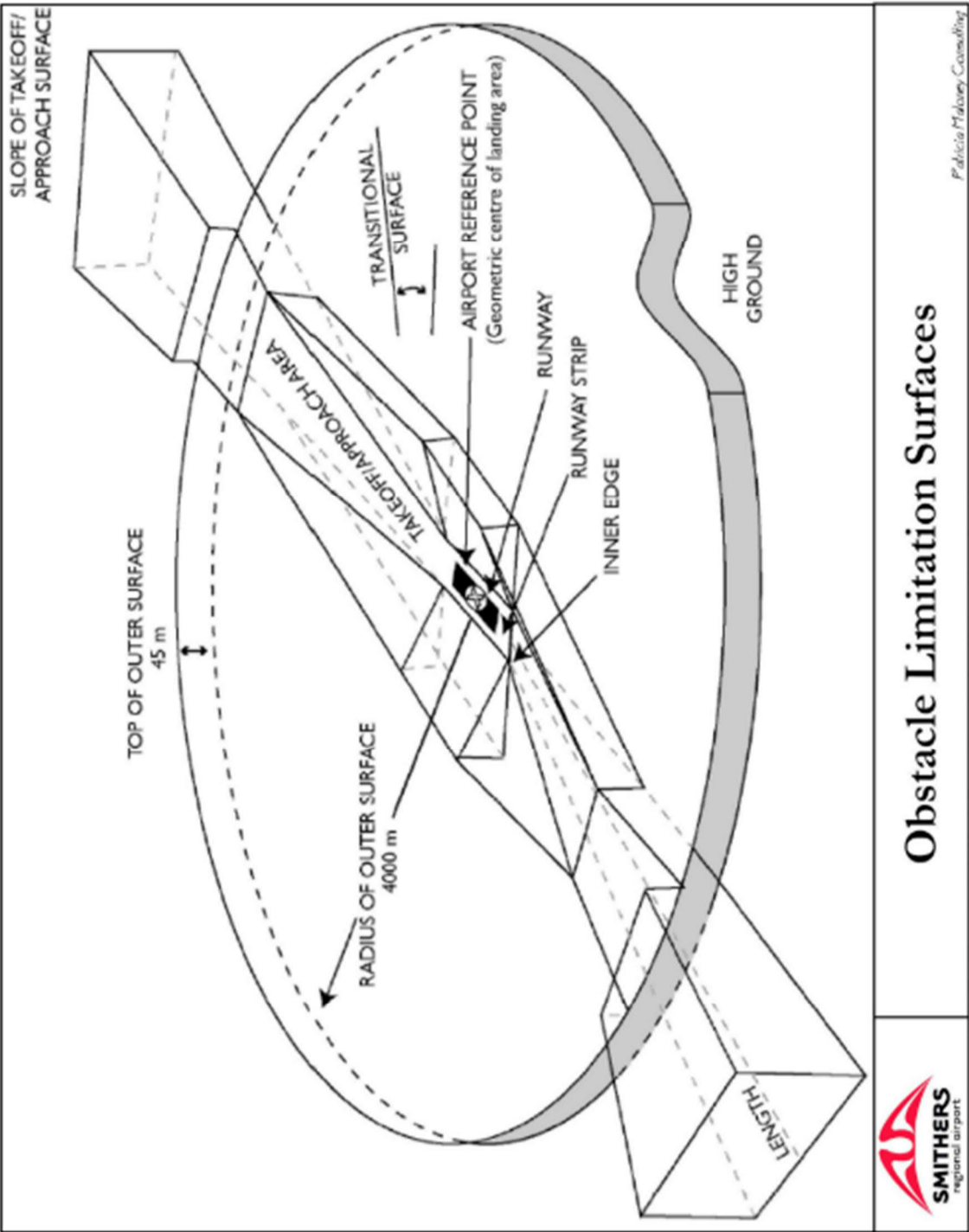


Figure 3. Obstacle Limitation Surfaces – Diagram 2



1.3. Regional Economy

The Town is located in the Regional District of Bulkley – Nechako in northern British Columbia (BC). The Town serves as the primary economic, service and transportation hub for the region. The regional economy is characterized by a high degree of diversification, anchoring itself in resource extraction, while expanding into professional services and technology, as well as balancing the tourism and lifestyle benefits of the beautiful natural environment.

The Key Economic Sectors:

- **Mining & Exploration:** Smithers is a nationally recognized hub for the exploration industry. The sector saw a 177% five-year growth rate as of 2025. In 2022, approximately \$95 million was spent in Smithers to support BC mining operations.
- **Forestry:** Historically the Town's backbone, it remains a critical employer, with Pacific Inland Resources (West Fraser) as a key anchor employing roughly 220 people.
- **Retail & Services:** As a regional service centre, Smithers supports a trade area of 25,000 residents and a broader regional market of over 300,000. Retail trade and healthcare are the largest employment sectors.
- **Tourism:** Centred on outdoor recreation (skiing at Hudson Bay Mountain, steelhead fishing), tourism is a growing sector with significant crossover into the "creative" and tech-based industries.

Smithers is in a position to attract new residents with a household income equivalent to the provincial average and house prices 40 to 50% lower than the provincial average. Smithers is a younger demographic than the average urban centre in the province, with a higher education level than the provincial average.



The Town of Smithers Economic Development Plan 2025-2030 identifies several key opportunities for expansion:

- **Technology & Creative Industries:** These sectors saw 28% and 30% growth, respectively, between 2013 and 2023.
- **Airport Development:** The Smithers Regional Airport is zoned for industrial development, and serves as a vital link for moving commodities and personnel.
- **Value-Added Manufacturing:** Encouraging local food and beverage production, and industrial services for the transportation sector.

The strategic priorities identified in the 2025-2030 report include:

1. **Industrial Land Expansion:** Addressing the critical need for more non-residential land to support mining and transportation services.
2. **Housing Diversification:** Promoting multi-family and affordable housing options to attract and retain a skilled workforce.
3. **Brand Modernization:** In 2025, the Town launched a refreshed visual identity to better attract investment and tourism.

1.4. Business Plan for the Regional Airport

The Business Plan for the Smithers Regional Airport mirrors the Town's economic strategy. Developing airport lands, both airside and groundside, are critical for the success of the airport. Revenue generation is key to the continued operation of the airport. And the airport is critical for the success of the Town. This symbiotic relationship is made more seamless by the fact that the airport is owned by the Town, and policies and bylaws can be adapted to be advantageous for the airport to meet their shared goals.

2. Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the Master Plan is to update the 2009 Plan, provide guidance for the development of airport land, and direction for the continued safe and efficient operation of the airport. The resilient and ongoing financially viable operation of the airport is critical to the Town and the region.

2.1. Vision

The vision for the Smithers Regional Airport is:

In 2045, Smithers Regional Airport is the airport of choice to support industry, health services, tourism, and overall quality of life for residents, that is operated in a safe and efficient manner, with sustainable development on the airport lands, leading to a financially viable airport for a growing community.

2.2. Goals

The Master Plan provides several goals for the ongoing operation and development of airport lands. These goals, listed below, will guide the future of the airport to achieve the vision:

Goal 1 – To establish clear direction for the continued safe operation of the airport.

Goal 2 – To create a long-range plan for the development of the airport.

Goal 3 – To develop a strategy to increase revenue generation at the airport.

Goal 4 – To market the airport as a dependable and efficient regional airport.

3. Engagement and Community Consultation

The goal of this engagement process was to understand the perspectives of community members and all parties connected to the airport, including their travel habits, interests and usage, access to airport services, and ideas for future development of the available airport lands. The process was designed to be open, inclusive, and respectful, ensuring that all voices could meaningfully contribute to the airport's long-term vision.

The input gathered through this process will guide the 2026 Airport Master Plan for the Smithers Regional Airport, helping to ensure the policies and direction aligns with community values and regional priorities, along with sustainable future development of the Smithers Regional Airport.

The consultant team visited the Town and held various engagements with airport tenants. Although participation numbers were modest, the discussions were thoughtful and provided meaningful insights from a diverse range of perspectives. Community and industry surveys were also initiated. The feedback collected through meetings with Tenants, Council, Town Staff and the Airport Manager, and discussions with the stakeholders/businesses are summarized in a "What We Heard" report to support the ongoing Airport Master Plan work.

Over the months of October and November 2025, several engagement sessions were held, an online survey was posted for the community, industry and many one-on-one interviews were held with key stakeholders. Further discussions were held with individual stakeholders in January 2026, including Air Canada and BC Wildfire Services.

The full What We Heard report is included as **Appendix A** of this Master Plan.

The critical highlights of the engagement with the community, industry and tenants of the airport were:

- **Airport's Strategic Importance** – The airport is critical to the community. Municipal leadership and the community stressed the importance of the airport to the region for economic, medical and general quality of life. The airport will remain a seasonal base for BC Wildfire Services and with climate change, the airport should be prepared for wildfire events that will potentially increase air traffic levels.
- **Air Service Reliability** – Community, industry and tenants were unanimous in deploring the reduced level of commercial flight service that Smithers is receiving. More flights are required, and according to a discussion with key offices within Air Canada in January 2026, there is potential to further increase service level at Smithers. The ongoing pilot shortage and crew worktime limitations continue to be a constraint that may impact service until staffing levels rise to meet current and future demands.
- **Weather dependability** – There is the community perception that Smithers loses more flights to inclement weather than competing airports. This appears inaccurate and should be part of the marketing information.

- **Luggage and Equipment** – Many respondents noted that the airline does not put the passenger's luggage and equipment on the same flight, causing delays for holiday events such as skiing and fishing. The rationale for this is unclear.
- **Competitiveness** – Many respondents noted that the cost of flying commercial to and from Smithers was higher than Terrace. Local tourism operators are recommending their clients and visitors fly in and out of Terrace.
- **Airport Lands, Leasing and Sale** – Industry and tenants indicated that more land needs to be available for leasing, leases need to be long and the opportunity to purchase the land should be available.
- **Development Constraints** – Soil contamination has been identified in two ways. The first is the naturally occurring levels of arsenic in all soils in the valley. The second is the contamination of airport lands from previous development. These are considered constraints to development. The Town and provincial agencies are seeking remedies.
- **Workforce Housing** – Housing for airport-related employees is difficult to find.
- **Community Liveability** – The Town needs to market the community better and demonstrate the benefits to locating in Smithers.
- **Economic and Industry versus Environmental and Recreation** – Participants noted the disparity between the two economic sectors of industry and recreation. The airport needs to demonstrate it can cater to both.
- **Operational, Infrastructure and Regulatory Considerations** – The airport currently operates efficiently and the runway is sufficient for the aircraft using the airport. Apron/taxiway expansion was identified as a potential future project.
- **Terminal Building Efficiencies** – The comments portion of the survey revealed noteworthy observations regarding baggage handling flow and accessibility considerations that could improve customer experience.

It was evident from the engagement that the airport is operated in a safe and efficient manner, and that people would like to use the airport more.

4. Aviation Activity and Trend Analysis

This section looks at the past aviation and passenger activity at the Smithers Regional Airport, and addresses some of the trends in aviation.

4.1. Historic Aviation Activity

The nature of traffic at Smithers since the mid 1990s has addressed a growing need for passenger service with aircraft as large as the B737. In more recent years, passenger service continues to be addressed predominantly by Dash 8/Q400. Central Mountain Air (CMA) ceased passenger service operations in 2023, leaving Air Canada as the only scheduled air service at Smithers. In the peak season, Air Canada operates two flights per day, reduced to one flight during the winter months.

The airport continues to be served by other operators (charter) such as Carson Air under BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) for medical evacuation flights, flying mainly the Beech King Air 360. Charters currently provide service to the mining community, operating within the region and accessing airstrips at the mine sites. Future charter operations plan to use Dease Lake as their base, with Smithers as a weather alternate. Other general aviation aircraft (including a variety of executive jets, courier and just in time delivery) continue to use the airport.

CMA, headquartered at Smithers for many years, leases the largest hangar on the airport, now used principally for maintenance. With CMA no longer providing scheduled commercial passenger service to/from Smithers and potentially reducing their charter service for the mining industry, it is unclear what plans they may have for continued operation at Smithers.

At the peak of air service in Smithers, there were four commercial carriers that serviced the Smithers Regional Airport: Air Canada Jazz, Hawk Air, CMA and Northern Thunderbird Air, utilizing Dash 8 and Beechcraft 1900 aircraft. There were also several other operators, including: Highland Helicopters, Alpine Lakes Air, Alcan Air, Sustut Air and Interior Helicopters. While Sustut, Highland and Northern Thunderbird Air are no longer operational, Alpine Lakes Air, Silver King Helicopters, Tsayta Air, Aberdeen Helicopters and Mustang Helicopters continue to run noteworthy operations at Smithers.

BC Wildfire Service operates a range of aircraft from Smithers as fire retardant bombers and more recently the Air Tractor 802. As a seasonal operations deployment base, the air fleet includes the Lockheed Electra (L-188), as well as the AVRO RJ85 and Dash 8/Q400, as retardant bombers, plus the Turbo Commander 690, as a bird dog aircraft. It also supports the wildfire crews requiring air transportation into fire zones. The BC Wildfire Service uses both local and external helicopter companies to support its efforts at the Smithers Regional Airport.

Canadian Forces search and rescue operations use the CH-149 Cormorant Helicopter and CC-130 Hercules; with the CC-295 Kingfisher, now operational, it replaces the CC-130 as an occasional visitor at Smithers.

Over the past several years, helicopter operators increased in both numbers and individual size based on the demand to support both industrial and recreational activity.



There are a handful of fixed wing general aviation operators that provide air services, as well as aircraft maintenance for local and visiting aircraft.

The airport is home to a limited number of private aircraft owners, wherein some have hangars and some tied down on a grass area west of Taxiway Bravo.

The airport offers aviation services including fuel, de-icing, aircraft maintenance, aircraft

marshalling, and the presence of an on-site Flight Service Station (FSS) run by NAV CANADA. The FSS provides flight information services to airborne aircraft, such as traffic information, aerodrome information (including relevant weather) and ground control for vehicles. The FSS operation is staffed for up to 16 hours daily depending upon the season; the unit is classed as a “remote” operation by NAV CANADA.

4.2. Passenger Movements

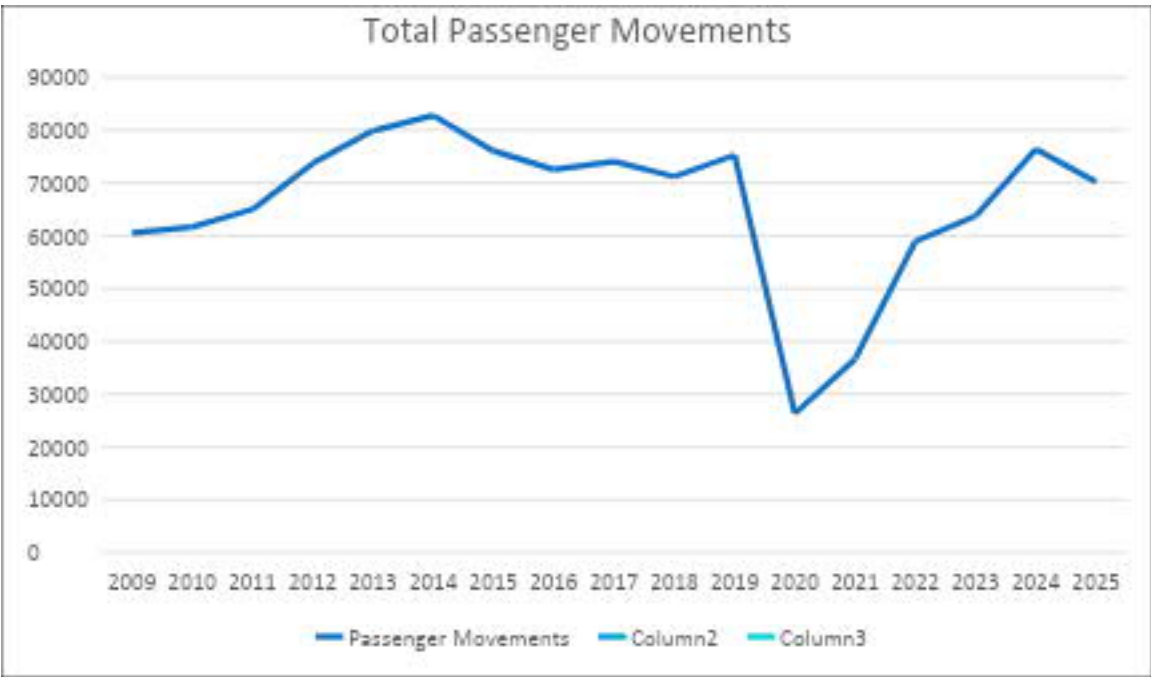
Regional airports are critical to the sustainability of remote communities, and Smithers is no exception.

Smithers primarily caters to two types of passengers. The first are the commercial passengers travelling on airlines. These passengers are required to be processed and access the aircraft through a secured departure lounge, after screening by Canadian Air Transport Security Authority. The second type of passengers are those who travel via charter or other itinerant aircraft. These passengers are not required to use the terminal building and secured areas. They can access directly from the apron and private hangars.

Historical commercial passenger movements demonstrate growth over many years, and when the COVID pandemic hit, there was a significant drop in all travel. Commercial airlines drastically reduced their flights and airlines reassessed their routes. It has taken many years for the travelling public to regain confidence to fly, and for airlines to restructure and recommence regular flights.

Figure 4 illustrates the passenger volumes for Smithers Regional Airport from 2009 to 2024.

Figure 4. Smithers Regional Airport Passenger Volumes



4.3. Aircraft Movements

As with passengers, the COVID pandemic impacted the aircraft movements at the Smithers Regional Airport. **Figure 5** illustrates that aircraft movements returned to pre-pandemic numbers by the end of 2024.

A recent study commissioned by Canadian Airports Council; “Keeping Canada Connected: The Challenge of Regional Air Service and Federal Policy” (<https://airportscouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-CACConnectivityReport-Summary.pdf>) addresses the challenges of Canadian regional airports realizing a decline in commercial passenger traffic. The paper states:

“In recent years, regional air connectivity has returned with fewer daily flights and a reduced number of airlines serving individual destinations. While regional airports remain integral to Canada’s transportation network, these limitations have reduced their ability to provide the flexibility and convenience that travelers once experienced. As a result, the economic and social benefits of regional air service, essential for connecting communities and fostering growth, have been dampened, leaving many of Canada’s communities with reduced access to the opportunities they depend on.”²

The report further states that airlines have shifted their approach in how they serve regional airports – they are putting less emphasis on intra-regional connectivity, resulting in “regional airports

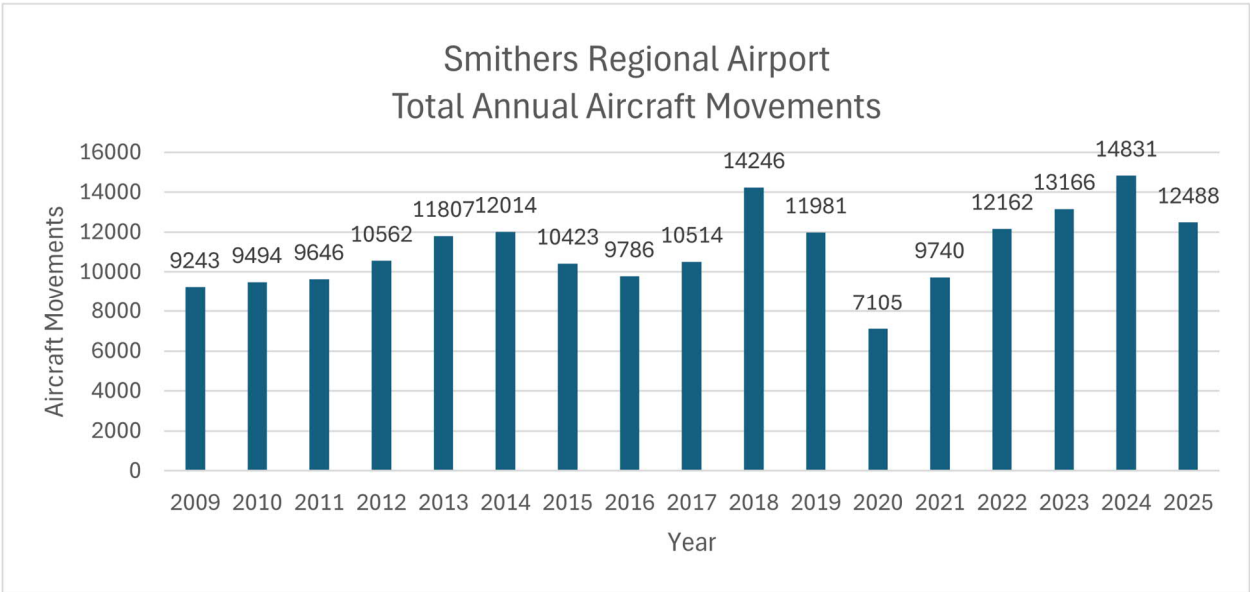
² Keeping Canada Connected: The Challenge of Regional Air Service and Federal Policy, InterVISTAS Consulting Inc. May 7, 2005 (p 9).

receiving fewer daily flights, reducing their operational hours and diminishing the convenience they offer passengers.”³

These findings are significant for Smithers Regional Airport and provide some of the rationale for concerns raised over the decline in passenger services. In addition, the movement statistics provide insight into the nature of recent changes in operations at the airport.

Figure 5 reflects the total number of aircraft movements since 2009⁴. A movement is defined as a landing or a take-off. The general trend over time is positive and influenced by a variety of factors, including but not limited to passenger demand/commercial traffic, charters and general aviation. The pandemic caused the drop in 2020, and it took four full years to see a recovery to pre-COVID numbers. While it is evident that some commercial operations declined in more recent years, other activities, such as charters and aerial wildfire operations, contributed to otherwise offset declines for other reasons. Growth in aircraft traffic at the airport over the entire period stems from the combination of increasing passenger demand and a rise in charter flights primarily supporting mining/exploration. A rise in traffic in other years is in part due to increased wildfire activity, including the spike in 2018, which was a particularly harsh year for fires in the region.

Figure 5. Smithers Regional Airport Aircraft Movements

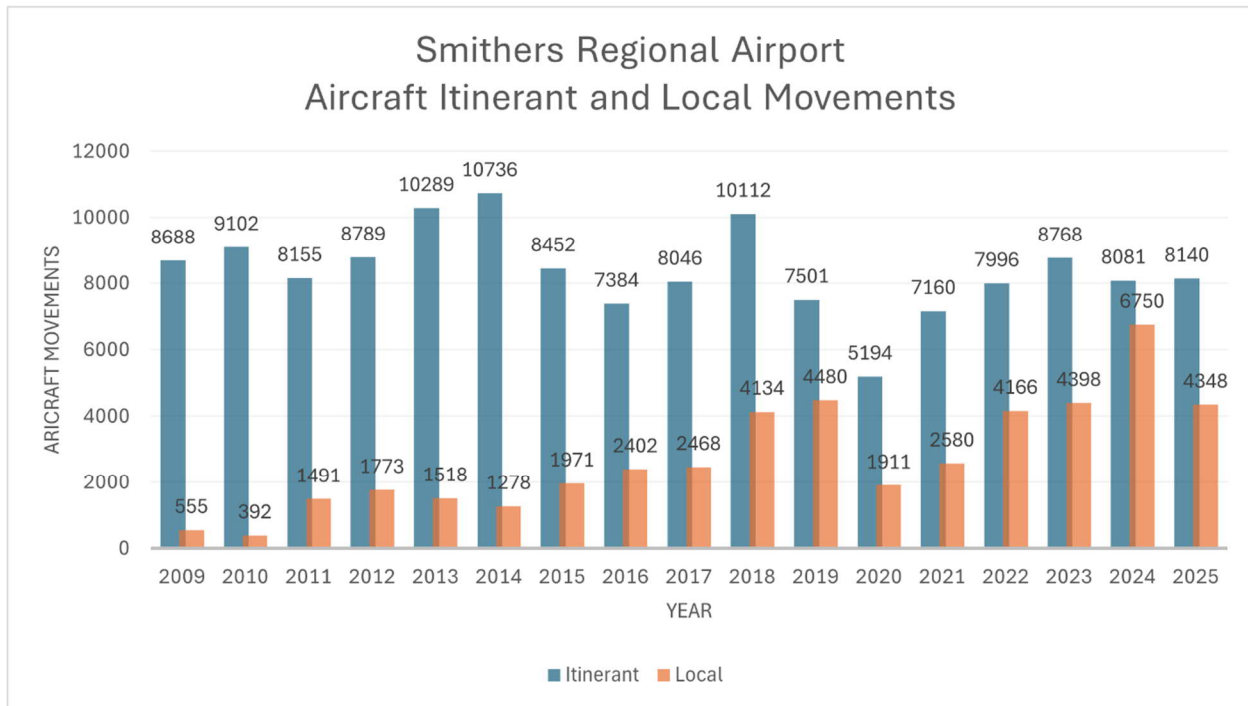


³ Ibid (p 7).

⁴ Statistics Canada. From Table 23-10-0009-01 Aircraft movements, by class of operation and peak hour and peak day of movements, airports with NAV CANADA flight service stations, monthly).

Figure 6 illustrates the aircraft movements broken into two categories – itinerant and local⁵. An itinerant movement is the initial departure or final landing of an aircraft. As an example, this would account for every aircraft taking off to leave the area and/or landing from another airport. A local movement is most often those that remain at the airport conducting approaches for training or maintenance purposes (see footnote 5 for official definitions).

Figure 6. Aircraft Movements Separated as Local and Itinerant Movements



It will be important to monitor the shift in the balance between itinerant and local aircraft as the mining operations place more dependency on charter flights as their sole air carrier and the concern that the charter company will not use the Smithers Airport. This will change the service levels at Smithers. However, itinerant aircraft also includes aerial firefighting activity which may see increased use if dry summers persist.

⁵ Itinerant movements are defined as the initial take-off or the final landing of an aircraft – typically those that leave the airport or terminate at the airport. A local flight is defined as aircraft that conduct the following activities: a touch and go, stop and go, simulated approach without landing, low approach, pull up on final approach or a missed approach. Local movements are often carried out during training flights (touch-and-go), equipment tests, etc.
(Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2024007-eng.htm>).

5. Demographic Trends

5.1. Historical Demographics

The Town is located in the Bulkley Valley in Electoral Area A of the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District. Forestry has been the traditional industry of the region.

The forestry industry, a traditional economic backbone of the region, has experienced numerous mill curtailments and permanent closures throughout BC, with ripple effects in Smithers, which serves as an economic hub for the Bulkley Valley. The closures and curtailments are largely attributed to a lack of economically viable timber supply (fibre supply), high operating costs, U.S. softwood lumber tariffs, and evolving market conditions. Over the past 10 years, there has been an economic shift with the closing of several mills in the region and the increasing emphasis on mines and tourism.

The population in the Town has remained relatively stable between 2006 and 2021, albeit in slight decline. Smithers has not experienced the growth of other northern communities.⁶ This reflects changes in economy, smaller share of large industrial (pipeline) projects, and depopulation of the younger age categories as they access education and job opportunities elsewhere.

Figure 7. Smithers Population Trends 2001 to 2021

Census Year	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Population	5,414	5,217	5,404	5,401	5,378
5 Year % Change	-3.70%	- 4%	4%	-0.1%	-0.4%
Median Age	33.3	36.1	37.2	39.2	39.6

Source Statistics Canada, Census 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006, 2001.

The local economy is now anchored by sectors such as retail, healthcare, construction, manufacturing, mining and exploration, government services, education, and tourism as evidenced by **Figure 7**.

The Town actively works on economic development and has an economic development plan that highlights the diversity and resilience of the local economy. **Table 1** illustrates the employment sectors for the Town.

Mining has become a significant economic driver for the region housing three operating mines (Dome Mountain Gold Mine, Huckelberry Mine and Eskay Creek Mine), with several projects in the exploratory stage.

⁶ Prince George grew 8% between 2006 and 2021 and Terrace grew 6% over the same time period. Source: Statistics Canada.

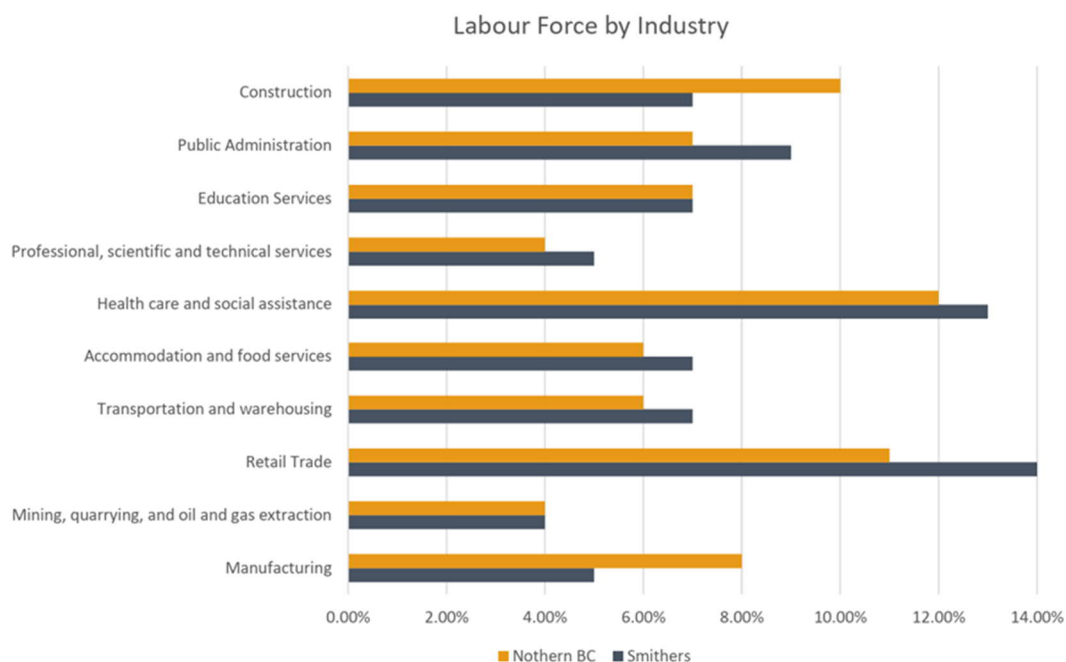
Table 1. 2021 Employment Sectors

NAME	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
School District No. 54	393
Bandstra Transportation Services	380
Northern Health Smithers	380
Hy-Tech Drilling	369
Government of British Columbia	278
West Fraser Concrete	235
CN Rail	221
Pacific Inland Resources	200
Smithers Community Services Association	64
Town of Smithers	60

There is optimism that the relative stability of the area, the increase in mining and exploration operations, the increase in tourism opportunities, and the continued role as a regional hub, will see slow growth. Like much of BC, Smithers has seen its median age rise, with more older adults, though it retains a younger proportion of youth compared to the provincial average.

The participation in the labour force demonstrates how Smithers is a regional hub, with significant employment in the public administration, health care and social assistance, and retail trade sectors (illustrated below in **Figure 8**).

Figure 8. Smithers Labour Force by Industry



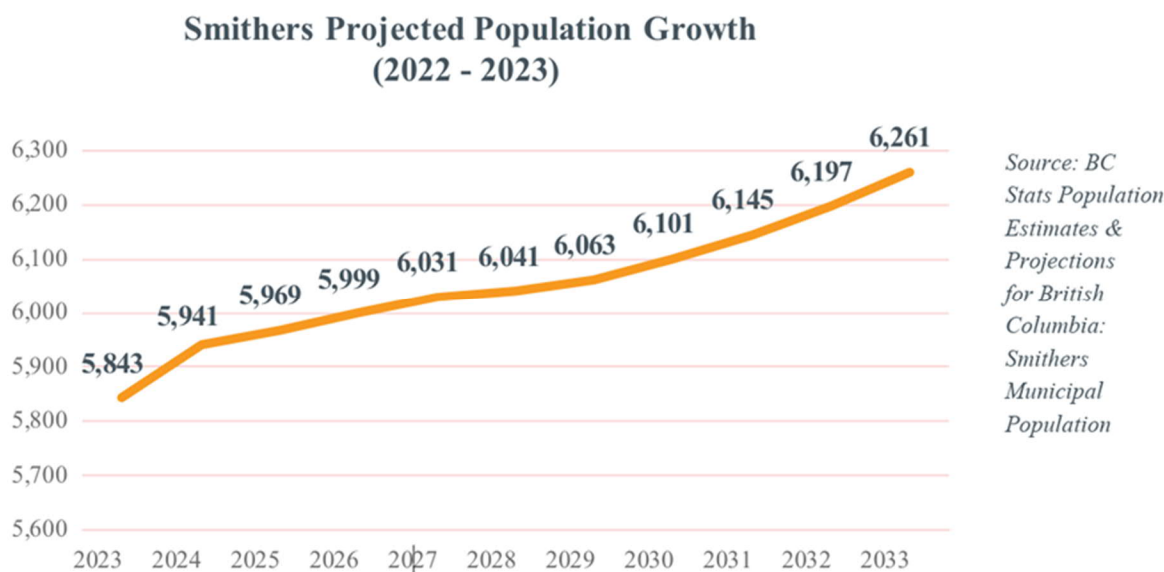
5.2. Demographic Projections

The population of a town and region have a great influence on the activity at a regional airport. Population projections for Smithers range significantly. As noted above, Smithers has had a stable but not growing population. Population projections for the Town and the region will impact the projections for the region.

The most aggressive population projection for the Town was a BC Stats report from early 2024 that indicated a potential 30.2% growth for Smithers by 2046, reaching about 7,444 people.

The projections provided in the Smithers and Surrounding Area Community Profile 2024 (**Figure 9**) project very optimistic growth with a population of 6,261 in 2033 (an increase of 7.2% over 10 years). This projection extended only to 2033. If the projection was extended to 2045 using a 0.72% per year increase, the 2045 population would be 6,775.

Figure 9. Population Projection: Smithers and Surrounding Area Community Profile

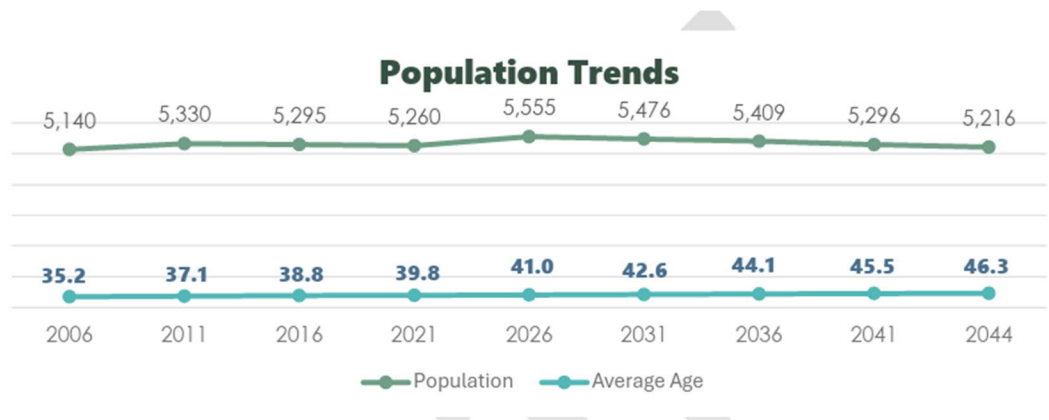


Source: Smithers and Surrounding Area Community Profile 2024

The third projection considered was the Housing Needs Analysis for the Town, completed in 2024, again using BC Stats numbers, shows an increase in population in 2026 to 5,555 and then a continued slight decline to a population of 5,216 in the year 2044 (**Figure 10**). This is based on past growth, aging population, inability to retain youth and shifts in the economy.

This demonstrates that population projections are not an exact science. While an optimistic outlook is positive, it is also important to be realistic.

Figure 10. Population Trends: Housing Needs Analysis



Source Housing Needs Analysis Town of Smithers 2024

When considering demand for the airport, the immediate service area for the airport should be considered. This includes Electoral Area A (Population of 5,587, 2021 Statistics Canada) and the Village of Telkwa (Population of 1,474, 2021 Statistics Canada).

For the purpose of the Smithers Regional Airport Master Plan, the report uses the population projections provided in the Housing Needs Analysis of 5,216 for the year 2044. In addition, the immediate service area of an additional 7,061 will be considered for overall population demand. These numbers will be used to project flights and passengers.

6. Aviation Projections

The 2009 Smithers Regional Airport Land Use and Business Plan was prepared pre-COVID, and with a very optimistic view of the economy and regional growth.

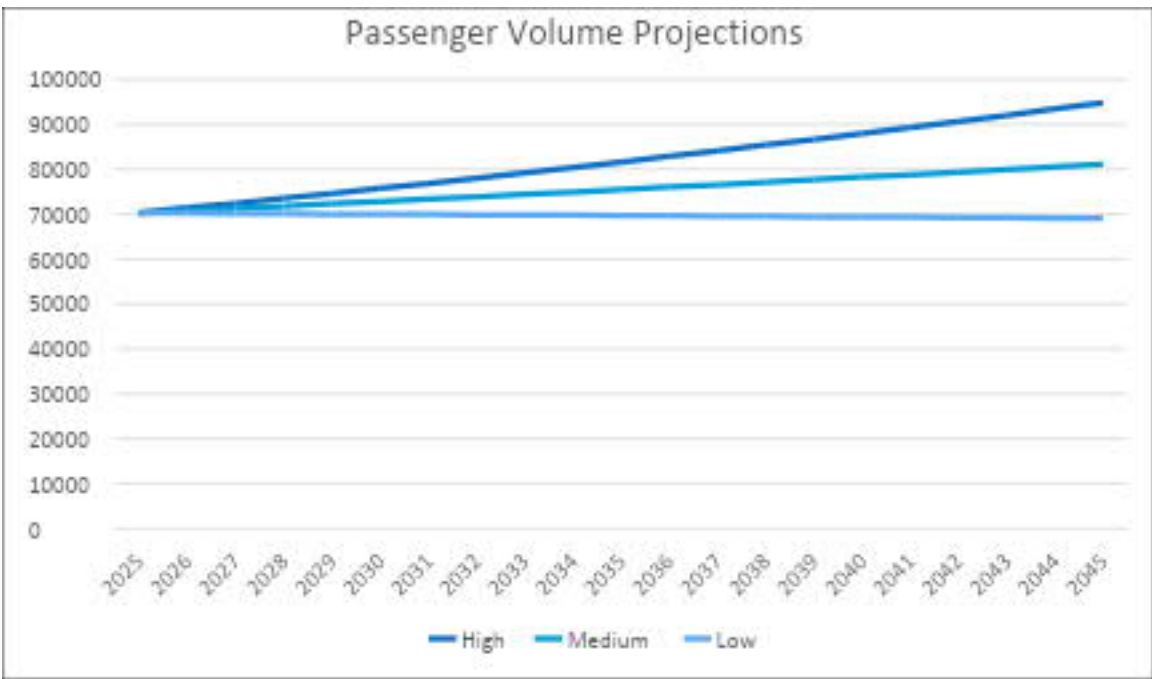
Using the 2045 population projection of 6,725, logically air traffic at the airport will increase.

6.1. Passenger Projections

Passenger projections have used the population projection rates from the three population projections for the Town (illustrated in **Figure 11**). This provides a low, medium and high projection for the passenger volumes based on: High (1.51% increase per year), Medium (0.72% per year), and a Low rate, which is a decrease of population (-0.08% per year).

These projections are “straight-line” projections based on the projected growth rates for the Town. This does not factor in any booms or busts such as a major construction or mine opening, or another pandemic. The High projection would see Smithers Regional Airport exceed any past peak volumes by the year 2045. The Medium projection sees the total passenger volumes achieved in 2014 of 82,768 total passengers. The Low projection follows the BC Stats projection trends for population in the Town that will decline slightly into 2045.

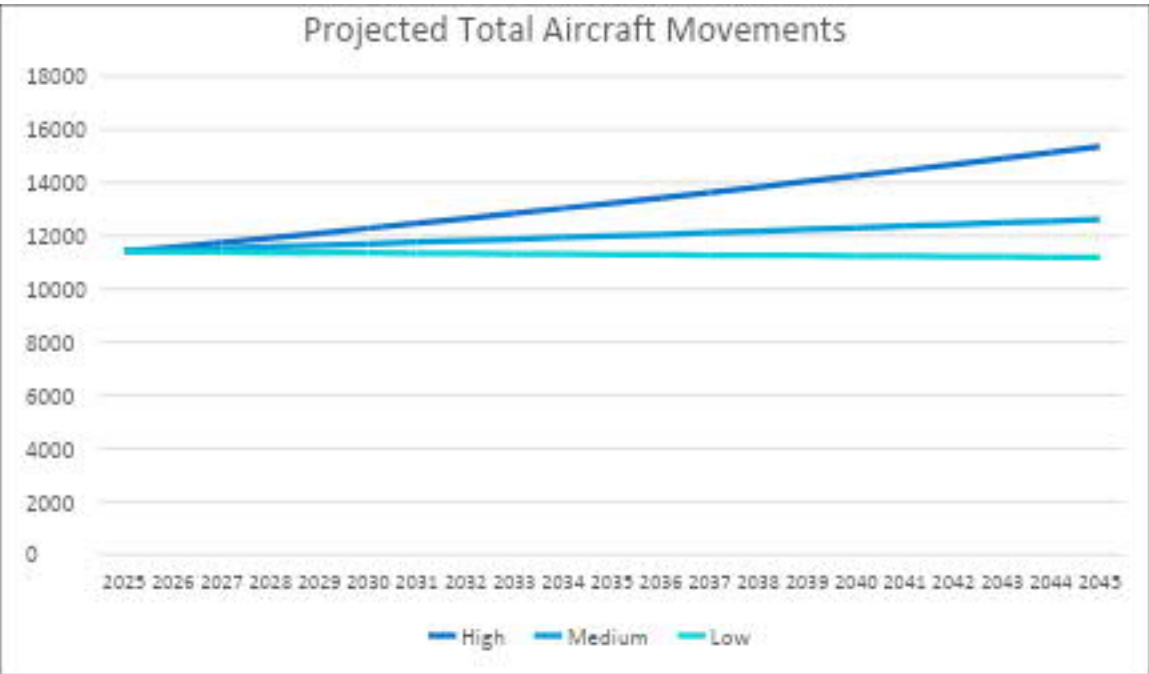
Figure 11. Projected Total Passenger Volumes 2025 to 2045



6.2. Aircraft Projections

The aircraft projections for the Smithers Regional Airport look at both the local and itinerant aircraft. With the trend toward less commercial airline traffic and the potential for charter aircraft serving the mining industry moving to Dease Lake as the base, the projections for aircraft will likely project lower unless the airlines can be encouraged to increase flights and the charters to use the Smithers Regional Airport. As with the passenger projections, this report takes a high, medium and low approach with the High projection reflecting a 1.4% increase, the Medium projection taking a 0.5% increase and the Low projection using a decrease of 0.1% in aircraft (**Figure 12**). The aircraft rates of annual growth are lower than the passenger rates, assuming full aircraft.

Figure 12. Total Projected Aircraft Movements



The High projection of 15,536 in 2045 compares to the peak years of 2014 (14,246) and 2024 (14,832). However, this may not be achievable if the mine workers' charters do not use Smithers Regional Airport.

While this may not be the optimistic view, the positive aspect is that the airport infrastructure can accommodate the projected aircraft volumes for many years, negating the need for significant capital investment in the airport.

7. Airfield Operations – General

The Smithers Regional Airport is a Canadian certified aerodrome and is federally zoned - SOR/81-916 (Approved by the Governor General in Council November 5, 1981, Registered November 9, 1981) (**Appendix B**). The zoning regulation was recently updated to reflect it as “Current to September 15, 2025.” Apart from this update, the zoning regulation has not been amended since it was registered in 1981. This is discussed further in **Section 8** of this document.

It should be noted that Transport Canada Advisory Circular No. 302-018, dated November 27, 2014, permits the airport to comply with the version of TP312⁷ that was in force at the time it was certified, until such times as a change in capability is implemented (Ref CAR 302.07).

Smithers Regional Airport offers 24/7 operation with some services limited to specific hours as defined in the Airport Operations Manual (AOM) and Canada Flight Supplement. The airport is very well equipped to handle a variety of aircraft up to and including the B737, which is designated in the AOM as the design aircraft for this airport.

The airport benefited from major capital projects over the past several years to ensure safe and continued operation of the airport; this includes obstacle removal (numerous trees and vegetation infringing on the obstacle limitation surfaces), as well as an upgrade of lighting and marking (including backlit signage and new approach lights).



The airport equipment required to maintain the aerodrome is available year-round and is reported to be in good condition. There are no foreseeable major replacement initiatives anticipated within the planning time frame of this report, according to the Airport Manager. Contingency planning should otherwise cover any unexpected issues that could arise over having to replace or repair maintenance equipment.

The aerodrome is subject to annual bird migration, which can be a hazard to an airport. To protect against any impact, the airport maintenance staff deter birds by using scaring techniques common to controlling such activity on aerodromes.

⁷ TP312 is the Aerodromes Standards and Recommended Practices adopted by Transport Canada. The document sets standards and requirements, such as physical characteristics, obstacle limitation surfaces, visual aids, and some technical services the aerodrome operator at a certified land aerodrome (airport) provides to support aircraft operations, as well as other standards to the safety of the operation of the airport.

7.1. Runway 15/33

The runway (15/33) is asphalt, was resurfaced in 2017 and has a pavement load rating (PLR) of 12⁸ (measured in 2018) and an Aircraft Group Number (AGN) of IV⁹ for the full runway length of 7547 feet (2300.32 m). The runway is 150 feet (45 m) wide. **Figure 13** illustrates the Smithers notifications in the Canada Flight Supplement.

The runway has turn around areas (or turn pads) at both ends and displaced thresholds¹⁰, resulting in a reduced landing distance of 7287 feet (Runway 15) and 7283 feet (Runway 33). The turn around areas also has a PLR of 12. There is a clearway at the end of each runway, but no stopway or runway end safety area. The runway strip extends 75 m on either side of the runway centreline, with a gravel and turf surface beyond the edges of the runway. **Figure 14** illustrates Smithers Airport in the Canada Flight Supplement.

There are three taxiways that connect with the runway (directly or indirectly), with some considerations that can limit runway capacity; this is discussed in **Section 7.2** of this plan.

The physical runway environment is not expected to require any meaningful attention in terms of upgrade within the master plan planning timelines.

⁸ Pavement load rating (PLR) is the measurement of a runway's strength, determining which aircraft can use it.

⁹ Aircraft Group Number (AGN) - is a method for interrelating the numerous technical specifications concerning the aerodrome and the characteristics of the critical aircraft for which the aerodrome, or part thereof, is provided. (Ref TP 312 – definitions).

¹⁰ A **displaced threshold runway** has its starting point for landings moved from the physical end of the runway, marked by arrows pointing toward the landing zone, to allow for obstacle clearance (like trees, buildings, terrain), pavement protection, or noise abatement, meaning the displaced area is not used for landing touchdown but can be used for taxiing, take-off, and landing rollout from the opposite direction, reducing the available landing distance but preserving the full length for departures.

Figure 13. Smithers Canada Flight Supplement

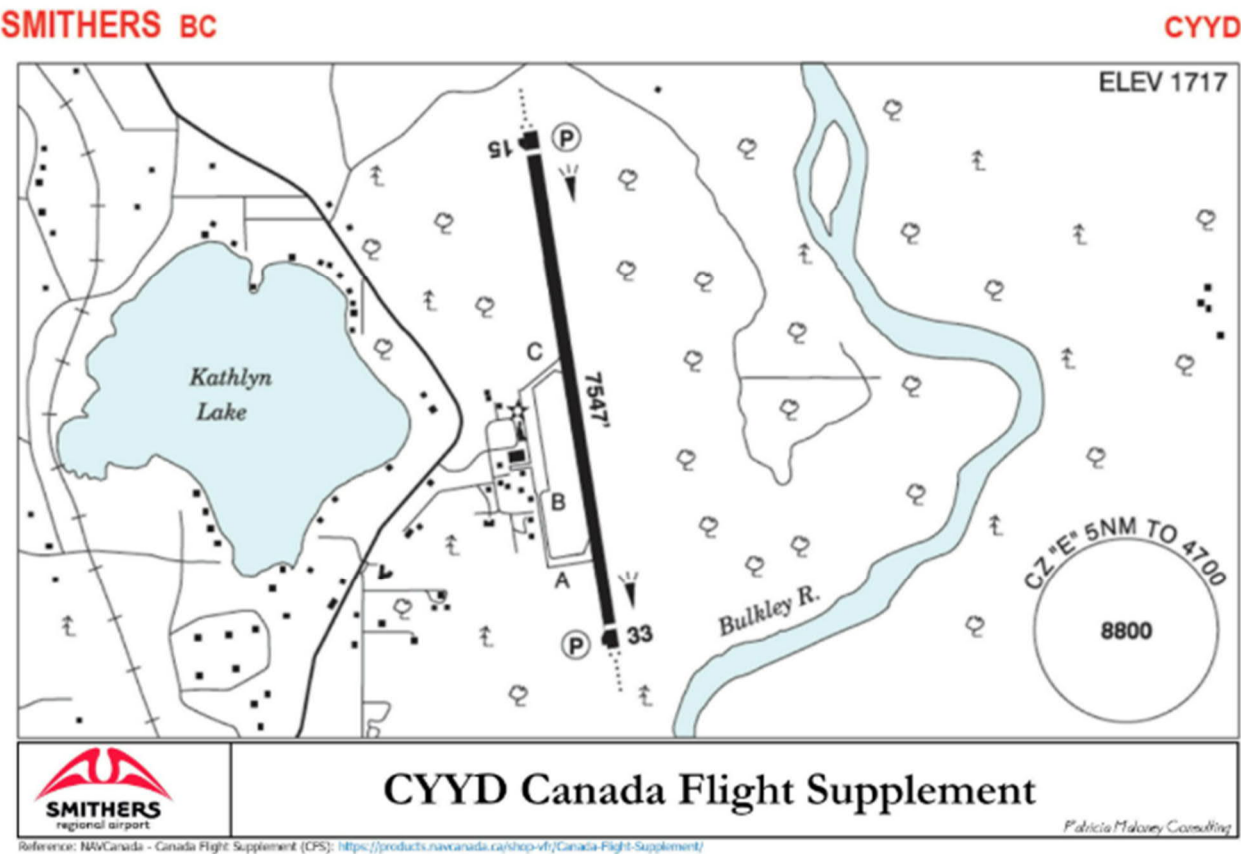
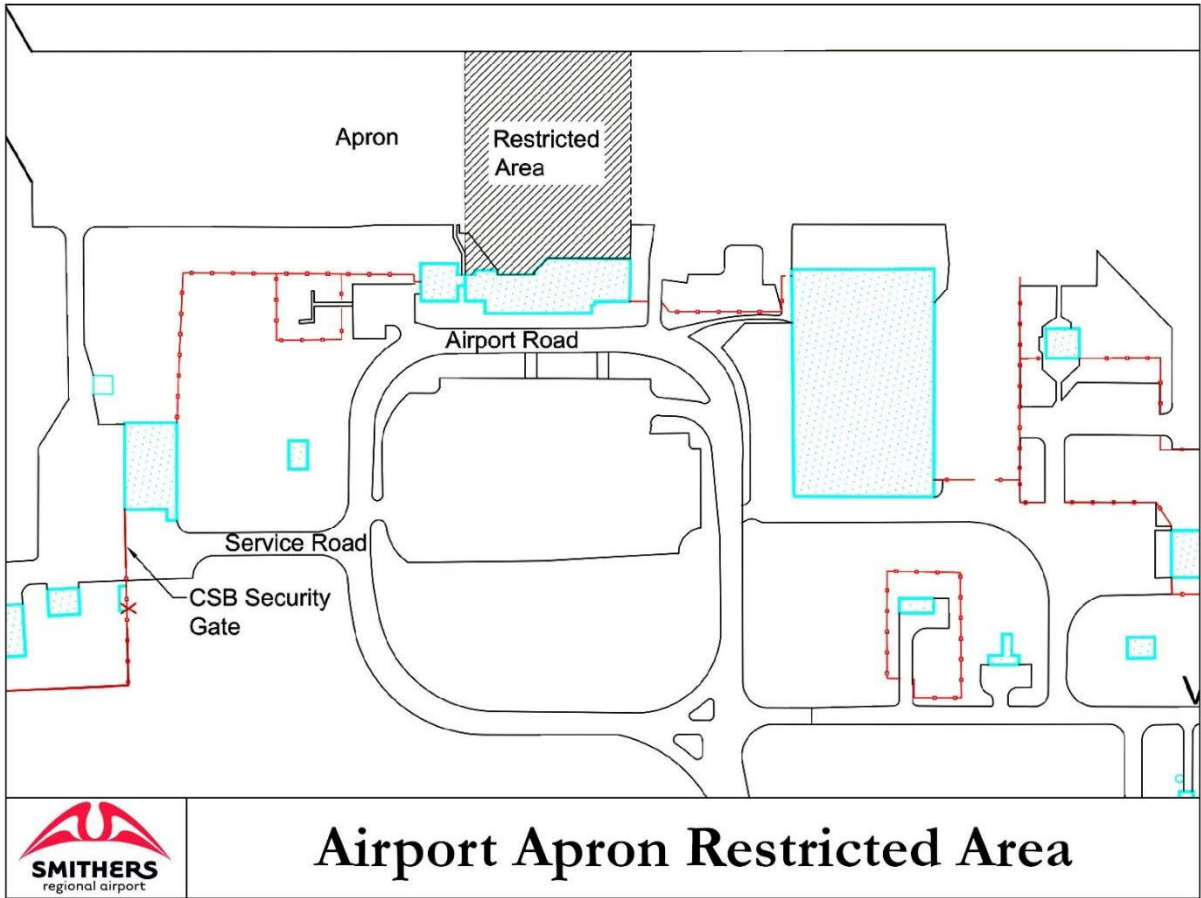


Figure 14. Airport Apron Restricted Area



7.2. Taxiways

There are three taxiways connecting the aprons with the runway, each with asphalt surfaces. Taxiway Charlie is 75 feet (23 m) wide, has a PLR of 11, and provides the sole means of access and exit to the runway for all AGN IV aircraft. Taxiway Alpha and Bravo are limited to AGN IIIA given PLRs of 9 and a width of 45 feet (15 m). All taxiways were also resurfaced in 2017.



Taxiway Charlie provides easy access to the apron on the north side of the aerodrome, whereas taxiway Bravo links to taxiway Alpha at the south for runway access/exit; taxiway Bravo runs parallel to the runway, located in line with the west edge of Apron 1, and Alpha is perpendicular to and connects with the runway.

Taxiway Bravo is used consistently by the aircraft at the BC Wildfire Service Air Tanker Base. The proximity of the base to this taxiway provides the quickest means to launch and recover aircraft during critical operations, thus, avoiding commercial and other general aviation activity in the vicinity of the terminal building. The north taxiway (Charlie) connects with the runway 3368 feet from the beginning of Runway 15, requiring departures using Runway 15 to back track. Back track may also occur for some aircraft landing on Runway 33 that are unable to complete their landing roll prior to Taxiway Charlie. Departures with an AGN IV rating are limited to accessing/exiting the runway via Charlie. While this is not an issue for current operations, an increase in traffic with larger aircraft may give rise to the question of adding a parallel taxiway particularly for Runway 15 departures.

Any future adjustments to the taxiways should consider all options from a cost benefit perspective given the apron configuration, its usage, and connectivity considerations between apron and runway.

7.3. Aprons and Aircraft Stands¹¹

There are two aprons: 1 and 1a, both of which are asphalt with PLR of 10/AGN IV ratings.



Current traffic levels rarely result in all stands (designated aircraft parking positions) being occupied at the same time. Stands are configured sufficiently distant from each other that aircraft depart by maneuvering out of and away from the stands under their own power.

Access to and from aircraft is usually accomplished with onboard aircraft stairs. The airport has readily accessible stairs available, if required.

The south area of Apron 1 is used in the wildfire season by BC Wildfire Service; therefore, this area becomes quite busy. It is located sufficiently distant from the commercial operation at the terminal buildings, such that neither operation tends to be an issue for the other. The retardant bombers recharge on the apron while still running and they do not typically overnight at Smithers. There have been occasions where the combination of commercial and BC Wildfire Q400 bombers have occupied all five parking stands, requiring creative alternatives for manoeuvring and parking. One particularly busy season required the closure of Taxiway Bravo to meet the requirements of BC Wildfire Service operations. The “Air Tractors” or “Skimmers” (fixed wheel with floats) do at times overnight at the airport and typically park on Apron 1a, far enough back from Apron 1 traffic/parking to avoid conflict.

The aprons are considered suitable to handle up to and including AGN IV rated aircraft. There are no known or anticipated issues with the aprons or aircraft parking stands that would impact the airport authority within the planning time frame. However, between the south end of the apron area, along with taxiways Alpha and Bravo during the busy summer periods, the congestion could give rise to safety concerns. Infrastructure alternatives may need to be considered if congestion increases and/or the nature of traffic using these areas becomes a safety consideration.

7.4. Navigation

While the Bulkley Valley is narrow and winding, it offers the ability to navigate, land and take-off effectively, either visually or under instrument conditions. There are limitations on operations

¹¹ Aircraft stands are designated parking positions for aircraft on an apron and are typically marked.

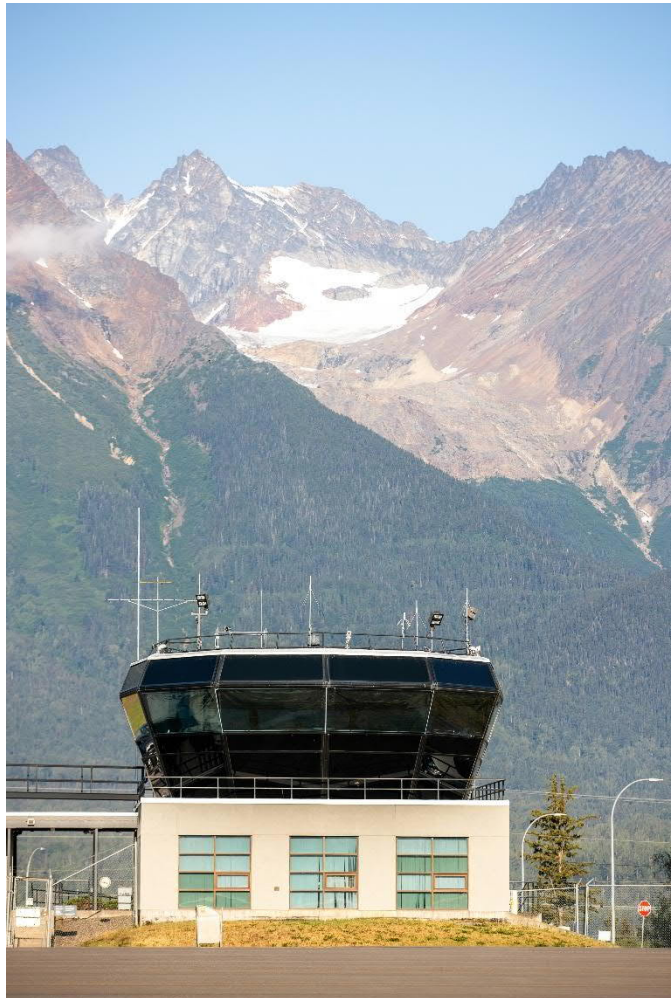
related to visual flight operations requiring manoeuvring within three lighted towers on high ground surrounding the airport at night. The ground in the approach areas and some terrain further out limits the visual approach system use to within two nautical miles (NM) of either runway threshold.

NAV CANADA recently assumed responsibility for maintaining instrument approach and departure procedures for Smithers. All such procedures are based on the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) with no ground-based aids serving approaches. The initial approach procedures make use of GNSS/Smithers/Houston YYD VOR located 29 NM southeast from Smithers and the XT NDB located 56 NM to the West.

Instrument approaches are limited in nature due to the non-instrument certification of the runway; as such, the approach limits are restricted to not less than 500 feet (ft) ceiling and 1.5 statute miles (sm) visibility. Some approaches (non-precision) are considerably more restrictive with limits of ceiling 1000 ft and 3 sm.

There is a perception amongst some operators that improvement in approach limits at the airport would benefit the operation, thereby attracting more commercial interest in Smithers. The next closest major airport is Terrace, which has considerably more commercially operated flights and often draws people from the area to that airport rather than use Smithers. The change in limits would require runway recertification from non-instrument to instrument: non-precision. However, there are noteworthy obstacle considerations given mountainous terrain in the approach areas for instrument approaches, as well as the current frequency of weather-related missed approaches and diversions begs the question as to whether it is practical/achievable. Since there is some uncertainty on this topic, it would be prudent for the Town/Airport Authority to investigate the feasibility of lowering instrument approach limits.

NAV CANADA confirmed that there are no immediate plans to adjust the service level currently in place at the Smithers Regional Airport. The Smithers station is well staffed and will continue to provide services within published hours of operation. The FSS unit is classed as isolated in terms of its location.



The Initiative to introduce digital remote services may impact Smithers in future and is not expected to happen within the next 5 to 10 years.

7.5. Lighting and Marking

Aerodrome lighting and marking were updated with new surface paint, backlit signage, LED runway, taxiway and apron lights, Omni Directional Approach Lights (ODAL) and Runway End Identification Lights at both ends. Some minor lighting enhancements remain outstanding and are expected to be completed under the current lighting upgrade project.

The outstanding items to be completed include the ODAL and the Airport Lighting Control System to be installed in the NAV CANADA FSS/Tower Cab in the Spring of 2026. All such upgrades are covered under an ongoing project.

Apron flood lighting coverage is appropriate for the nature of the operation.

The airport has a backup/secondary power supply for airfield lighting covering the approach lighting, runway lights (edge, threshold and end), Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) lighting and taxiways.

7.6. Meteorology

Weather has a significant impact on the operation of an airport. Whether it be visual impact, snow clearing, de-icing or wind, all airports are at some time impacted by weather. This generally means cancelled or delayed flights. This begins to erode the confidence in the airport to deliver service. There is the perception in the community that the Smithers Regional Airport loses more flights to weather than Terrace or Prince George. There is also a perception amongst some operators that a certification to instrument: non-precision would allow for lower approach limits and accommodate more flights.

Smithers Regional Airport historical data shows the weather-related missed approach and diversion at an annual rate of between 2% and 3% over the past year (slightly higher in winter months).¹² In particular, commercial aircraft are unlikely to complete their approach and land when the ceilings and visibility are below published limits. About 5% of the hourly reports published by NAV CANADA reflect instances of ceiling and/or visibility below the minimum limits over the past 10 years. The landing approach success rate appears comparably better than this. The times when visibility conditions are poorest are in the fall when the river and ambient temperatures tend to produce fog particularly to the south of the Runway 33 approach area. Notwithstanding these statistics, considerations such as the necessities to accommodate Medevac aircraft and avoiding, where possible, disruption to air carriers provide good reasons to investigate the possibility of reducing approach limits.

¹² Smithers Regional Airport Management Office, email dated December 2, 2025.

7.7. Airside Services

Fuel is currently supplied on airport land by Allied Aviation, which has fuel tanks and trucks on-site at the north end between the Airport Services Building and Apron 1.

Input from one of the main and long-standing general aviation tenants identified a concern over not having a self-serve utility for AVGAS. The cost of delivering the fuel to smaller aircraft and the inconvenience of having to sometimes wait for lengthy periods to receive the service is a detractor to the many aircraft that use this fuel (typically smaller operators with piston type aircraft). From an improvement standpoint, establishing a self-serve fueling capability at this airport could potentially attract more users/tenants.

De-icing service is available at the airport through a contractor and used during the winter months. The equipment is sometimes stored in the Airport Services Building. There are no current or anticipated issues that would impact airport planning.

7.8. Terminal Building

The Smithers Regional Airport terminal building renovation was completed in 2019 as a major capital program. The building provides a range of capability and related services, including airport administration with conference room doubling as an Emergency Operations Centre, airline counters, arrival area with baggage carousel, secure area with security screening and two departure gates. It also has the typical amenities for an airport with a recently added café and small area displaying/selling local works of art and crafts within the café eating area. The secure area can support the holding (and boarding) of passengers for two medium sized aircraft simultaneously. While this meets current needs, any notable increase in commercial passenger traffic will require some action on the part of airport management in terms of deconfliction or expanding the holding/boarding area. **Figure 15** provides the floor plan of the Terminal Building.



The community survey reflected the desire to have a shop available to travellers, and while the café has made moves toward providing a limited assortment of indigenous works, the airport may wish to consider seeking a vendor dedicated to running a shop should the passenger traffic increase beyond

current levels. Input at the tenants meeting and other engagements highlighted the advantages of having Indigenous artwork/crafts available to travellers to increase the attractiveness of the region in this otherwise already well-equipped terminal facility.

The terminal is an energy efficient facility using geothermal technology. The design allows the airport to generate significant energy savings and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When constructed, the geothermal equipment was configured to maintain temperatures within a specified range. When temperatures are outside this threshold due to climate change or other factors, the cooling system no longer meets cooling needs during warmer months in the secure area; this became a passenger and screening staff comfort issue in recent years, leading to an engineering study to identify a solution. Funding will need to be sourced to adapt the thermal equipment to provide adequate air conditioning in the summer months. This is mentioned here as this issue is not in the expenditure forecast and should be added at the earliest opportunity.



AIRPORT TERMINAL MAP

SCALE: 1:250

DRAWN BY: DDR

DATE: April 29, 2026

APPROVED BY: MFA

PROJECT: MUSKOGEE COUNTY LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FILE: LEASE 2380-201 - LEASEWORKING FOLDER

7.9. Vehicle Parking and Access

The Smithers Regional Airport is located north of the townsite, accessed off Highway 16, the Yellowhead Highway.

Public parking at the airport (**Figure 16**) is provided by a paved parking area at the Terminal Building with approximately:

- Eighteen (18) One-hour free stalls;
- Twenty-four (24) Rental Car Stalls;
- One hundred seventy-five (175) Long-Term Parking Stalls; and
- Six Long-Term reserved parking stalls.

A large, gravelled area exists for parking expansion, and additional land could be cleared and levelled for additional parking should volumes require.

Vehicle parking fees are very competitive with other regional airports. For example, Smithers fee is \$5.00 per day, \$35.00 for a week and \$150.00 per month. Prince George fees are: \$15.00 per day and \$175 per week. Terrace fees are: \$9.00 per day. Fees could be increased slightly for the 2027 and beyond timeframe and remain competitive.

Tenant parking is provided on the leased areas.

As noted, the airport access is off the highway and is controlled by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT). Future development at the airport will be required to meet MoTT's requirements for access. This may include separation distance between intersections and access points, sight lines for access points, acceleration and deceleration lanes, left turn lanes, and signalization, depending on the trip generations of future development proposals.



[illegible]

7.10. Emergency

The Smithers Regional Airport's Emergency Response Plan was recently assessed by Transport Canada and following minor corrective actions, was signed off. Infrastructure meets expectations for emergency response (including initial command and control) for an airport of this size and operation. Policing and Emergency Medical Services are provided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and BC Ambulance service, respectively, and activated through the 911 alerting system. Security within the airport is a contracted service and adequate for the foreseeable future. Airfield Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) is provided by the Town, with response times and capabilities within standards set by Transport Canada. Any change in response time/location of ARFF resources would be triggered by a substantial increase in annual passenger traffic, which is not forecasted to occur within the planning time frame. Accordingly, ARFF is not expected to have any impact on capital or operating budgets associated with the airport within the timeframe covered by this plan.

7.11. Airport Utilities

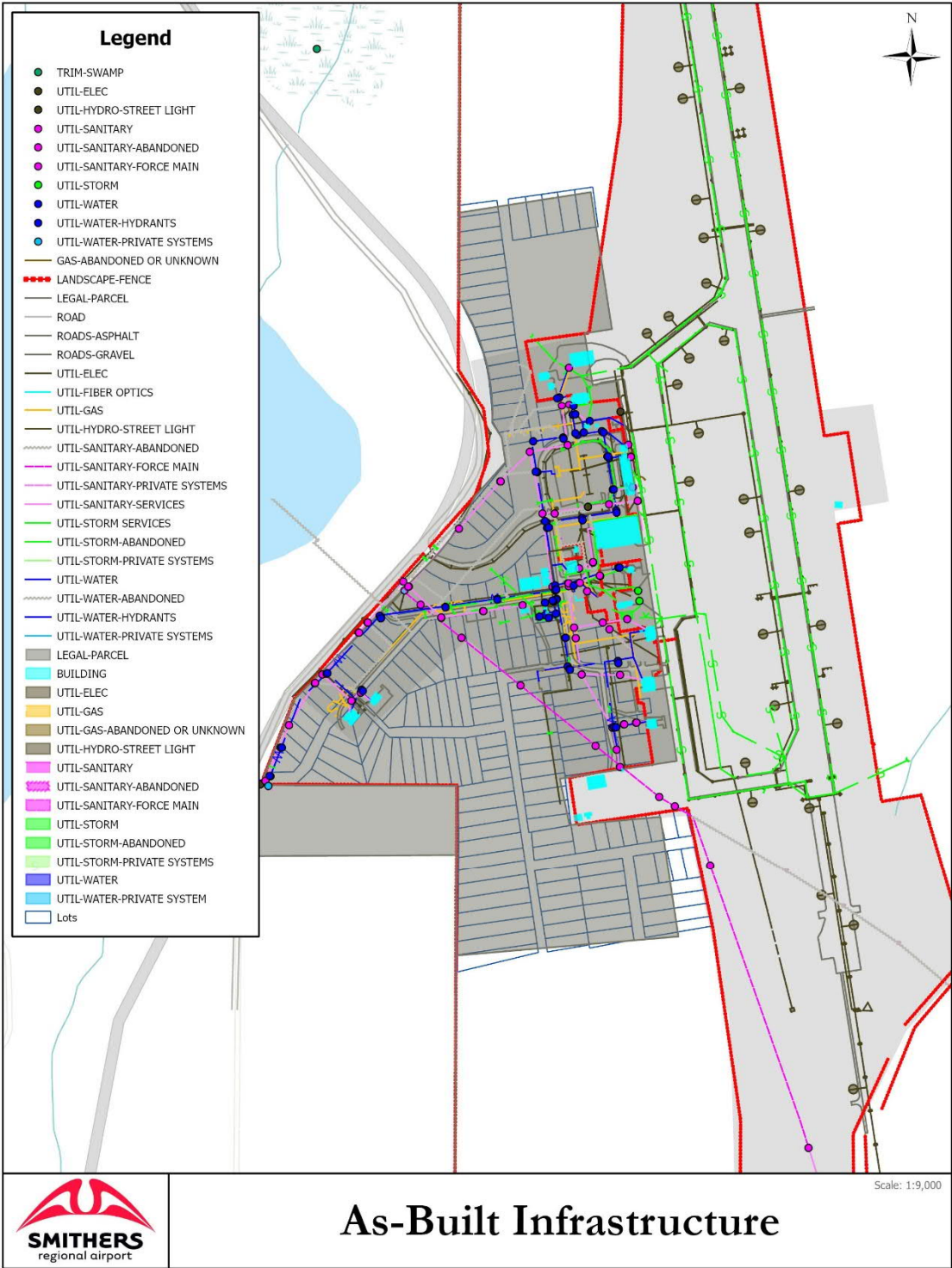
The airport is well served by all typical utilities including power, gas, water, wastewater, telephone, cellular and internet. It is important to note that a new water treatment plant is nearing completion under a major capital program. There are no concerns over capacity to serve hydro needs should there be an increase in demand in addressing any interests on the airport property.

Utility access points are easily accessible and there is sufficient infrastructure in proximity to all existing buildings for any updates or repairs that may be required. For any new infrastructure, accessing such utilities would be in accordance with expectations for any such development, including the AP-2 zoned parcels.

As-built infrastructure is illustrated on **Figure 17**. New development may require extension or expansion of existing utilities. The party responsible for costs associated with the servicing connections will be determined at the time of the development application.



Figure 17. As-Built Infrastructure at the Smithers Regional Airport



8. Airport Community Interface

8.1. Federal Zoning Regulations and Obstacle Limitations

As indicated earlier in this plan, the Smithers Regional Airport is a certified airport having a federal aerodrome zoning regulation (AZR) in place (**Appendix B**) illustrated on **Figure 18**. The Master Plan is a mechanism for identifying and initiating potential changes to the AZR.

The AZR for Smithers was created in 1981. The Town owns the airport and has jurisdiction over some of the lands abutting the airport property, which is zoned under its bylaw No. 1987. Other lands adjacent to the airport fall within the jurisdiction of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

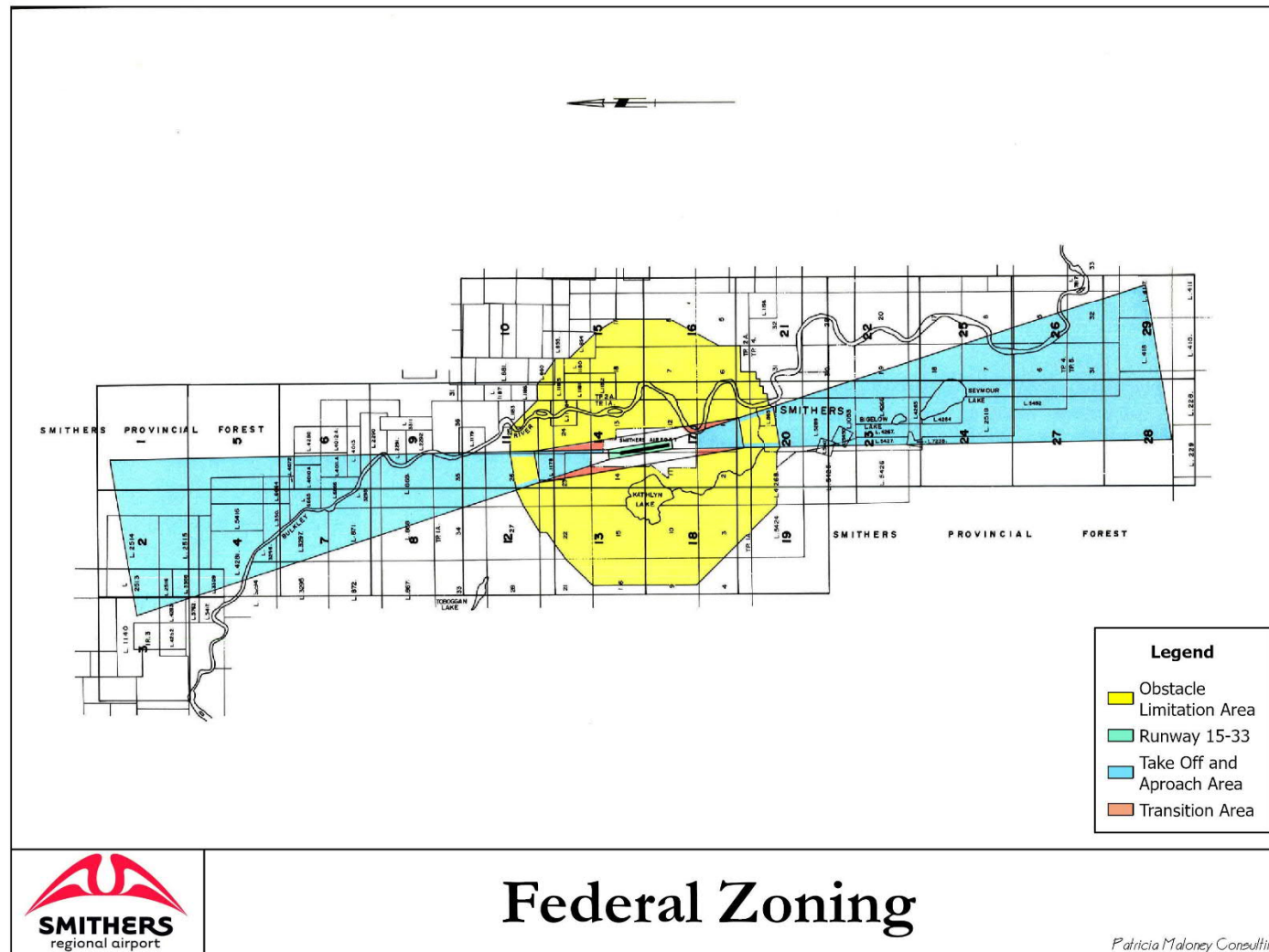
Since the AZR was created, Runway 15/33 was lengthened, effectively pushing the origin of the approach and departure Obstacle Limitation Surfaces out further. Accordingly, Transport Canada Regional and National offices advise that an update to the AZR appears to be required and would need to be initiated by the Town. This will have planning and cost implications on the Town.

All airports do their best to ensure the safety of the airports' operation by ensuring there are no obstructions penetrating the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces applicable to each aerodrome. However, land and land uses outside of the owners' (in this case the Town of Smithers) jurisdiction are not often able to be controlled. In the case of the Smithers Regional Airport, the Town owns and operates the airport and airport operations are diligent in ensuring that there are no development or trees penetrating the obstruction area.

The runway is certified as "non-instrument" and there are no precision approach aids located on the aerodrome. Accordingly, all approaches are conducted using satellite-based navigation with the lowest approach limits restricted to not less than 500 ft ceiling and 1.5 sm visibility.

Because weather-related diversions/missed approaches are limited in frequency, combined with prevailing weather considerations and terrain considerations, the cost and effort to improve approaches may not be justifiable without external funding. The best possible case would be for the limits to drop to a 250-foot ceiling and 1.0 sm visibility, which could further reduce weather-related diversions/missed approaches. This process would require new obstacle assessments and approval/involvement of Transport Canada and NAV CANADA.

Figure 18. Smithers Regional Airport - Federal Zoning



8.2 Noise Exposure

One of the largest perceived negative impacts of an airport on a community is noise. Larger airports calculate Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF) contours that demonstrate where the noise of the airport may cause complaints from residents who live in the vicinity of the airport.

NEF contours are mapping tools, like topographical maps, that show predicted aircraft noise levels around airports. These guide land use, identifying areas for sensitive development (homes, schools, hospitals) where noise limits (like NEF 30) are exceeded. This often requires noise mitigation like better insulation for construction and are used by planners to balance airport growth with community well-being. These contours use metrics that consider flight frequency, aircraft type, flight paths, time of day, and human perception to predict annoyance, helping prevent future noise complaints.

The calculation of the NEF contours consider:

- Metrics like Effective Perceived Noise Decibels and average sound levels (dBA) to quantify noise impact, acknowledging that NEF contours are not based on a single event; and
- Calculations to include aircraft types, take-off/landing numbers, flight paths, duration, frequency, time of day and tonal characteristics.

Smithers does not have NEF contours. The airport is generally considered far enough from the Town to have an impact on the community, and in fact, due to the low levels of aircraft and the type of aircraft, a NEF of 25 (which is generally considered compatible with residential development) may not be exceeded off airport property.¹³ Historically, noise complaints have been minimal.

8.3 Municipal Bylaw and Zoning Regulations

As a municipality that owns and operates the airport, it adheres to municipal bylaws and policies in addition to federal zoning and regulations.

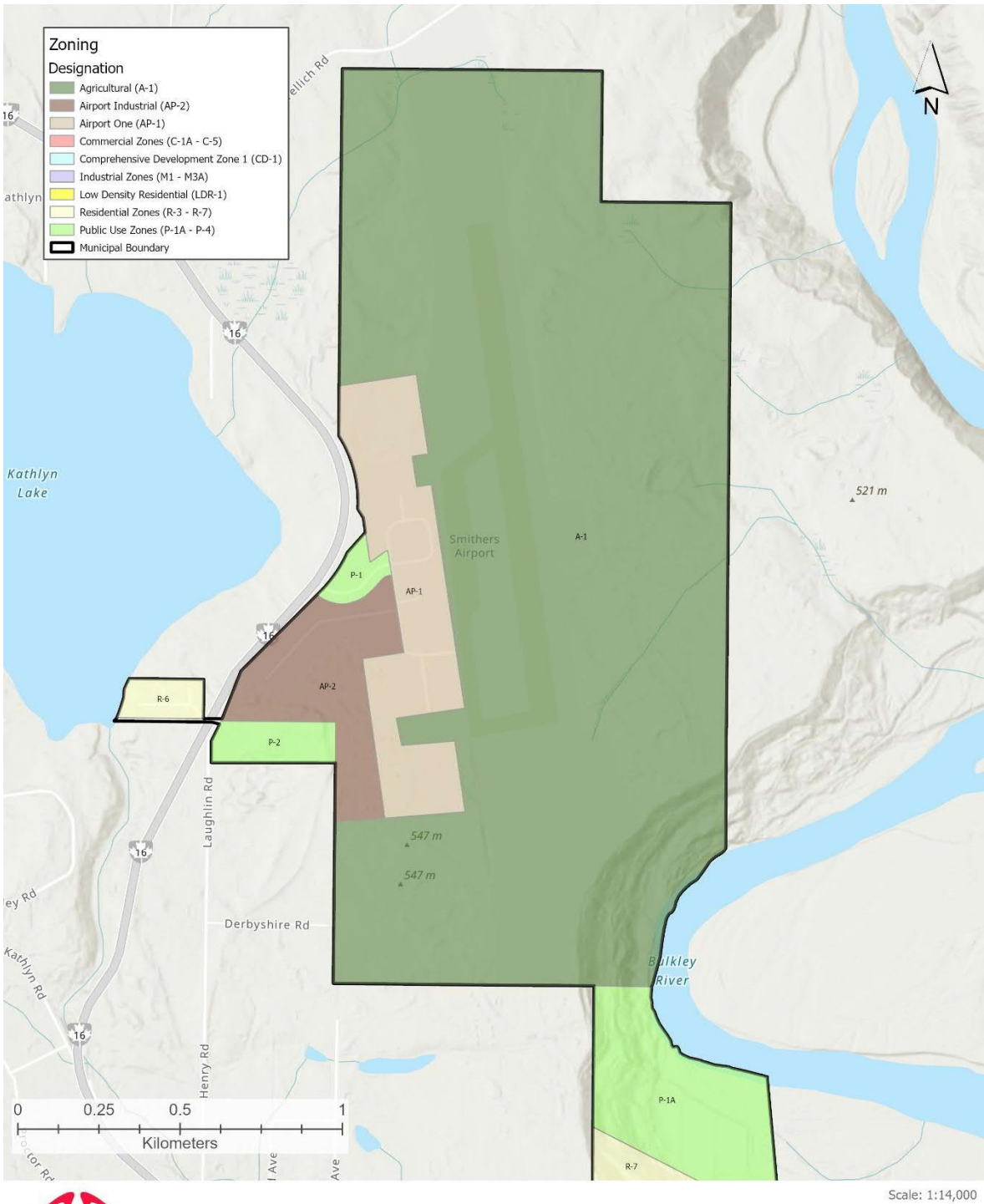
8.3.1 Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan (OCP), Bylaw No. 1935 was updated and consolidated in March 2025.

Figure 19 illustrates the Airport Lands Designation in the OCP.

¹³ More information about NEF contours can be accessed here: <https://tc.canada.ca/en/aviation/operating-airports-aerodromes/managing-noise-aircraft/noise-exposure-forecast-related-programs>.

Figure 19. Airport Lands Designation in the Official Community Plan



Airport Lands Designation in the Official Community Plan

The OCP supports development at the airport, but strongly supports the protection and development in the downtown.

Policy 6.2.1.3 High Density Residential Development /Downtown Commercial support greater intensity and mix of uses with accessible pedestrian-oriented streets. This walkable complete community would include service based businesses such as retail, restaurants, cafes and professional and civic services. The Policy aims to specifically reinforce the Main Street of Downtown. This policy is supported by Policy 6.2.2 Commercial that has the objective to concentrate new high density residential, commercial and community uses within the downtown, but also to encourage high quality development and redevelopment opportunities along the Highway 16 corridor.

Despite the above, the OCP confirms that the development within the airport will be governed by a separate land use plan, such as this Master Plan. The airport lands are addressed in Section 6.2.9 of the OCP, stating the intention of designating the airport lands is to allow for airport and airport industrial uses. Policy 6.2.9 states that a separate land use plan for the airport will be used to guide airport development.

Section 8.0 of the OCP addresses the type of development considered appropriate at the airport in the Zoning Bylaw and the OCP states the airport is a key economic driver in the community, providing connectivity and access to the area, as well as that the Town is well positioned to utilize the airport and other lands to encourage new industries and commercial opportunities.

Section 8.4 of the OCP provides policies about industrial development at the airport - specifically:

“2. Support aviation-related industrial development at the Smithers Regional Airport.

3. Review and update the Airport Land Use Plan that includes engagement with local realtors and the business community. This plan should compare airport governance and operations approaches to ensure the long-term viability of the airport as a key economic generator for the Town.”¹⁴

The OCP includes commercial uses, which are not reflected in the current Zoning Bylaw.

The recommended action to achieve the appropriate uses on the airport, are included Section 11.1 which may include an amendment to the OCP to clearly recognize the potential for commercial uses to serve the airport and airport users, and a Zoning Bylaw amendment to include additional uses in the permitted uses in the Airport 2 Zone to allow for hotel, retail, restaurant, service station and other highway and airport related uses.

The community engagement and economic development have identified uses that would be suitable for the site, particularly close to the highway. Uses such as hotel, conference centre, day care, training and institutional facilities, and small-scale manufacturing and sale were identified. It is recognized that uses that may compete with downtown uses and development would not be

¹⁴ Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 1935, p59.

appropriate but uses that may serve the travelling public such as gas, or service station and restaurants would be suitable. These uses would require a Zoning Bylaw amendment. The purpose of this housing is to take the pressure off rental accommodation in Town, which is better used for long term residential rental.

Another use that may be suitable on or near the airport is workforce housing. For the purposes of the Master Plan, “work force housing”¹⁵ is considered to be accommodation for transient or short term workers in the region, working for airlines or helicopter companies, and employed on major (but short term) industrial projects in the region (such a BC Hydro). This would take the form of a temporary or camp style housing. Industry and airport tenants have expressed the need for accommodation on airport property to serve the needs of pilots, mine workers, service providers, and other employees of the mines and pipeline construction.

The Land Use Plan for the OCP identifies the airport as Airport Lands in Zoning Bylaw

8.1.1. Zoning Bylaw

The Zoning Bylaw provides a land use designation on every parcel of land in the municipality, identifying its permitted uses, density, heights and other development regulations. Division 8 of the Bylaw refers to the Airport zones.¹⁶ The airport’s land is divided into two zones: Airport One (AP-1) Zone and Airport Industrial (AP-2) Zone. Generally, AP-1 apply to airside lands and AP-2 apply to groundside lands on the airport. **Table 2** illustrates the uses permitted in these two zones.

To ensure financial viability and success for the Airport, a wider range of uses needs to be included in the AP-2 zone, including hotel, retail commercial, work force housing, and other uses that may be supportive of the airport and provide revenue through leases, recognizing that the airport should not compete with the downtown.

Table 2. Current Airport Zoning Bylaw

Section 8.1 AP-1 Airport One Zone The purpose of the AP-1 zone is to accommodate airport and aviation-related uses that primarily make use of airside access.	Section 8.2 AP-2 Airport Industrial Zone The purpose of the AP-2 zone is to accommodate an industrial park.
Permitted Principal Uses • Airport terminal building and terminal-related uses • Aviation fuel sales and storage • Aids for air navigation and safety • Air cargo facility • Aircraft operation and storage, including private storage hangars	Principle Permitted Uses • Aids for air navigation and safety • Air cargo facility • Aircraft operation and storage, including private storage hangars • Aircraft equipment sales, service and storage • Airport maintenance and utility areas

¹⁵ The term “work force housing” in the context of the Smithers Regional Airport Master Plan is not to be confused with the housing provided by not for profit organizations as affordable housing supported by BC Housing or CMHC which is more appropriate in the Town itself.

¹⁶ Town of Smithers Zoning Bylaw No. 1987, p82-84.

• Aircraft equipment sales, service and storage • Airport maintenance and utility areas • Airport parking • Automobile rentals • Airport taxi facility • Aviation related document and parcel delivery depot • Flight training school • Aviation-related trucking and freight depot • Aviation-related warehouse use and wholesale sales • Weather observation station and airport-related research facility • Fuel pumps for private use only • Regulations office use • Outdoor storage	• Airport parking • Airport taxi facility • Automobile rentals • Document and parcel delivery depot • Flight training school • Fuel storage • Military/Air Force • Mini storage • Trucking and freight depot • Warehouse use and wholesale sales • Weather observation station and airport-related research facility • Camp services and Expediting operations, including offices, outdoor storage and warehousing • Food packaging, repackaging, operations • Labelling operations • Industrial, Primary • Laboratory, testing facility • Aviation-related office use • Axillary Uses - o Fuel pumps for private use only - o Office use - o Outdoor storage - o Retail Sales and Display of Goods to a maximum of 50 m² or 10% of the gross floor area, whichever is less, used for retail sales and display of goods
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The airport zones reflect the current uses and what is allowed on the airport lands as illustrated on **Figure 20**. The AP-1 reflects airside development, while the AP-2 reflects groundside development. The AP-2 has a limited number of uses for the groundside development of the airport, which may be more restrictive than the OCP.

There are two parcels on either end of the hangar line that are zoned AP-2. This land, if rezoned to AP-1, could be modified to provide airside access in the future, with the construction of a taxiway linking the lands to the apron. This opens more options for hangar and aircraft maintenance and servicing. These uses are currently being provided at other airports, and the addition of available lands could attract these aviation-related uses to Smithers.

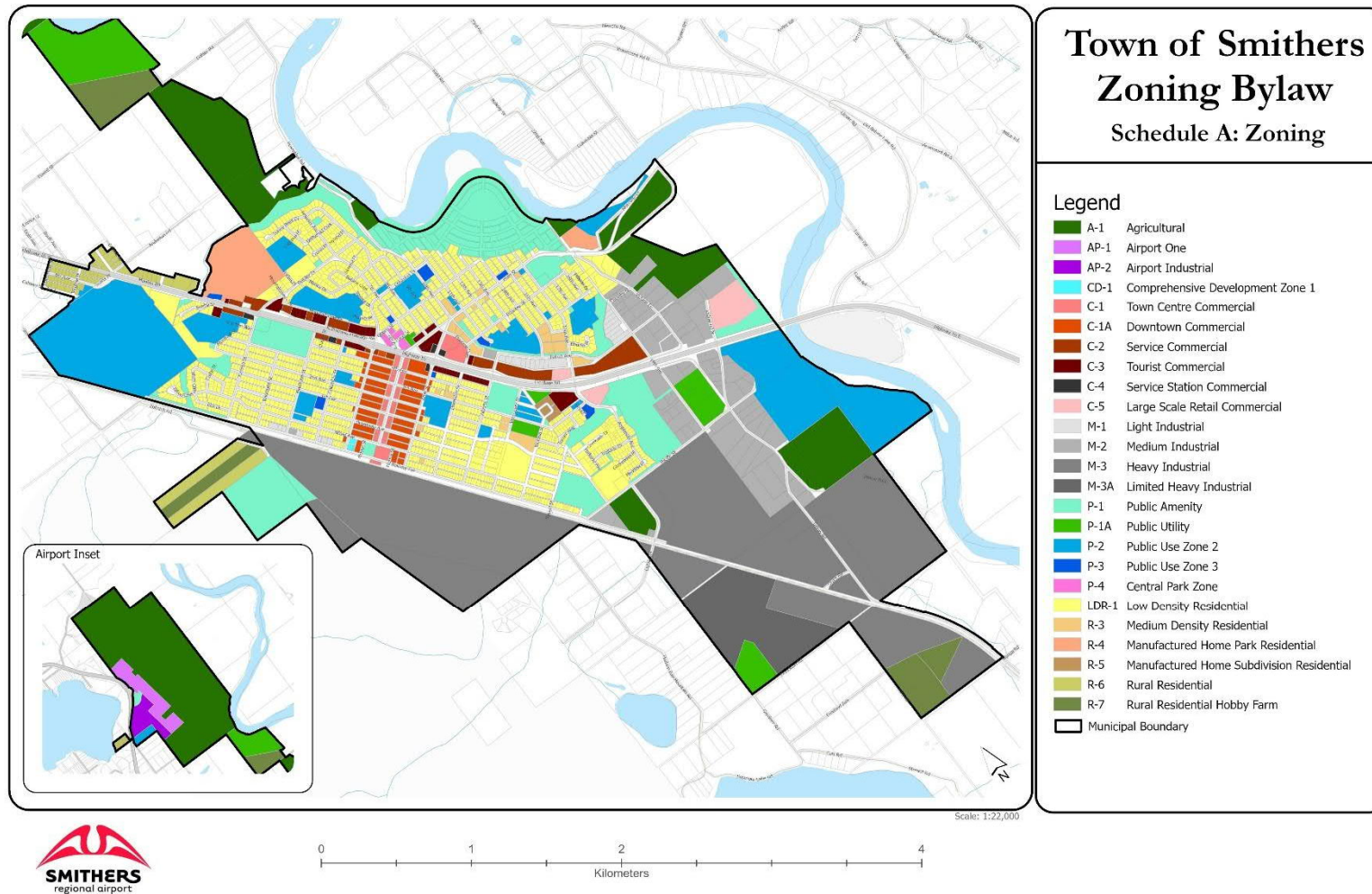
The Town Fire Training Centre has been located on AP-2 lands.

In addition, there is some land identified for public use located north and south of the AP-2 lands.

The lands south, west and north of the airport are identified as agricultural (while being located on the airport property).

As noted in **Section 8.7.2**, the zoning for the groundside lands (AP-2) are restrictive and may not allow for the range of uses required by the airport to service the potential needs of industry.

Figure 20. Zoning for the Smithers Regional Airport



8.4 Existing Land Use and Leases

The land uses at the airport are divided into airside (AP-1 Zone) and groundside (AP-2 Zone). Airside uses have direct access to aviation infrastructure, including taxiways and aprons, and the runway. Groundside uses do not have direct access to the runway or airside infrastructure. Often groundside uses provide support to the airside uses, but under federal regulation, are not required to have an aviation focus. Airports are significantly challenged by financial sustainability, particularly when passenger and flight volumes have not recovered from COVID or are reflecting regional economic declines.

Existing uses at the airport support aviation, both fixed wing and rotary aircraft. Rotary aircraft are helicopters. Helicopters do not require direct airside access; as such, they can be located on the airport lands but distant from the Terminal Building. This is evidenced at the Smithers Regional Airport.

The Town has recently initiated the relocation of the Fire Training Centre from the downtown area to the airport.

Figure 21 illustrates the current leases and uses at the airport.

There are currently several groundside uses, including BVSAR, Apex Drilling, Pellows Construction, as well as helicopter operations. The issue of environmental contamination has delayed the leasing of lands. Once this issue is resolved, there are significant lands that can be leased at the airport that will support the Town's economic development strategy, create revenue for the airport and the Town, generate employment, and support other industries (particularly resource industries) in the valley.

Leases at the airport are currently a variety of short and long-term. To fully incentivize development and investment at the airport, the Town needs to offer long-term leases. This requires leases of 25 to 49 years. Development at airports generally requires significant investment for buildings, such as warehousing and hangars. Should financing be required, banks generally do not accept a lease less than 25 years.

There is also the potential to sell groundside lots. While the sale of airside lands is never recommended, because the airport is owned and regulated by the Town, any owner of a lot would

have to conform to the Town's zoning and development regulations. While this brings a one-time



influx of cash for the sale, the airport would not gain regular revenue. The Town would collect property taxes.

All development at the airport, whether airside or groundside, is required to meet Federal Airport Zoning Regulations (AZR), not exceed height restrictions, not generate smoke, steam or other visual impediments, not unduly attract birds or wildlife, and not create any electronic or signals interference. The airport lands currently do not fall under a Development Permit Area. Applications for development would be in the form of a building permit under the current zoning.

The Town could consider applying a Form and Character Development Permit Area to the airport lands to allow for greater control and review of future proposed development. And as noted above, the Town could consider expanding the permitted uses in the AP-2 Zone.



Figure 21. Smithers Regional Airport - Lease Map, 2026



8.5 Land Availability

The Smithers Regional Airport is located 5 km northwest of the Town and occupies approximately 340 hectares of land adjacent to the north side of Yellowhead Highway 16. The Smithers Regional Airport is part of a regional air system that links domestic and international services.

The airport land represents a unique development opportunity for future airport-related activities due to its proximity to regional markets and unique airside, as well as road and rail links, including Yellowhead Highway 16.

The Smithers advantage includes affordable lease rates, a diversified local economy, lower cost of living, access to affordable housing, world-class recreation and tourism opportunities, and government services.



9 Development Challenges and Constraints

As with all regional airports, the Smithers Regional Airport faces constraints and challenges. The following summarizes the challenges and constraints for the Smithers Regional Airport.

Developability of Land – as the landowner and the developer, the Town and the airport are responsible for getting the airport lands development ready. This may include extending servicing to the lot, improving internal road access, extending power and clearing the land. This can be expensive. Municipalities are not often in the role of the developer. Borrowing ability can be limited for municipalities and municipalities have other projects that may take priority over developing land at the airport. Revenue generation is critical for the airport. Therefore, leasing and developing the lands/lots requiring the least infrastructure upgrades first would be strategic for the airport.

Financial – The Smithers Regional Airport faces a financial sustainability challenge. It is reliant largely on its reserve fund for operations (projected to run out in 2028), and grant funding for specific projects that meet strict criteria (most are limited to capital projects). Grants are restrictive, competitive, and provincial and federal funding is limited. The airport needs to increase revenue from the traditional sources of revenue, including the following, all of which are supported by increased passenger and aircraft traffic:

- Landing fees;
- Airport Improvement Fees / Passenger Facility Fees;
- Concessions (car rental counters, airline counters, shops, restaurants, etc.);
- Advertising;
- Parking fees; and
- Leasing lands, both airside and groundside.

Environmental Contamination – Several existing industrial lands at the airport are considered potential contaminators due to previous and historical Schedule 2 uses. The Ministry of Environment has standards regarding contaminated lands that supersede any municipal airport development regulations. Studies have been conducted and there are several sites that have been identified as being potentially contaminated and potentially contaminating adjacent lands due to underground plumes. Often, the potential contamination is contained on the specific site, but detailed groundwater testing is required to demonstrate the extent of the contamination. Because the airport is one single parcel of land, the potential contamination, is deemed to be interpreted as the entire airport site. The Ministry will not allow any development on contaminated lands. A solution must be determined to allow development at the airport. **Figure 22** illustrates the lands identified as Schedule 2 use sites.

Airport Rates and Fees – Smithers has a high Airport Improvement Fee (AIF) compared to other regional airports in BC. Smithers AIF is \$30.00. Whereas Abbotsford is \$10.00, Terrace is \$16.80, Campbell River is \$10.00, Kamloops is \$15.75, and Nanaimo is \$15.00. Only Victoria (\$25.00), Kelowna (\$29.40) and Prince George (\$36.75) are close to Smithers. This cost is added to the ticket

price and may be one more contributing factor to the perception of increased costs to fly to and from Smithers.

Air Carrier Service Level Considerations – Currently Air Canada is the only commercial carrier serving the airport. In the summer, they provide two flights per day to Vancouver, and in the winter, they reduce the number of flights to one a day. This is causing a leakage of money and passengers out of Smithers. People will drive to Terrace or Prince George to access additional flight schedules and carriers. And with choices of airlines, Air Canada is losing passengers to WestJet, CMA and Pacific Coastal at these neighbouring airports. Increasing commercial carrier service is a priority for the Town, the airport and the residents, recognizing the challenges involved in increasing service. Opportunities exist for service expansion, especially on new/unserved routes, such as Calgary, where industry workers and skilled labour travel has driven demand. The Airport has recently added specific wording to their updated Fees and Charges bylaw, to incentivise carriers offering scheduled service on new routes.

Population and Passenger Growth Projections – Smithers has not seen the growth projected by the Province. This experience is mirrored in other small northern communities. This reality implies that both population and passenger growth may be flatter than predicted, making it difficult for air carriers to justify higher levels of service.

Airport Zoning Regulations (AZR) – Amendment Process – The current AZR does not accurately reflect previous updates/developments at the airport, such as lengthening of the runway. To protect the certification of the airport and runway, the Town and Airport should consider amending the AZR. Its worth noting that there are considerable costs and lengthy timeframes (3-5 years) associated with this update process, including a public consultation period, and that the Airport would be required to sign an upfront commitment agreement to cover all associated costs. There are no known funding sources available at this time for amendments to the AZR.

Economic Conditions – The airport needs the regional growth, and regional growth is dependent upon the continued operation of the airport. It is clear that the airport benefits more residents and jurisdictions than just the Town of Smithers residents. While the Town of Smithers has a population of 5,378 (2021 Federal Census), the Buckley-Nechako Regional District had a population of 37,737 (2021 Federal Census). These regional residents utilize the airport but provide no tax support. Moving forward it would be beneficial to the continued success of the airport to receive some financial support for the airport from the Regional District. This could come from general revenue or from the [Municipal and Regional District Tax](#) (MRDT) or from their emergency budget (reflecting the regional use of the airport for medevac and fire protection). The quality of life, and proximity to nature and amenities makes the area attractive for families and businesses and the region has growth potential, particularly in resource and tourism. However, the employees of the mines in the region, fly to the mine by charter aircraft to the camps, stay there for work and fly out to their place of residence. Encouraging these people to live in Smithers will require strong partnership between the Town, industry, the airport and other agencies, such as BC Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to affect demand - regional attraction, access to efficient transportation, jobs, housing, amenities, access to healthcare and education, etc.

Runway Recertification – As described earlier in this plan, there are several unknowns associated with the airport being able to lower approach limits in order to meet the criteria required for runway recertification from a non-instrument to a non-precision runway. There is a cost to assess the feasibility to recertify, and if considered practical, the actual recertification cost. Both costs will need to be factored into short- and/or medium-term actions.

Terminal Building Secure Area Cooling – While the installation of a geothermal heat pump provides environmentally sustainable heating and cooling to the terminal, the current cooling capacity is insufficient to provide adequate air conditioning to the secure area of the Terminal Building during hotter summer months. This modification is a priority by the airport, but the source of funding for this upgrade is not forecasted; therefore, a source remains outstanding.



Figure 22. Environmental Contamination Lands



10 Airport Land Use Plan

10.1 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for land use at the Smithers Regional Airport include:

- Safe and efficient airport operation;
- Financial sustainability and resilience;
- Provide a high level of service;
- Foster a collaborative environment;
- Communicate clearly and transparently;
- Respectful environment; and
- Commitment to Clients.

10.2 Proposed Future Land Use

10.2.1 Aviation or Airside Development

Based on the current zoning, AP-1 Zone, the airside or aviation-related development has a broad range of uses. While current aviation uses include hangars and aircraft maintenance, there is the potential to expand the uses. Air cargo facilities would be strongly supported at the airport. Additional airside lands have been identified in **Figure 23** Proposed Land Uses. Flight school, catering, fueling and additional hangar development would be first priorities for the airport.

Uses that would attract and support commercial airlines and tourism opportunities would also be supported, such as cold storage and short-term storage for passenger equipment and product (fishing and skiing equipment, and potential cold storage for fishing and hunting game).

Currently the AP-1 Zone provides the uses appropriate for moving forward for airside development, with the amendment of the map to include the potential airside parcels.

Advanced Air Mobility

In addition to the traditional uses, the opportunity for Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) is a potential for airside lands at the airport. **Appendix C** provides more information about this opportunity.

AAM is a modern ecosystem of air transportation for moving people, goods, and services, using technologies like electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and drones. As per Transport Canada, the AAM services fall into two broad categories - Urban Air Mobility and Regional Air Mobility.^[1]

eVTOL are aircraft that can take off and land vertically just like helicopters. eVTOL technology works on electric propulsion in which electric motors are powered by either batteries or other electric

power sources, providing vertical lift with rotors or propellers arranged in different configurations around the aircraft.¹⁷¹⁸

As Smithers Regional Airport is a small regional airport, “Regional Air Mobility” would be well suited for it, if explored, given the Airport’s strategic location in northwestern BC and its existing infrastructure (including 340 hectares of land adjacent to Highway 16)^[3]. By incorporating forward-looking planning around vertiport readiness, electric aircraft operations, and low-altitude connectivity corridors, the Smithers Regional Airport can signal its readiness to adapt to emerging aviation technologies, while supporting regional economic growth, improved services, and community accessibility.



Source: Helijet, 2023

AAM, as NASA defines it, is “safe, sustainable, affordable, and accessible aviation for local and interregional mission transformation”. AAM could bring a transformative shift in air transportation about how people and goods move.

Smithers Regional Airport’s available land, strategic northern location, and existing operational capacity positions it to not only benefit from future AAM services, but also to accommodate potential AAM or eVTOL operators as the sector evolves.

1. **Regional Connectivity** – Ideally located within the northwest region of BC and only 5 km northwest of downtown Smithers, the Smithers Regional Airport could explore the opportunity of being a hub for eVTOL or cargo drone routes serving smaller northern communities with limited road access.
2. **Emergency and Medical Response** – Smithers Regional Airport already plays a significant role in emergency and medical responses in the region, and it also acts as a wildfire response base. In May 2025, Smithers Regional Airport hosted one of the largest live emergency response training exercises in northern BC. Given this existing role, the Smithers Regional Airport is well-positioned to extend that capability into future AAM-

¹⁷ <https://arc.aiaa.org/doi/10.2514/1.D0440>.

¹⁸ <https://www.smithers.ca/news-notice/press-release-2025-05-large-scale-emergency-training-event-may-23-2025>.

enabled operations (such as eVTOL or cargo-drone support) to provide firefighting services, rapid movement of goods, equipment or medical supplies during emergencies or natural-disaster events.

3. **Economic Development** – Readiness for AAM can signal to industry, government and investors that Smithers is forward-looking and open to innovation, which could attract funding, new businesses, jobs, and technological investment into the region. Collaboration on AAM/eVTOL with neighbouring airports could also be explored further. Smithers Regional Airport could also leverage its position to quickly transport locally grown produce (e.g., mushrooms) to regional and international markets, supporting both local farmers and the broader regional economic resilience.
4. **Just in Time Delivery** – The use of AAM could provide an excellent source for just in time delivery of smaller critical technological elements for industry.
5. **Climate Alignment** – Embedding AAM readiness, enabling electrified short-haul aviation sends a message that the Smithers Regional Airport is aligning with low-emission transportation trends, which strengthens the airport’s environmental credentials and supports community expectations.

AAM remains an emerging field with potential opportunities. For Smithers Regional Airport, taking smaller strategic steps to adopt AAM will ensure that the airport remains well-positioned as the technology evolves.

Air Cargo

There is currently no air cargo facility located at the airport. Some local businesses use existing Air Canada services for urgent needs, just in time delivery. Air cargo is a use that could be added to the airport with minimal investment.

There is sufficient land at the airport to support air cargo operations and with major projects planned regionally over the next 10 years (transmission line, possibly new pipeline, mining and exploration), the prospect to have such a capability may be attractive to industry. The nearest airport with an air cargo capability is Prince George, but it also has no dedicated infrastructure for air cargo, operating on an integrated model with existing domestic airlines on a larger scale compared to Smithers.

Airport size, regional demographics (population, business/industrial) and economic considerations all factor into the practicality of establishing/attracting such a capability at a regional airport like Smithers.

Upgrades to support cargo may include: a small cold storage facility for hunter/fisher catches, a storage area for small cargo (potentially a secured shipping container), and heavier gauge dollies or carts to move goods to aircraft.

10.2.2 Groundside Development

Groundside uses or generally non-aviation uses (with the exception of Helicopter uses) can provide a broad range of light industrial, commercial, accommodation and manufacturing opportunities. These uses do not need to have a direct relationship to the airport. However, often these uses do have a connection.

Light industrial and manufacturing uses are appropriate at the airport. There is land available, and the product may service other airport users or support future cargo service.

A hotel at an airport is generally considered an airport supportive use. It provides accommodation for pilots, passengers who may be stranded due to weather cancellations, work crews transitioning from camp to a commercial flight and tourists. It is recognized that the overall occupancy for hotels in Smithers is approximately 70%, with higher occupancy in key tourism seasons. While this is not full occupancy, travellers like options and an airport location may meet the needs of people that are currently not being met with limited taxi and no transit service to the airport from downtown.

The inclusion of workforce housing (as discussed in Section 8.3.1) would allow for industry to create short-term housing for employees and crews.

Commercial retail uses could provide service to people on airport, such as tenants, future hotel guests and work force employees. This may be considered at later phases of development once other uses have developed. It could also provide opportunity for partnerships with Indigenous arts and culture groups to provide a fixed location to showcase and sell local Indigenous art.

Hotel and associated uses could also provide conference centre capability. Options for conferences are limited, as evidenced by the use of the arenas for the Minerals North Conference in May 2026.

It is recognized that the Town's Zoning Bylaw would require amendment to allow these uses at the airport.

Figure 23 Proposed Land Uses illustrates a land use strategy that would allow for a long-range strategy for airport growth and financial sustainability.

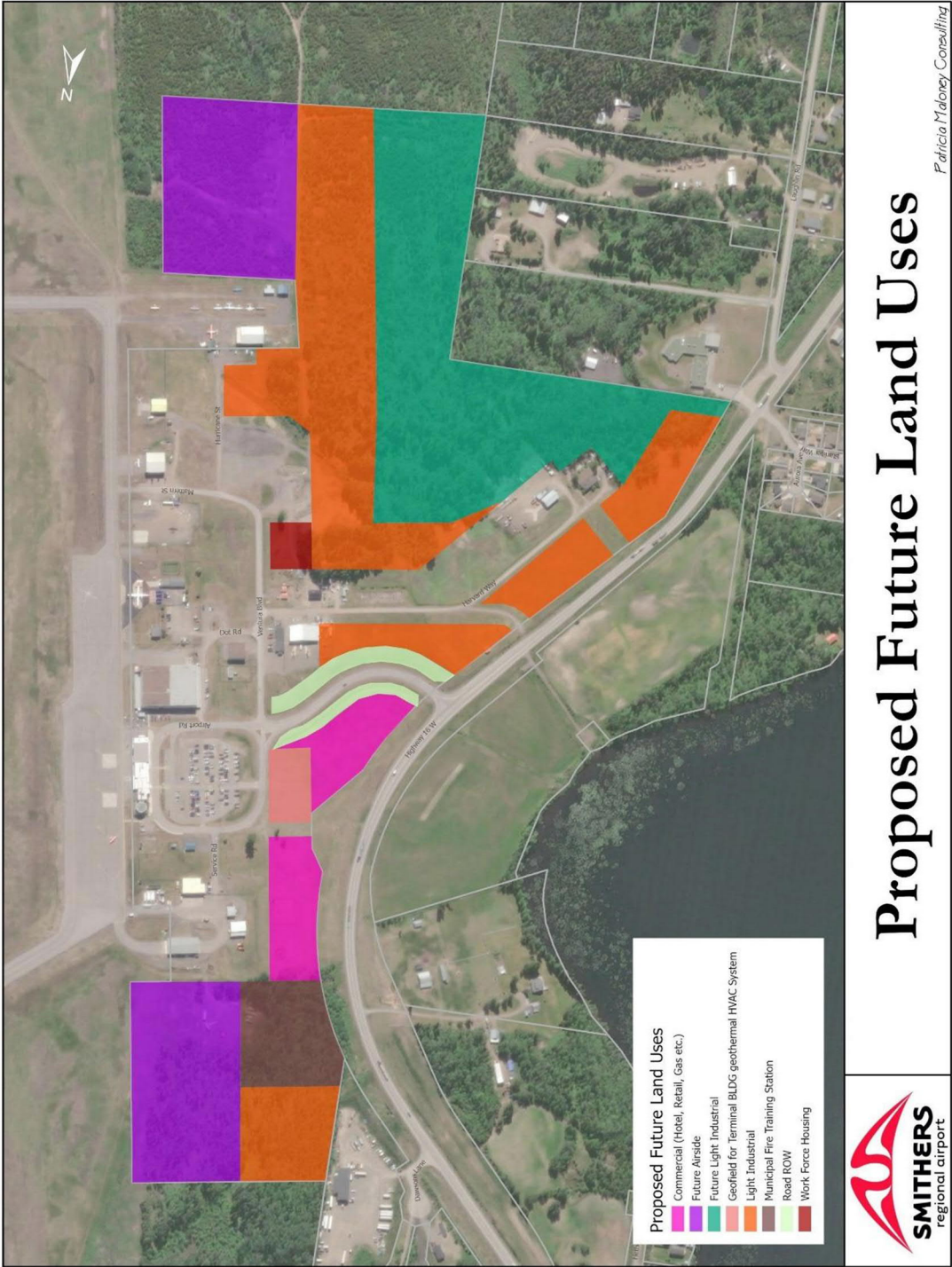
The Future Airside parcels increase airside development potential. Increased use of the existing aviation infrastructure (apron, taxiway and runway) is a strategy utilized at airports. Each parcel would require some additional taxiway development. The tenant would construct hangar and apron facilities. The parcels are in close proximity to water, sewer and power for connection. These parcels could accommodate the air cargo, increased hangar development and aircraft maintenance uses.

The inclusion of commercial development on the access road to the airport could accommodate hotel and retail/restaurant uses. While these uses may not be viable at this time, industry has identified the need for accommodation, as has the tourist industry. There was a hotel proposal in the past which did not proceed. Future markets and clarification of the environmental contamination issue may change the viability. The retail/restaurant uses would support both the airport tenants, the hotel guests, and work force housing residents.

This leads to the inclusion of a parcel of land that would be identified for work force housing. Industry in the past have identified the need for accommodation for crews, pilots, transient staff and service personnel. This would not be permanent housing, but housing that could accommodate short-term (up to three weeks) that would be available for industry. Examples of this type of housing are evident in many communities to provide accommodation for people such as a specialist coming to town for a three-week contract, or crew members who are on a two-week in/two-week off schedule for term projects. With the housing shortages in the Town, these workers are hesitant to come to Smithers due to lack of affordable and accessible accommodation.

Light industrial uses illustrated on **Figure 23** are currently allowed in the AP-2 Zone. These uses could include a wide range of warehousing, mini storage and outdoor storage. These are uses that often require larger parcels of land that may not be available in the Town.

Figure 23. Proposed Future Land Uses



11 Development Strategy

The development strategy has been divided into short, medium and long-term recommendations. The years associated with the terms are not fixed but provide a guide. These tasks should be triggered by demand, increased air traffic and passenger movements, collaborative marketing and economic development initiatives, and timely funding opportunities. In addition, based on market demand, tasks can occur out of order if the infrastructure can support the specific development.

This strategy recognizes the need to generate revenue for the airport to pay for capital and operational works. The short-term projects and tasks reflect relatively low-cost actions to get the lands ready for lease and development.

Future work (medium and long-term) may require more capital to accomplish the development, following the adage of development, that you must spend money to make money. It is anticipated that the capital to complete the work for the medium and long-term projects will be received from the leases, and increases in passengers and aircraft as a result of the short-term projects.

11.1 Short-Term (0 – 5 years)

The following tasks are considered high priority and the airport and the Town should work together to complete them in the short-term. These tasks are critical to attracting and approving development at the airport. For the Short-Term, development is required to proceed immediately. With projected passenger movements ranging from 70,000 to 74,000, and projected aircraft movements (Figure 12) ranging from 11,400 to 12,000 in the short-term time frame, the growth and revenue generation must be from the development and leasing of land.

1. **Zoning Bylaw Amendments** – Complete Zoning Bylaw Amendments to modify AP-1 Zone and include future airside parcels, and add hotel, workforce housing, conference, education/institutional, unrestricted commercial (retail and restaurant) to AP-2 Zone.
2. **Official Community Plan Amendment** – Add policies to section 6.2.2.1 to recognize development at the airport on Highway 16 that reflects uses and services to the tourist and the travelling public including overnight accommodation (including, conference and meeting facilities), tourism related retail (indigenous arts and crafts), restaurant, service station.
3. **Subdivide and Identify Development Ready lots** – Clarify contamination with the Ministry of Environment, subdivide lots for lease, develop a long-term lease template, work with the Town for expedited process for development approval.
4. **Prepare Long Term Lease Template** – work with the Town to create a long term leases for periods of 25 and 49 years to encourage significant capital investment on the airport.
5. **Commercial Service** – Proactively pursue increased airline service, including frequency. Working with the Town and Economic Development, reach out to WestJet, Pacific Coastal, CMA, and Porter Air and incentivize their location to Smithers.
6. **Improve Airport-to-Town Connectivity** – Working with the local taxi company and potential business incentives through the Town, improve connectivity between the airport

and downtown Smithers. This could be accomplished through taxi, shuttle services, transit coordination and mobility-accessible infrastructure.

7. **Survey Phase 1 Lots** – Based on the phasing illustrated on **Figure 24**, a legal survey of lots for lease. This will provide options for tenants, with a variety of sizes, airside and groundside.
8. **Extend Taxiway North** – Extend the taxiway at the north end of the hangar line to provide airside access to lots.
9. **Market the Airport lands** - in collaboration with Economic Development, market the airports lands for lease. Potentially using social media, BC Aviation Council conference and direct marketing, and mail out to industry. Arrange meetings with industry to promote the lots.
10. **Communication and Outreach** - Continue to communicate with and educate the community on airport operations, including sharing statistics regarding weather and cancellations, and manage expectations for airport upgrades based on financial ability. Use website, social media and potentially schedule a “day at the airport” for residents and students to attend.
11. **Terminal Building Cooling** – Recommend inclusion of the upgrade to the heat pump system in the Terminal Building to seek funding and add as a capital project to ensure cooling in the secured departure area. Given the green nature of this improvement, it is important to the Town’s goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
12. **Advanced Air Mobility** – Monitor AAM policy and regulatory developments from Transport Canada, NAV CANADA, and the Canadian Advanced Air Mobility (CAAM) organization and building relationships with potential partners.
13. **Partnerships** - Integrate Indigenous partnership, recognition, and cultural representation into airport planning and design. Partner with industry to increase industry presence at the airport (e.g., work force housing, training centres and storage facilities).

11.2 Medium-Term (6 – 10 years)

The Medium-Term development proceeds once commercial air service has increased and the number of passengers is on the upswing. Phase 1 lots will be 85% leased and a revenue stream will have started at the airport. The Medium-Term sees passenger projections up to 83,000 and will require additional lots to be leased to continue to increase revenue. This phase also sees the potential for the sale of groundside lots.

1. **Survey Phase 2 Lots** – Survey the next phase of lots, which include a variety of groundside and airside lots. Trigger for this is either a special request for a lease lot of a certain size or use, or 85% of the Phase 1 lots are leased.
2. **Advanced Air Mobility** – Assess the feasibility of small-scale cargo drone demonstrations, emergency response support, or regional connectivity trials and review operational requirements, such as electrical demand, siting for small charging pads, or low-altitude flight corridors, as pilot projects become available and evaluate whether early AAM services could realistically meet local needs (e.g., tourism access, medical transport or

- cargo efficiency). Coordinate with the Town, Regional District and NAV CANADA to ensure local planning frameworks can adapt to low-altitude aircraft operations.
3. **Extend Taxiway South** – Extend taxiway on the south end of the hangar line to provide access to lots for airside development.
 4. **Float Plane** – Provide support to general aviation float plane operators, work with MoTT to address movement of float planes across the highway, encourage maintenance and service providers for float planes.
 5. **Fuel** – As the Airport Authority, the Town can investigate the prospect of adding self-serve AVGAS fuel capability at the airport.
 6. **Market Lots for Sale** – Working with Economic Development, create a strategy for the sale of groundside lots. This work would include an appraisal of the lots and pricing. This would also include clarification with the Town of the role and responsibility of the future landowners, including infrastructure connection and tie-in.
 7. **Recertification of Runway** – Initiating the process of determining the feasibility of lowering instrument approach limits, including the recertification of the runway from non-instrument to instrument: non precision to improve weather resilience and operational reliability.
 8. **Continue Community Outreach** – Continue to work with Economic Development and the community to provide current information and encourage an environment of open and transparent information sharing.

11.3 Long-Term (10+ Years)

The Long-Term passenger projections range between 70,000 and 95,000. If the higher projection is achieved, the airport will have developed lands, increased traffic and commercial service, and revenue. This will require more lots to be leased, some groundside lots to be sold and the apron will require expansion.

1. **Survey Phase 3 Lots** – Survey groundside lots and develop a servicing strategy to service those lots currently un-serviced, as well as develop a strategy for tenant contribution, lot owner developer cost charges, and ongoing utility payments.
2. **Advanced Air Mobility** – Explore opportunities to accommodate AAM service providers on-site, such as small-scale cargo operators, regional eVTOL services, or emergency-response partners. This includes the development of a marketing approach that encourages the AAM community to consider Smithers Regional Airport as a development, test and trial centre for emerging technology in the AAM domain.
3. **Expand Apron** – If the passenger volumes achieve 95,000, this will reflect that there is additional commercial service, and the apron will require expansion with parking for multiple aircraft.
4. **Clear and Survey Lots** – The remaining groundside lands on the airport require clearing, lot design and survey for leasing.

11.4 Phasing Strategy

The phasing strategy looks at a logical approach to developing lands closest to existing servicing tie-ins.

The first phase of development is the Short-Term development. This includes light industrial lands and the Fire Training Centre. This phase also includes the lands identified for work force housing. If major projects are to begin in the short-term, housing will be a critical element to the success of the project and the continued use of the airport.

The next phase of development, Medium-Term, introduces some of the commercial uses, such as retail, restaurant and hotel as well as additional light industrial lands. Short-Term development also allows for the airside development on the south end of the hangar line to open up.

Included in the Long-Term Phase of development is the completion of the two new airside parcels. This also includes additional light industrial uses.

The critical element in the phasing is that the development is triggered by market/industry demand. The airport will have lots surveyed and ready to lease and a strategy for extending servicing to the properties when a tenant is committed to a lease and development of the site. The Phases of development are not tied to the year allocation for the Term. For example, it is not automatic that the medium term uses and the medium-term phasing will occur in 6 to 10 years. Development will occur when the demand is evident and servicing capacity confirmed. Other than surveying the lots to prepare them for lease (or sale), the airport will not pro-actively service lands for development but will be ready to service the lots upon confirmation of development by the tenant.

The strategy is for contiguous development that allows for a logical progression and extension of the servicing. Should a tenant, or prospective lot owner determine that they will extend services to a specific site, the Airport and Town will work with them to ensure the proper capacity in the servicing lines to ensure future development can tie into these lines (potentially paying a latecomer payment to the developer who extended the servicing).

Appendix A

What We Heard Report

SMITHERS REGIONAL AIRPORT

MASTER PLAN

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT,
January 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Smithers Regional Airport (YYD) is completing an Airport Master Plan to guide the future development of the airport in a manner that supports long-term operational needs and aligns with the community's vision. The purpose of the engagement program was to gather input from tenants and airport users, community members, stakeholders, and key partners regarding the current role and future direction of the airport. Understanding these perspectives is essential to ensuring that both short and long-term planning reflects operational realities, community priorities, and broader regional objectives.

Engagement activities were designed to reach a diverse range of participants and included in-person and virtual stakeholder meetings, online community and industry surveys, and written feedback submissions. Participants represented tenants and airport users, airline and aviation service providers, local government and elected officials, regulatory and federal agencies, economic and industry organizations, and the general public. This multi-layered approach enabled both targeted technical discussions and broader community input, supporting an accessible and inclusive engagement process.

Key themes identified through the engagement process included concerns related to airline service levels, limited competition, high fares, and flight reliability, particularly during periods of poor weather. Participants consistently emphasized the airport's critical regional and economic role, including its importance to workforce mobility, medical evacuation services, time-sensitive cargo, charter and specialized aviation operations, and overall community connectivity. Additional issues raised included the need to improve ground transportation access to and from the airport, support a range of aviation activities, and ensure the airport reflects the identity and values of the community it serves.

This What We Heard Report summarizes the input received through the engagement process and identifies the key themes that emerged across the various engagement activities. The findings presented in this report will inform the development of the Smithers Regional Airport Master Plan and support future planning decisions that are responsive to stakeholder input and community perspectives.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context of Region/ Project

Smithers is situated in Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako in northwestern British Columbia having a population of approximately 5,400, with surrounding region comprising of a population of approximately 15,000. Smithers offers a mountain town experience to residents, tourists and business owners with its wide variety of activities available in the Town.¹²

The Town of Smithers owns and operates the Smithers Regional Airport, located 5 km northwest of the Town and the largest registered Airport in Northwestern British Columbia between Terrace and Prince George. The Smithers Regional Airport sees a footfall of 75,000 and 85,000 passengers every year from across the world. The Airport sits on 340 hectares of town land and has 53.5 acres of zoned lands offering a distinct opportunity for aviation-related development, supported by their close access to regional markets and strong multimodal connections, including airside facilities, Highway 16, and nearby rail links.³

During the process, the consultant team has thoroughly reviewed Airport Business and Land Use Plan 2009, Economic Development Plan, Analysis and Connectivity Reports, Marketing Strategy 2013, Town of Smithers Five-Year Financial Plan (2025-2029), Town of Smithers OCP and Zoning Bylaw. By analyzing these materials alongside current developments and partnerships, the team has established a strong foundation to guide strategic planning and support a long-term vision for the growth, operations, and regional role of Smithers Regional Airport (YYD).

1.2 Purpose of Engagement

The purpose of the engagement process was to gather input from community members, stakeholders, and organizations connected to the Airport, ensuring that the Master Plan reflects local perspectives and supports responsible growth. This approach helps position the Airport to meet the current and future needs of both the Town and the broader region.

The goal of this engagement process was to understand the perspectives of community members and all parties connected to the Airport, including their travel habits, interests and usage, access to airport services and ideas for future development of the available airport lands. The process was designed to be open, inclusive, and respectful, ensuring that all voices could meaningfully contribute to the Airport's long-term vision.

¹ <https://www.smithers.ca/airport/airport-administration-0/development-opportunity>

² <https://www.smithers.ca/sites/default/files/2024-04/Smithers%20Community%20Profile%202024.pdf>

³ <https://www.smithers.ca/airport/airport-administration-0/development-opportunity>

The input gathered through this process will guide the New Airport Master Plan for Smithers Regional Airport, helping ensure the policies and direction aligns with community values and regional priorities along with sustainable future development of the Airport.

The consultant team visited the Town and held engagement with the tenants. Although participation numbers were modest, the discussions were thoughtful and provided meaningful insights from a diverse range of perspectives. Community and Industry surveys were also being done. The feedback collected through meetings with Tenants, Council, Town Staff and the Airport Manager, and discussions with the stakeholder/ businesses are summarized in this “What We Heard” report to support the ongoing Airport Master Plan work.

1.3 Engagement Approach

The consultant team facilitated this engagement process by approaching various methods for the community and stakeholders through in-person/online meetings and surveys to get as much input as possible to be considered in the Smithers Regional Airport Master Plan. The consultant team worked closely with the Airport Manager, identified a range of key stakeholder groups and airport tenants for consultation, alongside City Council, municipal staff, and the general public; the following methods were used to gather input:

- In-person engagements.
- Records of meetings with key groups and individuals, such as the airport tenants, Smithers Exploration Group, NAV CANADA, Transport Canada (Regional and National HQs), Air Canada, Central Mountain Air, Alpine Lakes Air and BC Wildfire Service Aviation.
- Community and Industry Engagement Surveys.
- Multiple communications with Airport staff.

Stakeholder Type	Approach	Date of Engagement
Tenants and airport users	1 x in-person meetings	October 27, 2025
City Council	1 x in-person session with Committee of the Whole	October 27, 2025
Past Airport Manager	1 x in-person meeting	October 28, 2025
Airport Manager and Staff	1 x in-person meetings	October 28, 2025
NAV CANADA	1 x virtual meeting	November 04, 2025
Airline CMA	1 x in-person meeting	November 05, 2025
Airline	1 x virtual meeting	November 17, 2025
CAAM Meeting	1 x virtual meeting	November 24, 2025
Transport Canada	1 x virtual meeting	December 01, 2025
Wildfire BC	2 x teleconference	December 2025
SEG Stakeholder Response	1 x online form	
Community and Stakeholders	1 x online survey each	

Several attempts were made to engage other specific users of the airport, but without success.

By combining surveys, targeted stakeholder meetings, communication with airport tenants, and regular coordination with Airport staff and management, the consultant team gathered valuable input, insights, and a strong understanding of the regional context. The purpose of the engagement was to develop a clear understanding of the community's and stakeholders' visions, priorities, concerns, and ideas for the Smithers Airport Master Plan. Tailored sets of guiding questions were used for each audience to support focused and efficient discussions, while a welcoming and low-pressure environment was created to encourage open input. This combination of engagement methods enabled a balance between broad community perspectives and more targeted technical and organizational insights. Further details are outlined in the Engagement Activities section.

1.4 Stakeholder Category

1. Airport Tenants & Operators
2. Airlines & Aviation Service Providers
3. Local Government & Elected Officials
4. Regulatory & Federal Agencies
5. Economic & Industry Stakeholders
6. Community & Airport Users

2.0 Engagement Activities and Findings

2.1 Stakeholder Meetings

The consultant team facilitated a series of targeted in-person and virtual meetings with airport tenants, airline representatives, regulatory agencies, municipal leadership, and industry partners to gather input on airport operations, infrastructure considerations, and long-term development needs. This engagement approach allowed participants to share operational perspectives, regulatory context, and local knowledge relevant to the Airport Master Plan.

Stakeholder meetings included:

- Airport tenants and on-airport operators (terminal group meeting)
- Airline representatives
- Airport management (current and past)
- Town of Smithers Council (Committee of the Whole)
- Town of Smithers staff
- CAAM
- NAV CANADA
- Transport Canada

These meetings provided an opportunity for open dialogue, clarification of technical matters, and discussion of stakeholder-specific concerns and opportunities.

2.1.1 Key Findings/Points Raised

a. Terminal Engagement with Tenants and Airport User Representatives

A total of 15 tenants and airport user representatives attended the engagement session at the Runway Café and Bar.

- **Air Service Reliability and Competitiveness**

Participants expressed concerns about the reliability, frequency, and cost of scheduled air service at Smithers. Participants identified recurring issues

with delivering of baggage, specialized equipment such as skis and fishing gear, which affects both residents and visitors. Respondents highlighted multiple instances when the air carrier left clients' recreational gear behind thus leaving a negative impression of their experience travelling to Smithers.

- **Passenger Experience and Terminal Facilities**

Several issues were raised related to security staffing levels, reliable food service and the lack of adequate cooling in the secure area was noted as a concern.

- **Airport Lands, Leasing, and Development Constraints**

Interest was expressed in purchasing or leasing airport lands; however, contaminated soils and land survey issues continue to limit development opportunities.

- **Workforce, Housing, and Community Liveability**

Workforce challenges were consistently raised, including shortages of affordable rental housing and reliance on migrant workers. One helicopter operator felt forced to install staff housing to accommodate most of their 40 migrant pilots, which brings with it additional costs to the operator and ultimately their clients. Importance of showing Smithers' livability, including housing availability, amenities, schools, were also discussed.

- **Economic and Industry Context**

Participants highlighted the continued importance of the mining, exploration, and resource sectors to the regional economy and the airport. While support for sustainability initiatives exists, regional economic realities remain resource based.

- **Transportation and Ground Access**

Concerns were raised regarding limited local ground transportation options, including taxi availability, which can affect passenger experience and airport accessibility.

b. One-on-One Meetings with Municipal and Airport Leadership

Targeted meetings with Council, staff, and airport management.

- **Airport's Strategic Importance**

Municipal leadership and airport management emphasized the critical role of the airport in supporting community connectivity, economic development, and regional access. Participants noted that the airport influences business investment, workforce attraction, and residents' quality of life, and that reduced air service negatively affects community perception and long-term competitiveness.

- **Air Service and Competitiveness**

Concerns were raised regarding limited flight availability, seasonal service

reductions, and competition from nearby airports. Participants expressed interest in improving service reliability and attracting additional air service to support essential travel for residents, businesses, health care, and government functions.

- **Economic Development and Airport Lands**

Participants highlighted the importance of developing airport lands to support industrial, commercial, and aviation-related use. Contaminated lands and zoning constraints were identified as key barriers to development, underscoring the need for remediation, and a phased development approach.

- **Operational, Infrastructure, and Regulatory Considerations**

Operational limitations related to runway geometry relative to terrain, obstacle surfaces, and approach limits were discussed as ongoing challenges affecting reliability. Infrastructure needs within the terminal were identified, along with funding gaps and potential opportunities for external funding support.

- **Housing and Workforce Challenges**

Housing availability, particularly affordable rental housing, was identified as a significant challenge affecting workforce attraction and retention.

Participants noted that broader community services, including accommodations, childcare, and emergency services, are closely linked to the airport's ability to support growth and resilience.

c. One-on-One Meetings with Airline and Air Service Operators

- **Air Service Reliability and Regional Connectivity**

Airline and air service operator participants emphasized the critical role of reliable commercial air service in supporting both regional economic activity and local aviation operations. Charter and regional air service operators noted that limited scheduled airline service and seasonal reductions have resulted in increased reliance on nearby airports, adding cost and inconvenience for clients and reducing Smithers' competitiveness as a regional aviation hub.

Operational needs raised included improved general aviation fuelling options, particularly self-serve AVGAS, and improved land-water access for floatplane operators to safely and efficiently move aircraft between nearby lakes and the airport for seasonal storage. An airline noted uncertainty regarding its future operations in Smithers following the loss of a major contract and expressed limited viability for new regional routes under current operating conditions.

Overall, operators reinforced the airport's importance as a community service and economic enabler, while identifying air service reliability as a key factor influencing future aviation activity at Smithers.

The meeting with Air Canada representatives provided an opportunity for the Smithers master planning team to highlight concerns over service level, ticket pricing and other issues expressed in the community and industry surveys. Upon presenting statistics from the recent passenger leakage study by InterVISTAS, Air Canada was alerted to the opportunity to offset the loss of passengers to other airports/airlines. At the same time, the airport was better informed of some of the constraints facing the airlines – particularly the pilot shortage stemming from COVID that may take a few more years to recover from, despite the increase in training. Air Canada is currently planning service/schedules for winter 2026/27, will be returning to two flights this summer and will take into consideration the data provided by the airport in its plans regarding service level. Both the airport and airline agreed to continue regular engagement in an effort to keep each other aware of progress/developments.

d. One-on-One Meetings with Regulatory and Aviation Authorities

- **NAV CANADA**

Representatives from Nav Canada indicated that no technical or operational changes are anticipated at Smithers Regional Airport within the Master Plan timeframe. Any near-term infrastructure upgrades would be coordinated with the Airport Authority, and no changes to service levels or airspace management are planned. Longer-term national initiatives related to remote or digitized services may have future implications but are considered outside the scope of this Master Plan. NAV CANADA confirmed that an Aviation Services and Facilities Agreement is in place and requested early engagement and review of the draft Master Plan prior to final approval.

- **Transport Canada (TC)** (National and Regional HQs)

Representatives provided regulatory input related to Airport Zoning Regulations (AZR), approach limits, and runway certification. The team identified that the current AZR does not reflect the runway lengthening completed in 2009, creating a potential misalignment with Obstacle Limitation Surfaces. TC advised that amendments to the AZR or changes to approach limits would be a lengthy process. No immediate regulatory changes or requirements affecting the airport were identified.

Questions concerning amending the AZR were forwarded to Transport Canada in anticipation of further collaboration to confirm whether Smithers should seek an amendment. In addition, the Regional HQ agreed to ask their

standards division to explore the prospect of recertifying the runway to instrument: non-precision.

In January, the planning team met virtually with TC Regional and National authorities on airport zoning. Following some discussion on the disparity between the actual runway environment and the strip as defined in the AZR, TC concluded that an amendment to the AZR appeared to be practical. TC Regional would forward documentation to the airport which outlines the process and requires formal commitment of the Town upon initiating the process.

TC noted that there is a consultation process that occurs with this to include indigenous groups and the Town is encouraged to conduct its own.

2.2 Community and Industry Engagement Survey

The online surveys were developed for engaging with community members as well as the local industry players on the importance of the Smithers Regional Airport, patterns of airport use, travel behaviour, use of alternative airports, and perceived barriers related to air service availability, cost, and reliability.

The survey also sought feedback on potential development opportunities at or near the airport, including commercial, industrial, and community-serving uses. Open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide additional comments and perspectives related to their experiences and priorities.

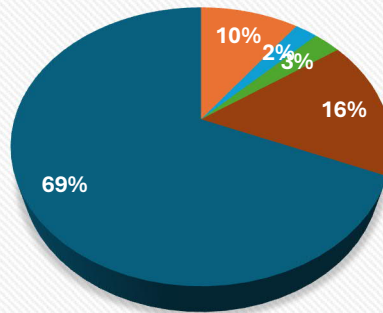
The survey allowed participants who were unable to attend meetings to contribute feedback in an accessible and flexible format.

2.2.1 Key Findings/Points Raised

a. Community Survey

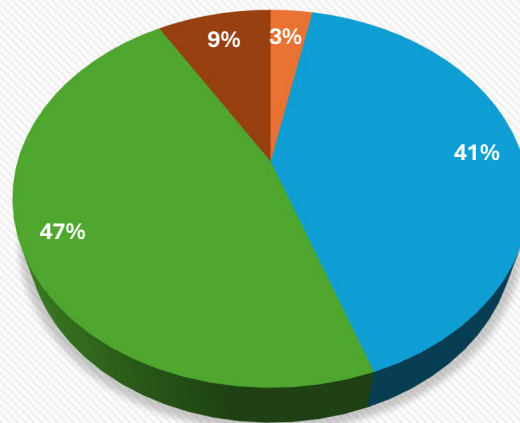
With an overwhelming 825 responses, the community survey indicate that the Smithers Regional Airport is widely regarded as an important asset for residents and the region. Most respondents reported flying infrequently, typically once or twice per year, and primarily for a combination of leisure, business, and medical purposes.

Importance of Smithers Airport



Very unimportant Somewhat unimportant Neutral
Somewhat important Very important

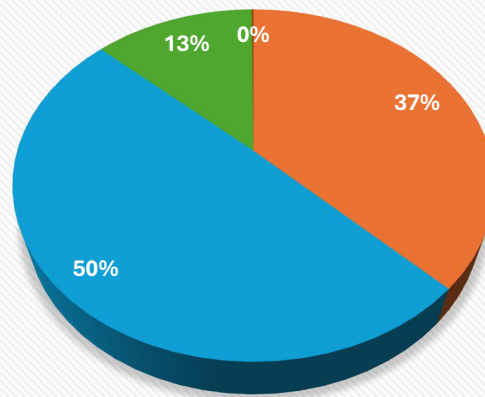
Frequency of Use



Weekly or greater Monthly or quarterly Once or twice a year Rarely or never

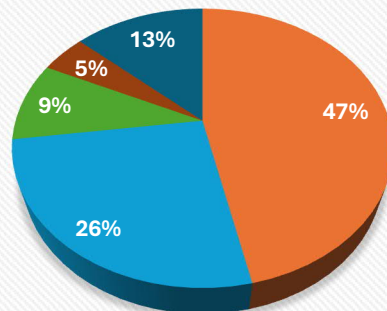
A large proportion of respondents indicated that they sometimes or frequently use alternative airports, with Terrace identified as the most used alternative, followed by Prince George. The primary reasons cited for using another airport included lower airfare costs, better flight availability, and reliability. Metro Vancouver was identified as the most common final destination, followed by other Canadian and international destinations.

Use of Alternative Airports



Yes, almost always Sometimes, but its rare No, never 4th Qtr

Reasons Why Chose an Alternative Airport



Cheaper airfare Better flight availability / more frequent flights
More dependable weather / reliability Choice of airline
Other

Community respondents also expressed interest in future airport-related development, with light industrial or commercial uses, hotel and conference facilities, and other supportive services identified as preferred opportunities.

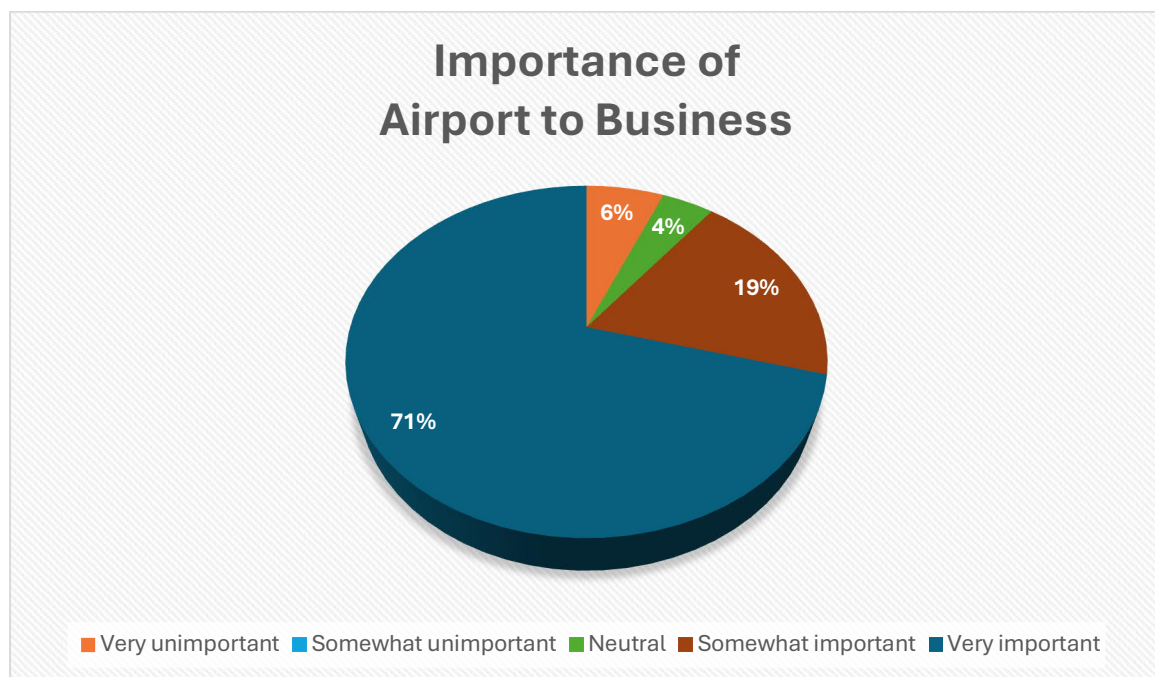
Open Ended Question: The community survey included one optional open-ended question, which received 487 responses. Comments provided additional context and elaboration on issues raised through the structured survey questions

- Open-ended responses consistently highlighted airfare affordability, service reliability, and the lack of airline competition as the most significant concerns.

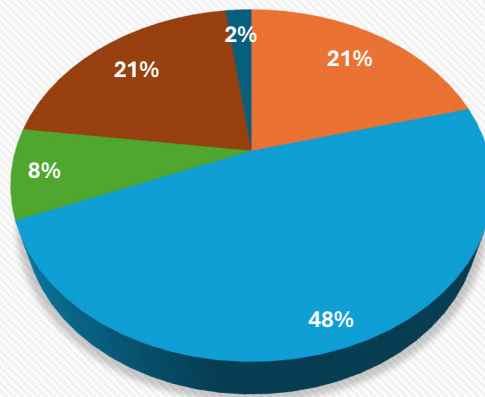
- Many respondents indicated that high prices and limited options lead residents to regularly use Terrace or Prince George instead of Smithers. Limited flight frequency and scheduling constraints were identified as barriers for medical, business, and connecting travel.
- Frequent cancellations and winter reliability issues, particularly related to fog and low visibility, were widely noted, with strong emphasis on the need for improved instrument landing capability.
- While recent terminal improvements and amenities were generally appreciated, respondents emphasized that air service improvements should be prioritized over new infrastructure or expansion.

b. Industry Survey

Industry survey results demonstrate strong recognition of the airport's importance to local business operations. With a more targeted survey of 48 local industry players, many businesses reported regular use of scheduled flight services, with some organizations also relying on charter and cargo services to support their activities.



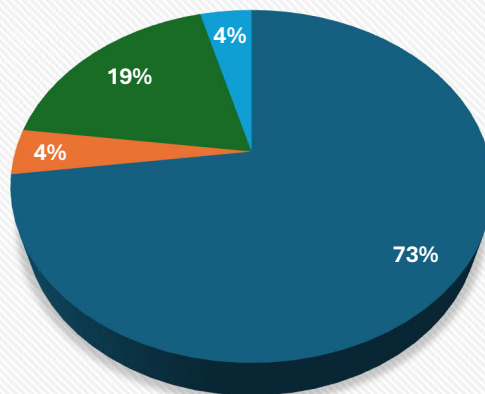
Satisfaction with Scheduled Flight Service



Very unsatisfied Somewhat unsatisfied Neutral Somewhat satisfied Very satisfied

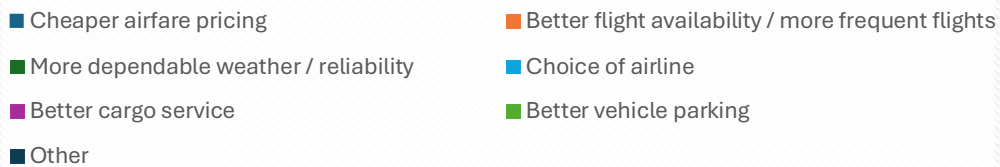
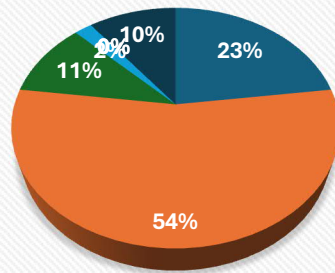
Similar to community respondents, industry participants reported using alternative airports, most commonly Terrace, primarily due to better flight availability and airfare pricing. Satisfaction with scheduled air service was mixed, with concerns related to capacity, frequency, and reliability.

Use of Alternative Airports



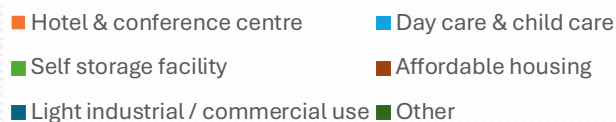
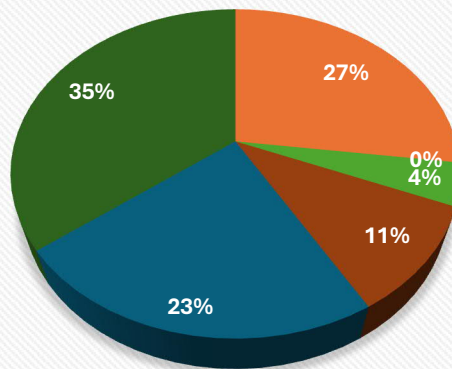
Yes - Terrace Airport (YXT) Yes - Prince George Airport (YXS) No - rarely or never Other

Reasons Why Chose an Alternative Airport



Industry respondents identified interest in certain forms of airport-adjacent development, including light industrial or commercial uses and hotel or conference facilities, reflecting the airport's role in supporting regional economic activity and workforce mobility.

Preferred Development Opportunities



Open Ended Questions: The survey included three open-ended questions to provide respondents with an opportunity to share additional context regarding their experience with scheduled flight service at the Smithers Regional Airport, identify any anticipated industry-related changes that could affect future airport demand, and offer broader

comments or suggestions related to airport operations and development. These questions were intended to complement the quantitative survey results by capturing qualitative perspectives from business and industry participants.

2.3 Feedback Form

Written feedback was collected through a stakeholder response form submission from Smithers Exploration Group. This approach allowed participants to provide detailed input at their convenience and ensured that perspectives from a specific interest group were captured alongside meeting and survey input.

2.3.1 Key Findings/Points Raised

- Feedback received through the submission highlighted the Smithers Regional Airport as critical regional infrastructure supporting mineral exploration, resource industries, government, Indigenous organizations, and workforce mobility.
- Respondents emphasized heavy reliance on commercial air service, charter aviation, cargo operations, and medical evacuation flights. Significant concerns were raised regarding the reliability, frequency, and cost of scheduled air service, including frequent schedule changes, reduced cargo capacity, high fares, and limited competition.
- While the airport facilities and Town management were viewed positively, air carrier service levels were consistently described as unreliable and airfares were high. Respondents stressed that improved, affordable, and dependable air connectivity is essential to support regional economic activity and major resource developments.

3.0 Key Themes Identified

Based on feedback received through stakeholder meetings, community and industry surveys, the other feedback, and targeted engagement with federal agencies and industry representatives, several consistent themes emerged. These themes reflect shared priorities, concerns, and expectations regarding the current role and future direction of the Smithers Regional Airport and are summarized below.

3.1 Airline Service Levels, Competition, and Affordability

A strong and recurring theme was dissatisfaction with the limited number of scheduled flights, reduced frequency, especially in winter, and the lack of airline competition. Respondents noted that constrained service levels affect scheduling flexibility, connections, and travel costs. Many participants indicated that these factors influence travel behaviour and airport choice, with operational and financial implications for businesses and regional users. A noteworthy input highlighted the significance of air

carrier services for people considering moving to/from the region; airport accessibility for business, personal or medical considerations is often a significant factor in relocation decisions.

3.2 Flight Reliability and Weather-Related Disruptions

Across engagement activities, participants emphasized concerns related to flight delays, diversions, and cancellations, particularly during periods of low visibility, and the resulting impacts on travel reliability, medical services, business operations, and regional connectivity. Airport facilities were generally viewed positively, while operational limitations related to approach minima and navigation capability emerged as a key constraint through discussions with technical and regulatory stakeholders. It is important to note that regular air carriers either did not flag this as a factor or were unavailable to contribute to this discussion. Equally significant is the point that the airport tracks weather-related missed approaches and/or diversions at less than 3%.

3.3 Regional and Economic Importance of the Airport

The airport was widely recognized as essential regional infrastructure supporting community connectivity, economic development, health care access, government operations, tourism, and resource-based industries. Feedback from industry groups, particularly through the Smithers Exploration Group (SEG), underscored the airport's role in enabling workforce mobility, time-sensitive cargo movement, and access to Northwest BC. Engagement with industry representatives highlighted the airport's importance to sustaining regional business operations and supporting economic activity across the Bulkley Valley and surrounding areas.

3.4 Cargo, Charter, and Specialized Aviation Services

Engagement highlighted the importance of non-passenger aviation services, including air cargo, charter operations, medevac services, and general aviation. Participants noted concerns regarding reduced cargo reliability and the broader implications for industries reliant on time-sensitive shipments. The availability and reliability of these services were viewed as critical to maintaining the airport's functional role beyond scheduled commercial flights.

3.5 Ground Transportation, Accessibility, and Passenger Experience

Engagement feedback identified challenges related primarily to landside access and ground transportation, including limited shuttle, transit, and taxi options. Terminal functionality and passenger experience were also raised, including wayfinding, amenities, and landside access. While recent terminal improvements were generally

well received, participants emphasized that landside access and accessibility remain important considerations.

3.6 Support for Aviation and Airport-Based Activities

Feedback from airport users and aviation-related stakeholders highlighted the importance of supporting a range of aviation activities, including general aviation, charter operations, and floatplane operators. Participants noted opportunities to improve fuelling infrastructure, operational logistics, and landside functionality to better serve aviation users and maintain the airport's role as a regional aviation hub.

3.7 Community Identity, and Inclusion

Some participants expressed interest in ensuring the airport reflects the identity and values of the community it serves. Suggestions included supporting locally operated services and maintaining the airport as a welcoming and functional community asset. Several respondents emphasized the importance of recognizing the airport's location on unceded Wet'suwet'en territory and expressed interest in stronger Indigenous presence, visibility, and collaboration.

4.0 Observations & Considerations

The engagement process reached a broad range of stakeholders connected to the Smithers Regional Airport and the aviation sector more generally, including airport users, tenants, industry representatives, regulators, and community members. The consultant team received a strong level of participation across engagement activities, generating a wide range of feedback, perspectives, and insights.

Overall, the input reflected a high level of interest in the airport's growth, its future and a shared recognition of its importance to the region. Participants provided thoughtful comments identifying existing challenges, operational constraints, and opportunities for improvement, which together offer valuable context to inform the Airport Master Plan moving forward.

Appendix B

Federal Zoning Regulation



CANADA

CONSOLIDATION

CODIFICATION

Smithers Airport Zoning Regulations

Règlement de zonage de l'aéroport de Smithers

SOR/81-916

DORS/81-916

Current to March 2, 2026

À jour au 2 mars 2026

OFFICIAL STATUS OF CONSOLIDATIONS

Subsections 31(1) and (3) of the *Legislation Revision and Consolidation Act*, in force on June 1, 2009, provide as follows:

Published consolidation is evidence

31 (1) Every copy of a consolidated statute or consolidated regulation published by the Minister under this Act in either print or electronic form is evidence of that statute or regulation and of its contents and every copy purporting to be published by the Minister is deemed to be so published, unless the contrary is shown.

...

Inconsistencies in regulations

(3) In the event of an inconsistency between a consolidated regulation published by the Minister under this Act and the original regulation or a subsequent amendment as registered by the Clerk of the Privy Council under the *Statutory Instruments Act*, the original regulation or amendment prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

LAYOUT

The notes that appeared in the left or right margins are now in boldface text directly above the provisions to which they relate. They form no part of the enactment, but are inserted for convenience of reference only.

NOTE

This consolidation is current to March 2, 2026. Any amendments that were not in force as of March 2, 2026 are set out at the end of this document under the heading “Amendments Not in Force”.

CARACTÈRE OFFICIEL DES CODIFICATIONS

Les paragraphes 31(1) et (3) de la *Loi sur la révision et la codification des textes législatifs*, en vigueur le 1^{er} juin 2009, prévoient ce qui suit :

Codifications comme élément de preuve

31 (1) Tout exemplaire d'une loi codifiée ou d'un règlement codifié, publié par le ministre en vertu de la présente loi sur support papier ou sur support électronique, fait foi de cette loi ou de ce règlement et de son contenu. Tout exemplaire donné comme publié par le ministre est réputé avoir été ainsi publié, sauf preuve contraire.

[...]

Incompatibilité — règlements

(3) Les dispositions du règlement d'origine avec ses modifications subséquentes enregistrées par le greffier du Conseil privé en vertu de la *Loi sur les textes réglementaires* l'emportent sur les dispositions incompatibles du règlement codifié publié par le ministre en vertu de la présente loi.

MISE EN PAGE

Les notes apparaissant auparavant dans les marges de droite ou de gauche se retrouvent maintenant en caractères gras juste au-dessus de la disposition à laquelle elles se rattachent. Elles ne font pas partie du texte, n'y figurant qu'à titre de repère ou d'information.

NOTE

Cette codification est à jour au 2 mars 2026. Toutes modifications qui n'étaient pas en vigueur au 2 mars 2026 sont énoncées à la fin de ce document sous le titre « Modifications non en vigueur ».

TABLE OF PROVISIONS**Regulations Respecting Zoning at Smithers Airport**

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Short Title |
| 2 | Interpretation |
| 3 | Application |
| 4 | General |
| 5 | Natural Growth |
| 6 | Disposal of Waste |

SCHEDULE**TABLE ANALYTIQUE****Règlement de zonage concernant l'aéroport de Smithers**

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Titre abrégé |
| 2 | Définitions |
| 3 | Application |
| 4 | Dispositions générales |
| 5 | Végétation |
| 6 | Dépôt de déchets |

ANNEXE

Registration
SOR/81-916 November 9, 1981

AERONAUTICS ACT

Smithers Airport Zoning Regulations

P.C. 1981-3181 November 5, 1981

His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of Transport, pursuant to section 6 of the *Aeronautics Act*, is pleased hereby to approve the annexed *Regulations respecting zoning at Smithers Airport* made by the Minister of Transport.

Enregistrement
DORS/81-916 Le 9 novembre 1981

LOI SUR L'AÉRONAUTIQUE

Règlement de zonage de l'aéroport de Smithers

C.P. 1981-3181 Le 5 novembre 1981

Sur avis conforme du ministre des Transports et en vertu de l'article 6 de la *Loi sur l'aéronautique*, il plaît à Son Excellence le Gouverneur général en conseil d'approuver le *Règlement de zonage concernant l'aéroport de Smithers*, établi par le ministre des Transports, ci-après.

Regulations Respecting Zoning at Smithers Airport

Short Title

1 These Regulations may be cited as the *Smithers Airport Zoning Regulations*.

Interpretation

2 (1) In these Regulations,

airport means the Smithers Airport, near the town of Smithers, in the Province of British Columbia; (*aéroport*)

airport reference point means the point described in Part I of the schedule; (*point de repère de l'aéroport*)

approach surface means an imaginary inclined plane that extends upward and outward from each end of a strip, which approach surface is more particularly described in Part III of the schedule; (*surface d'approche*)

Minister means the Minister of Transport; (*ministre*)

outer surface means an imaginary surface located above and in the immediate vicinity of the airport, which outer surface is more particularly described in Part IV of the schedule; (*surface extérieure*)

strip means the rectangular portion of the landing area of the airport including the runway prepared for the take-off and landing of aircraft in a particular direction, which strip is more particularly described in Part V of the schedule; (*bande*)

transitional surface means an imaginary inclined plane that extends upward and outward from the lateral limits of a strip and its approach surfaces, which transitional surface is more particularly described in Part VI of the schedule. (*surface de transition*)

(2) For the purposes of these Regulations, the assigned elevation of the airport reference point is 519 m above sea level.

Règlement de zonage concernant l'aéroport de Smithers

Titre abrégé

1 Le présent règlement peut être cité sous le titre : *Règlement de zonage de l'aéroport de Smithers*.

Définitions

2 (1) Dans le présent règlement,

aéroport désigne l'aéroport de Smithers, près de la ville de Smithers, dans la province de la Colombie-Britannique; (*airport*)

bande désigne la partie rectangulaire de l'aire d'atterrissage de l'aéroport, comprenant la piste spécialement aménagée pour le décollage et l'atterrissage des aéronefs dans une direction déterminée; cette bande est décrite plus en détail à la partie V de l'annexe; (*strip*)

ministre désigne le ministre des Transports; (*Minister*)

point de repère de l'aéroport désigne le point décrit à la partie I de l'annexe; (*airport reference point*)

surface d'approche désigne un plan incliné imaginaire s'élevant vers l'extérieur à partir de chaque extrémité d'une bande; ladite surface d'approche est décrite plus en détail à la partie III de l'annexe; (*approach surface*)

surface de transition désigne un plan incliné imaginaire s'élevant vers l'extérieur à partir des limites latérales d'une bande et de ses surfaces d'approche; ladite surface de transition est décrite plus en détail à la partie VI de l'annexe; (*transitional surface*)

surface extérieure désigne une surface imaginaire située au-dessus et dans le voisinage immédiat de l'aéroport; cette surface extérieure est décrite plus en détail à la partie IV de l'annexe. (*outer surface*)

(2) Aux fins du présent règlement, le point de repère de l'aéroport est à 519 m au-dessus du niveau de la mer.

Application

3 These Regulations apply to all the lands, including public road allowances, adjacent to or in the vicinity of the airport, that consist of

- (a) the lands within, and
- (b) the lands directly under that portion of an approach surface that extends beyond

the outer limits described in Part II of the schedule.

General

4 No person shall erect or construct on any land to which these Regulations apply, any building, structure or object or any addition to any existing building, structure or object, the highest point of which will exceed in elevation at the location of that point any

- (a) approach surface;
- (b) outer surface; or
- (c) transitional surface.

Natural Growth

5 Where an object of natural growth on any land to which these Regulations apply exceeds in elevation any of the surfaces referred to in section 4, the Minister may make a direction that the owner or occupier of the land on which that object is growing remove the excessive growth.

Disposal of Waste

6 No owner or occupier of any land to which these Regulations apply shall permit that land or any part of it to be used for the disposal of any waste edible by or attractive to birds.

Application

3 Le présent règlement s'applique à tous les terrains, y compris les emprises de voies publiques, qui sont attenants à l'aéroport ou dans voisinage, et qui sont situés

- a) à l'intérieur, et
- b) directement au-dessous de la partie des surfaces d'approche qui s'étend au-delà

des limites extérieures décrites à la partie II de l'annexe.

Dispositions générales

4 Il est interdit d'ériger ou de construire, sur un terrain visé par le présent règlement, un bâtiment, ouvrage ou objet, ou un rajout à un bâtiment, ouvrage ou objet existant, dont le sommet serait plus élevé que

- a) les surfaces d'approche;
- b) la surface extérieure; ou
- c) les surfaces de transition.

Végétation

5 Lorsque, sur un terrain visé par le présent règlement, la végétation croît au-delà du niveau des surfaces mentionnées à l'article 4, le ministre peut ordonner au propriétaire ou à l'occupant du terrain d'enlever l'excédent de végétation.

Dépôt de déchets

6 Il est interdit au propriétaire ou à l'occupant d'un terrain visé par le présent règlement de permettre qu'on y dépose des déchets comestibles pour les oiseaux ou propres à les attirer.

SCHEDULE

(ss. 2 and 3)

PART I

Description of the Airport Reference Point

The airport reference point is a punch mark on the down bolt at the North East Corner of the Rotating Beacon, and having U.T.M. co-ordinates of 6,076,470.969 North, 616,611.411 East.

PART II

Description of the Outer Limits of Lands

The following described boundaries are the outer limits of lands:

Commencing at the intersection of the centre line of the approach surface for approach 14 with the northerly boundary of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 26, Township 1A; THENCE, on an azimuth of 79°09'56" and perpendicular to the aforesaid centre line to an intersection with the easterly limit of the approach surface for approach 14; THENCE, eastwardly in a straight line, to the northeast corner of the Southwest 1/4 of Section 25, Township 1A; THENCE, southeastwardly, in a straight line, to the northwest corner of District Lot 1185; THENCE, eastwardly, and following the northerly boundary of District Lot 1185, aforesaid, to its intersection with the westerly boundary of District Lot 860; THENCE, southeastwardly, and in a straight line, to the southeast corner of District Lot 860, aforesaid; THENCE, southwardly and following portions of the easterly boundaries of District Lots 1185 and 1181 to the northwest corner of District Lot 854; THENCE, southeastwardly, in a straight line, to the southeast corner of District Lot 854; THENCE, southeastwardly, in a straight line to the southeast corner of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 17, Township 2A; THENCE, southwardly and following the easterly boundary of the Southwest 1/4 of Section 17, Township 2A, to the southeasterly corner thereof; THENCE, southwardly, and following the easterly boundary of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 8, Township 2A to the southeasterly corner thereof; THENCE, southwestwardly, in a straight line, to a point on the northerly boundary of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 5, Township 2A, said point lying three hundred and thirty (330) metres eastwardly of the northwest corner of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 5, aforesaid; THENCE, southwestwardly, and in a straight line, to the northwest corner of Lot 1, Plan 4975 of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 5, aforesaid; THENCE, southwardly, and following a portion of the easterly boundary of the Northeast 1/4 of Section 6, Township 2A, to the southeast corner thereof; THENCE, westwardly and following a portion of the southerly boundary of the Northeast 1/4 of Section 6, aforesaid, to the northeast corner of Lot 1,

ANNEXE

PARTIE I

Point de repère de l'aéroport

Le point de repère de l'aéroport est une marque de poinçon qui est gravée sur le boulon d'ancrage du coin nord-est du radiophare tournant et qui répond aux coordonnées U.T.M. suivantes : 6 076 470,969 Nord et 616 611,411 Est.

PARTIE II

Limites extérieures des terrains

Voici la description des limites extérieures des terrains :

À partir de l'intersection de l'axe de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 14 avec la limite nord du quartier sud-est de la section 26, township 1A; de là, à l'azimut 79°09'56" et perpendiculairement à l'axe susmentionné, jusqu'au point d'intersection avec la limite est de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 14; de là, en direction est et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle nord-est du quartier sud-ouest de la section 25, township 1A; de là, en direction sud-est et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle nord-ouest du lot de district 1185; de là, en direction est et le long de la limite nord du lot de district 1185 précité, jusqu'à son intersection avec la limite ouest du lot de district 860; de là, en direction sud-est et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est du lot de district 860 précité; de là, en direction sud et le long d'une partie des limites est des lots de district 1185 et 1181 jusqu'à l'angle nord-ouest de lot de district 854; de là, en direction sud-est et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est du lot de district 854; de là, en direction sud-est et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est du quartier nord-ouest de la section 17, township 2A; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite est du quartier sud-ouest de la section 17, township 2A, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit quartier; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite est du quartier nord-ouest de la section 8, township 2A, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit quartier; de là, en direction sud-ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à un point de la limite nord du quartier nord-ouest de la section 5, township 2A, ledit point étant situé à trois cent trente (330) m à l'est de l'angle nord-ouest du quartier nord-ouest de la section 5 précité; de là, en direction sud-ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle nord-ouest du lot 1, plan 4975 du quartier nord-ouest de la section 5 précité; de là, en direction sud et le long d'une partie de la limite est du quartier nord-est de la section 6, township 2A, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit quartier; de là, en direction ouest et le long d'une partie de la limite sud du quartier nord-est de la section 6 précité jusqu'à l'angle nord-est du lot 1, plan 6222, du quartier sud-est de la section 6 précité; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite

Plan 6222 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 6, aforesaid; THENCE, southwardly, and following the easterly boundary of Lot 1, aforesaid, to the northeast corner of Lot 2, Plan 6222 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 6, aforesaid; THENCE, southwardly, and following the easterly boundary of Lot 2, aforesaid, to the southeast corner thereof; THENCE, westwardly, and following the southerly boundary of Lot 2, aforesaid, to its intersection with the easterly boundary of the Portion of the Southwest 1/4 of Section 6, aforesaid, lying East of the Bulkley River; THENCE, southwardly, and following a portion of the said Southwest 1/4 of Section 6, aforesaid, to the southeast corner thereof; THENCE, southwestwardly, in a straight line to the northeast corner of Lot 23, Plan 1077, of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 31, Township 4; THENCE, southwardly, and following the easterly boundary of Lot 23, aforesaid, to the southeast corner thereof; THENCE, southwardly, and following the easterly boundary of Lot 22, Plan 1077 aforesaid, to the southeast corner thereof; THENCE, westwardly, and following the southerly boundary of Lot 22, aforesaid, to the southwest corner thereof; THENCE, southwardly, and following the easterly boundary of Lot 14, Plan 1077, aforesaid, to the southeasterly corner thereof; THENCE, westwardly, and following the southerly boundary of Lot 14, Plan 1077, aforesaid, to the southwest corner thereof; THENCE, westwardly, in a straight line, to the northeast corner of Lot 8, Plan 1077, aforesaid; THENCE, southwardly, and following the easterly boundary of Lot 8, aforesaid, to the southeast corner thereof; THENCE, westwardly, and following the southerly boundary of Lot 8, aforesaid, to the southwest corner thereof; THENCE, southwardly, and following the easterly boundary of Lot 5, Plan 1077, aforesaid, to the southeast corner thereof; THENCE, westwardly, and following the southerly boundary of Lot 5, aforesaid, to the southwest corner thereof; THENCE, southwestwardly, in a straight line, to the northeast corner of Lot A, Plan 5136, of the Fractional Northeast 1/4 of District Lot 865; THENCE, westwardly and southwardly, following the northerly and westerly boundaries of Lot A, aforesaid, to an intersection with the easterly limit of the approach surface for approach 32; THENCE, northwardly and following a portion of the said easterly limit of the approach surface for approach 32 to a point, said point being the intersection of a line on an azimuth of 79°02'56" from the intersection of the centre line of the approach surface of approach 32 and the south boundary of Lot U, Plan 6127 of District Lot 865, with the said easterly limit of the approach surface of approach 32, aforesaid; THENCE, on an azimuth of 259°02'56", to the intersection of the said centre line of the approach surface of approach 32 with the south boundary of Lot U, Plan 6127, aforesaid; THENCE, on an azimuth of 259°02'56" to an intersection with the westerly limit of the approach surface of approach 32; THENCE, northwestwardly, in a straight line, to the southeasterly corner of the Northeast 1/4 of District Lot 4268; THENCE, westwardly, and following the southerly boundary of the Northeast 1/4 of District Lot 4268 to its intersection with the northeasterly boundary of District Lot 5716; THENCE, westwardly, in a straight line, to the most easterly corner of the Remainder of the Northeast 1/4 of District Lot 4268 lying to the south of Right of Way Plan 1231; THENCE, westwardly, and following the southerly boundary of the Remainder of the Northeast 1/4 of District Lot 4268 lying to the south of

est du lot 1 précité jusqu'à l'angle nord-est du lot 2 plan 6222, du quartier sud-est de la section 6 précité; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite est du lot 2 précité jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit lot; de là, en direction ouest et le long de la limite sud du lot 2 précité, jusqu'à son intersection avec la limite est de la partie du quartier sud-ouest de la section 6 précité, qui s'étend à l'est de la rivière Bulkley; de là, en direction sud et le long d'une partie dudit quartier sud-ouest de la section 6 précité jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit quartier; de là, en direction sud-ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle nord-est du lot 23, plan 1077, du quartier nord-ouest de la section 31, township 4; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite est du lot 23 précité jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit lot; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite est du lot 22, plan 1077 précité, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit lot; de là, en direction ouest et le long de la limite sud du lot 22 précité jusqu'à l'angle sud-ouest dudit lot; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite est du lot 14, plan 1077 précité, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit lot; de là, en direction ouest et le long de la limite sud du lot 14, plan 1077 précité, jusqu'à l'angle sud-ouest dudit lot; de là, en direction ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle nord-est du lot 8, plan 1077 précité; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite est du lot 8 précité jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit lot; de là, en direction ouest et le long de la limite sud du lot 8 précité jusqu'à l'angle sud-ouest dudit lot; de là, en direction sud et le long de la limite est du lot 5, plan 1077 précité, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est dudit lot; de là, en direction ouest et le long de la limite sud du lot 5 précité jusqu'à l'angle sud-ouest dudit lot; de là, en direction sud-ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle nord-est du lot A, plan 5136, d'une partie du quartier nord-est du lot de district 865; de là, en direction ouest et sud, le long des limites nord et ouest du lot A précité jusqu'au point d'intersection avec la limite est de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 32; de là, en direction nord et le long d'une partie de ladite limite est de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 32 jusqu'au point d'intersection d'une ligne à l'azimut 79°02'56", à partir de l'intersection de l'axe de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 32 et de la limite sud du lot U, plan 6127, lot de district 865, et de ladite limite est de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 32 précitée; de là, à l'azimut 259°02'56", jusqu'à l'intersection dudit axe de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 32 et de la limite sud du lot U, plan 6127 précité; de là, à l'azimut 259°02'56", jusqu'à l'intersection avec la limite ouest de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 32; de là, en direction nord-ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est du quartier nord-est du lot de district 4268; de là, en direction ouest et le long de la limite sud du quartier nord-est du lot de district 4268 jusqu'à son intersection avec la limite nord-est du lot de district 5716; de là, en direction ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle le plus à l'est du reste du quartier nord-est du lot de district 4268 qui s'étend au sud du plan de l'emprise 1231; de là, en direction ouest et le long de la limite sud du reste du quartier nord-est du lot de district 4268 qui s'étend au sud de l'emprise du plan 1231, jusqu'à l'angle sud-ouest dudit lot; de là, en direction ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est du lot 1, plan 6684, dans le quartier nord-ouest du lot de district 4268; de là, en direction ouest et le long de la limite sud du lot 1, plan 6684 précité, jusqu'à l'angle sud-ouest dudit lot; de là, en direction sud et le long du prolongement de la limite ouest du lot 1, plan 6684 précité, jusqu'à

Right of Way Plan 1231, to the southwest corner thereof; THENCE, westwardly, and in a straight line to the south-east corner of Lot 1, Plan 6684 of the Northwest 1/4 of District Lot 4268; THENCE, westwardly, and following the southerly boundary of Lot 1, Plan 6684, aforesaid, to the southwest corner thereof; THENCE, southwardly and following the production of the westerly boundary of Lot 1, Plan 6684, aforesaid, to an intersection with the southerly boundary of the Northwest 1/4 of District Lot 4268, South and West of District Lot 5716; THENCE, westwardly, and following the said southerly boundary of the Northwest 1/4 of District Lot 4268, aforesaid, to the southeast corner of the Northeast 1/4 of District Lot 5424; THENCE, north-westwardly, in a straight line, to the southeast corner of the Southwest 1/4 of Section 3, Township 1A; THENCE, northwestwardly, in a straight line, to the northwest corner of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 3, Township 1A; THENCE, northwestwardly, in a straight line, to the southwest corner of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 9, Township 1A; THENCE, northwardly, and following the westerly boundaries of the Southeast 1/4 and the Northeast 1/4 of Section 9, Township 1A, to the northwest corner of the Northeast 1/4 of Section 9, aforesaid; THENCE, northwardly, and following the westerly boundaries of the Southeast 1/4 and the Northeast 1/4 of Section 16, Township 1A, to the northwest corner of the Northeast 1/4 thereof; THENCE, northeastwardly, in a straight line, to the northeast corner of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 21, Township 1A; THENCE, northeastwardly, in a straight line, to the most southerly corner of Lot 4, Plan 4734, of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 22, Township 1A; THENCE, northwardly, and following the easterly boundary of Lot 4, Plan 4734, aforesaid, to the northeast corner thereof; THENCE, eastwardly, and following the northerly boundary of the Northeast 1/4 of Section 22, Township 1A to the northeast corner thereof; THENCE, northwardly, and following the easterly boundary of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 27, Township 1A to the northeast corner of Lot 7, Plan 6771, of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 27, Township 1A; THENCE, northeastwardly, and in a straight line, to a point on the westerly limit of the approach surface of approach 14, said point being the intersection of a line on an azimuth of 259°02'56" from the point of commencement, with the said westerly limit of the approach surface of approach 14; THENCE, on an azimuth of 79°02'56", to the point of commencement, which outer surface is shown outlined in yellow on Department of Transport Plan No. B.C. 1384 dated January 31, 1980.

l'intersection avec la limite sud du quartier nord-ouest du lot de district 4268, au sud et à l'ouest du lot de district 5716; de là, en direction ouest et le long de ladite limite sud du quartier nord-ouest du lot de district 4268 précité, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est du quartier nord-est du lot de district 5424; de là, en direction nord-ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle sud-est du quartier sud-ouest de la section 3, township 1A; de là, en direction nord-ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle nord-ouest du quartier sud-est de la section 3, township 1A; de là, en direction nord-ouest et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle sud-ouest du quartier sud-est de la section 9, township 1A; de là, en direction nord et le long de la limite ouest des quartiers sud-est et nord-est de la section 9, township 1A, jusqu'à l'angle nord-ouest du quartier nord-est de la section 9 précitée; de là, en direction nord et le long de la limite ouest des quartiers sud-est et nord-est de la section 16, township 1A, jusqu'à l'angle nord-ouest du quartier nord-est dudit township; de là, en direction nord-est et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle nord-est du quartier sud-est de la section 21, township 1A; de là, en direction nord-est et en ligne droite, jusqu'à l'angle le plus au sud de lot 4, plan 4734, du quartier nord-ouest de la section 22, township 1A; de là, en direction nord et le long de la limite est du lot 4, plan 4734 précité, jusqu'à l'angle nord-est dudit lot; de là, en direction est et le long de la limite nord du quartier nord-est de la section 22, township 1A, jusqu'à l'angle nord-est dudit township; de là, en direction nord et le long de la limite est du quartier sud-est de la section 27, township 1A, jusqu'à l'angle nord-est du lot 7, plan 6771, du quartier sud-est de la section 27, township 1A; de là, en direction nord-est et en ligne droite, jusqu'à un point situé sur la limite ouest de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 14, ledit point étant situé à l'intersection d'une ligne à l'azimut 259°02'56", à partir du point de départ, et de ladite limite ouest de la surface d'approche pour l'approche 14; de là, à l'azimut 79°02'56", jusqu'au point de départ; ces limites extérieures sont tracées en jaune sur le plan B.C. 1384 du ministère des Transports, daté du 31 janvier 1980.

PART III

Description of the Approach Surfaces

The approach surfaces, shown on Department of Transport Smithers Airport Zoning Plan No. B.C. 1384, are surfaces abutting each end of the strip associated with the runway designated 14-32 and are described as follows:

- (a) a surface abutting the end of the strip associated with runway approach 14 consisting of an inclined plane having a ratio of 1 m measured vertically to 50 m measured

PARTIE III

Surfaces d'approche

Les surfaces d'approche figurant sur le plan de zonage de l'aéroport de Smithers B.C. 1384 du ministère des Transports sont des surfaces attenantes à chacune des extrémités des bandes associées à la piste 14-32 et sont décrites de la manière suivante :

- a) une surface attenante à l'extrémité de la bande associée à l'approche de la piste 14 et constituée d'un plan, incliné à

horizontally rising to an intersection with the outer surface; THENCE such approach surface shall be horizontal and contiguous to said outer surface to an intersection with an imaginary horizontal line drawn at right angles to the projected centre line of the strip at its intersection with the northerly boundary of the South East 1/4 of Section 26, Township 1A, Range 5, Coast District; THENCE said approach surface shall slope upward at the above specified slope of 1 m measured vertically to 50 m measured horizontally to an imaginary horizontal line drawn at right angles to the projected centre line of the strip and distant 15 000 m measured horizontally from the end of the strip, the outer ends of the imaginary horizontal line being 2 400 m from the projected centre line and 804.3 m, measured vertically, above the assigned elevation of the airport reference point; and

(b) a surface abutting the end of the strip associated with runway approach 32 consisting of an inclined plane having a ratio of 1 m measured vertically to 50 m measured horizontally rising to an intersection with the outer surface; THENCE such approach surface shall be horizontal and contiguous to said outer surface to an intersection with an imaginary horizontal line drawn at right angles to the projected centre line of the strip at its intersection with the southerly boundary of Lot U, Plan 6127 of District Lot 865, Range 5, Coast District; THENCE said approach surface shall slope upward at the above specified slope of 1 m measured vertically to 50 m measured horizontally to an imaginary horizontal line drawn at right angles to the projected centre line of the strip and distant 15 000 m measured horizontally from the end of the strip, the outer ends of the imaginary horizontal line being 2 400 m from the projected centre line and 799.7 m, measured vertically, above the assigned elevation of the airport reference point.

PART IV

Description of the Outer Surface

The outer surface, shown on Department of Transport Smithers Airport Zoning Plan dated January 31, 1980, is an imaginary surface located at a common plane established at a constant elevation of 45 m above the assigned elevation of the airport reference point except where that common plane is less than 9 m above the surface of the ground, the imaginary surface is located 9 m above the surface of the ground.

PART V

Description of the Strip

The strip, shown on Department of Transport Smithers Airport Zoning Plan dated January 31, 1980, is described as a strip associated with runway 14-32 being 300 m in width, 150 m being on each side of the centre line of the runway, and 1 948.8 m in length.

raison de 1 m dans le sens vertical contre 50 m dans le sens horizontal, qui s'élève jusqu'à son croisement avec la surface extérieure; de là, la surface d'approche doit être horizontale et contiguë à ladite surface extérieure jusqu'à son croisement avec une ligne horizontale imaginaire tracée perpendiculairement au prolongement de l'axe de la bande au point où elle croise la limite nord du quartier sud-est de la section 26, township 1A, rang 5, district de la côte; de là, ladite surface d'approche s'élève en pente à l'endroit du plan incliné précité à raison de 1 m dans le sens vertical contre 50 m dans le sens horizontal jusqu'à une ligne horizontale imaginaire tracée perpendiculairement au prolongement de l'axe de la bande et située à 15 000 m, dans le sens horizontal, de l'extrémité de la bande, les extrémités extérieures de la ligne horizontale imaginaire étant à 2 400 m du prolongement de l'axe de la bande et à 804,3 m dans le sens vertical au-dessus de l'altitude déterminée du point de repère de l'aéroport; et

b) une surface attenante à l'extrémité de la bande associée à l'approche de la piste 32 et constituée d'un plan, incliné à raison de 1 m dans le sens vertical contre 50 m dans le sens horizontal, qui s'élève jusqu'à son croisement avec la surface extérieure; de là, ladite surface d'approche doit être horizontale et contiguë à ladite surface extérieure jusqu'à son croisement avec une ligne horizontale imaginaire tracée perpendiculairement au prolongement de l'axe de la bande au point où elle croise la limite sud du lot U, plan 6127 du lot de district 865, rang 5, district de la côte; de là, ladite surface d'approche s'élève en pente à l'endroit du plan incliné précité à raison de 1 m dans le sens vertical contre 50 m dans le sens horizontal jusqu'à une ligne horizontale imaginaire tracée perpendiculairement au prolongement de l'axe de la bande et située à 15 000 m dans le sens horizontal, de l'extrémité de la bande, les extrémités extérieures de la ligne horizontale imaginaire étant à 2 400 m du prolongement de l'axe de la bande et à 799,7 m dans le sens vertical au-dessus de l'altitude déterminée du point de repère de l'aéroport.

PARTIE IV

Surface extérieure

La surface extérieure, figurant sur le plan de zonage de l'aéroport de Smithers du ministère des Transports daté du 31 janvier 1980, est une surface imaginaire qui consiste en un plan commun situé à une altitude de 45 m au-dessus de l'altitude déterminée du point de repère de l'aéroport; la surface imaginaire est toutefois située à 9 m au-dessus de la surface du sol lorsque le plan commun décrit ci-dessus est à moins de 9 m au-dessus de la surface du sol.

PARTIE V

La bande

La bande, figurant sur le plan de zonage de l'aéroport de Smithers du ministère des Transports daté du 31 janvier 1980, est une bande associée à la piste 14-32 et mesurant 300 m de largeur, soit 150 m de chaque côté de l'axe de la piste, et 1 948,8 m de longueur.

PART VI

Description of Each Transitional Surface

Each transitional surface, shown on Department of Transport Smithers Airport Zoning Plan dated January 31, 1980, is a surface consisting of an inclined plane having a ratio of 1 m measured vertically to 7 m measured horizontally at right angles to the centre line and centre line produced of the strip and extending upward and outward from the lateral limits of the strip and its approach surfaces to an intersection with the outer surface.

PARTIE VI

Surfaces de transition

Chaque surface de transition, figurant sur le plan de zonage de l'aéroport de Smithers du ministère des Transports daté du 31 janvier 1980, est une surface constituée d'un plan incliné à raison de 1 m dans le sens vertical contre 7 m dans le sens horizontal, suivant une direction horizontale perpendiculaire à l'axe et au prolongement de l'axe de la bande, qui s'élève vers l'extérieur à partir des limites latérales de la bande et de ses surfaces d'approche jusqu'à son intersection avec la surface extérieure.

Appendix C

Advanced Air Mobility Summary

ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY (AAM)

Part 1

1. Introduction – What is Advanced Air Mobility?

Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) is a modern ecosystem of air transportation for moving people, goods, and services, using technologies like **electric vertical take-off** and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and drones. As per Transport Canada, the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) services fall into 2 broad categories - Urban Air Mobility and Regional Air Mobility.¹

Canadian Advanced Air Mobility (CAAM) is a socially responsible, federal not-for-profit consortium that acts as the national catalyst for the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) industry in Canada.²

eVTOL are the aircrafts that can take off and land vertically just like helicopters. eVTOL technology works on electric propulsion in which electric motors are powered by either batteries or other electric power sources, providing vertical lift with rotors or propellers arranged in different configurations around the aircraft.³⁴

As Smithers Regional Airport (YYD) is a small regional airport, “Regional Air Mobility” appears well suited to consider the location for a variety of potential uses. Given YYD’s strategic location in north-western British Columbia and its existing infrastructure (including 340 hectares of land adjacent to Highway 16)⁵, Smithers Regional Airport is well-positioned to explore the potential of Regional Air Mobility within the broader AAM ecosystem. By incorporating forward-looking planning around vertiport readiness, electric aircraft operations, and low-altitude connectivity corridors, the Smithers Regional Airport can signal its readiness to adapt to emerging aviation technologies while supporting regional economic growth, improved services, and community accessibility.

2. AAM and its Canadian Trends

During the recently held International Paris Air Show 2025, Canada along with the United States, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand partnered for a landmark roadmap named “**The Roadmap for Advanced Air Mobility Aircraft Type Certification**” to align how new types of aircraft, including eVTOLs, are certified and validated across borders - a major milestone for AAM.⁶

In October 2023, **Helijet International Inc.** - North America’s largest and longest-standing helicopter airline announced that it had placed a firm order for the ALIA 250 eVTOL aircraft

¹ <https://tc.canada.ca/en/aviation/advanced-air-mobility>

² <https://canadianaam.com/>

³ <https://dewesoft.com/blog/evtol-guide>

⁴ <https://amprius.com/evtol/>

⁵ <https://www.smithers.ca/airport/airport-administration-0/development-opportunity>

⁶ <https://canadianaam.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/The-Pulse-June-2025.pdf>

from BETA Technologies. The move positions Helijet as the first Canadian air-carrier to prepare for passenger and cargo eVTOL services. The decision was supported by BETA's goal to certify the ALIA 250 for instrument flight rules (IFR) operations.⁷



Source: Helijet, 2023

In early 2025, InDro Robotics joined a Canadian trade delegation that visited California. The trip included around 40 groups, such as Transport Canada, NAV Canada, and the National Research Council Canada, etc. The visit was organized by CAAM (Canadian Advanced Air Mobility), which brings together people and organizations who are working on the future of advanced air transportation in Canada.⁸

California hosts - Joby, Archer and Wisk - were three of the leading companies in the Advanced Air Mobility space. Wisk is planning to introduce the world's first autonomous, four-passenger air taxi.⁹ Wisk has its presence in Canada, with an existing Montreal hub. In contrast to Joby and Archer, which intend to begin operations with piloted vehicles, Wisk Aero has adopted an 'autonomous-first' strategy. In practice this means that, once full certification from FAA is achieved, the first flights carrying passengers will be aboard an aircraft that flies itself.¹⁰



Source: Generation 6, Wisk

⁷ <https://helijet.com/helijet-places-order-with-beta-technologies-for-first-passenger-service-evtol-aircraft-in-canada/>

⁸ <https://indrorobotics.ca/wisk-promises-autonomous-advanced-air-mobility/>

⁹ <https://wisk.aero/>

¹⁰ <https://indrorobotics.ca/wisk-promises-autonomous-advanced-air-mobility/>

Challenges and Considerations

Advanced air mobility (AAM), as NASA defined it, is “safe, sustainable, affordable, and accessible aviation for local and interregional mission transformation”.¹¹ AAM could bring a transformative shift in air transportation about how people and goods move. Since every coin has two sides, it does come with some potential challenges with its introduction in air transport sector.

- **Certification and safety standards still evolving:** According to Wisk, they are progressing with the FAA on certifying their Gen 6 aircraft.¹² Changes to the air traffic control system and regulatory frameworks will be needed to integrate AAM within the current air space structure. Electric aircrafts depend on powerful electric motors driven by high-capacity batteries, plus advanced autonomous navigation and control systems that enable safe operations in complex urban settings.¹³
- **Infrastructure needs:** Vertiports need to be built in strategic locations for aircraft to have direct access. Fast charging stations for these electric aircraft will be mandatory for smooth operations.
- **Public acceptance:** A recent study by Airbus UTM on AAM clearly shows safety as primary concern for people with 55.6% of respondents **stressing that aircraft safety** is most important.¹⁴ Communities need assurance around noise, safety, privacy and environmental impacts before new aircraft take flight regularly overhead.¹⁵ It's important to remember that whenever a new technology is introduced, people need time to become comfortable with it - thoughtful engagement and transparency will be key.
- **Others:** Cost, etc

Part 2

3. Relevance for Smithers Airport

Smithers Regional Airport's available land, strategic northern location, and existing operational capacity position it to not only benefit from future AAM services, but also to accommodate potential AAM or eVTOL operators as the sector evolves.

1. **Regional connectivity:** Located just 5 km northwest of the Town, Smithers Regional Airport being the furthest North registered Airport in Northwestern British Columbia,¹⁶ it could explore the opportunity being a hub for eVTOL or cargo drone routes serving smaller northern communities with limited access.
2. **Emergency and medical response:** Smithers Regional Airport already plays a significant role in emergency and medical responses in the region, and it acts as a forestry fire base too. In May 2025, Smithers Regional Airport hosted one of the

¹¹ <https://arc.aiaa.org/doi/10.2514/1.D0440>

¹² <https://wisk.aero/aircraft>

¹³ <https://www.mecalux.com/blog/advanced-air-mobility-aam>

¹⁴ <https://vertxpartners.org/building-public-trust-in-aam/>

¹⁵ <https://www.mecalux.com/blog/advanced-air-mobility-aam>

¹⁶ <https://www.smithers.ca/airport/airport-administration-0/development-opportunity>

largest live emergency response training exercises in Northern BC.¹⁷ Given this **existing role, the Smithers Regional Airport is well-positioned to extend that capability into future AAM-enabled operations (such as eVTOL or cargo-drone support) to provide firefighting services, rapid movement of goods, equipment or medical supplies during emergencies or natural-disaster events.**

3. **Tourism access:** Tourists from across the world come to Smithers for fishing and the Town is noted for its tourism opportunities. By positioning the Smithers Regional Airport as a gateway to short scenic or chartered advanced air mobility services, the region could open entirely new experiences such as aerial access to remote lodges, mountain resorts and wilderness adventures, and in turn draw higher-value tourism to the area.
4. **Economic development:** Readiness for AAM can signal to industry, government and investors that Smithers is forward-looking and open to innovation which could attract funding, new businesses, jobs, and technological investment in the region. Collaboration on AAM/eVTOL with neighbouring airports could also be explored further. **Smithers Regional Airport could also leverage its position to quickly transport locally grown produce (EG: mushrooms) to regional and international markets, supporting both local farmers and the broader regional economic resilience.**
5. **Climate alignment:** Embedding AAM readiness, enabling electrified short-haul aviation sends a message that the Smithers Regional Airport is aligning with low-emission transportation trends which strengthens the airport's environmental credentials and supports community expectations.

4. Infrastructure and Planning Considerations

As Smithers Regional Airport functions as a smaller regional airport rather than a major hub, it does not require a large-scale leap into advanced air mobility infrastructure or a significant upfront capital commitment. Instead, the focus can remain on incremental readiness and flexibility, allowing the airport to adapt as the AAM market develops.

1. **Space allocation:** Within the Smithers Regional Airport lands, conceptual zones should be identified for future AAM related infrastructure such as a vertiport, eVTOL charging stations while preserving flexibility for other aviation uses. Since the land base is large and already in place, the Smithers Regional Airport can set aside areas now for future use.
2. **Utility readiness:** AAM is emerging by advances in electric and hybrid propulsion¹⁸, which remain central to its growth. The Smithers Regional Airport should explore readiness of the electrical infrastructure - grid capacity, charging stations, backup power, and perhaps energy storage. While Smithers may not need to build new systems yet, it would be wise to check the existing power supply, identify spots for future chargers, and stay in touch with utility providers. AAM readiness will depend

¹⁷ <https://www.smithers.ca/news-notice/press-release-2025-05-large-scale-emergency-training-event-may-23-2025>

¹⁸ [https://ntrs.nasa.gov/api/citations/20205002989/downloads/Chancey%20Politowicz%20Le%20Vie_SciTech2021\(11.20.2020\).pdf](https://ntrs.nasa.gov/api/citations/20205002989/downloads/Chancey%20Politowicz%20Le%20Vie_SciTech2021(11.20.2020).pdf)

not only on airport infrastructure, **but also on the preparedness of remote operating sites and the willingness of end users to invest in supporting facilities.**

3. **Location and Capabilities:** Location away from traditional hubs offers more flexibility in airspace use (less dense traffic, lack of impediments to movement, etc.) and a natural cold weather test environment. Almost every potential application can be trailed and tested at this location. The airport operating surfaces offer a great testing and training ground for CTOL aircraft. Commercial air and land services provide easy access to support development needs. Location is sufficiently away from built up areas to noise/disturbance to the community.
4. **Airspace coordination:** Introducing AAM will involve new flight paths, potentially low altitude eVTOL operations, and integration with existing airport systems. Coordination between the Smithers Regional Airport, NAV CANADA, and local planners on airspace management, noise contours, and operational procedures will help ensure future AAM services can be safely accommodated. Smithers has an advantage over many other regional options with an on-site NAVCANADA staffed Flight Service Station (FSS).
5. **Land use flexibility:** Maintain adaptable zoning near terminal or General Aviation areas for emerging aviation uses. Avoiding restrictive zoning or incompatible development near future AAM zones will keep the Smithers Regional Airport ready for innovation.
6. **Policy and partnerships:** The Smithers Regional Airport can actively explore partnerships with Transport Canada, the BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure, industry players and clean-tech firms. Preparing a “future-ready” **framework now will position the airport to apply for funding and to participate in early-stage AAM initiatives, without committing to large infrastructure build-out until the business case is clearer.**

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)

While many AAM concepts focus on electric propulsion, the Smithers Regional Airport should remain aware of alternative sustainable fuels, including SAF, for aircraft operations, especially as certification and technology mature. SAF is being recognised across the aviation sector as a key tool in achieving net-zero targets. **Canada’s Aviation Climate Action Plan, 2022, targets net zero emissions by 2050 for Canadian aviation** along with the goal of 10% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) use by 2030.¹⁹

Even if AAM vehicles in the near-term are electric, considering SAF positions the Smithers Regional Airport for hybrid or fuel-use variants (e.g., regional electric/plug-in aircraft, hybrid VTOLs) and the potential future where SAF may serve as a drop-in fuel for new air mobility vehicles. Therefore, the Smithers Regional Airport should monitor developments in SAF production and supply chain infrastructure so that future AAM operations remain aligned with overarching sustainability and regulatory objectives.

¹⁹ <https://tc.canada.ca/en/corporate-services/transparency/briefing-documents-transport-canada/2023/current-topics/decarbonizing-transportation>

5. Future Strategy

Advanced Air Mobility remains an emerging field with potential opportunities. For Smithers Regional Airport, taking smaller strategic steps to adopt AAM will ensure that the airport remains well-positioned as the technology evolves. Any future AAM initiatives would need to be considered within a competitive regional airport environment.

Short term (0-2 years): Awareness and Engagement

1. Monitor AAM policy and regulatory developments from Transport Canada, NAV CANADA, and CAAM.
2. Participate in AAM-related forums or working groups to stay informed of emerging operational standards, safety requirements, and funding opportunities.
3. Build relationships with potential partners, including AAM operators, emergency response agencies, and provincial/federal innovation programs.
4. Include AAM as a consideration in land-use updates, utility discussions, without making any major commitments.
5. Develop a marketing approach that encourages the AAM community to consider the Smithers Regional Airport as a development, test and trial centre for emerging technology in the AAM domain, based on the features and benefits listed in Part 4.
6. Engage existing local operators to determine interest levels in potentially adopting AAM within their businesses (some may already be considering).

Medium term (2-5 years): Evaluate Opportunities

1. Assess the feasibility of small-scale cargo drone demonstrations, emergency response support, or regional connectivity trials and review operational requirements such as electrical demand, siting for small charging pads, or low-altitude flight corridors, as pilot projects become available.
2. Evaluate whether early AAM services could realistically meet local needs (e.g., tourism access, medical transport, or cargo efficiency).
3. Coordinate with the Town, Regional District and NAVCANADA to ensure local planning frameworks can adapt to low-altitude aircraft operations.

Long Term (5-10 Years): Strategic Integration Plan

1. Explore opportunities to accommodate AAM service providers on-site, such as small-scale cargo operators, regional eVTOL services, or emergency-response partners. Any such consideration would depend on market demand, regulatory approvals, and alignment with the airport's strategic objectives.
2. Leverage potential funding or innovation grants, if AAM becomes part of broader provincial or federal mobility strategies.

6. Summary

Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) represents an emerging shift in the modern aviation sector, with potential to offer long-term opportunities for improved connectivity, sustainability, and

innovation for northern communities served by Smithers Regional Airport. By proactively acknowledging AAM, Smithers Regional Airport positions itself to remain flexible and future-ready, supported by available land, its existing role in emergency and forestry operations, and its strategic location within the region. While no immediate infrastructure investment is required, early consideration of AAM allows the airport to respond efficiently as technologies mature, ensuring it can participate in future opportunities primarily - mining, exploration, emergency services and possibly forest management, and secondarily - tourism access, or regional mobility when the economic demand and regulatory environment are favourable.

Airport's Role in AAM Implementation

The airport's role in Advanced Air Mobility would be that of an enabler rather than a driver, providing long-term planning flexibility and accommodating future operational needs where appropriate, while market demand, investment, and operational responsibility remain led by industry, government, or emergency service users.

Appendix Summary (for the Main Master Plan body)

Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) represents a long-term, emerging opportunity enabled by advancements in electric and hybrid aircraft technologies. While Advanced Air Mobility is not anticipated to require major capital investment or formal operational commitments in the early stage, the airport may play a future enabling role through awareness, planning flexibility, and partnership-building as market demand, regulatory approvals, and supporting infrastructure evolve. Potential applications in the region include emergency response, wildfire management, resource exploration, and specialized cargo operations. At this stage, AAM is best considered as an opportunistic, user-driven activity, with the airport maintaining awareness of technological and regulatory developments while prioritizing its core operational and strategic objectives.