

COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

From: Operations

Date: March 10, 2025

Subject: Resolution of Support – BC Air Access Program and SPMT – Airport Upgrades

RECOMMENDATION:

Resolution #1 – BC Air Access – Transitional Infrastructure

THAT Council supports the District of Mackenzie’s application to the BC Air Access Program for up to \$33,000 in funding towards airport upgrades.

Resolution #2 – BC Air Access – Groundside/Ancillary Infrastructure

THAT Council supports the District of Mackenzie’s application to the BC Air Access Program for up to \$13,000 in funding towards airport upgrades.

Resolution #3 – SPMT – Airport Upgrades

THAT Council supports the District of Mackenzie’s application to the South Peace Mackenzie Trust for up to \$46,145 in funding towards airport upgrades.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Operations has identified necessary upgrades at the Mackenzie Airport to enhance safety, accessibility, and operational efficiency. These improvements align with the District’s ongoing efforts to maintain and modernize essential infrastructure to support economic development, emergency response capabilities, and regional connectivity.

The BC Air Access Program (BCAAP) provides cost-sharing opportunities for airport infrastructure projects that improve aviation safety and efficiency in British Columbia. The District is pursuing funding under two streams:

- Transitional Infrastructure – To support the replacement of the terminal doors with accessible automatic doors, ensuring improved accessibility for all users. Additionally, this funding will cover the installation of two motorized gates to enhance security and operational efficiency at the airport.

- Groundside/Ancillary Infrastructure – For the clearing of trees and brush along the exterior of the airport fence. This work is necessary to maintain clear sightlines, improve security, reduce potential wildlife hazards, and enhance the ability to perform regular fence maintenance.

Benefits of the Mackenzie Airport

The Mackenzie Airport is a key asset for the community, supporting economic activity, transportation, and emergency response services. The airport provides several direct and indirect benefits, including:

- **Support for Industry** – The airport is a critical piece of infrastructure for the forestry, mining, and energy sectors, providing air access for workers, contractors, and executives.
- **Emergency and Medical Services** – The airport facilitates medevac flights and emergency response operations, ensuring residents have timely access to critical services. Additionally, the airport's fire suppression capabilities support regional emergency services by providing a key base for firefighting efforts and enhancing response capabilities during wildfire events.
- **Tourism and Recreation** – The airport enhances Mackenzie's ability to attract visitors, outdoor enthusiasts, and adventure tourism businesses. Improved accessibility can support local events, hunting and fishing lodges, and wilderness experiences.
- **Future Growth and Connectivity** – A well-maintained airport positions Mackenzie for future development opportunities, including potential charter services and increased air traffic.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

If all three grant applications are approved, there will be no budgetary impact on the District, as the full \$92,145 project cost will be covered through external funding from the BC Air Access Program (BCAAP) and South Peace Mackenzie Trust (SPMT).

The motorized gates, previously budgeted at \$55,000 in the 2025 capital budget, would no longer require District funding, allowing those funds to be reallocated to other priorities.

If the grant applications are unsuccessful, staff will re-evaluate the scope of the project.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Community and Social Development

- Our investment in the municipality's services and infrastructure, our commitment to principles of social equity and well-being, and our belief in the value of resident engagement, creates a healthy community in which everyone feels valued and enjoys a high quality of life.

Economic Vitality

- The District is a leader on efforts aimed at diversifying the community's economy, supporting local businesses, and attracting new investment to the community. Diversification, a strong business sector and new investment are key to our economic vitality.

Strong Governance and Finances

- As the municipality's elected governing body, we serve all residents and businesses in the community. We engage residents and stakeholders on important issues and make our decisions through open and transparent processes. We are careful in our use of resources, mindful of the need to maintain programs and services, while also meeting the community's infrastructure needs.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Jody Murray, Director of Operations

Reviewed By: Corporate and Financial Services

Approved By: Chief Administrative Officer