



CCRD Governance & Service Delivery Study  
Fact Sheets  
September 2016

## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

### ► What services are provided?

The Central Coast Regional District (CCRD) provides two transportation services - the Bella Coola airport and Denny Island air strip.

Other important transportation services in the region, though not provided by CCRD, include the Bella Coola Transit System (“Community Bus”), BC Ferries services, provincial roads and highways, the Bella Bella airport and the Oweekeno air strip.

#### **Bella Coola Airport**

The Transport Canada certified Bella Coola Airport is located just off of Highway 20, 12 km east of Bella Coola near the Bella Coola River. The airport was established by residents and volunteers in 1966, and was taken over by the Ocean Falls Regional District (now the Central Coast Regional District) in 1972 to enable access to provincial government funds for airport infrastructure.

The first major provincial grant was secured later that year to construct a dike to protect the airport from river erosion and flooding, and further funding was obtained in 1978 to complete the purchase of the airport site, construct the terminal building, install security fencing and build a parking lot and access road.



Figure 1 - Bella Coola Airport

Today, private planes and helicopters can land at the airport and Pacific Coastal Airlines has scheduled daily flights from Vancouver on a year-round basis. The surrounding mountainous terrain does not permit the use of electronic instrument navigation and landing aids, and therefore all flights are conducted under Visual Flight Rules (VFR), which precludes night operations.

Flood protection remains a challenge – airport dikes were breached in 2010 and 2011 due to major flooding of the Bella Coola River. In both events, the airport runways were submerged and the facility had to be closed. In 2013, a proposal was put forward to establish a regional district service (Bella Coola Airport Dike Service Area) and authorize borrowing of up to \$1.2 million by the CCRD to match \$2.3 million in contributions by the provincial and federal governments. The funds would have been used to rebuild and extend the airport dike. The proposal was turned down by local residents in a May 2013 referendum – over 93% of the 458 participating electors voted against the project.

The CCRD has selected a consultant to prepare a 10-year Master Airport Plan, with emphasis on identifying future infrastructure upgrades and/or changes required to enable continued growth and development of the Bella Coola Airport, and ensure sustainability of airport operations.

#### **Denny Island Air Strip**

The Denny Island air strip was established by CCRD bylaw in 1992 when the community requested that an existing runway become a service of the regional district. The air strip is not Transport Canada certified, nor does it have any scheduled airline servicing. Private aircrafts are able to use the 3,000 foot (915 m) paved runway for daytime/VFR operations only. The land is secured by a licence of occupation granted by the Province. The air strip has no services, terminals or fuel.

### Bella Bella Airport & Oweekeno Air Strip

A small Transport Canada certified airport is located in Bella Bella on Campbell Island (Electoral Area B) and is operated by the Heiltsuk First Nation. Pacific Coastal Airlines offers daily scheduled flights between Bella Bella from Vancouver (via Port Hardy) and Campbell River on Vancouver Island. In Oweekeno (Electoral Area A), an airstrip is operated and maintained by the Wuikinuxv Nation. There are no facilities or terminals at the Oweekeno air strip. Both facilities are VFR operations only.

### Bella Coola Transit System

The Bella Coola Transit System, or the “Community Bus” as it is more commonly known, is a partnership between the Central Coast Regional Hospital District (CCRHD) and BC Transit. The CCRHD has the same boundaries as the Central Coast Regional District, but is a separate legal entity, although the board of directors for both organizations is the same. Funding for the CCRHD portion of the Community Bus service is provided by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

The Community Bus provides 6-times daily return service between Bella Coola and Glaciview (approximately 31 kilometres one-way), with service to Firvale and Burnt Bridge Creek by request, Monday to Saturday (except statutory holidays) from 8am to 6 pm. The service operates as a para-transit system, meaning that door-to-door service is available for people with disabilities and curb-to-curb service is available for others. The Community Bus service is available to everyone at a one-way fare of \$2.50 (children 4 and under are free), with hospital trips being the priority.



Figure 3 - Community Bus Route

### BC Ferries

BC Ferries provides year-round service between Port Hardy and Prince Rupert with north and

southbound stops in Bella Bella, where connection to Bella Coola, Ocean Falls and Denny Island is available via a smaller vessel (Nimpkish). A recent (September, 2016) announcement by the Province and BC Ferries committed to restoring a seasonal, direct ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola by the 2018 summer tourism season. Current ferry services, routes and costs are outlined below; however, note that significant changes are pending with the restoration of the Port Hardy / Bella Coola route by 2018.

The route between Port Hardy and Prince Rupert is currently served by two vessels – the Northern Expedition and Northern Adventure. Both carry approximately 130 vehicles and up to 638 passengers and crew. The connecting vessel (Nimpkish) that travels between Bella Coola, Ocean Falls, Denny Island and Klemtu carries up to 16 vehicles and 95 passengers and crew.

### Provincial Roads and Highways

In unincorporated areas, roads and highways are delivered by the provincial government. Maintenance of provincial roads, highways and bridges is overseen by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) and funded through provincial rural taxes. The province is divided into 28 service areas, and MOTI engages private contractors in multi-year agreements to undertake routine maintenance, repairs, upkeep surrounding electrical infrastructure and apply pavement markings in each service area. The CCRD spans two service areas: Service Area 5 – Sunshine Coast and Service Area 17 – Central Cariboo. The contractors responsible for Areas 5 and 17 are Capilano Highway Services Company and Interior Roads Ltd., respectively.

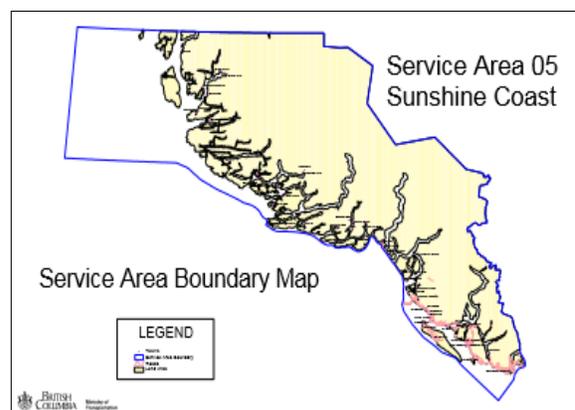
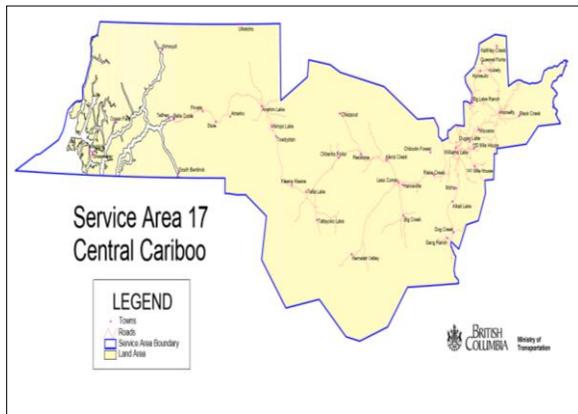


Figure 2 – Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure Service Area 5



**Figure 4 – Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure Service Area 17**

➤ **Who delivers the service?**

**Bella Coola Airport**

The Bella Coola airport is managed and operated by the CCRD. Prior to 2011, the CCRD was assisted by a volunteer-based airport commission. The commission’s role was to arrange for grounds and terminal maintenance and comply with the requirements from Transport Canada on behalf of the CCRD. The commission also offered recommendations to the Board of Directors on matters such as rental rates and charges, and major repairs to the runway and terminal building.

The service is now overseen remotely from the CCRD office in Bella Coola by the Transportation and Land Use Coordinator, who reports to the Chief Administrative Officer. A contractor performs daily runway inspections. The airlines (Pacific Coastal Airlines and Bella Coola Air Services) assist with daily operations and report any issues to the CCRD.

**Denny Island Air Strip**

The Denny Island air strip is also a service of the CCRD, although there are no facilities or services on site, and no monitoring of flight operations. Maintenance of the air strip is delegated to the Denny Island Airport Commission, which meets several times per year to fulfil its mandate, which is to review and make recommendations to the CCRD Board regarding facility administration, budgeting, maintenance, marketing and long-term improvements. CCRD staff involvement in the air strip operations is limited to receiving recommendations from the Airport Commission and reporting those to the CCRD board of directors for decision.

**Other (Non-CCRD) Transportation Services**

The Bella Coola Transit System or “Community Bus” is funded by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. The service is administered by the Central Coast Regional Hospital District, and B.C. Transit. The service is operated by the Bella Coola Valley Bus Co. Ltd.

In addition:

- BC Ferries is responsible for the delivery all ferry services;
- the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is responsible for roads and highways throughout the region, with maintenance contracted to Capilano Highway Services (Area 5) and Interior Roads Ltd. (Area 17);
- the Bella Bella airport is provided by the Heiltsuk First Nation; and,
- the Wuikinuxv Nation is responsible for the air strip at Oweekeno.

➤ **Who makes decisions?**

**Bella Coola Airport**

As a regulated Transport Canada airport, there are certain conditions and requirements that Bella Coola airport must meet in order to retain its certification. Within that context, all decisions related to the airport are made by the CCRD Board of Directors with input from the Transportation and Land Use Coordinator. Preparation of the Bella Coola Airport Master Plan is scheduled to begin in September 2016, which will help to guide the Board’s longer-term planning and decision making related to the airport facility.

**Denny Island Air Strip**

Decisions regarding the Denny Island air strip are made by the CCRD Board of Directors, with recommendations and advice provided by the Denny Island Airport Commission, as well as input from the Transportation and Land Use Coordinator.

The Denny Island Airport Commission is comprised of 6 members – 1 CCRD representative and 5 members-at-large. All members are appointed by the CCRD board of directors for a one-year term, and are eligible for re-appointment at the expiry of their terms. In addition to providing recommendations to the

CCRD Board, the Commission has a small budget that it uses for minor maintenance and repairs at the air strip.

**Other (Non-CCRD) Transportation Services**

Decisions pertaining to the community bus, roads and highways, ferry service, the Bella Bella airport and the Oweekeno air strip are made by the agencies responsible for their respective operations.

➤ **What is spent by CCRD on the services?**

The 2016 total budget for the Bella Coola Airport and Denny Island air strip are outlined in Figure 5.

Service Component	Cost <sup>1</sup>
Bella Coola Airport	\$100,760
Denny Island Air Strip	\$23,952
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$124,712</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cost estimates are from the 2016 - 2020 Financial Plan

In addition to the service costs, the CCRD established an asset replacement fund in 2014 for most services. Long-term asset management planning, including condition assessments of both the Bella Coola Airport and Denny Island air strip, is in progress with funding from the Community

Service	Reserve Total <sup>1</sup>
<u>Bella Coola Airport</u>	
Asset Replacement Fund	\$6,000
Accumulated Surplus	\$18,537
<u>Denny Island Air Strip</u>	
Asset Replacement Fund	\$304
Accumulated Surplus	\$13,967

<sup>1</sup> Reserve totals are as at the end of 2015.

Works Fund and the provincial government (see *Administration Fact Sheet* and *Regional District Grants Fact Sheet* for more information).

The amounts set aside in the asset replacement fund for the Bella Coola Airport and Denny Island air strip are shown in Figure 6. Both the Bella Coola airport and Denny Island air strip have also accumulated a surplus over the years, which is being used to fund some increases in operational costs over the upcoming years, including 2016.

➤ **How are the costs recovered?**

**Bella Coola Airport**

In 2016, the costs of the Bella Coola airport operations will be recovered through a combination of landing fees (43%), airport terminal leases (23%), various other user fees and charges (16%) and prior years' surplus (18%).

At present property taxes are not utilized as a source of funding for the airport. However, a bylaw (CCRD Airport and Facilities Conversion and Service Establishment Bylaw No. 410, 2011), does exist that enables the CCRD to levy property taxes as a source of funding for the service. Bylaw No. 410 stipulates that if property taxes were utilized, participating electoral areas would include C, D and E, and the maximum requisition would be \$1.00 per \$1000 of assessed value based on land and improvements. Long-term operations of the Bella Coola Airport, including a sustainable funding model, will be addressed in the 10-Year Master Airport Plan.

**Denny Island Air Strip**

The cost of the Denny Island air strip (\$23,952 in 2016) is recovered through a combination of property taxes based on assessed value of land and improvements within Electoral Area A, landing fees and when available, prior years' surplus. The 2016 breakdown is shown in the chart below. The budgeted cost of the Denny Island air strip is expected to drop to approximately \$10,000 in 2017 and for each of the three years thereafter, depending on the availability of surpluses to fund operations.

There are not currently any formal contribution or partnership agreements in place between the CCRD and local First Nations communities regarding the Bella Coola Airport or Denny Island air strip, nor does the CCRD contribute to the Bella Bella Airport or the Oweekeno air strip.

➤ **What is the cost to the typical resident?**

**Bella Coola Airport**

Currently there is no tax impact to residents of electoral areas C, D & E for the Bella Coola Airport. As per CCRD Bylaw No. 425, an Airport Improvement Fee of \$7.00 applies to passengers departing Bella Coola Airport on scheduled services. Calculation and remittance of this payment is determined by the airline operating the service. The 10-Year Airport Master Plan will address funding options to sustain and improve the facility in the long-term.

**Denny Island Air Strip**

The tax impact on areas within Area A that contribute toward the Denny Island Airport is shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**  
**Cost Impact on Typical Residence**  
**2016**

Service	Tax Req. <sup>1</sup>	Res. Rate	Total <sup>2</sup>
Denny Island Air Strip	\$7,785	0.0861	\$13

1 Tax requisition amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee  
2 Impact is calculated on a home assessed at \$150,000