



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TAKES FLIGHT: NANAIMO AIRPORT'S KEY ROLE IN REGIONAL BUSINESS SUCCESS!

**AIRPORTS ARE ONE OF THE LARGEST** infrastructure investments a region can make, and for good reason: the jobs they generate through their own operations is significant, but the total economic activity they support is massive. Nanaimo Airport (YCD) was one of ICET's earliest major infrastructure investments, with \$5M going towards functional upgrades including runway expansion, terminal improvements, and new safety features such as navigation and lighting systems. All told, these investments have helped turn YCD into one of the mid-Island's most-important economic assets.

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“When I think about the industries and sectors that depend on a reliable airport, it becomes apparent that YCD is a crucial link for the entire region,” said Mike Hooper, President and CEO of Nanaimo Airport. “Tourism, retail, manufacturing, international education, and more: being able to get your products and people in and out of a region efficiently is core to every business.”

It's one of the Island's busiest shipping hubs. Millions of dollars' worth of products — from auto parts to electronics to Christmas gifts — are air freighted through the airport annually. Its cargo facilities support everything from online shopping to business supply chains. For time-sensitive shipments, air freight is the main option.

Robotics company Inuktun Services, mobile air-compressor manufacturer VMAC, and medical cannabis producer Tilray are just some of the companies in the region who are benefiting from increased competitiveness thanks to a bigger, better, more reliable airport.

And while cargo is a growing trend of airport operations, Hooper sees the movement of passengers as the key to the airport's success.

“Vancouver Island University is our largest client. Their staff, faculty, students, and visiting families all have a major impact on the airport's customer base,” he explained. “When our reliability improved, it allowed VIU to promote

their international program with confidence knowing there are reliable connections. Our two organizations have developed and grown together, and have become significant economic drivers in the region.”

Today VIU relies on the Nanaimo Airport to bring students and their families from more than 90 countries worldwide, as well as every province and territory in Canada. The vast majority of international students at VIU arrive through YCD, and growth in their international student body has been approximately 10% per year for the past three years. A recent report indicates that for every 100 international students, the province gains 25 jobs and \$1.6M in GDP growth.

Overall passenger numbers at YCD are strong and growing faster than projected, necessitating terminal expansion and infrastructure upgrades. Research demonstrates a direct correlation between airport passenger volume and employment growth, validating the importance of airport expansion as an economic development tool.

At Nanaimo Airport, passenger volume has grown a record-setting 108 per cent in the last six years, since expansion completion. This places YCD ten years ahead of forecasts, with an economic output of \$229M in 2016.

Direct and indirect employment numbers of 1,200 FTE jobs and passenger volumes of more than 340,000 passengers are a big part of that overall economic impact. “By expanding our facilities, we are able to host more flights, meaning more convenience for passengers and cargo customers,” Hooper explained.

In a cycle of continual improvement, expanded facilities have resulted in new services like WestJet Encore flights to Calgary, daily FedEx Express flights, Air Canada expanding direct service to Calgary, and new aviation services, including Enex Fuels.

“Thanks to those expanded services, we're planning for more growth, including a \$50M+ terminal building through a 20-year master plan,” said Hooper. “This will include increasing the security, boarding, and customs areas, an addition of 200 parking stalls, and much more.”

With more than 50 hectares of land for development, the aerospace opportunities at YCD are significant, and this key piece of economic infrastructure has solidified its place as a fundamental asset driving growth and success of the region.

# PROJECT PROFILE

## NANAIMO AIRPORT



\$27 MILLION  
BUDGET

\$5 MILLION  
ICET CONTRIBUTION

2010  
COMPLETION DATE