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Item No. 11.1.2

**Halifax Regional Council
January 12, 2010**

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: December 16, 2009

SUBJECT: **Case 01192: Amendments to the Planning Districts 14 and 17 MPS and LUB to Restrict Future Noise-sensitive Development around Halifax Stanfield International Airport**

ORIGIN

- Policy EC-14A of Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Authorize staff to initiate a process to consider amending the Planning Districts 14 and 17 Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to restrict noise-sensitive land uses around Halifax Stanfield International Airport; and
2. Direct staff to follow the public participation program as approved by Council in February, 1997.

BACKGROUND

Through this report, Regional Council is asked to initiate a process to restrict the development of future land uses around Halifax Stanfield International Airport that may be adversely impacted by airport noise. HRM has recognized the importance of addressing land use compatibility issues around the airport through the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, which states:

Halifax International Airport is a significant contributor to HRM's economy, generating about \$1 billion in direct and indirect benefits with an employment base of about 5400 jobs¹. The Halifax International Airport Authority, the agency responsible for managing the airport, plans significant expansion and improvements over the coming years, including the potential for a third runway². These expansion plans reflect projected increases in both passenger and freight traffic at the airport.

One issue facing the airport's activity is the potential impact of noise from plane traffic on surrounding areas. Transport Canada has charted areas where noise impacts may be significant and recommends restricting development, especially residential, from locating within these areas. These areas, known as Noise Exposure Forecast contours, will be incorporated into the applicable secondary planning strategy and land use by-law.

EC-14A In accordance with Transport Canada guidelines, HRM shall, through the secondary planning process, establish a Noise Exposure Forecast Schedule around the Halifax International Airport. Within this Schedule, new residential uses shall be subject to development controls to mitigate noise from airplane traffic.

HRM previously started a process to limit residential development, including the holding of a public information meeting in 2003 and a workshop in 2005. However, it was determined that the legislative authority to restrict development within the noise exposure contours was not clear and the project stopped. Amendments to the legislation have since been adopted, expressly allowing Council to restrict development within noise contours.

DISCUSSION

The Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF) is a time-averaged determination of expected noise levels within the vicinity of an airport, expressly from the perspective predicting likely annoyances from aircraft upon a surrounding community. By considering factors such as types of aircraft, time of flights, arrivals, departures, and future runway expansions, noise levels are presented as contours upon a map (a Noise Contour Map) with an assigned a NEF value. Transportation Canada describes the typical community response to each NEF as follows:

¹ SGE Acres Ltd. *Halifax International Airport Economic Impact 2002*. (Halifax: HIAA, 2002)

² LPS Aviation and Dillon Consulting. *Halifax International Airport Master Plan*. February 2004. Halifax.

Response Area	Response Prediction *
1 (over 40 NEF)	Repeated and vigorous individual complaints are likely. Concerted group and legal action might be expected.
2 (35-40 NEF)	Individual complaints may be vigorous. Possible group action and appeals to authorities.
3 (30-35 NEF)	Sporadic to repeated individual complaints. Group action is possible.
4 (below 30 NEF)	Sporadic complaints may occur. Noise may interfere occasionally with certain activities of the resident.
* It should be noted that the above community response predictions are generalizations based upon experience resulting from the evolutionary development of various noise exposure units used by other countries. For specific locations, the above response areas may vary somewhat in accordance with existing ambient or background noise levels and prevailing social, economic and political conditions.	

Source: Transportation Canada, TP-1247

Transportation Canada recommends that development be controlled from the 25 NEF. Halifax Stanfield International Airport has developed NEF mapping for the areas around the airport and has asked that HRM restrict the development of future noise-sensitive land uses in support of the Transportation Canada recommendations. The 30 NEF seems to be reasonable given the existing development in the surrounding area (Map 1).

The purpose of restricting further noise-sensitive development is to ensure that land use compatibility issues are not exasperated. Noise-sensitive development is referenced by Transportation Canada as being uses such as residences, nursing homes, schools, hospitals, and day cares (Transportation Canada, TP-1247, www.tc.gc.ca/civilaviation/publications/tp1247).

Restricting development within NEF noise contours would occur through amendments to the Districts 14 and 17 Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law. The anticipated policies and regulations would prohibit new noise-sensitive development within and above the 30-35 NEF. There would be no impact upon existing development such as houses, which would continue to be permitted to expand, or new development upon existing lots. Furthermore, uses that are not characterized as being noise-sensitive and that are currently allowed under the existing zoning will continue to be permitted. The greatest impact of the amendments would therefore be upon the establishment of new residential subdivision development.

If Regional Council agrees to proceed with this project, the exact nature of the potential amendments to the Districts 14 and 17 Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law will be determined through a detailed review and public consultation.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The costs to process this planning application can be accommodated within the approved operating budget for C310.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council may choose to initiate a process to consider amending the Planning District 14 and 17 Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law. This is the staff recommendation.
2. Council may choose to pursue policy amendments that differ from those that are outlined in this report.
3. Council may choose to refuse to initiate amendments to the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, thus retaining the existing policies and regulations.


ATTACHMENTS

Map 1 - Generalized Future Land Use

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

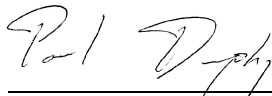
Report Prepared by: Richard Harvey, Senior Planner, 490-5637

Report Approved by:

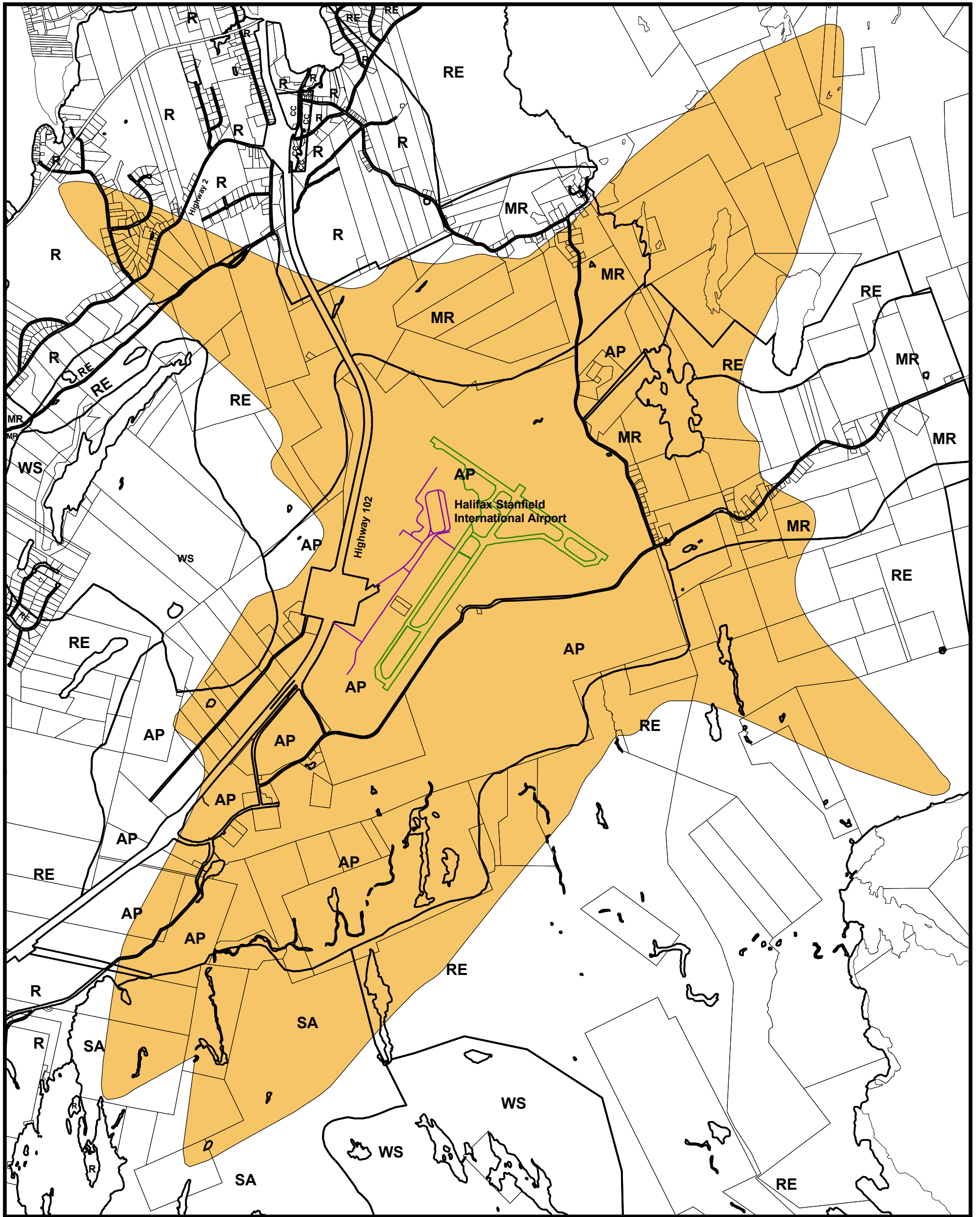


Austin French, Manager Planning Services, 490-6717

Report Approved by:



Paul Dunphy, Director, Community Development



Map 1
Generalized Future Land Use



NEF 30 Contour

R Residential Designation
MR Mixed Residential Designation
AP Airport Designation
WS Watershed Designation

CC Community Centre Designation
RE Resource Designation
SA Special Area Designation

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