
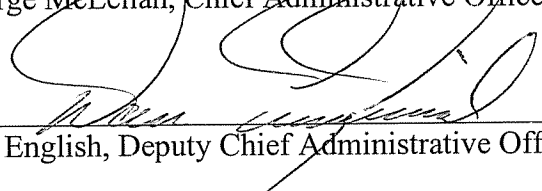


**Halifax Regional Council**  
**November 4, 2003**

**TO:** Mayor Peter Kelly and Members of Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

  
Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** September 2003

**SUBJECT:** Case 00617: MPS and LUB Amendments - Aerotech Business Park

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**ORIGIN**

This report originates from HRM Real Property Planning, Real Property and Asset Management.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:**

- 1. Instruct staff to initiate the process to amend the Planning Districts 14 & 17 (Shubenacadie Lakes) Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to alter the range of permissible industrial and business land uses; and**
- 2. Request staff to follow the public participation program as approved by Council in February, 1997 with staff to hold the public participation meeting.**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Aerotech Business Park, located adjacent to Halifax International Airport, is within the planning area for Shubenacadie Lakes. Since the adoption of the area planning documents in 1989, the park has been designated for business and industrial use, with an emphasis on attracting aerospace, technology, and manufacturing uses (Attachment 1 provides relevant extracts from the community plan). Considerable public investment in road, municipal sewer and water systems was made, to service both the Business Park and the airport.

Despite initial success, the business park has not been successful in attracting new occupants in the last ten years from its original target market. Business interest from non-technology and non-aerospace interests has been consistently active, however the zoning in place excludes many potential uses. The park therefore needs to be repositioned in the marketplace through adjustments in land use policy and zoning, and marketing.

Aerotech presently has approximately 110 acres of serviced/market ready lots available for sale in the park. With the current infrastructure in place and a change in zoning, Staff would be able to more readily market the lots with limited capital costs. The marketing for these lots would in turn provide the best indication of market demand within the park and whether future capital expenditures are warranted.

## **DISCUSSION**

The market position of Aerotech needs to be re-assessed to bring the park in line with other HRM Business Parks such as Burnside. While a variety of uses are permitted now, the present permitted uses exclude some key traditional uses found in other HRM Business Parks. For example, if a large food retailer wanted to construct a distribution/warehouse facility in Aerotech, they would not be permitted to do so. The exclusion of such uses is detrimental to the economic growth of the immediate area and HRM overall. This reassessment will lead to changes to existing plan policy and zoning in the planning documents for Shubenacadie Lakes.

To assist staff, a consultant was commissioned to undertake a development study. This study, Update for the Development and Marketing Plan for the Aerotech Park, was completed in April of this year by Environmental Design and Management Ltd (EDM) in association with CB Richard Ellis Ltd. The consultant agreed that relaxation of current land use policies and zoning was required. The report also made recommendations regarding changes to road infrastructure in the park, changes in the means of marketing and park identification, and on closer co-operation and marketing with the Halifax International Airport Authority (HIAA).

In general terms it is anticipated that new zoning would be based on the establishment of traditional highway commercial zones (for lands around the Exit 5A interchange) and emphasizing general commercial/industrial development for the remainder of the park. Staff have been meeting regularly

with the HIAA, and there is general agreement on policy and zoning changes which will benefit both the airport and the business park. Build-out of Aerotech will enhance the airport and its related uses by providing a critical mass in the area sufficient to attract and support amenities such as hotels, restaurants, banking and daycare.

In addition to changes to the Aerotech Business Park zoning, changes to zoning for the airport itself can also be considered. While municipal land use regulations do not apply to lands under federal control, there are extensive areas of land outside of the main terminal which are now, or may be, leased to private businesses. These would include commercial and retail uses, cargo businesses, and other private facilities which commonly seek to locate at airports. Further discussions with the HIAA are required to determine appropriate changes.

The existing MPS policies themselves anticipate the need for changes to park zoning over time to respond to market and land use shifts. It is therefore appropriate to commence a public process to allow broad input, from the public, the HIAA, and from area businesses on changes to the planning documents. Changes to present zoning standards will be critical in stimulating land sales in the business park.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications.

### **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**

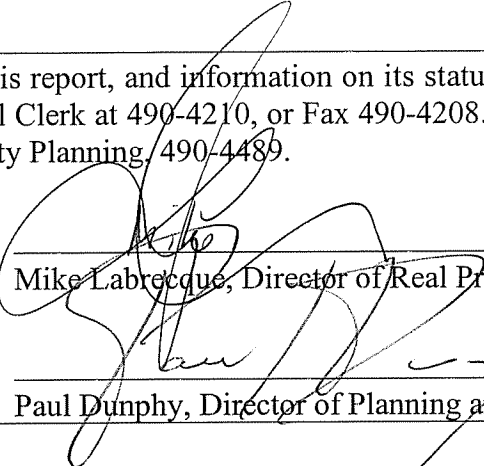
1. Proceed with the public consultation process. This is recommended for reasons described above.
2. Refuse to undertake the process. This is not recommended, as in staff's opinion change is required to the current land use policies and controls to allow proper marketing of the park.

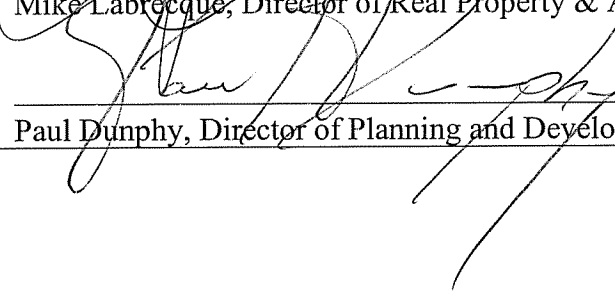
### **ATTACHMENTS**

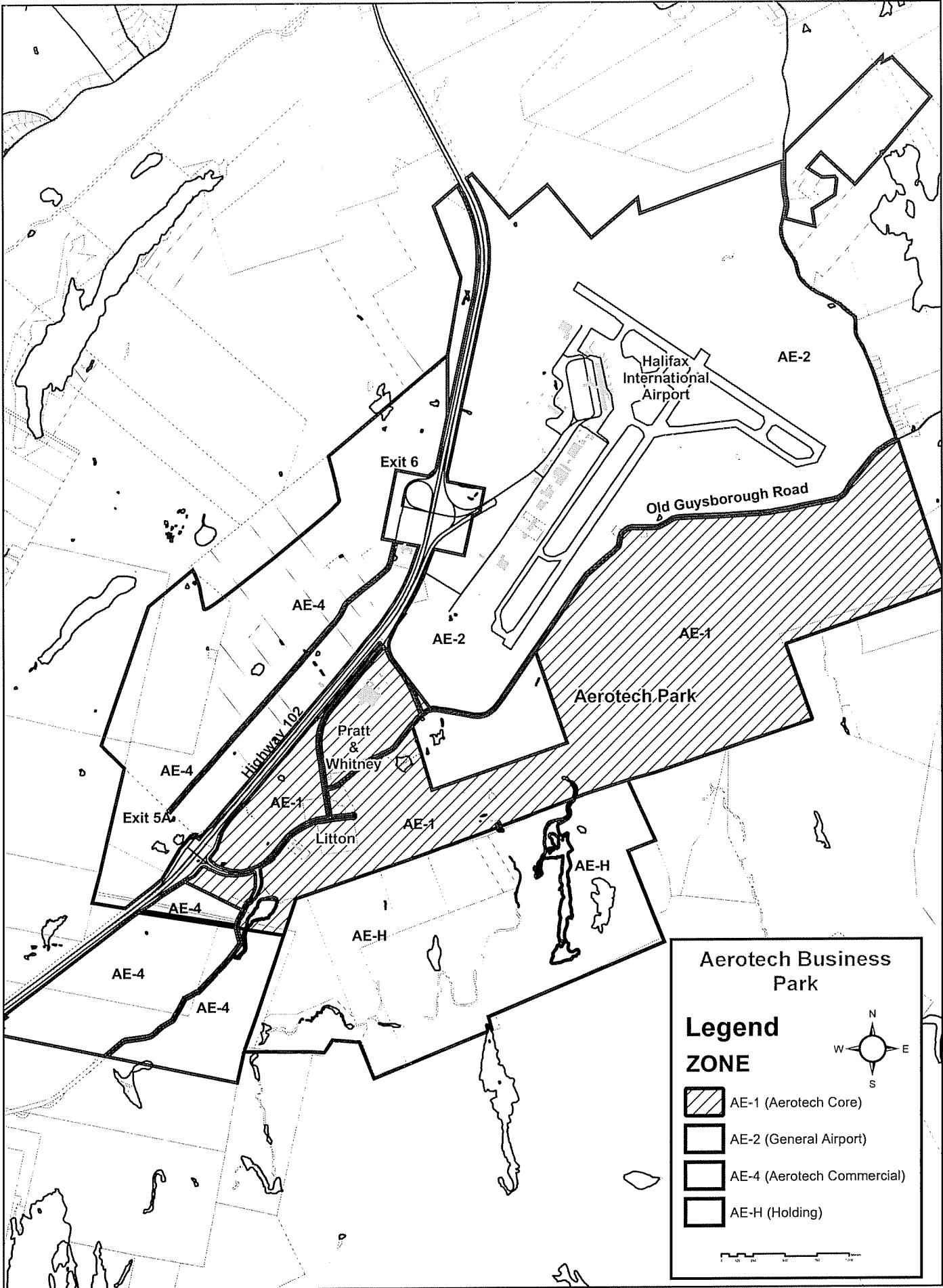
Map 1: Aerotech Business Park  
Attachment A: Extracts from the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208. Report Prepared by: Mitch Dickey, Planner II, Real Property Planning, 490-4489.

Report Approved by:

  
Mike Labrecque, Director of Real Property & Asset Management





  
Paul Dunphy, Director of Planning and Development Services

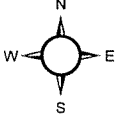



**Aerotech Business Park**

**Legend**

**ZONE**

-  AE-1 (Aerotech Core)
-  AE-2 (General Airport)
-  AE-4 (Aerotech Commercial)
-  AE-H (Holding)





**Attachment A**  
**Extracts from the Municipal Planning Strategy for Planning Districts 14 & 17**  
**(Shubenacadie Lakes)**

AIRPORT INDUSTRIAL DESIGNATION

In 1985, the Municipality and senior levels of government began developing the Aerotech Business Park on approximately 1,600 acres of land to the south of Halifax International Airport is Atlantic Canada's busiest airport and one of the metropolitan area's major transportation centres.

"Aerotech" is the Municipality's largest single commitment to growth, improved employment opportunities, and the long-term balancing of taxation. In total, 2,400 acres have been acquired for this undertaking. The park is intended to provide sites for the development of industries at the leading edge of modern technology, as well as for uses which will substantially benefit from the airport location.

Pratt and Whitney Canada Inc. will establish the first operation within the park. This facility will utilize a satellite directed robotics system to manufacture aircraft engine parts, a unique innovation in North America. In addition, Litton Systems Canada Limited has announced the construction of a radar component plant.

P-102 In recognition of the unique opportunities offered by the transportation interface at Halifax International Airport, it shall be the intention of Council to establish the Airport Industrial Designation as shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map (Map 1). The Designation reflects the importance of the airport as a major regional facility, supports the Municipality's objectives in the phased development of Aerotech Business Park, and recognizes the potential which these create for complementary business development on private lands.

In adopting the requirements of the land use by-law, it is Council's intention to establish a variety of zones which respond to the various development phases, land ownership and uses within the Designation. In addition, the by-law shall provide specific and deliberate standards relative to municipal servicing and environmental matters, landscaping, storage and open spaces, parking and access, design and other elements which contribute to the coordinated development of a variety of industry and other business in this strategic location. In order to achieve the best possible use of land and to contribute to this co-ordination of development, the by-law shall allow for these standards to be varied only according to specific development agreements under the Planning Act.

All efforts will be made to create a campus atmosphere within Aerotech, and to ensure a high degree of compatibility between technology and the natural environment. This is supported and required by the dedication of high tech industry to providing a progressive work environment.

The success of the campus concept demands high standards of design and engineering from park tenants and the Municipality. It also requires a degree of flexibility in development control and a coordinated approach to developing individual yet complementary sites. It is the intention to establish minimal zoning standards and to ensure innovation and excellence by negotiating specific design and maintenance items. This will be achieved through a variety of means, including agreements of purchase and sale,

deed or lease covenants and adherence to selected municipal guidelines for site development as established by individual development agreements.

These guidelines will be established in the form of a site standards manual, which will identify the key elements required for site and facility design and will outline the process of design approval by the Municipality. The process will include the review and recommendation of the multi-disciplinary advisory group established to assist prospective tenants, negotiate specific elements of proposals and advise the Municipality's Industrial Commission on development matters within the park.

In addition to the site standards manual and review team, it is the intention to complete a master plan for Aerotech, which will incorporate both infrastructure and environmental elements and will reflect the basic zoning and design standards adopted by the Municipality.

P-103 It shall be the intention of Council to demonstrate its commitment to creating and maintaining a campus atmosphere within Aerotech Business Park, and to protecting the investment of park tenants in this concept over the long term by:

- (a) the establishment of an advisory group which may have representation from municipal departments, outside experts, park tenants and others as the Council determines are required to provide technical advice to the Industrial Commission and Council on the merits of specific proposals and on development matters with the park generally;
- (b) adopting municipal site development standards which shall guide the activities of the advisory group and prospective tenants in designing and negotiating the development of specific sites with the park; and
- (c) developing a master plan for the park, in order to support the most effective phasing of development, maximize efficiency in the construction and use of roads and other infrastructure, identify specific environmental or other elements which may affect the overall park design or operation, and locate natural and man-made features which provide opportunities for site design and the overall campus concept or which may assist in promoting areas of the park for specific uses.

In the first instance, the preparation of a master plan concentrates on the park itself. However, this undertaking may benefit from broader considerations, such as the future needs of Halifax International Airport and the development potential of privately held lands. Upon completion of either type of master plan, its land use elements should be incorporated into this Strategy.

P-104 With reference to Policy P-103, it shall be the intention of Council to amend this planning strategy and the land use by-law to incorporate and fully implement secondary planning carried out within and surrounding Aerotech Business Park.

As the character of "high tech" uses are not easily defined and are highly changeable, it is appropriate to establish only minimal standards within the zones applicable to Aerotech. Uses permitted within any zone will become inadequate to describe the overall high tech concept over time and it may be necessary to amend existing zones or to create additional zones. The absence of a detailed master plan also sets limits on the potential of the by-law to identify detailed and varied zoning for specific sites. Thus, the by-law's requirements will be necessarily broad at the outset and Council will be required to monitor its continuing applicability as the first phase of the park is developed.

P-105 With reference to Policy P-104 and in recognition of the need to maintain flexibility with respect to site design and the changing character of technically advanced industry, it shall be the intention of Council to establish minimal site requirements within the land use by-law and to negotiate through the Industrial Commission more specific site requirements. These shall be implemented by way of covenants and other agreements as may be required including development agreements. Furthermore, it shall be Council's intention, with the co-operation and advice of the Commission, to monitor development within the park and, where beneficial to the overall concept, amend existing zones or create new zones.

Initial planning has outlined two development stages within the park, and an access road from Highway 102 has recently opened 500 acres. It is intended that critical sites at the junction of this access road and the highway be reserved for high quality commercial developments and that they be withheld until such time as demand from Aerotech or airport users warrants these facilities. In addition, there is potential for other commercial or mixed use service centres within the first 1,600 acres, particularly at major intersections.

Approximately 250 acres of land has access to full services and water and sewerage has been provided to an additional 250 acres. It may be necessary to complete this servicing with storm drainage and road improvements in order to be cost effective or to respond to a major development proposal.

P-106 Within the first phase of Aerotech Business Park, it shall be the intention of Council to establish a core zone which provides a concentrated area for a wide range of technologically advanced industry, related to aviation, aerospace, research and development and manufacturing. In addition, the land use by-law shall provide for supporting services to industry and the airport, including education and training centres, information and communication facilities, and consulting, storage and other services normally required by park tenants. Provisions shall also be established within the land use by-law with respect to outdoor storage and display, parking and loading.

P-107 Notwithstanding Policy P-106 it shall be the intention of Council to establish a commercial zone within Aerotech Business Park, which shall provide for major commercial, manufacturing, institutional and mixed use developments serving airport and Aerotech users. Provisions shall be established within the land use by-law with respect to vehicle storage areas. In order to permit the identification of commercial sites prior to the completion of the master plan for Aerotech, the by-law shall provide that certain lands within the core zone may be developed for commercial purposes and according to the standards of the commercial zone.

P-108 Notwithstanding Policy P-106 and in addition to lands used for major commercial facilities pursuant to Policy P-107, it shall be the intention of Council to recognize the importance of lands within the Aerotech Designation which abut Highway 102. The land use by-law shall specify requirements which contribute to the development of a highway "showcase", including requirements which affect the visual appearance from the highway.

P-108(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of Policies P-106, 107, 108 and 109, Council may consider varying the requirements of the land use by-law according to Sections 55, 66, and 67 of the Planning Act, for any of the uses permitted by the zone of a property within the Airport Industrial Designation. In considering any such agreement, Council shall have regard to furthering the campus concept for designed within the Aerotech Business Park, as is illustrated by the guidelines of the Aerotech development advisory committee, and



to the integration of proposed projects with existing park tenants, and to specific measures required to meet the criteria established by Policy P-155.

The sewerage system is designed to eventually accommodate the 1,600 acres. However, additional lands have been acquired. In addition, the appropriate mix of land uses has yet to be determined.

P-109 Within the Airport Industrial Designation, it shall be the intention of Council to establish a holding zone which shall permit a limited range of uses such as government uses, utilities and educational uses. In recognition of the most recent acquisition of lands, it shall be the intention of Council to apply this holding zone to these lands. Furthermore, Council shall reserve these lands pending the resolution of a master plan.

Halifax International Airport is the busiest airport in Atlantic Canada and has often exhibited rates of growth in freight and passenger services in excess of national averages. Over the last ten years, substantial additions have been made to passenger, freight and supporting industrial uses at or near the airport. Additional growth can be expected.

The community of Goffs, within which both the airport and the Aerotech Business Park are located, while predating the construction of the airport has a substantial interest in the improvement of airport centred employment opportunities. In the past, the Municipality has maintained broad areas of industrial zoning throughout the community which, together with aircraft noise has helped to limit new residential and commercial opportunities in the community.

The airport is served by the only highway which directly links the metropolitan area with the rest of Canada. This major highway link and the airport area and Aerotech Park area as both an employment centre and a destination suggests that continued growth can be expected. This will generate increased opportunities for a broadened range of commercial and industrial uses in the airport area. The form and type of commercial uses which can be accommodated should include a range of uses which would also serve the needs of the residents of Goffs.

P-110 It shall be the intention of Council to recognize the existing and potential range of commercial and industrial uses which are provided by and supportive of the Halifax International Airport, as both a transportation centre and an employment centre as well as a service centre for the community of Goffs, by establishing a general airport zone within the land use by-law which shall permit airport related facilities and services, manufacturing and construction industries, warehousing and commercial uses (P-107). It shall be the intention of Council to establish the general airport zone on federal lands at the airport and on private lands generally contained within the 35th noise exposure projection contour.

The sizable investment of public funds in the Aerotech Business Park builds on public investment in the Halifax International Airport to make the general area more attractive to business development. It is not the Municipality's intention to ignore this potential nor restrict its overall benefits to the private property owner. However, in order to protect the initiatives at both Aerotech and the airport, there must be comparable requirements for development on private land holdings, whether related to environmental standards or to site design and maintenance along Highway 102. It is important that, in addition to maintaining the general campus concept, the sensitive equipment contained in facilities at Aerotech not be subjected to hazards and that the functions of the airport not be disrupted.

Three locations have specific industrial and commercial potential - lands on the opposite side of Highway 102 from the showcase lots of Aerotech; property abutting the highway and to the immediate south of the park; and federal holdings abutting the highway and to the immediate north of the park.

- P-111 Within the Airport Industrial Designation, it shall be the intention of Council to establish a business zone which shall be applied to specific private and federal holdings in the immediate vicinity of, Aerotech Business Park and which have potential for business development in support of and complementary to, high technology developments. In addition, the land use by-law shall identify general industrial and commercial and institutional uses which can benefit from a location along Highway 102 and which can be accommodated without detracting from facilities developed at Aerotech or Halifax International Airport. Further, the land use by-law shall contain requirements for service stations and provisions which determine the compatibility of development with the general concept for Aerotech Park. In particular, land abutting Highway 102 and yards visible from this highway shall be required to be used in a manner which supports the intentions for attractive and well-designed developments along this corridor. Further, it shall be the intention of Council to consider the expansion of the Airport Industrial Designation to include additional lands on the western side of Highway 102, at such time as public road access is made available.