

**Proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendment to Establish a New Direct Control District:
'Technology Business Park'**

Evan Cameron, P. Eng.
Cameron Labs Ltd.
April 3, 2018

Location & Size: P/O W1/2-SW-15-55-25-W4 - Hwy 2 & Carbondale Rd. (30.8 Ha/76.1 Ac.) - see Appended Illustrations

(Presentation to Sturgeon County Council Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting April 10, 2018)

1. What is the fundamental rationale underpinning this proposal?

- a. In terms of land use, the subject properties, as described by the appended illustrations (pages 3 & 4), would be better suited for a higher purpose than 'Agriculture' (AG).
- b. The proposed 'higher purpose' would be a 'Technology Business Park', i.e. a park to accommodate businesses and facilities dedicated to innovation, research and applications in such technologically evolving fields as agriculture, communications, education, energy distribution, environment, health, housing, transportation, etc.. Synergy exchange between tenants will significantly enhance efficiency overall. Integration of technologies and people creates a whole that is better than the sum of its parts.
- c. As there are no 'Districts' specified within the context of a 'Technology Business Park' in the Sturgeon County Land Use Bylaw (LUB), under Part 1.9.2(a)(i) this land is eligible for establishment as Direct Control District (DCD) by means of an amendment to the LUB, hence joining other DCDs similarly established and described under Part 16. This proposal clearly meets the three conditions stated under Part 1.9.2(b) of the LUB.

2. Why would this land be better suited for a higher purpose than 'Agriculture'?

- a. The soil classification is Class 3. "Soils in this class have moderately severe limitations that restrict the range of crops or require special conservation practices." The subject parcels are too small to be economically viable using traditional agricultural production techniques. In fact, over the years the optimal agricultural purpose for this land has been determined to be hay production, which, albeit economically unsustainable, facilitates good stewardship of the land, keeping it organically healthy.
- b. Sturgeon County has a history of sacrificing prime agricultural land in favor of developments having much high economic generation, hence higher tax base, e.g. residential, industrial and commercial, etc.. With the recent provincial focus on the preservation of prime agricultural land, Sturgeon County will soon have to commit to significant restrictions on such development. Since the subject land, because of the parcel size and quality, cannot be considered prime agricultural land, the concept 'Technology Business Park' makes a lot of economic sense as a future use for this land.

3. Why a 'Technology Business Park' at this location (Ref. appended illustration Page 3)?

This would be a 'first' for anywhere within Sturgeon County. A 'Technology Business Park' at this location not only offers a high quality, environmentally friendly type of development for Sturgeon County, with above average tax assessments, but also presents a significant attraction to the developers and supporters of technology based businesses, for many reasons:

- a. True 'park' environment, i.e. independently located in a rural area yet adjacent to a major highway, thus offering a high level of security, especially if the 'park' is gated. Policing readily is available.
- b. Unique architecture and picturesque landscaping will exude a pleasing ambience along Hwy 2.
- c. Developers will find all utilities accessible either at the property line or well within a mile - refer to location illustration appended (page 3).
- d. Ready access to quality residential living in several communities within the county, as well as Edmonton, St. Albert and Morinville.
- e. Close proximity to the universities and colleges of Edmonton. The University of Alberta already has a strong presence, with their agricultural lands just a couple miles to the south.
- f. A 'Technology Business Park' will potentially offer high end careers for young professionals, especially encouraging the home-grown ones to stay in their community.

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4. Why include both properties in the proposed park (Ref. appended illustration Page 4)?

Both properties currently support non-agricultural activities which are fully compatible with technological business. Also, both have the same, less than optimum, soil conditions - reference previous Section 2.

5. What sort of technology businesses might find a home in this park?

- a. Once the 'Technology Business Park' district is established it will be interesting to see how it evolves. Certainly it will provide the Sturgeon County Economic Development team a unique and worthy marketing objective to pursue. Ideally, a far-sighted developer will acquire an interest early on and invest in subdividing and installing the civil infrastructure, i.e. roads, utilities, etc. In any case it might take 10 - 25 years to fill out the park, however should an expansion be required before then, this property is ideally situated to accommodate such - something a developer will take note of from the outset.
- b. A **Solar Farm** might be one example a growing technology business that could develop early on, since minimal civil infrastructure is required - just a tie into the primary power grid (about a mile to the east).
- c. The technology business potential of the park is also greatly enhanced, or 'seeded', by the long time presence of the Cameron Labs Ltd. amateur radio facility, where HF antenna research has been conducted for several years now, also the 6000 sq.ft. Sturgeon County South office building which has built-in 'lab' capacity. There is some synergy potential between the two, which may soon be exploited by the province, who are planning to build a Provincial Operations Center (POC) for the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) in south Edmonton. As part of their mandate to consolidate all 'emergency communications' facilities in the province, the AEMA are apparently requiring all municipalities to establish connectivity with those local amateur radio stations having operational capability for emergency services. Whatever the outcome, this scenario represents communications technology finding a home in the park.

6. How does this initiative reconcile with the Municipal Development Plan (MDP)?

Whereas there is no specific reference therein, justification for the spirit of this proposed 'Technology Business Park' is reflected very well in the MDP document, specifically under 'The Integrated Regional Growth Strategy (IRGS)' to be found on page 23. Of note however, is the fact that the MDP may soon be somewhat eclipsed by eventual implementation of a 'Region Growth Plan' originating under the auspices of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB), a fact which suggests that there is no better time than now to create this DCD.

7. How would this initiative reconcile with Alberta Transportation?

The 'Technology Business Park' being inherently non-commercial, would not be dependent on the highway for anything other than normal business access. This factor, combined with the fact that rapid development in the park is unlikely, should not trigger Alberta Transportation to call for a traffic study as a pre-requisite to approval of this DCD. Furthermore, the potential future closure of direct access to Hwy 2, via Twp Rd 552, in favor of a less direct access route, will have negligible impact on the 'Technology Business Park' accessibility factor.

8. How does this initiative reconcile with the Edmonton's 'Horse Hills Energy and Technology Park'?

Negligible overlap! The Horsehills Energy and Technology Park, established in 2010, covers a 4,800 ha (12,000 acres) triangle of NE Edmonton, west of Manning Freeway and south of Hwy 37. Besides being 160 times as big, their expressed intention is to: "chart a course for the development of the Northeast area into a world class eco-industrial precinct specializing in petro-chemical manufacturing and supportive industry", i.e. they are focused on petro-chemical whereas our park will host a broad range of technologies.



