

A (Very) Quick \$120 Million: Supersonic Flight Takes A Bold Step Closer To Reality



Mike Espindle Contributor 

Boats & Planes

I cover private aviation, yachting, and recreational boats.

Nearly every aviation nabob out there will tell you that the next time we see supersonic air travel, it will more likely be aboard a business jet than aboard a commercial airliner. [Aerion Corporation](#), a leader in supersonic jet development, caused a stir in the private jet world with a bold announcement back in 2004 seeking to create a joint venture to design and build a new supersonic business jet. After a great deal of interest, the original aircraft was revisited and upgraded to the current Aerion AS2 proposed project in 2014: An 8-10 passenger, natural laminar-flow winged aircraft that will be designed to blaze a trail in the skies at 1.4 Mach (um, that's over 1,000 mph) over a minimum planned range of 4,750 NM (about 5,466 statute miles, besting the range of a subsonic Gulfstream G500).





The Aerion AS2 supersonic business jet project comes that much closer to reality with the ground-breaking of a massive new headquarters. [-] COURTESY OF AERION CORPORATION

In 2019, Boeing came on-board as a development partner, making a substantial investment in Aerion. And now, the operation has just announced the ground-breaking of an exciting new headquarters and operations center in Melbourne, Fla., at Orlando Melbourne International Airport. Priced at \$120M each, there is already a \$6.5-billion backlog of orders for the AS2 jet, which is slated to begin production in 2023, with a first flight in 2024 and first deliveries projected for 2026.



SHAMIN ABAS
COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS



The Aerion AS2 will fly at Mach 1.4, over 1,000 miles per hour. COURTESY OF AERION CORPORATION



SHAMIN ABAS
COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS

The \$300m, 110-acre home of the company's new global headquarters and campus for ongoing research, design and production of the AS2 aircraft will be powered by clean energy (just as the AS2 intends to provide carbon-neutral flight) and bring at least 675 new high-wage jobs to Florida. Plans for the site, dubbed "Aerion Park," is that it will encompass over 2,000,000 square feet of buildings and facilities; constitute the focus of the AS2's assembly, testing, completion and delivery operations; serve as the nerve center for flight testing in its own airspace and approved supersonic testing corridors in the area; and include a customer experience center to host clients and develop customized, bespoke designs for each aircraft.

"This is a truly exciting day for Aerion as we launch our new home and the future of sustainable supersonic flight here in Melbourne, Florida," said Tom Vice, Aerion's Chairman, President & CEO at the ground-breaking ceremony. "We are building the future of mobility—a future where humanity can travel between any two points on our planet in three hours or less. We will change the world and bring a new sustainable means of supersonic and hypersonic flight to reality and it will happen here, at Aerion Park."



SHAMIN ABAS
COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS



The new headquarters will comprise a 2 million square feet of buildings and facilities across 110 ... [+]

COURTESY OF AERION CORPORATION

The previous era of civilian supersonic flight ended in October, 2003, with the final run of the Concorde aircraft; it was a British Airways flight from JFK in New York to Heathrow in London. The Concorde was largely a commercial failure as high upkeep and fuel costs for supersonic airliners slowly ate away at the once-profitable higher ticket prices they could command. Concerns about sonic booms could potentially hobble the new era of supersonic flight, but the Aerion AS2 will employ so-called “boomless” technology that refracts the shock waves produced by moving air molecules around the fuselage at faster-than-sound speeds away from the ground to mitigate any disturbing effects.



SHAMIN ABAS
COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS