

Mornington Peninsula Technology Park Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is proposed for the Bungower Road site?

A group of local landowners are collaborating to activate a high-tech jobs hub on Bungower Road, Somerville.

The precinct will feature:

- 50 hectare publicly accessible site of which up to 50% will be green open space
- 25 hectares developed into attractive, high quality low-rise buildings
- Redeveloped heritage precinct
- New community playing field
- Up to 1,500 jobs on site

The development is unique to the Mornington Peninsula and will draw employment and economic growth to the area and provide certainty and active recreation facilities to surrounding residents.

This will be a green, vegetation filled campus style precinct, with low-rise buildings and plenty of space for active recreation.

This is a dynamic economic proposal as well as a win for the local community, contributing to the availability of social infrastructure in the form of community facilities.

We will activate what is currently private land, providing a net increase in trees as well as active recreation facilities like bike paths, jogging trails, and a playing field open to surrounding residents.

2. Why does Council prefer the site at Hastings?

That's a matter for Council. We applaud the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council's intentions in trying to prioritise the economic recovery of the region from the pandemic downturn.

We do, however, note that construction of the Hastings

site will not be possible for some years due to the number of considerations and determinations that have to be made before it can proceed.

This includes coordination with stakeholders like the Port of Hastings, discussion of landowner contributions to infrastructure upgrades, and the very substantial decisions to be made around the need for railway stabling on the site.

Council's Industrial Areas Rezoning Strategy was started prior to the impact of COVID-19 being felt, and the bottom line is that we think Council should activate both sites – Somerville to deliver jobs and economic growth now, and Hastings to deliver them in a few years' time.

3. Hasn't the Council-funded report concluded that Hastings is the preferred site?

Firstly, our aim is for Council to activate both the Hastings site and our site.

It is the case that a preliminary desktop study conducted by a planning firm indicated the Hastings site should be preferred by Council.

The limitations of the study meant that some of the determinations are problematic, as was confirmed at a Council meeting in early June. We would urge people to make their own minds up after looking through the proposals.

Council's report sets out a plan for providing 15 years of industrial land in the form of Industrial 1 Zone land at Hastings.

The State Government's Melbourne Industrial and Commercial Land Use Plan (MICLUP) identifies the need for a 30 year plan for industrial land.

The Somerville site is zoned Special Use Zone 1 and is surplus to port related uses. MICLUP identifies the Somerville site as representing regionally significant

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industrial land.

The proposal for the Somerville site is for a regionally significant high-tech industrial precinct catering to both regional and local demand for high tech industrial uses

Under a 30-year strategic approach, there will be a need for both the Hastings and Somerville sites.

4. When will you begin construction on the site if you are successful?

Sealite has project funding and can commence construction immediately, subject to rezoning.

Upon the rezoning and any associated permits to support the campus development, Sealite will commence construction within 12 months, generating jobs and investment on the Peninsula.

This project is ready to go and we just need the green light from Council.

5. What happens if you can't get approval at Council or State Government level?

In immediate terms, it would mean that Sealite would need to make other arrangements for delivery of its \$260M in prospective upcoming work contracts.

Much of this work is in defence spending for the upgrade of port infrastructure and military airfields.

This is really significant work for Sealite, but also for the local region. Sealite is already having to look at transferring work to other locations, and if this facility cannot proceed, the work will be outsourced or offshored to a suitable facility, rather than fulfilling the contract on Victorian soil.

This proposal will enable the retention of Sealite in Victoria and support its growth as a significant local employer providing much needed STEM-related career opportunities.

6. How will this proposal bring employment to the Peninsula?

The Sealite project combined with the high-tech business park proposal has the potential to increase employment in the Mornington Peninsula with Sealite increasing total jobs to 250 and potential for up to 1500 jobs across the campus on full development.

This is particularly important given the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates that Mornington Peninsula Shire suffered one of the worst employment declines in Victoria in the weeks following the pandemic lockdown.

7. Why are you replacing open farming land with an industrial precinct?

The site itself is actually currently zoned Special Use Zone for marine related industrial use, specifically port-related use. Under those terms, it could be used for container storage or for any number of unsightly heavy industrial uses.

At some point, this land will be activated for use in some way, shape or form.

We are seeking to provide a positive planning outcome and a positive community outcome, by building low-rise, low density facilities for clean tech businesses, surrounded by new vegetation, community recreation facilities, and a significant increase in trees. We feel this is a much better outcome for the community than the possible alternatives, and that it will contribute to the character of the area.

8. What kinds of businesses do you expect will become co-tenants?

The anchor tenant for the precinct is Sealite, who are a local manufacturer and designer of navigation aids for marine and aviation use.

We believe the precinct will attract similar businesses – those who push technological boundaries to find better

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outcomes for businesses and communities. Importantly, these are STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) industry businesses, and will provide employment in those fields.

9. What benefits are there for the community in your proposal?

The precinct is designed to support the community, with a community playing field and sports facilities, sustainable building attributes, recycled water and waste-water recovery and active transport assets (eg bike paths and links to the Somerville township/public transport) add to the environmental attributes of the proposal.

End of trip facilities for visitors and tenants within the high-tech business park will be provided consistent with the campus vision of the project.

There are no high-amenity business parks in the area offering a mix of commercial and community spaces allowing users and visitors to the area opportunities to interact and engage in the space around them. This has the potential to not only improve outcomes for workers within the business park but increase the quantum of quality open space and active and passive recreation areas in Somerville and surrounding areas.

Residents to the western side will see an improvement in their views, and the extensive buffering and campus vegetation produces a substantial net increase in flora and fauna habitat.

10. What are you going to do about all the traffic on Bungower Road?

It is likely that during construction there will be an increase in vehicle movements along Bungower Road. The project will generate a significant amount of jobs and economic activity, and vehicle movements will be a necessary part of that.

It's important to note that Bungower Road already experiences around 5000 vehicle movements per day,

and Frankston-Flinders Road has around 10,000. These are busy roads already.

Activating both the Hastings and Somerville sites would spread the overall increase in traffic on the Peninsula over two locations. We also note that the use of the Somerville site as a high-tech business park will result in fewer truck movements than if its current zoning, which allows heavy industrial use, was realised.

While road upgrades, including the long-discussed duplication of Bungower Road, are a matter for Council, an expert traffic consultant report has confirmed that the surrounding roads are appropriate for the volume of vehicle traffic we can expect to service this precinct.

11. Why can't Sealite just build its new facility at Hastings?

Sealite is one of the current owners of the Somerville site and has a long history in the Somerville area. Our vision is to have our new, purpose-built facility sitting amid a clean, high-tech business park on this site.

12. Some members of the community have expressed concerns with any form of development on this site. Why are you trying to push ahead with it?

We acknowledge that Council has engaged with some parts of the community on a proposal for this site. While we don't believe the details of the project were represented in the clearest possible way to the community at that time, we have listened to community views and concerns, and substantially changed our proposal in response.

We note also that the current zoning of the site allows heavy industrial use. We are seeking a more limiting zoning, for use of a much lower-impact high tech business park.

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13. Who are the landowners involved in the proposal?

The majority of the landholding belongs to Sealite Pty Ltd, and to Gazzola Farms. Both are significant local employers and have long histories of contributing to the economy and community fabric of the Somerville area.

14. Will the buildings in the precinct block my view?

No. Buildings will be low rise and sensitively designed to protect visual amenity. Moreover, the substantial increase in trees and vegetation on site will mean that local visual amenity and character is retained and reinforced.

15. Isn't this land designated for Port of Hastings use?

The proposed site used to be part of a tract of land designated for future use for the Port of Hastings.

The Port of Hastings has recently confirmed that the land is surplus to its requirements, paving the way for us to activate the site for a better community outcome than may otherwise have occurred.

The land has been designated as a 'regionally significant industrial precinct' by the State Government and is currently zoned for uses including heavy industrial development.

16. Don't you already have a planning permit for this site?

We are requesting rezoning of the subject site from Special Use Port Related (SUZ1) to Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z) to facilitate the creation of a new high technology business park on Bungower Rd, Somerville, of which Sealite would become the anchor tenant.

Sealite has a current planning permit for this site. However, this cannot be acted upon under the current zoning as only 'port related' uses are allowed, which

means many businesses that would suit the area are unable to operate.

In order to facilitate a shovel-ready development by Sealite, and to host other high-tech/high-value businesses and suppliers, this technology business cluster will need a rezoning of the site.

We are requesting intervention to rezone the land to support high tech manufacturing and the supporting precinct as without this the land will remain undeveloped.

17. What will happen to the heritage listed house on the property?

Our proposal includes consideration to redevelop the existing structure to provide a commercial focus for the precinct – something like a café, restaurant, or craft brewery. We want the character of the building to be retained but we want to activate it as an asset for the community.

18. Why have you submitted this proposal to the Building Victoria's Recovery Taskforce before Council has finished with its public consultation?

The Victorian Government has established process to prioritise construction projects that will deliver immediate economic growth and employment, as part of their broad ranging efforts to assist Victoria's recovery from the economic damage caused by the pandemic. This project will deliver immediate results, and in our view will contribute substantially to the aims of the State Government.

It's important to note that development of this site by Sealite has been considered by Council and a number of previous policies and consultations. This is a new version of an existing proposal and has been adapted in response to the feedback we have had from residents and interested stakeholders.