

## 9. SKATEBOARDING IN BURWOOD/PEGASUS

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the issues around skateboarding needs in Burwood/Pegasus.

### CONTEXT

The Board requested a report on the feasibility of providing skate facilities at QEII and New Brighton. Issues around skateboarding needs in Burwood/Pegasus were discussed at a Board seminar in May 2002. The information from this seminar was requested to be reported to the Board.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is high demand and limited resources for skateboarding facilities in Burwood/Pegasus. Skateboarding requirements need to be addressed in a planned and co-ordinated fashion. Prioritisation of skateboarding needs in Burwood/Pegasus is required and must be balanced with the needs of the wider City.

### RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

It is a strategic objective of the Council to contribute to safe and healthy lifestyles by providing parks, festivals, and recreation and leisure services. The provision of skate facilities is supported by the following policies:

- Recreation and Sport Policy.
- Youth Strategy.
- Children's Policy.
- Social Wellbeing Policy.

### SKATEBOARDING

Skateboarding continues to grow in popularity both as a competitive sport and as a recreational activity. It is a global activity and with increasing numbers of professional skaters, commercial sponsorship, and large amounts of capital investment involved, it is not likely to be a passing fad. Skateboarding fits the mould of modern recreation trends in that it is:

- An informal, casual activity that people can participate in at any time and in a wide variety of places.
- Available to all levels of skills, abilities, ages and genders.
- An activity that people can do alone or in groups.
- Relatively inexpensive.
- Exciting and fun with a progression of skill development.

Skateboarding is also a useful mode of transport and provides fitness and social benefits to participants.

### Current Provision and Gaps

The Council is committed to providing for youth recreation needs; 28.1% of the City's population is aged 5 to 25 years.

Christchurch currently has 13 skate parks which are fairly evenly distributed around the city. Gaps in provision can be identified in both the Halswell and Sumner areas. An analysis of the facilities shows:

- They mostly cater for ramp style skating.
- There is a lack of street skating facilities.
- The facilities are mostly of an intermediate level.
- There is a lack of both advanced facilities and easy beginner facilities.
- The facilities are mostly of a medium size.
- There is a lack of large, metropolitan facilities that cater for a wide range of styles and abilities, though the extension of Washington Reserve will go some way to meeting this need.

- There is a lack of small, local facilities. The proposed skate facilities at Wainoni Park and MacFarlane Park are both considered to be local facilities.
- There are no indoor facilities.

### **Draft Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle BMX Cycling Strategy 1999**

The strategy was developed to prioritise and guide the provision of skateboarding facilities in the city. The strategy identified that the need for future facilities is likely to be greatest in:

- Richmond-Shirley.
- Aranui-South New Brighton.
- Parklands.
- Central City.

### **Identified Burwood/Pegasus Needs**

Skateboarding has been a recurring theme in various pieces of research in the Burwood/Pegasus wards – Burwood/Pegasus Youth Recreation Needs Study 2000, Parklands Needs Analysis 1993, What's The Big Idea? 1999. There has also been a petition received for skate facilities at South New Brighton, and requests for skate facilities at New Brighton. It is difficult to say whether the petition reflects a need for skate facilities particularly in South New Brighton or whether it reflects a general need for skate facilities somewhere in the New Brighton vicinity. More research is required to identify the priority area. In summary, the need for skate facilities has been identified at:

- South New Brighton.
- Thomson Park upgrade.
- New Brighton.
- The Palms.
- QEII.
- Parklands.
- Aranui.

A skateboarding event is being organised at Thomson Park in conjunction with a mid-winter swim on Sunday 23 June. Consultation will occur with the skateboarders at this event by means of a survey and interviews to determine priority areas, style and ability level for skate facility provision. Advice will also be sought from key people in the skateboarding community. Following this consultation, a strategy will be developed to meet skateboarding needs in Burwood/Pegasus and will be reported back to the Board.

### **Some Options and Issues**

#### **(a) Portable ramps**

The Burwood/Pegasus portable ramps could be placed temporarily in various locations. However, the ramps would be susceptible to vandalism if left unsupervised. They are currently managed by Powerhouse Youth Ministries.

#### **(b) Incorporate skateable features into play areas**

Possible skate features could be incorporated into play areas at South New Brighton Domain, Broad Park, New Brighton playground. These facilities would only cater for beginner level skating and would need to be designed very carefully to avoid conflict with other users.

#### **(c) Large undeveloped reserves available**

Bexley Reserve and Owles Terrace have yet to have plans finalised for them. Skate facilities could be incorporated into their design and be well sited for visibility and minimal disturbance to neighbours. These sites have not been specifically identified as areas where skate facilities are needed and no funding is currently available.

(d) Partnerships with community organisations

Several community groups and a skateboard club are currently involved in skateboarding activities. Partnerships with these groups could be further developed to help meet the needs of skateboarders. These groups often rely on volunteers and have very limited resources available. There is also discussion centred around the forming of a Skateboarding Association, the objective being to support the skateboard community in setting up clubs, seeking funding, etc.

(e) Competitions and events

Regular skateboarding events could meet some of the skateboarding needs in Burwood/Pegasus. Additional resources would be needed to increase the number of these events.

## **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Funding**

Parks and Waterways Unit funding for teenage recreation facilities in 2002/03 has been allocated to Washington Reserve and Wainoni Park. No further funding is available until 2003/04. Burwood/Pegasus needs have to be balanced with competing city wide needs.

### **Public Perception**

Media attention on skate facilities has tended to focus on negative aspects of skate facilities which can lead to the public perception that these facilities create problems. This has not assisted with promoting increased public awareness or empathy for youth recreation needs. Currently there is a significant imbalance between the general public perception of the issues associated with these types of facilities and what actually exists in reality. The task of establishing these facilities on our parks is always going to be challenging while many of the current public misconceptions remain in the community.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The need for skateboarding facilities in Burwood/Pegasus exceeds the resources available for provision. A strategic approach is therefore required to prioritise the needs and balance them with city wide needs. Prioritisation will be undertaken in consultation with skateboarders and the community and a strategy will be developed.

### **Staff**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.

### **Chairperson's**

- Recommendation:**
1. That the abovementioned recommendation be adopted.
  2. That staff be asked to identify and prioritise possible skateboarding sites in Burwood/Pegasus and undertake consultation.
  3. That consideration be given to the purchase of an additional portable skate ramp for Burwood/Pegasus.