

15. SKATEBOARD FACILITIES AND THOMSON PARK UPGRADE

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Corporate Plan Output: Leisure Planning and Parks Plans and Policy Statements	

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with a progress report on the Thomson Park upgrade and to provide information on the needs for, types of and potential sites for possible additional skate facilities in the Burwood and Pegasus wards.

BACKGROUND

The Burwood/Pegasus Community Board at its 26 November meeting endorsed the objectives and priorities of the Draft Skateboarding, In Line Skating and Freestyle BMX Cycling Strategy. Due to the importance of skateboarding facilities in these ward areas the Board also requested a monthly progress report on skateboard facilities development with the objective of putting the Thomson Park upgrade to tender by March 2000.

1. Thomson Park Upgrade

Staff from Leisure, City Design, and Parks Planning, together with local skateboard facility designer Andy Wylie, have explored the options for upgrading the skateboard facilities at Thomson Park within the existing budget, and an initial design has been drafted. This design includes transition elements with a ramp and pyramid and street skating elements with two rails and a grinding box. These skating features are versatile and can be used by beginners through to advanced skaters.

Deterioration of the asphalt means the surface is particularly slow and this design allows for partial resurfacing of the skateboard facility. Longer term, the second phase of the upgrade would be to resurface the rest of the skateboard area, add an additional ramp, include a shallow bowl and make some changes to the existing quarter pipe.

The designs will go out for consultation with local skaters, starting with participants from the SK8 Out workshops held in January. Approximately 40 to 50 local skaters will be asked for comment and feedback. After the consultation stage the final designs and costing will be completed by City Design and brought back to the Board for final approval at its February 28 meeting, with the project able to be put to tender by March.

2. **Portable Skateboard Ramps**

At its meeting of 26 November the Board supported a request for \$8,000 from Project Funding allocated for implementing the Youth Recreation Research to build a set of steel mobile skateboard ramps. Further discussion with the designer shows these structures can not be fixed to the ground due to vandalism and would need to be set up and taken down each day. This relocatable equipment will be used for community events, youth festivals, holiday programmes, schools programmes and safety workshops. They can be located in malls, at libraries, and in school grounds. A series of skateboarding workshops have been held throughout the city in the school holidays and have proved popular with young skateboarders. Further workshops will be held and the portable ramps used for safety workshops, teaching beginners new skills and demonstrations and to meet short-term demand in areas where facilities have not yet been built. The benefit of these ramps is that they are durable, fun, portable, and can be used by people with a range of abilities.

The set of wooden ramps owned by the Linwood Service Centre are used extensively in summer, but are in constant need of repair. Transport has also been a problem and the design for these ramps includes a trailer system. Should the Board approve the funding of these ramps they would be available for Skatejam in April.

3. **Possible Locations for Other Facilities and Street Skating Facilities in the Burwood/Pegasus Area**

The Skateboarding, Inline skating and Freestyle BMX Cycling Strategy identifies Aranui, South Brighton and Parklands areas as requiring new facilities.

As Board members will be aware the Parks Unit has been working with Parkview School students on the location and design of a skating facility in Parklands. The project has developed out of the "What's the Big Idea" Programme initiated by the Children's Advocate. A concept plan for the facility in part of Adcock Park is presently being circulated to local residents for comment. Comments will be received until 21 February 2000.

Other possible areas identified by the Area Parks Officer include Queen Elizabeth II Park, South Brighton Domain, New Brighton Soundshell area, Wainoni Park, and the new Shortland St -Wainoni Rd Reserve. There seems to be an urgent need to address skateboarding near the New Brighton Pier and Library, following complaints from library staff and visible damage to steps around the library and newly landscaped forecourt. Parks staff believe that some skating obstacles to draw activity away from the library should be located as a priority at the southern end of the foreshore near the soundshell.

The Youth Recreation Needs Study identifies Wainoni Park, QEII, Parklands and the malls as suitable areas for beginner to intermediate sites.

The Burwood and Pegasus wards could develop one or two large skate parks which cater for beginners to advanced skaters, and a number of smaller satellite facilities with some street skate features which cater mainly for beginners to intermediate level. The process for identifying potential sites for future development of skating facilities will be addressed when a local recreation plan for the Burwood Pegasus area is developed.

Recommendation: That the Board allocate \$8,000 for building a set of portable skate ramps from its 1999/2000 Project and Discretionary Funding.

**Chairperson's
Recommendation:** For discussion.