

17. SKATEBOARD PARK AND GRAFFITI WALL - ADCOCK RESERVE

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The purpose of this report is to inform Board members of the outcome of public consultation regarding a proposed skateboard park and graffiti wall in Adcock Reserve and to seek approval for community consultation on a skateboard facility in Queenspark Reserve.

SUMMARY

During 1999, students of Parkview Primary School participated in “What’s the Big Idea?”, a programme initiated by the Children’s Advocate involving students looking at issues in their community and presenting solutions. Parklands has a growing youth population and the children of Parkview School recognised a need for suitable recreation activities for young people. They proposed a skateboard area and graffiti art wall for their local park, Adcock Reserve.

500 letters outlining the proposals were distributed together with comment forms for feedback by means of a letterbox drop to local residents and internally to Council staff. A 14.8% response rate was achieved, totalling 74 submissions.

The comment form invited open feedback from recipients. There were no structured questions seeking specific feedback and submitters were free to comment on any aspect of the plan. A wide variety of responses were received ranging from being very supportive of the plans for Adcock Park and offering help, to being opposed to having a park at all. Opinions were divided about the skateboard park with 30 submissions received in favour of the facility and 24 against. There were 19 submissions in favour of the graffiti art wall and 39 submissions opposed to it.

A number of concerns were raised with regard to both the skateboard facility and the graffiti art wall. Christchurch City Council currently provides skateboarding facilities in ten locations around the city. The feared loud noise, security problems, large crowd gatherings, behaviour and hours of use are not seen as problems at other facilities and are not expected at Parklands. The proposed skateboarding facility is a small, local facility designed for beginners of school age and is not expected to attract large numbers of people from other areas.

There are some issues regarding the suitability of Adcock Reserve for a skateboard facility. Alternative sites were suggested and these have been investigated further to identify the site that best meets the needs of the Parklands community. Queenspark Reserve has been identified as the most suitable site for a skateboard facility and community consultation is recommended to gauge community support for this option.

Some submitters expressed concern that graffiti vandalism in the neighbourhood would increase with the establishment of a graffiti art wall, but in fact, when implemented as part of a whole community approach to graffiti reduction, graffiti art walls have proven effective in reducing graffiti vandalism. The Council is taking an active approach to reducing graffiti vandalism in the city by working together with other agencies to co-ordinate and implement graffiti removal. The Council is also initiating a pro-active programme to reduce graffiti.

It is recommended that the graffiti art wall not be established in Adcock Reserve. Pro-active ways of reducing graffiti can be explored with the Graffiti Reduction Worker.

Below is a summary of all the submissions received. Submitters comments are listed under different topics. The tables show the comments made, the number of submitters making the same comment, and a reference number for each submission. Each topic has been commented on and recommendations provided.

1. **Objections**

<i>Comment</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Object to skateboarding and graffiti proposal	22	1,23,24,25,30,32,35,36,38,40,43,45,49,52,54,55,56,61,63,64,67,69
Opposed to skateboard facility	2	3,51
Opposed to graffiti wall (but not skateboard facility)	17	8,14,20,22,27,28,29,31,37,46,47,53,57,70,71,72,74
Do not need a third park in Parklands	1	32

1.1 *Comments*

A significant number of submissions were opposed to the proposal or parts of the proposal to develop Adcock Reserve with a skateboard facility and graffiti wall. People expressed their disapproval of the proposal mainly because they were worried about other activities they thought might occur as a consequence of the skateboard facility and graffiti wall (see concerns below). Submitters were especially opposed to the graffiti wall and one person did not support development of Adcock Reserve at all as they do not think Parklands needs another park.

Invariably in the past, Council has come up against community opposition when skate facilities have been proposed. This has usually come from residential and business neighbours in close proximity to facilities, concerned about the impact that the facility will have within their neighbourhood. For most however, concerns are largely based on a fear of the unknown, and misconceptions about who “skaties” are and their associated behaviours. Neighbours often become more supportive when they realise their fears are unfounded, eg St Albans skateboard ramp.

Graffiti is already a problem in the area so, naturally, the idea of a graffiti art wall raised the ire of a number of submitters. In the information sent out to residents, the aim of the graffiti wall and how it would operate were not well explained and the graffiti art wall was misleadingly described as a “graffiti bombsite”. An unsupervised graffiti wall with no control or guidance for participants could well result in an undesirable outcome. However, well-run legal graffiti art programmes have been shown to redirect young people away from illegal graffiti vandalism and in to legal graffiti art. Young people are encouraged to improve their artistic skill in a positive environment. If the artwork is recognised publicly, the illegal and untalented act of tagging is increasingly seen as amateur and “uncool”. Ideally, the site should be themed and supervised and introduced as part of a wider community approach to graffiti reduction. A public education process is required to inform people of how a graffiti art programme would operate and the expected outcomes.

1.2 *Recommendations*

1.2.1 To withdraw plans for a graffiti art wall in Adcock Reserve.

1.2.2 To explore pro-active ways of reducing graffiti with the Graffiti Reduction Worker.

2. **Support for Proposal**

Comment	#	Reference
Great idea, excellent plan, support proposal	17	2,4,9,11,17,18,19,21,26,29,33,39,42,44,59,66,67
Bomb site good – may help to identify taggers	2	19,51
Support skateboard park (but not graffiti wall)	12	22,28,31,41,46,57,58,65,70,71,72,74
Perfect solution to preventing a skateboard park in Parklands Park	1	7
Support decent recreation area for all to use	1	31

2.1 *Comments*

Support for the proposals for Adcock Reserve was also strong and twelve of the people who opposed the graffiti wall expressed support for the skateboard facility. Overall, support for the skateboard facility was only slightly stronger than opposition but may have been tarnished by the inclusion of the graffiti wall in the proposal leading people to make a general objection.

Submitters recognised a need for a skateboarding facility in the Parklands area. However, Adcock Reserve may not be the best site for the facility and some alternative sites suggested are outlined below.

2.2 *Recommendations*

2.2.1 To proceed with plans for a skateboard facility in the Parklands area.

3. Suggestions and Ideas

<i>Comment</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Incorporate BMX and roller blade areas in skatepark	1	33
Reduce amount of landscaping to provide more wall to paint and more view for safety	1	33
Have paint out service available if wall goes ahead	2	47,56
Remove "bomb site" if graffiti incidents increase	1	47
Display graffiti art on park sign to show what real graffiti art is	1	68
Consider old people in area also, keep graffiti positive and not indecent	1	9
Develop skateboard park at final stage of park development	1	59
Areas must not be too secluded, not too many trees and bushes, keep skateboard area exposed	2	19,42
Lack of rubbish bins	1	6
Need lighting	2	11,20
Need toilet facilities	2	11,67
Need fence along Lamorna Rd to stop children running on to road	1	12
People should be made responsible for their dog droppings	1	6

3.1 Comments

Submissions were received that suggested ways of improving the proposed ideas. These are each commented on below.

Incorporate BMX and roller blade areas in skatepark

A broad range of users share skate facilities throughout the city including skateboarders, inline skaters, and BMX riders. In the main, facilities are shared well between users, and problems are rare. It is important, however, that users follow principles of respect and turn taking. The Council's Skateboarding, Inline Skating, and Freestyle BMX Cycling Strategy recommends that general rules of use should be displayed in a prominent place to facilitate shared use. Conflict between users is more likely on footpaths where skate and bike lanes would increase safety.

A Bicycle Dirt Trail is planned for Bottle Lake Forest Park to cater for freestyle BMX riders.

Reduce amount of landscaping to provide more wall to paint and more view for safety

It is recommended that the graffiti wall be deferred so this will no longer be an issue. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of the fence can be accessed for a graffiti art programme and can be recycled as required.

Have paint out service available if graffiti wall goes ahead

Suggestions of providing a graffiti removal service are based on assumptions that graffiti vandalism would increase in the neighbourhood with the presence of a graffiti art wall. However, a graffiti art wall if implemented as part of a wider community programme, should reduce graffiti vandalism. The Council recognises the need for rapid removal of graffiti and has already launched a graffiti hotline in conjunction with other agencies.

Remove "bomb site" if graffiti incidents increase

A graffiti audit of the area would need to be undertaken to ascertain the current level of graffiti, and redone after six months to a year of a legal graffiti art programme to measure the success (or failure) of the programme. Future action would then be recommended.

Display graffiti art on park sign to show what real graffiti art is

This submission refers to the difference between unskilled tagging and skilled artwork and included a newspaper article about a Graffiti Art Exhibition that ran at the Linwood Community Arts Centre. The artwork referred to is the type of graffiti art that would be promoted on a graffiti art wall and unskilled tagging would be discouraged. The submitter suggested displaying examples of such artwork on a board at the park entrance or beside the graffiti wall to educate people as to what graffiti art is.

Consider old people in area also, keep graffiti positive and not indecent

While the Council can not control all graffiti in the area, any graffiti that is encouraged as part of a graffiti art programme would certainly be expected to be positive. However, graffiti art, like other modern art forms, is not going to please everyone and one of the aims of a graffiti art programme is to encourage public acceptance of graffiti art. Ideally, the graffiti art wall should have a theme and be supervised, as this is the most effective way of achieving the desired results.

Develop skateboard park at final stage of park development

The submitter is concerned that there will not be enough funds to complete the project and would prefer the skateboard park to be developed at the final stage of the project so that a lack of funds does not affect the overall enhancement of Adcock Reserve. Development of the rest of Adcock Reserve may still be some time away. Meanwhile funding can be applied for from external organisations to construct the skateboard facility.

Areas must not be too secluded, not too many trees and bushes, keep skateboard area exposed

Skateboarding sites should be easily visible to passing traffic and to the surrounding area to maximise user awareness and spectator enjoyment as well as user safety. Facilities should be developed in ways that minimise “places to hide” and which are aesthetically appealing. Adcock Reserve is secluded at present but landscaping removing the fence between the reserve and the school will improve visibility. Once the surrounding area is housed, the site will become even more visible. However, this could be some time away.

Lack of rubbish bins

Rubbish bins can be provided when the park is developed.

Need lighting

Lighting is included in the budget for the proposal.

Need toilet facilities

Toilet facilities will not be built immediately in the park. The need for toilets will be assessed as the park is developed.

Need fence along Lamorna Rd to stop children running on to road

This refers to the yet to be developed extension of Lamorna Rd and will be an important safety consideration when the road is extended.

People should be made responsible for their dog droppings

Dog bylaws are to be reviewed and a submitter has offered to sponsor suitable receptacles.

3.2 *Recommendations*

3.2.1 Consider providing skate and/or cycle lanes within Adcock Reserve.

3.2.2 Select a skateboarding site with a high level of visibility.

4. Alternative Sites for Skateboarding and Graffiti

<i>Comment</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Reference</i>
City centre, urban areas need skateboard areas	2	32,48
Put proposed development in Brighton	1	38
Improve skateboard facilities at Thomson Park instead	6	30,45,49,61,62,64
Proposal better in Parklands Reserve or Queenspark	3	3,25,50
Open, prominent areas more suitable (Adcock Park too secluded)	3	24,65,67
Skateboard facility better sited in the middle of Adcock Reserve	1	57
Skateboard area better in a supervised area, eg QEII	1	69
Skateboarding facilities should be sited far away from residents	1	46
Have graffiti site at Thomson Park	1	50
Have graffiti bomb site on Council building	1	54

4.1 Comments

While some people support the notion of a skateboard facility or a graffiti wall they do not think Adcock Park is the best location. It is important to understand that the proposed skateboarding facility is intended to meet the needs of local children who are unable to travel out of their neighbourhood to go skateboarding. As a small, local facility it is not expected to attract large numbers of people from outside of the neighbourhood.

The skateboarding strategy identifies that facilities need to be sited in locations which optimise accessibility, safety and attractiveness, in turn maximising usage levels. Adcock Reserve lacks visibility and accessibility and alternative sites were suggested.

City centre, urban areas need skateboard areas

Washington Reserve has a popular inner city skateboarding facility that currently provides the best skate surface of the Council facilities. However, it is inaccessible to many children living in the Parklands area and does not meet local needs.

Put proposed development in Brighton

A small skateboard facility has been proposed for the New Brighton foreshore near the pier but will not meet the needs of Parklands children. Thomson Park is close to Brighton and upgrading of this facility should cater for the needs of Brighton.

Improve skateboard facilities at Thomson Park instead

There were six suggestions to improve skateboarding facilities at Thomson Park. This work has been planned to begin in April.

Proposal better in Parklands Reserve or Queenspark

Parklands Reserve is central and offers a visible site for skateboarding. It is close to the proposed site at Adcock Reserve and would therefore cater for the same users. A skateboarding facility would complement other facilities in the reserve, namely half court basketball court, playground, sports fields, community centre, toilets, plunket rooms and sport clubrooms. It is well used which would enhance safety and security for a skateboarding facility. Also, a skateboard park would draw skateboarders out of the adjacent shopping mall to a more suitable venue.

Skateboarding has been proposed in Parklands Reserve previously but has not been supported by the community. There is very limited space available for a skateboarding facility.

Queenspark Reserve is further from Adcock Reserve but still within walking distance. The reserve has sports fields, tennis courts, a fitness trail and rugby clubrooms. Queenspark School is adjacent to the reserve. Toilets are co-located with the rugby clubrooms and it may be possible to negotiate having them publicly available. There is high demand for a skateboarding facility in this area. At present, skateboarders use the tennis courts and nearby carpark for skateboarding causing problems for other users. An area on the corner of Queenspark Drive and Radiata Ave within the reserve is well suited to a skateboarding facility. The sand dunes on site could be incorporated into the design or used to partially screen the facility from neighbouring residents. The Parklands Baptist Community Church and their Youth Worker are located across the road. Queenspark Reserve is the most suitable site for a skateboard facility in the Parklands area.

Visibility and supervision

Adcock Reserve does not provide a very visible site for skateboarding at the moment and other more public areas have been suggested. QEII, however, is too far away to meet local needs.

Graffiti site

Suggested sites for the graffiti art wall are too distant to meet local needs.

4.2 *Recommendations*

4.2.1 To seek community feedback on a skateboard facility in Queenspark Reserve.

5. Alternative Suggestions

Comment	#	Reference
Want passive recreation park, nature park	4	1,25,41,69
Adventure playground suggested as alternative to skateboarding	1	24
Spend money on eliminating graffiti instead	2	41,48
Promote healthy activities using forest tracks, beach, golf, pool, wetlands etc nearby	5	48,49,58,60,61
Install basketball courts, big playground, sporting facilities	3	48,54,73
Use money to support community organisations running activities	1	52
Proposed wall is already covered in graffiti	1	69
Library in Parklands	1	73

5.1 Comments

Several people expressed surprise about the perceived lack of recreation opportunities for young people and highlighted the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities utilising the nearby forest tracks, beach, golf, swimming pool and wetlands. Suggestions were made that these activities be promoted instead of building new facilities, however, these are not suitable for everyone. Other recreational facilities were also suggested, many of which are already provided in the Parklands area. Parklands has several playgrounds, sports grounds, basketball half courts, and may be getting a library.

It must be kept in mind that the idea of a skateboarding facility came from the children themselves and is reflective of their interests. Skating is a popular activity with young people and with no facilities currently provided in the neighbourhood, they are causing inconvenience for other people by using areas not intended for skating.

New recreation facilities continue to be developed and no changes are recommended.

6. Reserve

<i>Comment</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Don't plant only natives	1	6
Budget to provide for replacement of trees	1	8
Concerns about water levels and quality of lake	2	8,51
Concept of lake is good	2	8,37
Suggested model yachting in lake	1	19
Concerns over appropriateness of lake for children	2	17,31
Like reserve, reserve is a wonderful idea	5	22,28,36,48,50
Suggested walkways and bike tracks, picnic areas	3	30,31,49
Want plan showing reference to Broadhaven Ave	2	16,34

6.1 Comments

The comments listed above refer to the plans for the rest of Adcock Park (excluding the skateboard and graffiti facilities). The concept for the park was mostly well received although concerns were expressed regarding quality and safety of the lake, and plantings.

A range of plants will be used when developing Adcock Reserve. Public information will be distributed for comment before the park is developed.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Consider concerns about water levels, quality and safety when designing the lake.

7. Community Involvement

<i>Comment</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Request for public meeting	1	3
Need to promote to community the needs of growing youth population	1	10
Community members should supervise skateboard facility instead of teachers	1	29
Appreciate community involvement	1	2
Like children's input	4	2,26,29,48
Don't think children should determine fate of residents	3	3,25,58

7.1 *Comments*

Community involvement is vital to win support for and ensure the success of the project. It is important that neighbours have an input and are kept informed of decisions. The needs of all park users and local residents are always considered when developing new facilities.

7.2 *Recommendations*

7.2.1 Keep the community informed and involved in all decisions regarding the development of a skate park or graffiti art wall.

8. **Contributions and Fundraising**

Comment	#	Reference
Offer of voluntary labour	2	4,6
Offering contribution to landscaping planting costs	1	4
Offering sponsorship of dog faeces receptacles	1	5
Suggested fundraising with a market day	1	10
Offering help through monetary donation or stall	1	10
Offering donation of tree	1	6
Working bees or PD workers could help save money	1	33
Locals may consider paying for an item and getting name on it	1	42

8.1 *Comments*

A shortfall in funding of \$23,000 was identified in the proposal. There were several offers of assistance to help progress the proposal. Community involvement is welcome and should be encouraged. The Adopt-A-Park programme allows for the establishment of volunteer groups. The skateboard facility will be the subject of funding applications.

8.2 *Recommendations*

8.2.1 Accept and encourage community support and funding.

9. Concerns

<i>Comment</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Lack of funding for proposal	2	3,59
Previous failures of skateboarding facilities	1	34
Noise from skateboarding	6	13,16,51,57,65,67
Hours of use	1	13
After hours security, suggested security camera	5	2,11,28,34,40
Enforcement of rules/supervision	6	13,14,28,29,38,58
Don't remove fence between reserve and school, safety concerns for school children	3	37,62,64
Anti-social behaviour, illegal activity	6	16,25,50,52,58,60
Youths and undesirables will be attracted to and congregate on site	9	23,24,41,47,48,52,60,67,74
Increased traffic	1	3
Skateboarders in street	2	3,35
Property devaluing	10	3,27,35,43,48,53,55,62,63,64
Increase in house insurance	1	3
Graffiti wall will "legitimise" and encourage tagging	12	8,14,20,22,24,25,43,46,47,52,63,70
Graffiti, crime or vandalism may increase in the neighbourhood	25	14,23,24,25,28,31,32,35,36,37,40,41,42,45,47,48,49,50,53,55,56,58,61,63,65,67
Need to keep area tidy, concerns about rubbish	2	21,67
Proposal will degrade community, reduce community pride	2	47,55
Don't think Arthur Adcock would have supported idea	1	47
A small group of people will dominate facility making it unavailable to others	1	52
Area should be for all, not pupils who want to skateboard and graffiti at school	1	54
Graffiti is an eyesore	1	55
Skateboard park will suit a small minority whose numbers will dwindle when novelty wears off	1	61
Special area for animals or banned?	1	66
Facility will bring problems of Brighton to Parklands	1	67
Existing problems of vandalism, graffiti, drunkenness, bad behaviour will not be reduced	1	69

9.1 *Comments*

The main focus of concern is that large, unruly crowds of youth will gather at the facility, act in an anti social manner, and vandalise neighbouring properties. The proposed graffiti wall raised concerns about a possible increase in graffiti vandalism in the neighbourhood and perceived legitimisation of graffiti.

Similar reactions have been encountered when proposing other skateboarding sites throughout the city. In most cases, however, concerns are largely based on a fear of the unknown, and misconceptions about who “skaties” are and their associated behaviours.

The skateboarding facility is aimed at young people and it is desirable that they are attracted to the site. However, large crowds are not expected, as the proposed facility is a small, local facility designed for beginner skaters of school age. Christchurch City Council has established a skateboarding, inline skating, and freestyle BMX cycling strategy and currently provides skateboarding facilities with specialised structures in ten locations around the city. Loud noise, security problems, large crowd gatherings, behaviour, and hours of use are not seen as problems at other facilities and are not expected at this local facility. Skateboarders on the street and increases in traffic are also not likely to be a problem.

The Council has portable skateboarding ramps available. A temporary ramp could be set up for a day near Queenspark Reserve to give locals an opportunity to see first hand what it will be like having a skate facility and what issues will actually arise. It will provide an opportunity to gauge community feeling and to gain support for the facility.

Concerns about lack of funding for the facility can be addressed through funding applications. Limited funds may also be available in Council budget.

Graffiti vandalism is already a problem in the Parklands area and submitters are concerned that a graffiti wall will only aggravate the problem and devalue the community. The City Council provides a graffiti hotline for graffiti removal and a Graffiti Reduction Worker has been employed to establish pro-active ways of reducing graffiti. Graffiti art programmes, as part of a whole community approach to graffiti reduction, have been effective in reducing graffiti. A graffiti art programme aims to redirect the energies of graffiti vandals into productive activity, provide an outlet for their creative impulses and encourage them to feel part of the community, rather than outside of it.

As pointed out by one submitter, graffiti art is quite different to common tagging and one of the aims of a graffiti art programme is to increase public acceptance of skilled graffiti art as a legitimate art form. Not everyone will like it, just as not everyone likes other modern art forms.

9.2 *Recommendations*

- 9.2.1 To organise a skate day with a portable skate ramp near Queenspark Reserve.
- 9.2.2 Apply to external organisations for funding and sponsorship for a skateboard facility.

CONCLUSION

There is strong demand for a skateboard facility in the Parklands area. Queenspark Reserve offers the most suitable site. Community consultation is required to gauge community support for this proposal. A public skate day would provide local residents with the opportunity to see what it would be like having a skateboard facility in the area.

A graffiti art wall in Adcock Reserve is not popular. However, residents are concerned to reduce levels of graffiti vandalism in the area. The Council has implemented a programme for removal of graffiti and have employed a graffiti reduction worker to establish pro-active programmes. A programme for reducing graffiti in Parklands could be considered in the future.

- Recommendations:**
- 1. That the report be received.
 - 2. That plans be withdrawn for the proposed graffiti wall and skateboard facility in Adcock Reserve.
 - 3. That the Board allocates \$500 from its 2000/2001 Discretionary Fund to sponsor a public 'skate day' near Queenspark Reserve.
 - 4. That the Board approves community consultation for a skateboard facility in Queenspark Reserve.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the aforementioned recommendations be adopted.