

5. SKATEBOARD FACILITIES UPDATE

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| Corporate Plan Output: Parks Plans and Policy Statements | |

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on current developments at Washington Reserve.

PETITION

Parks Unit staff understand that a petition with approximately 450 signatures will be presented to the Committee. The petition calls for the advancement of further stages of the skating facility.

CRIME PREVENTION CAMERA

Recently the Police and Parks Unit staff have investigated the proposal to locate a crime prevention camera in Washington Reserve. The feasibility of a security camera had previously been discussed by the Washington Working Group as a way of minimising antisocial activity in the area, but was not pursued mainly due to cost and because there had not been significant problems at the reserve. However, the Police now believe that a camera would assist in making the reserve and outlying area safer, by deterring those who might come to the park for reasons other than skating.

A survey of 55 young people was carried out at Washington Reserve during a Montana Winter Carnival skate event. Questions asked included:

- Do you feel that Washington Reserve is a safe place to visit?
- Do you think a security camera in Washington Reserve is a good idea?

Thirty-six young people felt that the reserve was a safe place to visit and 16 believed it wasn't. Some answered both "yes" and "no". It appeared that skaters felt relatively safe during the day but not so safe if they wanted to skate at night.

Forty-four skaters thought that a crime prevention camera was a good idea and 11 believed it wasn't. Some skaters thought that priority should be given to lighting and then a camera installed if undesirable things still visited the reserve. A few respondents said that a shop or a drink vendor would be a good option for the reserve. A food vendor will trial the site shortly with the view to accepting the tendered licence if the trial is successful.

Discussions at the Youth Council's October meeting confirmed that if the skaters supported the crime prevention camera then one should be installed in the reserve.

SUPERVISION

The key to skaters feeling safe when using skate parks seems to be reassurance that there is some supervision. Honorary Warden, Barry Saunders, has been invaluable in this respect at Washington Reserve during the weekend. He has gained the trust of skaters through his dedication to the reserve, by preventing and sorting out potential conflict and even retrieving stolen skateboards.

Both the presence of a crime prevention camera and adults at the park will deter undesirable characters who target young people. It has been suggested that a line item in the Parks Unit's operational budget should be created to cover the cost for some part-time supervision.

The amount suggested for casual supervision, if and when required, is \$20,000.

Further to this, the Parks Unit has organised three seats, a picnic table and some more large shade trees for Washington Reserve. Seats and a picnic table will provide facilities for parents visiting the reserve and the large trees will provide much needed shade in summer for skaters.

CONCLUSION

The popularity of the city's skate parks will continue with improved supervision. While dangerous incidents have been relatively rare, the Parks Unit is keen to ensure that these areas are perceived as being as safe and as well looked after as possible. The crime prevention camera at Washington Reserve together with more formalised supervision at Washington Reserve and other parks which attract young people.

- Recommendation:**
1. That a crime prevention camera be installed in Washington Reserve.
 2. That a new operating initiative of \$20,000 per year for skate park supervision be considered for inclusion in the 2001/02 annual plan.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.