

## 7. BMX FREESTYLE CYCLE FACILITY - CRAIGHEAD RESERVE

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Corporate Plan Output: Elected Member Advice	

The purpose of this report is to request the Board to consider allocating funds from their 2001/02 Discretionary Funds to carry out planning and design work for a BMX Freestyle Cycle facility at Craighead Reserve. This request was also referred from the Board's Project Proposals meeting in March.

### BACKGROUND

The popularity of BMX Freestyle cycling has increased significantly in recent years and there are now an increasing number of people taking part in this recreational activity. There is no doubt that the construction of skateboard facilities around the city has been a key factor in the increased popularity with this sport. The skateboard facilities are very popular and well used by this group of cyclists and others are being encouraged into the sport through the increased profile and exposure as a result of them sharing the use of these facilities.

In the early stages of constructing these facilities, the Parks Unit (as it was then) considered banning all forms of cycling from skateboard facilities. Mainly because at that time there was a problem with many children turning up to these facilities trying to ride them with all manners of bikes ranging from mountain bikes to 10 speeds.

When the Jellie Park facility was initially opened it was not uncommon to see up to 50 or 60 cyclists turning up at the facility when local schools in the area finished for the day. Needless to say only 1 or 2 had bikes suitable for riding these types of facilities. There were reports of a number of injuries, mainly to skaters from people using inappropriate bikes on these facilities.

### MEETING WITH BMX CYCLISTS

Following the initial reaction to exclude all forms of cycling from skateboard facilities some individuals and parents representing this group met with staff to discuss the issue, this also included the representatives presenting a deputation to the Parks and Recreation Committee to put forward their views.

Subsequently there was a meeting with the cyclists at Bottle Lake Forest Ranger Headquarters attended by Parks Staff and the Chairman of Parks and Recreation to further discuss this groups need and their use of the existing facilities.

Staff and the Chairman acknowledged that this particular group of users were compatible with skateboarders and inline skaters and subsequently the exclusion to all cycles using the skateboard facilities was amended to apply to all cycles **except** BMX Freestyle cycles.

Since refining the restriction on cycles to exclude the unsuitable bikes, the facilities have operated very smoothly and the two main user groups have coexisted very successfully. In addition the amended management practice staff gave a commitment at the Bottle Lake meeting to look at providing a purpose built facility specifically designed for and in consultation with this particular group. As an interim measure an area was made available on Nepal Reserve extension in Burnside for the group to build a temporary BMX track.

### DESIGN AND PLANNING

Parks staff had identified Craighead Reserve as a potential site to construct a more permanent BMX facility offering a greater degree of challenge which the users are seeking. Board members may recall going past the site on their last tour around the ward.

Craighead Reserve is considered to be a suitable site given that there is already an existing BMX track on the reserve and therefore it is not introducing a new activity but simply a matter of upgrading an existing facility on the park. Other advantages with this site include good visibility and closeness to the road frontage while Northcote Road and the railway line provide good separation from neighbouring residential properties.

While the intention is to design and construct a facility targeted at the needs of freestyle cycling there is no doubt that the facility will also be suitable for skateboarders and inline skaters. The Parks and Waterways Unit is aware of recent requests for some skate facilities in the Papanui area and this site and location could assist with addressing some of the needs in this area.

## **FUNDING**

The Parks and Waterways Unit is seeking funding to undertake the planning and design work required for this facility. Whilst there is no specific budget provision for the construction of this facility at this stage, the Parks and Waterways Unit does have a line item in our Capital Programme for Teenage Recreation Facilities. This particular budget provision is unspecified in terms of specific projects for future years, therefore there is an opportunity to obtain some funding from this source for the construction and development of the facility once the design, planning and consultation is completed.

The Bottle Lake meeting was also attended by representatives of a local BMX Club who offered their assistance to this group of young riders. Therefore there is also potential to attract or apply for community funding through this group and undertake the project more as a partnership rather than something completely and totally funded by Council.

**Recommendation:** That the Shirley Papanui Community Board allocate \$3000 from a 2001/02 Discretionary Funds to undertake design, planning and consultation for a BMX Freestyle cycle facility at Craighead Reserve.

**Chairperson's Recommendation:** That the officer's recommendation be adopted.