

# SKATEBOARDING, INLINE SKATING AND FREESTYLE BMX CYCLING STRATEGY

CHRISTCHURCH CITY  
COUNCIL  
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Prepared in 1999 by:

Sarah Wylie  
Social Research Consultant

Prepared for:

Christchurch City Council  
Skateboarding Strategy  
Steering Group

Amended in 2000 following input from community boards by:  
Alan Bywater  
Christchurch City Council

Updated in 2004 with input from Council staff by:  
Kelly Hansen, Recreation Planner, Greenspace Unit  
Christchurch City Council

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## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

### ***Key Principles***

Underlying the Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle BMX Cycling Strategy are several key principles that fit within the broader contexts of the Youth Strategy, the Children's Policy, the Recreation and Sport Policy, and the Community Development and Social Well-Being Policy. These principles include the following:

*Skaters should be able to have reasonable access to quality facilities which are enjoyable, challenging, cater to a broad range of skills, well-maintained and which minimise risk of injury or harm.*

*Council should respect the knowledge, skills and opinions of skaters and allow opportunity for involvement in facility planning decisions.*

*Council should cater for skater needs as much as possible, through facilities designed to offer broad appeal and able to be altered and/or extended to meet changing demands.*

*Skate facilities and accessways should be designed to minimise negative impacts on non-users.*

*Participation in skate pursuits should be encouraged by Council via support of special events and promotions and of skills development workshops and groups.*

*Trends in skating should be monitored and facility planning undertaken to cater for changing needs.*

All policy and planning relating to skateboard, inline skate and freestyle BMX facilities should be undertaken within the context of these principles.

### ***Priorities for Action***

#### ***Short Term Priorities:***

##### ***Objective 1. Complete Works Planned for 2004-2009***

- Completion of stage three of Washington Reserve. All respondent groups in the research for the original strategy identified the completion of Washington Reserve as the top priority. Funding has been allocated for 2007/08 to complete stage three.
- Complete improvements to skate facility at Linwood Park. Funding is available in 2004/05 to add a concrete apron to the skate facility and install a grinding rail.

- Resurfacing and addition of street skating elements to existing facilities has occurred at both Hoon Hay and Thomson Parks in accordance with the 2000 Strategy.
- Consultation in Burwood Pegasus has identified a need for further additions to Thomson Park and funding has been allocated in 2008/09.

***Objective 2. Tune Existing Facilities into the Demands of Users and Potential Users***

- **Maintenance**

Inadequate maintenance of facilities has been identified as a significant problem, especially for the older skate facilities and for those in less visible locations such as Cypress Gardens and Wycola Park, where broken glass and vandalism are particular problems and more regular clean-up is needed than is presently undertaken.

Skate facilities are on regular weekly maintenance and rubbish removal regimes and are often checked more frequently by contractors working on site. Reported issues are responded to promptly.

In relation to leisure inline skating, maintenance, in the form of regular sweeping to remove organic matter from adjacent trees, is a clear need in Hagley Park and in any other future developments of skate paths in parks.

- **Leisure Inline Skating Pathways**

Upgrade of the pathways in Hagley Park is a high priority for leisure inline skaters. Pathways need to be connected to develop a continuous skate route, and widened to ensure the safety of other users and to enable use by those wishing to skate at speed. Regular sweeping is essential. Upgrading of the paths in Hagley Park is ongoing.

With the numbers of leisure inline skaters growing rapidly, it would also be desirable for a second skate path to be developed once a suitable facility is in place at Hagley Park. Possible options include a skate lane on the Sumner Esplanade or skate paths in Bishopdale Park, Burnside Park or Jellie Park, all areas with high populations of inline skaters.

Provision for inline skating is being considered in the current planning exercise being undertaken for the Sumner Esplanade area. Shared use paths are suitable for inline skating in many other parts of the city.

- **Vert facility**

It is strongly suggested that completion of Washington Reserve should include a high quality vert ramp. If for any reason this does not occur, development of such a facility in an alternative central location is of high priority. Such a facility would be well utilised by skateboarders, extreme inline skaters and freestyle BMX riders. A vert ramp will be considered in Stage 3 of Washington Reserve.

### ***Objective 3. Provide Greater Support for and Promotion of Skate Pursuits***

Once the upgrades and additional facilities suggested above are completed, a high priority should be placed on supporting activities that optimise facility usage, both in terms of participation levels and skill development.

- **Publicity**

A pamphlet on Christchurch's skate facilities was produced and distributed. Additional information is available on the Council website at this address <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/parks/recreation/skateboarding.asp> This information needs to be kept up to date.

- **Skate Jams at Skate Facilities**

Greater support by Council for such events over the next few years is vital to entertain, promote skate pursuits, encourage new participants to have a go, develop skills and aspirations among skaters and to raise the public profile of skate facility usage. Such support demonstrates to the skater community that Christchurch City Council values this diverse group. In turn, this is likely to foster a cooperative relationship between Council and skaters.

The Community and Recreation Unit should continue to run a number of successful skate jams, competitions and events around the city on a regular basis.

- **Similar Events for Leisure Inline Skaters and Freestyle Cyclists**

As well as increasing support for skateboarding and extreme inline events, it is recommended that Council also provide support for similar events that promote other skate pursuits, and in particular, leisure inlining.

- **Promotion of Skating Off-Site from Skate Parks Using Portable Skating Elements**

Skate jams and similar events are normally held at permanent skate parks, tending to attract those who already use the facility. They are less likely to introduce new people to skating. In an effort to increase participation, it is important that all styles of skateboarding, inline skating, and freestyle cycling are also promoted in other settings, where they can appeal to potential new participants.

The Burwood Pegasus Community Board has funded the construction of some portable ramps, which are often used at community events and skate jams, and also cater for inline skaters. The ramps are available for expert demonstrations as well as "have a go" sessions with skateboards.

- **Support for Skills Development and Female Skater Groups**

Demand for female-only skills development workshops, particularly from female skaters, is high. Assistance from Council to female skating groups and community groups working to increase skate participation among females, in the form of grants for purchase of skate and safety gear and publicity, would contribute significantly

towards increased female participation in skate pursuits. Supporting other groups operating skills workshops or provision of these directly via Council recreation facilities is also a high priority.

The Council should continue to run skills workshops. Female instructors have been promoting female skating and a programme for women is being investigated.

- **Enhanced Safety at Existing Skate Venues**

Some skaters, especially very young skaters, older skaters and female skaters, are deterred from using facilities such as Washington Reserve because of safety concerns. Greater surveillance at night should be a priority at Washington. However to create lasting improvement in safety at skate facilities, the development of formal skater codes of conduct is an option requiring investigation. Unwritten codes of etiquette are strongly evident amongst skateboarders. These need to be developed by skaters themselves for each venue, along the lines of the informal skater etiquette already held by more experienced skaters. Developed into a formal code, covering issues such as unacceptable behaviour, turn-taking, respect for other's space etc., these should be clearly posted at skate parks. BMX bikes are allowed on skate parks but mountain bikes are considered unsuitable.

To further enhance the safety and positive atmosphere of Council-operated skate venues, investigation should be made into the viability of community skate committees for the larger skate venues, as operated in Brisbane, Australia.

- **Support Inline Hockey Facility Providers**

At present there are three inline hockey clubs operating from the former Skatezone building. However, this building is only available on a short-term lease and longer-term secure facilities are required. Membership numbers steadily increased during the late 1990's to 2001 to 450 members. Difficulties in getting long term sponsorship and a secure venue may inhibit further growth. Council should work with the inline hockey clubs to support their activities. Further investigation is required to determine the appropriate level of support from Council.

### ***Medium Term Priorities:***

#### **Objective 4. Develop Street Elements at Existing Facilities**

Addition of street elements to existing skate facilities was given much greater priority by most respondents in the Strategy research than development of new facilities. Street elements have been added to Washington Reserve, Wainoni Park, St Albans Park, Templeton Reserve, Hoon Hay Park, Thomson Park, Brooklands Domain, and Wycola Park in accordance with the 2000 Strategy.

In developing street skating elements in the future, investigation should be given into design of elements that can be reconfigured to retain skater interest.

## ***Longer Term Priorities***

### **Objective 5. Develop New Skateboarding and Extreme Inline Facilities**

Based on all the information gathered, including population data, and the location of existing and planned facilities and upgrades, the 2000 Strategy identified that demand for new facilities was likely to be greatest in Richmond-Shirley and Aranui-South Brighton, followed by Parklands and the central city. Construction of the St Albans skate facility has met much of the Richmond-Shirley need while the proposed skate facility in MacFarlane Park, Shirley has been deferred for consideration as part of a wider park renewal. In the Burwood Pegasus wards, the Aranui need is being met through the development of a small skate facility in Wainoni Park. Thomson Park has been identified as the next highest priority followed by South Brighton and QEII. However, these needs must be balanced with other youth recreation needs throughout the city. As a result of extensive consultation, a skate facility in Parklands will not proceed. Washington Reserve meets the needs of the central city.

Because of the substantial time period required to identify a site and obtain support for facility development, upgrades of existing facilities are strongly recommended as the preferred option for meeting geographic needs.

### **Objective 6. Development of Freestyle BMX Facility, Subject to Demand**

Freestyle BMX riding is increasing popularity and BMX riders are free to share facilities with skateboarders. In most cases this works well. Without on site supervision, it would very difficult to enforce a separation of use between skateboarders and BMX riders at any purpose built facilities. Some crowding issues have been identified at Jellie Park with high levels of BMX use at peak times and further investigation is required to determine how best to address this issue. Meantime, it is recommended that BMX bikes be permitted to ride on skate facilities providing they comply with strict guidelines including the following:

- Children should not ride bikes on skate facilities;
- Protective gear must be worn by BMX riders;
- Mountain Bikes should not be permitted on skate facilities;
- Trick BMXers should use facilities only at times when not in use by inliners or skateboards, with restriction placed on the number of bikes permitted to ride at any one time.

Investigation should be made into the viability of regular timeslots in which BMXers have priority use of one or more skate facilities.

### **Objective 7. Skate Routes**

In collaboration with City Streets and the Pedestrian Strategy, development of skate routes should be undertaken, channeling skate traffic to areas where their safety and

the safety of pedestrians is enhanced. Such skate routes should provide access to skate facilities and other areas of high skater demand. They should be clearly marked and surfaced to encourage skater usage and enhance safety.

Issues re perceived conflict between pedestrians and skaters are still to be addressed.

#### **Objective 8. Small Scale Local Facilities**

The ward based 'Leisure, Parks and Waterways Studies' identified a desire for skateboard parks of small and diverse scale. Rather than centralising large-scale skate parks, the desire was for more dispersed parks with only a few low grinds and bowls. The development of 'mini skate parks' with small-scale, basic, and relatively low challenge features is recommended. Such skate facilities could be designed into new play areas as needed and should be targeted at young skateboarders.



## SECTION ONE

### *INTRODUCTION*

#### *Background*

Work undertaken by Christchurch City Council since early 1998 identified a need to develop not only a policy or code for skating in public areas but also a citywide skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle cycling strategy, expressing the importance of providing youth with facilities relevant for such activities. Accordingly, the Christchurch City Council commissioned the preparation of a Draft Three Year Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle Cycling Strategy for completion in October 1999.

The strategy was intended to identify the number and type/styles of facility required in the city and guide decision makers as to the best sites for these in the suburbs and appropriate budgets. In identifying the required facilities, the transport to and between facilities by participants in skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling was to be considered, along with the facility provision of all other providers and potential providers.

The strategy has been updated in 2004 to incorporate facilities that have been completed since the strategy was finalised, upcoming facilities, and the results of recent research.

#### *Objectives*

In developing a strategy for the provision, distribution and funding of skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling facilities in the City, it was intended that the following objectives would be met:

- (a) To identify the possibilities and problems of different skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling user groups sharing facilities.
- (b) To identify the likely future trends in skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling participation and the implications for the Council's facility provision.
- (c) To identify the number, type and broad geographic location of required skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling facilities taking in to account the different skill levels of participants, the changing trends in the activities and the potential for use of relocatable facilities/equipment.
- (d) To develop a process that officers/community boards can use to select the sites for skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling facilities within the broad geographic locations identified.
- (e) To identify the likely issues surrounding the proposed development and location of skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling facilities and any mitigation measures or processes that have proved effective for others providing this type of facility.

- (f) To clarify the health and safety responsibilities of all potential providers of skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling facilities.
- (g) To prioritise the needs for skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling facilities within the city and to develop action plans to include funding required for the next three years.

### *Methodology*

The methodology employed in developing the Strategy aimed to make full use of the existing information resources held by Council and its staff and of the knowledge of skateboarders, inline skaters and trick bikers in the city.

The following research activities were undertaken:

1. Interviews were undertaken with 13 Council employees including all Council staff on the Strategy Steering Group, and relevant material already gathered by Council was obtained, including demographic information, relevant policy documentation, and prior work regarding skateboarding, inline skating, freestyle cycling facilities and needs in the city.
2. Consultation was undertaken with 12 key people involved in the skate / freestyle cycle scene, identified by Council staff and the respondent group. While most were interviewed individually and in person, some were interviewed in pairs or by telephone.
3. Results of initial consultations were analysed along with demographic data and relevant literature from New Zealand and Australia. This included all Christchurch City Council research relating to skateboarding and undertaken since 1996.
4. Following such analysis, wider consultation with skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle cyclists was undertaken at a selection of the city's skate facilities via interview. Purposive Sampling was employed to ensure that respondents included representatives of the age range of skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle cyclists and that the sample included females.

All interviews were undertaken in accordance with the Christchurch City Council ethics protocol. In an effort to obtain feedback from skaters who may not currently use existing Council skating facilities, questionnaires were distributed at three skate shops in the city and at the only commercial indoor skate facility in Christchurch, Skatezone. They were also disseminated to members of a female skateboarding group known as Girl Corp or Ladies Skate Division.

5. A draft strategy was prepared with input from the Strategy Steering Group and key informants from each of the pursuits covered by the Strategy.

6. The Community Boards were invited to provide feedback and comments on the Draft Strategy. These comments were then used by the Strategy Steering Group in developing a final strategy.

### *Steering Group*

The Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle BMX Cycling Strategy Steering Group included the following members:

Alan Bywater - Team Leader, Leisure Planning, Leisure Unit

Lesley Symington - Community Recreation Team Leader, Leisure Unit

Suzanne Weld - Parks Planner, Parks Unit

Robyn Moore - Youth Advocate, Community Relations Unit

Matt Glanville - Youth Council Representative

Kate Rathbun, Community Recreation Advisor, Fendalton Service Centre

Helen Gallagher, Community Recreation Advisor, Linwood Service Centre

### *SCOPE*

Skateboards, inline skates and BMX bicycles each have a very broad range of uses. All can be ridden in a variety of ways and for different purposes, including sporting, recreational, and as modes of transport.

Just some examples include the following:

- Skateboarding on transitions (ie. ramps and bowls) in purpose-built skate facilities or portable fixtures either competitively or recreationally;
- Skateboarding on street-style facilities such as rails, seats, steps, and ledges either competitively or recreationally;
- Skateboarding on natural transitions and street features in the urban environment;
- Skateboarding along tracks and footpaths as a mode of transport;
- Skateboarding on flat surfaces for leisure;
- Extreme inline skating on transitions (ie. ramps and bowls) in purpose-built skate facilities or portable fixtures either competitively or recreationally;
- Extreme inline skating on street-style facilities such as rails, seats, steps, and ledges either competitively or recreationally;
- Leisure/fitness inline skating on flat, paved areas or pathways or in indoor facilities;
- Inline racing / race training on flat, paved areas or pathways or in indoor facilities;
- Inline hockey, in indoor facilities or on paved ballcourts;
- Commuter inline skating;
- BMX racing/riding on dirt tracks;
- BMX riding on mountain bike tracks;
- On-road BMX cycle commuting;
- Trick / freestyle BMX riding on flat surfaces;
- Trick / freestyle cycling on transitions.

Accordingly, skateboards, inline skates and BMX bicycles require several types of facilities depending on needs. While some of these facilities need to be purpose-built, others are shared with a range of other users.

The present strategy is intended to address the facility needs of skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle BMX riders. Encompassing all usage types within the one strategy was seen as unwieldy, and impacting on too many other recreational and transport groups; as but two examples, commuter skaters share roads and footpaths with other commuters, dirt BMXers share facilities with mountain bikers.

In order to develop a strategy which is useable and with a clear direction and purpose, the strategy has been developed to address use of skateboards, inline skates and BMX cycles in the urban environment where there is some overlap in facility needs.

*The Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle Cycling Strategy relates to the following:*

- Skateboarding, inline skating and BMX riding on purpose-built transition-type and street-type facilities;
- Skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle, or “trick” BMX cycling on recreational paths and paved areas; and
- Inline hockey.

*The Strategy does not relate to:*

- skating for transport on public roads and footpaths;
- extreme skateboarding, inline skating or trick cycling on street features in the urban environment and not intended for that purpose;
- BMX racing or dirt jump tracks;
- Inline racing, competitive inline speed skating, or indoor figure skating.

Whilst participation in skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle cycling is not exclusive to children and youth, the activities are especially significant to these groups. Recognising this, the Strategy is intended to relate more to the involvement of children and youth (i.e. up to 24 years of age), both male and female, in these three activities than other age groups.

## SECTION TWO

### ***SKATEBOARDING, INLINE SKATING AND FREESTYLE BMX CYCLING<sup>1</sup> IN CHRISTCHURCH***

#### ***Current Scene and Future Trends***

While skateboarding and rollerskating, the forerunner of inline skating, have long been leisure activities undertaken in Christchurch, such pursuits have become increasingly popular, and particularly with children and youth in the city. As skateboarding and inline skating have evolved into an increasing range of styles, the number of skaters has grown. While skateboarding went through fads of popularity through the 1970s and '80s, the core of committed skaters continued to grow. Numbers of skateboarders steadily increased through the 1990s, without the same pattern of high peaks and low troughs in participation levels characterising the pastime in earlier decades.

Through the 1990s, both skateboarding and inline skating matured into enduring recreational pursuits, supported by the following:

- enhanced skate design;
- cross training potential - inline skating is a cross trainer for skiing, cycling and triathlons while skateboarding is a cross-trainer sport for surfing and snowboarding, the latter being a growth sport for the Canterbury Region and a major tourist draw card to the city;
- affordability of participation - as popularity has increased, better quality equipment, particularly for inline skating has become available on the mass market, becoming considerably cheaper. Availability of free-for-use public skating amenities makes inline skating and skateboarding very affordable when compared with their crossover sports and with more organised club and team-based sports.
- elite sports status - skateboarding was a demonstration sport at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics adding enormously to skateboarding's profile;
- growth in the number of older skateboarders and inliners entering child bearing / rearing age, and keen to encourage their children to skate - skateboarding and inline skating are viewed as family pastimes that all can enjoy together;
- growing female participation, particularly in inline skating;
- huge international popularity - many young New Zealanders are developing their skills and enjoyment of skateboarding and inline skating overseas, continuing with the pastime upon their return to New Zealand.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of brevity, the generic term "Skaters" is used periodically throughout the present report to refer to skate facility users. Trick/freestyle BMX bikers are included in this group.

- importantly, the recognition already given to skateboarding and inline skating as legitimate recreational pursuits by Christchurch City Council, and reflected in the development of a range of skate facilities in the city - skating is less susceptible to faddish popularity in locations where good facilities are available.

### *Popularity of Specific Pursuits*

As outlined in the section of this report concerning scope of the strategy, skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle (“trick”) BMXing are actually made up of many more specific pursuits. While some individuals are involved in several of these, others are focused on one activity. Each activity has different levels of participation and different trends of growth. These are spelt out in more detail in the Appendices. However as a general rule there tend to be strongest participation levels and potential growth in those pursuits which are less extreme and easier for those of beginner and intermediate level to enjoy; participation is less strong in the more difficult to master and high risk pursuits, being extreme inline skating and trick BMXing.

In the coming years, it is expected from the feedback obtained from informants in the present study and from international trends that particularly strong growth in participation will occur in leisure inline skating in the city. With Christchurch’s huge areas of flat land, the city offers the ideal venue for inline skating, a relatively easy to learn activity which offers a fun means of getting around, with the same energy expenditure involved as walking. With skateboard facilities improving in the city and skateboarding now holding mainstream sport status, skateboarding is also likely to continue its trend of increased popularity into the Millennium. Both street-style skateboarding and transition skateboarding have keen followings in the city, with many skateboarders enjoy both types of facilities.

Inline hockey has been played formally in Christchurch since 1998 and the number of teams has risen steadily. Formal teams operate under an Inline Hockey Association, although other casual players are also involved in inline hockey; affordable equipment is readily available. Approximately 450 players are currently on the Inline Hockey Association mailing list.

While riders have been doing tricks on their BMX bicycles for several years, freestyle BMXing has reached a commercial level in the last 10 years or so, with purpose-built bikes and parts now available, an increasing number of competitions being undertaken, and sponsorship deals with riders. The sport is on the increase internationally, although participation is substantially lower than for skateboarding and inline skating. While many young people try freestyle cycling on skate facilities, it is a difficult pursuit to learn and the risk of injury is high. As a consequence, the attrition rate is high. The current numbers of BMXers in Christchurch is unknown, but increasing numbers of participants are becoming more visible.

### *Demographics*

In terms of the population of Christchurch city as a whole, at the time of the 2001 Census, over one-third (34.4%) of the city’s residents were under 25 years of age. 15 percent (N=47, 418) of the resident population was aged 15-24 years, the age group

most prevalent among skateboarders and trick BMX riders in the city, and accounting for a large proportion of inline skaters.

As a proportion of the population in each area of the city, young people in the 15 to 24 year age bracket made up the most significant groups in the central city and areas closer to the University and Christchurch Polytechnic or on the main arterial routes to the University/College of Education area; areas where the proportions of population aged 15-24 years are highest include Cathedral Square-Hagley Park-Avon Loop and Ilam-Greater Riccarton, followed by Edgeware-Greater St Albans, Linwood, Upper Riccarton-Sockburn. Youth comprise greater proportions of the population in areas with high levels of rental accommodation.

In contrast with the areas in which the proportions of population aged 15-24 years were high, the areas where children (0-14 years) comprised a large proportion of the population at the time of the last Census tended to be less central and more suburban. Children comprised the largest proportions of population in Aranui, Bromley, the area surrounding Jellie Park, and Parklands.

Of these areas, Ilam – Greater Riccarton, Upper Riccarton – Sockburn, and Parklands have least access to a skate facility.

## ***Role of Christchurch City Council in Relation to Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle Cycling***

### ***Policy Context***

Christchurch City Council has a commitment to address the needs of young people involved in skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle cycling under at least four existing policies; the Youth Policy, the Children's Policy, the Recreation and Sport Policy and the Community Development and Social Wellbeing Policy. The Youth Strategy and Children's Strategy also relate directly to the present Strategy for Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle BMXing.

### ***Youth***

Youth has been identified as a priority policy area for the Council. The central principle of the Youth Policy, which was revised and adopted by Council in mid-1998, states that:

*The Christchurch City Council is committed to developing, supporting and promoting initiatives which positively contribute to the safety and wellbeing of young people, their families and communities.*

Key outcomes of the Youth Policy relating to the target group of the present strategy include valuing young people's views and contributions and seeking their input into Council activities, recognising and cherishing their diversity, and working towards young people's access to information and resources which meets their health, safety, wellbeing, environmental, recreational and entertainment needs. Council clearly has a role in ensuring that youth have access to safe and user-friendly facilities that support their interests, including skateboarding, inlining and other related pursuits. It also has a

role in involving young people in the development of such facilities from the earliest stage. Such a role is endorsed by the principles of the Youth Strategy. These principles include equity, empowerment, partnership, cooperation, effectiveness, research and information and the Treaty of Waitangi.

### ***Children***

In line with the Youth Policy and Youth Strategy, Christchurch City Council's Children's Policy, relating to 0-13 year olds, states that *The Christchurch City Council is committed to ensuring that its policies, planning and programmes impact positively upon the welfare and wellbeing of children/tamariki and their families/whanau and that The Christchurch City Council sees it as important to involve children and their perspectives, in planning and decision making processes.* Key outcomes include a safe environment, equitable access to opportunities, participation in planning and voices heard, and improved services and resourcing. Consultation with children in the planning and evaluation of parks and recreation programmes and facilities is explicitly recommended in the Children's Strategy.

### ***Community Development and Social Well-Being***

Key outcomes of the Community Development and Social Well-Being Policy include *equitable access to opportunities, community resources and clean living environments, high self esteem, participation in personal and political decision making and participation and a sense of belonging in communities.* This policy also therefore supports participation of users and potential users in the planning processes relating to skate facilities, as well as location of skate facilities in a manner that provides equitable access to such facilities.

### ***Recreation and Sport***

The outcomes sought from the Recreation & Sport Policy include:

- *that children and youth are aware of, have access to and are increasing their participation in a broad range of recreation and sporting activities,*
- *services, facilities and programmes meet the recreation and sport needs of children and youth in particular,*
- *consultation with the Christchurch community, recreation and sport participants and service providers is ongoing and effective, and*
- *physical assets meet the identified and viable recreation and sport needs of Christchurch and minimum legal standards.*

The development and implementation of a skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling strategy was seen by the Strategy Steering Group as a very practical means to advance the policy objectives of the Recreation & Sport Policy.



### ***Policy Specific to Skateboarding and Related Pursuits***

The general policy held by Christchurch City Council in relation to skateboarding and related activities is expressed in the Greenspace Unit's Codes of Practice. This document states that:

*Skateboarding and related activities are acceptable on most reserves (other than those specifically excluded) subject to there being no undue inconvenience, annoyance or danger to pedestrian and other reserve users.*

*Generally casual use of skateboarding facilities with specialised structures on Council reserves is available any time during daylight hours.*

*Reserves/ areas specifically excluded from skateboarding and other related activities include:*

- *Victoria Square*
- *Botanic Gardens*
- *Peter Scoular Park*
- *Wilson Park*
- *Riccarton Bush*
- *Mona Vale*

*Surrounds of childrens paddling pools (when in use)*

The policy also makes reference to Bylaws relating to skateboarding, the most important one in force since 6 October 1997, the Christchurch City Public Places and Signs Alteration Bylaw 1997 and related to the prohibition of skateboards.

Clause 3 of this Bylaw states:

#### ***3. PLAYING AT GAMES***

*(1) Subject to clause 3(2), no person shall play at any game or ride in or upon any toboggan, cart, trolley, skateboard, roller skate or similar device in any road or public place, in such a manner or at such a time as may cause damage to property owned by the Council or may cause annoyance, danger or inconvenience to residents or members of the public in the vicinity.*

*(2) The Council may from time to time by resolution publicly notified in a newspaper circulating in the City prohibit the use of skateboards in any public place or any part of a public place or any road or any part of a road.*

*(3) The Council shall mark any such prohibited public place or road by erecting such signs, markings or notices as the Council sees fit.*

*(4) No person shall use a skateboard in any public place or road prohibited by the Council pursuant to sub-clause (2) of this clause."*

## *Existing Facilities*

Christchurch City Council currently provides skateboarding facilities with specialised skating structures in 14 locations in the city.

- ***Washington Reserve, Moorhouse Ave***

Stage one of this facility was completed in 1996, comprising a series of transitions, geared to beginner-intermediate level skating. Stage two, including street-style skate elements, was completed in 2003. Stage three is programmed for 2007/08.

At present, Washington offers the best skate surface of the Council facilities, and is well-liked for its excellent transitions. The facility was the most skated by all respondent groups canvassed in the Strategy study. It is the most centrally located skate facility in the city, on one of the four avenues and within 3 city blocks of 20 bus routes. Within walking distance of the square, Washington is accessible to users of all the suburb-CBD bus routes. Washington Reserve is accessible to some of the areas with the highest proportions of youth population; Cathedral Square-Hagley Park-Avon Loop.

Feedback from Council staff, skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle BMXers in the Strategy study identified completion of stage two and three of Washington Reserve as of vital importance in addressing the needs of skaters in the city. Other needs for this facility identified by respondents include installation of a payphone in the vicinity of the facility and of seating positioned to encourage skate spectators and to discourage non-skaters from congregating in less visible locations in the Reserve. There is also demand for a more preventative action against anti-social behaviour in the Reserve, including vandalism, drug use and bullying. It was suggested at the South Christchurch Youth Summit, November 1998 that the park is too much of a “guy’s place”, captured by certain groups. Work to make the facility more acceptable to all skaters would be well received by female skaters and very young skaters.



- ***Waltham Park***

The Council's Skateboarding facility at Waltham Park consists of a small swimming pool-style, kidney-shaped bowl and a grinding box/seat, with landscaped surround. The park is easily accessed via the Lyttelton and Huntsbury bus routes and is on the edge of Beckenham, St Martins and Sydenham, areas with moderate youth population densities. There is a high level of awareness among skaters and BMX riders regarding the facility's existence and the facility is well-utilised, and especially popular with BMX riders and skateboarders. Waltham bowl is favoured for its size and proportions, and for its level of challenge. Inclusion of the funbox as well as the bowl is also well-liked.

While the facility is seen as a good one by most users, some would like to see it added to with other features. The landscaping beside the bowl is seen by skaters as too close to the bowl itself (skaters often land in the garden unintentionally, damaging the plants) and would be better relocated against the wall of the Waltham Pool. Ground cover plantings are seen as a better alternative to the bark chips currently used on the landscaped area, the bark being thrown in the bowl by children from the adjacent play area, creating a hazard and a nuisance for skaters.



- ***Hoon Hay Park***

The skateboard facility at Hoon Hay Park is one of the older facilities in the city, comprising a cloverleaf skate bowl with surrounding asphalted transitions, and a small hump. The facility is located on the Mathers Road, Rowley side of Hoon Hay Park, servicing Hoon Hay, Hillmorton, and Barrington North, areas with moderate youth populations. A stop on the city-Hoon Hay bus route is adjacent.

The surface of the Hoon Hay facility has been repaired, and new coping on the concrete bowl's edge has been provided. Grinding rails have also been added.



- ***Bishopdale Park***

The facility at Bishopdale Park is geared to beginner-intermediate skaters and comprises an undulating area with concrete spined miniramp, a box and a bump. It is located on the edge of an area of moderate youth population. The facility is accessible by bus from Harewood, Papanui, Bryndwyr and the central city.

The Bishopdale skate facility is well-utilised, especially by inliners of all ages and young skateboarders. It is less popular with more experienced skateboarders because of a lower level of challenge offered than some of the alternative facilities. While already popular, the facility could be further enhanced with a surface upgrade (the existing concrete is slippery according to some users) and the addition of skate pathways for inliners and skateboarders preferring long runs.



- ***Thomson Park, New Brighton***

The skate area at Thomson Park is the oldest in the city, dating from the 1970s. Thomson Park is a transition skate facility, with a bump, a plywood quarter-pipe, a bank, a mini ramp, and grinding rails. The surface has been repaired. Thomson Park is in close proximity to the New Brighton, Queenspark, North Beach and Parklands bus routes. While in an area of fairly low youth population, Aranui and New Brighton are nearby with high youth population densities.

While more skilled skateboarders and inliners felt that the design itself of the facility was sound, other skaters reported that they found the facility boring. The poor state of repair of the bank and quarter-pipe require urgent address. Thomson Park has remained a popular skating venue, seen as well-located. The facility offers considerable potential for development as a city-wide venue. Funding has been earmarked for 2008/09 for a further upgrade of Thomson Park.



- *Wycola Park, Hei Hei*

The Wycola Park skate facility dates from the mid 1980s. The facility originally comprised of a Mexican hat-style transition area and a skateable path through a large pipe attached to a vert ramp. The vert ramp and pipe surface was in a poor state of repair due to ongoing vandalism and safety issues and has been removed. The facility was upgraded in association with the removal of the vert ramp. The sides of the facility were extended to make the bowl area more usable along with the inclusion of a smaller half pipe and a grind rail. The facility is now suitable for beginner to intermediate skaters and is of an appropriate scale for this park. No further extensions are planned for this facility.

Any future development of more extensive skate facilities in this area would be more suited at Kyle Park. Kyle Park is ideally located being highly visible on a major road, close to Hornby High School, Hornby Primary School and the Mall. Development of a skate facility on this site would complement and be compatible with the existing BMX race track. Kyle Park is accessible via the Lincoln University, Russley, Hornby and Templeton bus routes. The park is in an area of moderate youth population and fairly high levels of children.



- *Cypress Gardens Reserve, Bromley*

The facility at Cypress Gardens, Bromley is located at the rear of Bromley School on Keighley's Rd, a mainly-industrial area. Bromley is an area with a high proportion of the population aged under 15, and the surrounding area has a moderate youth population. Cypress Gardens is on the Woolston bus route. The facility comprises a half-pipe, with bark chip surrounding it. Being close to one of the few community halls in the area that permits alcohol on the premises, the Cypress half-pipe is a popular location for drinking at night, and the area is prone to high levels of litter and broken glass. The area is very poorly lit, and the undersides of the half-pipe provide shelter at night for inappropriate activities.

Awareness of the Cypress Gardens facility among skaters is very low. To attract more skaters, the facility needs to be publicised, and clearly needs to be altered to discourage inappropriate behaviour. Obvious modifications include lighting and filling in of the underside of the pipe. More regular maintenance would help to address problems with litter and graffiti currently plaguing the facility.



- ***St Albans Park***

The temporary half pipe was replaced and upgraded with a permanent facility in 2000. The new facility has half pipes and street style elements. The facility is readily accessible via the Shirley and Canterbury University routes. The area has moderate levels of youth.

St Albans is a popular skating venue, ideally located to service a large user population.



- ***Sheldon Park***

The Sheldon park concrete mini-ramp (4ft) was installed after a plywood ramp, built by the local community, had been in place for some time. The facility is on the Belfast bus route as well as bus routes from Kaiapoi and Rangiora.

Awareness of the Belfast skate facility is relatively low, reflecting its less central location. The facility has been criticised for having poor transitions. However most feedback regarding the facility was ambivalent; the facility seems to meet local needs, but is not of a standard which encourages skaters to travel to use it.



- *Templeton*

The facility at Templeton is designed for beginner-intermediate level skaters and offering low transitions of a variety of types. A small extension to the original facility now incorporates a grind rail and a fun box. Templeton is an area of rapid growth, particularly in housing for young families. The facility is accessible via the Templeton bus route. Of all Council skate facilities, it is furthest from the city centre. It is a local facility.



- *Brooklands Domain*

The Brooklands facility is a half pipe and grinding rail. It is a local facility that caters for local skaters and is too far out of town for other skaters to travel to. It is an area with high levels of children.



- *Jellie Park*

Jellie Park has various transitions and street elements. It is particularly popular with BMX bikes and as a result, there have been some issues with overcrowding. It is en route to a number of nearby schools adding to its popularity. Jellie Park is on the Orbiter route and is also serviced by the Burnside bus route. Jellie Park has high levels of children and moderate levels of youth.



- ***Linwood Park***

Constructed in 2000, the Linwood Park facility offers a range of transitions. The sealed surface is to be extended in 2004/05 to provide a flat beginner skate area and to add some grinding rails.

Linwood Park is on the Orbitor bus route and numerous other suburban routes. It is in an area of quite high numbers of children and moderate levels of youth.



- ***Wainoni Park***

A skate path winds its way around the play area at Wainoni Park with several street style elements including wedges, boxes and rails. This is a small local facility aimed at local skaters. Wainoni Aranui has high levels of children and moderate levels of youth. Wainoni Park is on the New Brighton-Aranui bus route.





- *Privately Owned Facilities*

There are no private facilities or indoor facilities currently operating in Christchurch.

### *Health and Safety*

At present, health and safety at skate facilities has been addressed by the Council by attempting to ensure that facilities are as safe as possible, designed in a way to minimise injury. In addition, signage is to be provided at Council skate facilities advising the following:

*People using this skating area do so at their own risk. The Council will not accept responsibility for injury or damage whatsoever.*

*Protective clothing should be worn, in particular a safety helmet.*

*Children under 10 years old must be supervised by an adult whilst using this area.*

*Please respect other people and park neighbours.*

This approach is very similar to that of other Local Authorities in New Zealand and Australia.

Reporting on their skateboarding venues (Brisbane City Council Community Development Branch, 1997), Brisbane City Council acknowledged that the majority of skaters know their limitations, using safety equipment in situations where risk is high. The approach taken by that Local Authority in considering health and safety on skate facilities was one of respecting the commonsense of skaters. A review of skate facilities in Melbourne Australia in 1998 recommended that safety plans be developed for facilities in that city, addressing signage, maintenance, first aid, shade and shelter. Safety procedures were also recommended for special events at skate venues.

By ensuring that skate facilities on Council reserves are in a good state of repair, are designed and constructed in a manner which minimises injuries and by encouraging safe skater behaviour (e.g. wearing of safety gear, supervision of young skaters). Christchurch City Council fulfills its health and safety obligations. Liability of Council for injury is limited under the Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Act 1992 to a) a claim for compensatory damages for “nervous shock”, compensation for psychiatric / psychological harm resulting from witnessing or being involved in an accident, and b) a claim for exemplary damages for outrageous or flagrant negligence causing personal injury. For both claims, extreme negligence on the part of the Council would need to be proven for the damages to be awarded. However in such a situation where negligence can be proven, the signage provided would not offer protection from litigation.

Similar claims against Council could be made where extreme negligence was proven in Council construction, maintenance and installation of portable skateable elements, such as those which might be used at skate jams, special events or at demonstrations at schools and holiday programmes. To minimise the risk of such liability, legal advice previously provided to Christchurch City Council (Buddle Findlay, July 1998) recommended that Council should ensure that skateboard ramps:

- have been constructed in accordance with accepted safety and design standards;
- are correctly installed on-site by suitably qualified persons;
- are inspected at the end of each usage period to ensure that no new hazards have developed from authorised or unauthorised use.

It was also suggested that Council's litigation risk could be further minimised by ensuring that ramps were only used for their intended purpose and in acceptably safe fashion. To achieve this, Council could:

- require that schools or other organisations hosting portable equipment should have adequate mechanisms in place to minimise the risk of injury to pupils using equipment during school hours;
- require that ramps going into schools comply with Ministry of Education requirements;
- enter into a formal contract with schools or other ramp hosts, setting out the school / organisation's obligations in respect of supervision of users during school hours / hours of programme operation;
- require that safety standards be set and enforced by schools, such as usage of protective gear provided with the ramps by Council; and
- post rules of conduct on the side of the ramps to cover usage outside of school/ programme hours.

### ***Facility Sharing***

Skate facilities, whether transition-based, extreme street, indoor or flat areas and paths outdoors are shared by a broad range of users. In the main, facilities are shared well between users, and problems are rare. When these do occur in skate parks, conflicts are normally due to naivety of younger skaters or bikers who are not aware of "skater etiquette". Strong codes of conduct exist at skate facilities, based around principles of respect and turn-taking.

A minority of skateboarders and inliners interviewed who use skate parks believed that there were some problems with BMX riders sharing skate facilities. This belief was also held by some Council staff interviewed. BMX bikes are definitely more likely to cause injury upon collision than skateboards or inlines, and it seems clear that trick biking on skate facilities is the most difficult and dangerous of the extreme skate sports. However, few problems seem to exist with skilled BMXers using skate facilities; more experienced BMXers tend to ride skate parks when not in use by skateboarders or inliners. However, there is potential for conflict when bikes are ridden at the same time as skaters are using facilities, and a significant level of risk when inexperienced cyclists try to ride

extreme elements beyond their ability. In relation to BMX use of skateboarding facilities, the following suggestions came through in the research:

- Mountain Bikes should never be ridden on skate facilities - they damage the transitions and are a danger to all facility users;
- Trick BMXers safely share facilities when used at times when not in use by inliners or skateboards, providing that riders are skilled and do not attempt to ride beyond their ability;
- Children should not ride bikes on skate facilities;
- Protective gear should be worn by BMX riders;
- BMXs pose a significant danger when ridden on skate facilities at times where there are high numbers of other users or when in use by skaters of beginner level.

While trick BMXers who ride transitions, jumps, gaps and grinding elements are a small minority of skate facility users, it is desirable that they have their own facility, or at least one at which their use takes priority.

For leisure inliners, conflicts are less likely with skateboarders and more likely with walkers and joggers sharing paths. The narrowness of paths in Hagley Park requires that pedestrians step to the side of the path for inliners to pass. When they do not hear an inliner coming or do not move out of the way, skaters have to skate onto the grass to avoid collision. While inliners can share skate facilities with little problems, path sharing in parks ideally requires development of skate/bike lanes and wider pathways for optimal safety.

## SECTION THREE

### *FUTURE DIRECTION*

#### *Budget*

Funds available within Christchurch City Council for the development of skate facilities over the next few years are allocated broadly in two main budgets, the Greenspace Unit's 5 Year Capital Plan for Teenage Recreational Facilities, and the annual budgets of each Community Board totaling \$300,000 per Board. For both of these funding sources, skate facilities are just one of a range of demands on funds.

The following allocations have been made to the Teenage Recreational Facilities Capital Plan:

2004-05:	\$159 535
2005-06:	\$141 069
2006-07:	\$109 477
2007-08:	\$167 534
2008/09	\$150 230

Of this funding, allocations have been made to skate facilities as follows:

2004/05	Wainoni Park	\$30 000 approx.
	Linwood Park	\$40 000 approx.
	Summer investigation	\$15 000 (Community Board)
2005/06	Craighead Reserve BMX	\$40 000
2007/08	Washington Reserve	\$75 000
2008/09	Thomson Park	\$50 000

## *Areas of Need*

In developing the present Strategy, information has been gathered by the researcher from a broad range of sources regarding needs of skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle BMXers in Christchurch now and in the immediate future. In gathering this information, emphasis was placed on ensuring that the voices of all types of skaters were heard - both male and female, young and old, of all relevant pursuits and skating style.

Before considering the needs of skaters in the city for the next 3 years, it is important to acknowledge the work already undertaken in developing skate facilities in Christchurch. Overall, facility users canvassed in the present research believed that these were of average standard. While not ideal, the city does have a good base on which to improve. Achieving a city in which skaters feel valued and are well-catered for is well within Council's reach within the term of the Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle BMXing Strategy.

## *Geographic Gaps*

While a small minority of skaters interviewed at skate facilities for the present study believed that the city needed more suburban skate facilities, the overall feedback regarding quantity and spread of skate facilities suggested that the number of facilities already in place or under development in the city was about right. Most people who had input into the development of the present Skate Strategy felt that the number of facilities in the city was good already. However some respondents did identify areas which they felt had poor access to skate facilities.

Areas that emerged most strongly in the Strategy research and in previous research undertaken or contracted by Christchurch City Council as requiring new skate facilities have now largely been catered for. Gaps in provision are noted in the Halswell and Sumner areas. Local research has identified demand for a skate facility in Sumner. The Halswell area requires further investigation to identify the youth priority needs.

Other areas where some demand for a new facility has been expressed either by respondents in the present study or in other Council consultations include Redwood, Woolston and Upper Riccarton. These three areas have high proportions of children, and facilities would be best targeted at a local beginner to intermediate level.

## *Facility Type*

### *Transition skating*

At present, the bulk of Christchurch's skate facilities comprise transition skating elements; ramps, bowls, half and quarter-pipes and humps. Some street skating elements have been added to many of the skate parks. With further improvements and upgrading to achieve good surfaces, sympathetic landscaping and apron size (skateable surface surrounding elements) and appropriate transitions, the existing facilities will do well at meeting the needs of transition skaters in the city with one addition. Christchurch lacks a well-designed and constructed vert ramp. There is a very high

demand for such a facility, which would best be located in one of the more central skate parks.

### ***Extreme Street Skating***

Grinding elements such as funboxes, pyramids and manual pads appear to offer the broadest appeal to street skaters, followed by rails, ramps and steps. While very advanced skaters would like to see these street elements constructed at greater heights than those already in place in Christchurch, facilities need to be designed in ways that minimise injury.

With the majority of skaters in the city always likely to be of beginner - intermediate level, the priority in developing street skating facilities needs to be placed on catering to the user majority. Facilities should ideally challenge advanced skaters, but without shutting out the “mass market”. Very high grinding elements and drops will make facilities inaccessible to many skaters, and especially female and younger skaters. These should only be developed once adequate beginner-intermediate street skating facilities are in place.

### ***Leisure Inline Skating***

Leisure inline skating is a rapidly growing pastime internationally, and this trend of growth is reflected in Christchurch. Leisure inline skating has broad appeal and because of this, any facilities designed to cater for this activity are likely to be very heavily utilised. The pathways in Hagley Park are already well-utilised by inliners, but these would be made considerably safer if they were swept regularly to remove material from the many trees near paths. Widening of Hagley pathways, connection of these into a circuit and development of a skate lane, at least in the areas of heaviest skater use, is a priority.

The encouragement of inline skating in Hagley Park, whilst not identified specifically, is broadly consistent with the Hagley Park Management Plan. The Hagley Park Management Plan has an objective within the Recreation section ‘To promote Hagley Park as a venue for passive and informal activities’ of which inline skating is one. The associated policy in the Management Plan states that ‘Passive and informal activities shall be encouraged in Hagley Park’. In the Circulation section of the Management Plan the objective is ‘To provide safe, logical access and circulation around the park for cyclists, pedestrians, joggers and people in wheelchairs’. The fact that inline skaters are not mentioned in this objective is probably due to the Plan having been developed in 1991, before inline skating became a significant recreational activity in Christchurch. The Hagley Park Management Plan goes on to identify the need to develop a hierarchy of cycleways and pedestrian tracks. The inclusion of tracks on which inline skating is encouraged within the overall hierarchy is broadly consistent with this element of the Management Plan.

Development of skate paths in other parks would also be well-received, especially if these incorporated undulations and snaking. With a large proportion of the city’s leisure inline skaters appearing to reside in North-West Christchurch, potential locations for such paths include Jellie Park and Bishopdale Park. (Local needs analyses by Council in the Bishopdale area have identified high demand for inline paths connecting the park to the mall).

### ***Inline Hockey***

Inline hockey is a growing sport in Christchurch, appealing to a broad age range. With uncertain availability of a long term venue, there is some demand for a free-for-use inline hockey court in the city for more casual play. Development of such a court could also meet the needs of some skaters currently attracted to Hagley Park's netball courts, an area in which skating is not permitted. Such a facility would best be located centrally, Hagley Park being one obvious possibility. Further research and investigation is needed to determine how to best meet the needs of inline hockey.

### ***Freestyle BMXing***

Feedback gathered from freestyle BMX bikers suggests that in the main, they are happy to share facilities with skateboarders and extreme inliners. The type of elements they enjoy very much align with those of other facility users, although there is a strong preference for large elements among skilled bikers.

While facility sharing works well most of the time, there is a need to address health and safety concerns relating to facility sharing, and especially where less experienced BMX riders are concerned. Ideally, it would be good to see a facility developed especially for the use of BMX riders. However with the number of skilled riders is considerably lower than that of other extreme skate pursuits because of the difficulty of trick biking on skateable fixtures, any facility catering to the needs of intermediate-expert BMXers is likely to be underutilised by appropriate users and dangerous to novices. Any facility catering for BMXes only and publicised as a cycle facility should aim to be safely ridden by younger riders and those just getting into trick biking. More skilled riders need to be able to continue to access existing skate facilities, but following strict guidelines incorporating the points made previously under the heading "Facility Sharing".

### ***Information Needs***

Many of the city's existing skate facilities are poorly utilised, partly because of poor maintenance and state of repair but also to a large extent because of a lack of awareness among skaters that these facilities exist, and especially those of beginner and intermediate level. Many of the skaters who feel that the city caters poorly for skate pursuits are unaware of the facilities that they could be utilising and which are already available to meet their needs. Awareness appears to be particularly low for the city's more remote skate facilities, and in particular, Cypress Gardens in Bromley, the skate facility in Templeton and the Sheldon Park facility in Belfast. Information and knowledge has improved since development of the Strategy with a number of websites now providing details of Christchurch's skate facilities. It is recommended that Council resources include the following information:

- The location of every facility/skate venue in the city, including privately operated skate facilities and areas such as the Hagley Park pathways;
- Description of elements offered and pursuit catered for (ie. leisure inlining, extreme inlining, transition skateboarding, extreme street skateboarding etc.);

- Skill levels catered for;
- Relevant bus routes and location in relation to bus stops;
- Availability of nearest toilets, payphone and drinking water;
- Nearby areas where skating is not permitted or is undesirable;
- Cost, hours of public sessions, and contact details for private facilities;
- Information of skater rights, including an outline of the implications of recent legislation which allows skaters to skate on the road *as well as on the footpath*, but which makes skaters subject to the same vehicle use laws as motorists and cyclists.

This resource should be distributed via Council Service Centres, Skateshops and private skate facilities, Youth Centres, Park Rangers and Youth Workers, free skateboarding publications such as *Fondle*, and ideally, via schools. The launch of such a resource could be combined with a high profile event such as a skate jam or series of skate jams.

### ***Skill Development and Demonstration Events***

Opportunity for formal skill development sessions are not readily available to skateboarders and extreme inline skaters, although some have been operated from time to time by Council and by the skate shops. There is a strong demand for such workshops amongst skate facility users. It was suggested by several of the advanced skaters interviewed that such workshops should be operated in conjunction with the opening of any new skate facility to maximise the usage of facilities and ensure that users learn to skate elements safely and to best effect. Council support for such workshops is a good way of increasing utilisation of existing facilities and raising the standard of skating in the city.

The profile of skate pursuits needs to be developed if skateboarders are to be treated with respect and to in turn learn to skate in appropriate venues and in a manner which respects all skate facility users. Council can play an important part in achieving this by supporting events such as skate jams, either running them itself or supporting businesses and community groups in holding such events.

Run well, skate jams offer a chance for skaters of all ages to have fun and develop their skills and aspirations while also showcasing skate pursuits to the community and encouraging young people to participate in constructive recreational activities. Christchurch City Council has made a good start in involving itself in such events, and this needs to continue in the future. Construction and maintenance of a high quality set of portable steel skate ramps with sound buffers fitted inside is a priority for extending the scope of skate jams as well as offering potential for promotion of skating in other public events such as public concerts and outdoor parties.



## ***Needs of Specific User Groups***

While a significant proportion of the leisure inliner population, females comprise a very small proportion of users of transition and extreme street skating facilities. However their numbers are growing in line with growth in the popularity of skateboarding in general.

Female users of skate facilities have a range of special needs which need to be catered for if female participation in skate pursuits is to be nurtured. Most of these needs relate in some way to safety, and as one female skateboarder with a preschooler pointed out, many of these needs mirror those of very young skate facility users.

Female skaters are generally less daring than their male counterparts. They require more time to execute a run, and more physical space around them to feel safe. Consequently, they are more intimidated by crowded conditions at skate venues, preferring to skate at times and places where there are fewer people at a venue. They are also more likely to prefer smaller elements, and configurations which allow them to skate one element well rather than executing a series of maneuvers in rapid sequence. Elements such as smaller quarterpipes are popular with female and very young skaters because they are not hard to drop in on and are easier to learn on than elements demanding a sequence of maneuvers such as halfpipes. Such elements should be incorporated into skate facilities to cater for beginner skaters and less confident skaters.

Skills development workshops are likely to be especially popular with female skaters. Assistance to groups in obtaining protective gear and skateboards for loan and in publicising their activities and workshops is likely to encourage greater female participation in skating pursuits.

## ***Priorities for Action***

With a limited budget, it is not possible to address all needs relating to skate facility users and potential users in the city. However with careful prioritisation and city-wide coordination, it is possible to address a significant proportion of skater needs. Priorities for action relating to skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle BMXing are presented below, separated into short, medium and long term priorities.

### ***Short Term Priorities:***

#### ***Objective 1. Complete Works Planned for 2004-2009***

- Completion of stage three of Washington Reserve. All respondent groups in the research for the original strategy identified the completion of Washington Reserve as the top priority. Funding has been allocated for 2007/08 to complete stage three.
- Complete improvements to skate facility at Linwood Park. Funding is available in 2004/05 to add a concrete apron to the skate facility and install a grinding rail.

- Resurfacing and addition of street skating elements to existing facilities has occurred at both Hoon Hay and Thomson Parks in accordance with the 2000 Strategy.
- Consultation in Burwood Pegasus has identified a need for further additions to Thomson Park and funding has been allocated in 2008/09.

***Objective 2. Tune Existing Facilities into the Demands of Users and Potential Users***

- **Maintenance**

Inadequate maintenance of facilities has been identified as a significant problem, especially for the older skate facilities and for those in less visible locations such as Cypress Gardens and Wycola Park, where broken glass and vandalism are particular problems and more regular clean-up is needed than is presently undertaken.

Skate facilities are on regular weekly maintenance and rubbish removal regimes and are often checked more frequently by contractors working on site. Reported issues are responded to promptly.

In relation to leisure inline skating, maintenance, in the form of regular sweeping to remove organic matter from adjacent trees, is a clear need in Hagley Park and in any other future developments of skate paths in parks.

- **Leisure Inline Skating Pathways**

Upgrade of the pathways in Hagley Park is a high priority for leisure inline skaters. Pathways need to be connected to develop a continuous skate route, and widened to ensure the safety of other users and to enable use by those wishing to skate at speed. Regular sweeping is essential. Upgrading of the paths in Hagley Park is ongoing.

With the numbers of leisure inline skaters growing rapidly, it would also be desirable for a second skate path to be developed once a suitable facility is in place at Hagley Park. Possible options include a skate lane on the Sumner Esplanade or skate paths in Bishopdale Park, Burnside Park or Jellie Park, all areas with high populations of inline skaters.

Provision for inline skating is being considered in the current planning exercise being undertaken for the Sumner Esplanade area. Shared use paths are suitable for inline skating in many other parts of the city.

- **Vert facility**

It is strongly suggested that completion of Washington Reserve should include a high quality vert ramp. If for any reason this does not occur, development of such a facility in an alternative central location is of high priority. Such a facility would be well utilised by skateboarders, extreme inline skaters and freestyle BMX riders. A vert ramp will be considered in Stage 3 of Washington Reserve.

### ***Objective 3. Provide Greater Support for and Promotion of Skate Pursuits***

Once the upgrades and additional facilities suggested above are completed, a high priority should be placed on supporting activities that optimise facility usage, both in terms of participation levels and skill development.

- **Publicity**

A pamphlet on Christchurch's skate facilities was produced and distributed. Additional information is available on the Council website at this address <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/parks/recreation/skateboarding.asp> This information needs to be kept up to date.

- **Skate Jams at Skate Facilities**

Greater support by Council for such events over the next few years is vital to entertain, promote skate pursuits, encourage new participants to have a go, develop skills and aspirations among skaters and to raise the public profile of skate facility usage. Such support demonstrates to the skater community that Christchurch City Council values this diverse group. In turn, this is likely to foster a cooperative relationship between Council and skaters.

The Community and Recreation Unit should continue to run a number of successful skate jams, competitions and events around the city on a regular basis.

- **Similar Events for Leisure Inline Skaters and Freestyle Cyclists**

As well as increasing support for skateboarding and extreme inline events, it is recommended that Council also provide support for similar events that promote other skate pursuits, and in particular, leisure inlining.

- **Promotion of Skating Off-Site from Skate Parks Using Portable Skating Elements**

Skate jams and similar events are normally held at permanent skate parks, tending to attract those who already use the facility. They are less likely to introduce new people to skating. In an effort to increase participation, it is important that all styles of skateboarding, inline skating, and freestyle cycling are also promoted in other settings, where they can appeal to potential new participants.

The Burwood Pegasus Community Board has funded the construction of some portable ramps, which are often used at community events and skate jams, and also cater for inline skaters. The ramps are available for expert demonstrations as well as "have a go" sessions with skateboards.

- **Support for Skills Development and Female Skater Groups**

Demand for female-only skills development workshops, particularly from female skaters, is high. Assistance from Council to female skating groups and community groups working to increase skate participation among females, in the form of grants for purchase of skate and safety gear and publicity, would contribute significantly

towards increased female participation in skate pursuits. Supporting other groups operating skills workshops or provision of these directly via Council recreation facilities is also a high priority.

The Council should continue to run skills workshops. Female instructors have been promoting female skating and a programme for women is being investigated.

- **Enhanced Safety at Existing Skate Venues**

Some skaters, especially very young skaters, older skaters and female skaters, are deterred from using facilities such as Washington Reserve because of safety concerns. Greater surveillance at night should be a priority at Washington. However to create lasting improvement in safety at skate facilities, the development of formal skater codes of conduct is an option requiring investigation. Unwritten codes of etiquette are strongly evident amongst skateboarders. These need to be developed by skaters themselves for each venue, along the lines of the informal skater etiquette already held by more experienced skaters. Developed into a formal code, covering issues such as unacceptable behaviour, turn-taking, respect for other's space etc., these should be clearly posted at skate parks. BMX bikes are allowed on skate parks but mountain bikes are considered unsuitable.

To further enhance the safety and positive atmosphere of Council-operated skate venues, investigation should be made into the viability of community skate committees for the larger skate venues, as operated in Brisbane, Australia.

- **Support Inline Hockey Facility Providers**

At present there are three inline hockey clubs operating from the former Skatezone building. However, this building is only available on a short-term lease and longer-term secure facilities are required. Membership numbers steadily increased during the late 1990's to 2001 to 450 members. Difficulties in getting long term sponsorship and a secure venue may inhibit further growth. Council should work with the inline hockey clubs to support their activities. Further investigation is required to determine the appropriate level of support from Council.

### ***Medium Term Priorities:***

#### **Objective 4. Develop Street Elements at Existing Facilities**

Addition of street elements to existing skate facilities was given much greater priority by most respondents in the Strategy research than development of new facilities. Street elements have been added to Washington Reserve, Wainoni Park, St Albans Park, Templeton Reserve, Hoon Hay Park, Thomson Park, Brooklands Domain, and Wycola Park in accordance with the 2000 Strategy.

In developing street skating elements in the future, investigation should be given into design of elements that can be reconfigured to retain skater interest.

## ***Longer Term Priorities***

### **Objective 5. Develop New Skateboarding and Extreme Inline Facilities**

Based on all the information gathered, including population data, and the location of existing and planned facilities and upgrades, the 2000 Strategy identified that demand for new facilities was likely to be greatest in Richmond-Shirley and Aranui-South Brighton, followed by Parklands and the central city. Construction of the St Albans skate facility has met much of the Richmond-Shirley need while the proposed skate facility in MacFarlane Park, Shirley has been deferred for consideration as part of a wider park renewal. In the Burwood Pegasus wards, the Aranui need is being met through the development of a small skate facility in Wainoni Park. Thomson Park has been identified as the next highest priority followed by South Brighton and QEII. However, these needs must be balanced with other youth recreation needs throughout the city. As a result of extensive consultation, a skate facility in Parklands will not proceed. Washington Reserve meets the needs of the central city.

Because of the substantial time period required to identify a site and obtain support for facility development, upgrades of existing facilities are strongly recommended as the preferred option for meeting geographic needs.

### **Objective 6. Development of Freestyle BMX Facility, Subject to Demand**

Freestyle BMX riding is increasing popularity and BMX riders are free to share facilities with skateboarders. In most cases this works well. Without on site supervision, it would very difficult to enforce a separation of use between skateboarders and BMX riders at any purpose built facilities. Some crowding issues have been identified at Jellie Park with high levels of BMX use at peak times and further investigation is required to determine how best to address this issue. Meantime, it is recommended that BMX bikes be permitted to ride on skate facilities providing they comply with strict guidelines including the following:

- Children should not ride bikes on skate facilities;
- Protective gear must be worn by BMX riders;
- Mountain Bikes should not be permitted on skate facilities;
- Trick BMXers should use facilities only at times when not in use by inliners or skateboards, with restriction placed on the number of bikes permitted to ride at any one time.

Investigation should be made into the viability of regular timeslots in which BMXers have priority use of one or more skate facilities.

### **Objective 7. Skate Routes**

In collaboration with City Streets and the Pedestrian Strategy, development of skate routes should be undertaken, channeling skate traffic to areas where their safety and

the safety of pedestrians is enhanced. Such skate routes should provide access to skate facilities and other areas of high skater demand. They should be clearly marked and surfaced to encourage skater usage and enhance safety.

Issues re perceived conflict between pedestrians and skaters are still to be addressed.

#### **Objective 8. Small Scale Local Facilities**

The ward based 'Leisure, Parks and Waterways Studies' identified a desire for skateboard parks of small and diverse scale. Rather than centralising large-scale skate parks, the desire was for more dispersed parks with only a few low grinds and bowls. The development of 'mini skate parks' with small-scale, basic, and relatively low challenge features is recommended. Such skate facilities could be designed into new play areas as needed and should be targeted at young skateboarders.

## *Process Issues*

It is clear in the Christchurch City Council Youth Policy and Youth Strategy that youth opinion should be actively considered by Council for matters affecting young people. Accordingly, skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle cyclists should be given the opportunity to participate in the planning processes relating to skate facilities, both new and under upgrade. At present, this does occur to some extent, and consultative processes do appear to be improving over time. However there is considerable demand from skaters to be involved at a much earlier stage in decisions relating to skate facilities. Drawing on the Youth Strategy and feedback from skaters themselves, it is desirable that in all decisions affecting skaters in the future, Council:

- consults with a broad range of facility users and potential users - at present some skaters feel that the pool of skaters who have input into Council decisions is too narrow;
- develops a pool of more experienced skateboarders (street and transition), extreme inliners, leisure inliners, inline hockey players and freestyle cyclists who can have input into decisions at an early stage, prior to broader consultation;
- recognises and respects the knowledge which exists within the skater community;
- employs a broad range of methods (i.e. questionnaires, focus groups, meetings, workshops etc.) to ensure maximum input from skaters into decision making processes, and
- utilises skater expertise throughout the entire process, beyond development and design to oversight of installation and landscaping.

## *Site Selection*

When new skate facilities are to be developed in the city in the future, sites need to be selected with care. Facilities need to be sited in locations that optimise accessibility, safety, and attractiveness, in turn maximising usage levels. However, they also need to be sited in a manner which minimises inconvenience, noise and anti-social behaviour towards neighbours, thus minimising opposition.

### *Site Selection Criteria*

Site selection criteria have been developed previously by skate facility planners in Australia, in both Melbourne (Melbourne City Council, 1998) and Brisbane (Brisbane City Council, 1997). These criteria align well with the factors suggested by respondents in the present study as important in locating new facilities. Accordingly, the following criteria have been developed drawing on these sources.

### *Criteria for Selecting Sites for New Skate Facility Development in Christchurch*

It is recommended that the following factors be considered in selecting sites for any new skate facility in Christchurch. It is also recommended that the criteria be applied when prioritising upgrades of existing facilities.

#### *1. Registered Demand*

- New skate facilities and existing ones earmarked for large-scale upgrade should be sited in areas with significant youth and child population densities.
- Facilities should be located in areas central to several child and youth populated suburbs rather than on the edge of a populated area to maximise the user catchment.
- Facilities should be sited in areas which are attractive to young people and able to attract a significant proportion of the skating community.
- Facility type should be matched to demand in that particular area, catering to skating style and facility preferences.

#### *2. Accessibility*

- Facilities should be sited on bus routes, with preference to locations accessible via several buses including those from areas with high youth populations. Preference should be given in new site developments to sites accessible via the Orbitor buses as well as city-suburb runs.
- Siting should allow easy drop-off and pick-up by car and parking should be available nearby.
- Preference should be given to sites located on cycleways or on routes which are safer for cyclists.

#### *3. Proximity to Other Facilities*

- Skate facilities should be sited in close proximity to other youth recreation facilities to provide a range of recreational opportunities, to raise the profile of facilities to that of other sports and to provide shared amenities such as drinking water, toilets, seating and shaded areas.
- Skate facilities targeted at younger skaters should be sited close to playgrounds and picnic facilities to encourage family participation.
- Facilities should be designed to minimise negative impact on existing amenities.

#### *4. Suitability of the Site*

- Sites should minimise noise disturbances to neighbours.



- Topography should allow a variety of elements to be incorporated into designs.
- There should be room for expansion of the facility.

5. *Visibility*

- 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. When prioritising facilities for upgrade, visibility should be a key criterion, with lower priority given to facilities with poor surveillance.
- Facilities should be developed in ways which minimise “places to hide” and which are aesthetically appealing.

## *Process Issues in Siting New Facilities*

Invariably in the past, Council has come up against community opposition when skate facilities have been under development. 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, concerns are largely based on a fear of the unknown, and misconceptions about who “skaties” are and their associated behaviours. However instances of nuisance towards neighbours of skate facilities have occurred in the past, enhancing opposition to skate facilities in some instances.

While opposition does appear to be reducing over time, as skateboarding and related pursuits have become more mainstream, careful planning and practice is needed from the earliest stage in the development of a skate facility to minimise opposition.

Experience in Christchurch and in other centres strongly supports a need for open and honest communication and consultation from the very early stages in considering developing a skate facility in a particular area. Affected parties are much more likely to be supportive of the development (or at least ambivalent) if they are consulted using a community development model early on. Practices that have worked well in Christchurch and other centres in the past in developing skate facilities include the following:

- The needs of all users of that park or locale need to be considered and respected.
- Efforts need to be made to forecast problems and address them before they occur, and to identify potential objectors and “win them over” at an early stage.
- Promises should be avoided until there is a good level of certainty that they can be delivered upon.
- Council’s Advocacy Team should be involved in skate facility developments to advocate for those with less voice.
- Development of trust between all parties was an important target.
- Where local objections remain strong but a site fulfills other criteria well, a temporary facility can be installed (taking care to buffer noise as much as possible) to give locals an opportunity to see first hand what it will be like having the skate facility and what issues will actually arise. This approach has worked well in the past, gaining local support for the facility while acknowledging concerns and treating these with respect.

## SECTION FOUR

### ***STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION***

#### ***Key Principles***

Underlying the Skateboarding, Inline Skating and Freestyle BMX Cycling Strategy are several key principles which fit within the broader contexts of the Youth Strategy, the Children's Policy, the Recreation and Sport Policy, and the Community Development and Social Well-Being Policy. These principles include the following:

*Skaters should be able to have reasonable access to quality facilities which are enjoyable, challenging, cater to a broad range of skills, well-maintained and which minimise risk of injury or harm.*

*Council should respect the knowledge, skills and opinions of skaters and allow opportunity for involvement in facility planning decisions.*

*Council should cater for skater needs as much as possible, through facilities designed to offer broad appeal and able to be altered and/or extended to meet changing demands.*

*Skate facilities and accessways should be designed to minimise negative impacts on non-users.*

*Participation in skate pursuits should be encouraged by Council via support of special events and promotions and of skills development workshops and groups.*

*Trends in skating should be monitored and facility planning undertaken to cater for changing needs.*

All policy and planning relating to skateboard, inline skate and freestyle BMX facilities should be undertaken within the context of these principles.

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## ***GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT***

<b>Apron:</b>	The area of flat concrete around a skating element.
<b>Bowl:</b>	Skate area set into the ground with curve sides and edges. Various styles
<b>Dropping in:</b>	Taking off from the top of a ramp or bowl.
<b>Element:</b>	Any fixture designed to be skated on.
<b>Extreme:</b>	Skate pursuits which are high risk, involving big jumps, lots of air, and a great deal of adrenalin.
<b>Half-pipe:</b>	A U-shaped ramp
<b>Grinding Elements:</b>	Fixtures which skaters slide along using the centre of their skates of skateboard. Examples include funboxes (rectangular or square concrete blocks, usually with pipe on the edges), pyramids (as above but pyramid shaped), spines (ridges), rails (pipe rails like handrails but set at different heights, and either flat or on a gradient).
<b>Inline Skating:</b>	Skating using skates with the wheels in alignment rather than arranged in pairs - “rollerblading”
<b>Over-vert:</b>	When the angle at the top of a vert ramp is more than 90° to the ground.
<b>Quarter-pipe:</b>	A ramp which has a concave running into a flat area.
<b>Ramps:</b>	Concave inclines of various types.
<b>Run:</b>	Skating along in a straight line either towards or away from a skateable element or as an activity in itself.
<b>Transitions:</b>	Curvatures and inclines on skate elements.
<b>Trick Biking / Trick BMXing:</b>	Freestyle cycling on BMX bicycles.
<b>Vert Ramps:</b>	Ramps which have a vertical drop before following a concave curve.