

## **APPENDIX A**

### **FINDINGS FROM INITIAL COUNCIL STAFF CONSULTATIONS**

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

Council staff with roles relating to skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle cycling facility planning and utilisation and youth advocacy were interviewed at the commencement of the strategy development process. Those interviewed included:

Robyn Moore, Youth Advocate;  
Kate Rathbun, Community Recreation Advisor;  
Erin Isles, Community Recreation Advisor;  
Jane Mulholland, Community Recreation Advisor;  
Vanessa Taylor, Community Recreation Advisor;  
Helen Gallagher, Community Recreation Advisor;  
Suzanne Weld, Parks Planner;  
Garry Harrow, Linwood Area Parks Officer;  
Ann Cosson, Sockburn Area Parks Officer;  
Rod Whearty, Papanui Area Parks Officer;  
Lesley Symington, Team Leader, Recreation and Arts;  
Heidi Dowall, Youth Worker;  
Gary Watson, Youth Worker

Interviews were unstructured, although they generally sought to gather the following information:

- Useful contacts from within each of the user groups;
- Information on any work looking at likely future trends in skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling participation;
- Information on any work looking at where future facilities should be based;
- Information on any work relating to the health and safety responsibilities of all potential providers of skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling facilities;

- Their perceptions regarding the needs of skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle cyclists in the city;
- Views on the existing facilities in the city, their type and location;
- Issues surrounding different skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling user groups sharing facilities;
- Issues which have arisen in the past with development and location of skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling facilities, and how these were dealt with.

### ***ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCIL STAFF***

#### ***Perceived Needs***

##### ***Meeting the Needs of All Users***

Council informants recognised that skate facilities need to cater to a broad range of users. Not only do skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle cyclists vary in age widely, with the range differing for each pursuit; they also differ widely in their level of skill. In addition, within each pursuit, different types of users exist. Some skateboarders only do street skating while others prefer ramps and bowls or a mix. Likewise, some freestyle cyclists bike not only on the street and on skate facilities but also on dirt tracks, sharing facilities with mountain bikers. While the majority of people involved in inline skating enjoy leisure skating on tracks, others follow street skating in a similar way to street skateboarding while a growing group pursue extreme skating on skate ramps, bowls and the like. For some, skateboarding and inline skating are purely a transport option, chosen as an alternative means of commuting.

In planning facilities for the future, Council staff recognised that all users need to be catered for; at present, skateboarders have had more input than other users. Catering for all styles of skaters and freestyle bikers in facility design was seen by the Parks Planner as extending skill levels of users. Creating challenging facilities offers the promise of redirecting skating from inappropriate areas, with street skating becoming boring in comparison with what can be achieved on a purpose-built facility.

#### ***Existing Facilities***

**Specific needs raised relating to existing facilities included the following:**

- Completion of phase two of Washington Park was seen as of vital importance, with the delays leading to resentment towards Council on the part of skaters and feelings of being let down. Completion of the street-skating facilities at the park was seen as important in showing street skaters that their needs were important and Council wanted to address them. Completion of phase two was seen as likely to assist in keeping street skaters away from inappropriate skating locations within the CBD.
- The lack of lighting at Washington Park was identified as the biggest reasons for phone calls to the Youth Advocate regarding skateboarding and related pursuits, from both young people and from adults.
- Lack of a convenient public telephone at Washington Park was a safety concern.
- Thomson Park is very old and in a poor state of repair yet is still in high demand, situated in an area with a high youth population and a large number of skateboarders, inliners and freestyle cyclists. Revamping this facility to make it more user-friendly and to enhance safety was seen as a high priority by the Youth Advocate and some of the Parks and Recreation staff interviewed. The Parks Planner reported that Funding was available to reseal this facility and add a small half-pipe to one side of it in the near future.
- Adequate seating at existing and new venues was desired by several Council informants, including the youth workers who patrol Washington Park on Friday nights. Encouraging non-skaters to sit and watch the activity was seen to raise the profile of the activity, while at the same time keeping non-participants in the open rather than encouraging them to congregate out of sight where they are more likely to get into trouble. Some informants believed that picnic-type facilities and play equipment near major facilities would be useful, encouraging families to stay and watch older children using the skate facilities.
- Quick clean-up of offensive graffiti was seen as important. Skate facilities were seen as needing to be intolerant of inappropriate behaviour.

### **New Facilities**

- Investigations have been made into utilisation of the fountain at QEII for a skate area. Provision of this or some other skate facility at QEII was seen as a priority by the Youth Advocate, particularly because of the high number of young families in the Parklands area.

- A skate facility in the inner city was seen as desirable by the Youth Advocate, further raising the profile and accessibility of the sports.
- Linwood Service Centre's Recreation Advisor manages a set of portable ramps made of timber. While developed for one specific special event, Helen reported that the ramps have been in very high use for a wide range of events. Plans have been developed by Andy Wylie for a more durable set of lightweight steel ramps with noise reduction buffers within them. Such equipment, transportable on a purpose-built trailer was seen by Council staff as highly desirable, and a good way to promote skateboarding and other extreme pursuits to young people and provide entertainment for youth at a broad range of special events. They also offer a good means of giving locals in a potential skateboard facility site a taste of what it might be like. Good quality, portable ramps, boxes and the like were seen as a high priority for the city. Health and Safety concerns have acted as a barrier to development of portable facilities in the past, but are seen as able to be overcome.
- The Youth Advocate mentioned that there had been calls for an inline hockey facility approximately a year ago but that little had been heard since that time.
- Because Washington Park is a no-bike zone, the Council's Parks planner saw creation of a facility for freestyle BMXing as a priority.
- The capacity to reconfigure facilities was seen as able to hold user interest for considerably longer than a static facility, which users may become bored with over time.
- Recreation staff suggested that maintenance budgets need to be set for facilities at the same time as they are being developed.

### ***Fostering Skill Development***

As well as providing facilities that meet the needs of skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle BMXers, Council was seen by Recreation staff interviewed to have an important role in fostering development of skill and encouraging participation. At present, Helen Gallagher, Linwood Service Centre, has been involved in supporting skills workshops for skateboarders, provided by local experts. These have been very popular among boarders, focusing on increasing the skill levels of skaters, while also enhancing safety by training boarders in correct fall techniques and use of protective gear. Expansion of such workshops was regarded as important by many Council staff interviewed, as was the

support of skate events designed to raise the profile of skateboarding and other extreme sports. Skills workshops and skate jams were suggested as important accompaniments to the development or renovation of any skateboard facility, increasing their usage and letting skaters know that they are valued within the city.

## **Location of Facilities**

### ***Geographical Spread***

On a broad level, the skate facilities that already exist in the city are seen as unevenly distributed. Achieving a coordinated approach city-wide to location and design of future facilities and facility upgrades was seen as a key outcome of the present strategy development process.

### ***Siting***

According to the Parks Planner responsible for skateboarding facilities, the siting of skate facilities is the key concern in their development; a facility's location dictates to a large extent its level of usage and acceptability to the community. Locating facilities away some distance from residential areas was seen as important; attempts at doing otherwise create considerable difficulty in gaining acceptance. Respecting neighbours was seen as important.

The Recreation and Arts Team Leader raised the important point that facilities need to have the capacity to expand and be altered over time to match user needs. Careful siting makes this much easier to achieve.

Siting of some existing facilities was criticised, with facilities not meeting the needs of local skaters. Staff offering such criticisms stressed the need to carefully consider the demographics of potential skate facility sites to ensure good match with users needs.

### ***Access***

In locating a new facility, social issues need to be considered, including transport; access should be as easy as possible and cover the broadest population possible. Siting on main bus routes is vital; the Youth Workers interviewed spend considerable time at Washington park and reported that a large proportion of the users access the facility by bus. The Community Relations Advisor interviewed reported that in her experience, many young people travel long distances to skate. The Sockburn-based Parks Officer stressed that this is less true for skaters in low SES areas such as Rowley.

## ***Quantity***

It was suggested by the Parks Planner, Suzanne Weld, that it would be ideal to have a) 2-3 facilities in the city of a high standard and scale similar to Washington Park and located on main bus routes, preferably near other recreational facilities, and b) other smaller secondary facilities elsewhere. The idea of putting strong effort into facilities to service the whole city was strongly supported by most Council informants, Although there were varying views regarding whether there should be 1,2 or 3 such facilities. There was a general preference for quality rather than scale for the secondary facilities. Maintaining old facilities seen as serving a narrow range of users (Wycola was cited by several informants as an example) was seen as less sensible by most than developing new, quality facilities located in areas with high access. The Hagley-Ferrymead Parks Officer believed that the city does not need a proliferation of skate facilities, with skaters already demonstrating a willingness to travel to skate venues.

## ***Value in Locating Skate Facilities Adjacent to Other Recreational Facilities***

Locating skate facilities near existing facilities catering for other recreational pursuits had been tried in Brisbane with success. This was seen as elevating skateboarding, inlining and freestyle cycling to sport status, while at the same time allowing some degree of supervision. This approach was favoured by several of the Council staff interviewed. Such an approach was seen as having the additional benefit of strengthening the usage of not only the skate facility but also the other recreational facilities in such a site by encouraging skaters to take part in the other recreational activities on site.

## ***Areas of High Need***

Areas of the city seen by Council informants as gaps in access to skateboarding facilities included Halswell - Wigram, Sumner, Eastern suburbs and Parklands/QEII.

## ***Appropriateness and Value of Existing Facilities***

The Wycola Park Facility was seen by some Council informants as underutilised because of its high level of difficulty and inaccessibility to the more advanced skaters in the city. The Cypress Gardens ramp was also seen as less accessible to skaters in general and underutilised because of this. It is a popular venue for drinking and inappropriate behaviour at night and has a large amount of litter and broken glass surrounding it as a result. While cleaned regularly, it does not

have the same feeling of safety as some of the more visible skateboarding fixtures.

While in desperate need of repair, Thomson Park was seen as well-located and popular. Other facilities in the city are well-utilised, with Washington, Waltham, Hoon Hay, Bishopdale, Belfast and Templeton seen as popular with skaters and other users.

## **Perceived Likely Future Trends**

Most staff acknowledged limited knowledge on this issue. However the following issues were raised by some informants:

### ***Street Skating***

Street skating was seen as very “now” by most of the Council staff interviewed. This type of skateboarding and inlining was seen as more faddish than ramp and bowl-type skating by several of the Council staff interviewed. However all Council staff interviewed agreed that there was a high need to provide facilities purpose designed for this pursuit, not only because street skating has many followers, but because it is this type of skating which creates real and perceived nuisance in the city. Facilities for street skaters were acknowledged as generally less expensive than the bowls, ramps and the like.

### ***Skating Events***

Skate events such as the Skate Jam held at Eastgate and the opening party held at Washington Park have been very well received by young people in the city.

### ***Related Pursuits***

Spin-off activities such as motorised skateboards were recognised as a possible future trend by the Youth Advocate, based on developments overseas. Skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle BMXing were seen to be evolving pursuits, with an increasingly diverse range of uses and users.

### ***Facility Sharing Between User Groups***

Little conflict was believed to exist between user groups at facilities, with skate park etiquette generally keeping usage orderly and fair. Most Council informants

gave examples of observing very orderly behaviour amongst all users at skate events and at skate facilities, with young people organising themselves into lines and taking turns at skating the elements. Cyclists and skaters were seen to share facilities well, with one groups standing back while the other uses a facility. Conflict was seen as more likely between inlines and skateboarders because the cultures of these two pursuits appear to have the strongest differences, with skateboarders more into the Hip Hop, grunge scene. Some informants believed that skateboarders see inline skating as less cool than boarding.

Inline skaters and freestyle cyclists who use skate park facilities were seen to prefer larger elements than boarders.

## ***Issues Relating to Development and Location of Facilities***

### ***Importance of Consultation with Potential Users***

Involving young people in the development and planning of skate areas was seen as critical to achieving end product facilities that meet the needs of users, which are well utilised and respected and which continue to do so over time.

Several Council informants acknowledged that consultation with and involvement of the potential users of several of the city's skate facilities had been inadequate in the past, contributing to inferior facilities that do not meet the needs of the potential users. Informants generally believed that to achieve success, young people from each of the relevant user/style groups needed to be actively involved in the design process from the outset. This involvement was seen as important not only at the time when siting is being considered and when designs are being drawn up but throughout the construction and landscaping phase. While recognising the importance of strong consultation, difficulties in reaching consensus were acknowledged by staff experienced in such a process, due to the broad range of facility users and skating styles.

Examples were given from Australia where Management Committees formed for specific facilities from the outset and involving skaters themselves had dealt successfully with issues relating to siting, access and behaviour of users. Codes of conduct for facility users had been successfully developed and implemented by the committees.



### ***Importance of Consultation with Affected Parties***

While attitudes and tolerances of skating are improving very slowly as the pursuits become more mainstream, developers of skate facilities invariably encounter opposition, and some staff interviewed spoke of encountering high levels of fear of the unknown and misperceptions about what a skate facility might mean for nearby property owners and residents. Consulting with residents and neighbouring businesses using a community development model at the earliest stage was seen as best practice by Council staff. Advocacy for those with less voice was seen as important role for Council, necessitating involvement of the Advocacy Team in all skate facility developments.

Most Council staff interviewed acknowledged that better consultation has been undertaken for some facilities in Christchurch than for others. In designing a new facility, staff stressed that 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. Recreational Officers interviewed also expressed the view that promises should be avoided until there is a good level of certainty that they can be delivered upon. Development of trust between all parties was an important target.

### ***Examples of Facility Development in Christchurch***

When looking for a suitable site in the Templeton area that was not isolated, Council staff door-knocked near a preferred site to find out what parents and residents thought. Parents of older children wanted the facility to be highly visible so that they could see what was happening. Concerns raised initially by parents of young children in the area who felt that their children might be intimidated by older skateboarders were acknowledged and addressed via provision of new pay equipment adjacent to the skateboard facility.

Efforts undertaken by the Area Parks Officer and the Relevant Community Recreation Advisor to get a facility accepted in St Albans Park were applauded by many of the Council staff interviewed. A temporary structure has been located in the Park following extensive consultation with local residents and other park users. This facility has changed attitudes among many potential objectors and smoothed the way for something more permanent at a later date.

### ***Funding Processes***

At present, the funding for skateboard comes out of several budgets within Council. While most funding comes from within the Parks budget, a

considerable proportion of skateboard facility funding comes from within Community Board discretionary funds. This system of funding was seen as unwieldy and lacking coordination by several informants. Independently planning facilities for each Community Board area was seen by some Council informants as running the risk of duplicating facility types, creating uneven spread city-wide for facilities, resulting in a proliferation of small-scale facilities to the detriment of high quality, larger facilities. However others felt that local officers in Council were best placed to know what their community needs were and to address these needs.

### ***Development of Expertise Within Council***

At present, a large number of Council staff are involved in the planning, design, maintenance and utilisation of skateboarding. Inline and freestyle BMXing facilities. Council staff interviewed endorsed the value of all players, with Community Relations, Recreation and parks staff all bringing expertise to the task of facility planning, development and utilisation. However many raised the point that staff are often working on such a project for the first time, and have limited opportunities to share what they have learned at the end of the project with others facing similar tasks elsewhere in the city. While this was seen as a barrier to effectively meeting user needs by several of the Recreation and Community Relations staff interviewed, one Parks Officer did not see this as a problem, believing that expertise specific to skateboard facilities was more critical in the design of the specific facility, a stage involving the City Design staff rather than Parks and Recreation personnel.

The suggestion was made by several informants that it would be useful to have a person experienced in all stages of skate facility development who had an overseeing role on all such work city-wide. This person was seen as supporting local Council staff throughout the consultation process, working in to strengthen the efforts of Parks, Recreation and Community Relations staff. While not supported by all informants, the idea was seen as a good one by the majority of Council staff interviewed.

### ***Importance of Communication Within Council Regarding Facilities Planning***

All informants stressed the need for Parks, Recreation and Community relations staff to work as a team whenever skate facility upgrades or developments are being considered. Open communication was seen to strengthen outcomes by maximising the use of information held by all parties.

### ***Need to Consider Needs of Skateboarders, Inliners and Bikes Throughout Design***

One Parks Officer stressed the valid point that users need to be considered throughout the design and not just in the skate bowls, ramps etc. Skaters dislike mud on their boards, so when surrounded by grass, paths to the fixture are important. Access ramps and the like will be skated, so these need to be designed in ways which accommodate such activity. Likewise, while landscaping is vital, this should be planned in consultation with users to ensure that it is located in ways which ensures that the garden is not skated on intentionally or accidentally, garden material is kept out of the skating area, and safety of skaters is maintained. Stakes for trees etc need to be used with care to avoid creating hazards for skaters.

## **Health and Safety**

### ***Potential Barrier to Facility Provision***

Several Council informants reported that a lot of schools were resistant to having skate facilities in their grounds because of concern as to their health and safety liabilities if injuries occurred. To date, health and safety has been addressed by the Council by attempting to ensure that facilities are as safe as possible, designed in a way to minimise injury.

### ***Signage***

Signage is provided at most Council skate facilities advising that children under 10 years of age should be supervised, that protective gear should be worn, and that people using the facilities do so at their own risk, the Council accepting no liability for injuries resulting from use of facilities. Kate Rathbun felt that the information board at Cromwell's skate facility was a good model to investigate further.

### ***Facility Sharing***

Bikes were seen by at least one staff member interviewed as a potential health and safety risk if allowed to share facilities with other users.

### ***Other Issues Raised by Council Informants***

#### ***Legislation and By-Laws***

The Council's Youth Advocate expressed concern regarding understandings of the law relating to skateboarding. She had received feedback suggesting that many skateboarders are confused as to where they are and are not allowed to skate. Obtaining information on the new legislation which defines skateboards as

vehicles is proving difficult, and as a consequence, legislation is being misinterpreted in a manner that is unfair to skaters. The Youth Advocate saw a clear need to educate skaters, law enforcers and other road users about what the law regarding skateboarding actually is. Similar education was also seen as important in relation to the Council's skateboarding bylaw.

### ***Female Participation***

Only a small number of females utilise the skate park facilities, with the majority of females at the existing facilities watching the guys rather than skateboarding, inlining or cycling on the facilities themselves. More females are involved in the leisure skating scene, most often using inline skates. Several Council informants felt that it was important to try and involve more females in skating in the skate parks. The present low participation was attributed to fear of looking vulnerable in front of male users, and intimidation by this group. Most Council staff interviewed felt that in the future, Council need to look at new ways of involving females in facilities. Recognising that young women are less likely to have access to a skateboard or skates than their male counterparts, free usage or hireage of skate gear at skate venues were seen as options worthy of further investigation. Female-only skate sessions were also seen as an option worth trialing to determine whether they encourage more active participation by females at skate parks. Council support for skill development initiatives such as Girl Corp, the female skaties club, was seen as a high priority by recreation staff.

### ***Need for Attractive Spectator Seating Areas***

Many of the females who frequent skate facilities do so to watch others skating rather than to participate themselves. Skate parks offer young women a place to meet and socialise while watching their skating peers. In addition to this group, parents, caregivers and younger siblings of younger skaters often go to skate facilities to supervise and watch children skating. However seating for spectators is currently lacking at most skate facilities. Provision of non-skateable, comfortable seating with a good view of skate fixtures and attractive landscaping was seen as a high priority for Washington Park as well as other existing and new skating venues. Encouraging people to sit and watch skating activities was seen to raise the profile of the sport and enhance safety of those using facilities.

### ***Behaviour at Skate Facilities***

Most of the Council informants stressed the fact that the vast majority of users of skating facilities are people committed to their pursuits, and respectful of other users. Unwritten codes of behaviour dictate the way users share the facility, taking turns, and moving in ways which minimise injuries. They are proud of their facilities and do their best to keep them in good order. Disturbances at

facilities are rare, and usually involve spectators rather than active users of the space. By ensuring high visibility to discourage illegitimate activity, skate venues are seen as safe places for people of all ages.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **FINDINGS FROM CONSULTATIONS WITH SKATE “EXPERTS”**

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

Following completion of interviews with Council staff and review of relevant literature, Council policy and demographic data, consultations were undertaken with 12 skateboarders, inline racers, extreme inline skaters and freestyle BMX riders, most of whom were of a more advanced skill level, and some of whom were rated by the group as the best skaters in the city. These skaters were identified either by Council staff, by skate shops, or by other skaters interviewed. While the majority were interviewed face to face by the researcher (two in pairs and the rest alone), two were interviewed by phone.

The following skaters and cyclists were consulted:

Jesse Horgan (skateboarder) - Euphoria staff member  
Adam Elford (skateboarder) - Cheapskates staff member  
Raphael Doidge (skateboarder - advanced)  
Grant Hutchinson (skateboarder / snowboarder - advanced)  
Sharon White (woman skateboarder / snowboarder)  
Kerry McKenna (woman skateboarder)  
Ricardo Vianello (extreme inliner) - Cheapskates staff member  
Nicky Wooding (world-class woman inline racer and leisure skater)  
Dana Tatom (inline skater) - Manager of Skatezone skating facility  
Nathan O'Connor (trick BMX rider - advanced)  
Jeremy Gray (trick BMX rider - advanced)  
Discussions with Andy Wylie, a skilled ramp and bowl skateboarder and facility designer were less formal and occurred over several occasions.

Interviews canvassed the following:

- Views on likely future trends for their pursuit;
- Views regarding strengths, weaknesses, numbers and type of existing facilities for their pursuit in Christchurch;
- Perceptions regarding levels of awareness of existing facilities among skaters and needs in relation to awareness;

- Views on the greatest needs of skateboarders, inline skaters and freestyle cyclists in the city;
- Issues surrounding different skateboarding, in-line skating and freestyle cycling user groups sharing facilities, opportunities for this to occur and limitations, and experiences regarding facility sharing between user groups; and
- Views on Council's processes in establishing new facilities or renovating old ones and areas for potential improvement.
- The idea of developing regional facilities for more advanced level skaters while catering for beginner - intermediate level skaters in suburban facilities was floated and discussed.

## **1. SKATEBOARDING**

### **FUTURE TRENDS**

All skateboarders interviewed believed that skateboarding had come of age as a recreational pursuit, moving beyond the fad popularity of the 1970s and 80s to become an enduring sport. Numbers of skateboarders were seen as steadily increasing through the 1990s, without the same pattern of high peaks and low troughs in participation levels characterising the pastime in earlier decades. The number of very committed skaters is steadily increasing. The following points were raised to endorse the expectation that skateboarding is "here to stay":

- Skateboarding is a demonstration sport at the next Olympics; that will add enormously skateboarding's profile, raising it to sport status.
- Skateboarding is a cross-trainer for snow-boarding, a pursuit demonstrated at the last Winter Olympics. In one skateboarder's words, "As long as there are snowboarders there'll be skateboarding". Christchurch the gateway to New Zealand's best snowboarding venues; the city hosts top level snowboarders who often practise on the city's skate facilities when access to the skifields is limited.
- The average age of skateboarders was seen by at least some of the key informants as increasing. Many skateboarders are now of child bearing / rearing age, and most skaters with children encourage them to skate too. Skateboarding is viewed as a family pastime that all can enjoy together.

- Skateboarding is enormously popular overseas, and especially in the US and Australia. With New Zealand's tradition of the Big OE, many young New Zealanders are developing their skills and enjoyment of skateboarding overseas, continuing with the pastime upon their return to New Zealand.

While still predominantly a male pastime, more and more females are getting involved in skateboarding and this trend was expected to continue by the female skaters interviewed.

In terms of style, the skaters interviewed differed in their predictions of what the future trends would be. While all acknowledged that there would always be a demand for ramp and bowl facilities with this style of skating retaining its challenge factor over time, views differed as to how important street skateboarding will be in the future. While most informants believed that this style of skating would continue to grow into the future, and especially street skating on vert., other skateboarders saw the rails / boxes style street skateboarding as more faddish, and likely to lose favour as skills are mastered. Taking all views into account, it seems that there will be an enduring demand for both ramp and bowl fixtures and street elements such as boxes and rails. However it may be useful allow for flexibility into the design of pure street-type facilities.

## **VIEWS ON EXISTING FACILITIES**

Skateboarders interviewed generally agreed that the city had average facilities. One older skateboarder felt that the Council had improved facilities greatly in recent years, recognising that skateboarding was not a fad and that facility development was money well-spent. One skater noted that whenever a new facility is developed, more skaters come "out of the woodwork".

Existing facilities were generally seen as catering best for intermediate-advanced ramp/bowl skaters and less well for extreme street skateboarders and female and very young skaters, who tend to learn better on smaller elements such as small quarter-pipes. There was a perceived shortage of vert. facilities in the city.

Most respondents felt that there were enough bowls in the city already but these needed to be maintained to a higher standard than at present.

Washington Park was seen as a good learners area and fun for more skilled skaters too- a quality facility which is very well-used and highly accessible. However the development of stage 2 was seen by all as a huge priority because at the moment, the facility does not cater for street skaters at all. Completed, the



facility would in the words of one respondent be “absolutely primo”. In developing stage, 2, several respondents commented that the Council need to work hard to “get it right”. Expertise needs to be utilised to the fullest to ensure a quality outcome, which caters to the broadest range of users possible. At present, Washington park is popular with all except street skaters, although because it gets very crowded, it can be intimidating for younger skateboarders, learners, and female skaters.

Comments made relating to other specific facilities included the following:

***Wycola:***

This facility caters to skateboarders of advanced level, but is too far out of the city to be accessible to this group. Currently, there are only about 6 skateboarders city-wide who can skate the vert. ramp properly because of its high level of difficulty. One skateboarder reported that many injuries occur on this facility because it is too hard for most to skate, not appropriate to the skill level of skateboarders who live in that area. With most skateboarders in Hornby / Hei Hei being of younger age, he felt that a mini ramp would be more appropriate in Wycola Park.

***St Albans:***

Viewed as a great learners facility because of its plywood construction. Skateboarders suffer considerably fewer injuries on well-maintained plywood ramps than on concrete, although when in disrepair, splinters can be very dangerous.

***Belfast:***

One of the most skilled skateboarders interviewed reported that this facility is out of proportion with incorrect angles used.

***Thomson Park:***

This facility was still popular in its design, but its poor state of repair made it dangerous and frustrating to use.

***Hoon Hay Park:***

The asphalt surrounding the concrete bowl needs to be raised and the hump made higher in order for the bowl to be properly used.

## **QEII:**

The loss of the facility at QEII was lamented by several of the more advanced level skateboarders interviewed. This facility was very well utilised and valued because of its medium-extreme target.

## **Awareness of Facilities**

Respondents believed that most skateboarders of teen years and older are aware of the city's skate facilities. Certainly awareness is high among the skilled skaters who share information with each other. Levels of general awareness of skate facilities will be more accurately assessed by the site interviews with skaters.

## **Needs of Skateboarders in Christchurch**

Completion of Washington Park was the most commonly expressed need for skateboarders in Christchurch. Beyond this, the following needs emerged:

- Development of a quality vert. ramp in the city. In the words of one of the more experienced skaters interviewed,  
*“A lot of kids don't think that they need it but we see that they do. Its important in getting rid of fear. (Because the curve is long)... they suffer less injury when they hit the bottom. It's a harsher fall in a basin than on a vert. Ramp. It develops skill.”*
- Development of more facilities for street skating.
- More development of skate skills workshops and schools so that facilities can be utilised fully.
- Development of skate routes in the city, and especially between Washington Park and the skate shops. Ensuring a smooth surface on these routes and awareness that encouraging skaters to use a specific route was seen to enhance safety.
- Awareness of the true implications of the recent law change defining skateboards as vehicles. While the law is quite clear that skateboards can be ridden on both roadways and footpaths provided that they are ridden carefully and with respect for pedestrians and other users, skateboarders report that they are being fined for skating on the footpath. This is a misuse of the legislation. Education is needed for law enforcers and skaters themselves regarding the new legislation.

- Addition of elements such as spines and hips into existing suburban facilities was seen by some respondents as important.
- A high level of need was identified for a good set of durable portable facilities. While wood is very skateable, it is less durable in portable fixtures, so sound-buffered steel ramps etc. were favoured. These were seen as extremely useful for:
  - raising the profile of skateboarding at special events;
  - giving local communities a taste of what a skate facility might be like in their neighbourhood before gaining their support for a permanent fixture;
  - taking out to schools for demonstrations and skills workshops; and
  - holiday programmes at Council venues and local malls.

Most skateboarders were happy with the city's existing facilities provided that these were maintained properly. The only areas seen to require additional facilities by the key informant group were Sumner and QEII.

### ***Regional Facilities***

The idea of concentrating Council effort on development of 2-3 other facilities of similar standard to Washington Park was floated and was well-received by the key informant group. QEII was seen as a promising location for such a facility. Close consultation with the skater community was seen as essential in development of truly "regional" facilities. The potential for corporate sponsorship of such regional venues was highlighted.

### ***Needs of Female Skateboarders***

One of the female skaters interviewed skates with her 4 year old son. She believes that the issues for female skaters are very similar to those of the very young. Both groups are increasing in size and are legitimate user groups to be catered for in facility design.

For many female skaters, skateboarding is a mode of transport and a pastime undertaken on driveways and other private property. Many do not currently use the city's skate facilities because they cater to too high a skill level, because they get crowded at certain times of the week and in some cases, because they are intimidated by others at the facilities.

Female skaters interviewed reported that in the early days at Washington, they were intimidated by male skaters. However this has reduced as males have seen that there a pool of skilled female skateboarders and learned to respect them. The main intimidation source in recent times has been a group of "homey girls",

youth gang-affiliates who hang around at Washington and pick fights with female skateboarders.

When asked what the needs of female skateboarders are in the city, females interviewed

suggested the following:

- More support for structured groups such as Girl Corp, a club for female skateboarders which meets weekly with the objectives of raising the level of female skating, uniting the female skating community, introducing more women to skating, and developing skills.
- More surveillance at Washington Park to keep people safe. The emphasis here was on the Park Ranger rather than lighting - this was seen by one woman as undesirable, encouraging inappropriate behaviour such as tagging.
- Female skaters tend to be far more fearful of big drops than their male counterparts. Learning to drop in on facilities even as small as Washington was seen as too hard for many female skaters. Consequently, more smaller facilities such as small quarter-pipes that girls could easily drop in from were seen as desirable. It was suggested that these could double as jumps for “the boys”.

### ***Facility Sharing Across Pursuits***

In terms of sharing facilities with skilled inliners and freestyle bikers, all skateboarders reported that this works well, with the different user groups sharing the same codes of respecting each others' right to take turns on the facility and not cutting in on someone else's run. The only problems that the informants had heard of in sharing facilities across user groups were where inexperienced people were sharing, and did not follow the etiquette for skate facilities. Similar problems were reported with skateboarders new to skate facility skating, although one respondent suggested that with inliners and bikes the danger is increased by the fact that they are harder to hear approaching than skateboards, making it harder to avoid collision.

All skateboarders interviewed felt that facilities could be safely shared between inliners, boards and bikes providing that the following occurs:

- Bikes should be limited to purpose-designed BMXs and that mountain bikes be banned from use on skate facilities. The latter damage the skate surfaces when jumped.

- Bikes should not be used at times when facilities are in high use by other users.
- Children under 10 years should not be able to ride bikes on skate facilities and those over that age should wear protective gear.

The points made above acknowledged the view of most skateboarders that bikers pose the greatest risk to themselves and others when using skate facilities; it is a very extreme pursuit.

## **FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES**

*Five of the skateboarder key informants had been involved to some degree in Council's consultation and design processes for skateboard facilities.*

While these skateboarders generally believed that Council had good intentions in the development processes of skateboard facilities, processes actually employed were often less than ideal.

All emphasised the need to involve experienced skaters right from the outset in locating facilities and designing them. Most believed that in addition, other facility user groups should be involved throughout the process. Views of skaters were seen as important not just in deciding which elements to include in a facility, but across the entire design, including inclusion and location of water fountains and toilets and importantly in landscape design and location. As two examples, inappropriate location of gardens areas too close to skate lines can compromise skater safety as well as contribute to repeated, unintentional plant damage, while use of bark for ground cover invariably leads to bark on the skate surface, increasing risk of falls. Alternatives such as plants with ground coverage habits were favoured.

Several informants believed that it would be useful to form a team of skate facility users who “know what they are doing” and could be involved from an early stage in the development and renovation processes for all facilities. They could develop the design with support from Council staff, and following its approval by Council, they could reconsult the design before it is constructed.

*Informants recognised the need to allow expertise to develop, by using the right people in design and construction of facilities, and utilising the same people to develop all facilities across the city, so that the “learning curve” develops, with each facility an improvement on the last.*

The idea of involving skaters not only in the design of skate facilities but in their management (ie. the planning of events, responses to tagging and undesirable behaviour, development of codes of behaviour and the like) as has been successfully applied in Brisbane, Australia was floated to the skate experts interviewed. All felt that this was worthy of further investigation in Christchurch, with several respondents very keen to play an active role in the management of their facilities.

## **2. INLINE SKATING**

While skateboarding involves the followers of two different styles, street and transition, there is a high degree of cross-over between the two pursuits; most skateboarders skate in both styles, as well as using their board as a means of transport. While transition skateboarding is better done using a board with larger wheels and more distance between the trucks, most skateboarders use the same board for both styles of skateboarding.

In contrast with skateboarding, inline skating is more strongly divided into style types; currently in Christchurch, the following types of inline skating exist:

- *Extreme inline skating*: These skaters share skate facilities with skateboarders, skating transitions and street skating elements such as rails, gaps and boxes. Extreme inlining is a mostly male pursuit, involving those in the teens - 20s age group.
- *Inline hockey*: The inline version of ice hockey requires large flat areas of smooth paving.
- *Leisure inlining*: Inline skating for fitness and fun on paved pathways, carparks and ball courts and indoor skate facilities such as Skatezone in Christchurch involves by far the largest number of inline skaters and a very broad age range, from preschoolers to older people, male and female.
- *Inline racing/ speed skating*: This is the modern equivalent of rollerskate racing, and falls outside the scope of the present strategy. However issues relating to training facilities for racers will be discussed.

While some skaters are involved in several inline pursuits, the equipment required for each differs. Because the styles generally involve different groups of people, leisure skating, inline hockey and extreme inlining will be discussed separately below.

### **FUTURE TRENDS**

#### ***Extreme Inlining:***

The extreme inline skater interviewed felt that this style of skating was “totally on the increase”, with street skating especially popular, and transition skating gaining favour as street skaters used Washington and started to realise how much less tiring transition skating is compared with extreme street skating.

The Manager of Christchurch’s last privately operated indoor skating facility reported that extreme inlining involving big jumps and use of rails etc. had leveled off in the last year, reflected in sales of extreme skates in the city and a result of the high level of difficulty characterising this style of skating. This view was endorsed by other respondents.

### ***Leisure Inlining:***

Internationally, leisure inline skating has followed a steady trend of increased popularity for some time. It now comprises the second-most popular recreational pursuit in South America, and is enormously popular as a leisure activity in Australia and West Coast USA and a mode of transport throughout these countries and the UK and Europe. Inline skating offers a fun means of getting around, with the same energy expenditure involved as walking.

Inline skaters interviewed believed that travel had exposed many New Zealanders to inline skating, and that popularity among adults was steadily increasing, as well as among children. The inline racer interviewed is a primary teacher. She reported that the majority of children at her school own inline skates; they offer an affordable leisure activity for children and their families, and with Christchurch’s huge areas of flat land, the city offers the ideal venue for inline skating.

Skatezone operates skills course for beginners. The manager reports heavy demand for these courses year-round, with particularly high interest from female skaters throughout adulthood. Many people are currently keen to develop enough skills to allow them to inline along paths outdoors for leisure.

### ***Inline Hockey:***

Inline hockey has been played formally in Christchurch since 1998 and the number of players has risen steadily to around 400. Formal teams operate under an Inline Hockey Association, although other casual players are also involved in inline hockey; affordable equipment is readily available.

## **VIEWS ON EXISTING FACILITIES**

### ***Extreme Inlining:***

The extreme inline skater interviewed believed that facilities for this pursuit were adequate in the city, although there was an urgent need for street-type facilities including the remaining stage of Washington Park. He was keen for more challenging facilities for advanced level inliners, although he and his peers were currently skating street features, private roofs etc which offered them the high drops and rails and big gaps which they enjoyed skating. The best places for such skating were not legitimate skate facilities, and included the hand rails by the Bridge of Remembrance and the entrances to various banks in Armagh Street.

### ***Leisure Inlining:***

Few facilities exist in Christchurch specifically to cater for the needs of leisure inliners. Only one privately operated indoor facility remains open, Skatezone in Addington. Much leisure inlining is undertaken on footpaths and in driveways.

Skating is allowed on the asphalted pathways of Hagley Park but these are shared with walkers and paths are too narrow for inline skaters to safely pass walkers. Paths do not all connect up, requiring skaters move off paths to get around the park, and infrequent sweeping means that many obstacles exist in the form of twigs and seeds from the may surrounding deciduous trees. The netball courts in Hagley Park are a favoured venue for leisure skating, despite the fact that the Netball Association bans the use of their facilities by skaters because of concerns that court markings will be damaged. Alternative flat areas of paving such as carparks and other ball courts are often difficult for inline skaters to access because of use by more legitimate users. A rollerskate club track is operated in Garbins Road, Sockburn, with the public able to pay to skate during public sessions, but this is in a poor state of repair.

Facilities for speed inlining are very lacking in the city. The extra width needed for the sweeping actions of racing inliners demand wider tracks than those in Hagley Park, forcing skaters to train on the netball courts when not otherwise in use or in private facilities such as the Go kart track on Carrs Road and Ruapuna Raceway.

### ***Inline Hockey:***



Skatezone offers the only legitimate facility for inline hockey in the city, with alternative venues being the Hagley Park netball courts and other paved ball courts.

### ***Awareness of Facilities***

Extreme inliners tend to be in contact with other followers of tat pursuit, and because of this contact, are reported to have a pretty good awareness of the good places to skate in the city, including Council skate facilities. In contrast, leisure inlining is often an individual and family-oriented pursuit, and awareness of safe, fun skating venues was seen by the informants as fairly low, especially for beginners.

### ***Needs of Inline Skaters in Christchurch***

#### ***Extreme Inlining:***

The development of street-style facilities at Washington Park was seen as the most pressing need for extreme inliners by the respondent from Cheapskates. He believed that it was this kind of stuff - big open areas, ledges off stairs and fun boxes, which people most wanted to skate. He wanted to see more difficult skating fixtures in skate parks, to push the skill level of learners<sup>1</sup>.

#### ***Leisure Inlining:***

Development of a large, open, paved area where skaters are allowed to skate and skater-friendly pathways through Hagley Park incorporating straights, curves and small inclines were viewed by the skaters interviewed as top priorities for the city. In addition, the idea of publicised “go” and “no go” skate routes on the city as used in Melbourne was favoured by the Skatezone manager. He was keen to see this concept applied to Christchurch, with special attention paid to adequate surfacing of footpaths on “go” routes, which should include on their route skate parks, skate shops and private skating facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> There appeared to be strong debate among informants over whether more difficulty, and especially more height in rails and jumps was needed. Some of the city’s most extreme skaters wanted this strongly, and argued that because they had been learners once, they knew what kids needed. In contrast, the female skaters interviewed and some of the older skaters argued strongly against this. They believed that the extreme skaters were never “average learners” (some of the informants had seen the extreme skaters develop from beginners), always having been fearless and very quick at mastering new skills. Those opposed to very high rails etc. believed that these would serve to put many learners off skating (both board and inline), either by seeming too difficult to try or by causing injury to those who do attempt them. Very challenging skateable fixtures already exist in the environment which advanced extreme skaters currently utilise, including their own private property.

### ***Inline Hockey:***

A paved outdoor inline hockey court in a central location in the city, and preferably in Hagley Park was seen as very desirable by the Skatezone manager. This would also meet the needs of leisure inliners wanting such a space to skate.

### ***Regional Facilities***

Development of both a flat area accessible to skaters and skater-friendly pathways in Hagley Park were seen to meet the needs of leisure skaters and inline hockey players in the city; both facilities were expected to be readily shared with other users. The extreme inliner interviewed was in strong agreement with the views of skateboarders on regional facilities; he believed that the Council needs to concentrate on getting Washington finished, including the development of the street facilities. Once completed, development of one or two other facilities designed to service large areas of the city by being easily accessed was regarded as a good idea.

### ***Facility Sharing Across Pursuits***

Sharing facilities with other users raised few issues for the inline skaters interviewed. Common courtesy, respecting “who was there first”, meant that most facilities were shared without problems. For leisure inliners and for inline racers in training, the narrowness of pathways in Hagley Park can be a problem when walkers or cyclists don’t hear an inliner coming from behind; inliners had to swerve onto the grass when this happens. With wider pathways, sharing facilities was seen as quite appropriate. For extreme inliners, skate parks were readily shared with skateboarders and cyclists. Difficulties only arose when young skate facility users did not follow the appropriate etiquette.

## **FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES**

All inliners interviewed were keen to be involved in consultations regarding future skate facilities; only one inliner had been involved in such processes in the past. All agreed that consultation with them from an early stage would be beneficial in developing facilities that meet the needs of all users. One skater believed that with Washington, the Council had “teased skaters by starting off with good ideas but then only following through with a wee bit of these”.

## **3. FREESTYLE BMX RIDING**

## **FUTURE TRENDS**

While riders have been doing tricks on their BMX bicycles for several years, the two riders interviewed reported that freestyle BMXing has reached a commercial level in the last 5 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.

While a lot of kids “get into it”, it is a difficult pursuit and very extreme, and as a consequence, many riders find it too hard and give up. The riders interviewed reported that there are currently only about 6 riders in Christchurch who are “fully into it”, with an average age of at least 18 years. It is a male pursuit.

## **VIEWS ON EXISTING FACILITIES**

The riders interviewed mostly ride Waltham Bowl and Washington Park, both at times when skateboarders and inliners are not using the facilities. Bikes are not permitted on Washington, and the riders interviewed tended to only go there at night.

They believed that Waltham bowl and Washington Park were good facilities for freestyle cycling, if a bit small. In terms of other facilities, they found the vert ramp too high at Wycola Park and the facility too far away for them to access.

### ***Awareness of Facilities***

Both riders reported that they had found out about the facilities in the city by talking with other riders.

### ***Needs of Freestyle BMXers in Christchurch***

When asked what the greatest needs of freestyle cyclists in the city were, they believed this was a general support for and recognition of their pursuit. At present, they are not legitimate users of Washington or other skate parks. They were keen to have legitimate access to these, but recognised that sharing facilities at the same time was hazardous for some. Many riders try and use skate facilities but without respecting the etiquette, resulting in danger to inliners and skateboarders. The riders interviewed believed that some younger, irresponsible riders were giving their pursuit a bad name.

Having access to existing skate facilities and the development of more resin-coated wooden ramps in the city were seen as priorities. Ideally, the riders wanted to have input in developing a park specific to their needs, with wooden ramps, spines and boxes but which would be shared with skaters. They reported that the transitions they enjoyed riding were the same as those which skaters enjoy.

The cyclists interviewed believed that a pay-for-use indoor facility using portable ramps would be very well-supported by cyclists and skaters alike. An old warehouse was seen as a great venue for freestyle cyclists, supported by sponsorship.

### ***Regional Facilities***

The idea of developing 2 or 3 big skate - bike facilities was well-received by the bikers interviewed. They believed that in addition to Washington, useful sites for development of larger facilities included QEII, Thomson Park and Bishopdale.

### ***Facility Sharing Across Pursuits***

The bikers interviewed agreed with the view of skater key informants that older facility users share well, and that the only problems which arose tended to involve young bikers or skaters who don't know respect when using facilities. Because bikes are not meant to use skate facilities, hostility towards them from younger skaters had been encountered.

The riders recognised that skate parks were potentially dangerous places for young riders. However they felt that bikes should be allowed to use the facilities if they followed the same codes of safety as other users<sup>2</sup>. Being legitimate users was seen to hold the potential to reduce hostility towards them from younger skaters and reduce the incidence of confrontations.

## ***FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES***

One of the cyclists interviewed had been heavily involved in consultations over the development of the Bottle Lake mountain bike tracks. While he had tried to get input into the development process for Washington, this had been

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<sup>2</sup> The issue of facility sharing was discussed with all key informants. A female skateboarder who skates with her child discussed issues surrounding young cyclists using facilities. She acknowledged that at busy times, these children were a hazard to themselves and others. While keen that bikers have access to skate facilities, she suggested that an age restriction be placed on cyclists using facilities (10 years suggested), that safety gear be compulsory for young cyclists and that cyclists have parental supervision below a certain age.

unsuccessful, with “lots of skaters involved already”. He believed that the Council was doing a good job in establishing new facilities and renovating old skate areas, but felt that a few powerful people had all the say in deciding what happened. Both cyclists were keen that Council consult with all types of users groups of facilities from an early stage.

## **APPENDIX C**

### ***FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS AT SKATE FACILITIES IN CHRISTCHURCH***

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

A component of the methodology for development of the present strategy comprised face to face interviews with facility users at a range of skate venues in the city.

#### ***METHODOLOGY***

Interviews were undertaken by a male interviewer familiar with the skate culture between 10 and 22 September 1999 and at different times of the day. Interviews were timed to include part of the school holidays.

While the target had been to undertake at least 60 interviews, this figure was not attained, with the interviewer reaching the point where repeated visits to skate venues did not identify facility users not previously interviewed. In total, 53 Skate facility users were interviewed, 18 of whom were interviewed at Washington reserve, 17 in Hagley Park in the vicinity of the netballs courts, 2 at Hoon Hay Park, 1 at Thomson Park, 7 at Waltham Park, 7 at St Albans Park and 1 at Bishopdale Park. The Cypress Gardens facility was visited on at least 3 occasions by the interviewer but no skaters were there at those times.

Efforts were made to include all user types and of all ages, and as many females as possible in the respondent sample. The respondent group interviewed reflected the make-up of the facility user groups at the times the interviewer was on site. However despite best efforts, the interview study obtained feedback from few female skaters and leisure inliners. This deficiency was addressed by the inclusion in the strategy development of a self-completion questionnaire, discussed in Appendix D.

#### ***RESULTS***

##### ***The Respondent Group***

Respondents comprised the following:

Table 1: Respondent Age, Sex and User Type

USER TYPE	Under 14 years	15-17 years	18-20 years	21-23 years	24-26 years	27-29 years	30 + years
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Skateboarder	6 male	9 male	9 male 2 female	6 male 2 female	4 male	1 male	-
Inliner	4 male	2 male	1 male 1 female	1 male 2 female	-	2 male	1 male
Trick BMXer	-	1 male	-	1 male	-	-	-

In total, the respondent group included 37 skateboarders, 14 inline skaters and 2 BMX riders. Only 5 females were interviewed.

Respondents had been skating for the following periods of time:

Table 2: Length of Time Skating

USER TYPE	One year or less	Between 1 and 2 years	3-5 years	More than 5 years
skatebdr	N=5	N=15	N=11	N=6
inliner	N=4	N=6	N=3	N=1
BMX	N=1	-	N=1	-

Skateboarders interviewed lived all over the city, while inliners tended to live in St Albans and the Ilam/Riccarton area. One BMX rider was from Opawa and the other from the central city.

Of the skateboarders interviewed, 17 reported that they were street skaters only, 11 were transition skaters only, and 9 preferred to skate both types of facility. Of the inliners interviewed, 5 were leisure skaters, 5 were extreme skaters and 4 preferred both types of skating. Both BMX riders preferred the full range of skate facilities.

### ***Elements Favoured***

When asked which kinds of elements they like to skate best, skateboarders were fairly evenly divided in favouring ramps, bowls and street-style grinding elements such as fun boxes, pyramids and manual pads. A slightly lesser group favoured rails and steps, and only 2 skateboarders reported that they liked gaps best. Of the inline skaters interviewed, 6 preferred skating on flat, smooth paved surfaces, 6 preferred vert facilities or ramps and 3 preferred extreme street skating elements. BMX riders liked both ramps and bowls.

### ***Travel***

When asked how they travel to their preferred skate facility<sup>3</sup>, 33 respondents reported that they skate or walk there, 18 drive or go in a friend's car, 10 use the bus, 2 get dropped off by car and 4 cycle. Skateboarders were less likely to skate/walk to facilities than were inliners, and were more likely to use buses or cars.

Forty-three respondents reported that they use their skateboard / skates / bike to get around town either sometimes (N=22) or a lot(N=21).

### **Feedback on Facilities**

Respondents were asked to rate Christchurch's skate facilities overall on a five-point scale. Results were as follows:

Table 3: Rating Given to Christchurch's Skate Facilities

USER TYPE	1 - Excellent	2	3 - Average	4	5 - Poor
Skatebdr	N=2	N=8	N=17	N=9	N=1
Inliner	N=2	-	N=6	N=4	N=2
BMX	-	-	N=1	N=1	-
TOTAL	N=4	N=8	N=24	N=14	N=3

The average rating for skateboarders was slightly under 3, while for inliners, the mean was slightly over 3. Overall, the mean rating given to Christchurch's skate facilities was that they are average.

To determine levels of use and awareness for existing facilities, respondents were asked how often they used each facility and if not, whether they were aware of it. Results are presented in Table 4<sup>4</sup>.

Table 4: Usage level and Awareness for Skate Venues

VENUE	Frequent use	A few visits	Not Aware
Washington	N=26	N=19	N=2
Hoon Hay	N=4	N=15	N=9
Waltham	N=10	N=23	N=8
Bishopdale	N=1	N=24	N=10
Thomson Park	N=4	N=21	N=10
Cyp. Gardens	N=5	N=13	N=27

<sup>3</sup> Respondents were asked to indicate all that apply, so totals do not match total respondent sample.

<sup>4</sup> Hagley netball Courts and Unit 9 were not included in the table but were mentioned by respondents when asked about other places they skate frequently. Accordingly, awareness was not determined.



Wycola	N=1	N=17	N=14
St Albans	N=14	N=13	N=16
Sheldon Park	N=1	N=17	N=23
Templeton	-	N=4	N=35
Skatezone	N=1	N=9	N=15
Hagley pathways	N=15	N=11	-
Hagley netball	N=14	N=3	Not Asked
Unit 9	N=3	-	Not Asked

Overall, usage was highest at Washington Park and Waltham Bowl; 85% and 62% of respondents had used these facilities. These were followed in popularity by the St Albans Ramp (51%), the Hagley pathways (49%) and Bishopdale Park and Thomson Park (47% each). Washington and Waltham were the two most popular venues for the skateboarders interviewed, and the Hagley pathways and netball courts for inliners.

Awareness levels were highest for Hagley Park and Washington Park and lowest for Templeton (a new facility) and Cypress Gardens in Bromley; for half of the facilities, more than 25 percent of respondents were unaware that they existed, identifying a strong need for publicity of skate venues to the skate community.

### ***Best Facilities***

When asked to identify the facility they liked best for skating in Christchurch, Washington was most frequently identified (N=25), with reasons for this cited as its nice transitions (N=9) and good design / surface (N=11), followed by the good mini-ramp and learner facilities (N=5) and the variety of elements (N=4). Other reasons cited were its central location, good people and wide skill level catered for.

The skate place next in popularity behind Washington was actually not a designated skate facility, the netball courts in Hagley Park. Signage of the Canterbury Netball Association in fact prohibits skating on the courts, yet despite this, the site was identified as the best place to skate by 14 respondents, 8 being skateboarders and 6 inliners; several portable fixtures have been placed in this area by skaters for their use. Reasons given for favouring the netball courts as a skate venue included its openness and roominess (N=6), quiet and relaxed atmosphere (N=5), the availability of grinding elements (N=4), its good surface (N=3), handy location (N=2) and range of things to do there (N=1).

Waltham Bowl was also identified as a favourite skate location by a high number of respondents (N=7), although with the exception of one BMXer, all respondents favouring Waltham were skateboarders; no inliners selected the bowl as best facility. Waltham was favoured for its good size and level of challenge and good steepness and ledges. One respondent liked the funbox at Waltham. Other facilities selected as favourites by respondents included:

- Thomson Park (favoured by 2 skateboarders for its low user numbers);
- St Albans (favoured by 4 respondents, being 2 skateboarders and 2 inliners who liked its challenge and good transitions);
- the paths in Hagley Park (3 inliners liked the space and the good surface); and
- Hoon Hay (1 skateboarder, because it was handy to him).

Other facilities cited as good skate areas by respondents included street locations and Unit 9, a private skate venue. Of the street venues cited, skateboarders favoured Victoria Square while the University and the Courts building in town were favoured by some inliners.

### ***Worst Facilities***

When asked to indicate the facility they liked to skate least in the city, responses covered the full range of venues listed apart from Hagley Park, suggesting the broad range of preferences among facility users. However some leaders did emerge as worst venue. Facilities most cited as least liked included the following:

- *Hoon Hay*  
Nine respondents indicated that this was their least liked facility, 8 of whom were skateboarders and 1 a BMXer. Reasons cited were its state of disrepair (N=5), its lack of street elements (N=3), poor transitions (N=3) and hassles from “homies” (N=1)
- *Thomson Park*  
Six respondents indicated that this was their least liked facility, all because they felt it was poorly designed and “boring”.
- *Washington*  
While the most popular site for skaters, it was also rated as least liked by 4 respondents, all skateboarders, who disliked the large numbers of users and the lack of street gear.
- *Bishopdale*  
Four respondents rated this as least liked, 2 because the concrete is too slippery, 1 because of the location and 2 because it had insufficient elements.

Feedback on other facilities included:

St Albans: Needs repaving and is slippery when wet;  
Waltham: Transitions too tight;  
Skatezone: insufficient elements and not challenging enough;  
Wycla: Over-vert and insufficient variety of elements;  
Bromley: Too much broken glass and too hard to skate;  
Sheldon Park: Too small.

### ***Access Gaps***

Respondents were asked if there were any areas of the city that had poor access to skate facilities. Twenty-two respondents (42%) believed that there were no areas in the city that had very poor access to facilities. Areas that were identified included the following:

Riccarton / Ilam / Fendalton (N=8)  
South Brighton / Brighton / Aranui (N=3)  
Very central city (N=3)  
Richmond (N=2)  
Shirley (N=2)  
Halswell (N=1)  
Woolston (N=1)

### ***Improvements***

Respondents interviewed were asked to suggest changes or improvements which could be made to existing facilities in the city. Responses included the following:

- More street skating elements (N=11, being 9 skateboarders, 1 BMX and 1 inliner)
- Finish stage 2 and 3 of Washington (N=10, being 9 skateboarders and one inliner)
- Better maintenance of existing facilities (N=10, 8 skateboarders, 1 BMX, 1 inliner)
- More suburban facilities (N=7, 6 skateboarders and 1 inliner)
- Bigger elements with more challenge (N=7, all skateboarders)
- Upgrade and add to existing facilities, and especially Thomson Park and Waltham (N=6, 4 skateboarders, 1 BMX, 1 inliner)
- More streets and paths that are skater-friendly (N=6, 3 inliners, 3 skateboarders)
- Designated skate routes (N=4, 3 inliners, 1 skateboarder)
- Larger open areas with ramps and vert (N=4, 3 skateboarders, 1 inline)

- Creation of one good Vert facility (N=3 skateboarders)
- Lights at Washington (N=3 skateboarders)
- Stricter action on vandalism and drugs (N=3 skateboarders)
- Dedicated BMX facility (N=2, 1 inliner, 1 BMX)
- Keep landscaping away from skate area (N=2, 1 BMX, 1 skateboarder)
- Good central facilities (N=2, 1 inline, 1 skateboarder)
- Clean Hagley pathways regularly (N=1, inliner)
- More inline events and consideration of inliners (N=1)
- More variety of facilities (N=1 skateboarder)
- Cater for all skill levels (N=1)
- Should allow BMXs but not other bikes (N=1 BMXer)
- More consultation (N=1 skateboarder)

### ***Priorities***

Respondents were presented with a range of options and reminded that the budget for skate facilities is limited. They were asked to indicate for each whether it was a high, medium or low priority. Although respondents showed a strong tendency to rate all options as high in priority level, a pattern did emerge in the results, with highest priorities seen to be, in descending order, completion of stage 2 and 3 of Washington park, Addition of street skating features to skate areas without them, and greater support into skate jams and skills workshops. Medium priority was placed on upgrading existing facilities using existing designs, creation of more small facilities in the suburbs (mini ramps etc.) and developing a set of high quality portable ramps for skate jams and skills workshops. Lowest priority was given to developing paths in Hagley park for skating on. However it is important to note in the latter finding that the interview sample under-represented leisure skaters, due to difficulties in stopping them for interviews.

### ***Workshops and Skate Jams***

Of the 53 respondents, 38 had attended a skatejam, and all but 2 reported enjoying it. Only 2 respondents had attended some sort of skills workshop, although 34 reported that they would like to take part in such workshops in the future, with a further 8 reporting that they might be interested. One respondent made the point that such workshops need better publicity than they currently receive.

### ***Useful Comments***

A number of comments were made by respondents which are useful in the strategy development process. These are summarised below.

- There needs to be more tolerance of skaters on the part of planners (N=6)
- Council needs to be true to designs (N=2)
- BMXs need their own facility (N=3)
- Council needs to talk to young people and communicate throughout facility development processes, respecting skaters' knowledge (N=2)
- Skaters need to be consulted in the design of Washington Stage 2 and 3, in order to make sure the money is well-spent on good, useable facilities.
- Portable ramps would be useful at skatejams
- A new ramp is needed at St Albans
- Council need to be aware that there are a growing number of freestyle cyclists and these people need access to Washington
- Inline skaters need safer ways to pass busy traffic zones and need wider pathways - skate lanes would be great
- Good to have variety in park designs
- Need a map showing where facilities are
- Need a wider, bigger mini ramp somewhere in the city

## **APPENDIX D**

### ***FINDINGS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF SKATERS, INLINE SKATERS AND FREESTYLE BMX RIDERS***

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

Because of the low numbers of female skaters and leisure inliners interviewed at skate facilities and at Hagley Park, a questionnaire survey was undertaken. 80 questionnaires were dropped off at four locations in the city for self completion by skaters and bikers. Thirty were dropped at Skatezone and were personally handed out to inline skaters and collected by the facility manager, and questionnaires were left on skateboard counters at three skate shops, Cheapskates (20), Euphoria (15) and Wideload. Completed questionnaires were collected by shop staff for the researcher. The questionnaire comprised a modified and slightly abbreviated version of the interview schedule. A further 10 questionnaires with questions specifically related to female skate facility users were given to a member of the Girl Corp, the ladies Skating Division for distribution to members.

#### ***METHODOLOGY***

Questionnaires were disseminated on 10 September and collected from the skate shops on Monday 20 September and from Skatezone on 28 September. In total, 36 questionnaires were completed and returned.

#### ***RESULTS***

##### ***The Respondent Group***

Respondents comprised the following:

Table 1: Respondent Age, Sex and User Type

USER TYPE	Under 14 years	15-17 years	18-20 years	21-23 years	24-26 years	27-29 years	30 + years
Skateboarder	2 male 1 fem.	4 male	2 male 1 female	3 male 1 female	-	2 male 1 female	1 male
Inliner	4 male	3 male	2 male	1 female	-	1 male	4male 2 fem
Trick BMXer	-	-	1 male	-	-	-	-

In total, the respondent group included 18 skateboarders, 17 inline skaters and 1 BMX rider. Seven females were interviewed. The respondent sample was older than that of the interview survey of skate park users.

Four respondents had been skating for less than a year, 15 for 1-2 years, 8 for 3-5 years, and 8 for more than 5 years.

As with the interview sample, Skateboarders interviewed lived all over the city, while concentrations of inliners lived in the Fendalton/Ilam/Riccarton area, South Christchurch and Christchurch East.

Of the skateboarders interviewed, 6 reported that they were street skaters only, 2 were transition skaters only, and 10 preferred to skate both types of facility. Of the inliners interviewed, 4 were leisure skaters, 4 played inline hockey and 9 played hockey and enjoyed leisure skating. No extreme skaters responded.

### ***Travel***

When asked how they travel to their preferred skate facility<sup>5</sup>, 16 respondents reported that they skate or walk there, 21 drive or go in a friend's car, 7 use the bus, 6 get dropped off by car and 6 cycle.

### ***Feedback on Facilities***

As with the interviews, questionnaire respondents were asked to rate Christchurch's skate facilities overall on a five-point scale. Results were as follows:

Table 2: Rating Given to Christchurch's Skate Facilities

USER TYPE	1 - Excellent	2	3 - Average	4	5 - Poor
Skatebdr	N=1	N=3	N=7	N=4	N=2
Inliner	-	N=3	N=11	N=1	-
BMX	-	-	N=1	N=1	-
TOTAL	N=1	N=6	N=19	N=6	N=2

Ratings given were similar to those of the interview respondents group, although inliners in the questionnaire survey were slightly more favourable of Christchurch's facilities than were those interviewed. This may reflect the fact that questionnaire respondents were not extreme inliners, as were the majority of inliners interviewed.

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents were asked to indicate all that apply, so totals do not match total respondent sample.

To determine levels of use and awareness for existing facilities, respondents were asked how often they used each facility and if not, whether they were aware of it. Results are presented in Table 3<sup>6</sup>.

Table 3: Usage level and Awareness for Skate Venues

VENUE	Frequent use	A few visits	Not Aware
Washington	N=9	N=19	-
Hoon Hay	N=2	N=10	N=5
Waltham	N=3	N=11	N=5
Bishopdale	N=3	N=14	N=2
Thomson Park	N=2	N=11	N=6
Cyp. Gardens	-	N=8	N=6
Wycola	N=2	N=8	N=4
St Albans	-	N=7	N=9
Sheldon Park	-	N=4	N=8
Templeton	N=1	N=1	N=13
Skatezone	N=14	N=3	N=2
Hagley pathways	N=10	N=10	-
Hagley netball	N=4	-	Not Asked

Overall, usage was highest at Washington Park (78%), the Hagley pathways (56%) and Bishopdale Park and Skatezone (47% each). Washington, Hoon Hay and Waltham were the two most popular venues for the skateboarders interviewed, and Skatezone and the Hagley pathways for inliners.

As for interview respondents, awareness levels were highest for Hagley Park and Washington Park and lowest for Templeton (a new facility).

### **Best Facilities**

When asked to identify the facility they liked best for skating in Christchurch, Skatezone was most frequently identified (N=13), possibly relating to the high response rate for questionnaires dropped at that location. Reasons offered for favouring Skatezone included its indoor location and smooth surface (N=9), Good hockey facility (N=6) and music (N=1).

The skate place next in popularity was Washington Reserve. This was favoured for its nice transitions (N=3), smooth surface (N=2), consistently clean toilets and

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<sup>6</sup> Hagley netball courts was not included in the table but were mentioned by respondents when asked about other places they skate frequently. Accordingly, awareness was not determined.



availability of water (N=1), helpful people (N=1), good ramp (N=1) and broad appeal (N=1).

Other facilities selected as favourites by respondents included:

- Hagley courts (favoured by 4 skateboarders for its grinding elements);
- Unit 9 (favoured by 4 skateboarders because it is indoor, smooth, with good elements);
- Waltham Bowl (2 respondents liked its shape and curves);
- Hoon Hay (1 skateboarder, because it is good for learners because they don't have top drop in);
- Bishopdale (1 inliner liked its tabletops and rails);
- Wycola and St Albans (each was favoured by one skateboarder for the ramp); and
- Hagley pathways, favoured by one skateboarder for the opportunity for long, clean runs.

Of the street venues cited, inliners favoured the university because of its large areas, ledges, rails and seats.

### ***Worst Facilities***

When asked to indicate the facility they liked to skate least in the city, responses covered most venues listed. However some leaders did emerge as worst venue. Facilities most cited as least liked included the following:

- *Washington*  
While the most popular site for skaters, it was also rated as least liked by 10 respondents, 6 of whom were inliners and 4 skateboarders. Reasons cited included a perception that it was only for skateboarders (N=3), that it was unfinished, missing street features (N=3), that there was too much "Homey bullshit" (N=2) and that it was too small (N=2).
- *Hoon Hay*  
Three respondents indicated that this was their least liked facility because of its bad shaped bowl, all of whom were skateboarders.

Feedback on other facilities included:

Skateboard facilities: unfriendly and too hard for inliners (N=3);

Skatezone: Cost (N=3)

Wycola: over-vert (N=2);

St Albans: No fun;

Waltham: Transitions too tight (N=2);  
Bishopdale: Too many kids;  
Hagley pathways: Flat.

### ***Improvements***

Respondents interviewed were asked to suggest changes or improvements which could be made to existing facilities in the city. Responses included the following:

- Finish stage 2 and 3 of Washington (N= 9 skateboarders)
- More street skating elements (N=8, being 7 skateboarders and 1 inliner)
- More streets and paths that are skater-friendly (N=7 inliners)
- Clean Hagley pathways regularly (N=6 inliners)
- More suburban facilities (N=4, 1 skateboarder and 3 inliners)
- Upgrade and add to existing facilities, and especially Thomson Park, Hoon Hay and Waltham (N=3, 2 skateboarders and 1 inliner)
- More inline events and consideration of inliner needs, “the fastest growing sport in the world” (N=4 inliners)
- More inline rinks (N=2 inliners)
- Bigger venues (N=1 skateboarder)
- Designated skate routes (N=1 inliner)
- Construction of one good vert ramp to promote skating (N=1 skateboarder)
- Enhanced safety for female skaters at Washington: Lighting, protective gear (N=2 skateboarders)
- Stricter action on vandalism, drugs and inappropriate behaviour, especially at Washington(N=2, 1 skateboarder and 1 inliner)
- More groups for female skateboarders (N=1 skateboarder)
- Keep landscaping away from skate area (N=2, 1 BMX, 1 skateboarder)
- Good central facilities rather than lots of little ones (N=1 skateboarder)
- More inline events and consideration of inliners (N=1)
- More support of skate events (N=1 inliner)
- Times for kids only at Washington (N=1 skateboarder)

### ***Priorities***

Questionnaire respondents were given the same list of options as interview respondents but were asked to rank them from highest to lowest priority. Results again put completion of Washington park at highest priority followed by addition of street features to skate areas without them and development of skater-friendly pathways in Hagley Park. Lowest priority was given to developing another facility like Washington park, developing a set of portable ramps, and path development in Hagley Park. The latter was rated as both a high

priority and a low priority by large numbers of respondents; this apparent inconsistency merely reflects the different priorities held by leisure inliners and skateboarders and extreme inliners; the pathways would clearly meet a strong need and would be well-utilised in the city, but not by skateboarders. Priorities for them are those other options highly ranked by respondents.

### ***Workshops and Skate Jams***

Of the 36 respondents, 27 had attended a skatejam, and just over half reported enjoying it. The lower rate of enjoyment compared with the interview survey of skate facility users suggests that skate jam events are less popular with older skaters, leisure inliners and skateboarders who don't frequent skate parks. Several respondents commented that they events were not for inliners and tended to be poorly organised. Nine respondents had attended some sort of skills workshop, mostly being inliners who use Skatezone. Of those who had not attended a skills workshop, 9 indicated that they would or might be interested in such activity.

## **APPENDIX E:**

### ***DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE SKATEBOARDING, INLINE SKATING AND FREESTYLE BMX STRATEGY***

Only available in hard copy.