



MAITLAND YOUTH SPACES STRATEGY



About this document

This document is the Youth Spaces Strategy for Maitland City Council. This follows the preparation of: Volume 1: Trends, Demand and Consultation Report, and a condition audit of existing skate parks in the City.

A management plan for youth spaces is provided as a separate volume (Volume 2).

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The project

This study has resulted from a resolution of Council calling for a review of skatepark facilities within the LGA. Council resolved as follows:

‘That a report be brought back to Council detailing the status of all skateparks in the Maitland LGA. The report is to include potential future locations recommended (if any) and number of seating and garbage’s provided at existing (if any)’.

Rather than deal solely with skateparks that were built in the mid 90’s early 2000’s it is recognised that needs of young people have changed overtime and that there is a trend towards providing different settings which appeal to differing age groups, genders, interests and contain a clustering of many elements and accessible to all of the community.

In summary the purpose of the study is to develop a citywide Youth Space Strategy to meet the current and future needs of the LGA.

What has been done to date

This discussion paper is the culmination of a range of consultation efforts, a demographic and demand assessment, a site and distribution analysis, condition assessment and the review of available background literature and trends. The following community consultation has been undertaken to this point:

- A press release was distributed and submissions from interested stakeholders invited
- Public workshops were held at the six skatepark locations across Maitland
- Telephone interviews were undertaken with a variety of stakeholders including retail outlets, service providers and reference groups
- An online survey was posted and advertised via the press release, posters and newspaper articles
- Comments were invited on facebook
- Submissions were invited on a project specific consultation website to obtain user preferences, current issues, future opportunities and preferences for location
- Council staff and stakeholder workshops were conducted
- All consultation mediums and methods were advertised via posters in schools, retail outlets, and libraries and at the six different skatepark locations in Maitland.
- Two documents have previously been submitted for Council staff review and comment:
 - Demand and Consultation Findings
 - Site Condition Assessment

1.2. What are youth spaces?

For the purpose of this project, youth spaces are defined as free access outdoor activity spaces designed for young people to encourage social and physical activity. These spaces cater to children over the age of 5 years and in the main, people between 10 and 24 years.

Typically they will facilitate social gathering, the conduct of one or more action sports and free access social sports facilities, such as: ball courts, hit up walls, goalposts and practice wickets.

Existing youth spaces

Maitland City Council currently has six skateparks, one recreational BMX track, one full outdoor basketball court and three half-basketball courts that have been considered youth spaces as part of this study. There is one competition BMX racing track occupied by a club in the City. This is considered to be a competition sports facility, not a youth space.

■ Maitland

Two skateparks are located in Maitland within the Maitland Sportsground Precinct and at Harold Gregson Reserve.

Image 1. Harold Gregson Reserve Skatepark



Image 2. Maitland Sportsground Half Pipe



■ Rutherford

Rutherford Youth Space has skate and scooter elements, a playground, hangout areas, art spaces, drinking fountains, bins, shade and seating.

Image 3. Rutherford Youth Space



■ Metford

This skatepark is located at the Metford Recreation Reserve co-located with a half basketball court. The sportsground has an athletics track and playing fields.

Image 4. Metford Skatepark



■ Largs

This skatepark is located at Largs Park and co-located close to two tennis courts and playing fields.

Image 5. Largs Skatepark



■ Thornton

This skatepark is located at Thornton Park with playing fields, playground and half basketball court, four tennis courts and two netball courts.

Image 6. Thornton Skatepark



■ Woodberry

This skatepark is located at a Fred Harvey Sports Centre, co-located with a BMX track, playground, a full outdoor basketball court and a tennis court. The sportsgrounds have an athletics and baseball facility and playing fields.

Image 7. Fred Harvey Sports Centre



There is also a half court basketball and "hit up wall" at Ashtonfield off Adele Crescent.

Why provide youth spaces?

Youth at risk

For adolescents, play is not only beneficial it is essential. Young children are typically catered for through the provision of children's centres and play equipment, but older children's play needs are often overlooked. Young people are often motivated by risk and challenge. They need safe places to gather and opportunities to get involved in constructive activities during idle periods. They also need positive role models, especially from within their own age group.

Many young people in Australia are increasingly at risk of developing poor life outcomes, lifestyle related illness and early death from preventable injuries. The low level of participation in physical activity amongst young people when combined with other risk factors such as psychosocial, behavioural and physiological conditions, presents an immediate and long-term challenge for communities.

Constraints to participating

Young people are typically constrained in the leisure pursuits by the cost of participating in sports, activities and clubs, the lack of transport and the lack of legitimate public places to gather and socialise. Provision of youth spaces aim to address these.

There is strong evidence to support the conclusion that participation in physical activity provides fundamental health benefits for young people.

It contributes to the development of healthy bones, muscles and joints; heart and lungs; coordination and movement, control and maintaining a healthy body weight.

Physical activity has also been associated with psychological benefits because it assists with control over symptoms of anxiety and depression, assisting with social development through self-expression and building self-confidence.

The need for supportive neighbourhoods

Sport and recreation facilities and supportive local neighbourhood settings such as outdoor youth spaces, are very important to young people in feeling they belong and providing opportunities for social connection and interaction. Young people who feel connected and have a sense of belonging are more likely to experience positive health outcomes.

As participation in physical and social activity increases, the odds of suffering from depression reduce by as much as 25%. Sport can protect against depression by boosting self-esteem and increasing social support.

Councils typically provide for younger children

In the past, Councils have widely acknowledged the benefits of providing children's play spaces for the physical and social development of young children. Older children and young people need stimulating learning environments, challenging physical activities and social interaction and engagement just as much. However open space and recreation planning have not typically provided spaces for young people other than competitive sports and fitness facilities.

A more concerted approach to planning design and management of spaces for young people is now required.

Outdoor challenges available to young people

Maitland is in the midst of change. It has grown from a regional, rural town to what is now an urban city, with large further growth in population expected over the next 20 years. Young people no longer can access the spaces they once did for the informal challenging recreation activities, and with fewer families having access to private open space; these activities need to be compensated for.

A respondent of the online survey said 'With the rising population in the Hunter region, with vast areas of new housing being developed, there is a need for a place where our young people can interact socially while feeling safe'.

■ **Key principles: Why provide youth spaces?**

1. Increased incidental physical and social activity by young people provides significant benefits including higher self-esteem, better mental health and physiological well-being, health outcomes and life skills
2. Council should acknowledge that young people need supporting and motivating environments as much as young children
3. That additional pressures and constraints associated with urbanisation warrant additional provision of free access youth spaces

2. Motivating people to use youth spaces

The nature of the target group (being young people) means that the following things are likely to be important in motivating people to participate:

- Casual / spontaneous participation opportunities
- No routine commitment
- Having the skills / confidence
- Activities that are fun, physically challenging (risky), stimulating (sound / activity) and they can do with their mates (social)
- Activities / places with minimal adult supervision or where young people can take control
- Places they and their friend's feel they belong (including girls), and can be proud of, as well as "girl-only" activities.
- Clean social spaces they can gather and be with others
- Low cost or free activities/facilities
- Central places that others are likely to drop them to ie shops, near schools, or that they can get to easily on their bike or by bus and train
- Having a friend to 'go' with or do things with, as well as the potential opportunity to make new friends there

Recreation opportunities / service levels

The provision of infrastructure should be seen as an input to a process of providing benefits through physical and social activity, rather than an end in its self.

Whilst youth spaces and facilities in Maitland are highly valued they would be used more and hence valued more if additional services or opportunities were available through them, and if they attracted a wider range of young people.

There are considerable advantages of providing programs and opportunities for young people to skate and ride BMX bikes and scooters, as well as to play sports socially outside of competition.

Action sports programs and sports activities may assist in developing patterns of physical activity and social behaviour that are of benefit long term, particularly if they are available in venues that can provide additional support.

Desirably recreational opportunities at youth spaces should include some or all of the following elements:

- **Programming**, after school and holiday programs, girl's only activities etc.
- **Events**: School competitions, local league competitions, local jams, music etc.
- **Sports development and educational activities**, clinics, and demos, especially targeting who may participate more with support (eg girls), and activities where clubs do not provide development opportunities (eg skateboarding, scooting and BMX riding).

Skill development

Not all children will learn skills necessary for sports (especially action sports) unless they or their parents are offered formal opportunities for them to learn, in the same way that children learn different sports through club development programs, come and try sessions, clinic and demonstrations.

Like other sports young people need challenges presented by competitions and exposure to role model. Some population groups such as females and people with a disability may need programs and separate sessions and other supports to develop the physical and social skills necessary to motivate them to use such spaces. In addition to developing the necessary skills to participate in the activity, action sports require some education of young participants around injury prevention as these are inherently risky activities and riders do not have the benefits of coaches and team managers to provide this, as other sports do.

Bike education programs that are run in schools are an ideal vehicle to incorporate safety education for young people about the sports of skateboarding, scooter riding, rollerblading and BMX riding, encouraging the ongoing development of skills and potentially an uptake in participation.

Young people should also have the opportunity to pursue professional interests in skateboarding and BMX riding. Skill development, coaching opportunities and exposure to competitions will be important in this regard.

Providing structured activities where leadership, parental supervision and monitoring are available (and that are still attractive to young people) is a challenge for the whole community.

Unlike in the USA, where there are a number of commercial entities providing camps and clinics and events, there are few opportunities outside public skateparks for young people to learn and develop skills in these sports. There are however, a wide range of potential partners Council can work with to develop and deliver such opportunities. These include schools, retailers, peak bodies for skateboarding and BMX, Kidsafe, professional skateboarders and BMX riders and coaches, adjacent Councils, PCYC, InDent and youth and social service agencies.

Street Wise is a program funded by the Australian Sports Commission and delivered by Skate Australia. It provides a series of coaching programs for skateboarders and inline skaters. Council could facilitate this type of program being delivered in Maitland, or other such programs at their parks.

Ongoing communication with other agencies serving young people will be an important component of the implementation of this plan, and its ongoing evolution as needs change.

Competitions

Inter-school sport is another option for incorporating action sports into the school setting, providing the opportunity to showcase skills (potentially encouraging skill development and training), whilst participating in a team environment that is not common to action sports.

Many skateparks and BMX tracks in the City, such as Woodberry, are co-located with sporting clubs and playing fields.

The location of these facilities may assist to provide opportunities for skate programs to build relationships with sporting tenants, introducing a cross-sport program, children's holiday programs incorporating the different activities, and it also provides an opportunity for occasional management presence.

It was noted during the consultation for this project that parents would be interested in helping to organize and / or run such competitions. Retail stores could also be enlisted to support any jam days by providing prizes and incentives, much like Mutts Scooter Shack has previously.

Council currently holds such events at Rutherford Youth Space, including 'Carve It Up', and the ongoing development of these events should be encouraged. The option to expand events and competitions to other youth spaces should be explored, with potential re-development of old sites, and / or development of new sites being the impetus.

Additional to the increased provision of active recreational activities, Council should look at providing more social elements in spaces for young people to gather, and the potential to incorporate music, Wi-Fi, and other support services to create these spaces as social activity hubs.

Encouraging young females to participate in physical and social activities outdoors

Between the ages of 5 and 11 years, both boys and girls have similar participation rates in sport and physical activity, however the overall participation rate for girls drops off significantly between 12 and 14 years, while the overall participation rate for boys continues to climb, albeit at a slower rate.¹

More girls than males tend to seek indoor activities and those that involve programmed or social elements, and they may be more sensitive to the comfort and cleanliness of environments. Also fewer females than males may be motivated by risk and physically challenging activities. Therefore it is unrealistic to expect the same level of participation by girls as boys in activities at outdoor youth spaces.

Where outdoor social and action sport facilities are provided girls can be encouraged to go there by ensuring there is adequate sheltered comfortable and clean places to sit, and suitable skill development, programming, staffing and scheduling of activities is provided.

¹ Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities 2009, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Some issues are consistently identified in literature as having a consistent impact on female's active leisure choices including:

- Lack of confidence
- Fragmentation of time available, due to other social or family responsibilities
- Perceptions of poor security and safety
- Poor quality facilities, or facilities designed for and monopolised by males
- Cultural norms, particularly about gender roles, clothing and interaction between the sexes
- Body image and modesty
- Social expectation about what activities are appropriate to females can also constrain their choices

What should Council do to encourage girls at youth spaces?

In order to encourage more female use of youth spaces, Council should focus on the following:

- Deliver targeting programs to females to assist more to learn and develop the skills of inline skating, scooting, skateboarding and BMX
- Provide ongoing "girl only" sessions for these actions sports
- Provide female elements in all programming, demos, clinics and competitions, music events, coaching etc.
- Encourage and promote female role models to work with girls
- Provide cleaner comfortable and well designed social spaces where girls can meet and hang out at youth spaces

- Consider organising female and mixed social sports activities at youth spaces such as 5 aside soccer, mixed netball and basketball, touch football, modified roller derby etc.

The co-location of youth spaces with other activities that encourage socialising and social connectedness with physical activity, such as gymnasiums, cafes, shopping precincts may also enhance the potential use by girls.

Better design of facilities, and having support facilities such as seating and amenities integrated into the youth space will enhance the social aspect of attending such spaces, and in turn increase use by females.

The provision of non-competitive events, such as training programs and demonstrations targeted specifically at girls to focus on the fun and social aspects of action sports should also be considered.

Initiatives such as girls-only timeslots and programs have been implemented in a range of contexts and proven to be effective in encouraging female uptake. Female-only gymnasiums and female-only group fitness classes are two examples of female only opportunities that have grown from strength to strength.

The provision of alternative activities to that of action sports is also an ideal way to encourage use of youth spaces by females, for example by incorporating music and cultural events into any programming of events at youth spaces. Such music events are supported by InDent in NSW, an organisation backed by government funding providing for safe, alcohol-free, all-age events.

■ Key principles: Motivating people to use youth spaces

1. Recreational opportunities at youth spaces should include:
 - **Programming**, such as after school and holiday programs, girls only activities
 - **Events**: School competitions, local league comps, local jams, music
 - **Sports development** and educational activities, clinics, and demos, targeting: girls, skateboarders, scooterers, BMXers
2. Council should develop partnerships with other agencies, retailers, participants, peak bodies and schools to program youth spaces
3. Additional services and programs will be required to increase use of youth spaces and participation in action sports by young females

■ Recommendations: Motivating people to use youth spaces

1. Co-locate youth spaces with support infrastructure, such as retail precincts, cafes and other social hubs
2. Integrate support facilities and amenities such as comfortable seating and shelter into the overall design of youth spaces to create a sense of belonging even if it isn't in a physically active context
3. Identify key partners and provide targeted girls-only programs and events
4. Develop annual program of activities, events, competitions and sports development activities at youth spaces in conjunction with other stakeholders, sporting clubs and other service providers
5. Incorporate alternative activities such as music activities into the programming of events at youth spaces
6. Encourage other providers to provide action sports elements in their programs i.e. after school and holiday programs, school sports, bike education programs and other girls only programs
7. Investigate the potential to run school action sport competitions and collaborate with nearby Councils to set up a local league competition across the region
8. Continue to hold events (such as 'Carve it Up' at Rutherford Youth Space) at youth spaces across Maitland
9. Investigate the potential to have Skate Australia or Australian Sports Commission endorsed programs or accredited coaches programmed at various youth spaces across Maitland

3. Current provision of youth spaces

3.1. Distribution, and type of facilities

Currently, Maitland City Council has six skateparks and associated free access outdoor basketball courts (1 full sided and 2 half courts), one BMX racing track and one recreational BMX circuit. All of which would be considered youth spaces.

Rutherford skatepark is considered a district level facility, and all other skateparks are considered to be local level facilities.

The skatepark adjacent to the remote control vehicle track in Harold Gregson Reserve in Maitland has the potential to be a citywide skatepark as a result of its size, location and accessibility, if some development of the site occurs.

Council breaks down the City into planning areas for planning purposes. Each planning area is a collection of suburbs. The following table shows the planning area and suburb that current youth spaces are located in. Map 1 shows the location of current youth spaces as well as the planning area boundaries.

The following table also identifies the catchment hierarchy of each skatepark. The table illustrates that:

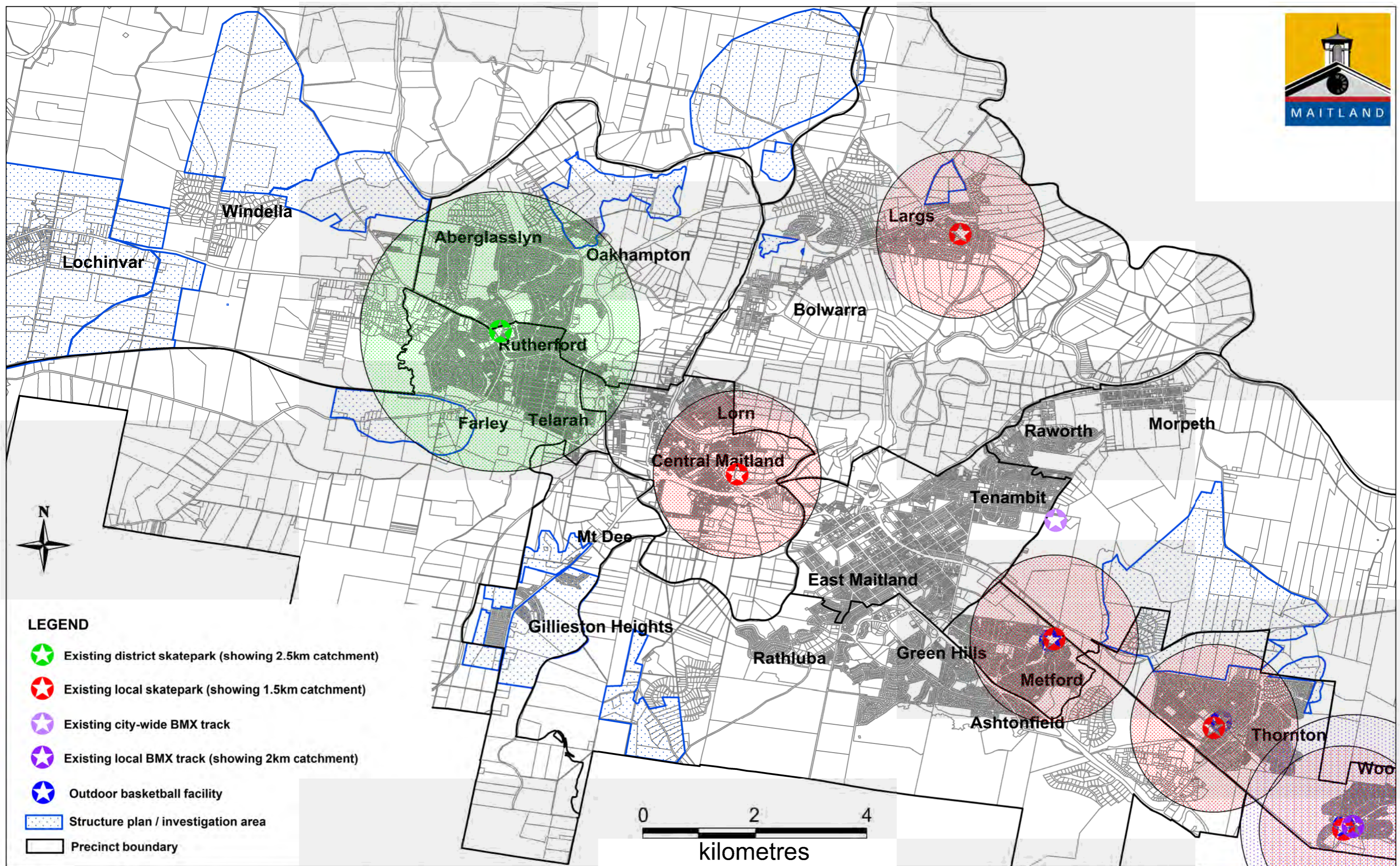
- Planning area's 3, 5, 6 and 8 currently have at least one youth space.
- If we exclude spaces with just a half basketball court/ hit up wall, six of the ten planning areas currently do not have a youth space.

- There are three youth spaces in the one planning area (planning area no. 8).

Table 1. Youth space distribution by planning area, Maitland LGA (2011)

Planning area	Suburbs	Number and type of facility	Location	Catchment Hierarchy
1	Lochinvar, North Rural	Nil		
2	Rutherford North, Aberglassyn, Oakhampton	Nil		
3	Telarah, Rutherford South, Farley	1 x skatepark	Rutherford South, adjacent to the shopping centre	District
4	Gillieston Heights, Mount Dee	Nil		
5	Central Maitland, Lorn, South Maitland	1 x skatepark and separate half pipe	Maitland Sportsground Precinct, and Harold Gregson Reserve, Central Maitland	Local (potential Citywide)
6	Bolwarra, Largs, Rural North	1 x skatepark	Largs Park, Largs	Local
7	Morpeth, Raworth, Berry Park, Rural East	Nil		
8	Metford	1 x skatepark 1 x half basketball court	Metford Recreation Reserve, Metford	Local
	Thornton	1 x skatepark 1 x half basketball court	Thornton Park	Local
	Woodberry	1 x skatepark ,1 x BMX track circuit 1 x full basketball court	Fred Harvey Sports Centre, Woodberry	Local
9	East Maitland, Tenambit	1 x BMX Racing track	Beryl Humble Sporting Complex	Citywide Sport
10	Green Hills, Ashtonfield, Rathluba	1 X ½ Basketball court and hit up wall	Off Adele Crescent Ashtonfield	Local

The following map shows the existing youth spaces in Maitland.



Maitland Youth Spaces Strategy 2011

EXISTING YOUTH SPACES AND CATCHMENT

3.2. Current gaps in provision

As shown in the previous table (table 1), there are a number of planning areas in Maitland that are currently not catered for by youth spaces. These include:

- East Maitland / Tenambit
- Raworth / Morpeth
- Greenhills / Ashtonfield / Rathluba
- Bolwarra
- Lochinvar / Windella (2 local or 1 district 30,000 people)
- Gillieston Heights / Mt Dee

Based on the 2006 Census population figures (see table 2), the planning area with the highest population (Planning area 8) – Metford, Thornton, Woodberry, has the greatest number of facilities with three skateparks, two half basketball courts and one full basketball court, and one recreational BMX track.

The planning area with the second highest population is Planning area 9 – East Maitland/Tenambit, has no youth spaces currently.²

There is a major gap in provision for BMX facilities in public space across the City, with only two BMX facilities to serve the whole City.

² Note: The competition BMX track in Tenambit is a leased club facility. It is considered a competition sports facility- not a youth space.

Range of types of facilities: overview

The majority of youth spaces currently provide skate facilities and basketball ball courts. There are limited BMX dirt jump facilities throughout the City. However some BMX tracks have been constructed on private property.

BMX is a major use of skateparks, and it needs to be thought of in the design and provision of skateparks.

Most of the skateparks in Maitland include transportable precast ramps, which provide a good basis for young skaters to learn basic skills on the flat around the ramps, and on transitions.

The local facilities are very similar in nature and there are no bowls, rails, vert ramps, spines and only a few stairs. Older skaters and freestyle BMX riders seek more challenges and specific types of elements than the current facilities offer. The limited range of facilities doesn't allow for ongoing skill development.

The lack of challenge is evident in that users are bringing their own materials and boards onto the parks to add challenges and variety.

Additionally, users have been adapting facilities provided initially for one discipline (ie skateboarding), to those more suited to and challenging for BMX. For example riders have constructed dirt access and jump ramps at the back of quarter pipes at local skateparks.

There is currently a good co-location of action sports facilities with outdoor sports throughout the City, enabling these areas to become activity 'hubs'.

Additional activities

There is the potential to enhance the range of activities that are catered for associated with action sports i.e. music, social facilities and other social ball courts (e.g. hit up walls, courts with multiple goals such as in 'rage cages' etc.).

In recent years there has been an increased demand by young people for free sports such as free running, free climbing and freestyle bike use. Most of these rely on found urban infrastructure because that is where the challenge come in the unpredictable nature of elements and combinations of 'problems as in bouldering, that require strategy and skill to solve.

There are now purpose build parkour equipment and bouldering walls on the market, which have considerable merit. These are best used in support and training for more challenging facilities close by. Should groups of enthusiast illustrate to Council demand for these structures then further consideration of climbing and free running facilities would be appropriate.

Support facilities

There is a general lack of support facilities accompanying youth spaces including:

- seats
- tables
- shelter/ shade
- bubblers
- bins, and
- sealed path access

This lack of support facilities and comfort, that is likely to impact on use by females and the general desire to be in and utilise the space.

Generally, the facilities are not well integrated with their surrounds at each site. At the Woodberry and Thornton skateparks there are a number of separate facilities (eg. tennis and netball courts) that would be used by young people if they were accessible and designed to be used together.

There is a need for professional planning and site design to ensure the future provision of youth spaces enhances sustainability, reduces risk, and ensures facilities are fit-for-purpose and likely to be well used.

Key principles: gaps in provision

1. An equitable distribution of youth spaces is required as young people need supportive and challenging spaces close to home. All planning areas should to be served by these types of spaces.
2. As concrete skateparks and dirt BMX facilities are not always compatible and may have different markets, they can be provided at different sites or in the vicinity (see selection criteria listed in Attachment 1). With limited resources BMX facilities can be provided at different sites to skateparks in order to maximise the distribution of youth facilities
3. A hierarchy of youth spaces are required across the City, that provide a range of types of facilities with specific elements to cater for different types of: action sport disciplines, age groups, proficiencies and interests

■ **Key principles: gaps in provision (cont'd)**

4. Should additional demand for free sports activities (such as climbing) become evident and user groups be identified consideration should be given to accommodating these
5. Each planning area in Maitland should provide opportunities for action sports (skate, scooter and BMX) free access full sized ball courts, and areas for social gathering. If basketball or multisport ball courts are provided in schools with community access they may not necessarily need to be provided in separate open space.

4. Demand for youth spaces

Likely participation in action sports based on population projections for 2031

Council should plan to service some 20,000 young people up to the age of 24 years by 2031. About half of those are likely to ride a bike if given the opportunity, and the other half may ride a skateboard or scooter, or inline skate. In excess of seventeen thousand young people are likely to participate in action sports in 2031, many more will want to play social court games, kick a ball or meet friends outdoors.

Age groups and activities

Projected population distribution and likely numbers of people to be catered for include those aged 5-24 years, because action sports now include participants learning the activities (as they do from the age of five) and becoming competent before they are ten.

Youth spaces should target adolescents i.e. those aged 10-24 years, as this age group is the most vulnerable, and children under 10 years are provided with and still use play equipment.

The likely number and distribution of people in the 5-24 year age group and projected participation in 2031 (based on maintaining current participation rates) are shown in the following table (table 2).

Although it appears the core participation age in skateboarding and BMX action sports is around 12-15 years, in recent years the age of skateboard riders has broadened to include much more younger (5-8 year olds), and additional older riders.

The profile of the bulk of BMX riders tends to be older, and scooter riders tend to be younger (5-9 years).³ In recent times there has been a considerable downturn in the number of inline skaters compared to other action sports, and an increase in the use of freestyle BMXers and scooter riders.

Young people typically seek a wide variety of activities, and the demand for these is likely to fluctuate based on availability of time, what their friends are doing, access to funds and transport and commercial and family influences.

Within the BMX and skateboard codes there are multiple disciplines that fluctuate in popularity. There are a large number of types of skateboards such as long boards and flex boards, which are used more for getting around or as a lifestyle accessory, and incidental street or yard use, rather than for freestyle park skating. Probably 40% of skateboard riders rarely use skateparks.

In the last two decades BMX riding has diversified from largely racing and freestyle, to include dirt jump and pump track riding. These also cross over with MTB use. Sometimes the same tracks are being used for BMX racing as well as four cross MTB (even though they have slightly different requirements).

³ @leisure article for Kidsafe NSW 2011

Using population projections and current participation rates for the key action sports, the key collections of suburbs where demand will be strong up to the 2030's are: Lochinvar / Rural North, Morpeth/ Raworth/ Berry Park/ Rural East, and

Metford/Thornton, Woodberry. Several of these locations do not have a youth space. The following table provides an indication of the demand for different action sport activities by planning area, based on current state participation rates.

Table 2. Projected demand for each youth activity by planning area, Maitland (2031)*

Precinct	Suburb	Existing Facilities	Projected population 2031	Projected youth population by age group (years) 2031			Projected participation by 2031		
			Total	5 – 14	15-24	Total youth	Skate / roller sports	BMX	Total projected (participation)
1	Lochinvar, North Rural	Nil	41,497	5,810	264	6,074	2,842	2,731	5,573
2	Rutherford North, Aberglassyn, Oakhampton	Nil (served by Rutherford Youth Space in Planning area 3 see below)	8,853	1,239	480	1,720	608	583	1,191
3	Telarah, Rutherford South, Farley	Rutherford Youth Space	12,273	1,718	840	2,558	844	808	1,652
4	Gillieston Heights, Mount Dee	Nil	4,629	648	112	761	317	305	622
5	Central Maitland, Lorn, South Maitland	Skatepark Maitland Sportsground, ½ pipe, Harold Gregson Reserve	6,090	853	517	1,370	419	401	820
6	Bolwarra, Largs, Rural	Largs Park Skatepark	6,600	924	438	1,362	454	435	888
7	Morpeth, Raworth, Berry Park, Rural East	Nil	17,236	2,413	289	2,702	1,181	1,134	2,316
8	Metford, Thornton, Woodberry	Skateparks at Metford Recreation Reserve, Thornton Park and Fred Harvey Sports Centre, Woodberry (+BMX track)	15,366	2,151	1,915	4,067	1,060	1,013	2,073
9	East Maitland, Tenambit	BMX racing track at Beryl Humble Sporting Complex, Tenambit	12,010	1,681	1,369	3,051	828	792	1,619
10	Green Hills, Ashtonfield, Rathluba	Nil	5,286	740	534	1,274	364	348	712
Total	Maitland LGA		129,840	18,178	6,760	24,938	8,916	8,550	17,466

*Projected population figures supplied by Council

Demographic profile and implications for demand

Children in families with two parents (47.1% in Maitland) where both parents are working have a higher likelihood (odds ratio 1.52⁴) of participating in sport and physical activities than those in other household types.

The high employment rate in Maitland (93.5%) indicates that there is a high proportion of families with both parents employed, and hence a high likelihood that children in those families will participate in sport or physical activities such as those found at youth spaces.

Children in 17% of Maitland's families have a low propensity to participate in sport or physical activity, as in single parent families where the parent is employed; children are less likely to participate (0.84), especially if the single parent is not working (0.51).

The City of Maitland has a low percentage of the population born overseas (7%), especially those born in non-English speaking countries (3.1%). The small proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds is unlikely to significantly impact on participation rates in sport and physical activities for Maitland's young people.

Changes from the 2001 to 2006 Census shows a slight decrease in the number of people in the lowest and medium to lowest household income groups in Maitland, and consequently an increase in the medium to highest and highest household income groups. Families with higher disposable incomes are more likely to spend money on travel and equipment to participate in sport and outdoor recreation activities such as skateboarding, and riding a BMX or scooter.

As access to youth spaces in a local neighbourhood is generally free of charge, local skateparks are potentially very important in providing accessible, low cost opportunities for young people's recreation. These may provide positive health outcomes to people who would otherwise be "at risk".

In 2006 the greatest proportion (more than 50%) of households in Maitland owned two vehicles or more. However, with limited public transport, and 73.5% of households using a car to get to work, and more than 8% of families not owning a vehicle, many households will not have access to a car. This means that transportation to and from youth spaces could be an issue for Maitland's young people.

As at the 2006 Census, 64.8% of households in Maitland had no Internet connection or a dial up connection, and 29.3% had broadband connectivity. Children who do not use a computer or the Internet at home are also less likely to participate in sport of physical activity (odds ratio of 0.55).

⁴ These figures are odds ratios indicating the likelihood of participation in sport or physical activity. A higher odds ratio indicates a greater propensity to participate in sport or physical activity. ABS The Young and the Restful – The Effects of Recreational Choices and Demographic Factors on Children's Participation in Sport. 2005

The low access to adequate Internet connections in Maitland may highlight the need to use more conventional hands-on techniques for engagement and promotion, as well as mobile phones, but also the lower propensity of Maitland's younger people to participate in activities found at youth spaces.

In 2006, Maitland overall has a SEIFA index of 992.0, ranking it the fourth least disadvantaged area in the Hunter region. This figure indicates a relatively affluent community. Woodberry is the most disadvantaged area with an index of 869.8, while Bolwarra and District is the least disadvantaged area with an index of 1083.4. This community has a number of social support facilities and agencies present, and interventions to provide whole of government approach are being planned. Rutherford is another area where social disadvantage is present, however this is a new community with a large population and the lack of social sports, infrastructure and services is a major issue.

Young people in the areas that are most disadvantaged are more likely to require interventions and opportunities to participate in physical activity as a result of the combination of barriers associated with low socio-economic status. It is these areas that should be priorities for implementation of interventions such as youth spaces.

Expressed demand

The demand and consultation findings and specific comments on each skatepark are provided in a separate volume to this report. The following key points summarise use and preferences for facilities:

1. Use of youth spaces is predominantly by scooters and BMX riders. The main parks used are Maitland skatepark and Rutherford youth spaces
2. There are opportunities for young people, especially females to be more engaged in action sports especially through events, programmed activities and in management roles
3. There are areas not well served by youth spaces and several potential new locations for these spaces
4. There is a need for alternative recreational activities, not just skateparks
5. Site upgrades and improvements are required at all existing sites
6. The condition and maintenance of youth spaces needs attention

Use of existing spaces

The online survey identified the Maitland Harold Gregson Reserve Skatepark and ½ pipe adjacent to the Maitland Sportsground as being the most used youth spaces in Maitland, closely followed by the Rutherford Youth Space.

The majority of respondents to the online survey identified that skateparks and / or sports fields are important spaces for young people. However, not many girls use skateparks and the surrounding youth spaces other than very young children with parents etc.

Participation in action sports is predominantly by males, however the consultation found that additional females should and could be encouraged to use youth spaces.

Riding a scooter was found to be the main activity undertaken at youth spaces, closely followed by 'hanging out', riding a BMX and skateboarding. In line with the increased use of scooters, it was noted that there are a lot of younger people riding scooters than in previous times.

Scooter and BMX riding were both highlighted as experiencing growth in participation with a large growth in younger competition riders between 5-12 years. Participation in skateboarding, however, has declined in comparison to the other actions sports.

BMX is also popular and growing in the adjacent City of Newcastle.

Preferences for facilities

Skateboarders identified that their preferences are for street sections and they seek a large bowl, rather than the typical 'skatepark' ramps currently provided that are dominated by BMX riders and scooters.

BMX riders who ride dirt generally don't ride skateparks. They said there is nowhere really for dirt riding in Maitland, although one person indicated some use dirt jumps on private land. Several survey respondents mentioned BMX dirt facilities and MTB trails are required. 'There are next to no mountain biking areas in Maitland. The only real areas worth riding are currently the spots of bushland surrounding Ashtonfield, Thornton, Beresfield and Walka Water Works, which are slowly being taken over by housing estates. Some trails out in the hills towards Maitland Vale area would be great'. It was noted that a recipient of nomination for the Maitland Mercury's Sportsperson of the Year was a local mountain bike rider. It was also identified that there is a large amount of use of public land for recreational motorbike use, and one motorbike club. No one identified the need for motor sports activities.

The skateparks in Maitland are used as a hangout area for young people. A parent noted that if they weren't at the park, they wouldn't have anything else to do and would potentially be out "causing trouble".

The consultation identified the demand for other free access sports facilities and competitions such as basketball, football, laser tag, paintball, putt putt golf and touch football, and identified the need for basketball courts to be in better condition and to be provided with nets.

It was noted during site visits that many of the ball court facilities associated with skate parks were locked including: tennis courts, netball courts and cricket nets, and hence were not available for use by young people.

Other suggestions made by young people for youth spaces included: areas for young people to hang out at night time, musical activities such as band days, and other action sports / outdoor adventure activities like tree-top climbing.

Users identified that an indoor skate/ youth facility would be heavily used and would attract users from neighbouring areas. One advantage of an indoor youth space, identified by several stakeholders was the ability to supervise the space and manage use, especially unintended users who cause damage at skate parks.

Transportation to youth spaces was raised as an issue as some areas in Maitland are only served by one facility, and access is not always available for young people. The areas of East Maitland and Green Hills were common areas put forward in consultation for additional provision, as there are currently no youth spaces in these areas.

■ **Key principles: Demand for youth spaces**

1. The projected demand and population projections warrant additional youth spaces in Maitland
2. Areas with families experiencing social disadvantage and limited services for young people should a priority for provision of youth spaces

5. Future provision of youth spaces

Council's current benchmarks do not specify benchmarks for youth spaces as a whole. They currently identify a benchmark for skate facilities, and one for BMX facilities. There are no benchmarks specified for free access or non-competitive outdoor sports facilities such as outdoor basketball courts, hit up walls, cricket nets or tennis courts, or provision for minor sports such as climbing etc.

In addition, it is not always possible or desirable to provide concrete skateparks and dirt BMX track together and there will not always be demand for both types of action sports facilities at the one site. For this reason the future provision of skate and BMX facilities is discussed separately below.

5.1. Skate facilities

Application of Council's 2006 provision benchmark

Based on previous Council benchmarks as stated in the City Wide Section 94 Contributions Plan (2006-2016) – Review of Open Space and Recreation, Council aims to supply one skatepark per approximately 12,000 (11,333) people.

Using this 2006 provision benchmark and based on the estimated increase of some 77,838 residents between 2006 and 2031, an additional seven (6.87) skateparks would be required to meet this population increase.

Planning areas that are estimated to require an increase of at least one more skatepark include:

- Planning area 1 – Anambah, Lochinvar, North Rural (3.66)
- Planning area 8 – Metford, Thornton, Woodberry (1.64)
- Planning area 7 – Morpeth, Raworth, Berry Park, Rural East (1.52)
- Planning area 9 – East Maitland, Tenambit (1.06), and
- Planning area 2 – Rutherford North, Aberglassyn, and Oakhampton (0.78).

The following table shows the likely number of skateparks required to meet the 2006 provision benchmark.

Table 3. Number of skateparks required to meet Council's provision benchmark (by planning area and Maitland LGA for the projected population 2031)

Plann- ing area	Suburb	Projected population 2031	Current no. of facilities	No. of facilities to meet 2006 benchmark
1	Lochinvar, North Rural, Anambah	41,497	0	3.66
2	Rutherford North, Aberglassyn, Oakhampton	8,853	0	0.78
3	Telarah, Rutherford South, Farley	12,273	1	1.08
4	Gillieston Heights, Mount Dee	4,629	0	0.41
5	Central Maitland, Lorn, South Maitland	6,090	2	0.54
6	Bolwarra, Largs, Rural North	6,600	1	0.58
7	Morpeth, Raworth, Berry Park, Rural East	17,236	0	1.52
8	Metford, Thornton, Woodberry	15,366	3	1.36
9	East Maitland, Tenambit	12,010	0	1.06
10	Green Hills, Ashtonfield, Rathluba	5,286	0	0.47

Due to the market (young people) who have limited transport, and the value of the social contact and physical activity provided by such facilities for this group, it is desirable to provide these facilities close to all residential dwellings. Hence both distance and population density criteria should be applied to ensure an adequate distribution of facilities.

In addition, to enable the provision of a diversity of different types of elements and several competition venues it is recommended that there be a hierarchy of skatepark facilities; including local, district and Citywide. The suggested hierarchy approach would be as follows:

- Local youth space – designed principally for young riders and those of a low level of proficiency to serve a catchment of 1.5km and up to 12,000 residents
- District youth space – provides for more skill levels and activities, including events. Serves a catchment of 2.5km, and approximately 12,000 residents. Located at a district centre or sports facility
- Citywide youth space – serves the entire City; provides graded challenges, multiple disciplines and events

Based on distance thresholds and population density criteria (recommended above), and the nature of settlement in each planning area it would be desirable to provide at least one facility in each planning area.

Ten to 12 youth spaces with skateparks would be desirable to cater for a population in excess of 120,000 based on Council's current benchmarks, as well as meet distance thresholds.

This includes two or three potential district facilities, one citywide and the remaining parks as local level facilities.

In locations such as in Planning area 1. Anambah Lochinvar and Rural North, it may not be practical to provide 3 local facilities to meet Council's benchmark. It may be more practical to provide one district one at a community sports hub and adjacent to a district commercial centre, where there is good public transport accessible to the whole planning area.

The development of one Citywide skate facility is recommended to ensure that the City is equipped to cater for a wide range of opportunities for skate, scooter and BMX freestyle, and competition and events. This citywide facility could be a redevelopment of the existing skatepark in Harold Gregson Reserve. This site provides: a large area of land for expansion, limited impact on the amenity of residents from noise, lights and traffic; and it is accessible by train and bus. A citywide youth space should include a wide range of elements to cater for all levels and abilities, and foster the development of riders from beginners through to the more advanced.

The following map identifies the location of desirable and priority skateparks as part of youth spaces.

Priorities for provision of youth spaces (skateparks)

A clear priority of people consulted was to improve existing facilities prior to the development of additional ones.

The condition audit found the existing youth spaces need further investment as well as further maintenance funds allocated, and new facilities should not preclude existing ones being maintained to an acceptable standard.

There will be considerable pressure to address large areas with population growth where there are no facilities as well as to address risk issues and the need for basic improvements in condition at the existing youth spaces.

Given this Council may find the investment in the recommended level of new youth spaces greater than it can afford, and provide within the same time frame as population growth, a long term desirable plan and an alternative more achievable plan may be required.

The priorities for planning should be on selecting and reserving appropriate sites for development of youth spaces, well before there is a need to construct such facilities. Desirably in new residential areas, the youth space should be provided before the houses, to avoid opposition to these.

Design priorities include:

- Redesign of existing spaces and a district and Citywide level that will attract people from a wider catchment that add diversity to the suite of opportunities available in existing parks
- Rectification of the layout and design of Woodberry BMX track and providing additional dirt BMX opportunities across the City

The priorities for development of youth spaces should be:

- where the greatest growth in population is likely to occur
- where there is strong expressed demand for the activities
- where development may be funded by others (such as in a citywide facility through government grants) or when the development is in conjunction with the development of a district centre and /or can be funded by developers
- where land is available and it is in the one ownership, so that the development can proceed inline with: the availability of funds, population growth, and when it is needed
- where there are no skate or BMX facilities in the planning area, or no BMX facilities
- areas with families experiencing social disadvantage and limited services for young people

- where the need for replacement of an asset due to poor condition or risk management brings forward a development that will be more cost effective
- where a site that meets all selection criteria can be found

Key sites where youth spaces are desirable, and that may be suitable for collaboration with developers include:

- Green Hills Shopping Centre; as a part of the retail precinct's redevelopment. This could provide a skatepark to service the East Maitland, Rathluba and Green Hills population. The developers are considering providing an indoor / outdoor youth space as a part of the shopping precinct.
- A new Thornton Skatepark in the Thornton new release area. This would replace the existing park that is in need of redevelopment on a site with potential for a district skatepark.

Considering these priorities the development of youth spaces in following areas are recommended over others proposed:

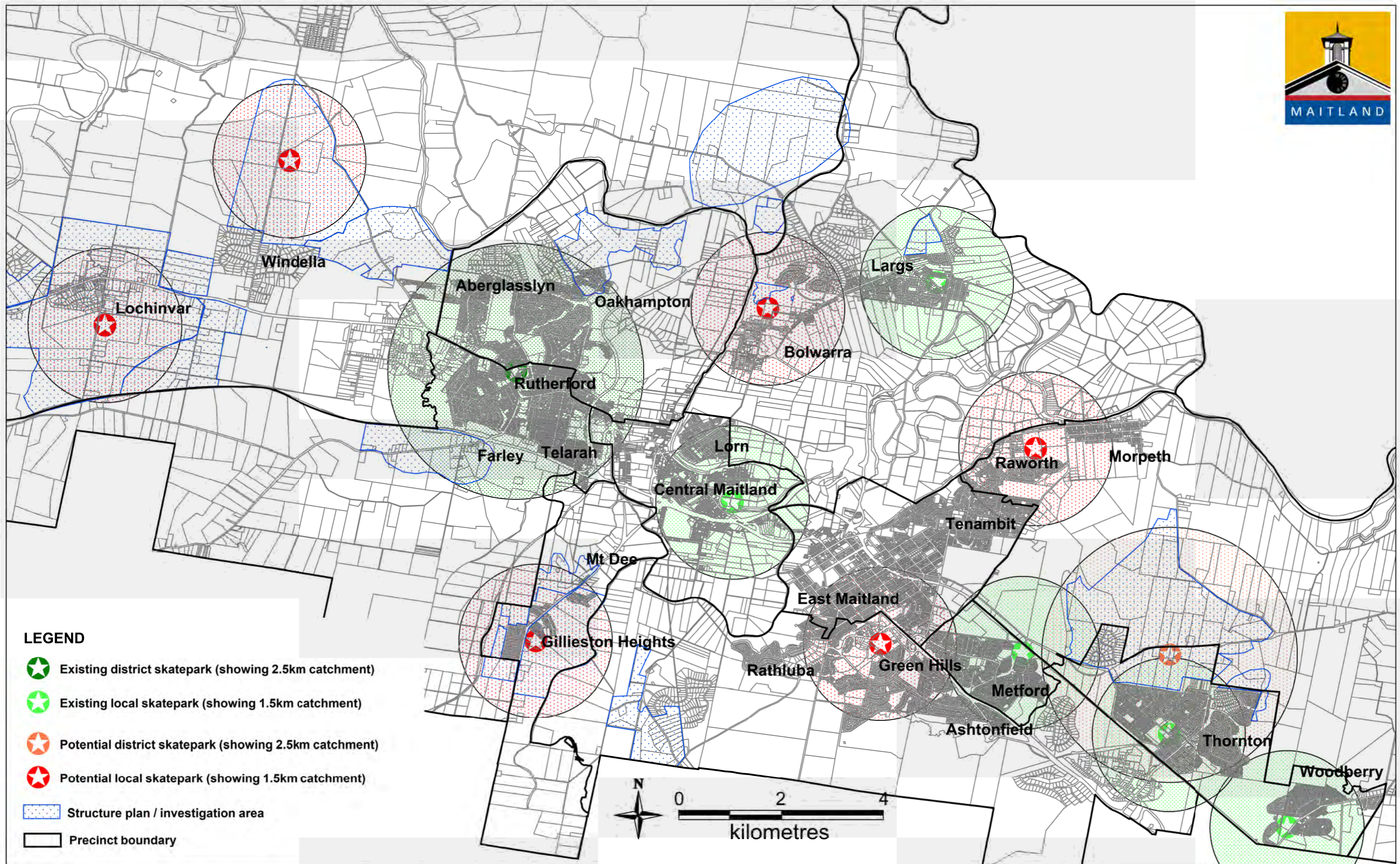
- Planning area 1. Anambah /Lochinvar, North Rural; (one district youth space. This likely to be in Anambah not Lochinvar, due to the likely availability and ownership of land).
- Planning area 9 and 10 East Maitland / Green Hills / Ashtonfield / Rathluba; (one youth space at the Green Hills Shopping Centre
- Planning area 7. Raworth / Morpeth / Tenambit; (one local youth space with a skate facility)

- Planning area 5. The upgrade of the Maitland skatepark to a citywide facility that is easy to get to and has a greater sphere of influence. This will cater for some demand from Planning area 9 where one local facility will be shared between Planning area 9. and 10.

Other youth space sites with future skate facilities that may be desirable in the long term but are not a priority at this stage are:

- Bolwarra (1 local)
- Gillieston Heights / Mt Dee (1 local)
- Rutherford North, Aberglassyn, Oakhampton (currently served by the Rutherford District Youth Space)

The following map displays the proposed new youth spaces (skate parks) recommended to cater for the potential demand in 2031. Note: BMX facilities are shown in chapter 5.2.



Maitland Youth Spaces Strategy 2011

POTENTIAL SKATEPARKS AND CATCHMENT

■ **Key principles: Youth space (skatepark) provision standards**

1. Future concrete action sport facilities must be designed to accommodate multiple freestyle activities including skateboards, scooters, BMX and other bikes
2. The provision standard for skate and BMX facilities should be considered separately as they have different site selection criteria
3. Both distance and population density provision standards need to be applied to ensure adequate distribution of youth spaces
4. A hierarchy of youth spaces should be provided including local, district and Citywide facilities
5. The desirable hierarchy of youth spaces should include the following:
 - Local: action sport facilities designed principally for young riders and those of a low level of proficiency to serve a catchment of 1.5-2km and less than 12,000 residents
 - District facilities: providing for more skill levels and activities, including events, to serve a catchment of 2.5km, and approximately 12,000 residents at key district parks or in conjunction with district centres
 - Citywide youth space: servicing the entire City (provides for graded challenges, multiple disciplines, events and competitions)

■ **Key principles: prioritising youth space developments**

The priorities for development of youth spaces should be:

- where the greatest growth in population is likely to occur
- where there is strong expressed demand for the activities
- where development may be funded by others (such as in a citywide facility through government grants) or when the development is in conjunction with the development of a district centre and /or can be funded by developers
- where land is available and it is in the one ownership, so that the development can proceed inline with: population growth, the availability of funds, and when it is needed
- where there are no skate or BMX facilities in the planning area, or no BMX facilities
- areas with families experiencing social disadvantage and limited services for young people
- where the need for replacement of an asset due to poor condition or risk management brings forward a development that will be more cost effective
- where a site that meets all selection criteria can be found
- The development of new facilities should not preclude existing ones being maintained to an acceptable standard

■ Recommendations: Skatepark provision

1. Plan to provide a range of different skate facilities within at least 10 locations by 2030
2. Where possible provide one skatepark at a youth space in each precinct
3. Provide a hierarchy of skate facilities across the City including:
 - one citywide skatepark, and
 - up to two additional district facilities
4. Redevelop Maitland skate park to a citywide skatepark
5. Provide a new skatepark to serve East Maitland / Green Hills/ Ashtonfield / Rathluba in conjunction with a developer and as part of a youth space development in Greenhills Shopping Centre
6. Provide a new district skatepark in a youth space in a new district park or centre in Thornton and decommission the existing Thornton skatepark
7. Provide a new district youth space with skate and BMX facilities in either Anambah or Lochinvar
8. Provide a local youth spaces in the Raworth / Morpeth / Tenambit planning area
9. Where resources permit provide a local youth space facility in the following suburbs:
 - Bolwarra (1 local)
 - Gillieston Heights / Mt Dee (1 local)

5.2. BMX tracks

Gaps in provision for future demand for BMX

In the Section 94 Contributions Plan (2006-2016) – Review of Open Space and Recreation, an Indicative planning benchmark of 1 BMX track per 61,517 people was recommended. This was a reflection of the current provision at the time, which was the BMX competition racing track at Tenambit. This provision standard did not however acknowledge the need for a range of different BMX codes.

Similar to the skatepark provision benchmark it is suggested that the standard reflect population density, a distance threshold and the hierarchy of BMX facilities.

It is suggested that two provision benchmarks for BMX be embraced to reflect the demand for different BMX disciplines that rely on dirt tracks: one for a club competition racing track, (not a free access BMX track as proposed in the definition of a youth space) and another for a free access dirt jumps / BMX recreational circuits such as at Woodberry.

The provision benchmark previously recommended by Council for a BMX club competition, racing track is appropriate for a citywide facility with a population of between 60,000 and 120,000.

The provision benchmark recommended for a local dirt jump / BMX recreational circuit type track should be a similar benchmark to that for a local skatepark (1 to 12,000 population)

with a slightly wider catchment threshold to acknowledge BMXers can travel further, and within 2kms.

The public BMX track in Woodberry is classified as a local level facility, whilst the club-based BMX racing track in Tenambit is classified as a citywide facility.

The skate and BMX facility may be on the same site, for example at a district reserve, and Council may wish to provide either a concrete skatepark or a recreational BMX track where a local youth space is being proposed.

The supply of local BMX facilities for the entire City is inadequate based on these criteria and the expected population increase, other than in Planning area 8 – Metford, Thornton, Woodberry.

BMX development opportunities

There is the opportunity to provide BMX facilities in areas that do and will not contain skateparks, to ensure a wide distribution of facilities and a range of activity options are provided throughout the City. The total number of locations with youth spaces can be reduced in number should there be financial constraints, if both skate and BMX facilities are provided at the same site. Providing both skate and BMX facilities on the same location however, will reduce the distribution of youth spaces and number of dwellings served.

Based on distribution issues, distance thresholds and population density, the following seven additional local level BMX tracks are desirable to meet the potential demand in 2031, assuming a BMX track in Woodberry is retained:

- Metford (where there is expressed demand to minimise the risk of dirt jump riders using the skatepark)
- Lochinvar / Windella / Anambah (where there is a large population not served by facilities and with likely sustained growth)
- Aberglassyn / Oakhampton
- Farley (where there is expressed demand)
- Telarah / Maitland (where there is expressed demand)
- Largs / Bolwarra Heights
- Rathluba (where there are few services and available land)

The following map displays the possible locations of new BMX tracks to cater for the potential demand by 2031.

Priorities for BMX

The principles for prioritising youth space development (see page 29) can and should be applied to BMX.

Considering the priorities for skate park development the following sites are considered as a priority for provision of BMX facilities.

- Metford, in Planning area 8., (where is a strong expressed demand and a risk issue that needs to be resolved)
- Lochinvar in Planning area 1; where the projected growth in population is very high and the priority skatepark development in this planning area is in Anambah
- Aberglassyn in Planning area 2., and
- Either Central Maitland or Rathluba (Planning area 5, or Planning area 10)

■ Key principles: BMX provision standards

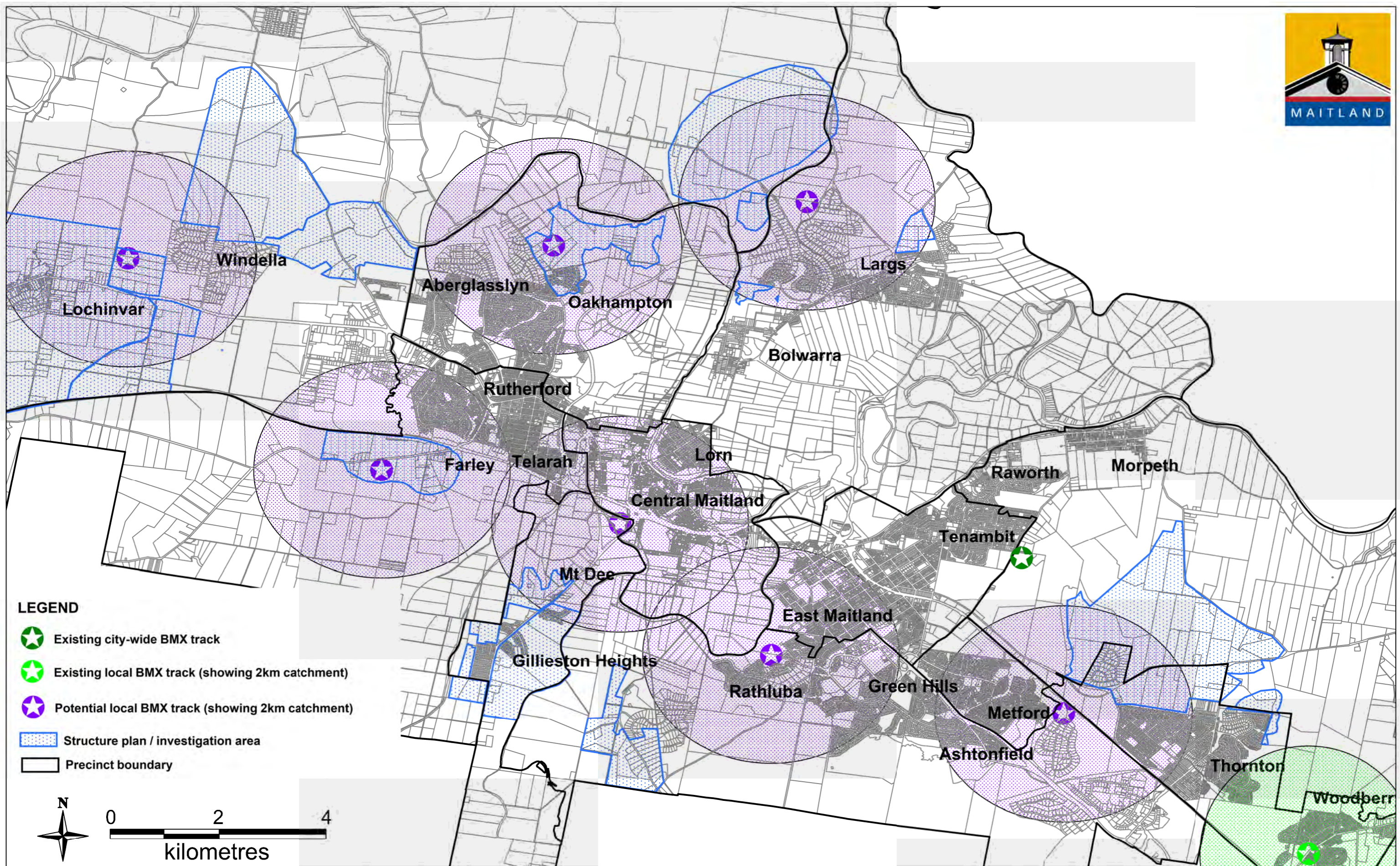
1. To achieve adequate supply and distribution of BMX facilities, the provision benchmark for a local level free access BMX facility (similar to skatepark) of 1 per 12,000 people and a 2km distance threshold should be adopted
2. The provision standard for a competition racing BMX track should be one track to serve the City for 60,000 - 120,000 persons.

■ Recommendations: Future BMX provision

1. Where funds allow provide BMX facilities at youth spaces in planning areas not currently served or proposed to be served by a skate park to maximise the spread of action sports facilities
2. Where funds allow provide seven additional local level BMX tracks to meet the potential demand by 2031, assuming a BMX track in Woodberry is retained. These may include tracks in the following locations:
 - Metford
 - Lochinvar / Windella / Anambah
 - Aberglassyn / Oakhampton
 - Farley
 - Telarah / Maitland
 - Largs / Bolwarra Heights
 - Rathluba

3. Adopt the planning, design and provision priorities as described previously
4. The priorities for provision of local free access recreational BMX facilities in the City are:
 - Metford
 - Lochinvar
 - Either Rathluba, or Maitland, and
 - Aberglassyn
5. Re-site, design and reconstruct the Woodberry BMX track to address risk management issues
6. Consider separating BMX dirt jumps from the Metford Skatepark
7. Retain one citywide BMX racing facility for the City (i.e. to cater for population of 120,000)

The following map identifies the existing BMX tracks, the potential locations for BMX facilities, as well as those that are a priority for development.



Maitland Youth Spaces Strategy 2011

POTENTIAL BMX TRACKS AND CATCHMENT

5.3. Siting and design issues

Youth space design issues

During the consultation a number of suggestions were made that would improve the design of youth spaces. These included the following:

- Lights to ride by
- Bins and graffiti removal
- Access to water
- Music facilities eg access to speakers where users could plug their iPod or phones into
- Seating / tables for users and their friends and family
- A public art / mural wall
- BBQ facilities
- Shade / shelter, trees (including fruit trees)
- Storage area for a broom, mop and where possible a mattress

A number of stakeholders identified that:

- The design of skate parks in Maitland was out of date, and they are almost identical in the nature across all spaces.
- Skateable or rideable elements such as: vert walls, bowls, bigger elements, mini's, boxes, more street elements, a foam pit, spines, and formalised dirt sections are desired

Ideally, full-size outdoor hard court ball courts rather than ½ courts should be provided, to incorporate a range of activities and types of goals on the one court, and thereby increase flexibility and the amount of use.

'Rage Cages' or similar fenced areas incorporating facilities for a basketball / netball, four square, French cricket and soccer with goals and hit up walls are one way of providing for flexible social free access activities for young people.

The site inspection identified that the existing youth spaces elements could be better designed and integrated with other adjacent sports facilities or support facilities. Few have seats, tables or shade and few have paths serving the facility directly. The relationship with dirt areas creates risks for skaters and scooters, as loose dirt migrates onto rideable surfaces.

Soil type and jump design and management are critical to the safety of BMX riders and the nature of BMX dirt jumping and track riding.

Site selection

There are different siting and design criteria for skate and dirt BMX facilities, although they can be co-located.

Facilities to be provided for skate and scooter users have a greater need to be in a more prominent, accessible and sociable than BMX facilities. The use of dirt BMX facilities tends to be more focused on the BMX activity, rather than as a sociable 'hangout' area.

BMX dirt facilities generally need more space for access and launching than skate facilities. They benefit more from shade to keep transitions in a good condition, and from the provision of dirt and water for track management.

Site selection criteria are provided in Attachment 1.

■ **Key principles: Siting and design**

1. Action sports facility design should provide graded challenges: for example multiple runs suitable for different age groups and proficiencies
2. A diverse range of elements will maximise use and flexibility over time, in each youth space as well as across the City as a whole
3. Plan for multiple disciplines of actions sports where possible: however the facility must be purpose built to suit each.
4. Action sports facilities should be served by a sealed shared path- right to the facility.
5. Youth spaces must be provided and integrated with other adjacent sports facilities, as well as facilities for social gathering
6. Hard surfaced facilities including skate parks and associated furniture should be accessible to people using wheelchairs

7. Where possible youth spaces should be located in close proximity to shopping precincts, in high use areas with good public surveillance on a public transport route, and preferably not near licensed premises
8. Seating should be designed to accommodate a number of people at one time, to aid conservation and to overlook a youth space or be integrated within the park (not like Rutherford or Largs)
9. Local and district level facilities should be co-located with service with toilets and other supports
10. Citywide level facilities should have toilets and support services unless these are co-located with existing facilities
11. A professional with experience must prepare the design of skate parks and BMX tracks in conjunction with potential users. An experienced professional, in accordance with an approved design and a materials specification, must also supervise construction.
12. One agreed client and project manager must be identified in Council to sign off planning, design, construction, maintenance of all youth spaces.
13. Council may empower users to assist with the ongoing management of these facilities on the condition that the design intent and agreed facility specifications are not altered

6. Condition and management of facilities

Condition of youth spaces

The condition and cleanliness of existing youth spaces is relatively poor. Debris, glass, graffiti and dirt on the surface of skate parks are not just an issue that affects visual appeal. Sports where users travel on small wheels at high speed need predictable, smooth, flat surfaces that are free from divots, water, slippery substances and debris.

Dirty and rough surfaces affect the equipment skateboarders and scooter riders use and hence dirty, rough and damaged surfaces are expensive and a deterrent to users.

There is a need for a program of regular inspections, cleaning and asset maintenance to reduce the risk of injury and to make the spaces more functional and appealing, and thereby to increase use. A number of ramps are at the end of their useful life and need to be replaced.

As facilities become rough and dirty less skateboard riders and scooters are likely to use them and more BMX bikes that are not so affected by them are likely to dominate. Bikes can also create additional wear especially when bikes with pegs use parks.

Some parks have arrangements with adjacent residents or shops for storing brooms, sweeping and picking up rubbish.

Most parks have issues with loose soil and debris migrating onto the surface because of either: placement adjacent to dirt embankments, or with narrow areas where grass can not be sustained, grass being worn away adjacent to the concrete surface, slopes that are subject to creep or erosion, drainage issues, or the lack of sealed paths to access the facility. If planting, slope treatment and some additional sealing of surrounds and paths was undertaken, much of the dirt on the parks would disappear.

Many of the concrete surfaces show evidence of wear and tear: chipping, cracking and peeling of concrete in vulnerable spots such as under the coping. There is evidence of inappropriate repairs using unsuitable material or not providing a consistency of smooth surfaces. All these have potential to cause injury.

A regular system of inspections, routine and regular monitoring and repairs, an asset replacement program, and careful selection of contractors is necessary to address these issues. There needs to be a consistent inspection and reporting process agreed with any contractors and staff. Maintenance staff need to be trained to identify risks in skateparks and BMX tracks and an internal system needs to be devised to respond to maintenance issues.

Asset management

An inspection service needs to be introduced similar to playgrounds; maintenance checklists need to be developed and approved by the City, and any person making the inspections should be appropriately trained.

Skate and BMX facilities, like all other assets, should have an asset management plan, and sufficient funds allocated to ensure they can be adequately maintained over their product life cycle, upgraded to respond to product demand, and replaced when they become economically and / or functionally obsolete.

The product life of outdoor skate and BMX facilities is relatively short. This is likely to be in the order of three to five years, after which modifications, additions or improvements may be necessary.

Cost planning needs to occur at the time of committing capital funds, prior to construction. Capital works budgets need to allow for improvements after three years and replacement / redevelopment after five years.

An annual maintenance budget needs to be set aside to allow for cleaning, graffiti removal, minor repairs and major cyclic maintenance of all facilities, structures, fixtures and fittings.

■ Recommendations: Condition of facilities

1. A maintenance checklist for each park should be prepared and approved by Council
2. Regular monthly (preferably fortnightly) inspections of youth spaces should be undertaken
3. Maintenance staff should be adequately trained in the inspection and upkeep of youth spaces
4. A dedicated annual maintenance budget should be set aside for each youth space, and adequate records should be kept of issues and works undertaken which in turn should be used in planning and budgeting processes
5. Maintenance and capital works expenditure should be documented by each facility (i.e. skatepark, BMX track, outdoor basketball court)
6. Cost planning should be undertaken prior to committing capital funds and construction of youth spaces
7. Capital works budgets need to allow for improvements after three or more years and replacement / redevelopment after five years for each facility

Particular management issues related to the design of youth spaces

The majority of skateparks in Maitland are made up of transportable precast ramps, which provide a good sports development opportunities and transitions for young users and beginners, although they provide limitations to older riders in terms of providing variety and challenge.

These types of elements provide some specific challenges for maintenance that need to be addressed. The precast concrete ramps present in most skate parks in Maitland are susceptible to wear, and most ramp transitions show exposed aggregate, which is rough and becomes slippery.

The installation of transition nosings is problematic in how they are being affixed to the concrete slab, materials used, and some are not flush with the slab surface or smooth. Crane holds are not always being filled – or they are being filled with poor quality concrete.

In some cases ramps placed beside each other have significant gaps between each, creating hazards for rider of scooters and skateboards.

These ramps have some design parameters such as the radius of the transition that affect how and what these ramps should be used for.

It was observed that modifications are being made to ramps for BMX use, with dirt access ramps being providing at the back of concrete skate ramps. This has potential for serious injury to riders and other users of skate parks. Additionally, the fill is not

suitable for this instance and the design of the ramps not appropriate to their location.

Modifications by users

Mattresses and extra homemade equipment are being brought onto the skate park riding surfaces and extra jumps are being added by users to the BMX track for added challenge and to enable the development of tricks. Council cannot control the condition and quality of these elements. Hence these may provide considerable risk to other users including unintended users.

Riders have an important role to play in management of youth spaces especially in BMX tracks where transitions of jumps quickly dry out and wear down. Water and soil will be required to aid this process. It is possible to allow riders to maintain the lips of jumps, however the design integrity and the condition of facilities need to be maintained as designed and constructed.

There are inherent design issues that were observed including the nature of soil used for BMX tracks, the form of jumps and facility layout not being appropriate to the code. The Woodberry track is too close to transmission line poles; is constructed from inappropriate soil; and modifications by users including digging holes and riding over the berm (which is not designed for this) is providing considerable risks to other users.

Council should ensure that designs are prepared by experienced professionals in conjunction with users, that materials are compliant, and facilities are constructed and maintained as designed. Council must remove items provided by users.

Risk management systems

The major sources of risk associated with action sports and youth spaces are:

- **collisions and falls** – from conflicts between riders of different ages and abilities, with cars on the way to facilities, incompatibility of use or nature of activities on the facilities, or rider error
- **design** – the built facilities not being consistent with the requirements of the sport for which it was built or users levels of proficiency
- **condition of the facilities** and whether this can contribute to accidents
- **lack of systems** for identifying and rectifying unacceptable risk and cleaning and managing cyclic and minor maintenance.

Council has a major role to play in all of these and whilst the safety of people using youth spaces may not be brought to Councils attention as frequently as issues associated with the use and condition of play equipment, risk management of youth spaces is no less important.

The education of users about preventing injury, and skill development are important components of risk management as is the provision of signage. Currently only Rutherford youth space and Largs skatepark have signs.

Signs need to be provided and they should include information, warnings and a disclaimer.

For youth spaces especially BMX tracks Council should introduce a code of conduct with users and advertise this to families before opening a new facility.

■ Recommendations: Risk management

1. Undertake repairs and remove all sources of soil, debris etc. on skate surfaces so a consistent cost effective level of management is achievable
2. Involve users to ensure the process of design, construction, planning, and management by users are in place
3. Implement a user code of conduct / education program of local users about the issues / benefits of correct use and maintenance
4. Deliver consistent core levels of service regarding youth spaces
5. Provide at all sites:
 - Regular cleaning
 - Regular inspection
 - Regular maintenance and repair
 - Replacement program
 - Provision of paths, table and seats, bubblers, bins, shelter or shade, and a place to store brooms, rags
 - For BMX tracks (water and a supply of soil)
 - One or more signs displaying a warning, condition of entry, a disclaimer and other information

6. Provide different levels of service standards at local, district and citywide youth spaces
7. Train all staff who are involved in the maintenance of skate / BMX parks
8. Explain to users the risks of bringing loose materials on to facilities, and remove them when observed

Planning and management of youth spaces in conjunction with users

The bulk of action sports participants believe in freedom and individualism and are unlikely to be interested in routine commitment or join a club or committee of management.

However, as the sports mature they are producing older participants who are more interested in having a say about how facilities are designed and managed and how the sports develop. They may be prepared to get involved for the benefit of a new generation of participants.

Many sports struggle to attract and retain volunteers, and this may prove true for action sports, however without the support of the industry, participants, peak bodies, Council will struggle to create good channels of communication, deliver good design and well managed management and better facilities.

Council currently utilizes advisory groups to obtain information on its skateparks. The Friends of Youth Spaces (FOYS), and Woodberry Youth Reference groups are two such advisory groups.

Council should maintain an ongoing relationship with and support of these groups, and where possible additional similar groups should be supported for the other youth spaces.

Users of the Harold Gregson Reserve skatepark identified that an ideal way to get younger people involved is through retail stores, such as Drift Bikes, as a lot of people hang out at the store and use it as a meeting place.

Council should look to utilize partnerships with retailers and promoters for ongoing marketing, promotion and liaising with youth space users.

Events, social media and personal contact were highlighted as the best options for young people's engagement. School and youth organisations, local interagency and parent involvement were also highlighted as important to enhance the relationship between Council and young people in the delivery of youth spaces.

It was also noted in consultation that skateboarding and other associated activities are a respect orientated activity; so hiring people from within the community who have already established that respect of other users is a good way to engage with young people.

Such advisory groups and industry contacts have the potential to have a specific role including:

- Monitoring and identifying issues at particular parks and solutions for them
- Monitoring demand, and minimising conflicts between skateboarding / BMX bikes / in-line skaters
- Advising on the management of facilities
- Reviewing plans for new / redevelopment of facilities
- Advising skaters about local laws, insurance, and safety issues
- Sourcing local skaters for coaching and mentoring / clinics and demonstrations
- Increasing public relations by generating news features and reporting on Council skating initiatives and ongoing advice about safety
- Establishing relationships with industry stakeholders (cycle / skate shops, promoters and event organisers) to assist in the sponsorship or organisation of events
- Liaising with other groups such as youth groups; Good Samaritans Foundation, PCYC etc.

■ **Recommendations: Planning and management in conjunction with users**

1. Facilitate the development of relationships with users of youth spaces and provide ongoing support to the development of advisory groups or contacts for each youth space
2. Facilitate relationships with the local action sports industry and the retail sector, to assist with ongoing marketing, events planning and delivery, and liaison with youth space users
3. Facilitate relationships with schools, youth organisations, local interagency and parents to target the decision-makers of young people to provide opportunities to develop action sport and injury prevention skills
4. Investigate opportunities for involvement and / or employment of respected local users especially females as champions and role models to help facilitate programs, events and the ongoing consultation with young people in Maitland

Actions for each skatepark

Specific actions to address risk issues and maintenance identified in the condition audit of each park are summarized below.

Maitland Sportsground Half Pipe

Recommended Actions:

1. Undertake minor repairs and resurfacing of the concrete where very rough, and extend one of the platforms to make it more suitable for bike use.
2. Inspect the facility regularly and clean the park and repair damage when required.
3. Install a standard information, warning and name sign.

Maitland Skate Park, Harold Gregson Reserve

This park is in a location that has the potential to become a citywide facility. It may be more cost effective and create a greater benefit for young people if redeveloped than by adding major elements to a number of local skate parks. By providing a higher level park here and increasing the sphere of influence of the park, more significant social opportunities and challenges will be provided.

Recommended Actions: Maitland Skate Park, Harold Gregson Reserve

1. Consider redeveloping this park into a citywide skate park and youth space in the medium term, and provide lighting.
2. In the short term undertake repairs to all the concrete surface, fill in wide joints, divots and all crane holds, replace the asphalt around the transition nosing,
3. Clean substances off the skateable surface that may interfere with the smooth passage of wheels or if it is sticky or slippery.
4. In future parks, use an alternative designed fence to cable fencing.
5. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately.
6. Provide a bubbler.
7. Construct seating and tables close to the riding area.
8. Sign with information warning and name sign.
9. Consider providing a path system to the park or keeping the grass mown in a path to restrict weeds from seeding and causing punctures.

Largs Skate Park, Largs Park***Recommended Actions:***

In the short term undertake repairs to concrete surfaces, fill in wide joints, divots and resurface the slabs that are rough.

1. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately.
2. Provide a bubbler.
3. Consider resurfacing the tennis court and placing a range of goal posts on the court allowing for ball games as well as skating and small-wheeled toys etc.
4. Construct seating and tables close to the riding area.
5. Provide additional information and warnings on the sign.
6. Educate riders about the risks of using loose equipment on parks and the risks of using mattresses left by others and riding at night without good lights
7. Consider providing a path system to the park or keeping the grass mown in a path to restrict weeds from seeding and causing punctures.
8. Consider adding a spine, blocks or rails and alter the roll-in to add another transitions and wider elevated platforms.
9. Encourage the ongoing involvement by riders and the recreation board in the design, management and cleaning of the park. Consider providing the riders with the space for storing a broom and cleaning clothes to enable them to clean the park or mop when wet, before use.

Rutherford Youth Space***Recommended Actions:***

1. In the short term undertake repairs to all concrete surfaces, fill in wide joints, divots and resurface the slabs of concrete that are rough.
2. Review the need to seal some extra areas of slope to maintain the slope and limit sand from entering the park.
3. Review how secure the coping is and whether this needs to be replaced.
4. Steam clean the gum and bird droppings off the park and educate users not to use gum.
5. The earth and grass should be reinstated in several locations or the slope sealed.
6. Introduce a weekly cleaning and inspection program i.e. clean on Monday, check on Friday, or share the responsibility with users.
7. The review the success of the curb into top of the narrow platform and seek advice if this needs to be altered, or replace.
8. Introduce an ongoing and regular cleaning and inspection program and repair program immediately.
9. Repaint seating and tables and continue to keep them in good repair.
10. Repair the guardrails on the ramp.

11. Provide a consistent slab around the base of the bubbler so as a person from a wheelchair can use it.
12. Edge the grass and regrade along the path, repair the erosion down the grassed bank reseed in places to minimise creep of grass and dirt onto the riding surface.
13. Determine a suitable location to store a broom on the site for use by riders and seek to arrange for riders to undertake cleaning work or link to an existing cleaning contract to keep the park in a good condition. Sweep sand from the slope and debris, plants, bird droppings, gum and graffiti off the park.
14. Consider relocating the space net and installing ball rings and additional seating, remove seats adjacent to the box in the north east to provide better space around the eastern box, and redesign the unsealed area in the both east between the path and the skate surface to add additional skate elements.
15. Provide an accessible path of travel into and along the skate park.

Metford Skate Park

Recommended Actions:

1. Replace net on basketball ring
2. Provide blocks along the edge for skaters to sit on
3. Provide a sealed path to the centre of park and returf the worn grassed areas with kikuyu
4. Paint out non skateable panels and clean off paint on skateable elements
5. Redesign access to the roll in with the dirt access. This might include a curb entry ramp that is asphalted, so that it is not seen as a jump.
6. Undertake repairs to all concrete surfaces, fill in wide joints, divots and resurface the slabs of concrete and transitions that are rough, and the edges of boxes.
7. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately.
8. Provide a bubbler.
9. Consult local people about whether the basketball court is use and add additional skate elements in this location.
10. Construct tables/seats close to the riding area.
11. Provide a sign with information, warnings and a disclaimer
12. Providing a path system to the centre of park
13. Consider making minor adjustments so the small items in the centre of the park ie add a spine, blocks etc.

14. Encourage the ongoing involvement by riders in the design and management and cleaning of the skate park. Consider providing the man across the road with a broom and cleaning clothes if he is willing to enable them to clean the park or mop when wet, before use.
15. Consider constructing a small BMX dirt jumps area in the reserve, farther enough away from the skate park to prevent dirt spilling on to the skate park. When constructed remove the dirt mound behind the ramp.

Thornton Skate Park

This park may be best redeveloped on the same site or accommodate the potential development proposed at a new district reserve in the new release area to the north, and to complement the Metford and Woodberry parks.

Recommended Actions: Thornton Skate Park

1. In the short term undertake repairs to all concrete surfaces; fill in wide joints, gaps, and divots in the concrete.
2. Remove hard material and regrade the dirt ramp and stabilise as a smooth entry in the short term
3. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately.
4. Provide a bubbler. If not available in conjunction with associated facilities
5. Consider redeveloping this site and removing the basketball court if a full sized adjacent court is available for community use. Provide a slightly bigger park here with a wider range of elements and redesign the playground as an integrated element.
6. Construct seating and tables close to the riding area.
7. Provide a sign with information, warnings and a disclaimer.
8. Provide a sealed path system to the park adjacent facilities and the roadway.
9. Encourage the ongoing involvement by riders and the recreation board in the design and management and cleaning of the skate park.
10. Consider providing the riders with the space for storing a broom and cleaning clothes to enable them to clean the park or mop when wet, before use.
11. Redesign the rear dirt entry to one ramp with an extended platform if the park remains as it is.
12. Commence planning of a new district park to serve Thornton, in the new release area.

Woodberry Skate Park

The maintenance and design of this park could be enhanced to reduce key risk issues and provide a more integrated youth space with a range of elements.

The BMX track needs to be relocated away from the pylons and skate park, and redesigned with more suitable soil. A maintenance program needs to be put in place in conjunction with the users.

Recommended Actions: Woodberry Skate Park

1. Repair concrete, gaps, divots and resurface the old ramps or replace these
2. Consider providing a slightly larger skate areas with other elements
3. Consider upgrading the playground and add other elements such as a hit up wall
4. Consider resurfacing the basketball court and providing compliant backboard ring and net
5. Returf the edge around the skate park in kikuyu
6. Ensure the skate park and BMX track are separated by non riding areas to limit the spread of debris on to the skate park
7. Relocate the BMX track in accordance with the relevant disciplines, appropriate soil type and layout, ensuring that the track is distinguishable from the surrounds, that cross riding is constrained and berms are not being ridden over
8. Determine the role that users should play in managing and maintaining the BMX track, once the nature of the disciplines have been determined
9. Provide a sealed path from the skate park to the road edge path and shops
10. Paint the non skateable elements of the skate park to control graffiti
11. Construct seating and tables close to the riding area
12. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately
13. Provide a bubbler adjacent to the seats and tables
14. Provide a sign with information, warnings and a disclaimer
15. Ensure that the tennis court has nets provided and remains open to the community

7. Summary of Recommendations

7.1. City wide recommendations

1. Motivating people to use youth spaces

1. Co-locate youth spaces with support infrastructure, such as in retail precincts, cafes and other social hubs
2. Integrate support facilities and amenities such as comfortable seating and shelter into the overall design of youth spaces to create a sense of belonging even if it isn't in a physically active context
3. Identify key partners and provide targeted girls-only programs and events
4. Develop annual program of activities, events, competitions and sports development activities at youth spaces in conjunction with other stakeholders, sporting clubs and other service providers
5. Incorporate alternative activities such as music activities into the programming of events at youth spaces
6. Encourage other providers to provide action sports elements in their programs i.e. after school and holiday programs, school sports, bike education programs and other girls only programs
7. Investigate the potential to run school action sport competitions and collaborate with nearby Councils to set up a local league competition across the region
8. Continue to hold events (such as 'Carve it Up' at Rutherford Youth Space) at youth spaces across Maitland
9. Investigate the potential to have Skate Australia or Australian Sports Commission endorsed programs or accredited coaches programmed at various youth spaces across Maitland

2. Skatepark provision

10. Plan to provide a range of different skate facilities within at least 10 locations by 2030
11. Where possible provide one skatepark at a youth space in each precinct
12. Provide a hierarchy of skate facilities across the City including:
 - one citywide skatepark, and
 - up to two additional district facilities
13. Redevelop Maitland skate park to a citywide skatepark
14. Provide a new skatepark to serve East Maitland / Green Hills/ Ashtonfield / Rathluba in conjunction with a developer and as part of a youth space development in Greenhills Shopping Centre
15. Provide a new district skatepark in a youth space in a new district park or centre in Thornton and decommission the existing Thornton skatepark
16. Provide a new district youth space with skate and BMX facilities in either Anambah or Lochinvar
17. Provide a local youth spaces in the Raworth / Morpeth / Tenambit planning area
18. Where resources permit provide a local youth space facility in the following suburbs:
 - Bolwarra (1 local)
 - Gillieston Heights / Mt Dee (1 local)
 - Recommendations: Future BMX provision
19. Where funds allow provide BMX facilities at youth spaces in planning areas not currently served or proposed to be served by a skate park to maximise the spread of action sports facilities
20. Where funds allow provide seven additional local level BMX tracks to meet the potential demand by 2031, assuming a BMX track in Woodberry is retained. These may include tracks in the following locations:
 - Metford
 - Lochinvar / Windella / Anambah
 - Aberglassyn / Oakhampton
 - Farley
 - Telarah / Maitland
 - Largs / Bolwarra Heights

2. Skatepark provision

- Rathluba
- 21. Adopt the planning, design and provision priorities as described previously
- 22. The priorities for provision of local free access recreational BMX facilities in the City are:
 - Metford
 - Lochinvar
 - Either Rathluba, or Maitland, and
 - Aberglassyn
- 23. Re-site, design and reconstruct the Woodberry BMX track to address risk management issues
- 24. Consider separating BMX dirt jumps from the Metford Skatepark
- 25. Retain one citywide BMX racing facility for the City (i.e. to cater for population of 120,000)

3. Condition of facilities

- 26. A maintenance checklist for each park should be prepared and approved by Council
- 27. Regular monthly (preferably fortnightly) inspections of youth spaces should be undertaken
- 28. Maintenance staff should be adequately trained in the inspection and upkeep of youth spaces
- 29. A dedicated annual maintenance budget should be set aside for each youth space, and adequate records should be kept of issues and works undertaken which in turn should be used in planning and budgeting processes
- 30. Maintenance and capital works expenditure should be documented by each facility (i.e. skatepark, BMX track, outdoor basketball court)
- 31. Cost planning should be undertaken prior to committing capital funds and construction of youth spaces
- 32. Capital works budgets need to allow for improvements after three or more years and replacement / redevelopment after five years for each facility

4. Risk management

- 33. Undertake repairs and remove all sources of soil, debris etc. on skate surfaces so a consistent cost effective level of management is achievable
- 34. Involve users to ensure the process of design, construction, planning, and management by users are in place
- 35. Implement a user code of conduct / education program of local users about the issues / benefits of correct use and maintenance
- 36. Deliver consistent core levels of service regarding youth spaces
- 37. Provide at all sites:
 - Regular cleaning
 - Regular inspection
 - Regular maintenance and repair
 - Replacement program
 - Provision of paths, table and seats, bubblers, bins, shelter or shade, and a place to store brooms, rags
 - For BMX tracks (water and a supply of soil)
 - One or more signs displaying a warning, condition of entry, a disclaimer and other information
 - Provide different levels of service standards at local, district and citywide youth spaces
- 38. Train all staff who are involved in the maintenance of skate / BMX parks
- 39. Explain to users the risks of bringing loose materials on to facilities, and remove them when observed

5. Planning and management in conjunction with users

40. Facilitate the development of relationships with users of youth spaces and provide ongoing support to the development of advisory groups or contacts for each youth space
41. Facilitate relationships with the local action sports industry and the retail sector, to assist with ongoing marketing, events planning and delivery, and liaison with youth space users
42. Facilitate relationships with schools, youth organisations, local interagency and parents to target the decision-makers of young people to provide opportunities to develop action sport and injury prevention skills
43. Investigate opportunities for involvement and / or employment of respected local users especially females as champions and role models to help facilitate programs, events and the ongoing consultation with young people in Maitland

7.2. Locality Specific Recommendations

Maitland Skate Park, Harold Gregson Reserve

44. Consider redeveloping this park into a citywide skate park and youth space in the medium term, and provide lighting.
45. In the short term undertake repairs to all the concrete surface, fill in wide joints, divots and all crane holds, replace the asphalt around the transition nosing,
46. Clean substances off the skateable surface that may interfere with the smooth passage of wheels or if it is sticky or slippery.
47. In future parks, use an alternative designed fence to cable fencing.
48. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately.
49. Provide a bubbler.
50. Construct seating and tables close to the riding area.
51. Sign with information warning and name sign.
52. Consider providing a path system to the park or keeping the grass mown in a path to restrict weeds from seeding and causing punctures.

Maitland Sportsground Half Pipe

53. Undertake minor repairs and resurfacing of the concrete where very rough, and extend one of the platforms to make it more suitable for bike use.
54. Inspect the facility regularly and clean the park and repair damage when required.
55. Install a standard information, warning and name sign.

Largs Skate Park, Largs Park

56. In the short term undertake repairs to concrete surfaces, fill in wide joints, divots and resurface the slabs that are rough.
57. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately.
58. Provide a bubbler.
59. Consider resurfacing the tennis court and placing a range of goal posts on the court allowing for ball games as well as skating and small-wheeled toys etc.
60. Construct seating and tables close to the riding area.
61. Provide additional information and warnings on the sign.
62. Educate riders about the risks of using loose equipment on parks and the risks of using mattresses left by others and riding at night without good lights
63. Consider providing a path system to the park or keeping the grass mown in a path to restrict weeds from seeding and causing punctures.
64. Consider adding a spine, blocks or rails and alter the roll-in to add another transitions and wider elevated platforms.
65. Encourage the ongoing involvement by riders and the recreation board in the design, management and cleaning of the park. Consider providing the riders with the space for storing a broom and cleaning clothes to enable them to clean the park or mop when wet, before use.

Rutherford Youth Space

66. In the short term undertake repairs to all concrete surfaces, fill in wide joints, divots and resurface the slabs of concrete that are rough.
67. Review the need to seal some extra areas of slope to maintain the slope and limit sand from entering the park.
68. Review how secure the coping is and whether this needs to be replaced.
69. Steam clean the gum and bird droppings off the park and educate users not to use gum.
70. The earth and grass should be reinstated in several locations or the slope sealed.
71. Introduce a weekly cleaning and inspection program i.e. clean on Monday, check on Friday, or share the responsibility with users.
72. The review the success of the curb into top of the narrow platform and seek advice if this needs to be altered, or replace.
73. Introduce an ongoing and regular cleaning and inspection program and repair program immediately.
74. Repaint seating and tables and continue to keep them in good repair.
75. Repair the guardrails on the ramp.
76. Provide a consistent slab around the base of the bubbler so as a person from a wheelchair can use it.
77. Edge the grass and regrade along the path, repair the erosion down the grassed bank reseed in places to minimise creep of grass and dirt onto the riding surface.
78. Determine a suitable location to store a broom on the site for use by riders and seek to arrange for riders to undertake cleaning work or link to an existing cleaning contract to keep the park in a good condition. Sweep sand from the slope and debris, plants, bird droppings, gum and graffiti off the park.
79. Consider relocating the space net and installing ball rings and additional seating, remove seats adjacent to the box in the north east to provide better space around the eastern box, and redesign the unsealed area in the both east between the path and the skate surface to add additional skate elements.
80. Provide an accessible path of travel into and along the skate park.

Metford Skate Park

81. Replace net on basketball ring
82. Provide blocks along the edge for skaters to sit on
83. Provide a sealed path to the centre of park and returf the worn grassed areas with kikuyu
84. Paint out non skateable panels and clean off paint on skateable elements
85. Redesign access to the roll in with the dirt access. This might include a curb entry ramp that is asphalted, so that it is not seen as a jump.
86. Undertake repairs to all concrete surfaces, fill in wide joints, divots and resurface the slabs of concrete and transitions that are rough, and the edges of boxes.
87. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately.
88. Provide a bubbler.
89. Consult local people about whether the basketball court is use and add additional skate elements in this location.
90. Construct tables/seats close to the riding area.
91. Provide a sign with information, warnings and a disclaimer
92. Providing a path system to the centre of park
93. Consider making minor adjustments so the small items in the centre of the park ie add a spine, blocks etc.
94. Encourage the ongoing involvement by riders in the design and management and cleaning of the skate park. Consider providing the man across the road with a broom and cleaning clothes if he is willing to enable them to clean the park or mop when wet, before use.
95. Consider constructing a small BMX dirt jumps area in the reserve, farther enough away from the skate park to prevent dirt spilling on to the skate park. When constructed remove the dirt mound behind the ramp.

Thornton Skate Park

96. In the short term undertake repairs to all concrete surfaces; fill in wide joints, gaps, and divots in the concrete.
97. Remove hard material and regrade the dirt ramp and stabilise as a smooth entry in the short term
98. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately.
99. Provide a bubbler. If not available in conjunction with associated facilities
100. Consider redeveloping this site and removing the basketball court if a full sized adjacent court is available for community use. Provide a slightly bigger park here with a wider range of elements and redesign the playground as an integrated element.
101. Construct seating and tables close to the riding area.
102. Provide a sign with information, warnings and a disclaimer.
103. Provide a sealed path system to the park adjacent facilities and the roadway.
104. Encourage the ongoing involvement by riders and the recreation board in the design and management and cleaning of the skate park.
105. Consider providing the riders with the space for storing a broom and cleaning clothes to enable them to clean the park or mop when wet, before use.
106. Redesign the rear dirt entry to one ramp with an extended platform if the park remains as it is.
107. Commence planning of a new district park to serve Thornton, in the new release area.

Woodberry Skate Park

108. Repair concrete, gaps, divots and resurface the old ramps or replace these
109. Consider providing a slightly larger skate areas with other elements
110. Consider upgrading the playground and add other elements such as a hit up wall
111. Consider resurfacing the basketball court and providing compliant backboard ring and net
112. Returf the edge around the skate park in kikuyu
113. Ensure the skate park and BMX track are separated by non riding areas to limit the spread of debris on to the skate park
114. Relocate the BMX track in accordance with the relevant disciplines, appropriate soil type and layout, ensuring that the track is distinguishable from the surrounds, that cross riding is constrained and berms are not being ridden over
115. Determine the role that users should play in managing and maintaining the BMX track, once the nature of the disciplines have been determined
116. Provide a sealed path from the skate park to the road edge path and shops
117. Paint the non skateable elements of the skate park to control graffiti
118. Construct seating and tables close to the riding area
119. Introduce a cleaning and inspection program immediately
120. Provide a bubbler adjacent to the seats and tables
121. Provide a sign with information, warnings and a disclaimer
122. Ensure that the tennis court has nets provided and remains open to the community

8. Attachments

Attachment 1. Youth spaces location and site selection criteria

1. Location (suburb/ vicinity)

- ☐ Where there is a gap in available facilities and services for young people
- ☐ Where there is a large number, or sustained growth projected of 10 -24 year olds
- ☐ Where there is potential sport or recreation reserves or community/commercial development sites relatively close to public transport
- ☐ Where there is or will be other community or commercial facilities where young people are likely to go (eg community hub or shopping centre)
- ☐ Where there is undeveloped public land available, being recycled, or with low value for other uses

2. Site selection criteria: skate parks and paved youth spaces

- ☐ Where the youth space is likely to be consistent with the zoning and ownership of the land
- ☐ Accessible by public transport; desirably by train

- ☐ Suitably sized (to allow for expansion, and space for parking if district or City wide youth space).
- ☐ Suitable soil, slope and environmental conditions (desirably relatively flat) so as cut and fit and poor drainage or loose soil can be avoided
- ☐ Emergency vehicle access (fire and ambulance).
- ☐ Visually prominent, pleasant site with good public surveillance and high level of foot traffic for safety and high marketability (eg for obtaining sponsorship).
- ☐ Associated amenities, such as a telephone, toilets, water, shelter, and shade are available or cost effective to provide.
- ☐ Adequate distance from residential dwellings and incompatible land uses (ie avoiding noise and light intrusions).
- ☐ Where other free access ball courts or other recreation facilities are provided and there will be minimal conflict with other users (eg pedestrians) other sports (female dominated sports such as netball), or one other age group (toddlers playground).
- ☐ Suitable to fence if required (eg where a skate bowl is sited or where it is desirable to restrict access at night).
- ☐ Served by an off-road shared path network or route.
- ☐ Not too close to a busy road or railway line unless formalise crossing points are provided

- ☐ Restricted access to vehicles to prevent skating at night by car lights.
- ☐ Free access to users and spectators.
- ☐ Close to shops selling food and drink.
- ☐ On a localised circulation route- if in a larger reserve
- ☐ Not within a short walking distance from a hotel licensed premises or nightclub.
- ☐ Where planning approval from other responsible authorities may not be necessary.
- ☐ Not in a drainage line or too close to wet or environmentally sensitive areas.
- ☐ Where the catchment (regional or local) of existing recreation/ sport facilities match the proposed facility.

For BMX dirt facilities

- ☐ Access to water for refining transitions
- ☐ Access to additional soil for topping up worn jumps and berms
- ☐ A site with some shelter and shade to prevent jumps drying out
- ☐ Space for three runs of jumps or a circuit

- ☐ Where some control over motorbikes, remote control cars and dogs is possible to minimise potential damage
- ☐ Not in a location where pedestrians are likely to walk through and across the track
- ☐ Where the youth space is likely to be consistent with the zoning and ownership of the land
- ☐ In the vicinity of a train station
- ☐ Suitably sized (to allow for expansion, and space for parking if district or City wide youth space).
- ☐ Suitable soil, slope and environmental conditions (desirably relatively flat)
- ☐ Emergency vehicle access (fire and ambulance).
- ☐ Associated amenities, such as a telephone, toilets, water, shelter, and shade within several hundred meters
- ☐ Adequate distance from residential dwellings and incompatible land uses (ie avoiding noise and light intrusions).
- ☐ Suitable to fence if required
- ☐ Served by an off-road shared path network or route.
- ☐ Not too close to a busy road or railway line unless formalise crossing points are provided
- ☐ Restricted access to vehicles to prevent night riding by car lights.

Attachment 2. Terminology

Youth spaces

Youth spaces are defined as free access outdoor activity spaces designed for young people to encourage social and physical activity.

Skate - A generic term referring to skateboarding and inline skating.

BMX - Bicycle motocross; a form of cycling that uses a small framed and wheeled bicycle. Types of BMX competition include flatland, racing, freestyle and dirt jumping.

Aggressive Inline Skating - This is a specific form of inline skating performed on aggressive skates, as opposed to fitness or racing skates. Utilising half pipes and spines, as well as city streets, aggressive skaters attempt tricks such as sliding ("grinding") on the edge of concrete ledges or handrails, jumping, spinning and flipping over stairs or other gaps.

MTB - The term "Mountain Bike" refers to any bicycle designed for off-road riding. Mountain bikes originated as all-purpose machines, but as the sport grew mountain bikers began to ride a wider variety of terrain and products developed to address more specific needs. Different categories of mountain bikes evolved and, today, mountain bikes in the marketplace can generally be divided into four types: XC racing, XC Trail, All-Mountain, and Freeride.⁵

⁵ Sourced from www.shimano.com.au

Trails or runs - These refer to a series of dirt jumps in a line, which enable the rider to jump. These jumps consist of two parts (doubles) – a launch and landing jump, that are separated by a space that is jumped.