

REPORT TO	Council Meeting	ITEM NO. 2.2
MEETING DATE	Monday, 25 June, 2012	
SUBJECT	Mount Martha Skate Park Site Selection	
PREPARED BY	Peter Gore, Manager – Recreation and Leisure; and Chris Munro, Recreation Strategic Projects Officer	
AUTHORISED BY	Director – Sustainable Infrastructure	
FILE NO.	FA10560	
ATTACHMENT(S)	YES	

PURPOSE

This report provides a summary of the submissions received in relation to the Mount Martha Skate Park Site Selection Report and a recommendation for the siting of a Skate Park in Mount Martha.

BACKGROUND

Council, at its meeting of 23 June, 2008, adopted the Shire's Skate and BMX Strategy. The Skate and BMX Strategy identified a need to develop permanent facilities at major activity centres and key townships. The Strategy identified the need for the development of a local level facility in Mount Martha. The Shire has progressively implemented the Strategy as part of the Shire's Capital Works Program.

In a report to the Council Meeting of 19 December, 2011, Council adopted the following recommendation:

- “
1. *That the results from the Mount Martha Skate Park Matrix Summary and the Mount Martha Skate Park Site Assessment Matrix indicate that the preferred location of the Mount Martha Skate Park is Eco Park, Glenisla Drive.*
 2. *That the Mount Martha Skate Park Site Selection report be placed on public exhibition for a period of 12 weeks and community feedback be reported to Council.”*

PROCESS

All Skate Parks in the Shire have been sited using the Sport and Recreation Victoria Skate Facility Guide as framework to guide decision making determining the suitability of Skate Park locations.

Shire officers assessed eight sites in Mount Martha including:

1. Balcombe Reserve (Watsons Road).
2. Mount Martha Public Park (Forest Drive).
3. Ferrero Reserve (Seppelt Avenue).
4. Walara Reserve (Orana Drive).
5. Eco Park (Glenisla Drive).
6. Mount Martha House Parade Ground (Esplanade).

PROCESS (CONT'D)

7. Mace Oval (Tal Tal Crescent).
8. Citation Reserve (Helena Street).

POLICY CONTEXT

The Shire has two policies that relate to the siting of skate facilities including:

1. Skate and BMX Strategy (Council Meeting 23 June, 2008).
2. Draft Active Sports Strategy (to be presented to Council). The Strategy reiterates the importance of the location of skate facilities as critical for their success.

CONSULTATION

The community were consulted on the Eco Park site as the preferred location for a Skate Park in Mount Martha. The public exhibition period consultation included:

- Notification to the Mount Martha Primary School;
- Notification signage at Eco Park Reserve (Glenisla Drive);
- Notification board at Mount Martha House Community Centre;
- Information and plans displayed at Shire offices; and
- Notification and feedback forms on Shire website.

The consultation period was extended for an additional three weeks to further assist residents in making submissions.

The Shire also conducted a bus tour for Councillors visiting all sites on 31 May, 2012.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

The Shire received 75 submissions during the consultation period. A total of 72 submissions were in support of a skate facility in Mount Martha. However, there were a range of viewpoints regarding the preferred locations from respondents.

Submissions expressed a range of views including:

- A total of 32 objected to the Eco Park site;
- Six were in favour of the Eco Park site;
- Six were in favour of Mount Martha House Parade Ground site; and
- A total of 12 were in favour of Citation and Ferraro Reserve sites.

A detailed summary of the submissions is included as (Confidential) Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

The respondents expressed a range of views relating to the Mount Martha Skate Park Site Selection report. The submissions are summarised under the following key headings.

Antisocial Behaviour

Respondents raised concerns in relation to a number of antisocial behaviours including graffiti, vandalism and drug use.

Officer's Comment

There is no direct correlation that skate parks encourage antisocial behaviour including graffiti, vandalism and drug use. The Shire has effectively implemented a no-tolerance graffiti removal program at other facilities e.g. Somerville Skate Park. The Shire's new maintenance contract (SIMS 2) proposes an increased level of service response to graffiti removal across the Shire.

Victoria Police is the principal agent responding to vandalism/drug use (where appropriate supported cooperation by the Shire).

Toilet Facilities

Respondents raised concern in relation to no toilet facilities existing at the Eco Park site. Respondents were also concerned in relation to the potential use of the Mount Martha Primary School's toilet facilities by skate park users.

Officer's Comment

At its meeting of 13 March, 2012, Council adopted the Shire's Toilet Strategy. The Strategy identified Eco Park as a priority for the construction of a new public toilet facility. The Shire anticipates the new toilet facility will be constructed prior to, or in conjunction with a development of a skate facility at Eco Park. This is subject to Council's budget process.

Shire Officers noted the potential use of the Mount Martha Primary School's toilet facilities as an option in the Mount Martha Skate Park Site Selection report. The Mount Martha Primary School has since indicated to the Shire that this is not a viable option.

Impact on Residents

Respondents raised concern in relation to the potential impacts of noise and night use of the skate facility at the Eco Park site.

Officer's Comment

Sound engineers were engaged to assess Eco Park if a skate facility was located at it. Given the distance from the nearest dwelling, it was found that typical noise levels created from skate activities is 49-54dBa (SLR Consulting – Sound Engineers). By comparison, Environment Protection Authority (EPA) guidelines suggest 60dBa for normal conversation, 70dBa for vacuum cleaners and 90dBa for lawn mowers. Given the location of the facility to the nearest dwelling, the noise from a skate facility is not considered significant. The introduction of noise buffer fencing could also reduce the noise levels if Council wishes to implement further remedial works.

There has been significant improvement in the construction and building methods of skate parks. There has also been a significant improvement on the sound qualities from early model steel vertical ramps.

DISCUSSION (CONT'D)

Impact on Residents (Cont'd)

***Officer's Comment* (Cont'd)**

The Shire is not proposing to light the Mount Martha Skate Park for night skating. Innovative designs may also discourage night skating including:

- Strategically placed street lighting (limiting peripheral lighting of the skating surfaces);
- Fencing and landscaping (prohibiting vehicles from shining headlights onto skating surfaces);
- Earth mounding; and
- Signage.

Based on the respondent's feedback, Shire officers have made minor adjustments to the Mount Martha Skate Park Site Assessment Matrix (no material impact on outcome).

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

Council's Director – Sustainable Communities has a direct interest in this report, as a resident abutting Citation Reserve. The Chief Executive Officer has designated the approval of this report to the Director – Sustainable Infrastructure. The Director – Sustainable Communities has not exercised a relevant power, duty or function under the Conflict of Interest provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The Recreation Strategic Projects Officer, involved in the preparation of this report, has an indirect interest as some submissions received on this project are friends or nearby residents of the Officer. It should be noted that this report has been through an approval process by the Manager – Recreation and Leisure, and the Director – Sustainable Infrastructure. The Recreation Strategic Projects Officer has not exercised a relevant power, duty or function under the Conflict of Interest provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

COMMUNITY PLAN IMPACT AND CONNECTIONS

“ ***Outcome 3.3 – Accessible, Valued and Well Utilised Community Resources***

3.3.3 To develop and manage community facilities and spaces according to community needs and values.

Outcome 3.5 – An Active Connected and Informed Community

3.5.2 To enhance the community's opportunity to participate in a diverse range of recreational, leisure and volunteering experiences.”

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The Skate and BMX Strategy estimates the cost for the design and construction of the Mount Martha Skate Park at \$250,000.

There may be opportunities to receive external funding or grants to assist with sections of the plan, and community involvement in projects such as landscaping and planting could be encouraged.

Council provides an annual allocation of \$250,000 for the implementation of Skate and BMX Strategy.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

Co-locating the Mount Martha Skate Park with existing Shire facilities such as public toilet and playground is likely to maximise use of existing infrastructure. Families are more likely to use a broad range of facilities that meet all of their needs, ensuring that it is a success.

CONCLUSION

The Shire uses the Sport and Recreation Victoria's (SRV) Skate Facility Guide as a framework to guide decision making. The framework guides the Shire's assessment to determine the suitability of locations for the development of a permanent skate facility. The Shire has assessed eight locations in Mount Martha, and proposes that the Eco Park site best meets the SRV guidelines to ensure the facility is a success.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Mount Martha Skate Park be located at Eco Park (Glenisla Drive, Mount Martha).**
- 2. That Shire Officers work closely with the Mount Martha Primary School to ensure the success of the facility.**
- 3. That implementation works be referred to the Council's budget process.**
- 4. That Council resolves that Attachment 1 to this report be retained as a confidential item pursuant to Section 77(2)(a) and (b) of the *Local Government Act 1989* and be placed in a separate minute book for confidential items.**