



The Safety Grind

Guidelines For Safer Skate Parks





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INCENT ALVAREZ

skate

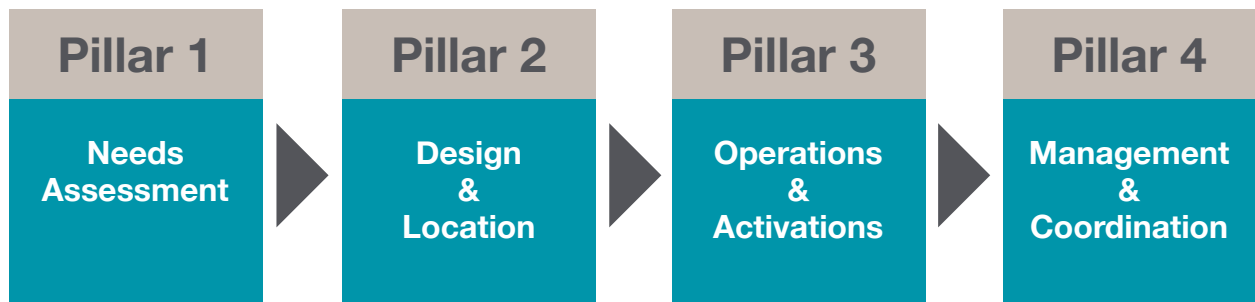
Introduction

The purpose of this project is to provide a basis for local government to create and strengthen their overall city-wide skate strategy. The guidelines work towards an integrated approach to skate parks by including four pillars, (1) needs assessment, (2) design, (3) operation and (4) management for local government.

While the City of Casey has taken the lead in this project, the guidelines are aimed to assist all Local Government Authorities to develop their skate strategy or open space planning.

The main aim is to engage key stakeholders in the needs assessment, planning, implementation and management stages of skate parks. Additionally, to align guidelines with other council, community, neighbourhood, parks, open space and Child Youth and Family strategies.

Research was done to arrive at the final guidelines, including; Literature review, YMCA local government planner surveys, 2019 Casey Summer Skate Park Audit, user surveys and an open forum.

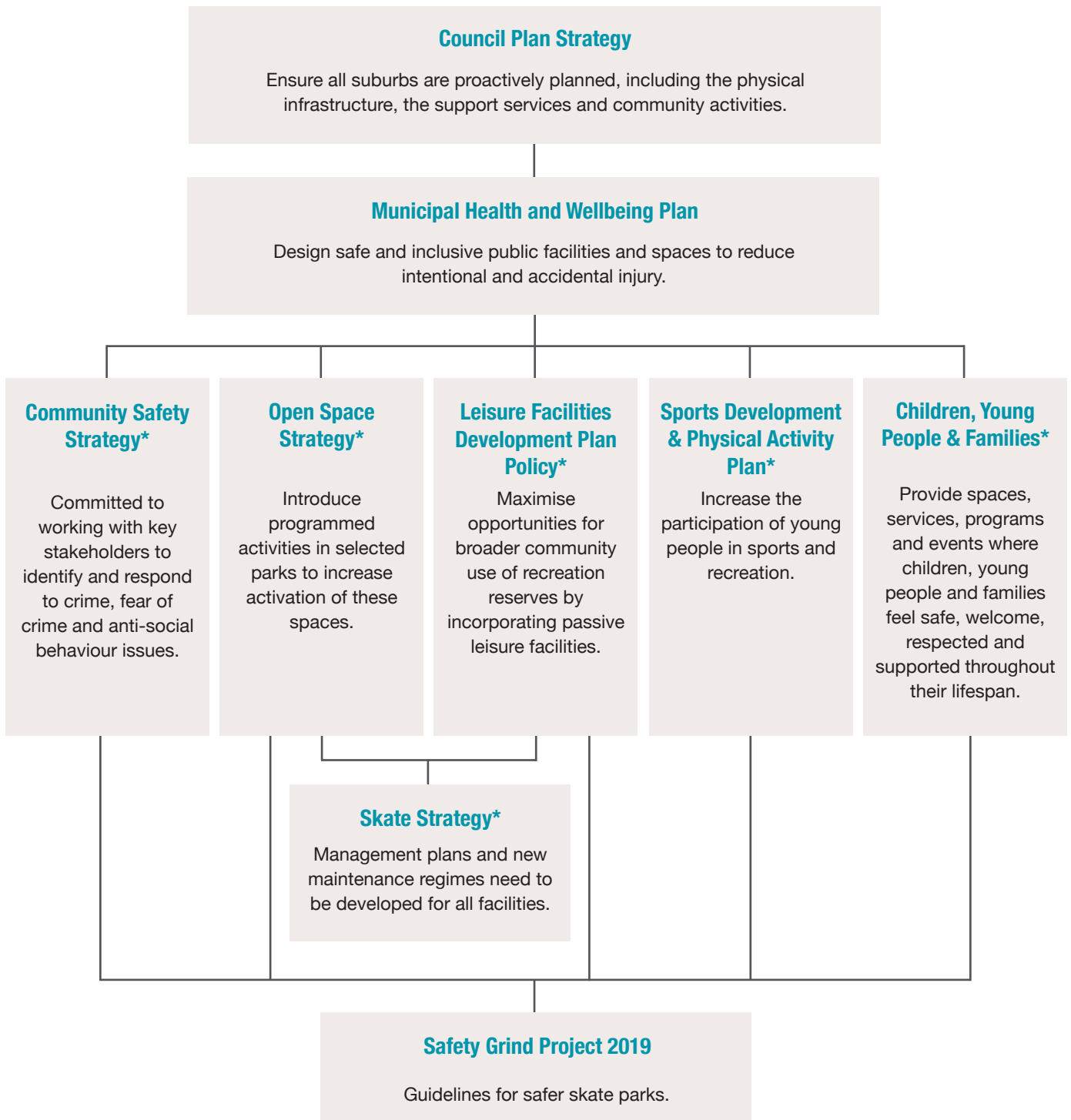


The Safety Grind forum was held at Bunjil Place in June 2019 to present the four above pillars and receive feedback from relevant people from Victoria Police, YMCA, Department of Justice and Community Safety, skaters, and representatives from

the following City of Casey departments; City Design and construction, City and Asset planning, Safer Communities, Active Communities and Child, Youth and Family. A total of 30 people attended and discussed the pillars in five diverse groups.

General Hierarchy

Alignment of Council Plans - Indicative example



* Indicative hierarchy only. Local Government Authority's may have similar plans that target the same areas.

Pillar 1 Needs Assessment

“What do we need to provide and why?”

Considerations	Key points	Why it is important
Overall municipal skate park strategy / Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment to vision and policies • Structure for cross departmental planning • Framework for development, management & evaluation 	It is important to align the planning of the skate park to other council policies and visions. Outline how multiple departments come together in the planning, design, operations and management of the asset.
Demographic analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population -present & future • User profiles -existing & potential • Neighbouring council / benchmarking (sub regional & regional only) 	A high-level demographic analysis can show if the area is a good site for a skatepark. It can predict if people will still be using it in 10 years. Benchmarking similar demographic areas to see what has been successful is valuable.
Research and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current trends -design, users • Alignment with other council policies e.g. Open Space • Data observations -safety, user traffic 	The park should be heavily based on research and evidence of a variety of factors; users, design trends, area needs and stakeholder input. This will assist in achieving the aims of linked policies.
Community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community consultation and engagement • Specific needs; sport, social or combination • Users, non-users & other stakeholders 	It is important for the community to be engaged and support the facility, this allows for their expectations and concerns to be managed, through design, build, management and activation.
Diversity of users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and passive, new and existing • Multi-platform & multi-dimensional engagement • Marginalised and disability group engagement 	Our aim is to ensure the facilities are for the whole community not just select or existing user groups. We can build attractions and amenities that service the broader community and skill levels not just select user groups.
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & evidence • Assess needed features for safety (shade, water, lighting) changes depending on park type 	Like any public space, people that use them should feel safe. A good skate park is activated by CPTED principles and thus need to be embedded into planning. Design should incorporate considerations of natural surveillance, designing out graffiti and vandalism to support activation.

Pillar 2 Design and Location

“What to put where and for how long?”

Considerations	Key points	Why it is important
Park type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment outcome Consideration of type Budget considerations over lifecycle of asset 	Skate parks have thousands of different combinations of skate-able infrastructure and design. This means we can ensure it is relevant and dynamic to existing user groups as well as every member of the community.
Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design process Commit to ownership Needs v wants and managing expectations 	The co-design process is vital as it can establish a sense of ownership and respect for the space. There may be differences in what established users want and what is needed to align with Council policies and goals. This may mean the skatepark needs to be designed with strategic intent more so than what existing user groups want. Balance is key.
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community access, egress and sight lines Relationship to nearby businesses and other facilities (toilets, medical) Neighbouring council / benchmarking (sub regional & regional only) 	We need to ensure skate parks are safe and have a positive relationship to other facilities and amenities. This includes egress and sightlines, access to pathways, local shops and public transport. Doing this will better facilitate access and ensure the park is well-used for longer periods of time.
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of parks in municipality: users and size Integrated or multi-use facility Engaging traditional non-users (females, inactive people) 	A skatepark with diverse features will attract all members of the community ensuring greater usage levels. It is important to make the park accessible and inviting for non-traditional users as well. In addition, all skateparks in one area should be diverse from each other to provide variety.
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of type Essential: water, shade, bins, seating, lighting, toilets Budget allocations 	Access to necessary amenities will give users the ability to attend the facility for longer periods of time as they do not need to leave for basic things. In turn, this increases the activation of the park as more users remain present.
Recreation facility or youth space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street or park design focus (social or physical) Civic integration or precinct use (incidental skate-able infrastructure or purpose built) Consideration of target market/group within hierarchy 	A focus on the sports (physical activity) or cultural aspects of community can both attract unique cross sections from within the skate community.
Evaluation and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative & Quantitative measures Clear KPIs Process of measurement (correspondence) 	Have we been successful? Does the community value the skate park or is the council spending money maintaining an asset that nobody uses or wants.
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design to Australian standards Location within open/commercial space: sight lines, lighting Community stewardship 	Like any public space, people that use it should feel safe. A good skate park is activated by CPTED principles and this needs to be embedded into planning.

Pillar 3 Operations and Activation

“How do we ensure it is useable and safe?”

Considerations	Key points	Why it is important
Ongoing financial commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment, depreciation and phasing costs Asset management/maintenance costs Annual activation costs (budget) 	Ongoing financial commitment supports a long-term planning process and the longevity of a council asset. Longevity is achieved through maintenance and provision of a safe space; therefore, financial commitment makes this duty of care achievable.
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular weekly schedule Graffiti, waste Auditing and reactive maintenance 	Having planned maintenance can reduce the likelihood of claims, incidents and accidents. It also mitigates risk and promotes community engagement with council.
Continuous activation and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual activation plan e.g. events and programs Alignment with council plans and expectations Inter-agency cooperation (businesses, police, clubs) 	Annual activation encourages minority and fringe groups to use the space. It can promote community health and wellbeing through recreation and social connection, while further building relationships with other agencies and young people
Community ownership and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local leadership developed Accountability to activation plan Responsive to community needs 	Community connection and cohesion is important as it leads to a well-used and well-maintained facility by the whole community.
Periodic measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual evaluation of plan Milestones and outcomes measured Review impact, implement changes 	Measurement is important to benchmark investments. It provides data on the usage levels for the park which can inspire change to activation programs if low. Measurement can be used to understand the impact the skate park has on the area.



Pillar 4 Management and Coordination

“Avoid the set and forget”

Considerations	Key points	Why it is important
Governance process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership groups - community stakeholders regular meeting (suggested quarterly) Systems and procedures - terms of reference, frequency, budget Departmental ownership - clear lines of accountability 	A leadership group is important to ensure accountability of the plan. It establishes ownership and provides accountability to change activation strategies if not successful.
Other Councils and sponsorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information sharing and networking Liaise with government and commercial sponsors Benchmarking good practice 	Information sharing and liaising is important to gain information and ensure we are well informed of areas with similar implementations. We can learn what is working and what is not.
Marketing, promotion of asset program and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timetable events and promotion developed Communications plan (PR and social marketing) Review and report 	Marketing is vital to ensure we communicate well with our community. It allows communication with traditional and hard to engage user groups.
Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematic process to review asset and activation Develop action plan for departments (schedule) Annual assessment 	Asset management ensures the skate park stays on the agenda instead of being quickly forgotten after its launch. An action plan and annual assessment provides accountability and an exit strategy if the skate park is not deemed a good fit for location.
KPI's and goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate against overall skate strategy Evaluate against council plans in hierarchy Evaluate against design and location goals 	Evaluation allows us to be informed about how successful the park is, and any problems arising. It allows us to change our approach if not successful. Finally, evaluation data provides a base to share success.



Conclusion

- ***Indepth research can ensure the skate park is the right fit for the area and will align with Council aims.***
- ***Including aspects other than skate features can encourage a diverse range of users to the area.***
- ***Community connection and cohesion is important as it leads to a well-used and well-maintained space.***
- ***Maintenance of skate parks is expensive (mostly due to graffiti and rubbish removal costs) and an ongoing budget should be included in the planning.***

Recommendations

- Include a wider range of people (professional skaters, stakeholders, and non/passive users), policies and research in the design process.
- Design the park according to the target audience and their most popular mode and skill level.
- Include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques in the design.
- Engage in continuous activation through scheduled programs, KPIs and goals.
- Form a skate advisory group to conduct reviews and control long term management of the park.
- Create spaces for non-skaters to engage in the park, such as walking tracks and exercise equipment.

