

September 2005

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Preamble

Over the past five years there have been an increasing number of informal dirt jumps and mountain bike tracks being built and regularly modified by young people on Council owned land. The trend has shifted significantly from BMX racing track style structured activities to a more unstructured free-style activity. It is recognised that unstructured and free-style bike tracks are an important way in which young people can participate in recreation and leisure.

Whilst these facilities have a legitimate role in providing valuable leisure opportunities to the community, there is a need for a degree of regulation over indiscriminate development to avoid environmental damage and minimise risk management issues.

By adopting a formal application process for the development of BMX jumps and mountain bike facilities Council will be better positioned to manage this growing trend, improve present risk management issues and provide safe facilities for young people in the Shire.

Freestyle BMX is the National Sporting Organisation for BMX incorporating freestyle dirt jumping, flatland, mini, street and vert riding. Mountain Bike Australia (MBTA) is the new national governing body for mountain biking across Australia. Both bodies were engaged in preparation of this policy.

This policy involves developing a partnership with young people. If the site is deemed suitable, the design and construction phase will involve potential users to ensure the facility meets expectations, will be used and also encourage ownership of the site.

Definitions

Freestyle BMX ~ Incorporates all types of BMX riding that is not speed based, which may include dirt jumping, street obstacles, flatland and vert riding.

BMX dirt jumping ~ The construction of shaped mounds of dirt with specific takeoff and landing ramps usually with a gap in the middle. The purpose of this is to launch into the air, complete a trick or combination of tricks and land fluently on the landing ramp. Facilities may vary from small beginner rhythm jumps to larger extreme sport type facilities.

BMX racing ~ Requires a specific track usually containing a steep start followed by a combination of straights with jumps and banked corners where a number of participants can ride simultaneously.

Cross country mountain biking ~
An endurance sport on a set course of climbs and descents on tracks made entirely of dirt. The nature of the sport calls for tracks to be located in bush land.

Down hill mountain biking ~
A totally down hill racecourse on heavy duty bikes which may include rocks, jumps, corners and high speed sections.

Mountain cross ~ Similar to BMX racing, this course is usually built on a hill and contains larger jumps, drops, corners and obstacles.

Free ride mountain biking ~

Trails are usually constructed on a down hill slope and contain natural and man made obstacles which can include elevated wooden challenges.

This policy relates to BMX dirt jumping, Cross country mountain biking, Down hill mountain biking, Mountain cross and Free ride mountain biking.

Policy principles

This policy aims to:

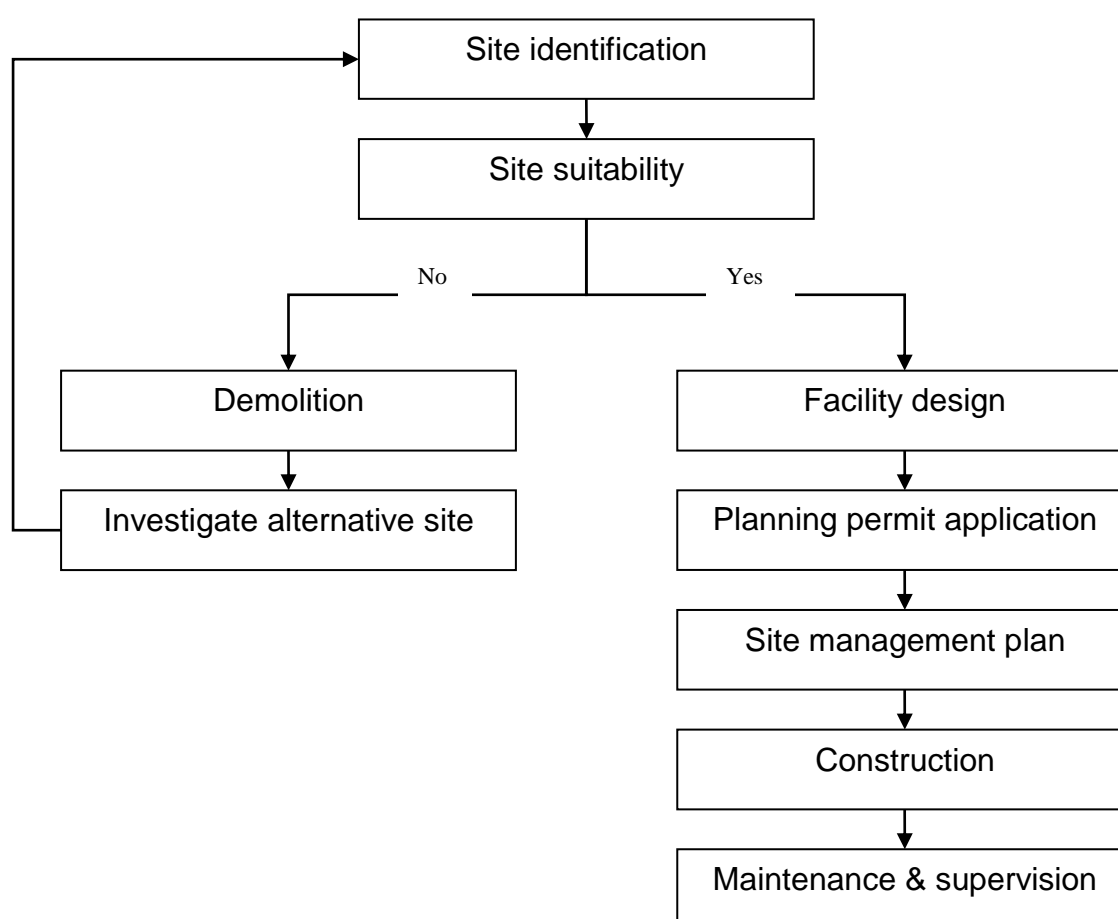
- Ensure appropriate public safety is achieved and maintained in this recreational setting.
- Establish a fair and reasonable process to deal with the emerging BMX and mountain bike facilities on Council land.
- Protect and enhancing the natural environment through appropriate site selection and placement of BMX and mountain bike tracks.
- Ensure the process of community engagement is effective, democratic and meets expectations.

The prime objective of this policy is to have in place formal processes to better manage BMX and mountain bike facilities, provide safe facilities for young people and improve present risk management issues.

Policy

The BMX jump and mountain bike track policy details specific steps to be taken in such instances and can be separated into the following steps;

Scope



This policy applies to all informal BMX and mountain bike facilities and potential sites for BMX and mountain bike tracks within the Shire of Nillumbik.

Accountabilities

It is the responsibility of the Leisure Services Unit to implement this policy and to coordinate site inspections with relevant Council officers from Infrastructure Maintenance Unit, Environmental Works Unit and Youth Services Unit and a nominated local club representative if applicable.

Infrastructure Maintenance is responsible for monthly site inspections (see Policy Attachment 2), general maintenance issues and other activities negotiated as part of this policy.

The Youth Services Unit is accountable for undertaking consultation with users regarding site issues; including site suitability, demolition, facility design and site management.

Environmental Works Unit contribution to the implementation of this policy includes knowledge and expertise in site identification and site selection.

Procedure

Following is the proposed process for the future development of BMX and mountain bike tracks on Council owned land.

Step 1 – Site identification

The site may contain a set of existing informal tracks or is an area of open space that is frequently used by young people riding BMX or mountain bikes. This site is identified and inspected by Council as well as a nominated local club representative if applicable.

Step 2- Site suitability

A set of criteria within a site assessment checklist (see Policy Attachment 1) is applied to determine the suitability of the site for a BMX and mountain bike track.

A site will be deemed inappropriate if it is identified as a Significant Environmental Reserve or Roadside and if it is located within either of the top two environmental classifications under the Roadside Management Plan (1997). If the site falls under the third classification of the Roadside Management Plan, discussions must be initiated with Environmental Works to determine if the site is appropriate.

Mandatory site criteria

The following criteria must be met if the proposed facility is to be developed. If these criteria can not be satisfied the BMX Dirt Jumps will be demolished.

The site must be:

1. in one of the following planning scheme zones:
 - Public Parks and Recreation
 - Public Use
2. separated from, or not too close to a road;
3. where there is access to water for aiding the construction of jumps;
4. at a suitable distance from a permanent water course based on an assessment by an environmental officer;
5. where there are suitable soil and environmental conditions and at a suitable distance from mature trees to avoid damage to vegetation based on an assessment by an environmental officer and risk to participants;

6. at a suitable distance from nearest permanent structure taking into account jump height, route, speed and structure type.
7. be accessible by emergency vehicles.

Secondary site criteria

The site should preferably be:

8. within a reasonable cycling distance to amenities, such as a phone, toilets, shade or where these can be provided;
9. where rubbish can be managed;
10. served by a bicycle path network or route;
11. adjacent to a facility where tools may be stored;
12. on a site large enough to allow for expansion;
13. where young people want to be or adjacent to where they congregate;
14. at least 30 meters from nearest residential dwellings and incompatible land uses; and
15. at a sufficient distance from the drip zone of indigenous trees based on an assessment by an environmental officer.

Step 3 – Demolishing existing dirt jumps

If it is established the site is unsuitable for BMX and mountain bike tracks Leisure Services will provide Infrastructure Maintenance with signage notifying the jumps will be removed (see Policy Attachment 2). Youth Services will be informed of the situation and will undertake consultation with the users.

After a notification period of two weeks the Environmental Works Unit will coordinate the demolition of jumps with the Infrastructure Maintenance Unit. This will be completed in an environmentally sound manner by and the area will be returned to its original state.

If Youth Services receive feedback and a need is established, an alternative site will be investigated.

If there is sufficient feedback in relation to the demolition and evidence of need is established for a facility an alternative site will be investigated.

Step 4a- Facility design

If a site is deemed suitable for construction Council officers from Youth Services and Leisure Services will work collaboratively with local young people to establish a design for the facility based on the type of riding facility desired. A number of workshops facilitated by Council Officers may be required to finalise this design.

There are currently no Australian Standards that exist for the development of dirt jumps. Guidelines can be obtained through BMX Australia. The height of jumps, distance between jumps and the materials used for construction must be approved by Council.

Designs should consider safety, environmental issues, usability, maintenance requirements and should include a nominated local club representative if applicable.

Step 4b- Application for a planning permit

Dependent on the controls that apply to a proposed site, planning approval may be required and will be subject to conditions set out in Council's Planning Scheme. The applicant will be notified of these conditions at the commencement of the planning process and all requirements must be adhered to.

Step 5- Site management plan

Officers from Council's Leisure Services and Youth Services will work with the young people who will predominately be using the site to negotiate a Site Management Plan.

The purpose of the Management Plan is to provide Council and other stakeholders with a formal approach to issues such as safety and risk management, maintenance, rubbish and litter control, site access, and signage, anti social behavior and modification of jumps.

Each site will present a variety of different issues for Council and it will be necessary for the site Management Plan to individually reflect these issues.

The Management Plan will be governed by any permit conditions and appropriate consideration will be given to environmental management in protection of on site vegetation and wildlife.

Step 6 – Construction

The construction of jumps must be in accordance with the conditions issued with any Planning Permit. Users will be responsible for constructing jumps in accordance with the conditions of the site management plan and specific facility design.

Users of the facility are not permitted to use any other material than dirt in the construction and reconfiguration of the jumps. For safety reasons, items such as logs, branches, rocks, timber, metal sheeting and wire mesh must not be used to build jumps.

Step 7 – Maintenance & supervision

Council officers from Infrastructure Maintenance in accordance with Council's Risk Management Strategy will conduct monthly site inspections (see Attachment 3). This checklist will highlight any vandalism, graffiti or modification of jumps that is not in accordance with the site management plan or any approved amendment to the design.

Ultimately the use and management of the facility will be underpinned by the conditions of the site management plan.

Related policies

Parts of this policy can be related to the Skate and BMX Facility Study (2001) and the Nillumbik Skate Facility draft Management Plan.

This policy also draws on information from the Roadside Management Plan (1997).

Review

This policy will be reviewed after a two year period.



Site Assessment Checklist

Location: _____ Date: _____

	Criteria	Site	Y/N	Comments
Mandatory Site Criteria (all criteria in this section must be met with a yes)	Planning Zone (any site in ESO 1 requires planning approval)	PPRZ or PUZ		
	Distance from road	Greater than 10 meters / separated from		
	Access to water	Yes		
	Distance from permanent water supply (based on Environmental Officer assessment)	Approved distance		
	Soil type	Non-dispersive		
	Distance from nearest mature tree (consider; jump height, route, speed & tree species)	Approved		
	Distance from nearest permanent structure (consider; jump height, route, speed & structure type)	Approved		
	Emergency vehicle access	Yes		
Secondary Site Criteria (criteria in this section are preferred only)	Distance from nearest amenities	Reasonable riding distance		
	Can rubbish be managed?	Yes		
	Is the site serviced by a bike path or route?	Yes		
	Is there an adjacent storage facility?	Yes		
	Can the site be expanded if required?	Yes		
	Is the site a congregation point for youth?	Yes		
	Distance from nearest residential dwelling.	At least 30m		
	Distance from indigenous tree drip zone (based on Environmental Officer assessment)	Approved distance		

Site Assessed by:

Officer: _____ Signature: _____

Officer: _____ Signature: _____

Club Rep: _____ Signature: _____

Site Assessment:

☐ Approved

☐ Inappropriate

BMX Jumps & Mountain Bike Track Maintenance and Condition Report

Site Location: _____

Assessed By: _____

Signature: _____

Date: / /



Item	Condition			Maintenance		Comments
	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Required Y/N	Complete Y/N	
Information and disclaimer signage						
General site cleanliness						
Graffiti & vandalism						
Park furniture						
Access Paths						
Garden beds						
Foreign material used in the construction of jumps						
Jumps not in accordance to planning permit						
Damage to surrounding vegetation						
Adherence with requirements of management plan						



NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL NOTICE

This site has undergone a suitability assessment for the construction of a BMX and/or mountain bike track.

The site has been determined as inappropriate due to the significant risk management issues it creates for the Land Owner/Manager.

This facility will be removed after a two week period.

For further information contact:

Shire of Nillumbik
Leisure Services Unit
Ph: 9433 3130