

# **YORK YOUTH PRECINCT**

## **SITE SELECTION REPORT**

**AUGUST 2015**

**ITEM 9.2.3  
APPENDIX A**





**YORK YOUTH PRECINCT - CONNECTING COMMUNITY**



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## PROJECT BACKGROUND

### INTRODUCTION

The York Youth Precinct is a concept being designed as a unique, iconic and site responsive multipurpose, multigenerational community space that aims to complement the existing uses and facilities of Avon Park and the riverside area. This iconic area will be the central hub for the youth, wider community and visitors to the York area.

In March of 2015, local residents gathered at the existing York Skate Park to undertake a site appraisal of other possible site locations within the York CBD area and generate public interest in developing a safer, visible youth precinct. This was followed by the formulation of the York Youth Precinct Working Group, consisting of a Shire Representative, York Community Resource Centre facilitator and passionate community members and riders, to undertake the community consultation phase of the project.

The following report outlines the site selection process and community consultation of the proposed sites of the York Youth Precinct, as collated by the York Youth Precinct Working Group. It also summarises the results and comments of the community consultation, makes recommendations on the typology of the precinct and creates a design vision for development of the York Youth Precinct.





# UNDERSTANDING THE EXISTING SKATE PARK

## SKATE PARK CONTEXT

The existing York skate park located within the York Recreation Centre grounds is inadequate to cater for the needs of the current skate community. Consisting of a solid concrete structure with limited skate features, the facility does not allow for a number of different users to utilise the skate park at one time and lacks a diversity of skateable elements and flow lines.

The existing facility is showing signs of significant neglect due to its age, size and use. Overall wear and tear, and poor planning with blue metal surrounding the entire park impact on safety and presents a hazard to participants utilising the park. The overall layout and scale of the features do not allow for progressive multifunctional safe use and has no shade, toilets and limited seating facilities.

The current location is poorly defined with the park being set within the recreation centre carpark, it's associated sporting facilities back facing the park; culminating in various issues with poor passive surveillance. It lacks connectivity within the current community layout and ineffectively caters to the ethos of community inclusiveness.

The Park is currently the only skating park within the York Shire with the closest located in Northam approx. 35kms away or Midland / Perth area approx. 85kms away. Many local users will often commute to surrounding towns to ride various parks, with no regular public transport servicing York, creating a social indifference for users who do not readily have alternative transport options available.



# SITE ASSESSMENT SELECTION

## INTRODUCTION

The location of the York Youth Precinct is critical in ensuring the future success of this important community asset. In particular the site should have the capability to:

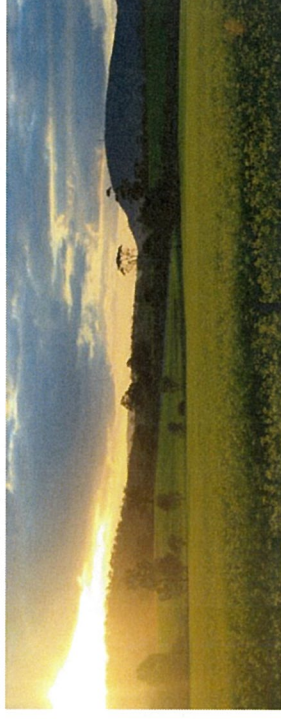
- Create a centralised hub for young people.
- Allow users of different ages to interact with each other.
- Allow users of different abilities to learn from each other.
- Create strong links with other existing community facilities and amenities.

It has been identified that the Youth Precinct must cater for all ages, abilities and types of action sports.

The design of the park should create clear areas for beginners to safely learn and progress, and areas for the more experienced to use the space without worrying about colliding into other users.

The York Youth Precinct site presents an opportunity for the Shire of York to develop the precinct and create a dynamic and activated community hub, offering recreational and social experiences for all members of the community, from day to day usage to community centred activities and events.

The following section outlines the key criteria used to assess suggested sites , and then nominate a preferred site recommendation.





# SITE ASSESSMENT SELECTION

## SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### 1. PHYSICAL SITE CONDITIONS & TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This first broad criterion is based on the physicality of the various sites and whether they can accommodate a facility of the required scale and type required by Local and Shire regulation. It also considers technical implications such as drainage and soil conditions. Questions asked at each site include;

- Is the proposed site capable to cater for the various applicable facility types defined previously? (ie: large enough to cater for state / regional events, looking at providing a point of difference to surrounding youth precincts in neighbouring communities)
- Is the proposed site free of existing land use implications, covenants, easements, service access requirements and/or underground/overhead power lines, water and gas?
- What are the implications of geotech conditions, ground water, drainage?
- What are the physical terrain implications of the site?

### 2. ACCESS/TRANSPORT

This second criterion looks at how easily accessible the site is for users, parents and those viewing the skate park or events. Questions asked of each site on this criterion include;

- Are there pedestrian/footpath connections accessible to the proposed site?
- Is there a safe drop off area or adequate car parking?
- Is there access to overflow parking for events and festival inclusions?

### 3. NATURAL SURVEILLANCE, SECURITY AND SAFETY

As the consideration is to create a Youth Precinct with the main users being between the ages of 6 – 21, it is critical to ensure the facility is usually open and safe and easily accessed in the case of an emergency. Questions asked for this criterion include;

- Is the site visually prominent with good public surveillance for safety and for the promotion of the precinct and skate activity?
- Is the site a short distance from police response calls and does it provide ease of police access on scheduled routes?
- Can the site provide adequate emergency vehicle access (fire and ambulance)?
- Can vehicular access be restricted at the proposed site to prevent illegally parked vehicles from entering onto the skate park itself?
- Can the proposed site provide safe entry to and from the site and safe setbacks from busy roads and intersections?

# SITE ASSESSMENT SELECTION

## SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### 4. PROXIMITY TO AMENITIES (WATER, TOILETS, SHADE, FOOD & DRINK)

An active Youth Precinct such as a skate and / or community park should have appropriate ancillary amenities. This includes shade for viewing and resting, drink fountains and nearby toilets given users can spend many hours using a skate park in a single session. Questions therefore asked for this criterion are;

- Are associated amenities such as public telephone, free Wi-Fi, toilets, water, shelter and shade existing and available or cost effective to install at the site?
- Is the site close to shops selling food and drink and is there potential for seasonal, peak time and/or event day food and drink outlets?

### 5. IMPACT ON EXISTING FACILITIES, ADJOINING USES AND USERS

To assess the suitability of a site, one of the main considerations is what impact will a new facility have on the existing users and use of the space. This can be a contentious community issue and so the following questions have been raised to address including;

- Can the site facilitate minimal loss of green space?
- Can the site facilitate minimal impact on ecological systems e.g. wetlands, river embankments and bushland?
- Can the site facilitate minimal loss of mature or significant trees?
- Can the site facilitate minimal impact on pedestrian or road network and access?
- Will the location of a skate facility on the site not substantially displace existing recreational or other site users?
- Are there any existing heritage items or indigenous people's claims for land title or cultural significance at the site?
- Is there a history of 'anti-social' activity of behaviour at the site?

### 6. DISTANCE FROM HOUSING & INCOMPATIBLE LAND USE

Another major consideration for redevelopment of any Youth Precinct is the potential impact of noise and light to nearby housing. It is important that the new skate facility is placed to minimise impact to surrounding residential areas. Professional advice received from skate park conveyancers indicates an appropriate distance from residential areas and as a guide 50m is considered an acceptable distance for a purpose built skate park. Please note that this is subject to a more detailed acoustic assessment as each location has different factors such as surrounding noise, landform, prevailing winds etc. This is also only for facilities and not incidental skate moments which due to their scale and level of potential use are not considered major creators of noise or loss of amenity. Questions therefore include;

- Is the site location an adequate distance (50m) from residential dwellings and incompatible land uses to avoid potential noise and light intrusions?
- Has the site the capacity to place a skate park in a location to maximise noise attenuation (eg: sunk into the ground)



# SITE ASSESSMENT SELECTION

## SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### 7. EVENT SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

With centrally located facilities presenting the opportunity to become a major multi used community hub, not just for skating/BMX and scooter users but also community events / festivals, clinics and competitions; sites must be assessed for their suitability to play that role. Questions therefore include;

- Is the proposed site adjacent to like/complimentary activities to create a greater recreational experience?
- Does the site have the ability to cater for larger crowds and temporary infrastructure during peak use and events?

### 8. MAINTENANCE

Maintenance is important to ensure the park can be cleaned easily and regularly. Questions therefore asked for this criterion are;

- How readily accessible is the site to regular cleaning for existing council cleaning and maintenance team?

### 9. CONTEXT & AMENITY

The criteria is most applicable to the socialisation that occurs at skate parks and the importance of providing facilities that are where young people want to be and provide important amenity (sun protection, wind, shelter, water etc..)

The following questions have been raised for each of the sites regarding context and amenity;

- Is the site location where young people want to be or adjacent to where they can congregate?
- Is the site in close proximity to existing shops, playgrounds, sports or recreation facilities?
- Is the site within or adjacent to a major community hub or central business district?

### 10. CONSISTENCY WITH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Sites for consideration need to conform to local planning schemes, embody strategic planning and reflect the current land use zones. Therefore for this criterion the following questions needs to be asked;

- Is the location consistent with the strategic land use, master planning, planning schemes and zoning?
- Does the Youth Precinct align with the current Shire council Strategic Plans?

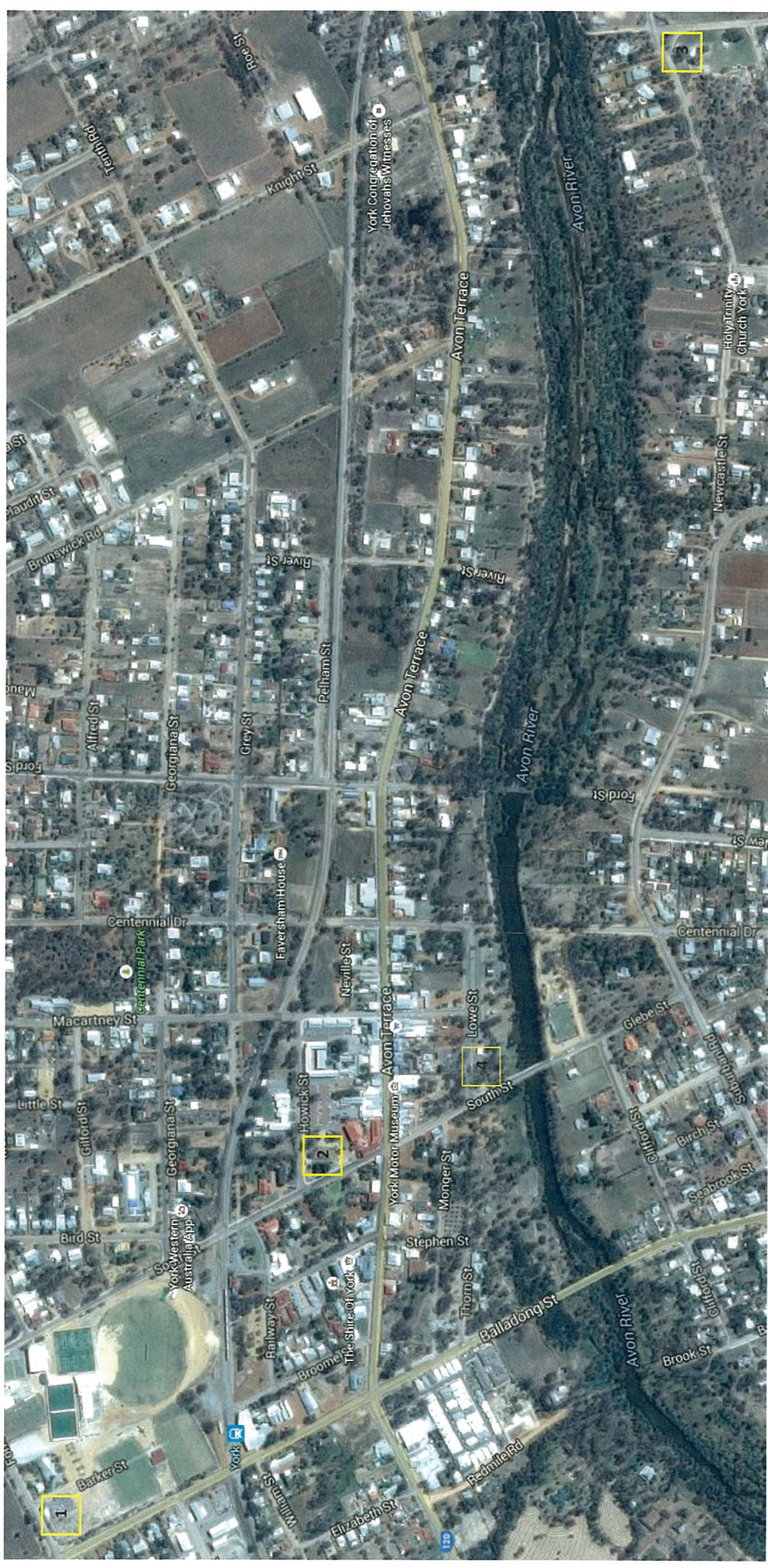


# SITE ASSESSMENT SELECTION

## SUGGESTED SITES

Based on direction from Community consultation, current working group and the Shire of York four sites were assessed for their potential to accommodate a new facility:

- Site 1: Existing Skate park location
- Site 2: Land Adjacent to Joanna Whitely Park
- Site 3: Candace Bateman Park Corner of Cowan & Newcastle St
- Site 4: Avon Park Corner of Lowe & South Street







## SITE 1 EXISTING SKATE PARK CORNER OF FOREST & BARKER ST

### SITE DESCRIPTION:

- The existing skate park consists of a solid concrete slab with skate elements modelled into the design.
- Located within the York Recreation and Convention Centre (YRCC) grounds and its associated sporting facilities (hockey field / netball courts).
- Existing sporting amenities including bins, limited seating and toilets accessible when events are held within the YRCC.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- The existing skate park is in close proximity to other similar recreational spaces such as the Recreational Centre, cricket training ground, netball and tennis courts allowing the proposed facility to key into associated amenities.
- There is already existing services available including rubbish bins and seating.

### CONSTRAINTS:

- The site is surrounded by blue metal, causing hazard issues with riders wanting to access the park, who do not have access to equipment to clear the blue metal before utilising the site.
- The space is relatively small and strictly confined by its surrounding existing uses, thus restricting possible expansion and various opportunities of community engagement / youth activation.
- Due to the function of the surrounding land use the location does not promote passive surveillance and or monitoring.
- The site is located within the only carpark entry of the Recreation Centre causing safety issues for both users and driving patrons attending Recreation Centre events.

### RATING OVERVIEW:

Of the four sites assessed, the existing skate park received a rating at **7/10**, making it the second highest rated site, with significant redevelopment possibilities for the new Youth Space. The current design location is poorly defined with the skate park lacking connectivity and being set within its associated sporting facility grounds, with no shade, water and limited seating options. The site has no footpath access points and would require significant redevelopment to encompass the York Youth Precinct vision. Although the site allows easy access and low impact on existing community facilities it is restricted by its size, opportunities of community engagement and youth activation will be significantly limited.







## SITE 2

### LAND ADJACENT TO JOANNA WHITELY PARK CORNER OF HOWICK & SOUTH STREET

#### SITE DESCRIPTION:

- The site consists of a large drain through the entire length of the block
- Located within the Central Hub area with amenities existing adjacent to the site.
- Many established shade trees and footpath accessible.

#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- The site is in close proximity to other similar active recreational spaces such as York Peace Park, Community Resource Centre and the existing adjacent memorial monuments.
- There are existing services and amenities available including shade trees, shelter, car parks and picnic areas

#### CONSTRAINTS:

- The sites existing drain will need substantial redevelopment to incorporate into the design.
- The size of the site is restricted due to adjacent land use thus restricting possible expansion and various opportunities of community engagement / youth activation without having to impact on adjacent spaces.
- The site is freehold land and would need initial funds to secure its purchase prior to development
- The site is located between two intersecting roads.
- The site would require soil and drainage investigations around and below the existing drain.

#### RATING OVERVIEW:

Of the four sites assessed, the land adjacent to Joanna Whitely Park received a rating of 5/10, as the least preferred site. The location rated poorly due to the high financial contribution required to purchase the land and investigate its soil / environmental suitability, combined with no capability for future expansion to include other youth precinct inclusions, due to the neighbouring carpark and size constraints of the site itself.







### SITE 3

#### CANDACE BATEMAN PARK CORNER NEWCASTLE ST & COWAN RD

##### SITE DESCRIPTION:

- Located on the eastern side of the Avon River on Newcastle Street approximately 3.2kms from the town centre.
- Existing park including a barbeque and playing area, which includes swings, half basketball court, football goals.
- Existing services available including rubbish bins , water, seating, shade and amenities.

##### OPPORTUNITIES:

- There are existing services and amenities available including shade trees, shelter, car parks and picnic areas.
- Large open grassy areas suitable for redevelopment.
- Shire owned reducing costs associated with land purchase and title use.

##### CONSTRAINTS:

- Distance from food outlets, public telephones, central youth hub activity.
- No footpath accessibility surrounding or adjacent to the site.
- Due to the function of the surrounding land use the location does not promote passive surveillance and or monitoring.

##### RATING OVERVIEW:

Of the four sites assessed, Candace Bateman Park received a rating of **6/10**, as the third preferred site. The proximity of the location to central youth activity a barrier to an inclusive Youth Precinct. Of the four sites assessed, this location was the furthest from CBD, with limited and in parts no footpath accessibility for users coupled with the location failing to provide passive surveillance and or monitoring.





**SITE 4**

**AVON PARK CORNER OF LOWE & SOUTH STREET**

**SITE DESCRIPTION:**

- Located within the existing Avon Park
- Large grassy area bordering Lowe & South Street
- Land currently owned by Shire of York
- Rectangular grassed site bordered by visitor parking, toilets and BBQ facilities

**OPPORTUNITIES:**

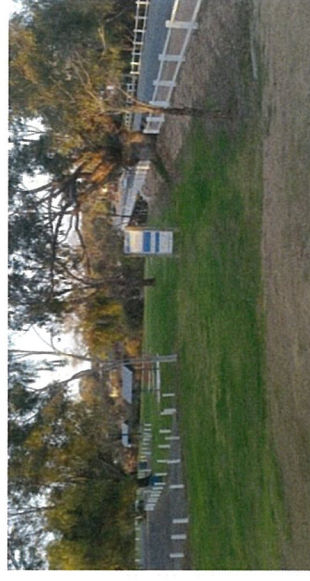
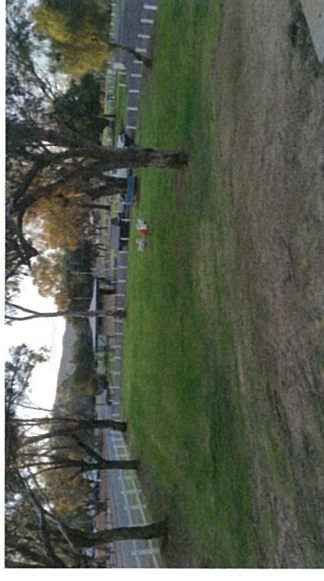
- The site on the corner of Lowe Street and South Street provides the opportunity to connect the skate park feature within the existing park aesthetically providing a “Youth Precinct” within a strong landscape framework.
- It is in close proximity to other facilities such as the Coffee Carriage, Central Business District, all ages playground and associated amenities.
- As the topography is generally flat with minimal structures, the site would require minimal landscape treatment and removal of vegetation.
- Centralised location providing a safer visible space for Youth to congregate.
- 77.78% of community consulted recommended the site for the York youth skate facility.

**CONSTRAINTS:**

- The current site houses a large mound / floodway which will need soil and drainage investigations to ensure the underlying soil composition and topography is suitable.
- The current land ownership is held by Shire of York with limited financial capacities noted, to assist with redevelopment of the area.
- The site is located in close proximity to a free flowing river, which could be a safety risk for younger users

**RATING OVERVIEW:**

The site rated highly in terms of its central location, access for both users and services and has a low impact on existing facilities , adjoining uses and users. It received a total rating of **9/10** Through the assessment process this site was the most appropriate for a new skate facility, due to pre-existing ownership by the Shire, existing amenities and surrounding comparable recreational based connectivity.





## SITE RECOMMENDATION

### PREFERRED SITE RECOMMENDATION

The evolving definition of skate parks today no longer restricts facilities to develop as an out of sight concrete park with little community interaction. Rather, a centrally located facility that allows easy site access, encouraging participation from the general community, is essential in creating a well used and maintained facility. Community acceptance and the increase of users, both skate and recreational, increases the opportunity for passive surveillance and the minimisation of anti-social behaviour.

The proposed site within Avon Park presents such an opportunity for the Shire of York to develop a Youth Precinct in the heart of the community that lifts the public profile of youth and is close to the town centre and existing amenities.

The site offers a unique design opportunity to tie into the existing recreational facets, and create a dynamic and activated community hub, that can offer recreational and social experiences for all members of the community, from day to day usage to community and regional events.

Based on the outcomes of the site assessment process, community consultations and working group reporting, a recommendation of the Avon Park site, as the most appropriate and preferred location for the new York Youth Precinct.

