

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES REPORT

## Concept plan for the upgrade to the BMX facility at Carmichael Park



We acknowledge that within the Cessnock local government area boundaries are the Traditional Lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which this Project is located and pay our

respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock Local Government Area.

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## Executive summary

Cessnock City Council engaged Spectrum Comms to undertake community engagement to inform the preparation of a concept plan to upgrade the BMX facility at Carmichael Park, Bellbird.

The objectives of the engagement strategy were to:

- Deliver an honest, innovative, flexible and transparent community engagement process
- Keep the community and other stakeholders informed about engagement activities through the provision of timely information and ongoing access to up-to-date information
- Ensure the commitments made to the community during the Project are tracked and met
- Close the loop with community and other stakeholders to ensure they understand how their input was used and any next steps.

This a preliminary consultation outcomes report from the first round of community engagement undertaken during October and November 2021. This includes the findings from an online survey, two online workshops, a drawing competition and an online ideas wall. This feedback will be used by Bike Tracks Australia and Bligh Tanner to prepare a draft concept plan that will be presented back to the community for further feedback.

This report includes an overview of the stakeholders who participated in consultation, the engagement methodology and the findings. Where appropriate, verbatim comments (*italicised*) have been included. Verbatim comments precisely represent the views of participants and help to illustrate the sentiment and desire of stakeholders. Copies of the survey questionnaire, the full results, communication collateral and workshop presentations can be found in the appendices under separate cover.

## Key findings

The key findings, in no particular order, from the first round of engagement undertaken for a concept plan for the upgrade of the BMX facility at Carmichael Park, Bellbird are as follows:

1. The facility needs to cater for all age groups and riding skill levels.
2. The space should be family-friendly and inclusive of everyone.
3. It would be ideal if the facility was built to a racing standard to provide an opportunity for the re-establishment of a local BMX club.
4. The track should be low maintenance.
5. The facility should have fencing to keep out undesirable uses such as dirt bikes and motorbikes.
6. Having both a tar and a natural track would help to minimise damage to the natural track after rain as people would be ore inclined to use the tar one.
7. Council should explore the idea of establishing a volunteer committee/group to help maintain the track.
8. A soft surface (natural/polymer) is preferable over a hard surface (concrete/tar) due to the increased risk of injuries after a fall however this needs to be weighed against maintenance requirements.
9. A pump track is perceived as the most versatile type of facility and can cater for different skills and uses including scooters and skateboards.
10. The community agrees the main purpose of the facility should be for bikes and this should include mountain bikes.
11. Toilets that are open and accessible, closer bubblers, seating and shade, tool kits and air pumps, bike stands/racks are desirable supporting amenities.

12. Charging stations and power points are not desirable as they may encourage anti-social behaviour.
13. Consideration given to installing security cameras and lighting to protect the facility against vandalism.
14. Council should consider sponsorship or advertising opportunities around the facility to support local businesses and encourage community ownership and pride.
15. Council should investigate the opportunity to integrate public art into the facility.

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 Project scope

Carmichael Park BMX facility is a regional facility located within the sportsground precinct and is the only BMX facility within the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA). Upgrades to the site have been identified in a number of strategic documents including Council's Skate and BMX Strategy 2020 and the Carmichael Park Masterplan 2020.

The existing facility is a freestyle dirt track and there is currently no formal user groups or formal competitions (e.g. clubs or associations) that are based/held at the site. Historically, local users of the site have maintained the integrity of the advanced dirt jumps, while Council monitors the use of the facility and undertakes regular risk assessments.

The facility lacks supporting infrastructure including shade, access to water, seating and pathways. The beginner and intermediate sections of the facility require upgrading and ongoing regular maintenance to maximise the potential use of the facility, and provide the opportunity for young and inexperienced riders to enhance their skills and improve the level of safety.

Council applied for \$250,000 in funding from the Resources for Regions Round Eight Grant program to complete upgrades to the BMX facility. To access this funding, a concept plan and detailed design was needed to proceed to procurement for construction to commence in early 2022. Council engaged BTA and Bligh Tanner to prepare the concept plan and detailed design and Spectrum Comms (Spectrum) to undertake engagement to support this work.

## 1.2 Project location

Carmichael Park is located in Bellbird in the Cessnock LGA. The site is bounded by Tennant Street and Sparke Street with residential bounding the other edges. Highlighted in yellow in Figure 1, the existing freestyle BMX facility is located in the south-western corner of the park.



Figure 1 Locality map



### 1.3 Project objectives

The Carmichael Park Master Plan 2020 identified improving passive recreation as a key design objective. To do this, the plan identified that one of the opportunities for passive recreation was to formalise the existing dirt BMX facility for beginner, intermediate and advanced users.

This Project works towards achieving this objective by undertaking communication and engagement with the community and other stakeholders to inform a concept plan and detailed design for the BMX facility.

### 1.4 Project negotiables

Community engagement is a process of involving people that are affected by or interested in a decision. It enables good governance, problem solving and decisions that are balanced and informed, resulting in better outcomes.

However, engagement recognises that although communities may exert influence, in this instance they did not have the authority to make the final decision on the concept plan. The power to make this decision rests with the elected Council. This required Council to be clear about what elements of the Project were open to influence from the community.

The following aspects of the BMX facility concept plan and detailed design were negotiable and open to influence from the community:

- The style and type of BMX facility eg. jump, pump, race, freestyle
- The track surface materials proposed to construct the upgraded BMX facility eg asphalt, concrete, dirt/natural, hybrid
- The variety and number of jumps and obstacles
- The type of support infrastructure and amenities at the facility.

## 1.5 Project timeline

Community and stakeholder engagement commenced on 11 October 2021. The first round of engagement concluded on 4 November 2021 and involved seeking input into the development of a draft concept plan.

A second round of engagement will commence in late November or early December 2021 and will involve presenting the draft concept plan back to the community and stakeholders for their feedback.

The draft concept plan will be informally exhibited during December 2021 and will be presented to Council in February 2022.

**Table 1 Project timeline**

Task	Timing
Project kick-off workshop	20 September 2021
Issue draft Community Engagement Plan for Council review	23 September 2021
Finalise and issue Community Engagement Plan	30 September 2021
Prepare communication collateral and organise engagement activities	1-8 October 2021
Open engagement and issue Project communication	11 October 2021
Facilitate first round of community and youth workshops	3 and 4 November 2021
BMX facility concept plan drafted	December/January 2021
Facilitate second round of community and youth workshops	January/February 2021
Exhibit draft BMX facility concept plan	January/February 2021
Issue community engagement outcomes report	February 2022
Finalise BMX facility concept plan	January/February 2022
Concept plan presented to Council adoption	February/March 2022



## 2. Stakeholders

### 2.1. Stakeholder overview

In its Community Engagement Strategy, Council defines community as individuals, groups and organisations that have a vested interest in the people of and the Cessnock Local Government Area.

For the purpose of this Project, we identified the following stakeholder groups:

- Residents – vicinity, local, regional, out of LGA
- BMX enthusiasts and interest groups
- Young people
- Businesses
- NSW government
- Local government
- Emergency services
- Media.

### 2.2. Stakeholder profiles

The profile of stakeholders with an interest in this Project varied from the professional and semi-professional BMX rider to the mums and dads who take their kids to the park to teach them to ride. The following profiles are based on real stakeholders consulted during the first round of engagement, however, names and images have been changed for privacy.

**Figure 2 Stakeholder profiles**



**MATT AND KATE**  
Parents of BMX racers

Matt and Kate live in Cessnock but have two sons who have just started racing BMX at the Tenambit track in Maitland LGA.

They would like to see the BMX facility at Carmichael Park built to racing standard so that families like theirs don't have to travel to other clubs all the time.

They like a hybrid surface made from tar and polymer.

They'd also like bike stands so riders have a place to park their bike so no one trips over them.



## **CRAIG**

Semi-professional rider

Craig is a semi-professional mountain bike rider who gets paid to ride. He's ridden on many different tracks of different surfaces and designs. He'd like to see better fencing installed at Carmichael Park to keep dirt bikes off the track to prevent damage. He prefers a polymer surface that has a softer landing but sees value in a tarred track that can be used after rain. He thinks pump tracks have the most to offer as a first stage and more can potentially be added on later.



## **JENNIFER**

Resident and parent

Jennifer is not a rider and doesn't really know anything technical about BMX. She does however have six kids and would love a facility that caters for her youngest children who don't have the skills of the older ones. She wants a facility that is safe and with toilets that are always open. She'd like a track that caters for all age groups. She thinks installing charging stations at the facility might encourage anti-social behaviour.



**SAM**

Former BMX racer

Sam grew up racing on the BMX track at Bellbird. He remembers racing every Sunday afternoon when the announcer's box was in the middle of the track. He's been pushing for an upgrade for several years and would like to see the track returned to racing standard. He's undertaken lots of maintenance at the track in recent years, rebuilding the jumps and berms himself to make it safe. He understands the importance of maintenance and wants to ensure that once upgraded, the track is not forgotten about.



**TOM**

12-year-old bike rider

Tom lives in Cessnock West and loves to ride his bike. He visits Carmichael Park BMX facility with his family as well as with his friends. He likes the idea of a polymer surface because it has a softer landing if you fall off your bike. He's worried that not every kid has the right protective gear and he doesn't want them to get hurt. He'd like a bubbler closer to the track in case he's forgotten to take a water bottle.

## 2.3. Stakeholder participation

During the first round of engagement, we engaged a range of stakeholders from across the stakeholder groups with a total of 235 unique interactions. As stakeholders could be a member of more than one stakeholder group, the numbers in Table 3 do not equal the total number of unique stakeholders.

While many issues, concerns or interests were shared across stakeholder groups, some themes were more prevalent among specific stakeholder groups than others. These findings are discussed in more detail in section 4.

**Table 2 Stakeholder participation and representation**

Stakeholder group	Number of stakeholders	Issue/Interest/Concern
Resident of Bellbird/Bellbird Heights	78	Use the facility to teach kids to ride, jump, watch others/hang out. More than one third visit a few times a week and more than half stay for 1-2 hours. Less likely to want events/competitions held at the facility. Want a facility that is easy to supervise.
Outside Cessnock LGA	19	Were active riders and/or parents of active riders. Visited BMX facilities to teach kids to ride, jump and watch others. 61 per cent had never visited the BMX facility at Carmichael Park. The variety of obstacles was the most important feature followed by multiple riders being able to use the track at once. Bins and toilets were the most important amenities.
Bike riders	103	Predominantly aged 34 and younger and more than 80 per cent of active riders were male. Active bike riders like to use a BMX facility to jump, do tricks and race their friends. More than 50 per cent visit the BMX facility at Carmichael Park a few times a week, once a week or a few times a month. 81 per cent of riders had visited a BMX facility outside of Cessnock LGA – these included tracks in Maitland, Singleton and in Lake Macquarie. The variety of obstacles was the most important feature of a facility followed by multiple riders being able to use it at the same time. Bins, toilets, shaded areas and drinking stations were the most important amenities.
Parents/guardians	100	Teaching kids to ride was the greatest use of the facility. Visit a few times a week or a few times a month and spend 1-2 hours there. More likely to have visited other BMX facilities outside of Cessnock, particularly Tenambit/Maitland facility. Multiple riders being able to use the facility at the same time was a priority followed by easy to supervise. Bins and shaded areas were the most important amenities.
Young people (aged 24 and under)	47	Predominantly male respondents (85 per cent), and active bike riders. Use the BMX facility to jump and do tricks. 50 per cent visited a few times a week and spend 1-2 hours. Having separate tracks for different skill levels was the most important feature of a BMX facility. Bins and drinking stations were the most important amenities.
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	30	Bike rider and parents/guardians who use the facility to jump, race their friends and do tricks. 41 per cent use the facility a few times a week for between 1-2 hours. Multiple riders being able to use the facility at the same time and the variety of obstacles were the most important features of a BMX facility. Bins and toilets were the most important amenities.
People with disability	12	Came from across all age groups and equal numbers of male and female respondents. Bike riders and parents/guardians and interested residents. Use the BMX facility equally for watching others and hanging out, teaching kids to ride, jumping, tricks and

Stakeholder group	Number of stakeholders	Issue/Interest/Concern
		racing their friends. Use the facility every day or a few times a month. Less likely to have visited another BMX track outside of Cessnock. Bins and seating were the most important amenities.
Male	123	Predominantly bike riders, a parent/guardian of an active bike rider or both. Like to jump and do tricks while at the BMX facility. More than 30 per cent visit a few times a week for between 1-2 hours. 75 per cent had visited a BMX facility outside of Cessnock. Multiple riders using the track and the variety of obstacles were the most important features of a BMX facility. Bins and shaded areas were the most important amenities.
Female	91	Respondents predominantly parents/guardians of riders or an interested resident. Use the BMX facility to teach kids to ride. 1 in 5 respondents had never visited the BMX track at Carmichael Park and 1 in 2 had never visited a BMX facility outside of Cessnock. A facility that could be used by multiple riders at the same time and a facility that was easy to supervise were the most important features females followed by separate tracks for different skill levels. Bins and shaded areas were the most important amenities.

### 3. Methodology

A range of online tools and methods were used to communicate with and engage the community and other stakeholders during the first round of engagement for the concept plan. As some COVID-19 restrictions were still in place for the unvaccinated until 1 December 2021, all engagement activities were delivered online.

**Table 3 List of tools and methods used and outcomes**

Tool/method	Detail	Outcome
Advertising	Advertising in local media to advise of upcoming consultation opportunities and provide	1 advertisement placed
Drawing competition	A drawing competition was open to children aged 12 and under to draw their ideal BMX facility. One entry was selected to win a family season pass to the local pool for the 2021/22. The competition was open from 11-31 October 2021.	1 entry received
Letterbox drops	A DL flyer with Project information and a QR code was letterbox dropped to residents living adjacent to the BMX facility at Carmichael Park. The letterbox drop took place on 11 October 2021.	140 properties received flyers
Media releases	Proactive or responsive media statements or announcements provided to the media and other key stakeholders to provide updates, address concerns and clarify information	1 media release issued
Phone interviews	One-on-one phone calls were made to community members who are actively involved in BMX in the region and with maintenance of the facility over a number of years.	1 interview
Signage	Corflute signs were installed at the BMX facility to inform users about the Project and included a QR code and details about how they could have their say. The corflutes were installed on 11 October 2021.	5 corflutes installed
Social media	Online social connection platforms were used to share Project information and interact with stakeholders. Posts were shared on Facebook and Instagram.	Xx post reach Xx post engagement Xx comments received Xx private messages received



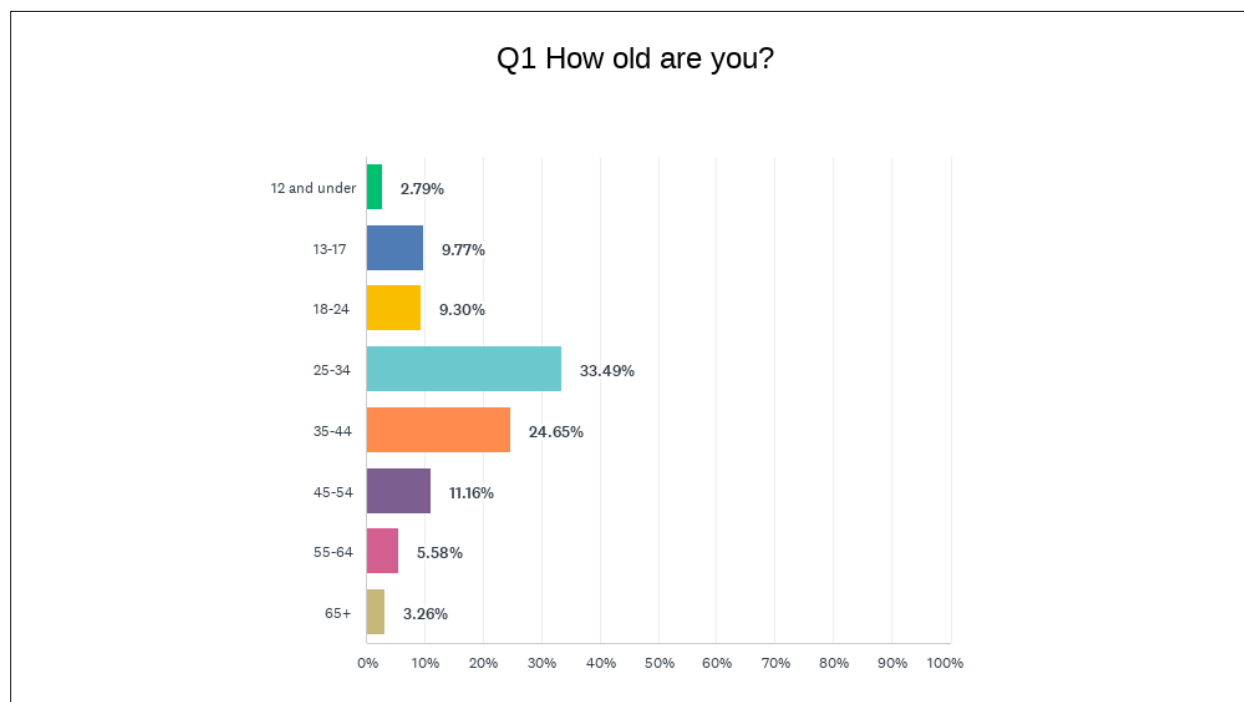
Tool/method	Detail	Outcome
Social Pinpoint – Ideas Wall	An online ideation tool where stakeholders shared their ideas including links and pictures. Ideas could be commented on and liked or disliked by other stakeholders. To be more inclusive to those without internet, stakeholders could also text in their ideas to a mobile number, however, no texts were received.	6 ideas and comments received
Survey	An online survey was used to obtain input and feedback on the BMX facility concept plan. The survey was promoted on Council's website, social media, via media release and corflutes installed at the facility. The survey was open from 11-31 October 2021.	215 survey responses
Webpage	A Project webpage on Council's corporate site was created in the Have your say section. The webpage include a Project overview, links to the survey and Ideas Wall, instructions for entering the drawing competition, links to supporting documents and strategies and a Project timeline.	Xx page views
Workshops	Two online workshops were held with the community to seek input into development of the concept plan and seek feedback on the draft concept plan presented by the technical consultants. The first round of workshops was held on 3 and 4 November 2021. Workshop participants could register their interest in participating at the end of the online survey, via Council's website, or via social media.	11 participants



## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Survey

There were 215 completed survey responses received. Of those, 123 were male, 91 were female, 47 were aged 24 and under, 30 were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and 12 identified as having a disability.

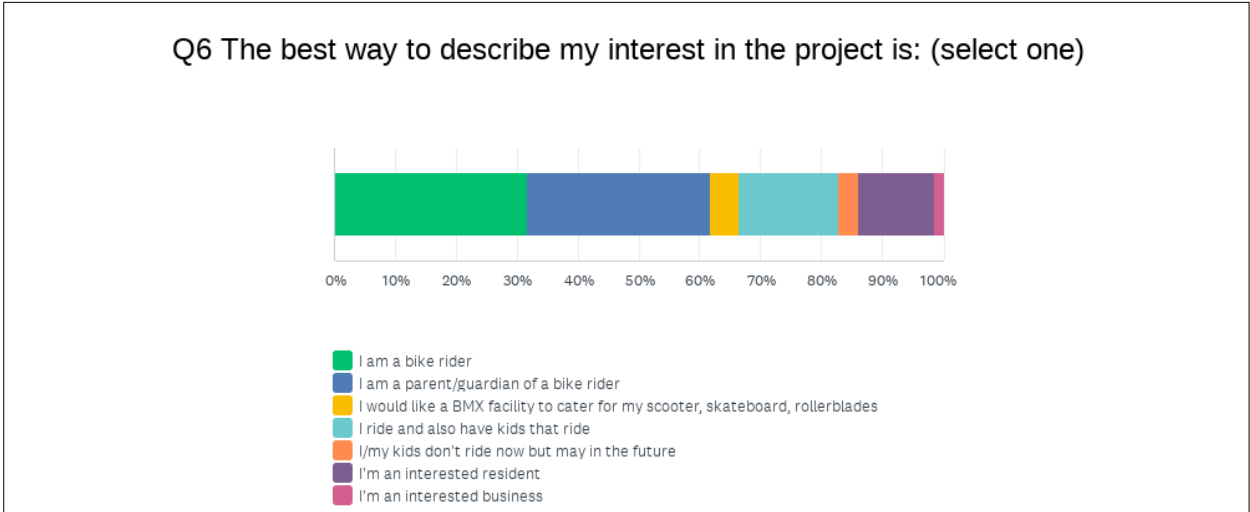


Most respondents were from the Cessnock LGA, however, 19 came from other LGAs including one from outside NSW.

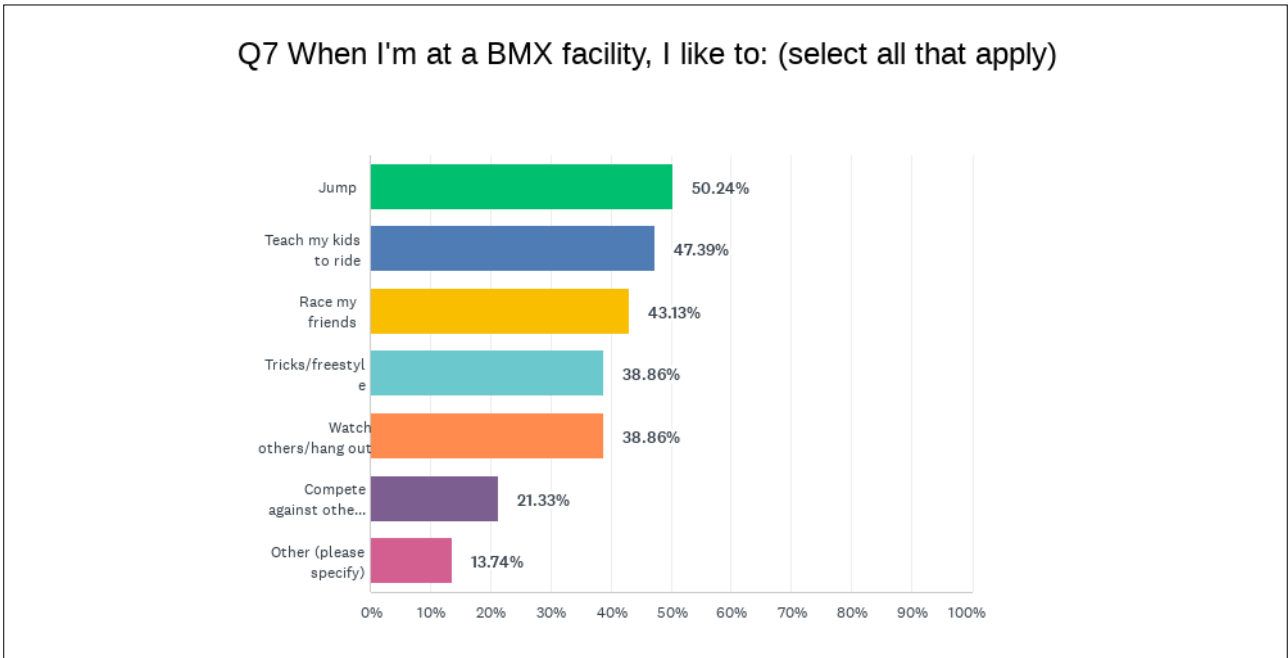
**Table 4 Survey respondents by suburb and area**

Suburb/Area	Number of respondents	Suburb/Area	Number of respondents
Aberdare	8	Kurri Kurri	8
Abermain	4	Laguna	2
Bellbird	71	Lake Macquarie LGA	2
Bellbird Heights	7	Maitland LGA	8
Branxton	4	Millfield	9
Cessnock	43	Mt Vincent	1
Cessnock West	6	Mulbring	1
Cliftleigh	2	Nulkaba	2
Dubbo LGA	1	Outside NSW	1
East Branxton	1	Paxton	5
East Cessnock	1	Pelaw Main	1
Ellalong	4	Pelton	1
Greater Sydney	3	Pokolbin	3
Greta	1	Singleton LGA	3
Heddon Greta	1	Upper Hunter LGA	1
Kearsley	2	Weston	5
Kitchener	1	Wollombi	1

Just over 30 per cent (68 people) of respondents best described themselves as a bike rider, 30 per cent (65 people) described themselves as a parent/guardian of a bike rider, 16 per cent (35 people) said they and their kids were bike riders, and 3 per cent (7 people) did not ride now but said they may in the future and 12 per cent (27 people) said they were interested residents.

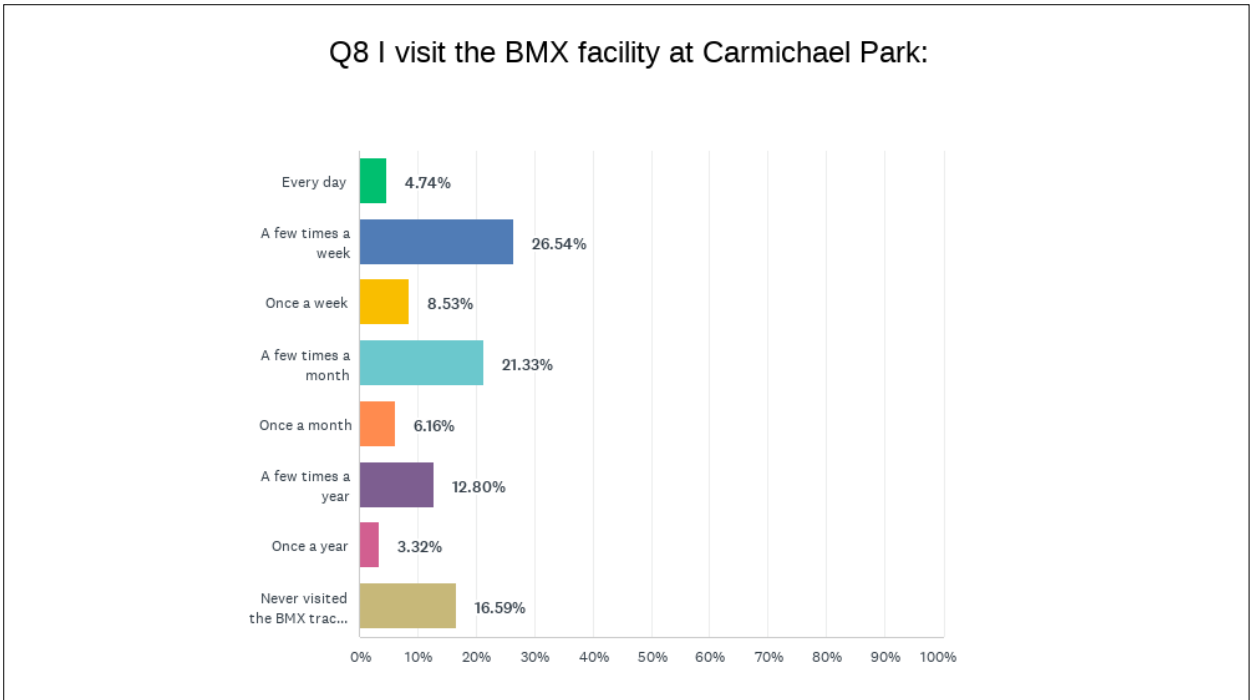


More than 50 per cent (106 people) said they like to jump – learn to jump, get air-time – while at a BMX facility, closely followed by teaching kids to ride at 47 per cent (100 people). Almost 44 per cent (91 people) said they liked to race their friends around the track and almost 38 per cent (82 people) they liked to do tricks and freestyle.

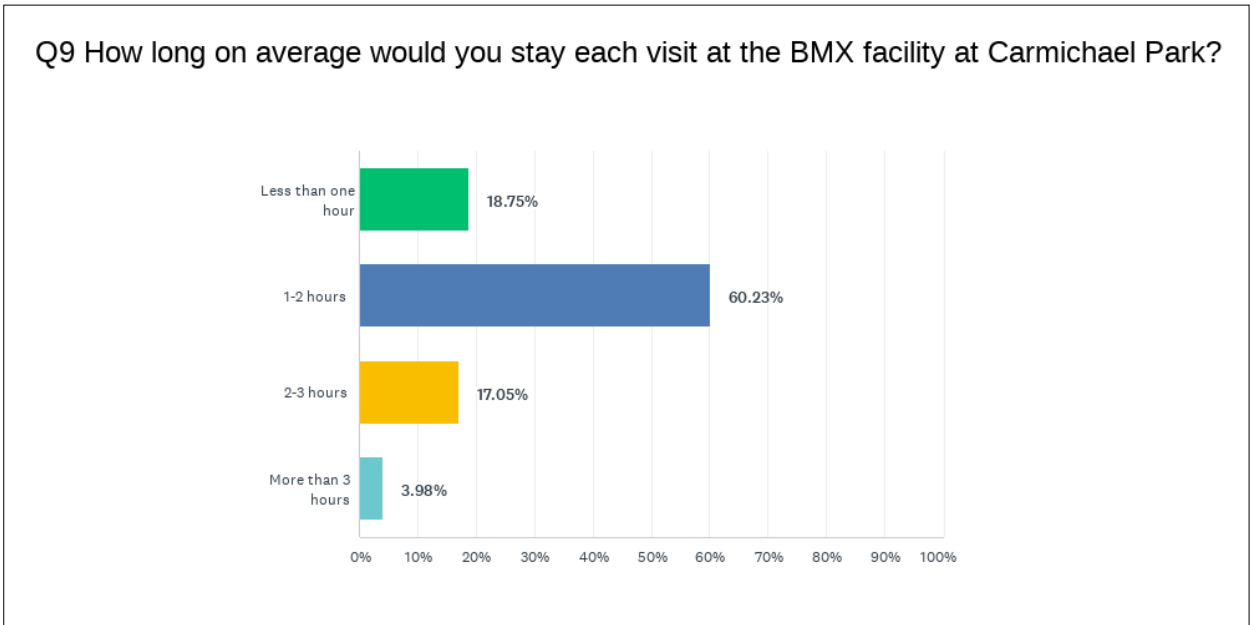


BMX facilities were also popular for those just wanting to watch others and hang out with 38 per cent (82 people) selecting this option. An open response allowed people to suggest other things they liked to do at a BMX facility. Responses included watching grandchildren, exercise and fitness and a place to take people with disability to enjoy the atmosphere.

More than a quarter of respondents (56 people) visit the BMX facility at Carmichael Park a few times a week. Just over 16 per cent (35 people) had never visited the facility.



For those who did visit the facility at Carmichael Park, more than 60 per cent (106 people) would spend an average of 1-2 hours there each visit.



More than 60 per cent of respondents (130 people) had visited other BMX facilities outside of the Cessnock LGA, of which 20 per cent visited other facilities a few times a year. While many of the other facilities were skate parks or mountain bike tracks, some were dedicated BMX tracks. Among the most frequently visited were Maitland BMX at Tenambit, Cameron Park, Singleton, Dungog, Glenrock, Broke, Wallsend, San Remo and Bridges Hill.

Respondents had varied reasons why they liked to visit these other facilities, ranging from the multifunctional purpose of the facilities to suit different riding abilities and styles to the supporting infrastructure in place, such as toilets and seating. The full responses have been provided in the appendices under separate cover.

Respondents were asked to indicate how important various features of a BMX facility were to them on a likert scale where 1 was not important and 4 was very important. There was also an “unsure” option as we anticipated some respondents would be unfamiliar with specific BMX jargon or not actual riders themselves. The collated results were then weighted to determine their level of importance for stakeholders for a possible score out of 4.

**Table 5 Importance of BMX facility features**

Feature of BMX facility	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Unsure	Total respondents	Weighted average
Multiple riders can use the facility at the same time	2.51% 5	3.52% 7	18.09% 36	74.37% 148	1.51% 3	199	3.69
The variety of obstacles eg jumps, rhythm section, rollers, step-ups, step-downs, table-tops	2.51% 5	6.53% 13	27.64% 55	58.79% 117	4.52% 9	199	3.56
The facility is easy to observe or supervise	4.52% 9	7.54% 15	22.61% 45	64.82% 129	0.50% 1	199	3.49
There are separate tracks for different skill levels	4.02% 8	10.55% 21	21.11% 42	61.81% 123	2.51% 5	199	3.48
The height and shape of the berms/turns	6.53% 13	10.55% 21	30.15% 60	46.23% 92	6.53% 13	199	3.36
There are dedicated jump lines	9.55% 19	14.07% 28	35.68% 71	31.66% 63	9.05% 18	199	3.17
The height of jumps	9.05% 18	18.09% 36	34.17% 68	33.17% 66	5.53% 11	199	3.08
The facility is suitable to host events or competitions on	16.08% 32	20.10% 40	24.62% 49	35.68% 71	3.52% 7	199	2.90
A starting pad/gates	18.59% 37	21.61% 43	24.12% 48	28.14% 56	7.54% 15	199	2.84
The facility is suitable to	16.08% 32	30.65% 61	22.61% 45	26.63% 53	4.02% 8	199	2.72

ride in all  
weather

Respondents were asked to indicate how important various supporting amenities and infrastructure for a BMX facility were to them on a likert scale where 1 was not important and 5 was very important. The collated results were then weighted to determine their level of importance for stakeholders out of a possible score of 5.

**Table 6 Importance of supporting infrastructure**

Supporting infrastructure	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Very important	Total respondents	Weighted average
Bins for rubbish and recycling	2.53% 5	2.02% 4	4.55% 9	19.19% 38	71.72% 142	198	<b>4.56</b>
A shaded area	4.55% 9	2.02% 4	9.09% 18	31.82% 63	52.53% 104	198	<b>4.26</b>
Toilets	4.55% 9	5.05% 10	11.11% 22	29.29% 58	50.00% 99	198	<b>4.15</b>
Drinking station	8.59% 17	4.55% 9	10.10% 20	27.78% 55	48.99% 97	198	<b>4.04</b>
Seating	6.57% 13	11.11% 22	14.65% 29	26.26% 52	41.41% 82	198	<b>3.85</b>
Picnic tables	9.60% 19	15.15% 30	22.22% 44	22.22% 44	30.81% 61	198	<b>3.49</b>
Lighting	17.17% 34	10.10% 20	15.15% 30	25.25% 50	32.32% 64	198	<b>3.45</b>
Fencing	28.79% 57	13.13% 26	15.15% 30	16.67% 33	26.26% 52	198	<b>2.98</b>
Landscaping	23.74% 47	18.18% 36	19.70% 39	21.21% 42	17.17% 34	198	<b>2.90</b>
Bike racks	31.31% 62	16.67% 33	19.19% 38	18.69% 37	14.14% 28	198	<b>2.68</b>
Access to power point/phone charging station	53.54% 106	12.63% 25	14.14% 28	10.61% 21	9.09% 18	198	<b>2.09</b>

The survey also included an open response question where people could share other comments and suggestions for the BMX facility at Carmichael Park. There were 119 open comments received and these have been provided in full in the appendices under separate cover.

Common themes included providing a facility that was suitable for families and children to learn on and progress, considerations about maintenance, requests for a pump track, requests for a race or competition track, concerns about vandalism and damage caused by motorbikes and anti-social behaviour and requests for specific types of jumps and layouts.

## 4.2 Round 1 workshops

Community workshops were held on 3 and 4 November 2021. While one workshop had originally be targeted toward young people, the decision was made to open both workshops to all ages to encourage registrations.

The workshops ran for about 90 minutes and included an overview of the Project and its scope, the negotiables and how the participants' input would be used to inform the draft concept plan, and next steps.

A Mentimeter interactive presentation format was used. This allowed workshop participants to answer multiple choice and open-ended questions to provide input on what they wanted to see in a draft concept plan. There were also opportunities for open discussion between participants to discuss the type of BMX facility they wanted, the surface type, other uses at the facility and supporting infrastructure and amenities.

Eleven people participated (10 voted) in the first round of workshops representing semi-professional and amateur bike riders, parents of and BMX racers, parents of recreational riders, recreational riders and school staff.

Participants were asked to describe the BMX facility as it is today as well as what they hoped it would be like in the future.

**Figure 3** Mentimeter workshop description activity

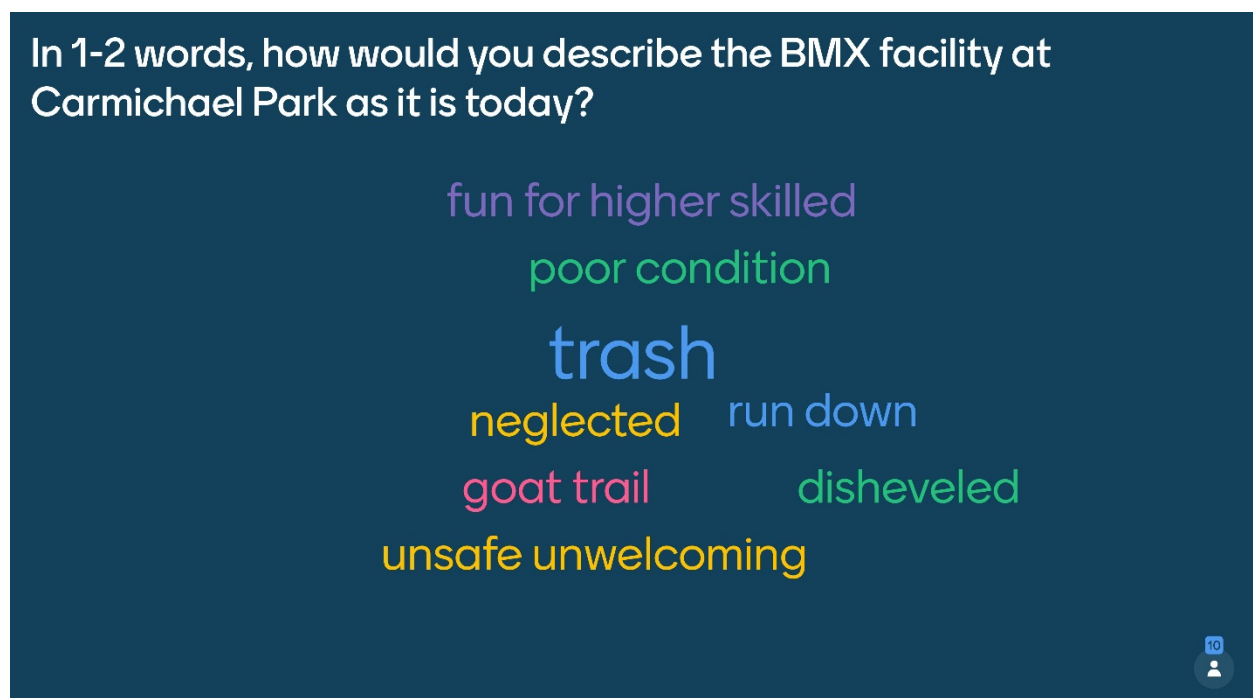




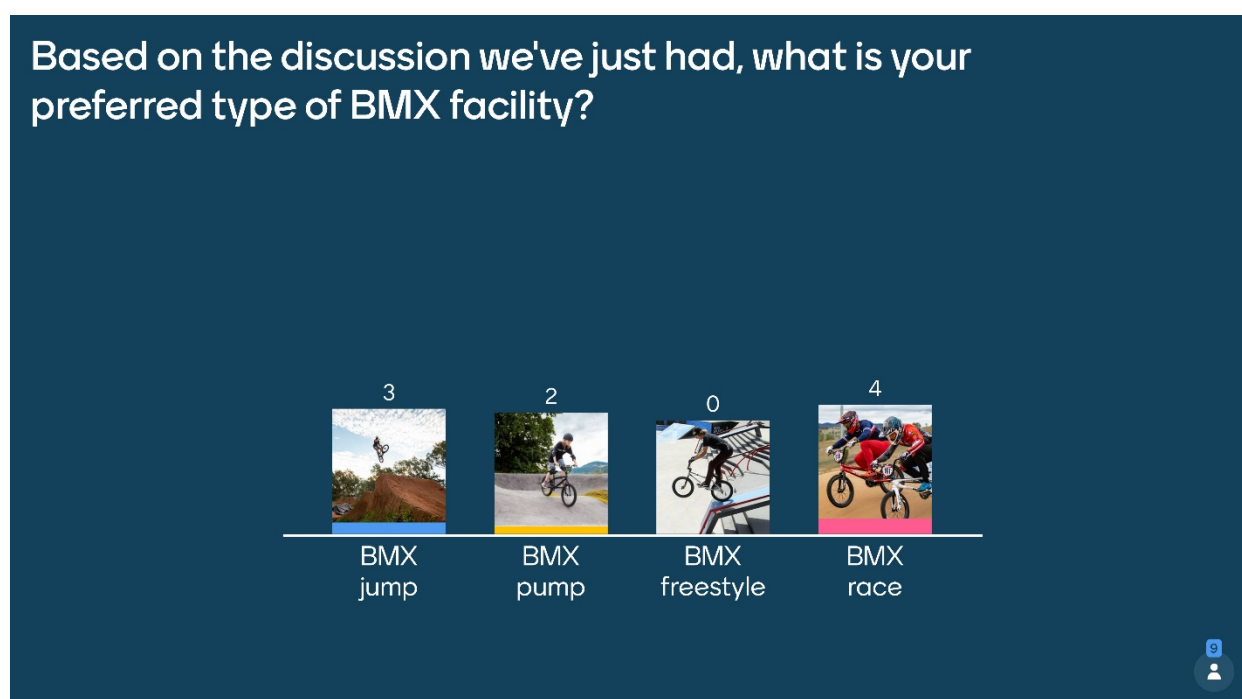
Figure 4 Mentimeter workshop visioning activity



Participants discussed the various types of BMX facilities – jump, pump, race and freestyle – although everyone acknowledged these types of facilities are not mutually exclusive and often include elements of all.

There was no general consensus among workshop participants for the type of BMX facility. Those who currently or previously race BMX would like to see a race standard track built while others saw a pump track as being more inclusive and versatile. Many believed that a pump track, if designed well, could provide for less experienced riders and more advanced riders, with “bumps” for young children offering opportunities to be “jumps” for older and more advanced riders.

Figure 5 BMX facility preferences



All participants agreed that the track needed to cater for the most riders possible in terms of age and skill. Participants were open to Council pursuing a staged approach to the facility upgrade. They understood that Council had a limited budget and may need to pursue alternative funding for the construction of future stages that may cater for more advanced or alternative lines.

Unprompted, participants discussed the importance of the first stage generating new interest in the sport of BMX in the hope that it may create the momentum needed for Cessnock to establish a BMX club. This would open opportunities for future events at the facility.

There was also significant discussion held around the type of surface the track should have. Again, participants recognised this is often determined by the type of BMX facility, for example, a modern pump track is almost always tar/asphalt. Participants discussed the merits of the surface types which included softer falls to prevent more serious injuries, maintenance requirements and its flow on effects to safety, and the different uses and the potential for damage.

There was a general consensus that those with an interest in racing preferred a hybrid surface with a mix of tarred berms and dirt/natural straights and obstacles with a polymer coating. Many participants with extensive riding and racing experience were familiar with the poly surface, however, all shared concerns about ongoing maintenance and management. This included how to keep off other users – such as skaters, scooters and remote control cars – which could damage the poly surface, hastening degradation and the need for maintenance.

While an asphalt track was recognised as being the best surface from a maintenance perspective (especially as there is no community or volunteer committee to undertake regular maintenance), there were some concerns about injuries and falls. Younger workshop participants noted that not every child with a bike was also equipped with the right protective gear to prevent serious injury in the event of a fall.

A dirt or natural surface without any polymer coating was not seen as an ideal surface due to the extensive maintenance requirements. Concrete surfaces were also considered too dangerous in the event of a fall.

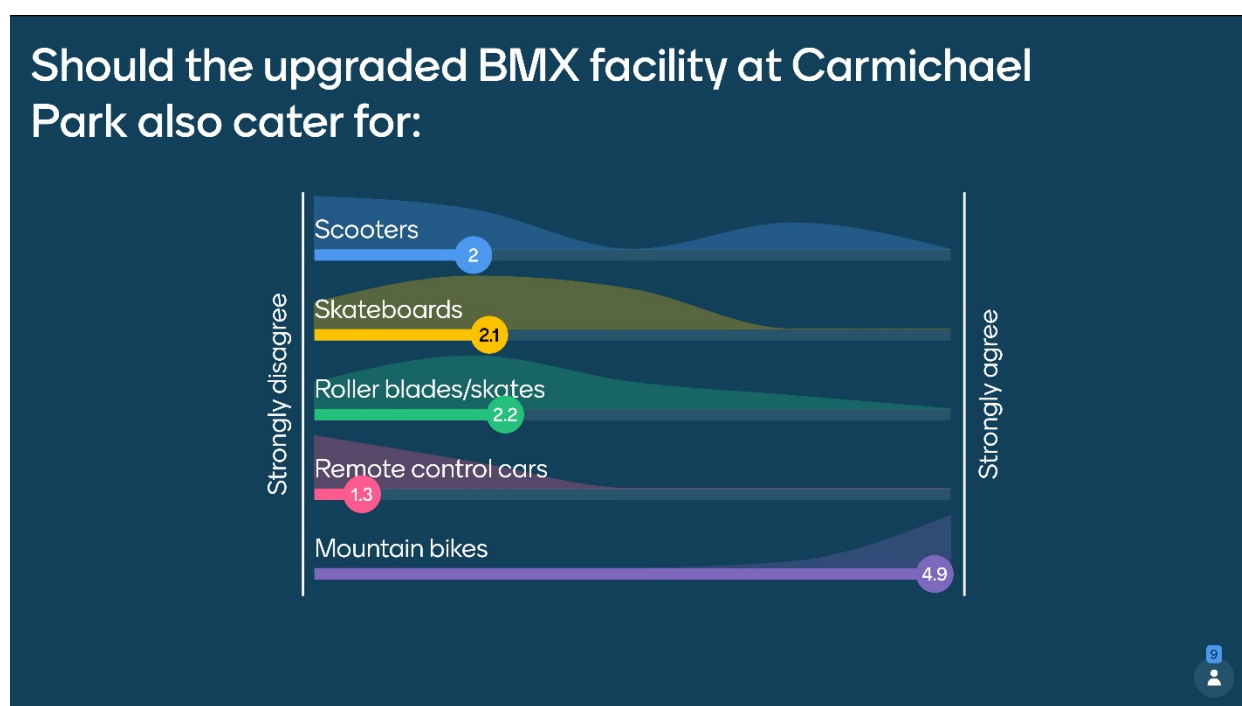
Figure 6 BMX surface preferences



Participants also raised the issue of how to prevent damage and vandalism to the track – either from scooters, skaters or remote control cars to dirt and motorbikes. This was seen to be a significant risk for a natural or poly surface track. However, participants recognised that it was difficult to regulate and keep out these uses without significant fencing and security. Participants were asked to indicate on a likert scale how strongly they agreed or disagreed with certain uses being catered for on the upgraded facility, where 1 was strongly disagree and 5 was strongly agree.

Bikes – be they BMX, mountain or street – should all be catered for based on participant discussion, however skaters, scooters and remote control cars were seen as less desirable. In the event the surface of the track is tarred or asphalt, participants had no issues with sharing with track with other uses.

Figure 7 Participant preferences other uses of the facility



Participants requested Council consider some other items/issues regardless of the track and surface type, being:

- the direction was clearly marked or indicated on the track for all riders
- fencing and gate systems are installed to keep out dirt and motorbikes
- gate to allow emergency vehicle access
- security cameras and lighting may be required to prevent vandalism
- tools, pumps and repair kits for community use
- hours of use during different seasons (more likely to be used in the evening during summer)
- accessibility of the facility and surrounding infrastructure and track as paracycling increases in popularity
- coaching clinics or educational signage to teach younger riders etiquette
- opportunities to integrate public art as an alternative outlet for graffiti
- engage with the local community to form a volunteer committee to help look after the facility
- investigate partnering opportunities to host events and jams at the facility with youth services such as HeadSpace and the PCYC, pop culture NitroCircus, professional and semi-professional riders

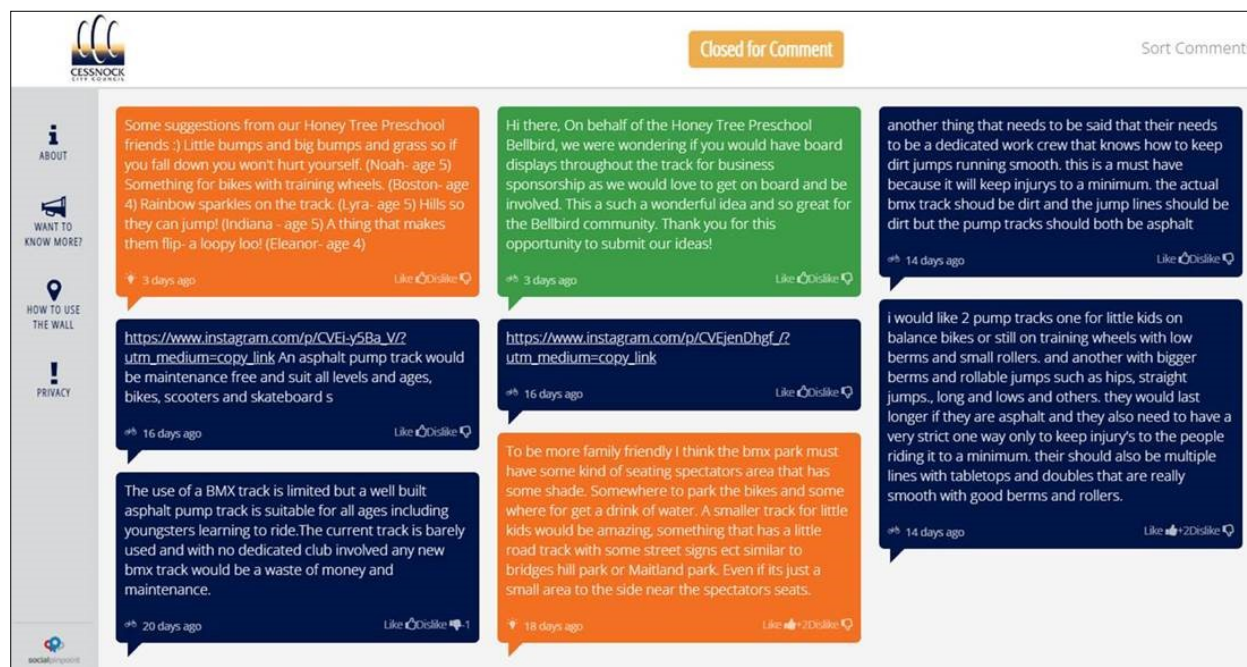
### 4.3 Ideas wall

There were eight suggestions and two videos shared to the ideas wall between 11 and 31 October 2021. All submissions were made online via Council's website.

Suggestions included an asphalt pump track to suit all skill levels and ages, possibly as two tracks to cater for beginners and more advanced riders, as well as including bikes, scooters and skateboards. Stakeholders noted the need for maintenance on any dirt jump and this would require a dedicated work crew.

Supporting amenities people would like to see included seating, shade, bike racks and a drinking fountain. There was also a suggestion that the facility might include advertising/sponsorship opportunities for local businesses.

Figure 8 Screenshot of ideas wall



*"The use of a BMX track is limited but a well built asphalt pump track is suitable for all ages including youngsters learning to ride. The current track is barely used and with no dedicated club involved any new bmx track would be a waste of money and maintenance."*

*"To be more family friendly I think the bmx park must have some kind of seating spectators area that has some shade. Somewhere to park the bikes and some where for get a drink of water."*

*"A smaller track for little kids would be amazing, something that has a little road track with some street signs ect similar to bridges hill park or Maitland park. Even if its just a small area to the side near the spectators seats."*

*"[https://www.instagram.com/p/CVEjenDhgf/?utm\\_medium=copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CVEjenDhgf/?utm_medium=copy_link)"*

*"[https://www.instagram.com/p/CVEI-y5Ba\\_V/?utm\\_medium=copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CVEI-y5Ba_V/?utm_medium=copy_link) An asphalt pump track would be maintenance free and suit all levels and ages, bikes, scooters and skateboards."*

*"I would like 2 pump tracks one for little kids on balance bikes or still on training wheels with low berms and small rollers. and another with bigger berms and rollable jumps such as hips, straight jumps., long and lows and others. they would last longer if they are asphalt and they also need to have a very strict one way only to keep injury's to the people riding it to a minimum. their should also be multiple lines with tabletops and doubles that are really smooth with good berms and rollers."*

*"Another thing that needs to be said that their needs to be a dedicated work crew that knows how to keep dirt jumps running smooth. this is a must have because it will keep injuries to a*

*minimum. the actual bmx track should be dirt and the jump lines should be dirt but the pump tracks should both be asphalt."*

*"On behalf of the Honey Tree Preschool Bellbird, we were wondering if you would have board displays throughout the track for business sponsorship as we would love to get on board and be involved. This is a such a wonderful idea and so great for the Bellbird community. Thank you for this opportunity to submit our ideas!"*

*"Little bumps and big bumps and grass so if you fall down you won't hurt yourself." - Noah, 5*

*"Something for bikes with training wheels." - Boston, 4*

*"Rainbow sparkles on the track." - Lyra, 5*

*"Hills so they can jump!" - Indiana, 5*

*"A thing that makes them flip- a loopy loo!" - Eleanor, 4*

#### 4.4 Drawing competition

There was one entry received in the drawing competition. This is statistically insignificant to group ideas or suggestions and have been considered in the broader consultation context.

**Figure 9 Drawing competition entry**

