

**Title: Heritage Ranch BMX/Skate Park**

**From: BMX/Skate Park Focus Group**

This report is being offered as an update to the Heritage Ranch Owners Association Board and membership as an opportunity to further discuss the possible options for establishing a BMX/skate park and get direction from the board for further action.

### **Focus Group Members**

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### **Goal**

The focus group was established by the Heritage Ranch Homeowners Association Board of Directors to explore the possibility of developing a new recreational amenity for the enjoyment of Heritage Ranch residents of all ages and abilities.

### **Recommendations**

The BMX/Skate Park Focus Group recommends that the HROA board direct the focus group and staff to:

1. Gather additional information regarding three sites: the old pavilion location, the CSD property, and the area of Gateway park adjacent to the church property;
2. Consider a phased approach for adding skate and BMX features, beginning with simpler features that might provide a “proof of concept” to assess member interest in a possible new amenity;
3. Work with the Heritage Ranch Community Services District to identify opportunities to work together through their authority to utilize funds for recreational uses;
4. Conduct outreach to our membership regarding interest in possibly adding a BMX/skate park amenity and utilizing HROA funds to build and maintain the amenity;
5. Conduct outreach to our membership regarding the possibility of member volunteers who have the ability to assist with building both BMX and skate features; and
6. Plan to include questions related to the use of HROA funds for these new amenities to be placed on the 2023 ballot.

### **Background**

Skateboarding and BMX bicycle riding are popular activities that municipalities and private organizations have sought to encourage through the development of specialized facilities. Locally, there are public skateboard parks in Paso Robles, Templeton, Cambria and San Luis Obispo. There is a public BMX dirt jump park in Morro Bay and the City of Paso Robles in partnership with the Paso Robles Recreation Foundation recently approved the development of a paved pump track at Barney Schwartz Park that will accommodate cyclists, skateboarders and scooter riders. Below are some images of existing BMX and skate parks. While these are larger facilities, smaller installations can be just as popular.



### **Challenges**

There have been a number of challenges which have historically hindered the development of this kind of facility/facilities. The first challenge is the concern of additional financial liability for the HROA. Through the leadership of Board President Tingley, it has been determined that the HROA could limit its liability through a combination of appropriate signage alerting users to the inherent danger of BMX/skate activities, requiring the use of helmets and other appropriate safety equipment, and increased indemnity through our insurance carrier. The second challenge is the cost of the development and maintenance of what would likely be considered a new amenity. Our governing documents require that the use of HROA funds for any new amenities be approved by a majority vote of our membership. This can be accomplished through the annual election. Development costs could be reduced through the use of volunteers and private fundraising, but maintenance costs would likely have to be incorporated into the budget. There is the possibility of partnering with the Heritage Ranch Community Services District to utilize their property and funding for recreational uses. The HROA would need to further explore this opportunity.

### **Project Description**

Given the size of the population this facility will serve, it will be necessary to identify a currently vacant property of 1-1.5 acres. Ideally, the location would be in close proximity to other recreational amenities, on an HROA road close to water and power utilities. While collocation of a separate skatepark and BMX dirt jump park would be ideal, it may be necessary to consider a phased approach whereby one location is developed with wood and metal features that would be used by skateboarders, scooter riders, and possible freestyle BMX riders and another location developed with dirt jump features.

The evolution of these similar sports has resulted in primarily separate facilities with more specialized uses. Municipalities and private organizations have been building skate parks for over 20 years, while BMX dirt jump and pump tracks have been a more recent development. The first municipally-owned dirt jump track in California is located in San Jose. Calabazas BMX Park was opened in June of 2007.



It can be difficult to accommodate the different needs of riders in one facility and for that reason it may be more efficient to utilize two separate locations for more modest early phase improvements. A number of municipalities and organizations have had success with with simpler skate features that are erected on a flat concrete pad.



### **Possible Locations**

The focus group has conducted a thorough review of the vacant parcels of land around our community and recommend further research be done on three locations: the old pavilion location, the CSD property, and the area of Gateway park adjacent to the church property.

#### The Old Pavillion Location

The former pavillion was located near the large pool. This location has a number of benefits. It is close to existing amenities. There is language in our governing documents that requires the replacement of removed amenities with new amenities. It would have to be researched as to whether the HROA would be allowed to spend money on this new amenity as a replacement for the pavillion. However, it is most likely that any use of HROA funds would require membership approval.



#### The CSD Property

The CSD property refers to both the area behind the CSD office that was once used as a dirt jump area and the current percolation ponds. The CSD will be removing the ponds and may be open to incorporating a recreational amenity in the reuse of that property. This would allow for the use of CSD funds rather than HROA funds, but is likely a number of years away. The area behind the CSD office could be utilized sooner, but is not ideal as it isn't really near any other amenities and would be somewhat hidden from view.



**June 23, 2022**

**Heritage Ranch Owners Association Open Board Meeting**

Gateway Park

This location is close to existing recreational amenities and a bathroom. It is a natural gathering spot for kids and the proximity to the church might offer the opportunity for partnership with the church. Like the old pavillion location, any use of HROA funds in this location would likely require membership approval. In addition, questions have been raised about whether there is a prohibition on developing a new amenity in this location due to greenbelt restrictions. However, if it is possible to use this area, then it could be ideal for the installation of a flat concrete pad and smaller more cost-effective features.



**Conclusion**

While there have been numerous verbal reports to the board and membership regarding focus group activities, it is a good time for the board and membership to receive a written report, as an opportunity to solicit feedback from members. It would be helpful for the board to provide direction to the focus group and staff for how to move forward.