



# BALLARAT REGIONAL CRITERIUM TRACK FEASIBILITY STUDY

PREPARED FOR  
BALLARAT SEBASTOPOL  
CYCLING CLUB, 2016



## INTRODUCTION

Ballarat Sebastopol Cycling Club, known as BSCC, is an ambitious club with a clear growth plan – it wants to have a strong membership across all cycling disciplines, and it wants excellent quality facilities to support local racers and visitors to the city.

The Club is experiencing rapid growth, particularly in criterium racing. It currently holds weekly events during the summer season at Victoria Park, a facility well-loved by cyclists, but equally renowned for its poor surface quality and hazards. Despite the popularity of criterium cycling in Ballarat, the city lacks a facility that can cater for current and future demands.

This has led the Club to ask itself: what is the future of criterium cycling in Ballarat? What facilities do we need? How can we get those facilities, and how can we manage them?

A purpose-built criterium facility racing is one option the Club wants to explore. It's bold, and that's a good thing. But is it warranted? It needs to find out.

To get things started, Council has kindly supported the Club and enabled it to prepare this *Ballarat Criterium Feasibility Study*.

The goal of this study then is to explore strategic issues affecting the sport and the community, to test whether a new facility is required and sustainable, and to consider, in a preliminary way, where a new facility (if justifiable) could go.

It has been prepared with oversight from BSCC's Road Racing Committee; in discussion with recreational planners from Ballarat City Council; through research and on-the-ground analysis; and through engagement with cyclists within the local community.

Cycling has always been a big part of sporting and cultural life in this town, and Council and BSCC are committed to an even better future. This Study is an important step towards that new future.

## ATTRIBUTIONS

This feasibility study was prepared by URBANSCALE Pty Ltd with funds provided by Ballarat City Council.

URBANSCALE is a team of urban planners who are passionate about community change.

Shannon Meadows was project leader. He set the overall project direction, drawing on his experience managing change within community organisations and urban environments.

Matt Novacevski was project analyst and heavy-lifter. He understands how to join the dots, build a case for change and present it as crisply as possible.

## SOME SHOUT-OUTS

Projects like this take time and effort.

While we hope our work will move BSCC towards its new criterium facility, we know the hard work will be done by other people. Those people deserve credit.

We acknowledge the superb contributions of the following to this study:

- 🚴 Tim Canny and Pete Canny from BSCC
- 🚴 The Road Racing Committee and Board of Management at BSCC. They are a progressive, proactive and passionate bunch
- 🚴 The many City of Ballarat Councillors, who have encouraged the club to think broadly about its future.
- 🚴 Neville Ivey, Terry Demeo and Talia Roden-Smith from Ballarat City Council, for the financial and strategic support to make this project happen.
- 🚴 The members of the BSCC and Eureka Veterans' Cycling Club who have come together to support this project.

Most importantly...

A big shout-out to all the wonderful bike riders in this town including members of our cycling clubs, who provided input to strengthen this case and clarify our thinking. Your care for your clubs and your community has built a foundation we can ride on together.



## FORMAT

This feasibility study is presented in five parts, along with a crisp summary and some appendices.

**Part 1** is where the project is clearly framed and the research method identified. It starts on **page 05**.

**Part 2** is a situational analysis, where we map and explore all the factors that influence criterium cycling in Ballarat. It starts on **page 06**.

**Part 3** is where we zoom out and look at the broad cycling and strategic landscape (we call it 'the desert', as things get pretty dry in here – but hey, deserts are important). We look at state and local government policies that affect decisions on new facilities, and we connect the (often hidden) dots that make a strong case for change in Ballarat. 'The desert' starts on **page 10**.

**Part 4** is about benchmarking (AKA, keeping up with the Joneses). We've looked backwards at what's been happening, and forward to what could happen next, now we look sideways to see what other Councils and clubs have been doing. Our sideways glance starts on **page 13**.

**Part 5** is where we bring it all together and say, okay, do we have a case for change? If so, what does it mean? And what next? It starts on **page 17**.

A final, **brief summary** is provided on **page 21**. We won't restate everything, promise.

Then we have two **appendices**.

They are:

1. New site options
2. Action Plan



## 1. SETTING THE SCENE

Ballarat Sebastopol Cycling Club (BSCC) is Ballarat's largest cycling club. It provides racing, training, coaching and recreational activities for road racing, mountain biking and BMX racing. It has a long history in Ballarat and is experiencing rapid growth as more and more people enjoy the health and social benefits of riding.

As its membership has grown exponentially, the Club has been forced to consider complex issues such as *how can it sustain its growth, and what facilities it needs for the future*.

The issue of racing infrastructure is particularly unique in cycling, and one affecting the Club in 2016. It occurs against a backdrop of increasing investment in infrastructure for activities such as football and cricket, with cycling investment mostly focused on pathways.

Track racing occurs on a velodrome, and Ballarat has an excellent facility at Marty Busch Reserve in Sebastopol. BMX racing occurs on a purpose-built track, and again the club is blessed, having access to a facility at Marty Busch Reserve. Investment by Council in recent years has greatly improved these facilities, and led to real growth in participation across the community in these two forms of riding.

Mountain bike racing can occur on existing tracks within natural environments, or on custom-made circuits. BSCC has an extremely proactive MTB committee that has overseen massive changes in facility quality in the Ballarat region, to the benefit of a wide catchment of riders across the western region. Again, a great result.

Criterium racing, while popular, is hampered. Despite significant growth in current participation, current facilities are inadequate and dangerous. Current facilities have presented a particular barrier to female and junior participation.

Criterium racing can occur on street circuits or purpose-built circuits. Street circuits include road networks within parkland, such as the one at Victoria Park, or a road network within an industrial or residential area, like the one used by Eureka Veterans Cycling Club (EVCC), or Caulfield Carnegie Cycling Club in Melbourne.

Purpose-built criterium facilities are on the rise, with several facilities constructed in Melbourne's growth corridors, and more undergoing planning at present.

Before we delve further into criterium facilities, let's briefly define criterium racing.

Criterium racing is a form of racing that occurs on road bikes. It is a timed event, often between 20 minutes and one hour, on a closed circuit no less than 800 metres in length (but can be up to 3km). Riders set off together in different grades based on ability, and complete laps for the designated time period. During a race different tactics are used, with riders testing each other's power and fitness. Wind, rain, road surface, cornering, bike handling, positioning, and of course fitness and power, all play a major part in the outcome.








It is an increasingly popular form of bike racing, and in Ballarat, the majority of BSCC's growth is occurring during its summer criterium season.

We'll call this the 'growth problem': a good issue to have, but not easily managed.

Why? Because with growth comes increased pressure: to hold safe events, to manage bigger groups of riders, to provide shelter and facilities for participants and spectators, to keep riders engaged, and to attract even more members. But all this must happen without more money flowing into the Club's bank account. Hard? Yes.

So, can this all be achieved? And does criterium racing present unique challenges for BSCC? We need to find out.

In the briefest possible terms then, the Club has prepared this feasibility study to:

-  Develop a clearer understanding of current state-of-play for road racing in Ballarat and across the State
-  Ask the cycling community what it wants and expects
-  Find and examine strategic documents, prepared by governments but also by the major cycling organisations, that influence investment in cycling facilities
-  See what other councils and cycling clubs are doing around criterium facilities
-  Determine what infrastructure BSCC reasonably needs to support future participation and growth
-  Work out different options to manage the Club's 'growth problem'
-  Identify some sites where a facility could be built and consider cost, maintenance and management issues.



## 2. SITUATION ANALYSIS

### Key Points:

- 🚲 Ballarat will experience significant population growth over next 20 years
- 🚲 BSCC membership is growing across all disciplines, including road racing. A majority of road racing members are men, but junior and female membership is steady or growing.
- 🚲 BSCC holds regular criterium training and races (between October and March) at Victoria Park, while Eureka Veterans Cycling Club (EVCC) races on a closed-road circuit in Alfredton.
- 🚲 All facilities used by BSCC are managed by City of Ballarat.
- 🚲 Most cycling clubs in Victoria use facilities – whether purpose-built or on closed-road – that are managed by the local governments.

This situation analysis considers the following factors:

- 🚲 The growth profile of the host city, and how that might help or hinder this project
- 🚲 The current state of play club-level, but also state and nationally in terms of rider and race participation, growth cohorts, and trends in funding
- 🚲 The outcomes of engagement with members and riders about the needs, wants and rider behaviour

### BALLARAT IS ON THE UP

The City of Ballarat's population is anticipated to grow from 104,355 to 145,197 between 2016 and 2036. Of the 40,842 expected new residents, 42% is expected to comprise people aged under 34, with another 20% aged between 35 and 49. This growth places particular demands on recreational infrastructure, including cycling facilities.

This growth is expected to be concentrated in designated growth areas such as Alfredton, Lucas, Delacombe and Sebastopol.

### CYCLING (AS A SPORT) IS ON THE UP

The *Victorian Cycling Facilities Strategy* (2016) found that cycling is among the top three participation sports across all age groups in Victoria. Between 2010 and 2016 there has been a 42% statewide increase in membership of cycling clubs.

### PARTICIPATION IS ON THE UP

BSCC has experienced strong membership growth since 2012. In April 2016, the club had 157 road/track racing members (including 24 juniors and 23 female members), with 131 mountain biking members and 48 BMX members.

Short-term trends show a 33% increase in member numbers in 2015-16, which broadly reflects ongoing trends identified in the *Victorian Cycling Facilities Strategy*.

It is important to note that cycling participation is not confined to members of cycling clubs. A 2010 VicHealth survey found cycling to be the second-most popular recreational pursuit in the City of Ballarat, outside walking.

Planned capital investments in cycling have generally focused on paths and transport links, rather than dedicated road cycling facilities.

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“A smooth surface is crucial in my mind, it leads to safer riding and should there be an incident, less severe injuries.” *(Local cyclist)*

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## CURRENT FACILITIES – BSCC

BSCC holds weekly criterium races at Victoria Park on Wednesday nights between October and March, with an extended break between mid-December and late January. Weekly participation numbers in 2016 were approximately 60 adults and 15 juniors, with sustained growth in recent years.

The Victoria Park circuit is approximately 1.3km long. It is an internal road network within the Park that is normally open to vehicles and pedestrians. Roads are closed during races and signage is erected to redirect traffic away from the circuit. There have been instances of motorists ignoring this signage.

While Victoria Park has a history of cycling, the condition of roads that constitute today's criterium circuit is poor. Gravel frequently washes onto the road on several corners, creating hazards for racers, and during a rain event water builds up in various low points and drainage lines, often flowing onto and across the circuit. It is not an all-weather facility.

There is no permanent or temporary infrastructure in place, such as change rooms, toilets, water or shelter, for use by participants or spectators.

Victoria Park is accessible to much of Ballarat, so many participants choose to ride to the circuit from their homes or from Lake Wendouree. Participants and spectators that drive to Victoria Park must park their car outside the Park (as the internal roads are closed) and ride/walk in to the circuit.

A key issue is user-group conflict within Victoria Park. The race circuit surrounds parkland that dog owners use as an off-leash exercise area. The current lack of fencing around the off-leash area has caused dogs to wander on to the track during criterium races, while dog owners often drive vehicles into the park before road closures are put in place for criterium racing.

BSCC has a clubroom, velodrome and BMX circuit at Marty Busch Reserve in Sebastopol. The Reserve is a shared recreation precinct shared by a number of groups including the Sebastopol Football and Netball Club.

## CURRENT FACILITIES – EVCC

EVCC holds weekly criterium racing on a closed street circuit at Productive Drive, Alfredton. The race circuit runs anti-clockwise and includes four corners. The road surface is new, includes curb and channel drainage and is wide enough for two vehicles plus on-street parking, therefore provides a wide and safe environment for road racing.

Races are conducted on Sunday mornings, which is a time of low or no traffic volume within the industrial estate. The location is a dedicated commercial area and is not a thoroughfare, so the circuit remains free of other user groups and through traffic. This greatly improves rider safety. However, like Victoria Park, there is no temporary or permanent infrastructure in place for use by racers or spectators.

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"If we were lucky enough to be able to get a purpose built criterium facility in Ballarat it would be nice to think that both clubs, BSCC, Juniors and Vets could utilize it and work together" *(Local cyclist)*

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## RIDER PERSPECTIVES

To gain a clearer understanding of current participation patterns and rider needs, BSCC, EVCC and the local cycling community were surveyed in June 2016. The survey's findings include:

What makes a good criterium experience?

- 🚲 96% of surveyed club members believed the condition of a cycling track surface to be essential or very important in building a good criterium experience.
- 🚲 The top five priorities for a great criterium experience are the condition of track surface, access to toilets, lack of conflicts with other users, easy access to supporting infrastructure such as drinking taps and rubbish bins, and adequacy of lighting.
- 🚲 A number of respondents added comments referring to the potential for criterium tracks to become a focus of social activity and to activate spaces.

Barriers to participation, and opportunities to improve:

The top four barriers to participation were the condition of the surface of the Victoria Park track, clashes with other user groups, washouts and a lack of changerooms.

81% of respondents cited condition of the Victoria Park track's surface as a barrier to participation.

While 90% identified the surface of the current track as a vital area for improvement, 63% did not view changing the location as a priority. Course design and access to change rooms were the other main priorities for improvement identified.

While access to changerooms was considered a mid-range priority in providing a good criterium facility, some 22% of respondents rated a lack of changerooms as a barrier to participation. This, combined with further comments submitted as part of the survey, suggests changerooms may be particularly important in catering for female participants.

Only 22% of respondents saw the safety of current cycling access to the Victoria Park track as a priority for improvement.

Only 8% of respondents cited the location of the current track as a barrier to participation.

Just over 50% believed car parking at the existing facility was adequate, while only 15% thought spectator facilities at the current track were a priority for improvement.

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"Female participants are currently discouraged by the complete lack of toilets" *(Local cyclist)*

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**How people participate:**

More than three-quarters of respondents used travel to a criterium facility as an opportunity to warm up with a ride of less than 20km. Only 31.5% drove their car to a criterium track, while less than 4% carpooled.

- 🚴 Nearly 73% of participants said they participated in criterium racing as often as possible, with nearly 25% racing up to five times per season.
- 🚴 More than 83% of respondents participate in criterium racing for competition or fitness, while almost 80% participated for social interaction and another 73% stated they participated to support the cycling club.
- 🚴 Around 45% of respondents said they had raced elsewhere, with many using criterium tracks in Melbourne (including purpose-built facilities and tracks that use the existing road network), Geelong and Bendigo as well as the road track used by Eureka Veterans in the Alfredton Industrial Estate (Production Drive).

“Ideally a well designed criterium track will be:

1. Closed circuit (no road closure required) providing a safe alternative for all cyclists
2. Centralised with easy access for school groups and families
3. Close to toilets and car parking
4. Multi-purpose design and used by other groups
5. Low impact on local area and able to be integrated into other events (extra parking for major events, farmers markets, etc.)”

*(Local cyclist)*

**WHAT CAN WE TAKE FROM THIS?**

- 🚴 Current facilities do not meet the demands of growing participation.
- 🚴 Safety concerns at the Victoria Park track present the primary barrier to participation in criterium racing.
- 🚴 A lack of toilets and change rooms presents a barrier for female participation in criterium racing.
- 🚴 Most participants in criterium racing choose to access the track via a 10-20km warm up ride.
- 🚴 While there is broad concern regarding the condition of the Victoria Park track, most survey respondents are satisfied with the track’s current central location.
- 🚴 Many respondents see the potential for a criterium track to become a hub for community events and social activities.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER ACTIVITY**

A suitably-designed criterium facility may provide opportunities for a range of users and stakeholders beyond cycling club members or recreational cyclists. This includes:

- 🚴 Schools that seek a safe, off-road surface free of other vehicles for bicycle education activities. Notably, the Ballarat Specialist School, which has been in dialogue with the BSCC throughout this project, sees the potential of an off-road criterium track as a base for road safety education and to build on current bicycle education programs it operates.
- 🚴 Wheelchair athletes and operators of other human-powered vehicles, who may seek to use the facility for training or recreational racing.

If suitably designed, a criterium facility may also provide new recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. This approach would align with universal design principles and maximise the social value of an off-road criterium track.

The BSCC recognises the potential for any off-road criterium track to act as a base that builds cycling skills and supports people of all ages and abilities. The BSCC would be pleased to collaborate with local schools and other relevant groups to work to this end.



### 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

#### Key points:

- 🚲 The Victorian Cycling Facilities Strategy indicates a need for a regional level criterium facility to be delivered in Ballarat within 4-7 years (2020-2023)
- 🚲 There is support for cycling facilities that broaden participation opportunities, particularly for women
- 🚲 A statewide shift is underway towards purpose-built criterium to overcome uncertain tenure arrangements
- 🚲 There is strategic support for a regional-level criterium facility in Ballarat

#### UNPACKING STATE STRATEGIES

Statewide strategies set a framework for investment in cycling facilities and for the governance of cycling across the state.

The development of cycling facilities in Ballarat is influenced by statewide cycling and recreation strategies including:

- 🚲 Cycling Victoria *State Facilities Strategy* 2016-2026
- 🚲 Cycling Victoria's *Strategic Plan* 2013-2016
- 🚲 Ballarat City Council's:
  - *Ballarat Bicycle Strategy* 2014-2019
  - *Recreation Strategy* 2014-19
  - *Victoria Park Masterplan 2015 and Victoria Park – A Vision* 2013
  - *Marty Busch Reserve Masterplan* 2010.

Arguably the most significant current strategy is the *Victorian Cycling Facilities Strategy* (2016), which was developed to allow peak bodies, government and clubs to better plan and maintain facilities with a view to growing participation and building relationships between stakeholders.

The strategy includes a 'needs assessment' for cycling facilities across Victoria including Ballarat; a strategic plan for development of cycling facilities across the state; and recommendations on building new facilities.

The strategy prioritises the development of multi-use facilities that are inclusive (focusing on inclusion, universal design principles, encouraging female and junior participation), support a range of cycling disciplines and contribute to off-road training networks. It finds that:

- 🚲 Criterium racing is the most popular form of road racing in Victoria, providing a foundation for cycling skill and fitness.
- 🚲 Clubs across Victoria currently use a mix of dedicated facilities, race tracks built for other sports or temporarily closed sections of the municipal road network, typically in industrial estates.
- 🚲 While many clubs currently use closed roads, tenure arrangements for these facilities has become increasingly uncertain.

## The Victorian Cycling Facilities Strategy:

### 1.

It recommends the development of a cyclocross facility within 1-3 years (between 2016 and 2019) at a location that includes other sporting facilities such as a BMX track, velodrome or off-road circuit.

### 2.

It recommends the development of a regional-level off-road criterium circuit within 4-7 years (2020-2023).

A regional level criterium facility in Ballarat would have a catchment stretching through the Grampians region, east to Moorabool Shire and Melbourne's outskirts. This region has a current population of 246,000 people, estimated to grow to 276,000 with up to 23,000 regular cycling participants before 2026 (*Victorian Cycling Facilities Strategy, 2016*).

#### A regional-level facility:

- 🚲 Attracts people from within or outside a municipality for training, state-wide competitions and potentially national competitions.
- 🚲 Is an off-road circuit not less than 800m and not more than 3km. Minimum width of 7.5m with a finishing straight of a minimum of 200m (length) and 8m (width).
- 🚲 The course can be undulating but must be sealed with minimal roadway/roadside hardware likely to cause hazards/falls.
- 🚲 Barriers to control pedestrians to be erected.
- 🚲 Spectator facilities include shared areas for at least 150 people.
- 🚲 Will include change rooms with showers, toilets, storage, first aid, kiosk.
- 🚲 May include car parking, lighting, fencing, drainage (as required). There are currently two dedicated regional criterium circuits in Victoria including Casey Fields in Melbourne's south-east, and Geelong. Examples of other regional-level cycling facilities in Victoria include Warragul Velodrome, Sandown Park race track, Knox BMX track and Shepparton BMX track.

## UNPACKING LOCAL STRATEGIES

### Key points:

- 🚲 Council strategies support the growth of Ballarat as a cycling destination
- 🚲 The City of Ballarat's precinct-based approach to recreation facility investment provides opportunities to locate a criterium track alongside other community facilities within growth corridors
- 🚲 The poor condition of Victoria Park's existing criterium track surface is acknowledged
- 🚲 There is currently no clear direction on where a criterium track should be located

A range of local-level recreation and spatial planning strategies influence the feasibility, and potential location and timing, of a purpose-built criterium facility in Ballarat.

Council's *Recreation Strategy* focuses on the development of a number of integrated recreation precincts throughout Ballarat, where sporting facilities and groups can be co-located and share infrastructure. This reduces construction and maintenance costs and enables broader community access and participation.

The *Ballarat Bicycle Strategy* (2014) focuses local investment in cycling infrastructure. The strategy proposes a five-year capital works schedule predicted to cost up to \$3.9m. This program does not include any allocations for criterium track development or upgrades to existing criterium infrastructure.

Capital works in the *Bicycle Strategy* focus more on cycling paths and transport links, including a high-priority project to link Victoria Park and Lake Wendouree and a focus on planning off-road cycling routes in growth areas.



Successive masterplans relating to Victoria Park highlight the poor condition of the current criterium track and the user conflict between dog owners and criterium cyclists. The *Victoria Park Masterplan* proposes that these issues are addressed by fencing the dog park and potentially relocating the criterium track, pending further investigation.

The *Marty Busch Reserve Masterplan* recommends investigating the feasibility of a criterium track at the reserve, and signals with a cost estimate of \$1 million for a 1.25km circuit including asphaltting (without additional facilities or site preparation and servicing). Critically, no location within the reserve is identified for a criterium track, with the largest area of open space earmarked for riparian planting and a BMX track.

The *Ballarat Bicycle Strategy* recognises Victoria Park as a current base for criterium racing in Ballarat, recommending drainage and surface improvements to the current track. Other recommendations relating to this study include:

- 🚲 Consider options through undertaking a feasibility study to establish a sealed community bicycle education/training facility in Victoria Park associated with the criterium course (subject to demand assessment and site master plan).
- 🚲 Consider options through feasibility study to establish sealed community bike ed/training facility in Victoria Park associated with criterium course.

The *Ballarat Bicycle Strategy* includes the following vision statements that directly link to the construction of a purpose-built criterium facility:

#### Vision

Ballarat will provide first class cycling facilities for all members of the community regardless of gender, age, ability and cultural background and we will promote the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle for all residents.

#### Opportunity

- 🚲 A dedicated, safe criterium facility would encourage further participation for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities
- 🚲 A criterium track that can be accessed broadly outside events provides a public asset that would encourage cycling and improve cycling skills. This includes the support of school bicycle education programs and informal training.
- 🚲 An off-road criterium facility provides potential for people of all abilities to use a range of human-powered vehicles.

#### Vision

Well planned and varied cycling facilities will make Ballarat a destination for others in the region for play, fun and competition

#### Opportunity

- 🚲 A dedicated criterium track would complement Ballarat's network of cycling paths, roads, BMX and mountain bike facilities and velodrome.
- 🚲 An appropriately designed, located criterium facility with supporting infrastructure would add to the appeal of Ballarat as a cycling destination.
- 🚲 Dedicated criterium training facilities would be an essential part of any push to increase Ballarat's profile as a cycling destination.

#### **WHAT CAN WE TAKE FROM THIS?**

- 🚲 Local recreation and cycling strategies broadly support the need for a dedicated criterium facility in Ballarat, as a means to increase cycling participation.
- 🚲 Up to 2016, reserve and facility masterplans are equivocal on the final location and scope of a criterium track.
- 🚲 Dedicated criterium facilities should be designed to both increase opportunities for participation and position Ballarat as a cycling destination, particularly at the regional level.
- 🚲 Planned cycling investment focuses on providing cycling paths and transport connections, rather than dedicated off-road training facilities.

## 4. BENCHMARKING

### Key points:

- 🚲 A number of clubs that use on-road facilities in Melbourne face uncertain tenure, with work underway to identify alternative sites.
- 🚲 Some clubs that use tracks on the existing road network bring in temporary supporting infrastructure (such as coffee vans, toilets) to support participants, activate spaces and provide a social component on race days.
- 🚲 Hume City Council has completed a feasibility study into a regional-level criterium facility, while Wellington Shire Council is also planning for a dedicated facility.
- 🚲 Many facilities were built with capital funding from state and local government, and all are managed by local government

The 'growth problem' we are examining is not unique to Ballarat – other clubs have been, or are, in the same position as BSCC. Many areas, such as Geelong and Casey, have planned criterium facilities in light of solid population growth and strong participation. Other regional and urban fringe areas, such as Hume and Wellington, are planning for criterium facilities.

Locations assessed in the benchmarking exercise have been selected because of strong regional population growth, high participation including use of facilities by travellers from Ballarat (particularly Geelong and St Kilda CC) and to reflect a mix of off-road and street tracks.

### SO WHAT ARE OTHER CLUBS OR REGIONS DOING?

- 🚲 Purpose-built facilities are found in Geelong (Belmont Common) and Casey Fields in Pakenham.
- 🚲 Hume City Council completed a feasibility study in 2015 into a regional-level criterium track in the municipality.
- 🚲 Wellington Shire is also working towards a regional criterium track development, and Cycling Victoria is working towards the development of off-road circuits in inner and western Melbourne.
- 🚲 St Kilda Cycling Club currently uses a street circuit in an industrial area of Port Melbourne. The Club is exploring new options as the area is undergoing rapid transformation as part of the Fishermen's Bend precinct.
- 🚲 Similarly, Footscray Cycling Club's use of Victoria University's Hoppers Crossing campus is uncertain beyond the immediate short term.

A common issue emerging here is that clubs using closed-road, but not purpose-built criterium facilities are experience issues relating to tenure (how long they can continue to use that location) or face increasing conflict with user-groups and road traffic.



An assessment of various Victorian clubs and their current facilities follows:

CLUB	CURRENT FACILITY	COMMENTS
St Kilda Cycling Club	On-road circuit in South Melbourne with start/finish on White Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚴 Largest cycling club membership in Australia</li> <li>🚴 Faces uncertain tenure with upcoming redevelopment of Fishermans Bend.</li> <li>🚴 Victorian Cycling Facilities Strategy states that three potential alternative sites are now being investigated.</li> <li>🚴 BSCC members that have raced at SKCC events praise the surface and atmosphere at events with food vans and music.</li> <li>🚴 Club holds 20-race season on Sunday mornings between October and April.</li> </ul>
Footscray Cycling Club	On-road racing at Victoria University's Hoppers Crossing campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚴 Club has been advised it can no longer use the Hoppers Crossing campus.</li> </ul>
Casey-Cardinia Cycling Club	Regional level track in south-eastern corner of Casey Fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚴 2.2km regional level criterium track with multiple loops.</li> <li>🚴 Track on a 20ha area in the south-east of Casey Fields, multi-purpose ovals in the middle.</li> <li>🚴 Managed by Council, with specific public use times allocated every day except Saturdays.</li> </ul>
Wellington Cycling Club	4km on-road circuit at Newry. Club also uses Sale Velodrome and runs longer on-road events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚴 Wellington Shire Council is investigating the development of a regional level criterium track.</li> </ul>
Geelong Cycling Club, Geelong and Surf Coast Cycling Club (veterans)	2.2km Belmont Island Criterium Circuit. Clubs also use a 1.7km criterium circuit on existing roadway at Eastern Gardens on the Geelong waterfront. This track has also been used for events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚴 2.2km track at Belmont is open to the community.</li> <li>🚴 Eastern Gardens track hosted Victorian Criterium Championships in 2015, suggesting a preference for larger scale events to be held in high amenity locations.</li> <li>🚴 Many survey respondents from BSCC and Eureka Veterans have raced at the Belmont facility. Many believe it is a good track, but that sections of it are too narrow.</li> </ul>

CLUB	CURRENT FACILITY	COMMENTS
Bendigo	Various circuits using existing roads and paths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚴 Circuit utilising roads in CBD and near Rosalind Park is used for national and international criterium events.</li> <li>🚴 Tom Flood Sports Centre, which adjoins the CBD, hosts Bendigo International Madison which includes a cycling program.</li> </ul>
Carnegie-Caulfield	Club uses 3.2km circuit at Sandown Raceway – a track usually used for car racing, and a 1.1km circuit centred on Glenvale Crescent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚴 Sandown races held on Tuesday nights during daylight saving, attracting more than 200 riders across five grades.</li> <li>🚴 Sandown track primarily used for V8 racing. Also includes a horse racing track.</li> <li>🚴 Glenvale Crescent is part of a mixed commercial and industrial precinct. Criterium events are held on Sunday mornings from October–April.</li> <li>🚴 Glenvale events include a coffee van, on-site toilets and use existing car parking.</li> </ul>
Hawthorn Cycling Club	Open road circuit on Kew/Yarra Bend Boulevard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚴 Circuit often known as “the teardrop” hosts a range of events and training activities.</li> <li>🚴 Reports of conflicts between drivers and cyclists, including tacks being spread on the roadway.</li> </ul>





## HUME WANTS TO GIVE BALLARAT A HAND...

When Hume City Council did a feasibility study for its own criterium facility project in 2015, it examined eight dedicated criterium facilities already built around Australia.

Hume's work is publicly available, so we should learn from it.

Here's what they found:

- 🚲 Tracks ranged from 800m to 2.3km, with widths of 5m-8m
- 🚲 Some included wider home straights
- 🚲 **Most sites ranged from 10ha to 21ha**
- 🚲 Several experienced issues with the surface including cracking, subsidence and drainage. This re-iterates the importance of including an appropriate contingency figure (for repairs/maintenance) in construction costs
- 🚲 Seven of the eight facilities studied required state government funding
- 🚲 **All facilities required Council funding for maintenance**
- 🚲 Local government manages all the facilities investigated, with user-groups including cycling clubs, triathlon clubs and local schools
- 🚲 Criterium tracks at Casey Fields, Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park and Toowoomba have user or advisory groups involved in management

Thanks Hume!

## WHAT CAN WE TAKE FROM THIS?

- 🚲 Street circuits continue to be popular, and for good reason. They are low cost and use existing infrastructure. What they lack is long-term tenure and supporting infrastructure, both of which create headaches for clubs and Councils
- 🚲 Relocation of large clubs from street circuits or closed-road locations in Melbourne is requiring a coordinated effort from Victorian Government, Local Governments and clubs.
- 🚲 Portable or pop-up infrastructure can be used to activate spaces and provide necessary infrastructure for criterium events. This is a lower-cost alternative to constructing and maintaining permanent facilities
- 🚲 Closed-road circuits are lower cost but create user conflicts, site specific safety issues, and lack permanent facilities that encourage participation
- 🚲 Purpose-built facilities are an emerging infrastructure trend, particularly in growth areas (Ballarat is one, regionally). Upsides are tenure, safety and accessibility. Downsides are cost, maintenance and management.
- 🚲 Areas with purpose-built facilities have still hosted larger scale events on closed roads in high amenity locations (such as the Geelong Waterfront/Eastern Gardens)

## 5 - MAKING IT HAPPEN

The Club's ambition to provide its members with a high-quality, purpose-built criterium facility is commendable, and achievable.

We have found clear support for this project in State-wide and local recreational and urban planning strategies, and we have identified that government and cycling stakeholders views a criterium facility as a critical infrastructure investment to support continued growth in cycling participation.

So what can the Club do now, and what can it do in the coming months and years, to make this project a reality?

The Club needs to accept that with **support from government and cycling stakeholders, this major sporting infrastructure project will take considerable time to plan, fund and deliver.** Without that support – buy-in from Council, the cycling community, and without funding – this project will take much longer.

It is entirely reasonable that a project of this scale and impact can take three years to move from the concept stage (where the project sits now) through a detailed business case, partnering, capital raising, site selection, design and construction. That may seem like an eternity, but it's also the reality.

Given that, the Club needs a **transitional plan** that allows it to continue to grow its racing membership, to hold regular races on a safe, enjoyable circuit, while working strategically towards its new purpose-built facility.

The smart way forward, then, is a **two-stage approach** to managing the club's 'growth problem'. The two stages are separate and have very different factors and outcomes, but they are compatible and overlap. They can be understood as two sides of the one coin.

A two-staged approach is recommended because:

-  It provides the club with a clear transitional plan to shift from its existing facility to a new facility
-  It provides certainty of tenure and continuity for racing, without major disruptions
-  It will enable a coordinated, partnered investment strategy with appropriate lead time to secure capital investment
-  It integrates with timelines in state and local strategies, including the 4-7 year window for a Regional Criterium Facility
-  It will meet immediate/short term needs of local cyclists, while upgrading to a regional facility in the medium term as funding becomes available.

### STAGE 1: 2016 TO 2019.

Stage 1 starts now and extends to 2019. During this timeframe the Club should:

-  Commit to using an existing street circuit for criterium racing
-  Continue to focus on membership growth and achieving high participation rates in racing, especially with new members, females and children
-  Work proactively with Ballarat City Council to determine the site for a new, purpose-built facility and identify compatible funding programs.

The Club has two options regarding the location of criterium racing between 2016 and 2019.

## 1.

It can keep using Victoria Park

Victoria Park is very popular with members, despite its shortcomings. The Club can continue to race at this location, but must actively lobby Ballarat City Council for a range of low-cost safety upgrades to improve the road condition and rider experience. It also needs to advocate for the implementation of relevant recommendations in the Victoria Park Masterplan (2015), such as fencing off the dog-off-leash area. By showing a commitment to the venue the Club can also seek support from Council to navigate user-conflicts.

To respond to rider feedback about amenities, the Club should explore the use of temporary structures or facilities at Victoria Park during the criterium series. These could include mobile toilets and change rooms with a drinking water supply, and also shade structures. They can be located on the site at a much lower cost to permanent facilities.

The Club should also seek expressions of interest from food van operators to attend on certain race nights, to create a family-friendly atmosphere, activate the space and enhance the rider experience.

## 2.

It can find a new street circuit

The Club could relocate, even temporarily during a trial period, to a different street circuit in the Ballarat urban area. The benefits of this would be immediate: improved rider safety and less user-group conflicts.

The primary issue the Club will need to overcome to enable a shift is race scheduling. At present, criterium races are held at Victoria Park on Wednesday nights, and the Park is closed to through traffic to ensure rider safety.

If the Club considers moving to another street circuit it is unlikely to be a closed environment like a park, so the Club will need to hold races when those roads are quietest, most likely on weekends. This is achievable, as proven by EVCC, but it will require a break with the Club's traditional race format and the negotiation of road closures as required.

A new street circuit would overcome issues associated with poor quality surfaces and drainage, user-conflicts and the need to organise road closure within a major urban park (which is an important administrative and logistical issue). However, while identifying alternative street sites is outside the scope of this study, it is clear that there are limited locations on existing road networks that could accommodate criterium racing without logistical issues, even in the short term.

**STAGE 2: 2019 ONWARDS**

This is the timeframe in which local and state government, and state-based cycling organisations, want to see investment in a regional-level facility.

The Club will be a lead advocate and agent for making this project happen, but it needs to be devised in partnership with Ballarat City Council, the State Government (Regional Development Victoria, Sport and Recreation Victoria) and Cycle Sport Victoria. This will be a major strategic project, therefore significant lead time will be required to finalise the business case, go through a rigorous site selection and design process, and to assemble project funding.

**Site options**

While this feasibility study was not devised to select a preferred site, or to provide a design for a regional-level facility, we have completed a preliminary assessment of four sites which are deemed compatible – strategically and locationally – with a new criterium facility.

A summary assessment follows – in no particular order – with a more detailed assessment provided in Appendix 1.



LOCATION	PLUS	MINUS
Marty Busch Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 The reserve already includes cycling facilities including clubrooms, velodrome and BMX circuit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Significant spatial constraints.</li> <li>🚲 Sub-optimal road access for riders.</li> <li>🚲 Potential for new development to conflict with existing user groups.</li> <li>🚲 Potential servicing and construction costs due to land form and access.</li> <li>🚲 Compromised access for events.</li> </ul>
Victoria Park option 1 – a full upgrade of the existing circuit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 A well-known and valued cycling location.</li> <li>🚲 Potential to activate the park precinct.</li> <li>🚲 Strong existing road and cycling access, central to Ballarat’s residential and commercial areas.</li> <li>🚲 Potential to host larger scale events.</li> <li>🚲 High amenity location.</li> <li>🚲 Strong historical links to cycling.</li> <li>🚲 Potential to reduce asset management burdens by re-using existing infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Conflicts with some current user groups.</li> <li>🚲 Surface of current track is poor and would require maintenance.</li> <li>🚲 Supporting infrastructure may be required to achieve a regional facility.</li> </ul>
Victoria Park option 2 – a new site within the Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Will formalise Victoria Park as a home for cycling.</li> <li>🚲 Location already well-known and valued by cycling community.</li> <li>🚲 Strong road and cycling access central to Ballarat’s residential and commercial areas.</li> <li>🚲 Potential to host and accommodate major events.</li> <li>🚲 Potential to activate under-utilised sections of Victoria Park.</li> <li>🚲 Availability of space.</li> <li>🚲 High amenity area.</li> <li>🚲 Historical links to cycling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Higher capital costs than re-use of existing circuit.</li> <li>🚲 May introduce new user-group conflicts in other sections of the Park.</li> <li>🚲 New asset management burden for Council.</li> </ul>
Northern Gardens, Lake Wendouree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Highly accessible location</li> <li>🚲 High amenity area</li> <li>🚲 In an area used by cycling community</li> <li>🚲 Levelled site may present less challenges for construction and servicing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Lake Precinct is a valued tourism and passive recreation asset with little current active recreation use.</li> <li>🚲 High traffic area.</li> <li>🚲 High land values.</li> <li>🚲 Existing event use and tourism activities may conflict with criterium events.</li> <li>🚲 Less central location than Victoria Park.</li> </ul>

## OTHER STAGE 2 CONSIDERATIONS

Investment in a regional-level facility is a major project that must be undertaken in direct, close collaboration with Ballarat City Council. To success – sustainability and viability – it can not be delivered by the Club alone.

Some particular factors the Club must manage during STAGE 2 include:

### ADVOCACY

A strategic approach to advocacy is vital to attracting necessary funding for a criterium track. For the BSCC, this would involve:

- 🚲 Maintaining effective relationships with all levels of government
- 🚲 Partnering with other community groups that may benefit from a criterium facility.
- 🚲 Being aware of opportunities to pursue funding
- 🚲 Designing facilities in line with the objectives of relevant grant programs.

BSCC is already working to build relationships with potential community partners including other cycling clubs, schools and community organisations. Integrating facility design with the objectives of grant programs would further support these efforts.

### FUNDING

Sport and Recreation Victoria's Community Sports Infrastructure Fund can provide Major Facility Grants of up to \$650,000, which may support a new track, a pavilion or both. Investment-ready plans are required as part of this funding application.

In addition to the major facility grant, grants of up to \$100,000 are available for female-friendly facilities and \$30,000 for detailed planning. Once a site is selected, it is recommended that BSCC partners with

Council to secure funding to develop detailed facility plans, so that a full SRV Major Facility Grant may be pursued.

Benchmarking of other criterium facilities around Australia confirms that capital funding from state and local government is an essential part of facility development.

It is vital that the Club pursues a prudent approach to raising funds and making investments. That involves:

- 🚲 Working with Council on advocacy to other levels of government.
- 🚲 Identifying further streams of revenue that may provide planning or capital funding towards a criterium facility
- 🚲 Ensuring facilities are designed to operate efficiently.

Detailed planning must consider the upfront capital funding associated with a criterium facility and ongoing maintenance costs of assets. Local government generally provides renewal funding for public assets.

### DESIGN

Based on the strategic context and the needs of criterium riders in Ballarat, and given that Ballarat is a regional growth area, any new criterium facility should be regional-level facility or have the ability to be upgraded to a regional level facility.

Regional-level criterium facilities must include an off-road circuit of between 800m and 3km, with a minimum width of 7.5m and a finishing straight 8m wide and not less than 200m long. A facility must also provide:

- 🚲 Shelter, which can be an area shaded by tree canopy, for at least 150 spectators
- 🚲 Change rooms, toilets, on-site storage, first aid and a kiosk to cater for events

A facility of this quality should be flexible and encourage broad access and participation. It is therefore essential that change rooms and toilets are provided, particularly to encourage female and junior participation.

## ENGAGEMENT

At the core of any successful social infrastructure investment is engagement. A user-centred design process could be conducted with guidance from a reference group that may include representation from the BSCC, Eureka Veterans Cycling Club, local schools, Council, access organisations and State Government. There may also be opportunities to engage with Federation University through its faculties of Health and Sport Science on facility design and operation.

## A FINAL, BRIEF SUMMARY

This feasibility study finds that yes, it is **entirely feasible** – and **realistic** – to have a purpose-built criterium facility here in Ballarat. This view is supported by local and statewide cycling, spatial planning and recreation strategies.

The crux of the matter is, when?

In the short-term, it is recommended the Club commit to using its current base, Victoria Park, or find an alternative street-based, closed-road circuit. Members are happy with the current location, and with targeted, low-cost investment in safety and amenity upgrades, the Club could enjoy an additional 3 years at its current site. This approach is cost-effective, and while it won't immediately resolve user-group conflicts, it provides certainty to the Club and Council for the immediate future of criterium cycling. The bigger challenge is delivering a new facility. That challenge starts now.

There is a clear case for a regional-level criterium facility in the Ballarat area on the basis of significant growth in population, significant growth in cycling participation and a very healthy, well-managed club environment. **The conditions are perfect for continued growth**, and that entirely justifies investment in a purpose-built facility in the mid-term.

Four possible site options for a regional-level criterium facility in Ballarat have been explored, along with the key factors influencing the location of a new facility.

These include:

- 🚲 Accessibility of the site to the Ballarat community
- 🚲 Integration with the urban road network
- 🚲 A location that includes built-in safety and amenity measures to improve rider experience, including separation of cars and people and minimal user-group conflicts
- 🚲 Sufficient site area to accommodate a well-designed, regional level track and supporting infrastructure.

In view of these factors, the study finds that of the four options explored, Victoria Park and Northern Gardens (Lake Wendouree) have the strongest claims for a regional-level facility, while Marty Busch Reserve presents the most limitations. The Victoria Park and Lake Wendouree sites integrate well with Ballarat's existing and changing urban fabric, including the Ballarat West growth corridor, and are highly accessible to cyclists and supporters.

Victoria Park is a strong candidate site based on existing user behaviour and rider preference, and the Club has also shown strong interest in developing a facility at Northern Gardens. It has played an active role in Ballarat City Council's public consultation towards a new Lake Wendouree Masterplan, and the criterium facility concept is one of nine major community projects under consideration for inclusion in the Masterplan. With various options on the table, and with momentum on its side, the future for this project is bright.

To deliver the outcome it needs and deserves, the Club can adopt the TWO-STAGE approach outlined in this study:

1. Commit to using the existing Victoria Park circuit, or find a new closed-road circuit, for a three-year period. This is a short-term solution that brings stability to the racing program and provides the necessary time and space for the Club to progress its major project (a new facility).
2. Partner with Council and state government departments and build support for construction of the new facility in 2019. Advocacy and attention should be oriented towards development options at Northern Gardens and Victoria Park, both of which are entirely compatible with:
  - 🚲 The strategic findings in the feasibility study
  - 🚲 Benchmarking exercises
  - 🚲 The expectations and aspirations of local cyclists
  - 🚲 Council's own spatial and recreational planning
  - 🚲 The infrastructure priorities, and investment timelines, of state government and state and national cycling organisations.



# APPENDIX 1: NEW SITE OPTIONS

**LOCATION:**

Marty Busch Reserve, Sebastopol.

Potential to site a completely off-road facility on vacant land in the east of the reserve (near the BMX track or further north).

Surrounding land use: Reserve with football ovals, netball courts and cycling facilities used by BSCC including a velodrome, pavilion and BMX track. The Yarrowee River is directly to the east, with most surrounding land in residential use with commercial development across Albert Street/Midland Highway.

Marty Busch Reserve houses a number of existing facilities the BSCC uses. Other users include the Sebastopol Football Netball Club.

**ACCESS**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Centrality, accessible within 10km of most of Ballarat via safe cycling routes (on or off-road)		★		Not a central location, more than 10km from much of Ballarat's north. Cycling access would be along busy roads with mixed standards of cycling safety.
Car parking meets needs for regular use and events		★		Reserve has some car parking that may provide for regular use, but not events.
Site has flexibility, amenity and space for events			★	Limited ability to provide spectator facilities or car parking on any vacant space in the reserve. Existing pavilion oriented to service velodrome and BMX track.
Site provides scope for all ability access			★	Parking and roadways would need substantial upgrades.

## ENGINEERING/CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Topography		★		Topography on vacant areas has steep sections that would pose engineering challenges and may limit the track's suitability for some riders.
Construction access			★	Affected by unmade roads within reserve.
Drainage			★	Proximity to Yarowee River and lack of existing infrastructure may pose challenges.
Availability of existing infrastructure/ services			★	Unmade road access, lack of drainage infrastructure nearby.
Space			★	Undeveloped areas of the reserve (to the south-east) are unlikely to provide sufficient space for a criterium track. Displacing other existing facilities at the reserve is not considered appropriate.
Potential site costs		★		Access and proximity of river may increase site costs.

## CRITERIUM EXPERIENCE

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Access to toilets, changerooms		★		Access to existing pavilion may be possible.
Site management requirements for events/training			★	No traffic management would be required.
Quality of surface			★	N/A – would need a completely new surface constructed.
Spectator shelter			★	No spectator shelter, including trees, is available around the potential track site.
Integration with surrounding activities		★		Facility may be particularly busy on home matches for football/netball should criterium events or activities be conducted. Space constraints may make integration with other recreational activity problematic.



## CONCLUSION

Marty Busch Reserve has limited potential to provide a criterium site due to spatial constraints, lack of safe cycling access from schools or other residential areas in Ballarat, potential site costs and a limited ability to cater for larger scale events. While the reserve already includes cycling facilities associated with the BSCC, a lack of space means other facilities may have to be displaced if a criterium track were to be built, or the track would have to run through existing parts of the reserve. This is not considered a viable or appropriate outcome for the BSCC, Council or other reserve users.

It is therefore not recommended that Marty Busch Reserve be pursued as a location for a criterium track. Mary Busch Reserve may however provide opportunities to co-locate a cyclo-cross track near the BMX facility should there be demand identified.



**LOCATION:**

Victoria Park, Ballarat – upgrading of existing criterium track.

Surrounding land use: Reserve with large open spaces, roads, significant trees and a range of users including clubs for dog obedience, cricket, football, soccer, horseriding, athletics, cricket, archery and passive recreation. The reserve has a rich history of cycling.

The reserve now includes a criterium track, much of which is also used by vehicles and other traffic. The surface of the track is poor, but renewal works could make it a viable option for ongoing criterium racing. Depending on arrangements with user groups in other parts of the reserve, additional criterium loops could also be considered around the existing track.

**ACCESS**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Centrality, accessible within 10km of most of Ballarat via safe cycling routes (on or off-road)	★			Centrally located, with good cycling access from much of Ballarat. Survey results noted that club members placed some value on a central location and saw this as a positive for retaining racing at Victoria Park.
Car parking meets needs for regular use and events		★		Reserve has some car parking capacity around existing criterium track with sufficient open space to create more to cater for events.
Connections to safe cycling routes (on or off-road)	★			Cycling access along roads with dedicated cycling lanes and off-road paths is available from most directions.
Site has flexibility, amenity and space for events	★			Site has good amenity, historical links with cycling and space to cater for events. Proximity to other attractions such as the CBD and Lake Wendouree increases its suitability for events.
Site provides scope for all ability access		★		Scope is available for all abilities access, but current surface and drainage is problematic.

**ENGINEERING/CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Topography		★		Some low-lying areas may require extra drainage treatment. Course currently susceptible to wash outs.
Construction access	★			Access available. Renewal works on existing track would use existing access.
Drainage		★		Drainage upgrades would be required around many areas of the current track, particularly on corners.
Availability of existing infrastructure/ services		★		Existing track, availability of car parking, some lighting and existing trees would likely reduce servicing requirements. Pavilion or similar supporting infrastructure would be required for a regional facility and address identified need for toilets/change rooms.
Space	★			Space is not a consideration as existing roadway would be used.
Potential site costs	★			Site costs likely to be lower due to the ability to reuse existing infrastructure and relatively simple access.

**CRITERIUM EXPERIENCE**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Access to toilets, changerooms			★	Existing pavilions and facilities in the park are available but not connected to the criterium track. It is therefore considered supporting infrastructure would be required near the site, ideally at the start/finish line.
Site management requirements for events/training		★		Current marshaling arrangements may be required, although there may be potential to removable bollards to close off the track from cars during events.
Quality of surface		★		Currently poor but could be relatively easily upgraded.
Spectator shelter		★		Track is well-shaded in many areas with tree plantings. Shelter could be provided at the start/finish line.
Integration with surrounding activities			★	Current user conflicts involving traffic and the off-leash dog area would need to be addressed. Fencing of the grassed area on the inside of the track as proposed in the Victoria Park Masterplan (2015) would assist.



## CONCLUSION

Victoria Park has significant advantages as a criterium track location including safe central access, the potential to host larger events, its amenity and historical links with cycling. Surveys conducted as part of this feasibility study show many members consider the central location positive.

Upgrading the current Victoria Park track through Council's asset renewal budget present a cost-effective option for short and medium term criterium racing in Ballarat, pending the management of user conflicts. This could be done through scheduling and relatively low-cost interventions such as fencing.

While the current Victoria Park Masterplan is equivocal on the future of criterium cycling in the reserve, the current track may also present a viable longer term option for a criterium facility pending the availability of supporting infrastructure (such as change rooms, toilets or a pavilion), management of user conflicts and the potential diversion of cars on to other roads within and outside the park.



**LOCATION:**

Victoria Park, Ballarat – new track within the reserve.

Surrounding land use: Reserve with large open spaces, roads, significant trees and a range of users including clubs for dog obedience, cricket, football, soccer, horse riding, athletics, cricket, archery and passive recreation. The reserve has a rich history of cycling. A new track may be considered as part of effective green field development of the south-western corner of the reserve, an area comprising around 13ha. This space is earmarked as a potential multi-use events space in the *Victoria Park Masterplan* (2015). A criterium track has the potential to integrate with future event or performance facilities; and attract events to Victoria Park in its own right.

**ACCESS**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Centrality, accessible within 10km of most of Ballarat via safe cycling routes (on or off-road)	★			Centrally located, with good cycling access from much of Ballarat including its western growth corridor. Survey results noted that club members placed some value on a central location and saw this as a positive for retaining racing at Victoria Park.
Car parking meets needs for regular use and events		★		Reserve has some existing car parking capacity, however more may be required around the south-western corner to cater for events. This could be integrated with other facilities that might be provided in this area of Victoria Park.
Connections to safe cycling routes (on or off-road)	★			Cycling access along roads with dedicated cycling lanes and off-road paths is available from most directions.
Site has flexibility, amenity and space for events	★			Site has good amenity, historical links with cycling and space to cater for events. Proximity to other attractions such as the CBD and Lake Wendouree increases its suitability for events.
Site provides scope for all ability access		★		Scope is available for all abilities access, pending the design of a greenfield track and provision of supporting facilities.

**ENGINEERING/CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Topography		★		Some low-lying areas may require extra drainage treatment. Course currently susceptible to wash outs.
Construction access	★			Access available. Renewal works on existing track would use existing access.
Drainage		★		Drainage upgrades would be required around many areas of the current track, particularly on corners.
Availability of existing infrastructure/ services			★	Some car parking may be available, while tree cover in the area may provide shelter. Other infrastructure would need to be constructed from scratch.
Space	★			The site area of just over 13ha has the potential to accommodate a criterium track.
Potential of low site		★		Site costs likely to be lower due to the ability to access potential construction site from an existing sealed road.

**CRITERIUM EXPERIENCE**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Access to toilets, changerooms			★	Existing pavilions and facilities in the park are available but not connected to the criterium track.
Site management requirements for events/training		★		A dedicated track in this area of the reserve may not require traffic management if it is not connected to the road network.
Quality of surface			★	A new track in this corner of Victoria Park would require complete construction.
Spectator shelter		★		Existing tree cover in this corner of the park has the potential to provide shelter and a high level of amenity.
Integration with surrounding activities	★			A new, dedicated track in Victoria Park would alleviate user conflicts at the current location, potentially integrate with an events focus in this section of the park and other active/passive recreation activity in the reserve. Road closures or flexible bollards might be considered as part of track design.



## CONCLUSION

Victoria Park has significant advantages as a criterium track location including safe central access, the potential to host larger events, its amenity and historical links with cycling. Surveys conducted as part of this feasibility study show many members consider the central location positive.

A new criterium track in Victoria Park would present a longer term option that could be explored within the 4-7 year window earmarked in the Victorian Cycling Facilities Strategy for a regional criterium facility in Ballarat. This location has the capacity to attract events and build on the existing cycling heritage in Victoria Park. Integrating the track design with existing tree cover has the potential to provide shelter and a high level of amenity for participants and spectators alike.

While a new track would eliminate current user conflicts and provide a facility that would not be open to cars at any time, the capital cost would be significantly higher than any reuse of the current track. A new track would also introduce further asset renewal requirements that would need to be funded, most likely through Council.





**LOCATION:**

Northern Gardens, Lake Wendouree

Surrounding land use: Lake Wendouree presents a premier tourism precinct for Ballarat. As this study is being developed, Council is completing a Masterplan for the area. In September 2016, Council started consultation on the Lake Wendouree Masterplan with nine projects identified, comprising a mix of active recreational and tourism/cultural facilities. Walking trails around the lake are popular for passive recreation. The area has significant tourism potential, and there is little active recreational activity in the area. The Northern Gardens area has the space to accommodate a criterium track of around 3km with multiple loops.

The Lake Esplanade is a very popular leisure and recreational cycling route

**ACCESS**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Centrality, accessible within 10km of most of Ballarat via safe cycling routes (on or off-road)	★			Centrally located, with good cycling access from much of Ballarat including its western growth corridor. Survey results noted that club members placed some value on a central location and saw this as a positive for retaining racing at Victoria Park.
Car parking meets needs for regular use and events		★		Some car parking capacity is available near the North Garden, on streets and at nearby facilities.
Connections to safe cycling routes (on or off-road)		★		Safe cycling access is available via The Esplanade, but the road network to the west provides limited safe cycling connections to the site.
Site has flexibility, amenity and space for events		★		Site has good amenity and would provide a focal point for cycling events.
Site provides scope for all ability access		★		There is the potential for all abilities access.

**ENGINEERING/CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Topography		★		The site is relatively flat with some low spots that may present drainage challenges.
Construction access		★		Access available from adjacent roads although access points for machinery may be limited by vegetation.
Drainage		★		Some low spots may require specific drainage treatment.
Availability of existing infrastructure/ services			★	Toilet blocks near the area may be upgraded.
Space	★			North Gardens has ample space to accommodate a criterium track with multiple loops and supporting infrastructure.
Potential site costs		★		Site costs may rise due to access issues and the site's proximity to the lake.

**CRITERIUM EXPERIENCE**

CONSIDERATION	H	M	L	COMMENTS
Access to toilets, changerooms			★	A toilet block is now located near the potential site, but changerooms and other supporting infrastructure would need to be constructed.
Site management requirements for events/training		★		Management of surrounding streets and car parking may be required for larger scale meetings or events.
Quality of surface			★	No surface as been constructed.
Spectator shelter		★		Some tree coverage may provide shelter around the site, however it is likely more shelter would be required to accommodate 150 patrons as per the regional facility specifications.
Integration with surrounding activities	★			The Lake Wendouree precinct is generally focused on tourism use (such as hospitality or public gardens) and passive recreation (such as walking trails). There is no other active recreation activity near the Northern Gardens site.

## CONCLUSION

Lake Gardens would provide a high-amenity location for a criterium track. The area has significant tourism, open space and passive recreation value. It does not currently host any other active recreation facilities. Lake Wendouree is also a less accessible location for cycling than Victoria Park.





Should a criterium facility be further considered for Lake Gardens, further thought would be required as to how a criterium track would integrate with surrounding tourism and passive recreational assets. It is therefore suggested that Victoria Park would be a preferable site for a criterium track because of its history of cycling, existing recreation facilities and central location with strong cycling links.



# APPENDIX 2: ACTION PLAN



**STAGE 1 – 1–3 years**  
2016–2019

ACTION	LEAD	RESOURCES
Advocate to the City of Ballarat for renewal works to be completed on the roadway at Victoria Park, with a view to improving road safety for all users. Works to focus on potholes and drainage. Continue to use Victoria Park for criterium races in the short term, or relocate events to Production Drive in Alfredton should safety issues remain.	BSCC City of Ballarat	Allocations from Council's renewal budget
Depending on the condition of the Victoria Park track, consider relocating criterium events to a safer roadway in the short-term – potentially Production Drive in Alfredton.	BSCC Potential traffic management arrangements with City of Ballarat.	
Explore the potential for pop-up infrastructure to provide change room, pavilion/social space and toilets at criterium events. Consider partnering with other clubs or community groups to provide portable facilities. Engage with Council to assess potential to work with other community groups that may need pop-up or flexible infrastructure.	BSCC	\$10,000–\$50,000, depending on facilities and funding partners.
Work with Council to seek funding to complete detailed design work for a criterium facility, including:  New track (if applicable)  Pavilion  Supporting infrastructure  Signage. Funding to be sought from relevant Victorian Government grant program.	BSCC City of Ballarat	Club and Council – time to complete grant applications. Club – potential to seek in-kind support from local firms.
Convene a criterium design reference group once funding for facility design is confirmed	BSCC City of Ballarat	Time
Upon completion of detailed designs, seek funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria through its Major Facilities Program from 2018.	BSCC City of Ballarat (to auspice grant application) Partners	Time to complete grant applications.



#### Medium-long term actions (3-5 years)

ACTION	LEAD	RESOURCES
If a greenfield site is selected, begin construction of a track that fits regional facility specifications, with funding from all levels of government.	BSCC City of Ballarat Victorian Government	\$1.5m-\$2m funding for new track surface Less for brownfield road renewal.
As a second stage, deliver necessary supporting infrastructure that brings the facility up to a regional standard. Design supporting infrastructure with a view to support activities such as events or other sporting/community groups.	BSCC City of Ballarat Victorian Government	\$800,000-\$1.5m, depending on facility scoping.



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