



Tips for Building a New Skate Park

Mike Bryson, June 2008

Here are a few tips to consider if you are thinking of putting a skateboard in your community. These tips and guidelines are not meant in any way to replace local authorities standards and guidelines.

Guidelines:

All parks need some guidelines. Here are a few that have helped make other cities' skateparks work for everyone.

Post a set of safety rules at the entrance to the park. Don't post rules you can't enforce. Your rules might include any or all of the following:

1. Skate at your own risk. The city assumes no responsibility for injuries. No supervision is provided at any time. (Ironically, supervision may increase your liability)
2. Helmets and safety pads are strongly recommended.
3. Help keep your park clean
4. Park is open dawn to dusk
5. No bicycles
6. Be careful and respectful of other skaters
7. Use of alcohol, drugs and glass containers is strictly prohibited.

Some other design considerations:

- Skateboarding is a spectator sport. Bleachers are a great idea.
- An area of lawn around the skatepark keeps down dust and debris.
- Skating area should be fenced to protect spectators/passers by.
- Make sure there are adequate trash containers close by.
- A drinking fountain and/or Sani-Can make life easier for the kids and local businesses.

Location:

Location is essential, both to kids and cities. A successful skatepark should be:

- Highly visible
Placing your park in an open area, close to the street reduces the risk of crime.
- Centrally located/Access to transportation
Most kids who'll use the park can't drive. They need to be able to get there easily.
- Close to conveniences (fast food, market, drinking water)
Skateboarding is a physical challenge. Kids need to be able to refuel.
- Close to phone
For emergencies, a ride home, or just to invite more kids.
- Near restrooms
Self-explanatory.
- Away from residential areas
The noise of skateboarding isn't compatible with a residential development.

Putting a skatepark in an existing public park is often the solution to many of these points, as well as providing an additional source of funding from your department of Parks and Recreation.

Community-Building:

One major benefit of skateparks is nearly impossible to measure. Community-building is intangible, but far-reaching.

What the kids get:

A chance to work with the system to effect change. They'll get up close and personal experience with local government and working in groups.

A sense of pride in accomplishment.

An opportunity to channel their energy, talents and dreams into something positive.

What your town/city/county gets:

Kids are taken off the streets, freeing up law enforcement for more important things, promoting safety and preventing damage.

An opportunity to build future citizens by showing the kids that the system can and does work. (They'll one day be voters.)

A sense of pride in uniting the efforts of government, local business, kids, parents and law enforcement.

What local business gets:

Relief from skaters using their property to skate.

An opportunity to establish a working relationship with kids. (They'll one day be customers)

A chance to contribute to the quality of life in their town. Making a better community makes better business.