

THE BENEFITS OF PUBLIC SKATEPARKS & ADDRESSING COMMUNITY CONCERNS



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OUTLINE

THE BENEFITS OF SKATEPARKS

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SKATEPARKS REDUCE

ILLICIT BEHAVIOR

The myth surrounding skateparks is that they are a breeding ground for crime and other illicit activities. As we explained earlier, while there will be an occasional "bad seed", providing designated spaces for positive activities is the best way to curb unlawful behavior among youth. When youth having nothing to do or nowhere to go – that is when they cause trouble.

It's no secret that children who are involved in team sports don't have the time to get into trouble, but it turns out you don't have to be dragging them to the soccer field or baseball diamond. Activities you might not expect -- like skateboarding -- might be just what teens and adolescents need. Research out of the University of North Carolina found that skateboarding is among the activities that might help keep children out of trouble.

"I think skateboarding kids are a focused group of kids," said Diana Harris, a parent. Compared to their couch potato peers, active adolescents -- including skateboarders -- were less likely to engage in risky behavior like smoking and drinking.

"I think that is a group we see as being a little more on the risky side, but instead of being on the risky side, they were actually protected from those behaviors," said Dr. Penny Gordon-Larsen, a researcher.

Source: *NBC Philadelphia*

"Keeping Active Best Way To Keep Kids Out Of Trouble"
April 3, 2006

This area is located in one of the most impoverished areas in Long Beach, and the park currently has given hundreds of kids in the neighborhood an alternative to drugs, gangs and the many negatives they face each day. The City's application shows that the project meets the goals of Job Creation, Benefiting Low Income Communities, Blight Reduction and Economic Development and Smart Growth.

Reduction in Crime since the Skate Park was installed: From 2003 to 2008, crime has dropped in the immediate area around the park, which has historically been a very high crime area of the city. Since 2003, drug related incidents have dropped 60.9%, violent crime has dropped 29.3% and overall incidents have dropped 22.8%. Further, calls for service have dropped 23.0%.

Source: *"News Release: Long Beach Rejects Assertion that 14th street skate Park Project is Stimulus Waste"* Ed Kamlan, Public Affairs Specialist City Manager's Office - City of Long Beach

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SKATEPARKS REDUCE ILLICIT BEHAVIOR



Young skaters roll into smooth concrete bowls and ramps that both parents and health officials see as a constructive and positive way to keep children away from drugs, gangs and crime.

"Skateboarding here gives us something to do instead of crazy stuff," Zuniga said, adding that the negative influences for teens are still prevalent in his neighborhood.

In 2008, Ciudad Juárez initiated "Reclaiming Public Spaces," a project that includes the remodeling or construction of parks, community centers, skateboard parks and extreme sports parks.

"One of the psychosocial benefits is to feel safe again, reclaiming public spaces helps people feel like a community again, the busier the place, the more appealing for the youth and the safest people feel," said Monica Chavira, M.A., Mental Health Consultant for the Pan American Health Organization.

"There is more opportunity for social interaction with other youth which helps develop trusting and cohesive communities."

Sports, like skateboarding, is providing the children of Juárez an alternative to the violence surrounding them, Chavira said.

"Skateboarding as an urban playing activity is beneficial for kids because it works as a positive escape route where the community and all the skate park users begin to take ownership of their park and take care of it themselves," she said. "In this individual activity there are no organizing factors limiting the creativity of the individual and it can become a highly motivational sport that encourages perseverance and discipline."

Source : Fox News Latino

"Ciudad Juarez Skatepark Lets Kids be Kids Amid Drug Violence"

Joseph Kolb - September 26, 2012

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SKATEPARKS PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR SKATEBOARDING

As was explained in the previous section rebutting the concern that skateboarding and skateparks are dangerous, the majority of skateboarding injuries happen outside skateparks. The most common injuries are falls due to surface irregularities and collisions with motor vehicles or pedestrians.

Skateboarding is going to happen whether skateparks exist or not, so the best way to keep youth safe is to provide them access to safe, designated spaces to pursue their activity.



In 2012, thirty skateboarders lost their lives. This report includes two skateboarders who suffered their accidents in 2011, but did not pass away until days or months after the original incident.

It is important to note that all thirty deaths occurred in a roadway.

Twenty four out of the thirty skateboarders listed were struck by a vehicle.

Source: *Skaters for Public Skateparks*
"2012 Skateboarding Fatalities"
Teresa Waters March 3, 2013

Six months after plans to build a public skateboard park behind the Taunton police station were scrapped, some are speculating whether having such a facility could have saved the life of a Taunton skateboarder who was recently struck and killed by a car on Bay Street.

"He definitely would have used (the skate park)," said the boy's mother, Melissa Thomas. "I think he probably would've been there instead of out on the street."

"Personally, I think the decision to not allow the skate park denied skaters in Taunton a chance to recreate safely," she said. Thomas echoed the sentiment. "They need a safe place where parents know where to find them," Thomas said. "They don't have a place to go anymore where they can skate."

Source: *Taunton Gazette*
"Taunton's lack of public skate park brought to forefront in wake of teen's death"
Gerry Tuoti August 19, 2011

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SKATEPARKS REDUCE

DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

“Everybody raise your hand, look at the person next to you and give a high-five,” she said, before Mayor Dwight C. Jones joined young skateboarders in dedicating the new facility at Carter Jones Park in Woodland Heights.

“Richmond’s always been a tennis city,” Jones said, “but skateboarding is an emerging activity that’s going to happen whether we’re on board or not.”

Source: *Richmond Times Dispatch*
“Skatepark opens in South Richmond”
Michael Paul Williams September 14, 2013

Mayor Jone’s comments echo a popular phrase in the skatepark industry, “If your town doesn’t have a skatepark, *it is one*”. Without designated skateparks, skateboarders will make use of any and all terrain in their community.

This often includes the private property of home owners and local businesses, as well as public spaces such as downtown plazas. Metal skateboard axles and BMX pegs can destroy paint and chip concrete, causing thousands of dollars in damage every year.

Public skateparks are a win-win because skateboarders have a safe place to pursue their passion, while law enforcement, business owners and community members no longer have to spend time, money and energy shoeing skateboarders away from their property.



Tyler Wolf, 17, now spends time hanging out on the benches outside the Roanoke Natural Foods Co-op on Grandin Road — a habit of many teens that has created anxiety among neighborhood business owners and residents this summer. He said an adequate skate park would lure him away from the benches. But Wolf called the state of Roanoke’s park “depressing,” especially since the removal of the half-pipe and several other ramps.

More support has been voiced for finding activities that draw their interest. In Bedford County, a skate park had promising effects, according to Michael Stokes, the county’s director of parks and recreation.

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SKATEPARKS REDUCE DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

Prior to the opening of Falling Creek Park in 2011, Stokes said, area police and merchants dealt with several problem areas that were attracting teen skaters.

"They're just looking for a place to skate," Stokes said. "And they're young and they're going to test some people. You drive through town now and you don't see that anymore."

"The issues were just skating in places where there might be pedestrians or traffic and we're not seeing that anymore," Stokes said. "It's open and very visible."

While scrolling through the comments on this online article, we found a valuable testimonial from a local resident who had a first-hand experience with skateboarders in Roanoke's downtown area. It's clear from her comment, that the lack of a quality skatepark is creating unsafe environment and hurting the business of local merchants.

Teresa - August 1, 2013 at 1:03 am

"I do avoid the area due to the teens. Same thing in downtown Roanoke too. They block the sidewalks. Also have nearly run over kids who skated boarded into the street from behind cars. Can't go to eat with my elderly mother because I am afraid she will be knocked down. Just not worth the hassle and definitely affected my use of merchants in the area."

Source : *The Roanoke Times*
"Roanoke teen loitering blamed on skate park's woes"
Zach Crizer August 2, 2013

PC Steve Wilson, of the Driffield Neighborhood Policing Team, said: "From my experience, I am aware that the skate park is regularly used by numerous young people from Driffield and the surrounding areas, offering a valuable diversion from anti- social behavior."

The officer said in a letter to Skate Park organizers, which was read at a meeting of the Driffield Town Council policy and finance committee: "Since the skate park opened there has been a noticeable drop in calls to youths causing annoyance and related matters. I would fully support this facility being made into an all-weather, all year round resource."

Source : *Driffield Neighborhood Policing Team*
"Skate Park helps cut crime"
August 8, 2006

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SKATEBOARDING HAS SIGNIFICANT PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Arguably the most important reason for participating in action sports is the fact that it keeps you healthy and physically fit. Finding an activity that gets kids off the couch and keeps them in shape is vital for the youth of this nation, especially in this time of a national health crisis.

"It's a cardio workout, and the faster I go, the more I'm gasping for breath," he said. "And it only becomes harder when I'm carrying a heavy backpack."

While skateboarding might look like fun, it also registers as an excellent workout. Michele Olson, a professor of exercise science at the Montgomery, Ala., campus of Auburn University, said that boarding engages many small and large muscles.

"Your glutes, hamstring and quads work with all that pushing off the ground; your abs and back help you balance; and you use the small muscles in your calves, the stabilizing muscles in your hips and the ones in the arches of your feet, which is great because these weaken and flatten out as you get older," she said.

Mr. Hippix began boarding in 2010, and he said he has become fitter and more toned. "It's definitely changed my body for the better," he said.

Source: *The New York Times*
"Skateboards for Work and Working Out"
Shivani Vora August 22, 2013

One of the most successful weapons against diabetes is a total blast: The Pawhuska Skate Park. It is impossible to make an absolute correlation between Tucker's improving health and the skate park, but here's a stunning fact: In the past one and a half years, Tucker's blood sugar average readings have steadily declined. In that same 18 months, he has been skating at the park, getting exercise for 10 hours or more hours a week – a proven method of keeping blood sugar in check.

His parents say that the skate park has made a huge difference in Tucker's physical activity. In pre-skate park days, Mark says that Tucker's life was mostly sedentary except for basketball season, largely occupied by school and playing video games. He still plays basketball, but now he's in full-exercise mode all year round.

Source: *The Bigheart Times*
"Sk8ing for diabetes, fun"

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SKATEBOARDING HAS SIGNIFICANT PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Skateboard tricks and the lifestyles of the kids who practice them could be a key to fitness into adulthood. A recent study by Johns Hopkins University researchers said regularly skating, Rollerblading and biking increase children's chances of fighting the flab as they grow. The odds were better than for those who played baseball and other organized, and often seasonal, sports.

The study, published in January's Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, was one more among the many seeking solutions to the nation's growing obesity epidemic. But it's one researchers believe will fuel the push for more school and after-school activities. And skaters and their parents say it could help the unindoctrinated appreciate the benefits of some ramps and an outlaw spirit.

The senior Hulson is a lifelong athlete and said he likes skateboarding because he believes it is a good cardiovascular workout, builds muscle strength and confidence, and comes with a community that provides encouragement.

They found that among after-school activities, the likelihood of being an overweight adult was reduced 48 percent for those who skated or biked more than four times a week. For those who played soccer or other organized sports three or four times a week, the odds of being overweight later were reduced 20 percent.

Source: *Baltimore Sun*

"Ramped-up exercise: Hopkins study finds that kids who skateboard or Rollerblade stay fit longer than those who play organized sports"

Meredith Cohn February 28, 2008

It also helps people develop some positive physical characteristics as they become more confident on a skateboard, such as increased leg strength, stamina, and balance. The largest health benefit of skating, however, is the cardiovascular workout it provides. "Most skaters don't care about the details of their health," he admits. "They just know that the more they skate, the better they feel, and that is enough."

Source: *Human Kinetics*

"Three Rules to Help Kids Fit in with the Skateboarding Culture"

Per Welinder December 6, 2011

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SKATEBOARDING HAS SIGNIFICANT MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Skateboarding is a unique activity because it combines extreme physical exertion with precise muscle coordination and balance. The complexity of performing tricks on a skateboard improves brain function at a fundamental level and stimulates new cell growth in the brain.

In 2006, an elementary school in Boulder, Colorado began incorporating skateboarding into the physical education curriculum – calling the program “Skate Pass”. The program’s director, Eric Klassen, wanted to “bring in activities that are alternative, non-competitive and individual. Most kids in schools feel intimidated when it comes to competition.”

Klassen says the biggest benefit might be something kids don't realize they're learning. While skateboarding helps with eye-foot coordination and balance, he says it also improves performance in the classroom.

"When they're involved in an activity that involves balance -- both hemispheres of the brain are equally stimulated," Klassen says. He points out that researchers have shown that the body also produces a hormone that makes students more receptive to learning for the rest of the school day.

Source: *9News*

"Local school becomes first in nation to teach skateboarding"
March 6, 2006

These benefits, taken together, constitute a picture of skating as a healthy, healing activity for veterans returning from war. Whether by promoting physical exercise, community or relaxation, skateparks and skateboarding are a positive and low-impact way of providing therapeutic treatment to the emotionally-damaged. As a peaceful, constructive and creative activity, skateboarding at a well-designed and well-maintained public skatepark can be one of the most valuable and fun things to do for the entire family.

By building public skateparks, a city or town is ensuring the health and well-being of their children, veterans, and disaffected teenagers, both physically and mentally."

Source: *Skaters for Public Skateparks*
2009

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Even more insidiously, my sweet but long-haired kids are subject to the continued supervision, tacit disapproval, and even harassment by police officers, business-owners, and ordinary people for their choice of sport. That is even though it is a sport exemplifying the values of sportsmanship, dedication, perseverance, and determination that we celebrate in hero-athletes like NFL great Joe Flacco and the college athletes we are watching this week in the NCAA basketball finals.

But I am not just a rabid skate-mom, who wishes my sons could practice their sport closer to home and wear their skate logos without judgment. I also am also a Northwestern University sociologist of law who is trained in participant-observation and makes a living observing and analyzing social interactions.

As any soccer, basketball or football mom knows, having two kids who practice the sport means I've spent lots (and lots and lots) of time in skate parks all around the United States and parts of Europe. And what I observe is a sport practiced by dedicated and enthusiastic young people who should be admired, not scorned.

Skateboarders are dedicated; they show up to practice, rain, shine, or snow (if they have a place to do it) without a schedule. No coach tells them when to arrive, how long to work, or what the next trick is.

And yet they make progress. Even when the next trick involves staring down a 7-stair jump, dropping into a bowl that terrifies their mom, or trying a 360 flip to manual for 12 years before landing it, skaters keep at it.

Source : *Huffington Post*
"Skateboarding Is Still a Crime, But the Sport Is Admirable"
March 22, 2013

SKATEBOARDING HAS SIGNIFICANT MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Experts would say that skateboarding and other individual sports are more beneficial than harmful to teenagers. They need to be out -- hanging out with people, laughing, connecting to something larger than themselves and their worries.

Teenage years are an "awkward period in your life. You're looking for definition and identity and your place in the world," said Miki Vuckovich, executive director of the Tony Hawk Foundation, a nonprofit group working with city governments to help build public skateparks. "Skateboarding is the answer for a lot of kids. It's fun. They can do it on their own terms. It doesn't require a coach or a team. Skating is something you do at your own pace."

He said skating actually is a lifestyle. There is the skating culture -- the lingo, the fashion, the atmosphere -- that teenagers like. Vuckovich said another great thing about skateboarding is that it's a supportive environment. You don't have to be a cool kid. You can't get cut from a team.

Source: *Tampa Bay Times*

"Identity on board: Skateboarding gives kids a chance with individualism."
Erin Sullivan July 15, 2006

Worley is a single mother with two children — Fallon, 5, and Sasha, 7. When Sasha was 2-years-old, he was diagnosed with autism. Worley said both her sons loved skateboarding, but the activity proved to be more than just fun for Sasha.

"It was this unique kind of therapy," Worley said.

Worley said she noticed her sons' relationship was much better when they would skate. "Sasha likes to play by himself, has a lot of anxiety and fights a lot with his younger brother," she said. "When he's on a skateboard, they become best friends."

Many children with autism seek ways to escape from pressure, Worley said. She said there were many times that Sasha would be so stressed that he would ram himself into a wall. Skating now relieves that pressure for him.

"He loves it," she said. "There were days when he would get off the school bus and just fall on the ground screaming. With the half-pipe, he can just go inside and grab his board and skate for a while."

Source: *Daily Mountain Eagle*

"A rolling remedy"
James Phillips, 2011

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SKATEBOARDING HAS SIGNIFICANT MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

An interesting case study on skateparks as positive environments comes from Evan Knappenberger, who is a skater-stepfather and OIF '05-'07 veteran with PTSD and depression. He is a student at Whatcom Community College in Bellingham, WA.

“How do these veterans cope? What hope is there in treatment, be it medical or spiritual, for ex-soldiers with mental illness? What exactly is it about emotional trauma that demands such a thorough and time-consuming healing? How is that healing facilitated in post-modern suburban America? One surprisingly effective answer for many veterans has been the local skateboard park.

Go to any skatepark in America and an astonishing number of young veterans from every political and economic background will tell you about the curative properties of skateboarding. Many claim there is a meditative quality to the sport that promotes relaxation and emotional balance. Some claim skateboarding as a miracle cure for their various ailments. Before looking into the physical and mental benefits of skateboarding, it is necessary to take a moment to realize the more important community benefits of the skatepark itself.

By providing veterans with specialized topics for discussion that are unrelated to warfare, such as skating equipment, tricks, and famous skaters, skateparks offer veterans a means of conversational engagement and a milieu of interpersonal connections. Skate culture transcends political differences and focuses on sportsmanship and camaraderie. This can be reassuring to veterans who are wary of politically charged causes or groups.

Many soldiers with depression, PTSD, or combat injuries struggle to maintain a healthy weight. For some it can be difficult to find the motivation to exercise as a civilian because it is usually a lonely activity whereas in the army it was social. Skateboarding is an excellent way to get exercise in a social environment without having to pay hundreds of dollars for a gym membership.

By acquiring new skating abilities a veteran can take pride in peaceable accomplishments while improving his or her self-esteem. Veterans learn how to overcome fear by facing a steep drop on a concrete ledge at a high speed; they learn how to overcome the past by focusing on the task at hand, which is keeping upright.

Notably, it is important that a skater not be drunk while attempting maneuvers. Veterans have a very high rate of substance abuse and alcoholism and are discouraged from using and drinking while they are skating, if only to save themselves from injury. I have yet to see a drunk vet at the local skatepark, though there are plenty at the VFW lodge down the street. The emotional rewards in skateboarding are performance-based, so alcohol becomes an obstacle between the skater and his or her reward.

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Skateboarding allows for individuality as rules are minimal and self-expression is encouraged. This freedom to be creative and express oneself through skateboarding activity can be a means of empowerment. Through the cultural values of inclusion, having fun, self-expression, and progression, participants can build confidence to become leaders. Regardless of gender, discipline, ethnicity, or age, the participants in this study routinely embraced each other, supported each other by showing encouragement and appreciation, and showed no signs of negative emotion toward other participants, despite the fact that prize money was on the line. This lack of negative emotions infers an inclusionary construct within the skateboarding culture.

Another central theme of this study was the energy and drive of the participants. While each participant was competing, facial expressions suggested the presence of passion and determination, fun, excitement, and desire to do their best at that moment.

Source : ESPN Productions, Inc.
"An Ethnographic Study of the Skateboarding Culture"
Linda Moore, Senior Director - Business Administration

SKATEPARKS HAVE A POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Hundreds are flocking to the new Fremont Skate Park from throughout northern California. Last Wednesday, Mike Brown and his buddies piled into a car and made an hour-long pilgrimage from Pittsburg to Fremont.

Demarcus James did the same from San Francisco. "Smalls," from Walnut Creek. Others, as far as Stockton and Sacramento. They're among the hundreds, if not thousands, who've made their journey to the Fremont Skate Park since its soft opening on May 31, turning our city into an unlikely mecca for the edgy action sport.

Source: *Newark Patch*
"New Skate Park a Tri-City Mecca"
Zoneil Maharaj June 13, 2013

The park is not intended to be an economic-development tool, though it has proven to be a draw for other cities. Stan Robinson, chairman of Recreation District No. 3 in St. Mary Parish, said his district's skate park, built in November, has been a worthwhile venture.

"I can't tell you how many times a parent has said to me that it's the best taxpayer money they've spent," he said. Nearby businesses, he said, are seeing their sales increase from visitors to the park. "We are already planning to expand it," he said.

Source: *Houma Today*
"Plans rolling ahead for new skate park"
Chance Ryan January 31, 2013

"The immediate response to our park was overwhelming. Both the youth of our town, and visitors alike bombarded our new park each and every day. This was a huge economic boost for our town, and continues to be as this contest has put Carbondale and our skate park on the map. Never underestimate the draw that a skatepark will have on your town.

Our town has been very pleased with the economic impact that the new skatepark has brought to Carbondale. With many visitors staying here over the Summer months just to skate our park, with large contests being held here and the free advertisements that skaters pass on to each other about Carbondale, our skatepark has been exceptional for town business."

Source: *Skaters for Public Skateparks*
Carbondale Recreation Coordinator Chris Woods - Carbondale, Colorado

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We do not have any specific studies on the economic impact of skateparks on communities, but from the feedback we receive from municipal skatepark managers, skateparks do seem to have a positive effect on businesses in the surrounding area. When a skatepark opens, it tends to draw folks from the outlying communities to come bring their kids to the skatepark, do some shopping, maybe have lunch, buy some gas, etc. Skateparks attract patrons to local businesses who might not otherwise be in the area.

Skateboarders are tenacious and will go wherever the compelling terrain is. While skateparks with high visibility and ample community interaction are healthier environments, skateparks in challenging locations can often serve to activate an otherwise underutilized space. Their presence displaces less desirable elements that require privacy and can be a steady presence for other visitors that may be reluctant to visit a desolate area.

Source : *Tony Hawk Foundation, 2013*

“To emphasize how much impact our skatepark has had since its opening, I would like to note that one of the most frequent questions at our Colorado Welcome Center is now, “How do you get to the skatepark?” The volunteers at the welcome center have requested that signs be placed throughout town to guide out-of-towners to the park.

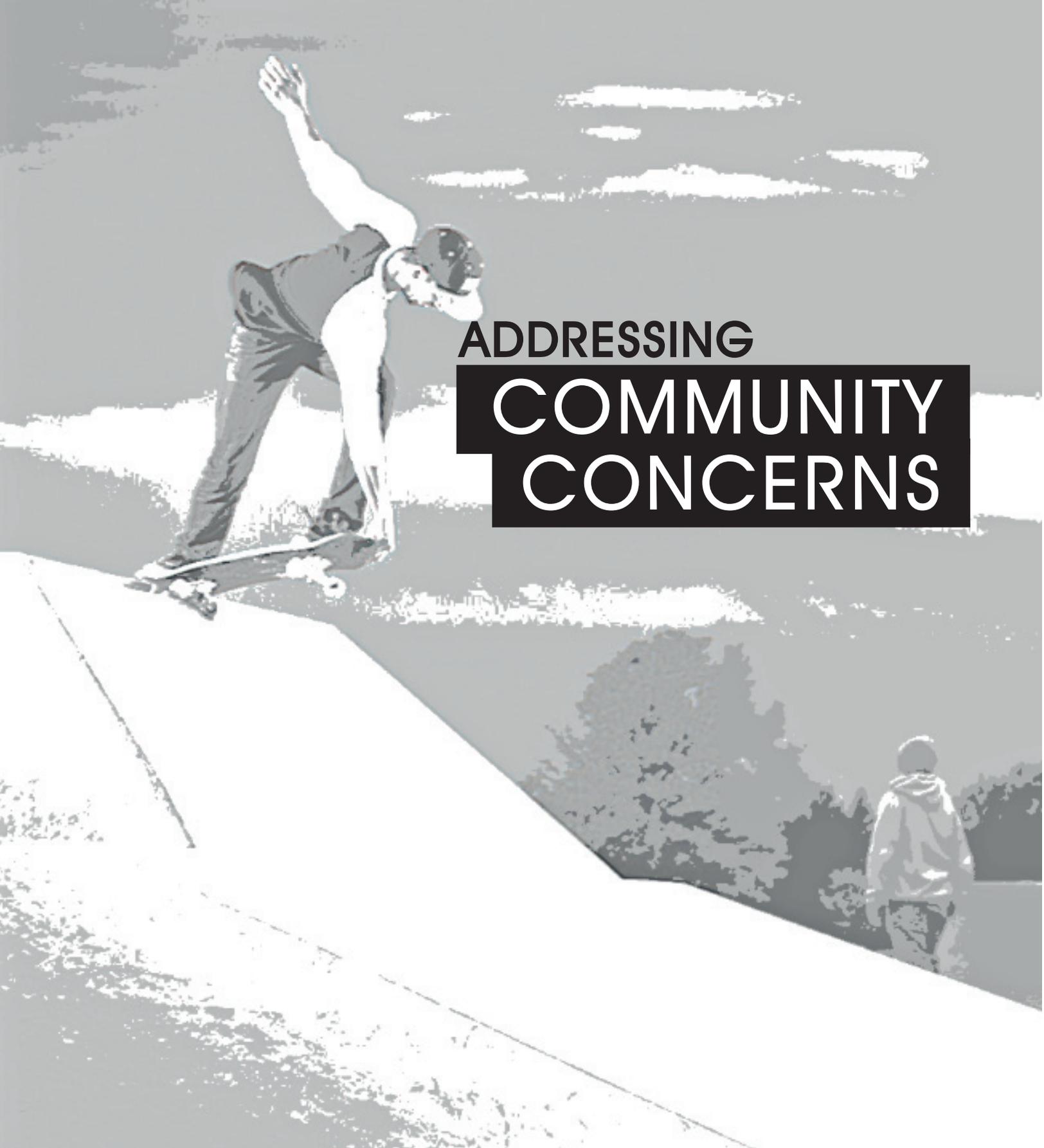
There have been, as I am told, numerous skaters from across America that have come here specifically for the purpose of trying out our new facility. I’ve heard reports from local enthusiasts that fellow riders from as far away as Maine, Vermont, Florida, Washington, Oregon, Texas, California, and Indiana have been here to skate. For a city with a population of 10,000 we are impressed with the results. Tony Hawk even stopped for a ride with his group a couple of weeks ago. Word travels fast when a world class skatepark is constructed.”



Source: *Skaters for Public Skateparks*
Mayor Joseph A. Reorda - Trinidad, Colorado

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SKATEBOARDING & SKATEPARKS ARE DANGEROUS

While there is a daredevil spirit commonly associated with skateboarding and many adrenaline junkies do pursue the activity, skateboarding's mislabeling as "dangerous" comes down to a perception issue. When you look beyond the outdated outlaw stereotype and compare skateboarding to traditional sports, you'll find that the activity is actually quite safe.

National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, a division of the Consumer Protection Safety Council, studied skateboard-associated injuries for a 12-year period 1987 to 1998 for participants aged 7 years or older. The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System provided injury estimates for skateboarding and the selected additional sporting activities. The National Sporting Goods Association annual survey of nationally representative households provided participation estimates. A participation-based rate of injury was calculated from these data sets for the selected sports for the year 1998.

Results:

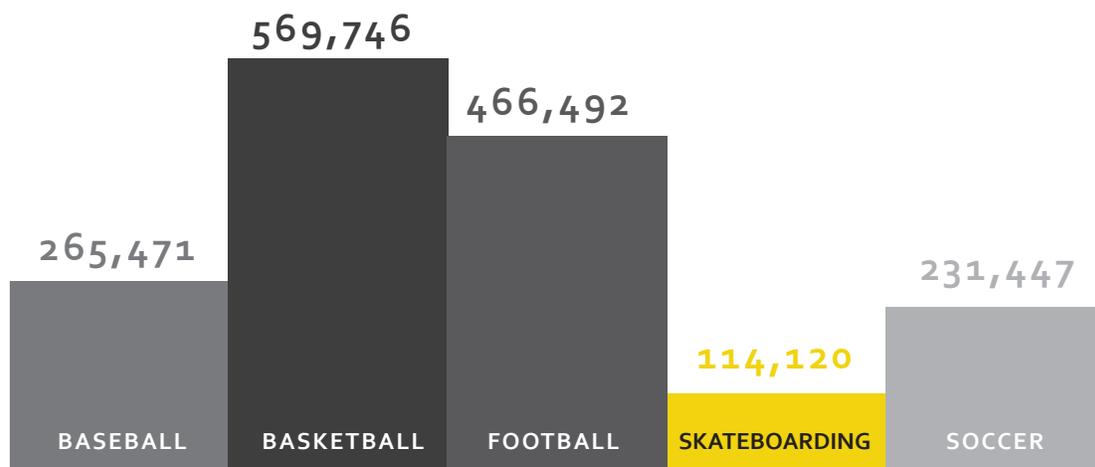
The 1998 rate of emergency department-treated skateboard-associated injuries-8.9 injuries per 1,000 participants (95% confidence interval) was half as high as basketball (21.2).

The most frequent injuries in 1998 were ankle strain/sprain and wrist fracture. Skateboard-associated injuries requiring hospitalization occurred in 2.9% and were 11.4 times more likely to have occurred as a result of a crash with a motor vehicle than injuries in those patients not hospitalized.

Source: The Journal of Trauma, October 2002

"Skateboard-associated injuries: participation-based estimates and injury characteristics"

The CPSC's NEISS published new data in 2012 from a sample of 96 hospitals, estimating the number of injuries per a 100,000 population in the US. The data for various activities was fairly consistent with the 1998 data and breaks down as follows:



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SKATEBOARDING & SKATEPARKS ARE DANGEROUS

Dr. Michael Yorgason, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon who practices at Montana Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, summarized the CPSC findings:

“The best research which quantifies risk of skateboarding comes from the Journal of Trauma, Oct. 2002, and is written by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. They determined the number of skateboarding injuries per active skateboarder and compared those numbers to in-line skating and basketball. Skateboarding had an injury rate of 8.9 per 1,000 participants. In-line skating was 3.9/1,000 and basketball produced 21.2 ER-treated injuries per 1,000 players. Statistically, skateboarding is safer than playing basketball.

Skateboarding on public streets or adjacent to traffic is more dangerous and can produce serious injuries due to collision with motor vehicles. The potential benefit from the skateboard park is that it will shift riders from the sidewalks and streets to the park, and there will be fewer falls due to surface irregularity.”

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons weighed in on the topic of skateboarding injuries with some important risk factors:

At highest risk are:

- Inexperienced skateboarders. Those who have been skating for less than one week suffer one-third of injuries, usually caused by falls.
 - Skateboarders who go near traffic or use homemade skateboard ramps. Both activities are particularly dangerous.
 - Experienced skateboarders who encounter unexpected surfaces or try risky stunts. Irregular riding surfaces, rocks or other debris can cause you to fall. You can stumble over twigs or fall down slopes. Wet pavements and rough or uneven surfaces can cause a wipeout. Avoid risky behavior. Don't skateboard too fast or in dangerous or crowded locations.
-

With smooth concrete, precise geometry and strategically-designed traffic patterns, a skatepark is clearly the safest place to perform the activity.

The Journal of Trauma published another study in 2010 that echoed this sentiment, “Our findings demonstrate that helmet utilization and designated skateboard areas significantly reduce the incidence of serious head injuries.”

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SKATEBOARDING & SKATEPARKS ARE DANGEROUS

When discussing the dangers of skateboarding, the question of liability will inevitably come up.

In most US states, skateboarding is classified as a hazardous activity. This classification is intended to let participants know that there are inherent risks in skateboarding similar to most other athletic activities. Limited liability laws and hazardous activity lists prohibit claims against public entities that operate public spaces such as softball fields, basketball courts and skateparks. This allows municipalities to create positive spaces for recreation without the fear of lawsuits.

In 1997, the State of California, amended Section 115800 of the Health and Safety Code to address skatepark liability. The bill discusses supervised skateparks as well, but as we understand Victorville skateboarders are proposing a non-supervised park so we've highlighted the pertinent section reluctant to visit a desolate area.

Existing law provides that neither public entities nor public employees are liable to any person who participates in a hazardous recreational activity. Existing law defines "hazardous recreational activities" for these purposes to include various activities. This bill would provide that skateboarding at a public skateboard park is a hazardous recreational activity.

With respect to any facility, owned or operated by a local public agency, that is designed and maintained for the purpose of recreational skateboard use, and that is not supervised on a regular basis, the requirements of subdivision (a) may be satisfied by compliance with the following :

(1) Adoption by the local public agency of an ordinance requiring any person riding a skateboard at the facility to wear a helmet, elbow pads, and knee pads.

(2) The posting of signs at the facility affording reasonable notice that any person riding a skateboard in the facility must wear a helmet, elbow pads, and knee pads, and that any person failing to do so will be subject to citation under the ordinance required by paragraph (1).

A detailed analysis of skatepark liability across multiple states comes from a 2009 article in Parks & Recreation Magazine written by James C. Kozlowski. Mr. Kozlowski is an associate professor in the School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism at George Mason University in Manassas, Virginia, and legal/legislative counsel to NRPA Public Policy.

"In this all too common scenario, ignorance of applicable state law and the perceived fear of liability may unnecessarily limit or eliminate public recreational opportunities and activities, like skateboarding. In general, a failure to enforce park rules, in this case ensure compliance with equipment rules, is not a basis for governmental liability, particularly in unsupervised facilities. More significantly, however, existing statutes in North Carolina and other jurisdictions would provide significant governmental immunity against any liability for skateboarding injuries.

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Despite jurisdictional variations, these state laws are quite similar in that they generally preclude any governmental liability for injuries arising out of the inherent risks associated with participation in skateboarding. While some states have adopted immunity legislation specific to skateboarding and similarly hazardous recreational activities, other jurisdictions have included skateboarding within the context of more generic immunity laws such as state recreational use statutes. As illustrated by the state laws described herein, in the case of skateboarding, the legislative trend clearly reflects a public policy which favors governmental immunity over liability.

In North Carolina, the expressed legislative purpose of the “Hazardous Recreation Parks Safety and Liability” statute (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 99E-21 to 25) is “to encourage governmental owners or lessees of property to make land available to a governmental entity for skateboarding, inline skating, or freestyle bicycling” without fearing liability:

To address such liability concerns, this law provides that no governmental entity or public employee will be liable “for any damage or injury to property or persons that arises out of a person’s participation in the [hazardous recreation] activity and that takes place in an area designated for the activity.”

Further, the law provides that any person who “participates in or assists in hazardous recreational activities assumes the known and unknown inherent risks in these activities, irrespective of age.” Moreover, pursuant to the statute, “no public entity that sponsors, allows, or permits skateboarding, inline skating, or freestyle bicycling on its property is required to eliminate, alter, or control the inherent risks in these activities.”

Rather, pursuant to the statute, the participant in hazardous recreational activities is held “legally responsible for all damages, injury, or death to himself or herself or other persons or property that result from these activities.” While engaged in hazardous recreational activities, irrespective of where such activities occur, the law holds the participant responsible for negligent failure to comply with the ordinance requirement that any person riding a skateboard at an unsupervised facility must wear a helmet, elbow pads, and kneepads.

The hazardous recreation law, however, does not limit liability that would otherwise exist for any of the following:

- (1) The failure of the governmental entity or public employee to guard against or warn of a dangerous condition of which a participant does not have and cannot reasonably be expected to have had notice.
- (2) An act of gross negligence by the governmental entity or public employee that is the proximate cause of the injury.

In contrast to the North Carolina and California statutes described above, the operative language of the Hawaii statute is much simpler in providing public entities with immunity to liability for skateboarding injuries:

No public entity or public employee shall be liable to any person for injury or damage sustained when using a public skateboard park, except when injury or damage is caused by a condition resulting from the public entity’s failure to maintain or repair the skateboard park. HRS 662-19 (2008)
In so doing, there is no requirement in the Hawaii statute regarding helmets, elbow pads, and knee pads in skateboard parks.

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SKATEBOARDING & SKATEPARKS ARE DANGEROUS

In pertinent part, the Nebraska "Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act," R.R.S. Neb. § 13-910 (2009), also provides an expressed exemption from governmental liability for any claim "relating to recreational activities for which no fee is charged," including skateboarding. In addition, the Nebraska tort claims act precludes governmental liability for the following:

The design of a skatepark or bicycle motocross park constructed for purposes of skateboarding, inline skating, bicycling, or scootering that was constructed or reconstructed, reasonably and in good faith, in accordance with generally recognized engineering or safety standards or design theories in existence at the time of the construction or reconstruction.

Source: *Parks & Recreation Magazine*
"Skateboarding Immunity Laws Limit Liability" September 2009
James C. Kozlowski, J.D., Ph.D.

In early 2013 we spoke with Jim Thyden, the insurance programs manager for the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority, which insures 75+ California municipalities with public skateboard parks. Mr. Thyden reminded us that no agency is 100% immune to lawsuits – anyone can sue someone. In his 10+ years of experience though, he has seen only a handful of lawsuits filed related to skateboard parks with zero of them actually materializing.

Jim's colleague at California JPIA, Allan Amico, was quoted in 2002 article written by the California Parks & Recreation Society adding that if municipalities would like to decrease their risk of liability even further, they should keep a written record of inspections for safety hazards within the skatepark.

Amico, who participated in efforts to introduce legislation that would provide more liability protection for skate park operators, urges agencies not only to have skate parks properly designed and constructed, but also to institute a rigorous maintenance program.

"Agencies must be able to show records of inspections and maintenance. That is a state requirement," said Amico, whose office is in La Palma. "In any case involving liability, the agency must be able to produce documentation of maintenance. Park maintenance supervisors should check for cracked concrete, metal reinforcing peeling away from concrete and other defects. Make sure that if a fall occurs, it isn't going to be the fault of the park itself."

Source: "Issues Facing California's Skate Parks"
California Parks & Recreation Society
Marti Childs and Jeff March, 2002

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While advocating for a public skatepark in Philadelphia in 2002, Joshua Nims, J.D., researched skatepark liability and provided a unique perspective:

Liability concerns have been a stumbling block for skatepark construction for decades. Municipalities, when asked to build facilities for their skateboarding population, always fall back on the liability excuse. That justification is often grounded in a misinterpretation of the actual risks of skateboarding and the comparative risks of traditional playground sports like football or soccer.

Skateboarding has supplanted a number of traditional sports as the activity of choice for over 9 million young people. Traditional playground sports such as soccer or football have comparable participation rates, yet have a much higher injury rate per thousand participants than skateboarding. Based on these facts, it is not logical for different standards of liability to be applied to children playing pick-up games of football or soccer in a public park than to skateboarders. It is important to establish early in the process of understanding skateboarding liability issues that the same amount of liberty that traditional sports participants are afforded in a public park should be allowed to skateboarders.

There have been no federal cases on skateboarding-related liability as of this writing. However, in 1999, the U.S. Department of Justice released a study of a small town in Massachusetts that had a downtown plaza skateboarding problem similar to the situation in Center City. A skatepark was constructed as a response and the loitering and pedestrian safety problem was significantly reduced. To address liability concerns, the town posted signs at the skatepark imploring users to wear protective gear and warning users that they are using the facilities "at their own risk."

The report admits that "safety gear requirements have been difficult to enforce and are frequently ignored," but the overall outcome for the community has been a success.

There is no perfect solution to any problem, but the Danvers, Mass. community is willing to take a small liability risk to alleviate a much larger one and the results have been very positive. Large reductions in complaints and police calls for skateboarding related incidents have been reported since the skatepark was constructed.

Source: *USHistory.org* Joshua H. Nims, J.D.

"Approaches to Liability for the City of Philadelphia in the Context of Skatepark Construction"
April 4, 2002

SKATEPARKS ARE HUBS FOR ILLICIT BEHAVIOR

When concerned community members describe behavior they believe will occur at a proposed skatepark, they are typically describing behavior that falls into one of the following four categories.

- Smoking, Drinking & Drugs
- Foul Language & Aggressive Behavior
- Vandalism & Graffiti
- Violence & Theft

In our experience, we've found that these issues can occasionally occur, but:

- They are the exception, not the rule. In every social group there will be the occasional "bad seed" whose upbringing was not rooted in values of courtesy, kindness and respect. This is not unique to skateboarders and issues like this are typically symptoms of being an adolescent, not symptoms of being a skateboarder.
- They are typically caused by non-skateboarders. The vast majority of skatepark users are extremely focused individuals engaged in a physically and mentally-demanding activity. In skateparks that lack visibility or feature prison-style fences that discourage the public at large from entering the facility, these occasional "bad seeds" feel like the skatepark is a place where they can hide from the law-abiding public and engage in illicit behavior.
- There are strategic methods during the planning and design process that can be implemented to minimize these issues.

Siting

Skateparks that are highly visible and surrounded by active public areas create the perception that any activities conducted within the skatepark could be seen by law enforcement, parents or community members. The perception that the skatepark is part of "everybody's space" and that there is nowhere to hide is extremely effective in discouraging poor behavior.

Adult Leaders

Skateboarding communities with a strong adult presence consistently see fewer problems once the skatepark opens. When there are positive role models in the mix, the majority of younger skaters will follow their lead and treat the facility with respect, or face the risk of becoming a social outcast within the group.

implemented to minimize these issues.

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SKATEPARKS ARE HUBS FOR ILLICIT BEHAVIOR

Involve users in skatepark development

When skatepark projects actively engage the end users throughout the process, they develop a sense of pride and ownership in the facility. Whether it's sitting through hours of city council meetings, contributing to the design of features within the park or helping raise funds for construction, when youth become invested in the project they are more likely to respect the facility once it opens. Plus, if they observe someone abusing or misusing the space, they are likely to take a stand. They'll remind that person how hard the skateboarding community worked to build the park and that disrespecting it could lead to its closure.

In a recent study by the Journal of Adolescent Research, Dr. Graham L. Bradley explains that "skate parks are positive places, which encourage civic responsibility and social skills.

We also watched and observed kids acquiring social skills, learning to cooperate, to take turns, to take some responsibility for their sporting arena. They have pride in it and they look after it.

We think young boys at the skatepark are learning the beginnings of some civic participation, some responsibility, and some involvement in their community."

Source: "Skate Parks as a Context for Adolescent Development"
Journal of Adolescent Research
Graham L. Bradley, March 2010; vol. 25, 2: pp. 288-323.



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SKATEPARKS ARE HUBS FOR ILLICIT BEHAVIOR

New research out of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill finds that physically active adolescents are not only improving their health - they also are decreasing the chance that they will get into trouble.

Among teens who fare well are skateboarders, particularly regarding their self-esteem and despite a lack of wide public support for this activity.

"Anything we can do to get kids to be physically active will help them in terms of their physical health, but this research suggests that engaging in a variety of activities may also have social, emotional and cognitive benefits, including reduced likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors such as drinking, drugs, violence, smoking, sex and delinquency," Gordon-Larsen added.

The risk was similarly low for the skaters/gamers. Skateboarding may get a bad rap, since schools don't generally sponsor it, many public places ban it and not a lot of adults participate in it. "But we found that adolescents who skateboard actually fared well in terms of self-esteem and were less likely to engage in risky behaviors compared to teens who watch a lot of TV," Gordon-Larsen said.

"It's also extremely important for communities and schools to provide safe and affordable recreation facilities and opportunities for physical activity," she added.

Source: *"Skateboarding's cool and healthy!"*
April 4, 2006 myDNA News

Staff said vandalism is a problem throughout the city park system and is predominantly in the form of graffiti. The city has a graffiti removal program in maintenance that has been successful in removing graffiti in a timely manner throughout its parks.

The most likely surfaces for graffiti in the skate park will be the concrete skating surface. Staff said since skaters find painted surfaces very undesirable to skate on due to the slick surface it creates, graffiti by skaters is anticipated to be non-existent.

Staff believed skaters will police others committing graffiti in what they will regard as their park. The previous skate park experienced far less vandalism than the majority of the city's park system, including playgrounds, and had very few graffiti incidences over the 10 years, according to staff.

Source: *San Jose Mercury News*
"Fremont skatepark design will return to the city council"
Wes Bowers 04/07/2011

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The number of reports of anti-social behavior in Dorchester has fallen by 19 per cent since the completion of a public skatepark in April 2009, and in the area where the skatepark is located the reduction is even more significant at 33 per cent.

Inspector Les Fry, Dorchester Section Commander, said: "This reduction is a tremendous result for the town and shows the real value of having such a good facility for young people.

"The park is the place to go, either to take part or just to sit and watch. The young people are extremely good at policing it themselves, looking after the younger and less experienced park users.

"Data shows that the park has had a really positive impact and is not just a short-lived flash in the pan. Reported anti-social behavior is down compared to the three previous years' statistics and the trend is continuing which is great."

Laurie Thomas, a 19-year-old member of the skate park committee said: "All of the users of the park look out for one another, whatever their age."

Tom Borland, 17, said: "The skate park is a very safe place to go and if anyone has any problems everyone helps out."

Emma Scott, Community Development Officer for West Dorset District Council said: "The young people have taken ownership of the park and are extremely proud of it. They are keen to look after it and continue to maintain it in top condition.

Source: *Dorchester skatepark contributes to drop in anti-social behavior*
Dorset Police Force

SKATEPARKS ARE HUBS FOR ILLICIT BEHAVIOR

Too often we hear stories of stolen phones. Not often do you hear a heartwarming story like this that tells the exact opposite tale of how a lost cellphone made its way back to its proper owner, showing that kindness still exists in this world.

It all started with a bouncy bike and a loose Velcro pouch. Architecture graduate Kim Ho wrote on her blog KYM4 how her friend didn't tell her he was putting his phone in the pouch on her bike..

"[We] had an amazing few hours biking along the country side," she wrote. But there were "lots of bumpy windy gravel roads on our route" and therefore "lots of opportunity to lose a wallet or phone."



When the pair returned home, they learned of the cellphone's lost status via — you guessed it — social media. Instead of someone putting incriminating selfies on Facebook from their newly acquired phone, there was an Instagram video waiting for the cellphone owner from a group of creative — and honest — kids.

"We found your phone," the kids say, instructing the owner to "call this phone." Of course, they couldn't resist showing off a few of their moves at the skate park. They even give instructions to come and get it. Ho wrote that she and her friend called the number and were told to meet the kids at the local park.

"No harm done to the phone, they just wanted to give it back to its rightful owner! They could have sold the phone, made some good coin and continued skating, but they didn't. Instead they took a few goofy pictures and filmed this sweet video," Ho wrote.

"I have to commend them on their creativity, their playfulness, and their honest nature- totally feeling inspired today about all the good folks in this world. All smiles."

Source: *TheBlaze.com Liz Klimas August 21, 2013*

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SKATEPARKS ARE HUBS FOR ILLICIT BEHAVIOR

The City of Manteca, California learned a valuable lesson with their first skatepark when they allowed unsubstantiated NIMBY concerns to dictate the skatepark siting process.

Back in the late 1990s after then Councilman Wayne Flores convinced his colleagues to approve the idea of building a skate park, it became a political hot potato.

Every location staff or a committee came up with was met with huge opposition from neighbors. A site in front of the golf course and across from the tennis courts was batted down because it was determined it would somehow be disrespectful to funerals taking place across Union Road. A location next to the parks and recreation office on Magnolia Street was rejected due to plans to expand the Civic Center complex.

A suggestion to build it at Woodward Park was rejected on the basis that the park was years away from being developed although there was vocal position from residents who had just moved into the neighborhood.

The council finally settled on the current location away from streets and homes tucked on a stretch of the Tidewater Bikeway behind the PG&E substation next to the railroad tracks between Center and Elm streets and Walnut Place Park.

The problems started immediately. Since no one could see it from any street — not even police on patrol — it became a place for bullies and thugs to hang out to intimate skaters and others. The situation forced the city to install the first surveillance camera linked directly to the dispatch center at the police station to monitor the facility.

DeBrum's suggestion of Spreckels Park for a possible new skate park location is based on the premise the two recreation endeavors complement each other, the site is highly visible with parking available.

Source: "A new skate park for Manteca" *Manteca Bulletin*
July 5, 2013 Dennis Wyatt

"We didn't see very much misbehavior, certainly when compared with what you would expect as per the stereotypes or what is to be reasonably expected in any social setting where youth congregate. We didn't see any physical or verbal bullying or intimidation. We saw no graffiti. We saw hundreds of kids, but fewer than 3% of them were smoking cigarettes. 2% littered at any time we were watching."

Source: *Journal of Adolescent Research*
"Skate Parks as a Context for Adolescent Development"
Graham L. Bradley, March 2010; vol. 25, 2: pp. 288-323

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SKATEPARKS REQUIRE

SIGNIFICANT OVERSIGHT

Skateboarders have a unique community; they teach, coach, learn, practice, and regulate their practice area silently but effectively. If you have ever watched skaters at a skate park, you know that two skaters cannot drop into the bowl at the same time. Avoiding collision in the bowl is crucial to avoid a trip to the hospital. And yet, no queue is formed because everyone wants to start their run from a different place in the park. Somehow, an unspoken arrangement plays out where everyone gets their turn.

When newer skaters show up who don't yet know the arrangement, they are gently guided, then chided about how to assess the park and determine whose turn is next. Better skaters coach weaker skaters saying things like, "your weight needs to be forward," "bend your knees more," or just, "try man." No one thinks twice if the more advanced skater is 8 years old and the skater getting the advice is 45.

Skaters are independent and self-sufficient; the sport is built on American principles we hold dear. It is practiced by independent trail blazers with unshakable belief in their athleticism and their sport. They gently enforce a set of guidelines for the benefit of the greater whole with the elders firmly but fairly guiding the next generation.

Source: *Huffington Post "Skateboarding Is Still a Crime, But the Sport Is Admirable" 03/22/2013*
Laura Beth Nielsen, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of Legal Studies, Northwestern University

For Cindy, the skate park has offered another blessing besides the better health of her son. It is also healthy socially.

"That skate parks works for everybody," she says. "There are no uniforms. No team. No coach.

"When you're down at the skate park, there are no differences. It doesn't matter how old you are or what race you are. The big kids help and teach the little kids, and everyone gets along."

Source: *The Bigheart Times*
"Sk8ing for diabetes, fun"
Louise Red Corn December 8th, 2011

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SKATEPARKS REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT OVERSIGHT

It was a spring cleaning that took a little extra effort but also brought additional meaning, as about 20 Baraboo area skaters celebrated the season opening of the skateboard area at Campbell Park with a clean-up day event. "We know if you don't keep it clean, you don't have a skate park," said Wroth Kearns, a 20-year-old skater from Baraboo.

Some parents also pitched in, including Susan Baum-Riechman, whose 13-year-old son, Seth Riechman, is a regular at the park. "I wanted to lead by example, and hopefully these kids will do the same for others who weren't here today that don't respect the park," she said. "They need to know this is part of young adulthood."

Rick Luther nodded as he tossed the two large bags of debris the effort produced. "In many ways the skaters are expected to police this area themselves," said Luther, the recreation coordinator for Baraboo.

"We've found that the problems come from the non-skaters," Luther said. "People have tried to trash their skate area, like smashing glass bottles, hoping the blame falls on the skaters. When people see a squad car here they think, 'Oh, it must be the skaters.' But it has nothing to do with them."

"So many times there is a bad stereotype with the skaters, but they're no different than the kids playing at the ball diamonds," said Brian Fisher, owner of the Elements skateboard shop in Wisconsin Dells. "The sport has really evolved, and these kids are tremendous athletes." Fisher spearheaded the clean-up event, mirroring it after one he organized at a park in Lake Delton.

Source: Baraboo News Republic
"Skaters assume responsibility for keeping park tidy"
April 28, 2013 John Morton

Staff said it had committed to create a "Friends of the Skate Park" group consisting of neighbors, skaters, and their parents, as well as coordinate park ranger patrol end of shift hours to coincide with the hours of operation of the skate park.

Source: San Jose Mercury News
"Fremont skatepark design will return to the city council"
Wes Bowers 04/07/2011

Does that mean the costs from cutting supervisors simply created expenses elsewhere? Mayoral spokeswoman Rachel Laing said the police presence doesn't cost money, saying police just include the skate parks with their regular patrols. "They're in the neighborhood," Laing said. "Part of their duty is patrolling the parks. It's just kind of an extra step."

Source: "Skate Park Liability"
Voice of San Diego Rani Gupta
January 8, 2009

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SKATEPARKS REQUIRE

SIGNIFICANT MAINTENANCE

A concrete skatepark designed and built by licensed and bonded professional skatepark design/build firm can withstand decades of daily abuse from skateboards, bikes and scooters without requiring any major repairs. The most common maintenance requirements are blowing leaves and debris out of the skatepark, as well as picking up trash. While not vital, yearly inspections could be conducted to assess the following:

- Inspect drains for trapped debris
- Inspect joints and concrete cracking. The most common cracking found in skateparks is known as “crazing” – a web-like pattern of tiny micro-cracks roughly a millimeter deep. These cracks do not extend through the depth of the concrete and are not large enough to allow enough moisture penetration to cause problems. When professionally-designed, a skatepark will have a strategic network of expansion joints, cold joints and saw-cuts to control cracking as best as possible.
- Inspect concrete riding surface for pockmark effect. High impact zones such as the landing of stair sets and step-up gaps may experience a pockmark effect from protruding axels of skateboards. The effect is subtle and in most cases does not affect the usability of features, but extreme cases may require some surface grinding.
- Inspect steel for rust. Responsible design/build firms are meticulous in wrapping exposed concrete edges with steel to protect against chipping and concrete crumbling. The steel itself, however, should be occasionally inspected for excess rust. Typically, constant grinding from skateboard axles and BMX pegs will take care of any rust, but in extreme cases an application of rust paint could be useful.

As countless newspaper articles have shown, users take ownership of their park – especially when they are involved in the design process and have adult leaders in the skateboarding community to look up to. While maintenance costs may amount to a few thousand dollars over a 5-year period, daily maintenance costs are negligible. In countless cities, parks maintenance staff add another 15 minutes into their daily or weekly routine to pick up trash and blow leaves/debris out of the park.

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SKATEPARKS

ARE LOUD

In our experience, the concern that skateparks are loud also boils down to a perception issue. When weary neighbors picture a skatepark, they imagine the constant “clicks” of a skateboarder rolling across expansion joints on a sidewalk or large metal ramps with constant clanking and banging noises. The facility being proposed will be smooth concrete, free from expansion joints and metal plates.

The primary sound generated by a skatepark will be the nearly-undetectable hum of urethane wheels on smooth concrete.

To support our opinion that skateparks are not inherently louder than any other recreational amenity we've referenced four sound studies as well our own case study of a park with similar site characteristics in Gardena, California.

Staff commissioned a noise assessment of the park site, which was conducted by Petaluma-based Illingworth and Rodkin Inc. The report found the project would not generate noise at the noise sensitive residential homes above 50 decibels during operating hours, which staff said is well below the ambient traffic noise generated along Paseo Padre Parkway.

Source: *San Jose Mercury News*
"Fremont skatepark design will return to the city council"
Wes Bowers 04/07/2011

Council members in April unanimously reaffirmed their support for the skate park site after a \$6,200 noise study found that it would generate less noise than traffic on Paseo Padre. The city selected the site because it is visible along Paseo Padre, adjacent to restrooms and in a section of the park unaffected by work crews building the BART extension to Warm Springs.

Source: *Oakland Tribune*
"Lawsuit could further delay skate park"
Matthew Artz 06/02/2011

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Noise Impacts from Skateparks
Creekside Park Skatepark in Monte Rio, California
Prepared by Prunuske Chatham, Inc.
January 25, 2012

To estimate anticipated noise from the proposed skate park, we used measurements from existing skate parks. Baseline Environmental provided noise measurements at the Sebastopol skate park. The measurement in Sebastopol also included vehicle noise from the adjacent street and sirens from the police station a block and a half away. Because vehicles and other city noises were louder than noises coming from the skate park, the average noise measurement doesn't represent the noise of skating. However, looking between noise peaks caused by vehicles and sirens, the skate park (at a distance of 70 feet) appears to generate sound levels ranging between 50 and 68 dBA. To evaluate this sound level, we also reviewed previous skate park sound studies. Results of the literature review are shown in Table 1 below.

Skatepark	Distance of Measurement	Leq (dBA)	Predicted 200' Leq
Sebastopol Skatepark	72 feet	60	51
Derby Park	120-130 feet	50	46
Santa Rosa Skate Park	120-130 feet	46	42
Kingsbridge Skate Park	33 feet	68	52
Chowchilla Skate Park	120 feet	59	55
Coaches Field, Oakland	200 feet	54	54

Noise levels appear to depend on the number of users, ambient noise, and skating features. Noise from skating comes from rolling, jumps and slaps, and glides along railings. Rolling is the activity that generates fairly constant noise and tends to be quiet, particularly on smooth pavement. Jumps and slaps create louder episodic sounds. Glides create a loud grinding noise and are also episodic. Often the sound of conversation between skate park users is as loud as the skating although some authors have noted that, since skating is essentially a solitary activity, conversation from group gathering places such as the concession deck may actually be louder.

Sound Impact Study for the Proposed
Brattleboro Area Skatepark is Coming (BASIC) Project
July 13, 2011
Prepared by Ramsey, McLaren, LLC – Planning & Engineering

Project developers propose to install a 3' high berm with a planting screen along the westerly (Union Hill) side of the playground, in an effort to minimize the movement of sound off-site to the adjacent residences. Berms and associated vegetation have been shown to be effective in sound / noise mitigation – when properly placed, maintained and of adequate height.

The Crowell Lot Playground is located in a residential neighborhood – and adjacent to a high-traffic state highway. Area residents testified at a 20 June 2011 Development Review Board meeting that they had “concerns” regarding the noise that such a proposed skatepark might generate.

This noise study was undertaken to quantify both the existing or background sound levels, the general sound characteristic in the neighborhood and the likely additional sounds that the skatepark might contribute.

Dwellings immediately opposite (north side of Western Avenue and west side of Union Hill) the Crowell Lot Playground were included in the sound study, as these are the locations that are nearest the sources of “new” sounds and are also those for which residents have indicated concerns regarding potential disturbance, quality of life, etc. matters.

Research involving skatepark design and construction indicates that one of the primary attributes of noise reduction is that of the “running surface” – material and surface condition. Test information supplied by the Skate Park Association of the USA suggest that a concrete surface is a significantly lower sound generator than is a similar design in steel or wood. (54/27 db for concrete vs. 75/78 for wood and 72/76 for steel)

Similarly, surface conditions (wear, cracks, pitting, etc.) contribute significantly to sound patterns. On a sidewalk, it is the expansion joints that are the sources for the most sound generation, not the broader surfaces of the walkway. At the BASIC park, the developers propose to install an engineered, finished concrete surface, the “least noisy” of the construction materials currently available.

Results of the sound testing appear in the accompanying Exhibit section and indicate that at none of the four residential property boundaries were skateboard-related sounds detectable at levels above that of the ambient or baseline levels.

Essentially, at times of “normal” traffic on Western Avenue, vehicle sounds are louder than – and mask – skateboard sounds. At times when traffic is lull- or traffic-related sound is less than baseline – the skateboard-generated sound level is still less than the “normal” Western Avenue background sound level.

SKATEPARKS ARE LOUD

Essentially, at times of “normal” traffic on Western Avenue, vehicle sounds are louder than – and mask – skateboard sounds. At times when traffic is lull- or traffic-related sound is less than baseline – the skateboard-generated sound level is still less than the “normal” Western Avenue background sound level.

This is not to suggest that skatepark activity will not be detected by the human ear – it will; but it will be below existing sound thresholds and the customary skateboard “noise”- the high-level, short duration incidents – will also be lower than current vehicle “noise” incidents.

As substantiated by the sound testing, vehicle audio systems, truck engine brakes, motorcycles, barking dogs and children crying are the most significant generators of high sound levels...and BASIC has little control over those activities. Human-generated sounds – particularly those of enthusiastic participants in a sport – basketball, skateboarding, etc. are controllable and appear to be those that reach the highest decibel levels at the Crowell Playground – far higher than the actual sounds generated by “wheels on concrete”.

Given that situation, the single best method to minimize sound and to enable BASIC participants to be perceived as “good neighbors” would be to strongly discourage “yelling” whether on the skatepark surface, the basketball court or the playground equipment.



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