SKATEPARK PROJECT TIMING & FINAL STEPS

ACCEPTING AND SIGNING OFF ON THE BUILD
Oftentimes during a skatepark construction project, the city will sign the site over to the skatepark builder to manage the site and complete the build. The project is completed, and the city has a chance to inspect the build before accepting the work and signing off on the job as completed according to plan. This is where previous conversations about reasonable acceptable tolerances come into play. An independent inspector (with skatepark construction experience) or a civil engineer might be the ones to do a final inspection with the builders and inspect tolerances before the city accepts the project as complete. This Quality Control process is in place to ensure that the skatepark is built to the plans and specifications agreed upon and paid for.

OPEN THE SKATEPARK AS SOON AS IT’S READY TO SKATE
An important note regarding timing of construction completion: Minimize the time between construction completion (rideable concrete) and when skaters are allowed to use the park.

  Consider a soft opening as soon as it’s ready to skate, and a grand opening later.
  The locals will be so excited to use the park that they may hop the fence if it’s still closed, regardless of the reason. You don’t want the neighborhood’s first interaction with the park to be people breaking the rules, as it sets the wrong tone and may create conflict. You can use temporary fencing and direct skaters to the skateable area, and also alert neighbors that it is acceptable for people to ride at this stage, as long as the skatepark builder gives the all clear.

If your skatepark project is a part of a larger park development, align the project to open with the rest of the park, or open the skatepark for use while other parts of the larger space are being completed.

MANAGING COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS
The construction phase is a good opportunity to continue to manage the expectations of local stakeholders and officials. Chat with neighbors, the police and community outreach departments, local skaters and municipal officials to help them understand that this is a place for youth to learn. As such, they may see signs of antisocial behavior. It’s important to prepare people for a transition phase as locals learn how to use and care for the space. When speaking with locals, ask for their patience and understanding, and give them a way to contact the skaters and the locals if they have questions or concerns. Having this conversation early can go a long way toward mitigating potential community growing pains.

SKATEPARK GRAND OPENING

The skatepark opening is a special day in which all stakeholders should be celebrated.

As a municipality, consider giving official certificates of appreciation to the local skatepark advocates who engaged in the civic process. Their volunteer work deserves to be recognized.

Invite funders and supporters who helped the project happen.

Consider inviting the local skate shop team to do a short demo, and to run a quick skate clinic.

Helmet and board/gear giveaways (or extremely cheap sales to amplify a sense of ownership), along with an art workshop space to decorate helmets (paint pens, stickers donated from skateshop), can be a great way to make sure the kids have access to the space with a board and feel less shy about their protective gear. Food, music and fanfare can add to the occasion.
Keep the opening remarks short, and let the kids get to skating.

**THINGS YOU CAN RIDE AT A SKATEPARK**
- SKATEBOARD
- BMX
- INLINE SKATES/ROLLERBLADES
- QUAD SKATES/ROLLERSKATES
- WCMX (WHEELCHAIR MOTOCROSS)
- SCOOTER
- SNAKE BOARD
- FREELINE SKATE

**THINGS YOU CAN DO AT A SKATEPARK**
- INDEPENDENT
  (You’re never really skating alone at the skatepark if there are people there)
- CRUISE
- LEARN NEW TRICKS
- TAKE TRICKS TO NEW OBSTACLES
- WITH FRIENDS
  - GAME OF S.K.A.T.E
  - ADD-A-TRICK
  - FOLLOW THE LEADER
  - THUGGIN’/FOOT DOWN
  - VIDEOGRAPHY
  - PHOTOGRAPHY
SKATEPARK OPERATION - MAINTENANCE & SIGNAGE

Public Skateparks are a self-governing space. Most of the time the space manages itself thanks to the stewardship of local skaters.

Contemporary Public Skateparks Operation:

FREE
PUBLIC
UNSUPERVISED
REASONABLE HOURS/LIGHTING

SUPERVISION
MODERN PUBLIC SKATEPARKS ARE UNSUPERVISED

PROS
• Parents can drop off small children like a daycare
• Repairs may be identified more quickly
• Potential for fixed ancillary resources (equipment rental, food, instruction)

CONS
• Increased liability
• Increased insurance costs
• Unnecessary equipment requirements and/or enforcement
• Employment cost for staffing
• Restricted hours due to staffing costs and/or availability
• Entry fee likely required due to increased costs
• User base displaced by fees, limited hours, equipment restrictions

Supervising skateparks can increase your risk of liability, which can increase insurance requirements and cost. The responsibility of these costs usually fall on the end user, and skateparks should always be free to use. Increased insurance requirements may increase barriers to entry like needing to sign a waiver and wear unnecessary safety gear. Why would people repeatedly pay to skate if they can skate for free, without pads, in the streets?

HOURS
Skateparks should be accessible from dawn to dusk, or later if there’s appropriate lighting. They are used by people of all ages and schedules.

MAINTENANCE
A contemporary concrete skatepark designed and built by professionals with community input should be relatively maintenance-free. Trash service and graffiti removal should be the responsibility of the city like all other municipal parks. The skatepark group should not be responsible for funding this. Locals should make every effort to help keep the place clean.

RECYCLING & TRASH
(provide enough bins for heavy use)

OCCASIONAL TAGGING/GRAFFITI REMOVAL
(alternatively, allow mural art and graffiti art)

LONG TERM CONCRETE TREATMENT OR REPAIR
(ask your builder about intervals and process)
GRAFFITI / MURAL WALL

If you have lots of organic art in town, consider doing a sanctioned graffiti mural board erected near the skatepark. You can have a signup sheet and rotate artists. Just be sure the wall doesn’t obstruct the line of sight from the street. Some parks sanction graffiti art/murals in the skatepark itself. If you’re aiming to allow this, be sure to consult your skatepark designer/builder on what type of paint is appropriate and safe for skating on. *(There is a danger of paint layers caking up or certain paints being slippery!)*

SIGNAGE

Skateparks can benefit from signage explaining basics around skatepark usage and rules, but signs can also play an important legal role. Work with local stakeholders to come up with appropriate signage that demonstrates state law & city ordinance rules for the space, as well as advice on how to use the space safely. Common language used is “This skatepark is unsupervised” and “Skate at your own risk.” The term “non-motorized vehicle” is also commonly used to describe the “vehicles” that people use at the skatepark.

Consider a map of the actual space and lines to show common pathways. Work as/with local skaters to design it.

Since this is a place where youth and adults congregate, consider including contact information for emergency and non-emergency services, domestic violence, mental health and suicide prevention hotlines. A simple sign can go a long way.

Plaques can be a good way to honor those in the community who supported this project, both from the local and municipal level.
SKATEPARK OPERATION - HOW TO USE

HOW TO USE A SKATEPARK

• Everyone is learning, so everyone is in the same place.
• Welcome others. Bring and maintain the vibe you want to be in.
• Skatepark etiquette is real and has to be learned. Respect and communication are key. You can consider putting up signage for this but avoid being prescriptive.
• Learn the lanes of traffic, learn the rotation order to drop in. Look around, it’s new every time.
• Teach the children well - don’t be afraid to kindly help someone understand how to use or take care of the space.
• Nobody cares if you’re wearing a helmet of protective gear
• You won’t be alienated for wearing protective gear
• Pack your trash

A note on “snaking”: Snaking is basically cutting in line. However, if you're in a “rotation” waiting your turn, and you're not really paying attention, it’s wasting everyone’s time and the next person might go ahead. You need to be ready to get your turn. However, sometimes people are nervous, so if you're in a position to help someone learn how the rotation works, help them out with a simple: “Want to go? Looks like it’s your turn!” That type of simple conversation can go a long way for people nervous about skating at a skatepark.

SKATE SESSION DO’S AND DON’TS BY JEFF GROSSO

“I think it’s a pretty universal thing – you don’t one-up people. Somebody’s trying something, you don’t just drop in and do it; steal their little moment of glory or photo. You let them do their thing. You get stoked for them and you try something else. Depending on the session, the crew and where you grew up, some people are really into snake sessions. Other people aren’t. You kind of have to crawl up there and read the lay of the land. Depending on how it’s going, you get involved in the mix. You try to bring something to the session and not take away from it. Not diminish it. Skateboarding sessions are little entities, they take on a life of their own and they build. There’s a crescendo, everyone’s all hyped, there’s hugs and high fives. Everyone laughs. Everything that goes along with it, you try to get in that mix and build on it. Just get the stoke rolling. If you’re one of those dudes that bums everyone out, you’re diminishing the session. Use your eyes, use your ears and get involved. Make it good. Don’t be a kook.”

Invaluable advice from the immortal and uncompromising Jeff Grosso in Thrasher Magazine. Rest In Peace, Jeff.

To learn more about the history of skateboarding, watch Love Letters to Skateboarding on Youtube.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Consult state requirements for safety gear in skateparks, as well as other nearby public skatepark rules.
Sometimes state requirements are out of date.
Some cities strictly enforce safety gear rules, many do not.

Note: Enforcing these rules may create greater liability for the city, limit accessibility, and may cause more issues than it solves.
It is common for 18+ users to have the choice to wear gear.
ALL beginner to intermediate skatepark users should strongly consider protective equipment.
AFTER OPENING / PROGRAMMING

- Work with the city, assign local point person to park relations for stakeholder communication requests for skatepark relations
- Connect with existing skateboard/action sports stakeholders (skate charities, local skate shops)

EVENTS, CLINICS and MEET UPS

Events and programming are a great way to activate a space, but cities don’t like surprises. It’s usually better to inform them of your plans. It’s also better to have an official organization if you’d like to routinely program the skatepark. When using the skateparks for clinics or classes, try to designate one section of the park for the class and leave one section open for free use, then rotate. Official events will likely need permitting and insurance, non-official events may still require insurance, waivers and more. For more information on how to create social skate programming, see “Starting A Social Skate Organization” in Appendix H.

Wondering which events need a permit and which don’t?

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HELMET GIVEAWAYS with customization station
BEGINNER CLASSES
MEETUPS that promote inclusion, progression and fun
COMPETITIONS

For more information on how to create social skate programming, see “Starting A Social Skate Organization” in Appendix H.
DEALING WITH ISSUES

- Pack in, pack out. Trash is the quickest way to start having problems at the park. Remind the locals to keep it clean to remind the city you deserve the space. Let the kids know.
- Exclusion - skateboarding has long traditions of inclusion and acceptance. Exclusion, hate speech and bullying have no place at the skatepark. It’s up to the locals to speak up and explain why it’s not ok.
- Harassment - speak up, stand up.
- Violence - call the authorities to deal with violent or criminal activity.

SKATERS LISTEN TO SKATERS

An important note to municipalities and community leaders:

Youth oriented park spaces attract humans who are still learning how to move about in society. Skateparks should not be CLOSED due to the misbehavior of a few people. You do not close a highway because of some people’s repeated traffic violations. This is a space for kids and adults. Closing the skatepark displaces community members and disconnects them from their most valued space. There is no good reason to close a skatepark. Work with the locals who actually use the space as intended to find other ways to rectify the issue.

ADVOCATE’S FOLLOW UP

If you’ve advocated for a skatepark and are successful, congratulations are in order. You’ve helped create a space that will serve many people for many years. Whether people recognize it or not, you’ve done more for your community and culture than most ever do. There’s no doubt you’ve noticed benefits that have come along with working to get this done. After the skatepark opens, people from neighboring towns may ask for your advice, if you care to give it. You may also be asked to help the city understand what programming can be created at the space. But when all is said and done, you can just ride the park you’ve helped create. Don’t forget to put this project on your resume or college application: “Lead advocate for X dollar public/private joint venture with the City of _____, resulting in a X square footage skatepark that serves X people annually.” That’s an impressive feat.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Once the park is open, you have the opportunity to do a little bit of Monitoring and Evaluation of the skatepark. Tracking skatepark usage can be a good way to help the city understand how successful the park is and how they might approach the next skatepark projects in their system. You or members of your crew can count how many people are there at what time of day, what they are riding, and who’s there in support (watching). You can ask your city to understand how much data they might like to see. Seeing those numbers will help you realize how many people this park serves.

You can also use the TSP Skatepark App to track your skatepark’s usage data.
SUPPORT FROM THE SKATEPARK PROJECT

Founded by Tony Hawk, The Skatepark Project (TSP) is a nonprofit organization working to increase access to outdoor recreation and free play through the creation of safe and inclusive community skateparks. TSP provides the resources, advocacy skills, grants and fellowship programs that guide skaters in creating their own community skateparks, from conception through construction. This is a collaborative process between skaters and city authorities to invest in capital improvements that will enrich a community for decades. The Skatepark Project’s grant programs have awarded over $10 million to help fund nearly 700 public skateparks in all 50 states, enjoyed by an estimated six million people annually. The organization’s International Program has provided technical and financial support to assist youth through the Skateistan educational programs in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and South Africa. To get involved, visit www.skatepark.org
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