

COMMUNITIES 4 SK8RS

# MAKING SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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THE VALUE OF A COMMUNITY-  
INTEGRATED SKATEPARK

BRIEF TO THE CITY OF REGINA PARKS AND  
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 16, 2005

# MAKING SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH: THE VALUE OF A COMMUNITY-INTEGRATED SKATEPARK

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## INTRODUCTION

Communities 4 Sk8rs is a broad-based coalition of parents, skateboarders, educators, community representatives, business operators and homeowners who are working in support of a skateboard park in Regina's inner city. Our vision includes the following points:

**First**, that skateboarding is an art, sport and culture of benefit to Regina and its citizens.

**Second**, that children and youth have a right to public space, and that public space should be designed to accommodate positive child and youth activities and interests.

**Third**, that a skateboard park works best when integrated into a neighbourhood setting that includes a full range of social and program support for children and youth who skateboard.

**Fourth**, that Regina's next skateboard park should be located as close as possible to where both the need and the community support are strongest.

With the above points in mind – and recognizing that the City of Regina has already determined broadly that the next park will be south of Victoria Avenue – our organization recommends support of the

findings of the initial Skateboard Advisory Committee consultative process, which pinpointed North Les Sherman Park as the optimum site for a new skateboard park.

We believe that the communities surrounding this location have special needs that should be considered. The fact that the proposed site is centrally located, providing more or less equidistant access, means that meeting these special needs works very much in harmony with the needs of the larger city. We also firmly believe that the surrounding communities have much to offer the proposed skateboard facility.

Accordingly, this brief will be divided into two sections:

- Community need: what a skateboard park can do for inner city communities.
- Community social capital: what our communities can do for a skateboard park.

## I. RECOGNIZING COMMUNITY NEED

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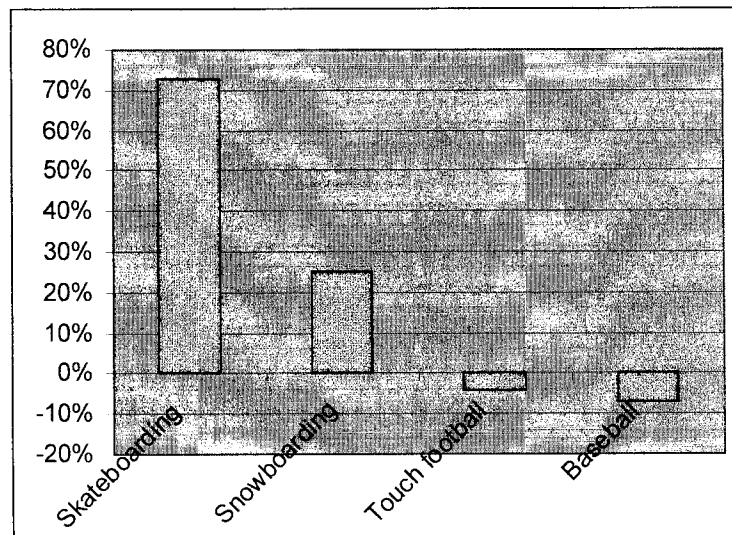
### A. SOCIAL FACTORS

The types of outdoor activities children and youth favour have been dramatically evolving over the past several decades. In 2001, a participation study by American Sports Data Inc. tracked “plummeting” participation in traditional sports such as baseball, football and basketball, in contrast to rapidly increasing participation in

skateboarding and other so-called extreme sports. Between 1997 and 2001, skateboarding participation in the U.S. grew 73 per cent, garnering more than 12 million active participants. In contrast, traditional sports like baseball and football lost participants.<sup>1</sup>

The report's authors noted "we may be witnessing a seismic shift in sports participation patterns, with enormous implications for the content of youth development sports programs"<sup>2</sup>

Fig. 1 – Participation Growth Rate 1997 - 2001



Source: American Sports Data Inc 2002.

The study further concluded that evolving sports preferences signal a major cultural shift that is led primarily by youth, one that places less emphasis on highly organized team sports. Instead, there is increasing emphasis on artistry and individual, non-competitive athletic

achievement, as witnessed by explosive growth in activities like skateboarding, rock climbing and snowboarding.

Meanwhile, public support for these activities has lagged far behind the trend. The lack of support ranges from not providing public facilities, to outlawing and banning the sports from public places. As a result, even as skateboarding's popularity has widened, so has the sense of alienation and marginalization that in some ways has come to embody the sport.

From a social perspective, this is not a positive outcome for a fitness activity. The City of Regina is therefore to be highly commended for taking a step forward and setting aside public funds for a second skatepark in Regina. Many cities have come to recognize that skateboarders deserve a place in the landscape of public recreation. The City of Langley, for instance, has five skateparks for its population of 91,000.<sup>3</sup> Other small and medium-sized cities, like Kingston, offer a wide range of skateboarding clinics and summer skateboarding programs.<sup>4</sup>

With the addition of a new skatepark, and the related coalescing of a committed community of support, Regina is making an important move toward meeting the social needs of children and youth in our city. This is particularly crucial for teens. If social spaces are not created for teens, they will create their own. The Canadian Amateur Skateboard Association notes:

“Many police departments are supportive of skateparks because they reduce street skating. Moreover, police departments have noted a reduction in other types of crime in certain instances where parks have been built in ‘problem’ areas.”<sup>5</sup>

This should be of note to the inner city in general and to Les Sherman Park in particular, where teens congregate in the evenings. As the CASA recommends, a positive solution is to provide a well-lit gathering area in full public view, one that offers a sports activity that teens are interested in watching and participating in.

***Recommendation:*** *That the skatepark location should be considered within the parameters of meeting the social needs of children and youth, particularly in Regina’s inner city.*

## B. GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS

North Les Sherman Park is within the boundaries of the Cathedral Area, a community of just over 7,000 residents. <sup>6</sup> The Cathedral Area is bordered by the North Central, Lakeview and Transition Areas, and is centrally accessible to the wider city.

Families in these core neighbourhoods have unique needs that relate to the physical geography of their surroundings. A typical lot size in Cathedral 25 x 125 feet, or just over 3,000 square feet. Yards are very small, and cement driveways are a rarity found only among a few houses on the 2400 block. As a result, when children and youth go outdoors they are more apt to play in public spaces than private spaces.

Children and youth who skateboard have few places to practice. Not only are yards are too small to accommodate skate structures, many back alleys are unpaved and the area's sidewalks are narrow, aging, and interspersed with gravel-strewn approaches from the alleys. This leaves the street as the only available open, flat surface for skating.

Typically the young people push their ramps and other skate obstacles onto the street, causing obvious traffic safety hazards. The Regina Police Service is aware of this activity and polices it in a relatively gentle fashion, no doubt recognizing that there are few other options for children in this part of the city.

These basic geographic factors are also encountered in the bordering neighbourhoods, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent in Lakeview. The northern part of Lakeview has its own challenges, though, being home to a highschool and a higher concentration of teens.

All the surrounding neighbourhoods share another important feature, namely the prevalence of high-traffic through-streets. Without the cul de sacs and crescents of suburban neighbourhoods, children are much more likely to be playing on busy streets. Rush hour begins as the school day ends, leading children to skate in very heavy traffic.

We believe these geographical factors present a clear and unique community need that deserves special recognition in the selection of a skatepark site. In addition, when the City's consulting team was tasked with finding a suitable location, one of the specific criteria the team was

given to meet was “proximity to urban centre”.<sup>7</sup> Our coalition fails to understand why and how this criterion lost its importance over the past few months, but it appears to have done so.

***Recommendation:*** *That the unique geography of Regina’s inner city should be taken into consideration as a needs-factor in determining the site selection.*

### C. ECONOMIC FACTORS

The average income in the Cathedral Area is \$44,848.<sup>8</sup> The average income in North Central is \$33,582.<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada reports that family income is a significant factor in recreational choices. Just 49 per cent of children in households with incomes less than \$40,000 are involved in sports, compared to 73 per cent in households with incomes over \$80,000.<sup>10</sup>

This is doubtless partly due to lack of access to affordable recreational activities. While highly organized sports like hockey remain popular in Canada, significant barriers are encountered by many. Cost is one obvious barrier, but there are others: a family might not have a car to get to games; a busy single parent may find it impossible to take a child to several practices and games a week. Not surprisingly, the Statistics Canada report found that hockey was reserved for higher income houses, with low income houses being more attracted to

inexpensive, non-team sports.<sup>11</sup> Skateboarding fits into the latter category.

In Regina, economic factors are of particular concern to aboriginal residents, who on average have lower household incomes. There is a positive side to this picture, though. Because of its accessibility, skateboarding is observably one of the more racially integrated social activities in Regina, as witnessed by the fact that many of the city's top skaters are First Nations youth. On any given evening at the indoor and outdoor skateparks, aboriginal and non-aboriginal youth can be seen skating together in roughly equal numbers, and interacting in a comfortable, friendly fashion that is all too rare in this city.

***Recommendation:*** That recognition be given to the fact that the North Les Sherman site offers close proximity to low income and First Nations populations, who should be considered priority users.

#### D. HEALTH AND SAFETY FACTORS

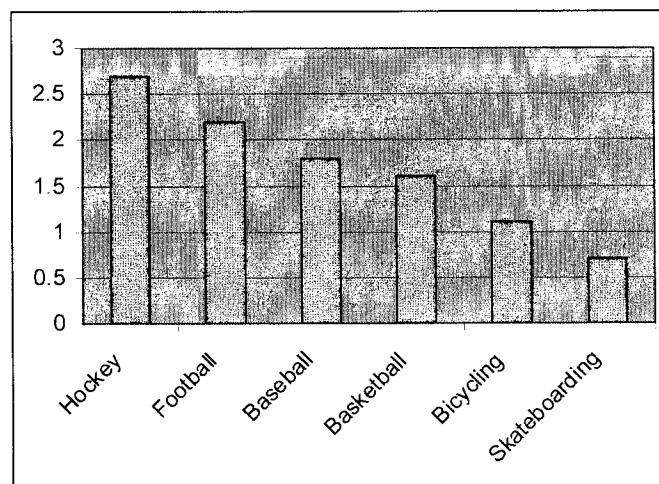
According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, over half of Canadians aged five to 17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute reports that only 21 per cent of teenagers accumulate enough daily activity to meet international guidelines for optimal growth and development.<sup>12</sup> In Saskatchewan, 68 per cent of young people aged 13 to 19 are physically inactive.<sup>13</sup>

Almost half of Canadian parents say lack of convenient facilities is a barrier to their children’s participation, while almost one in five (18 per cent) agree strongly that high costs prevent children from being more physically active, with a further 28 per cent agreeing moderately.<sup>14</sup> With this in mind, both financial and physical accessibility should both play a strong role in selecting a skatepark location. Placing a skatepark near low income neighbourhoods would greatly enhance the physical and social well-being of children in those areas, without excluding more mobile and options-blessed youth in other parts of the city.

There is another strong health and safety issue to be considered. While skateboarding looks extreme, it is in fact considered a relatively low-impact activity, with a significantly lower injury rate than sports such as hockey and baseball.

Fig. 2 – Comparative Sports Injury Rates

*Injuries per 100 participants*



*Note: Skateboarders skating for less than a week account for 1/3 of all injuries.*

Source: US Consumer Product Safety Commission 2002.

Injuries occur primarily when skateboarders are struck by vehicles. In 1998 the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reported just three deaths since 1980, all from motor vehicles.<sup>15</sup> The Commission further reported that half of all skateboarding injuries from falls were from riding on irregular surfaces.<sup>16</sup> In 2003 the Product Safety Commission looked at data from emergency room visits and concluded that skateboarding was “a relatively safe sport”, with hazards associated with the terrain where skateboarders practice their sport. The report’s authors also concluded that “the health care community should encourage skateboarders not to skate in the street and encourage the development of skateparks.”<sup>17</sup>

Noting that 25 per cent of skateboard injuries were caused by being struck by cars, the American Academy of Pediatrics echoed this recommendation:

"Communities should continue to develop skateboarding parks and encourage youth to practice there. These parks are preferred to home-constructed ramps and jumps, because they are more likely to be monitored for safety and separate the skateboarder from pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic." <sup>18</sup>

In summary, 50 per cent of injuries from falls are caused by uneven skate surfaces, and 25 per cent of injuries are caused by cars. With traffic and lack of safe facilities as the major source of injuries (rather than the sport itself) the City of Regina might find that building skateparks reduces – rather than increases – potential liability for injury.

In short, the City could be sued for *not* providing a skatepark where one is clearly needed.

In the interests of best possible safety, then, it makes sense to build the park where traffic conditions pose the greatest existing hazard, namely in the busy streets of the inner city where, as we have argued earlier in this brief, the streets provide the only open spaces for children to skateboard.

***Recommendation:*** *To promote better health a skatepark should be in an easily accessible, central location. To promote better safety, it should be in a location where skateboarders are known to be sharing space with heavy traffic. To reduce economic barriers to fitness, a skatepark should be located near low income neighbourhoods. These conditions are best met by the North Les Sherman site.*

## II. WELCOMING COMMUNITY SOCIAL CAPITAL

### A. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

While the new skatepark will be ‘Regina’s skatepark’, not the Cathedral Area’s, it must be recognized that the Cathedral Area has collectively opened its arms to welcome this facility. Both the Cathedral Area Community Association and the Ecole Connaught Community Council have sent letters to the Mayor and passed motions welcoming a site within the neighbourhood. When it was announced that North Les Sherman Park was at the top of the list, a petition was circulated that quickly gathered more than 1,500 names in support of the park. In addition to residents, members of the business community have been

vocally supportive and have signed the petition. The skatepark is widely recognized as an asset that will attract young families, providing greater support for the neighbourhood's schools, library, and local businesses, and improving property values.

## B. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SKATEPARK STEWARDSHIP

Area residents have been active members of the Communities 4 Sk8rs coalition, created to support the skatepark. While the coalition has participants from other parts of the city, the core support has come from residents living in proximity to North Les Sherman park, on both the north and south sides of the park.

When Communities 4 Sk8rs put out an exploratory call for volunteer stewards, several residents living directly on or very near the park volunteered to join a Skatepark Stewards Network. The volunteers agreed to help monitor the park for maintenance concerns and other problems that need attention, as well as to pick up stray garbage and keep in good communication with youth using the park.

The City of Regina should recognize that community care must be a very high priority for a good skatepark, especially one that is in a public park. A committed and watchful group of citizens is an invaluable asset for ensuring the skatepark is well kept up and problem-free. Problems might range from a chip in the skate surface to harassment.

Where youth might be unsure of how to approach the City about these things, friendly adults can assist as intermediaries.

The Skatepark Steward concept is an active ingredient at several North American parks. The organization Skaters for Public Skateparks notes: “Park stewards, whether they are officially recognized or not, are the first and last link in the plan for a successful, popular skatepark that the entire community will appreciate.”<sup>19</sup>

Steward organizations range from very formal structures and reporting mechanisms, to more casual ‘keep an eye out’ networks. The success depends entirely on community buy-in – that moment when a community steps forward and takes collective ‘ownership’ of the facility.<sup>20</sup> This has already happened in the residential areas surrounding North Les Sherman Park, even though the skatepark is not yet built.

A park physically separated from community quickly falls into neglect and disorder. Without meaningful ties to a neighbourhood residential setting, it is unlikely engender the feelings of ownership and pride that will in turn engender good stewardship.

***Recommendation:*** *That the City of Regina recognize the value of strong community ties to a skatepark, and seek to place the park where such ties are clearly available.*

### C. LISTENING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The past year has been full of good news for Saskatchewan skaters. Skateparks in Estevan, Weyburn and Swift Current were

opened, and significant progress was made in Prince Albert, Hudson Bay and Yorkton. Meanwhile, Regina skaters continued waiting for their new skatepark. The years it has taken simply to get to the discussion phase must seem like an eternity to our city's youth.

While progress has been slow, there's been progress nonetheless. We commend the City's Skatepark Advisory Committee for creating a forum for skaters to talk about the kind of skatepark they want, and for including skaters on the planning committee. The focus group session in December 2004 was very well attended by children and youth, and the discussion was informative and thoughtful.

The city's independent consulting team stressed the importance of this involvement, writing in their report: "As with many aspects of planning, the youth should be consulted. If they don't feel empowered by the development process, the facility is less likely to achieve a level of acceptability that will ensure its future longevity."<sup>21</sup>

However, involving skaters in the process requires the other shoe to drop – namely, actually listening to what children and youth have to say. Skaters gave North Les Sherman Park 25 out of 25 points as the most desirable skatepark location. The city's consultants agreed.

Skaters arrived at the public meeting in May feeling like Christmas was finally coming, only to find the process suddenly derailed and sidelined yet again. Instead of taking the recommendations forward, a fearful City of Regina scrambled to find a new location that wasn't on the

list of recommended sites. Although there's been no open communication about this plan, our understanding is that it involves a site in Wascana Centre, east of the Science Centre.

We welcome the City to scout out new locations for other skatepark sites – it's good to be thinking ahead. Other sites, specifically the site east of the Science Centre, may well make a good location for a third skatepark. However, the City should work to preserve the original process and criteria that recommended establishing a skatepark close to downtown and, more specifically, within a community park. (While Wascana Centre has many attributes, it can't really be considered a community park.) We believe the next skatepark should meet the original criteria, which has wide support among parents, Cathedral residents and, most importantly, skaters.

There is one other very important reason to support the process. The Canadian Amateur Skateboard Association states, quite correctly: "If we value our youth and want them to be respectful members of the community...treat them with respect."<sup>22</sup> It is not respectful to withdraw support for the youths' recommendation at the first sign of trouble. Instead, we should be assisting the skaters to carry their idea forward, including providing opportunities for them to convey their vision for the skatepark to the public at large.

**Recommendation:** *That the City of Regina respect the process and criteria that were put in place for the selection of a skatepark site, and actively support the skaters' preference for a facility in North Les Sherman Park.*

#### D. PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

In their skatepark site selection report, the City's consultants note: "The most popular and successful placement of skateparks has been in conjunction with community parks, recreation centres and schools."<sup>23</sup> North Les Sherman has a community school, an active community centre and a library branch in the immediate area, all of which offer programming to children and youth. We are enthusiastic about the possibilities these supportive community institutions offer.

We are particularly excited about the close proximity to the Neil Balkwill Centre. We have had preliminary informal discussions with Balkwill Centre staff, and have discussed a number of ideas to intergrate the Centre with the skatepark.

The Balkwill Centre and the skatepark are a natural fit, considering that skateboarders commonly refer to their activity as an art. Skateboarding is a highly creative pursuit that is deeply involved in the worlds of music, design, filmmaking, photography and writing. Art critics have noted the number of visual artists who are skateboarders and vice versa, and have theorized:

"This has, in effect, created a grey area in which it is difficult to distinguish between the artists and those from the skateboarding

world. It could be questioned whether making such a distinction is at all relevant.”<sup>24</sup>

Regina skaters are quite active in the arts. This summer, for example, local skaters planned and mounted the exhibit *Lords of Honktown*, which ran at the Saskatchewan Cultural Exchange Society in July and August. The show attracted the work of both local and international artists/skateboarders, and opened with the premiere screening of the film *Skatemoore*. The event was very successful not only as an art event, but also as a fundraiser. A silent auction of the artworks raised over \$2000 for a memorial honouring skater Eddy Lugt, which will be placed at the new skatepark. The fact that there will be a memorial connected to the park makes Communities 4 Sk8rs doubly determined to ensure the park is first-rate.

There is an excellent Saskatchewan example of how skateboarding, the arts and education can be combined: in 2004, ArtsSmarts provided the Mendel Art Gallery, Mount Royal Collegiate, the City of Saskatoon and the Skateboard Park Corporation with a grant “to engage youth in cross-curriculum lessons and creation of an exhibit tied to skateboarding”.<sup>25</sup> Several lesson plans were developed ranging from designing a skateboard to studying skate culture. The many activities surrounding the project were integrated with a touring exhibit organized by Regina’s Dunlop Gallery: *Godzilla vs. Skateboarders: Skateboarding as a Critique of Social*

*Spaces*. The result was a rich, engaging learning experience that appealed to youth and invited their participation.

We imagine activities like this being carried out in partnership with the Balkwill Centre, and we would work toward gaining grants and other support for such exhibits and activities.

We also imagine educational programs and workshops that would appeal to youth and to skateboarders during the summer months and in the evenings. The Balkwill Centre has the equipment needed to build and decorate skateboards, for example. There is also good potential for an action photography class. We have talked about the possibility of filmmaking as well, and the potential for connecting with the Sask Film Pool Cooperative to provide an opportunity for skateboarders to work with professional-level film equipment. Some cities offer summer skate camps in which the students do art for part of the day, then skateboard for part of the day. We would like to help organize such opportunities, including special activities to encourage and support girl skaters. We envision wonderful opportunities that will keep children and youth engaged and active, with the Balkwill Centre as a base, and we are willing to come forward as a community to make sure these things happen.

We don't believe any other location on the site selection list, or identified since the list was released, offers this potential. While there is a Science Centre in Wascana Centre, science is not as natural a fit as the

arts. We also feel the programming would likely be more institutional in nature than the programming that would arise from hands-on community and skater involvement.

Special mention should also be made of the Seniors Centre in North Les Sherman Park, which offers more potential for cross-programming and community integration. It would be very interesting to develop an activity that would involve interaction between skaters and seniors. We have not had opportunity to follow up this thought yet, but we would certainly pursue it if there is a skatepark in North Les Sherman.

Finally, while other parts of the city may have arts and culture programming, the Cathedral Area is well known as the arts and culture epicenter of the city. This is highlighted annually at the Cathedral Village Arts Festival, and throughout the year at many performances, gatherings and exhibits. The Cathedral Area has above-average resources in terms of community volunteers who are artists and arts educators. No other community can support and validate the creative endeavours of skateboarders at quite the same level as the Cathedral Area can.

***Recommendation:*** *That the City of Regina support the North Les Sherman site for its proximity to community facilities and services, including art galleries, education centres, community schools, community centres and libraries, and for the active community interest in arts and culture that is found in the surrounding neighbourhood.*

## E. CREATING NEW SOCIAL SPACES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Cultural theorist Taro Nettleton posits that skateboarding creates a new “poetic reading” of public space that challenges our concepts of what is ‘proper’ use of space. Skateboarding places people where before there were empty, depopulated expanses. “Through this imposition, what were formerly non-places are transformed into social spaces,” he writes. <sup>26</sup>

Communities 4 Sk8rs sees the skatepark as a new social space within North Les Sherman Park – one that will be unique from any other space. It will provide a space of unfettered energy and interaction for the whole neighbourhood to enjoy. While we already have baseball and soccer games going on in the park, these are more closed events – you can’t walk onto the field of someone else’s ball game and start playing. The skatepark, on the other hand, will be open to all, including bikers, bladers and skateboarders using the bike path.

Communities that have built skateparks attest that an inclusive space for youth enhances community safety and well-being. Troy

Blackmore, editor of *Concrete Powder Magazine* comments:

"For the safety and sense of feeling like part of the community the youth in your community should be welcomed and provided a place within the community. Giving the youth a space to feel comfortable and to call their own will help them to gain a sense of belonging and help to foster a respect for their community and its well being. If young people are treated with trust and respect they will return that same respect to the community. Banishing them to the back lots of an industrial area will do the opposite, and will place them in an unsafe out of the way area that may lead to dangerous situations. Young people tend to get into trouble when they are bored and have nothing to do, but when they are finished

with a day of skateboarding, they go home tired and satisfied with their daily accomplishments." 27

The new social space is not only for skateboarding youth, however. It is a point of interaction with the wider community. As North Les Sherman Park enjoys a great deal of foot traffic, the skatepark will doubtless become a gathering point for walkers, who will pause to sit and watch the skating. The skatepark landscaping should accommodate this factor. When skate jams and competitions are held, there will be even more interest. These events already take place from time to time in Regina, but not in public places that garner much foot traffic. With a skatepark in North Les Sherman, the skaters and the public will benefit from encountering one another, creating increased mutual respect and understanding.

This has been the experience in Vernon, where plans to put a skatepark in a popular walking park near a senior's residence were met with initial opposition, particularly from senior citizens who feared the idea of youth in the park. The City of Vernon persevered, gaining in the end better-than-expected results. Today the skatepark is an attraction for seniors and others, who enjoy watching the action on their evening walks. Fear has been replaced by admiration and a greater feeling of community safety. In a focus group conducted by Social Planning Council for the North Okanogan, senior women identified the skatepark as one of the things that made their community feel safer. Said one

participant: “The skateboard park was one terrific idea. I can’t understand why we fight so hard to keep from giving kids something to do.”<sup>28</sup>

This highly positive outcome might never have occurred had the skatepark been placed in a less-travelled area of the park, away from any potential opposition. Clearly, giving the skaters a place that brought them in contact with the rest of the community was a good idea, despite the initial fears people expressed, and the initial opposition the City had to weather.

***Recommendation:*** *That the City of Regina recognize the social value of placing a skatepark in the midst of community life, and be prepared to accept that many people have fears about youth in public spaces that can only be countered through the creation of mutual – rather than separate – social spaces.*

## CONCLUSION

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*“We don’t want to sound too sappy, but we are convinced that when teenagers, parents, police, politicians, business leaders and civic groups all get together and push the same wheel, and that wheel actually turns, the effort alone makes the world a slightly better place.” - Tony Hawk Foundation.*<sup>29</sup>

To date, the skatepark experience has been a negative experience for Regina’s children and youth. It has not given them a good impression

of the city or of their place in society. It does not make Regina seem like a place that is interesting, exciting and welcoming for young people.

The time has come for the City to stand up and turn the process into a positive experience. This involves not only inviting youth to express their wishes, but actually listening to them, respecting their recommendations and backing them up when they meet opposition in the community.

Standing up for youth isn't easy. The Canadian Amateur Skateboard Association cautions: "Despite the demand for skateparks and all their attendant benefits to youth and the community, there is still quite a bit of NIMBYism surrounding skateparks, probably more so than is typical of other proposed recreational facilities. Skatepark advocates and pro-parks council members should be prepared to credibly and articulately answer the NIMBYist fears."<sup>30</sup>

Communities 4 Sk8rs is prepared to play a role in assisting a renewed process that addresses, rather than runs from, fears.

Specifically, we are prepared to:

- Educate the public about skateboard parks and skateboarders.
- Help present the plans to the community, providing a neighbour-to-neighbour approach instead of a City-to-home owner approach.
- Plan community programs and activities that will complement the park.
- Implement a Skatepark Stewards Network to assist with park maintenance issues.

- Provide our local know-how to suggest ways to meet various local concerns, for example in the specific siting of the park within North Les Sherman.

However, all of these community-based activities are predicated on whether or not the skatepark will find a home in a community neighbourhood, rather than in a space removed from the daily lives of citizens. The resources, volunteerism, local know-how and other forms of social capital discussed in this brief do not float free in space, but are anchored within a physical community – namely the Cathedral Area and surrounding neighbourhoods.

In closing, we thank the City for its recognition of the need for a skatepark, and for the work done to date. We urge the City to continue to move forward on the recommendations put forward in May 2005. We know this will not always be an easy task, however City Councillors should rest assured that there is a great deal of public support for the City's work in this area, as evidenced by the eagerness with which people came forward to sign the petition in support of the skatepark.

One thing is certain: wherever the City places a skatepark, there will be opposition. The important thing is not to look at where the opposition is, but to look at where the support is. Residents of the Cathedral Area and surrounding neighbourhoods are prepared and well equipped to offer the social support you need to make this park a success.

**Recommendation:** *That the City of Regina capitalize on the broad community support that is available for a skatepark in North Les Sherman Park.*

## Summary of Recommendations

1. That the skatepark location should be considered within the parameters of meeting the social needs of children and youth, particularly in Regina's inner city.
2. That the unique geography of Regina's inner city should be taken into consideration as a needs-factor in determining the site selection.
3. That recognition be given to the fact that the North Les Sherman site offers close proximity to low income and First Nations populations, who should be considered priority users.
4. To promote better health a skatepark should be in an easily accessible, central location. To promote better safety, it should be in a location where skateboarders are known to be sharing space with heavy traffic. To reduce economic barriers to fitness, a skatepark should be located near low income neighbourhoods. These conditions are best met by the North Les Sherman site.
5. That the City of Regina recognize the value of strong community ties to a skatepark, and seek to place the park where such ties are clearly available.
6. That the City of Regina respect the process and criteria that were put in place for the selection of a skatepark site, and actively support the skaters' preference for a facility in North Les Sherman Park.
7. That the City of Regina support the North Les Sherman site for its proximity to community facilities and services, including art galleries, education centres, community schools, community centres and libraries, and for the active community interest in arts and culture that is found in the surrounding neighbourhood.
8. That the City of Regina recognize the social value of placing a skatepark in the midst of community life, and be prepared to

accept that many people have fears about youth in public spaces that can only be countered through the creation of mutual – rather than separate - social spaces.

9. That the City of Regina capitalize on the broad community support that is available for a skatepark in North Les Sherman Park.

## REFERENCES

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<sup>1</sup> American Sports Data Inc., “Extreme Sports Bonanza, Increasingly Active Seniors, and Plenty of Snow All Lift U.S. Sports Participation in 2000.” News Release, April 1, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> American Sports Data Inc., Current Issues in Youth Sports: Character Development vs. Physiological Benefits: The Need for Balanced Emphasis. 2005. Online posting: <http://www.americansportsdata.com/pr-youthsports.asp>

<sup>3</sup> Town of Langley. Outdoor Recreation Facilities. Online posting at [http://www.tol.bc.ca/Parks\\_and\\_Recreation/Outdoor\\_Recreation\\_Facilities/Skateboard/](http://www.tol.bc.ca/Parks_and_Recreation/Outdoor_Recreation_Facilities/Skateboard/)

<sup>4</sup> City of Kingston. <http://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/recreation/programs/youth/skateboarding1.asp>

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Amateur Skateboard Association. Skatepark NIMYism FAQs. online posting at <http://www.ca-sa.ca/moreresources.php?id=37>

<sup>6</sup> City of Regina. Cathedral Neighbourhood Profile. 2001

<sup>7</sup> van der Zalm + associates inc, New Line Skateparks Inc. and .Santec Consulting. Regina Skatepark Facility Site Selection: Preliminary Report of Findings. May 10, 2005. p 1.

<sup>8</sup> ibid.

<sup>9</sup> City of Regina. North Central Neighbourhood Profile. 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Kremarik. A Family Affair: Children’s Participation in Sports. Canadian Social Trends series. Statistics Canada. Autumn 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. 2004 Physical Activity Monitor. Oct. 5, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Saskatchewan in Motion. Fit Facts. Online posting at <http://www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca/facts/>

<sup>14</sup> Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. op.cit.

<sup>15</sup> Cited by skatepark.org

<sup>16</sup> United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. Skateboards. Publication No. 93.

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- <sup>17</sup> US Consumer Product Safety Commission. Consumer Product Safety Review. Vol. 7 No. 4, Spring 2003. p. 7
- <sup>18</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. “Skateboard and Scooter Injuries.” Pediatrics Vol. 109 No. 3 March 2002, pp. 542-543
- <sup>19</sup> Skaters For Public Skateparks. Skatepark Stewardship. Online posting at <http://www.skatersforpublicskateparks.org/process/docs/stewardship.html>
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> van der Zalm + associates inc, New Line Skateparks Inc. and .Santec Consulting. Regina Skatepark Facility Site Selection: Preliminary Report of Findings. May 10, 2005. pp 2-3.
- <sup>22</sup> Canadian Amateur Skateboarding Association. Skatepark NIMYism FAQs. online posting at <http://www.ca-sa.ca/moreresources.php?id=37>
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.2
- <sup>24</sup> Gyz La Rivière & Robert Rosenau. Program Notes: This is the Flow. Online posting at <http://www.vleeshal.nl/2001/skate/e-girl.html>
- <sup>25</sup> ArtsSmarts. “ArtsSmarts enhances learning by students, teachers and artists.” News release, Jan. 19, 2004.
- <sup>26</sup> Taro Nettleton. “Skateboarding, Spatial Appropriation, and Dissent Post”. *Post Road Magazine*. No. 8, 2003.
- <sup>27</sup> Cited by the Canadian Amateur Skateboard Association. Skatepark NIMYism FAQs. online posting at <http://www.ca-sa.ca/moreresources.php?id=37>
- <sup>28</sup> Social Planning Council for the North Okanogan. SAFER Women Project: Interview Results with Senior Women – Focus Groups Summary. Online posting at <http://www.socialplanning.ca/community/safer/focusgroups.html>
- <sup>29</sup> The Tony Hawk Foundation. “Skateparks Are Great, But Sometimes The Process Is The Best Part.” Online posting at [http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org/community\\_impact.asp](http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org/community_impact.asp)
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Office of the Mayor  
CITY OF VANCOUVER

## Proclamation

### "SKATEBOARDING WEEK"

- WHEREAS *Skateboarding Week has been created to support skateboarders and youth in their communities and complement Youth Week;*
- AND WHEREAS *Vancouver is committed to increasing physical activity in our young people and recognizes skateboarding as an accessible physical activity that helps achieve that commitment;*
- AND WHEREAS *British Columbia's skateboarders have brought international distinction to our city with their achievements;*
- AND WHEREAS *Vancouver has developed and established a significant skateboard industry including the largest and oldest professional contest in North America, Slam City Jam, and a thriving skateboard community supported by the Vancouver Skatepark Coalition;*
- AND WHEREAS *Vancouver is home to many people with diverse interests, including skateboarders, who all have the right to participate in their chosen activity;*
- NOW, THEREFORE, *I, Larry Campbell, Mayor of the City of Vancouver, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM the week of August 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005 as*

"SKATEBOARDING WEEK"

*in the City of Vancouver.*

  
Larry W. Campbell,  
MAYOR