

# **REGINA SKATEPARK FACILITY SITE SELECTION**

## **PRELIMINARY REPORT OF FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

With the aim of selecting the preferred site for a skatepark development, the consulting team has reviewed four finalist sites and evaluated each against a 'set list' of criteria. This list of key criteria has been developed over time and through consultation with communities across North America. The list includes desirable site attributes that fall within 3 categories:

1. Site Specific criteria
2. Planning and Land Use criteria
3. Stakeholder criteria.

Each category includes a list of site elements that have been associated with successful youth facilities. The process of evaluating each site against these criteria and applying point values results in a preferred site due to overall score. A more detailed discussion of the key criteria and justification for scoring will follow.

### **Point Rating Method**

The purpose of this study is to determine the most desirable development site from the list of four finalists; these four sites include:

1. Les Sherman Park North
2. Les Sherman Park South
3. Douglas Park (Concept Gardens)
4. Harding Park

Rather than rating these sites for their inherent qualities as a park, the consulting team evaluated each site against the other finalists to determine the best possible development site of the four finalists. The point rating was based on a scale of 1 – 5, as follows:

- 5 – excellent
- 4 – very good
- 3 – good
- 2 – fair
- 1 – poor

For sites that possessed similar traits in a given criterion, a tying score was awarded. After discussion and review by the consulting team, the scores were entered into a computerized spreadsheet to accurately track all points awarded.

## **Key Considerations**

The following criteria were used for the evaluation of each site. For each specific criterion in each category, the consulting team debated the pros and cons of each site against the others.

### **1. Site Specific Criteria (5 points each)**

- Visibility (e.g., from roadway, residences)
- Ability to integrate with existing landscape
- Topography, soils, drainage, environmental concerns
- Ease of development
- Expansion potential
- Proximity to shelter/refuge
- Proximity to washrooms, water fountain, telephone
- Proximity to concession/convenience store
- Potential for viewing areas/informal seating
- Overall sense of place (character and feel)

### **2. Planning/Land Use Criteria (5 points each)**

- Proximity to parking
- Compatibility with existing land uses
- Bus access
- Foot/bike access
- Proximity to urban centre

### **3. Stakeholder Criteria (25 points)**

- Support for location from stakeholders

Additional points were assigned to the Stakeholder criteria. The most popular and successful placement of skateparks has been in conjunction with community parks, recreation centers, and schools. 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 reach a level of acceptance that ensures its future longevity.

### **A Preliminary Evaluation of Sites**

Originally 17 sites were considered by the Skatepark Planning Committee, of which 11 were evaluated in terms of 5 main criteria: shelter from elements; sightlines for safety; proximity to residents; services/amenities; and size. This information was then used to identify opportunities and constraints for each site. Opportunities included: existing on-site washrooms, parking and amenities; proximity to the Devonian Pathway; existing trees/buffering etc. Constraints included: no trees/shelter; close to residences; night-time safety concerns; Wascana Centre Authority approval process etc.

Subsequently 2 parks were dropped from consideration: Kiwanis Park due to the Kiwanis Club's desire to retain the remaining passive open space; and Rawlinson Park as a result of lack of roadway access. Of the remaining 9 sites, the consulting team was directed to evaluate the following 4 sites:

1. Les Sherman Park North
2. Les Sherman Park South
3. Douglas Park (Concept Gardens)
4. Harding Park

A detailed analysis of each site follows, based on each of the key criteria.

## LES SHERMAN PARK (NORTH)

	Score
Visibility (e.g., from roadway) – visible from 15 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> Ave. (approx. distance 100m), and from Devonian Pathway	3.25
Ability to integrate with existing landscape – mix of active and passive open space; additional trees required	4.0
Topography, soils, drainage, environmental concerns – site lies within 1:500 year floodway; no major obstructions to stream flow allowed	2.75
Ease of development – accessible to construction traffic (site restoration would be required)	3.5
Expansion potential – lots of room for expansion (trees transplantable by tree spade)	4
Proximity to shelter/refuge – Neil Balkwill Centre 230m away	4.25
Proximity to washrooms, water fountain, telephone – Neil Balkwill Centre	4.25
Proximity to concession/convenience store – store on 13 <sup>th</sup> Ave. (950m away)	3.5
Potential for viewing areas/informal seating – landforming restricted by 1:500 year floodway	2.75
Overall sense of place – pleasant setting with existing trees, Creek beside	4.75
Proximity to parking – existing parking lot at Neil Balkwill Centre	3.5
Compatibility with existing land uses – residences approx. 80m away; mix of active and passive recreation	3.75
Bus access – bus routes (#11, 13) along Elphinstone St. one block to east	4.5
Foot/bike access – Devonian Pathway beside site	5.0
Proximity to urban centre – closest to downtown	4.25
Support for location from stakeholders – very strong support (#1 preference)	25.0
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>83.0</b>

Comments: The proposed site is in the location of a former paddling pool, north of Wascana Creek. It is very accessible via the Devonian Pathway and by bus. Parking and amenities are located at the Neil Balkwill Centre. The site has some immature trees, and could use more planting (e.g., for windbreaks). It lies within the floodway of Wascana Creek, which might pose some restrictions (i.e., no impediment to stream flow would be allowed). Sheldon Williams Collegiate is nearby, which has a large number of skateboarders among its student population.

## LES SHERMAN PARK (SOUTH)

	Score
Visibility (e.g., from roadway) – very visible from 17 <sup>th</sup> Ave. (approx. distance 10m) and from Devonian Pathway	4.5
Ability to integrate with existing landscape – passive open space; well treed	3.5
Topography, soils, drainage, environmental concerns – site lies within 1:500 year floodway; no major obstructions to stream flow allowed	2.75
Ease of development – accessible to construction traffic (site restoration would be required)	3.5
Expansion potential – would require removal of existing trees	3.0
Proximity to shelter/refuge – Neil Balkwill Centre 550m away	3.25
Proximity to washrooms, water fountain, telephone – Neil Balkwill Centre	3.25
Proximity to concession/convenience store – store on 13 <sup>th</sup> Ave. (1,175m away)	3.5
Potential for viewing areas/informal seating – landforming restricted by 1:500 year floodway	2.75
Overall sense of place – very pleasant setting with mature trees, Creek beside	4.25
Proximity to parking – possible on-street parking along 17 <sup>th</sup> Ave. and at Neil Balkwill Centre	3.5
Compatibility with existing land uses – residences approx. 60m away	2.75
Bus access – bus routes (#11, 13) along Elphinstone St. one block to east	4.5
Foot/bike access – Devonian Pathway beside site	5.0
Proximity to urban centre – second closest to downtown	4.0
Support for location from stakeholders – strong support (#2 preference)	20.0
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>74.0</b>

Comments: The proposed site is south of Wascana Creek, in a passive open space. It is very visible from houses facing north along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It is very accessible via the Devonian Pathway and by bus. Parking and amenities are located at the Neil Balkwill Centre. The site is well treed, which provides shelter but could restrict future expansion. It lies within the floodway of Wascana Creek, which might pose some restrictions (i.e., no impediment to stream flow would be allowed). Sheldon Williams Collegiate is nearby, which has a large number of skateboarders among its student population.

## DOUGLAS PARK (CONCEPT GARDENS)

	Score
Visibility (e.g., from roadway) – visible from McDonald Street (mature Spruce trees partially block view)	2.25
Ability to integrate with existing landscape – primarily active open space/sportsfields	4.25
Topography, soils, drainage, environmental concerns – no major concerns	3.5
Ease of development – subject to Wascana Centre Authority approval (could delay project)	2.25
Expansion potential – lots of room for expansion	4.75
Proximity to shelter/refuge – Douglas Park Bunker 250m away	3.0
Proximity to washrooms, water fountain, telephone – Douglas Park Bunker	3.5
Proximity to concession/convenience store – store at Broadway Ave. and Central St. (1,000m away)	2.5
Potential for viewing areas/informal seating – lots of room for landforming	4.0
Overall sense of place – pleasant setting, but somewhat remote	3.5
Proximity to parking – parking beside site along McDonald St. and at existing parking lot within Douglas Park	3.75
Compatibility with existing land uses – residences approx. 120m to north	4.0
Bus access – bus routes (#10, 12) along Douglas Ave. two blocks to north	3.5
Foot/bike access – the Devonian Pathway skirts the southeast corner of Douglas Park. There is also an informal pathway along the north side of Wascana Lake, starting at the west side of McDonald St.	3.0
Proximity to urban centre – quite far to downtown	2.75
Support for location from stakeholders – fair support (#3 preference); concern about safety at night	10.0
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>60.5</b>

Comments: The proposed site is in the location of a former formal garden, close to McDonald Street. It is quite accessible via the Devonian Pathway and by bus. Amenities are located at the Douglas Park Bunker. The site has some fairly mature trees, but could use more planting (e.g., for windbreaks). The biggest constraint is the Wascana Centre Authority approval process, due to the fact that the skatepark is not part of their Master Plan and it would likely require a major amendment (including public review) to the Master Plan (estimated timeframe 6 months to 1 year).

## HARDING PARK

	Score
Visibility (e.g., from roadway) – very visible from Arcola Ave.	4.0
Ability to integrate with existing landscape – primarily passive open space	3.25
Topography, soils, drainage, environmental concerns – no major concerns (above floodway of Pilot Butte Creek)	3.5
Ease of development – accessible to construction traffic (site restoration would be required)	3.75
Expansion potential – lots of room for expansion	5.0
Proximity to shelter/refuge – store at Arcola Ave. and University Park Dr. (1,100m away)	1.25
Proximity to washrooms, water fountain, telephone – store at Arcola Ave. and University Park Dr.	1.0
Proximity to concession/convenience store – store at Arcola Ave. and University Park Dr.	2.5
Potential for viewing areas/informal seating – lots of room for landforming	4.0
Overall sense of place – quite barren, windswept site	1.25
Proximity to parking – would require new parking lot (or possibly expand church parking lot)	1.0
Compatibility with existing land uses – residences approx. 50m to north; church adjacent (to east)	2.25
Bus access – bus routes (#10, 12) along Truesdale Dr. three blocks to north	3.0
Foot/bike access – Devonian Pathway nearby (on west side of Pilot Butte Creek)	2.5
Proximity to urban centre – very remote/suburban	1.5
Support for location from stakeholders – poor support (#4 preference); “too remote”	5.0
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>44.75</b>

Comments: The proposed site is west of an existing church, in a passive open space. It is very visible from Arcola Avenue. It is somewhat accessible via the Devonian Pathway and by bus. Amenities are located at a store over 1 km away. The site has some immature trees, and could use more planting (e.g., for windbreaks). It is viewed as being a physically remote and exposed site by the skateboarders.

## Conclusions and Preferred Alternative

Members of the consulting team independently rated each park according to the key criteria; the following overall score for each site was determined:

1. Les Sherman Park North	83.0
2. Les Sherman Park South	74.0
3. Douglas Park (Concept Gardens)	60.5
4. Harding Park	44.75

Les Sherman Park has several major advantages, including:

- Proximity to Neil Balkwill Centre which has existing amenities such as washrooms, water fountain, telephone and parking lot;
- Close proximity to the Devonian Pathway and bus routes for ease of access;
- Relative closeness to downtown;
- Very pleasant setting, with many existing trees and scenic Wascana Creek adjacent to the proposed site(s);
- Proximity to Sheldon Williams School which has a large number of skateboarders amongst its students, guaranteeing that the facility will be well used;
- Visible from adjacent roadways and residences;
- Skatepark development would be consistent with the existing park program which is a blend of active and passive recreation.

The site in the North part was rated more favourably than the site in the South due to the latter's close proximity to existing residences, as well as better expansion potential in the North. The proposed site in the North is located 80 – 100 meters away from houses, which provides some buffering. Some supplemental planting would be desirable to provide shelter from the prevailing northwest and southeast winds.

Both sites in Les Sherman Park lie within the floodway of Wascana Creek. However preliminary discussions with Saskatchewan Watershed Authority and the City of Regina Planning Department suggest that, as long as the skatepark is relatively low profile and does not seriously impede flow of floodwaters, it would be permissible to develop within the floodway.