

# SKATE PARK ACTIVITY PLAN

#### **MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD**

Our Mission: The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board shall permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board exists to provide places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

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shape the character of Minneapolis. Natural, cultural, artistic, historical, and recreational resources cultivate outstanding experiences, health, enjoyment, fun, and learning for all people. The Park System is sustainable, well-maintained and safe, and meets the needs of individuals, families, and communities. The focus on preserving land continues, with a strong emphasis on connecting people to the land and each other. Aware of its value to their lives, residents are proud stewards and supporters of an extraordinary park and recreation system.

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# WHY A SKATE PARK PLAN?

Skateboarding is a vibrant and important activity in Minneapolis and has been for several decades. This is true despite a lack of public skate parks – there are only 6 small public skate parks throughout the city, built in the mid-2000s. Skating's local popularity has been home-grown and supported by talented skaters themselves, including a handful of local skate professionals, private indoor membership bowls, and a few for-profit indoor skate parks with very dedicated fan bases. This talent pool of local skaters was recently recognized by ESPN when they elected to hold their 2017 and 2018 national X Games competition in Minneapolis.

Skate parks are community spaces that also safely serve the recreation needs of individuals, especially the sometimes overlooked teen demographic. They can help to develop community and a sense of pride and ownership in public space. They also encourage outdoor recreation and an active lifestyle, and can help provide extra "eyes on the street."

There is growing demand for more and better quality public skate facilities to serve skaters and others who have not been able to adequately, safely, and legally practice their action sports in Minneapolis public parks. Minneapolis has not kept pace with neighboring or comparable cities throughout the U.S., nor with trends in skate park design. Skaters without adequate facilities have often turned to skating on public infrastructure, causing property damage and leading to controversy, tension, and public misconceptions. This activity plan is a blueprint for how to better support local skaters and enthusiasts of other wheeled sports like BMX bike riding with quality public skate parks and programming in their own Minneapolis neighborhoods.

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, ranked by the Trust for Public Land as the number one park system in the U.S. for the last 5 years, can nonetheless do a better job to serve skate park users, starting with the recommendations in this plan. While leading the nation in quality parks, Minneapolis

# SKATING'S LOCAL POPULARITY HAS BEEN HOME-GROWN AND SUPPORTED BY THE TALENTED SKATERS THEMSELVES

could also be a midwest leader in exceptional skate park facilities.

The 2007 MPRB Comprehensive plan called for the development of activity plans. This Skate Park Activity Plan is intended to complement MPRB's other plans including the Comprehensive Plan, Service Area Master Plans, Park Master Plans, Rec Quest, and others. Park staff and community members should use this plan as a reference to guide decision-making during park system engagement, planning, and design projects.

#### PROJECTED OUTCOMES

Much has evolved in skate park design, technology, and the sport since MPRB's six original skate parks were built. This plan considers how improvement and expansion of public skate parks can be done equitably for a wide array of users, and sustainably for a variety of urban park environments. This includes an evaluation of relevant ordinances and policies, demographic and survey data, existing public skate facilities, local





"Minneapolis is rich with skateboarding history, and the downtown area has been skated for more than 25 years."

- ESPN X Games Minneapolis 2017 & 2018

needs, and opportunities. It presents community and staff recommendations for planning, designing, programming, funding, operating, and maintaining skate parks city-wide including the six existing parks. Also included are quality precedent parks and plans from other cities that can be used as models.

Because data and activity trends change over time, staff recommend this plan be reviewed and updated as necessary every 10 years.



#### VISION

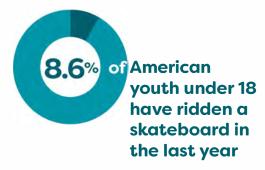
This plan is a 20-year roadmap for providing quality support to the local skate park community and encouraging skating among new and diverse generations of park users. This plan proposes a range of skate park sizes and types, spread throughout the city so that skaters and others who enjoy action sports have intriguing recreation choices within a reasonable distance from home. It imagines creative and unique skate park designs incorporating shared plazas, public art, and stormwater management techniques that both challenge skaters' abilities and are also attractive public spaces to the larger community. It endeavors to increase community understanding and acceptance of skating as a recreation activity deserving of public support.

The quality of Minneapolis public skate parks could draw people of all backgrounds, appealing to teens looking for their own space, adults looking for individually-directed recreation options, and parents looking for a safe community space to support their child's interest in learning a new sport. This plan envisions a network of public skate infrastructure that supports not only individual users but also group demos, amateur classes and competitions, and professional events. It looks forward to a local public skate scene in which skaters and other action sport enthusiasts can take pride and which the larger community will see as an integral and important part of recreational offerings of the Minneapolis park system.

# SKATEBOARDING

#### INTRODUCTION

Modern skateboarding has its roots in mid-century California surfing culture, and began to hit its popularity stride with a wider audience in the 1970s. While historically rooted firmly in youth counter-culture, this action sport has also grown over the past several decades to embrace



– publicskateparkguide.org/ vision/who-are-skateboarders

skaters and families of all ages, races, genders, interests, and abilities. Skate parks are now common and popular elements in park systems, schools, and neighborhood centers.

By riding wood or composite wheeled boards, skaters travel flat and sloped surfaces, interact with obstacles, engage in challenging tricks, and use skateboards for transportation. Skateboarding can be a rewarding individual recreation activity, a supportive group sport, thrilling competition, and especially fun for spectators to watch.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the "Public Skate Park Development Guide" published jointly by Skaters for Public Skate Parks, the International Association of Skateboard Companies (IASC) and the Tony Hawk Foundation, 8.6% of American youth under 18 have ridden a skateboard in the last year.1 Industry statistics company Statista estimates approximately 8.1% of US youth ages 5-17 skate, as well as 3.3% of young adults ages 18-24.2

Applying these percentages to the 2016 Minneapolis population under age 18 (83,557 total, according to the U.S. Census) one can estimate there are between 6,700-7,200 skaters under age 18 in the city, as well as 1,900 skating young adults ages 18-24, for

### Estimated skaters in Minneapolis



Total young skaters between 8,600-9,100

1 publicskateparkguide.org/vision/who-are-skateboarders 2 www.statista.com/search/?q=skate



a core total of 8,600-9,100 young skaters. Older adults skate as well, and some in their 30s and 40s who discovered skating as youth are now introducing their children to the sport they grew up loving and which formed a core part of their identity. Add these older skaters to the mix, along with BMX bikers, scooter riders, and in-line skaters who may also be served by new facilities, and the 2016 estimate of skate park users in Minneapolis easily tops 10,000 people. The Metropolitan Council forecasts a 9.3% growth rate in Minneapolis population by 2040,3 meaning the city-wide skate park network will be serving around 10,930 users in just over 20 years.

# 3 https://stats.metc.state.mn.us/profile/detail.

aspx?c=02395345

# BENEFITS OF SKATEBOARDING4,5

- Personal accomplishment, including overcoming fear and challenges
- Building social networks and community bonds
- Increased physical activity, strength and balance — burning 150-500 calories an hour
- Increased mental health and confidence
- Provides positive options for youth activity, keeps them out of trouble
- Healthy, pollution-free alternative transportation
- Can promote economic growth through tourism
- Low operating and programming costs are a smart community recreation investment
- www.healthfitnessrevolution.com/health-benefits-skate-
- 5 The Top 6 Benefits of Public Skateparks, March 2, 2014,



"Skateboarding is incredibly unique and so insanely hard to explain to the general public because it is more than a sport, it's more than an art, it's more than a movement, it's more than an identity... It's all of those things in their most powerful form wrapped into a wooden toy. It's incredible..."

- Mark Rivard

# **SKATEBOARDING TEACHES:**

- PERSISTENCE
- CREATIVITY
- INDIVIDUALITY
- COURAGE
- CONFIDENCE
- RECOVERY
- CALCULATED RISK TAKING
- SELF-DISCIPLINE
- ACTIVE LIFESTYLE
- COMMUNITY-BUILDING

# **SKATEBOARDING'S** APPEAL

The current popularity of skateboarding was highlighted in the "Outdoor Participation Report 2017" by the Outdoor Foundation, which lists skateboarding as the #4 "favorite outdoor activity" of youth ages 6-24, behind running, biking, and fishing.1 Perhaps the ultimate measure of athletic popularity outside of the X Games is that skateboarding will for the first time be a competition category in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan

The IASC Skateboarding Summit 2016 (a gathering of the retail skate industry) reported that members are already seeing an uptick in interest in skateboarding in advance of its Olympic debut, much the same as happened with snowboarding in 1998.2

While skateboarders have historically tended to be teen and young adult white males, a growing community of skaters of color and female skaters has emerged in the last 20 years. Women's skateboarding competitions are regularly held at the X Games, and are planned for the 2020 Olympics.3 Skateboarding as an action sport has been around for over 40 years. It is

<sup>1</sup> outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-Topline-Report\_FINAL.pdf

<sup>2</sup> www.grindtv.com/transworld-business/news/skate-summit-2016-top-takeaways

<sup>3</sup> www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/minneapoliscityminnesota/AGE275210#viewtop



not a passing fad. It also drives a \$4.8 billion dollar global market, including everything from equipment to footwear, fashion, videos and music.4 Yet the cost of entry for beginners can still be affordable, especially with used or borrowed equipment and publicallyavailable, free skate parks. Skate parks have been accepted by many communities as a relatively low-cost and effective means of safely providing recreation amenities, particularly for the often hard-to-serve teen demographic.5

# - TYPES OF SKATEBOARDING

**A QUICK PRIMER** 

Skaters participate in more than one type of skateboarding in a variety of locations. Street skaters enjoy skating on a street, plaza, or other primarily flat terrain which has strategically placed obstacles and features on which they can test creative routes and do tricks. Transition skaters enjoy more vertical and curved surfaces including swimming pool-like bowls, snake runs, and ramps on which they can gain speed and height to do tricks. Many public skate parks have a combination of street and vertical elements to appeal to a wide variety of users.

<sup>4</sup> Montgomery, Tiffany (May 13, 2013). "The state of the skateboarding industry" ShopEatSurf.com

<sup>5</sup> publicskateparkquide.org/vision/community-concernsand-the-skatepark/



THEN YOUR WHOLE CITY **BECOMES A SKATE PARK."** 

> There are also skaters who appreciate moving in long, linear directions or down large hills. This can include longboarders who primarily go longer distances, downhill racers on larger inclines, and people who use skateboards as a form of transportation. MPRB's system of trails could better serve the needs of these skaters if existing MPRB policy and ordinance language is modified to support it.

#### SAFETY

Because it is an action sport, some perceive skateboarding as inherently dangerous. However, a research article in the Journal of Trauma indicated that skateboarding on average had less than half the number of ER-treated injuries as basketball (8.9 per 1000 participants vs. 21.2). The report stated that "Skateboarding is a relatively safe sport." According to the National Safety Council's report "Injury Facts 2017", the number of injuries caused by skateboarding overall is less than basketball, bicycling, or football.<sup>2</sup> Like basketball players, skateboarders need a safe, challenging, fun place to be active, and if they don't have quality skate parks they are relegated

<sup>1</sup> J Trauma. 2002 Oct; 53(4): 686-90. "Skateboard-associated injuries: participation-based estimates and injury characteristics." Kyle SB, Nance ML, Rutherford GW Jr, Winston FK.

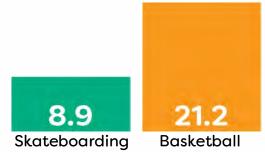
<sup>2</sup> www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/news-andresources-skateboarding-safety.aspx

# "THERE'S A PRECONCEIVED NOTION OF WHAT SKATEBOARDERS ARE LIKE, **BUT IT'S ALL HOLLYWOOD."**

to the streets. A 2011 Casualty Report by Skaters for Public Skate Parks showed that 71% of skater fatalities involved a vehicle, all of them on a public street or public bike lane.<sup>3</sup> To help reduce injuries, the National Safety Council recommends that skaters never ride in the street, and

# **ER-related injuries**

per 1000 participants



– Journal of Trauma

that they practice complicated tricks in specially designated areas - like skate parks. It is important to provide skaters with a safe, dedicated off-street space so they are not forced to compete with motor vehicles.

# THE FLIP SIDE — PROPERTY DAMAGE **AND CRIME**

Although popular, skateboarding has also cultivated negative attention when it has damaged public property, or skaters on sidewalks conflict with

pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Although some municipalities have tried to address this by restricting skateboarding in public spaces or ticketing skaters, a far more effective national response has been to purposefully build quality skate parks where athletes on wheels can enjoy their sport. When there are not public skate parks available, skaters are forced to practice on urban infrastructure not designed for skating. A common adage in the skating community is that if you don't provide quality skate parks, then your whole city becomes a skate park.4

Although the non-skating public often has a perception that skate parks attract illegal activities, a 2005 study from Portland State University for Portland Parks & Recreation concluded that skate parks do not contribute to serious crime, but in fact bring more eyes on the park, and have similar impacts as basketball courts in the eyes of neighbors. Interviews with Portland parks staff unanimously reported that skate parks were good investments.5

<sup>3</sup> www.skatepark.org/park-development/2012/01/2011skateboarding-fatalities

<sup>4</sup> publicskateparkguide.org/vision/the-skateboarding-

<sup>5</sup> www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.usp/files/usp\_skate.

# **SKATE PARKS**

# A QUICK PRIMER — COMMON SKATE PARK ELEMENTS

#### **MATERIALS**

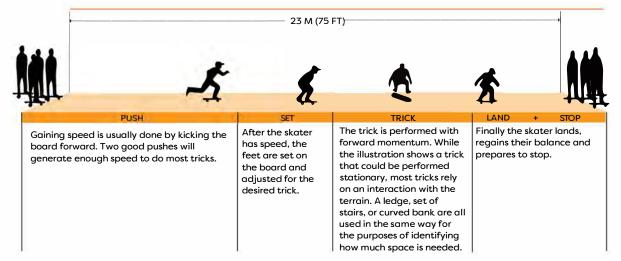
Skate parks can be built of polymer, steel, wood, or pre-cast concrete modular elements, however prefabricated elements don't often stand up to the demands of public use. A better and more durable choice is castin-place concrete which is the material most preferred by local skaters who ride regularly. Cast-in place concrete provides the smoothest surface, buffers the most noise, and allows for dynamic and uniquely shaped elements.

# SIZING UP SKATE **PARK FACILITIES**

In the U.S., the largest skate park is in Houston at 78,000 square feet, which is larger than a football field. Most skate parks, however, range in size from 1,000-40,000 square feet. According to data from the Tony Hawk Foundation grant awards program, the National Average Skate park size is 11,876 sq. ft., while in the upper Midwest states including Minnesota, the average is 13,260 sq. ft.1 All six of MPRB's existing skate parks are on the small side at 5,000 sq. ft. each.

The overall size of a skate park is important for determining its capacity, however the number and placement of elements also play a role. There must be adequate room for a skater to set up and execute a trick or to flow between obstacles, illustrated below:2

### How much space does a skateboarder need?



Note: This Diagram has been adapted from Skaters for Public Skateparks Skatepark Adopton Model (SAM) at www.skatepark.org

<sup>1</sup> publicskateparkguide.org/vision/us-skatepark-overview/ 2 www.skatepark.org, Skaters for Public Skateparks Skatepark Adoption Model







Left: Arvada, Colorado. Top: StreetDome, Denmark. Above: Paines Park, Philadelphia. Photos courtesy of City of Skate

This simple run with trick requires a linear area about 75 feet long by 10 feet wide, ideally with a 5 foot safety buffer on each end, for a total of 1,500 square feet. This should be considered the minimum size necessary for a skater's run, and up to 10 total skaters can comfortably share this amount of space until the wait for a turn becomes unreasonably long. So to size a skate park, consider approximately 150 sq. ft. per skater. A more common size skate park of 10,000 sq. feet can accommodate up to 66 skaters at one time. This assumes that the park designer doesn't overstuff the space with too many obstacles, reducing flow and capacity.3

#### TRENDS IN SKATE PARKS

In the past decade as more cities have built out their skate park systems, designers have begun experimenting

3 publicskateparkguide.org/vision/types-of-skateparks/

with mixed use plazas and skateable shared landscapes that can also serve non-skating communities. Also popular are larger skate or all-wheel parks over 40,000 square feet, adjustable or do-it-yourself (DIY) parks, and skateable public art or other features that make parks unique destinations grounded in local culture. The inclusion of skateboarding in the 2020 Olympics may increase its popularity nation-wide and result in increased demand on school and park facilities.

#### **Users on Wheels**

Public skate parks host not only a growing community of skaters, but often participants in other wheeled sports including BMX bike riding, scooter riding, in-line skating, and even parkour. These users can also benefit from having quality skate parks in the public realm, although shared use should be thoughtfully

# "Design is about flow and spacing — less is more."

designed and designated to reduce potential conflicts between activities or damage from unintended uses.

#### SKATE PARK CHALLENGES

#### Range of Users

Although youth are skateboarding's key demographic, adults skate as well. Often adults have time to skate after work, meaning parks may be most attractive if they have lighting and parking. Youth may prefer shade, transit access, and proximity to schools or home. Street and transition style skaters may be attracted to the same location. One park can host several skaters and other wheeled sports enthusiasts of different ages, styles and abilities, but it must be thoughtfully designed.

#### Quality

If a skate park is designed badly or built cheaply with poor-quality pre-fabricated materials then it likely won't be skated. Empty skate parks attract bored non-skaters which causes security problems.

#### **Public Purchasing**

Quality public skate parks are best designed and built by experienced specialists in the field who are skaters themselves, not necessarily by playground or concrete companies. This need is not always compatible with public contract and construction "lowest-bidder" requirements.



#### **Noise**

Skateboarding can cause noise just like other recreation activities like football or soccer. Skate parks can be designed and managed in such a way to buffer sound so it blends into the urban background.1 Portland's Noise Control Office measured and determined that concrete skate park noise is comparable to what already exists in parks, and is usually less noisy than baseball or basketball uses.

#### Insurance

Concerns about liability can impact park agencies' willingness to try new facilities or changes to existing designs and operation practices. This impacts skate park element heights, fencing, and use of protective equipment. Like other recreation activities, park system recreational immunity should apply. The City of Portland's Risk Management office "determined that liability for skate parks is the same as any other free public sports facility – all sports are played "at your own risk".2

<sup>1</sup>The Benefits of Skateparks, Spohn Ranch, http:// bikeswithwings.org

<sup>2</sup> Portland Skatepark System Plan, 2008

#### PRECEDENT SKATE PLANS



Photo: www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/48662

### PORTLAND, OREGON

A Portland parks levy approved in 2003 was earmarked for skate parks, used to develop the Skatepark System Plan, redevelop 2 existing parks, and build 4 new parks. The 2008 Plan recommended 10-16 new skate parks at 19 possible locations at an estimated cost of \$4.7-12 million to serve its population of 639,836.1 Portland recognizes skateboarding as legitimate transportation, with legal status similar to bicycling on most city streets and sidewalks outside of downtown, 24 hours a day.<sup>2</sup> Before this time the fine was \$2500. Some street bike routes are also designated and signed as "preferred skating routes" and have signage about skate park

locations. The Bureau of Transportation publishes a city transportation guide including a chapter on skateboarding. It is still illegal, however, to skate on private property or to damage urban infrastructure. Skaters under 16 must wear helmets and after sunset all skaters must wear reflective materials or flashing lights. Rule violations receive a \$25 fine. Portland allows BMX, non-motorized scooters and in-line skates on a first-come, firstserved basis, and has park rangers who enforce rules if there are complaints. Signage is used to inform or warn riders. The City offers skate classes, clinics, camps, and private coaching.3



<sup>1</sup> US Census American FactFinder, 2016 2 City Code 16.70.410

<sup>3</sup> www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/448952

"It's not just youth — when I go on a business trip I like to check out the local skate parks so it's helpful to have some nearby I can get to especially if I'm not renting a car."



### ARLINGTON, TEXAS

Arlington published its Skate Park Master Plan in 2012 with a goal of having skateboarders travel less than 15 minutes to get to a skate park, implemented within 20 years. The plan includes recommended typologies, siting criteria, and locations. Parks are non-supervised, and protective gear is "strongly recommended." BMX, scooters and in-line skates are welcome, and some skate parks are shared public space with other park users. Arlington has skateable art including the "Curved Taco" and the "Dragon Trail".

#### SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The City adopted a resolution in 2006 recognizing skateboarding's importance as a healthy and important recreational activity, and in 2007 adopted the Citywide Skatepark Plan. Six new skate parks have been built following the plan's adoption. The plan includes siting criteria, typology, proposed locations, and a funding strategy. The skate network includes skateable art commissioned



by the city. Seattle has partnered with Skate Like a Girl, Children's Home Society, Wells Fargo, and Parents for Skateparks to build public skate parks.



# CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA

Calgary has about the same population as the Twin Cities metro, and also shares a similarly cold climate. Calgary has indoor locations for winter skateboarding. The City has a variety of skate offerings, from the enormous, free 75,000 sq. ft. Shaw Millennium park, to several seasonal modular wood skate

Photo source: Arlington: www.spaskateparks. com. Seattle: parkways.seattle.gov. Calgary: Shutterstock. Philadelphia: City of Skate.

parks that move to different parks every couple of weeks, and cost \$5/day to skate, with funds going back into the park where they were generated. The City has signage designating all-wheel vs. skate-only parks. Calgary hires skate park monitors and instructors, and park officers enforce the rules. The City's 2011 Skateboarding Amenities Strategy stresses the importance of unstructured play, and recommends an expanded skate park network.



# PHILADELPHIA. **PENNSYLVANIA**

The 2011 Master Plan for Philadelphia Skateboarding highlights the city's history of a strong skateboarding community, while also acknowledging there is more to do to serve the skating population. The development of the plan was spurred by the skate community's frustration after the banning of skaters from JFK/Love Park.

#### **MINNEAPOLIS SKATERS SPEAK**

"Beginners like bike paths because they are smooth"

"There's no flow to MPRB parks. I usually get hurt trying to do tricks there"

"MPRB [existing] parks are built like you don't really care if they are good or not, you are just checking it off the list that you've provided something for skateboarders"

"All other skateparks in the USA have 9 foot ramps. Why are they 3 feet here?"

> "You can't skate MPRB parks because there is only one set up, and skaters like to approach features from different ways and use their creativity to ride them"

"If you could close a road the 1st Saturday of every month for longboarding..."

> "We are not making tons of money off of events, we just need permission"

"We want a public advocate in the Park Board to change the stereotypes about skateboarders"

"Skateboarding is more ecofriendly than biking because you expend more energy."

#### COMPARISON GRID

City	2016 Population	% population ages 5-24	Existing Public Skate parks	City Land in Acres	Public Park Land in Acres (% of city land)	Has skate park plan – year, # parks planned
Minneapolis	413,645	26.8%	6	34,534	5,064 (14.9%)	No, 10 parks
Minneapolis & St. Paul combined	716,048	28.2%	9	67,800	10,001 (15.1%)	No, 10 parks
Portland, OR	639,635	20.6%	6	85,393	14,504 (17.8%)	Yes — 2008, 10-16 parks
Arlington, TX	392,787	29.9%	3	61,364	4,714 (7.7%)	Yes — 2004, 27 parks
Seattle, WA	704,358	21.9%	9	53,723	6,591 (12.5%)	Yes — 2007, 29 parks
Calgary, Canada	1,239,220	23.9%	7	203,904	20,730 (10%)	Yes — 2011, 243,860 sq. ft., phase one = 8 sites
Philadelphia, PA	1,567,872	25.7%	23	85,825	10,830 (13.1%)	Yes — 2011, 15 parks

U.S. Census American Fact Finder, 2016 Population Estimates; Statistics Canada GeoSearch, 2016 Population Census; Trust for Public Land 2017 City Park Facts

#### SKATE PARK PRECEDENTS

Burnside - Portland, OR. Skatercreated, began as an illegal space, later sanctioned by the city. Primarily managed by users, Parks handles toilets and trash. Public, free, no pad requirements.

Red Bull Skate Space, Jefferson Park - Seattle, WA. Skatable public art made of mild carbon and stainless steel. A collaboration between pro skateboarder and sculpture artist.

#### Magdalena Ecke YMCA skatepark

- Encinitas, CA. Helmets and pads required, cost for entry. Lighted and gated. 13.5' ramp, multiple skate styles represented. Skated by many pros.



#### Arvada Skate Park – Arvada, CO.

40,000 sq. ft. Rental equipment available. Total \$2.1 million, funded 93% grant/lottery funds, 7% city general fund. Grants from Colorado Lottery, Great Outdoors Colorado, Jefferson County Open Space, the Tony Hawk Foundation and others.

#### David Armstrong/Louisville Extreme

Park - Louisville, KY. 40,000 sq. ft. of street and transition with 24' full pipe and 11' bowls, and 12' wooden vert ramp. Open 24 hours, public, has restrooms. Allows in-line skates and bikes. Mandatory helmet law.



Left: Arvada, Colorado. Photo courtesy of City of Skate Above: The Plaza at the Forks, Winnipeg. Photo courtesy of Flickr.

#### The Plaza at the Forks – Winnipeg,

**Canada.** Skatable art sculpture plaza and shared public space designed for skateboarders, BMX, in-line skaters. 44,000 sq. ft. street plaza and bowl complex. Concrete, custom tile, steel granite, brick. Free and in the middle of downtown. Skate Patrol "ambassadors" educate skaters on etiquette.

#### Paine's Park — Philadelphia, PA.

Mixed use public space designed primarily for skaters but open to non-skating public. Concrete and granite, green space and mature trees. Spectator viewing platforms. Built by Franklin's Paine Skatepark Fund and the City of Philadelphia, managed by city Parks & Recreation. Free.

#### Shaw Millennium Park — Calgary,

Canada. Largest in North America at 75,000 sq. ft. All-wheels welcome. Beginning, intermediate, and advanced courses. Designed as "family activity park", is also a venue for festivals and music events. Free, open 24 hours.

# Black Pearl – Red Bay, Cayman

Islands. Managed by a non-profit, public but not free. Sober location. 52,000 sq. ft. Allows BMX and scooters. Has equipment rentals. Partnerships with Ministry of Education After School Program/YMCA, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Special Needs Foundation, Youth Anti-Crime Trust.

#### Factoria Joven — Merida, Spain.

"Teenager's Playground" or "Youth Factory". Skating, BMX, rock climbing. Inexpensive materials like lightweight polycarbonate, bright colors. Has covered areas, lighting, and indoor spaces for computer lab, dance studio, theater.

#### Faelledparken Skatepark –

Cophenhagen, Denmark. 50,000 sa. ft. Three areas for different skill levels. BMX and rollerskates welcome. Free. Street course, bowls, wooden vert ramp. Funded by major donation on park's 100 year anniversary. Designed for spectator viewing.

#### Rabalder Park – Roskilde, Denmark.

Built both as floodwater control device and skate park. Canal drains water into 3 basins that are also skatable bowls. Can handle 10-vear rain flood event. Public and free.

# **SKATING IN MINNEAPOLIS**

There is currently a vibrant and creative community of skaters in Minneapolis, but it is not always visible to the general public. This is partly because there are not many free, public outdoor skate park options in the city. Those that do currently exist are relatively small, made of pre-fabricated construction, and often designed in a way that does not support good flow, which is critical to success and enjoyment of the activity.

#### **6 EXISTING MPRB SKATE PARKS**

- Creekview
- Bottineau
- Elliot
- Brackett
- Armatage
- Morris

#### **PARTNERS**



MSA
MIDWEST SKATEBOARDING ALLIANCE

#### **BUSINESS ALLIES**





#### **EVENTS**



- ESPN X Games in Minneapolis 2017 and 2018.
- 3rd Lair skateboarding and BMX demo area at MN State Fair annually.
- Familia's Aqua Jam at Boom Island
   2016 present.
- Go Skateboarding Day annually.

#### MINNEAPOLIS STRENGTHS

- private indoor bowls and skate parks
- street skating
- geographic balance of public skate locations
- strong and connected skate community

#### MINNEAPOLIS WEAKNESSES

- Tier 1 (3 ft.) height restrictions
- MPRB ordinances not always clear on skaters use of public paths
- small and poorly laid out public skate parks
- modular materials and construction
- cold weather

# INDOOR PRIVATE MEMBERSHIP FACILITIES

- Burrito Bowl
- DABB
- Hiawatha Bowl



# CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS SKATE-RELATED **ORDINANCES**

#### 427.300. – Rollerskating and skateboarding.

- (a) No person shall ride or propel rollerskates or skateboards upon a public street, highway or sidewalk, except in a prudent and careful manner and unless such a person be capable of efficient control and such rollerskates are operated with reasonable regard to the safety of the operator and other persons upon the streets, sidewalks and other public highways of the city.
- (b) No person shall ride or propel rollerskates or skateboards upon the Nicollet Mall, or any other public plaza-like area regulated by the City of Minneapolis or other governmental unit, except in connection with an exhibition, commercial venture, organized play or similar organized event authorized by permit from the city council pursuant to Section 440.20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances or as authorized by the appropriate governmental unit. (80-Or-303, § 1, 12-29-80; 83-Or-252, § 1, 10-14-83; 89-Or-093, § 1, 5-26-89)

#### 440.10. - Prohibited conduct without permit.

No person shall use Peavey Plaza, Riverfront Plaza, Cedar-Riverside Plaza, Loring Greenway, Nicollet Mall or any other plaza-like area owned by the City of Minneapolis for any concert, exhibition, commercial venture, organized play or picnic activities, or for any similar purposes without first obtaining a permit from the city council under this chapter. (76-Or-131, § 1, 8-13-76; 83-Or-253, § 1, 10-14-83)

### MPRB SKATE-RELATED **ORDINANCES**

#### PB2-10. — Use of grounds and facilities.

No person shall play ball, golf, tennis, archery, other games or sports, upon or within any park or parkway, except upon ball, tennis, archery range or appropriate athletic grounds or golf links, established by the board. No person shall enter upon or use any tennis court, golf link, archery range or other athletic grounds or facilities except for purposes authorized by the board, or the superintendent of parks acting directly or through his duly authorized officers or agents, and after having paid any admission or entry fee required by the board, or the superintendent of parks acting directly or through his duly authorized officers or agents. The use of all athletic grounds and facilities shall be subject to such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the board or its superintendent of parks for each such athletic ground or facility. The rules and regulations shall be in writing and made readily available to the public by posting the regulations on park property and maintaining copies of the regulations for public review at the office of the board's secretary. (Code 1960, As Amend., § 1010.140; Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 85-102, § 1, 6-5-85)

#### PB<sub>7.5</sub>-2. - Signs posted.

Signs will be posted to designate each pathway in a park as restricted as a pedestrian path for use by or for use as a bicycle path by walkers, bikers and roller skaters, or both. (Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 81-102, § 1, 5-20-81; Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 89-101, § 1, 5-3-89)

#### PB<sub>7.5</sub>-3. - Prohibited use.

No biker shall ride a bicycle and no roller skater shall ride or propel roller skates on any designated pedestrian pathway, except where such pathway is also a designated bicycle pathway. No biker shall ride a bicycle on any pathway, whether improved or not, where the board has erected signs designating such pathway as a "No Biking" pathway. No walker shall walk and no jogger shall jog on any designated bicycle pathway, except where such pathway is also a designated pedestrian pathway. (Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 81-102, § 1, 5-20-81; Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 96-101, § 1, 4-3-96; Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 96-103, § 1, 9-4-96)

#### PB7.5-10. - General speed limit.

No person shall propel a wheeled device at a speed greater than the maximum of ten (10) miles per hour on any pathway. (Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 81-102, § 1, 5-20-81)

#### PB7.5-11. - One-way pathways.

No biker shall ride a bicycle and no roller skater shall ride or propel roller skates on the designated bicycle pathways at Lake Harriet, Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles other than in a one-way clockwise direction. (Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 82-104, § 1, 6-16-82; Pk. Bd. Ord. No. 83-101, § 1, 5-4-83)

#### PB9-74. – Obedience to traffic devices.

No driver of a vehicle, pedestrian, persons riding a bicycle or animal or any person whatsoever shall disobey the instructions of any official traffic-control device, signs, markings, or any part of this article, unless at the time otherwise directed by a police officer. (Code 1960, As Amend., § 1043.110)

# **CURRENT STATE OF MPRB SKATE PARKS**

This feedback was received at two public open houses.

#### **ARMATAGE SKATE PARK**

- 2500 57th St. W.
- 5 features in park
- Concrete base
- Concrete features
- Manufacturer Solo

#### What works:

- The ledge
- · Smooth riding surfaces great addition to city park
- · Inactive park area by rec center building

#### What could be improved?

- Rough/awkward transitions on the pyramid
- Different sized ledges with more space around it
- · Not as generic, add structures on side
- · Use space better, put in another feature right of the quarters pyramid and bank
- The hip on the pyramid should not be round





#### **BOTTINEAU SKATE PARK**

- 2000 2nd St. NE
- Nine features in park
- Concrete base
- Concrete features
- Manufacturer-Skate Concept

#### What works:

- Concrete
- Variety
- Water fountain
- · Close parking lot

#### What could be improved?

- The hip line sends a rider right into fence
- Needs an abundance of flat ground, then the park could flow. Free space.
- Delete fencing it's restrictive
- · Slightly clustered
- Restrooms no biffy
- The quarterpipe/bank feature is straight dangerous.
- · The transition on the bank is almost un-rideable. Very rough.
- · There is no flow



#### **BRACKETT SKATE PARK**

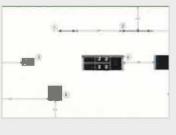
- 2728 39th Avenue South
- Six features in the park
- Asphalt base
- · RampX resin feature
- Manufacturer-Skate Wave

#### What works:

- Moveable ramps (some) and boxes are a crowd favorite and allow for more obstacle options
- · The two rails
- Nothing

#### What could be improved?

- Ground sucks Need concrete
- More space. Better ramps.
- Pad of concrete not asphalt
- Slippery, use metal edges
- The grounds sucks
- · Adjacent tennis court surface is better for skating, causing conflicts
- · Overall unskatable
- Ramps have holes
- Too far from rec center for staff to observe

















#### **CREEKVIEW SKATE PARK**

- 5001 Humboldt Avenue North
- Four features in park
- Concrete base
- Concrete features
- · Manufacturer-Solo

#### What works:

- Nothing
- Ramps

#### What could be improved?

- · This park is not skateboard oriented
- No one know about this park-needs advertising
- · Features are small and short

















#### **ELLIOT SKATE PARK**

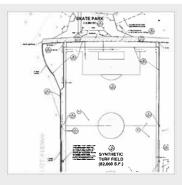
- 1000 14th Street East
- Five features in park
- Concrete Base
- Concrete Features
- Manufacturer-Solo

#### What works:

- · Recent improvements to footprintremoval of fence
- Great central location

#### What could be improved?

- Awkward transitions on the bank and pyramid
- · No boxes/ledges.
- Kids from playground/park (not interested in skating) overtake the skate park.
- Poorly placed round/kink rail.
- · Slippery concrete ramps
- Plenty of space to expand.
- · Redo middle obstacle completely
- · Remove round rail on the center piece/ hip section
- · Too hard/stupid to skate

















#### **MORRIS SKATE PARK**

- 5531 39th Avenue South
- Seven features in park
- · Concrete base
- · Concrete features
- Manufacturer-Skate Concept

#### What works:

- · Better mix of small stuff and larger ramps
- · Good spacing
- Good mix of obstacles

#### What could be improved?

- Too many cracks
- · Ramp transitions sunk into ground
- Sticky coping and rails
- · Concrete pad not asphalt
- · Ramps need to be raised
- · Heavy elements sink into the asphalt pad, creating hazardous bumps

















### **OVERVIEW OF POSSIBLE AND IN-PROCESS** MPRB SKATE PARKS



#### **Nokomis Park**

Approved in Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan.<sup>1</sup> However, currently not eligible to receive regional funds to build or maintain a skate park. Currently unfunded.

#### **Central Gym Park**

Approved in park plan as part of South Service Area Master Plan. Planning and design currently underway.

#### **NE Athletic Field Park**

Approved in NE Athletic Field Park Master Plan. Will replace existing miniature golf course. Currently unfunded.

1 Note: Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park is one of several parks in the MPRB system which is owned, operated and maintained by MPRB, but also designated as part of the Metropolitan Council System of Regional Parks and Trails (www.metrocouncil.org). In this document, 'Regional Parks' are those that meet this definition. For more information, see page 42.

#### **Underpass Park**

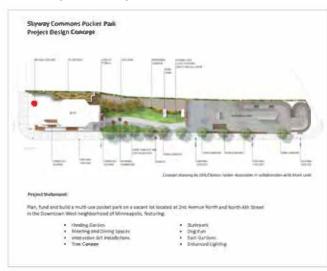
Listed as potential new North Loop park space in draft Downtown Service Area Master Plan. To be located under freeway overpass. Land currently a city owned and operated parking lot.

#### Cedar Field Park

Approved in park plan as part of South Service Area Master Plan (as amended). Currently unfunded, though Cedar Avenue Field appears in MPRB's CIP for funding due to its equity ranking.

#### **Skyway Commons Pocket Park**

Listed as potential park-like space in draft Downtown Service Area Master Plan. Agreement approved with Midwest Skateboard Alliance for planning exploration and possible fundraising. Land currently owned by MnDOT.



#### "It is one of the best moves that the Park Board made."

"The skate park at Armatage has been very successful. Kids skated in the park before there was a skate park there—they just skated on picnic tables, sidewalk rails and anything they could figure out. Once the skate park went in, on a typical day above 35°F, the park was always in use by an average of 15-30 kids. Anytime kids were free, it was busy, especially after school or on a weekend. There is camaraderie amongst skaters, they work as a team. We had kids who shoveled snow off the skate park so they could use it in November." – Jerry Peterson, MPRB Staff, Armatage Skate Park

#### **Brackett Park**

Expansion of existing skate park approved in South Service Area Master Plan, but only at end of useful life of adjacent tennis court and with additional community engagement. Currently unfunded.

#### Lake Calhoun/Bde Maka Ska Park

Approved in Lake Calhoun/Bde Maka Ska and Lake Harriet Regional Park Master Plan. However, currently not eligible to receive regional funds to build or maintain a skate park. Currently unfunded.

#### **Elliot Park**

Existing skate park footprint expanded during recent athletic field renovations. Phase two – improvement of elements, currently unfunded.

#### **Morris Park**

Existing skate park was approved for a complete rehabilitation in the South Service Area Master Plan. Currently unfunded.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### **OVERVIEW**

Beginning in 2013, MPRB staff engaged a Steering Committee of skaters and skate allies to review skate park precedents, current trends, technical considerations, and projected needs for public skate facilities. This group met 30 times and several members later formed the independent non-profit City of Skate, which formed a partnership with MPRB to support skate parks citywide. A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) of MPRB staff members from recreation, operations & maintenance, safety, and community outreach also provided input and reviewed feedback. The entire project team collaborated on outreach activities. To increase equity in engagement, staff did additional outreach with female skaters, BMX riders, and Latino and African-American youth park user groups.

#### **METHODS**

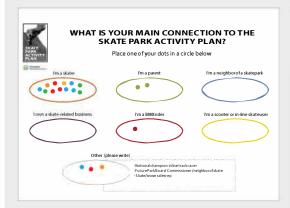
• Electronic and paper survey with approximately 1300 respondents. Youthline staff assisted with recruiting survey participants at recreation centers.

- Two public open houses with roundtable discussions.
- Three focus group sessions with female skaters, BMX bikers, and longboard skaters.
- Two recreation center discussions with African-American youth group at North Commons and Latino youth group at Powderhorn
- · Ten individual interviews with local skateboarding professionals, business owners, and planning staff of neighboring municipalities.
- Interviews with current or past recreation center directors at existing MPRB skate parks
- Meetings with an internal Project Advisory Team with staff from recreation, safety/park police, community outreach, and operations/maintenance.
- Project updates and news releases posted to the MPRB and City of Skate websites
- Unstructured public comments collected via online comment form
- Attendance at several meetings covering related topics including X Games coordination, specific park master planning, and community organization board meetings

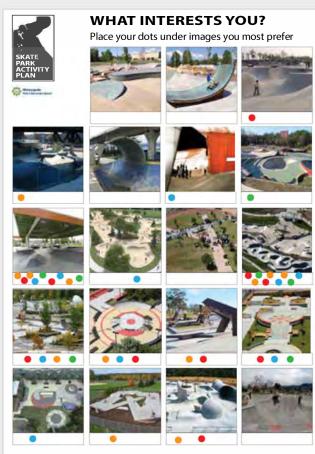
• Direct outreach to existing skate park users through site visits, emails and phone calls

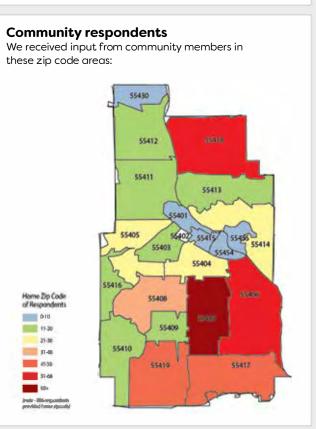
### COMMUNITY **ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK**

Key takeaways from a variety of forms of community engagement included: the need for more and larger quality parks of professional design and construction; the need for authentic outreach and partnerships with the users of skate parks; the need for public education on the value of skateboarding and skate parks. For more detailed information on community feedback, see this plan's appendix.



"It's about progressing and learning not necessarily being a professional." - community member





"Young Somali kids want to learn but there's no place by them - you can't always travel to it — you need to be able to walk to it — so put one near an immigrant community like Brian Coyle."

- community member



# SURVEY SUMMARY

Multiple-choice questions

MPRB opened a survey May 13-July 23, 2013, available both online and on paper. The survey had a total of 1339 respondents. The majority of respondents were males ages 18-24. Of those who responded, key findings include:





# A majority of respondents:

- have been skating for more than 5 years
- skate a few times during the week, and every day on weekends
- are very interested in plaza/street styles
- often drive to get to skate parks
- currently skate in the Central, University, and Northeast communities
- would like to skate in the Calhoun-Isles, Nokomis, Powderhorn, and Longfellow communities
- are interested in demonstrations, competitions, and contests rather than camps or lessons.
- Are interested in skate parks without a fee, with open access, restroom access, cover and shade, extended hours, and lighting at night.

#### Additional information:

- MPRB skate parks farther from the city center such as Creekview, Armatage, and Morris are not being used as much by respondents as those closer to city center
- skate parks outside the MPRB system rank high in popularity with respondents
- when comparing only MPRB skate parks, respondents are most satisfied with Bottineau
- small skate parks serve a neighborhood interest that is often younger and less experienced, while larger facilities will draw experienced skaters from farther distances.
- respondents use skate parks for related activites as well, such as BMX riding, scooter in-line skate use

#### **STAKEHOLDERS**

The community engagement plan for this project identified several key stakeholders:

- youth skaters
- vert skaters
- street skaters
- DIY skaters
- professional skaters
- · local shop owners and skate park operators
- · industry experts
- · artists connected to skateboarding
- corporate partners
- public health professionals
- · community members
- parents/advocates
- schools



"In team sports it's often all about the game and so participants practice for it but with skating it is all about the practice."

- community member

# **Skaters want:**

unique features related ability to ride on bike trails ews of nature without getting a ticket to the neighborhood convenient locations, both SIZE street and vertical creative locations with skateable art and fun

parking and/or transit nearby

# **GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

#### **OVERVIEW**

- **GOAL ONE: Increase the number,** variety, and distribution of skate parks in Minneapolis
  - STRATEGY 1A: Align total skate park area with city population
  - STRATEGY 1B: Provide a variety of skate park types and sizes
  - STRATEGY 1C: Plan for an equitable distribution of skate parks in appropriate locations throughout the city (system planning)
- **GOAL TWO: Address policy barriers to high quality** skate park experiences
- GOAL THREE: Improve the overall skate park experience through design, operations, inclusion, partnerships, and safety measures
  - STRATEGY 3A: Design and construct skate parks with an understanding of the unique and specialized needs of specialized needs of the activities it supports, and by involving partners and industry experts
  - STRATEGY 3B: Operate and maintain skate parks to a level equivalent to other park facilities
  - STRATEGY 3C: Provide increased skate park programming, while reserving majority of skate park time for unstructured use
  - STRATEGY 3D: Promote safety at skate parks
  - STRATEGY 3E: Preserve and cultivate partnerships in the implementation of the Skate Park Activity Plan





# **GOAL ONE: Increase the number, variety, and** distribution of skate parks in Minneapolis

MPRB currently operates six skate parks scattered throughout the city. In total, these six constitute approximately 30,000 square feet of skate park area, and all are of the same general type and size. Skate parks are a recreational facility of equal importance to basketball courts, playgrounds, and wading pools, in particular providing access to a wider age range of community members than many other facility types. Specifically, skate parks bring recreational amenities to teens not involved or interested in team sports—a group historically underserved by the park system. Increasing access to skate parks will encourage more

skating, which will have positive impacts on physical, social, and mental health.

### **STRATEGY A: Align total skate** park area with city population

There are several formulas for determining the level of service a city should provide to skateboarders. The following are adapted from the Skatepark Adoption Model (SAM) from the Public Skate Park Development Guide:1

The most significant influences on a skate park vision will be the size of

<sup>1</sup> publicskateparkquide.org/vision/skatepark-adoptionmodel/



The most significant influences on a skate park vision will be the size of the community it is meant to serve.

> the community it is meant to serve. The second factor is how large the space is that the community lives in.

#### Approach 1

A skater needs about 150 sq. ft. to complete a simple run (see page 14), and 10 skaters can share that space, taking turns. Using the 2040 estimate from the demographics chapter of 10,930 skaters in the next 20 years, then Minneapolis should have 163,950 sq. ft. of skate park.

#### Approach 2

One 10,000-square-foot skate park is recommended for every 25,000 residents. According to the Metropolitan Council, the Minneapolis population in 2040 is forecasted to be 459,200. Therefore Minneapolis should have 18.3 skate parks that are 10,000 sq. ft., or a an equivalent of 183,000 sq. ft.

#### Approach 3

The Skatepark Adoption Model (or SAM) is a formula for calculating how much skate park your community needs. See the Minneapolis version below.

#### The steps within the Skatepark Adoption Model include:

- 1. Determine the Service Area: Minneapolis
- 2. Determine the 2040 Population: 459,200
- 3. Determine the Number of Casual Skaters (3% of pop): 459,200 x 0.03 = 13,776
- 4. Determine the Number of Core Skaters: 13,776 x 0.0279 = 3,843
- 5. Define the Peak Load: **3,843 x 0.33 = 1,268 at one time**
- 6. Determine Level of Service: 1,268 x 150 sq. ft. = 190,200 sq. ft. total needed

#### Approach 4

An abbreviated version of the skate park adoption formula is:

#### Service Area Population X .414 = Total square feet required.

459,200 x 0.414 = 190,108. ft.

These four approaches indicate Minneapolis should have between 163,950 - 190,200 sq. ft. total of skate park space, or an average of 181,184 sq. ft.

This target would require an increase in total skate park area in the city of 151,814 square feet, or 6 times the area provided today.

MPRB should work with its partners to achieve this goal, recognizing that not all skate parks need to be owned and operated by MPRB. Skate parks open to the public with no fees or with options for reduced or need-based fees should count toward this goal, regardless of ownership or management. MPRB, however, does have a key role in achieving this goal, through the planning and design of additional skate park area. As skateparks are built it is anticipated the sport will grow in popularity and the number of skaters to serve will increase. A review of this activity plan after 10 years should consider this potential impact.

#### **STRATEGY B: Provide a variety** of skate park types and sizes

Sizes and types of skate parks vary by city and should be based on need, use, available land, community support, and adjacent uses. A city needs a variety of sizes and types to serve users. For example, Portland's skate plan recommended 3 sizes ranging from

3,000 sq. ft. to more than 20,000 sq. ft. The Public Skate Park Development Guide also makes this recommendation, suggesting one very large park for every five medium sized ones in a service area. Seattle expanded the range, recommending 4 sizes from 1,500 sq. ft. to more than 30,000 sq. ft.

Based on community and staff discussions, MPRB's city-wide skate park typology includes the following skate park classifications:

- 1. Skate Spot: Under 5,000 sq. ft.
  - Can be specifically designed skate parks or skateable art or other single elements incorporated into other complementary park uses. Comparable to size of a single basketball court. Can most easily be integrated into existing park plans. Are relatively inexpensive. Would best serve skaters and especially non-driving youth close to home and school. Funding could likely be covered with capital dollars or outside donations.
- 2. Neighborhood Skate Park: **5,000-30,000 sq. ft.** These will form the core of the skating network. Comparable to the size of 1-4 tennis courts. Would draw skaters from throughout the city. Should include additional amenities like drinking fountains and possibly shade. Partnerships and grants recommended for fundraising.
- **3. Community Skate Park: 30,000 sq. ft. or larger.** A very large and varied facility, good for competitions and events. Comparable in size to a soccer or football field. Would serve all city residents and also draw from outside the city. Should have basic comfort amenities. May be best built as a

## IT IS IMPORTANT THAT SKATE PARKS OF VARYING TYPES BE SPREAD EVENLY THROUGHOUT THE CITY TO PROVIDE THE GREATEST ACCESS TO SKATERS.

partnership with additional agencies such as Hennepin County. Innovative multi-source fundraising required.

The Public Skate Park Development Guide states that the neighborhood size should be the core of a skate park network as it provides adequate space for multiple skaters within reasonable distance from homes and amenities. The Guide also recommends that for every two neighborhood level skate parks, one skate spot should be included to help link them together. The MPRB project team determined the 6 existing skate park locations should be retained, but should be improved and increased in size to a neighborhood skate park level, with additional neighborhood level parks added to the system.

Therefore, this plan's recommended allocation of MPRB's approximate 181,814 sq. ft. of needed skate park space:

- 1 community skate park
- 11 neighborhood skate parks (includes expansion of existing 6)
- 6 skate spots
- 18 public skate parks total

Because of our climate, an indoor skate park can be considered as part of the MPRB total square footage if it meets all MPRB requirements including but not limited to: open during park hours, free and/or substantial subsidies for park users, and meets MPRB design/ operations/maintenance standards. Partnerships could be considered if an indoor skate park is pursued

# STRATEGY C: Plan for an equitable distribution of skate parks in appropriate locations throughout the city

This activity plan does not provide a list of specific locations for each of these future skate parks, Skate park siting and distribution is a task that should be included in ongoing service area and regional park master planning because it requires site-specific public engagement. Community-based support and neighborhood objections must be worked through on a case-bycase basis to address both recreation needs and livability concerns. What this plan does is outline the criteria for siting the recommended total amount of public skate park square footage in Minneapolis. It is important that skate parks of varying types be spread evenly throughout the city to provide the greatest and most equitable access, and that particular attention be paid to placing quality neighborhood skate parks in areas with a high density of teen and youth populations and in economically and racially varied parts of the city.

#### SITE SELECTION

Site selection should provide an optimum recreation experience for skaters, while also being sensitive to the needs of existing surrounding neighborhoods, the availability of funding, costs of development, and impacts on the environment.

The Seattle plan presented a thorough list of items to consider during site selection, adapted below.

All skate park locations in public parks should meet the following criteria:1

- Compatible with existing uses (ex. near an active area of the park rather than contemplative space)
- Not in a protected or specially managed natural area
- Off-site impacts to residential communities limited as consistent with city code, especially with regard to noise and lighting.
- Allow for clear, passive observation by parents, emergency services, police and the public.
- Close proximity to public transit, with good foot, bike and vehicular access, while taking into account barriers such as rivers, lakes, highways, and railroad yards.
- Easily developable and have minimal construction impediments.
- Do not unnecessarily threaten the loss of mature, healthy trees.
- Allow for the creation of a safe and



lokomis Community Center and East Beach Activity Center Plan

secure environment; providing for separation from vehicular traffic, vehicular and pedestrian access, and ease of routine maintenance.

- Located in a highly visible area with moderate to high pedestrian traffic.
- Integrated into a larger park space that provides other park amenities.
- Sized appropriately for the park.
- · Consider sun and shade and protection from rain and wind.
- Include a space for community viewing.
- · Consider the environment for the well-being of skateboarders, including noise and air quality.
- Can be made ADA accessible for users and spectators.
- · Consider its location in relation to the rest of the skate park system, in order to balance skill levels, amenities, types of skating, sizes, and service access throughout the city.

Additional criteria apply to both neighborhood and community skate parks, which are larger and play a different role within the multi-level system:

• Offer adequate separation from other facilities/programing at the site, while maintaining some visual connection. This supports safety

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Seattle Citywide Skatepark Plan, 2007 and Portland Skatepark System Plan, 2008

- while allowing adults to supervise youth using different facilities at the same time.
- Close proximity to water fountain, trash/recycling cans, restroom, picnic tables.
- Offer potential space for integrated or nearby action-oriented sports activities and events, such as BMX or climbing.
- Include the possibility of lighting, or integration with existing lighting.
- · Have expansion potential.
- · Have access to adequate parking.

These additional criteria apply only to a community facility:

- Have the capacity for concessions, vending, adjacent food truck parking, and/or proximity to off-site food options.
- Have adequate electrical service for large scale events.
- · Consider separate access with drop-off for service vehicles.

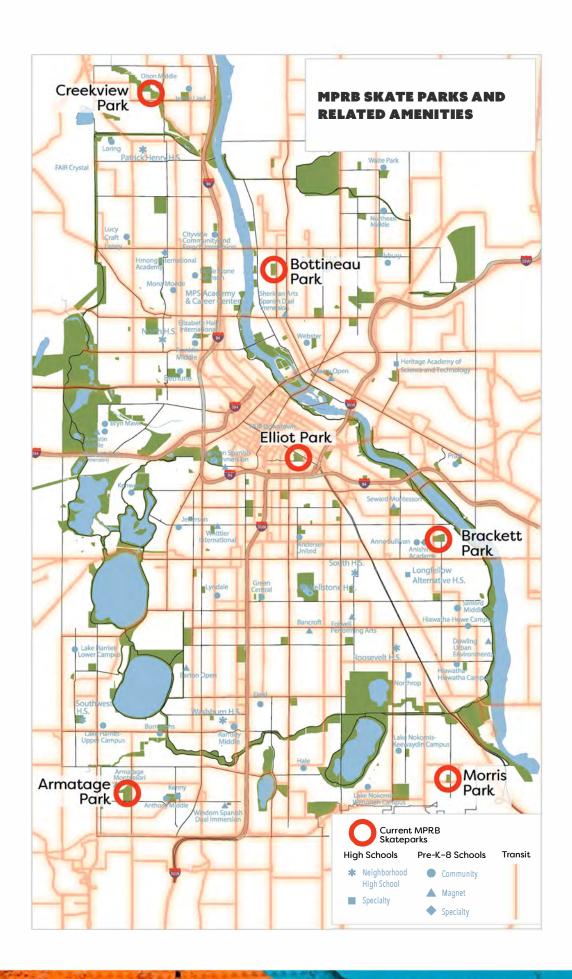
- · Consider space for a skate merchandise and/or repair shop.
- · Promote action oriented sports activities and events.

For all skate park locations, also take into consideration the following secondary factors as appropriate: locations of schools and community centers, at-risk youth service locations, childhood obesity rates, graduation rates, population density, median age, commissioner districts, number of parks nearby, local tourist attractions, business centers and shopping, transit line stops and frequency, transportation corridors.

#### **Goal One reporting**

Along with other master plan implementation reporting requirements, MPRB shall communicate the existing and planned skate park system and highlight any planning or implementation changes since the previous report.





#### **GOAL TWO: Address policy barriers to high quality** skate park experiences

In addition to availability of actual skate park facilities, existing policies can be a barrier to creating desirable skate park experiences. MPRB should work to re-evaluate and, if warranted, modify certain policies and practices that could limit successful implementation. The specific topics to be addressed include the following:

#### Height

The current 3 to 6-foot vertical height restrictions are a considerable barrier to use and are no longer observed by many municipalities. The restrictions were often put in place without reference to data such as injury rates based on type of obstacle This height requirement limits the kinds of equipment that can be implemented and reduces the desirability of skate parks, especially for intermediate and expert skaters. MPRB's Finance Department and legal counsel should review insurance requirements and determine how best to support construction of higher and more challenging facilities.

#### **Trails**

Current MPRB ordinances do not specifically allow skateboard and other non-motorized and humanpowered wheel uses on existing bike and shared-use paths. Though skateboarding is generally allowed on these paths, an explicit ordinance modification would make the trail system more welcoming to skateboarders and allow for better connections to skate parks.

#### Regional Parks<sup>1</sup>

Within Minneapolis, some parks are owned, operated and maintained by MPRB, but also designated as part of the Metropolitan Council System of Regional Parks and Trails. These parks are often larger in size and serve regional as well as local users. The development and maintenance of these parks are partially funded by the Metropolitan Council which strongly identifies regional parks with water bodies, natural resources, and passive recreation opportunities based on these natural features. Currently, skate parks are not eligible to receive regional or state funds to implement or maintain them in regional parks, nor can skate park users be counted as regional park users. MPRB should lobby Metropolitan Council to allow skate park uses in metro area regional parks, as parks policy plans are updated.

<sup>1</sup> The Metropolitan Council is the regional policy-making body, planning agency, and provider of essential services for the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan region. For more detailed information, read the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan at www.metrocouncil.org.

The current 3 to 6-foot vertical height restrictions are a considerable barrier to use and are no longer observed by many municipalities.



#### **Self-build Restrictions**

Finance, legal counsel, and city purchasing should review liability, labor, purchasing, and other implications of do-it-yourself (DIY) skate park projects that (1) allow skaters to build parks and alter terrain on a regular basis, and (2) use donated elements, materials, and/or labor. DIY skate parks are a significant aspect of skate park culture, and direct investment by skaters in their parks can lead to more use, less vandalism, and continued interest. Review existing MOCA and MORC mountain bike trail agreement as precedent.

#### **Permits**

Allow skate parks to be reserved for permitted special events in much the same way as picnic shelters, recreation center rooms, or specialized athletic fields.

#### **Goal Two reporting**

Along with other master plan implementation reporting requirements, MPRB shall communicate the status of policy, ordinance and procedure changes that benefit skate park implementation.



#### **GOAL THREE: Improve the overall skate park** experience through design, operations, partnerships, and safety measures

Beyond the acreage and locations of skate parks in the system, and beyond policy barriers, the design, implementation, and management of skate parks contribute significantly to the overall skate park experience. Improperly designed or constructed skate parks can create an environment that is undesirable for skating, leading it to be underutilized and contribute to negative

stereotypes of skating. Because of the specialized nature of this use, collaboration with implementation partners like City of Skate and other experts in the field is critical.

#### **Shared Space**

Recognizing both the need for unfettered public access as well as specific safety requirements of skateboarding, design for and allow

## EXPECT, ESPECIALLY FOR LARGER PROJECTS, THAT OTHER WHEELED SPORTS — LONGBOARDS, BMX & SCOOTERS — MAY ALSO USE THE SKATE PARK

all non-motorized wheeled sports in skate parks including BMX riding without pegs, scooter use, and in-line skating. Explore the possibility of a few skate spots and/or neighborhood skate parks within the network restricted to skateboarding only, and/or scheduling of shared skate parks to allow skateboard-only or BMX-only time periods. Continue research and discussion on impact of BMX pegs on skate park infrastructure.

#### **Community Engagement**

STRATEGY 3A: Design and construct skate parks with an understanding of the unique and specialized needs

### of this activity, and by involving partners and industry experts

The following design, sustainability, and contractor selection guidelines are designed to assist project managers in the implementation of skate parks throughout the system. Every project is different and will have different requirements, needs, and limitations. These guidelines should be considered in light of the entire project and incorporated to the extent possible. Stepping away from any of these guidelines should be a conscious decision made through evaluation with public stakeholders.



#### **DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES**

- ☐ Preferred material for skate parks is poured-in place concrete or shotcrete for all surfacing and most elements. Concrete is the most durable, quiet, requires less routine maintenance, and provides the best option for design creativity. Time-Saver Standards for Landscape Architecture recommends "surfaces should be made of a smooth, fluid, nonjointed material such as shotcrete or fiberglass." If concrete cannot be used, consider a material with similar strength, design flexibility, durability, longevity, ability to scale large, building efficiency, and rideability/ user experience. While concrete is currently the preferred standard, MPRB's design process should remain open to future, as-yet unknown materials that may provide the same quality experience. Skatelite is not recommended in permanent skate parks.
- ☐ Skate parks are site-specific, specialized facilities. It's important that a quality contractor experienced in skate parks be involved in both the design and construction work. Standard concrete sidewalk contractors are not necessarily the best choice.
- ☐ For skate spots and neighborhood skate parks, eliminate fencing whenever feasible, especially for street skating. Bowl facilities may need fencing to prevent equipment, animals or children from falling into them, especially at night.

- Fencing may be necessary in some circumstances for security purposes. Consider a 36" path around facility perimeter as a safety margin.
- ☐ Consider mixed-use or hybrid designs that incorporate non-skating amenities like picnic tables, community agriculture and performance spaces.
- ☐ Incorporate ADA accessibility standards throughout planning and design of skate park areas for use by both skaters and spectators.
- ☐ Expect, especially for larger projects, that other wheeled sports may also use the skate park. Incorporate this into design decisions to minimize conflicts, understanding that street and park style BMX will generally need more space than skateboards, and scooter riders tend to be younger and less experienced.
- ☐ Consider and cost estimate for the following amenities, especially at larger parks: access to restrooms, electrical service, water fountains, shade structures and/or covers to protect from rain, benches and space for spectators, public art, space for sharing music and video, parking, shade trees, picnic tables and grills, any utility relocation, trash/recycling, lighting, parking.
  - ☐ Before considering lighting or parking, conduct a site-specific evaluation and involve neighbors in the engagement process. Light and noise pollution are reasonable



- concerns and should be balanced with recreation needs. Lighting helps not only with safety but also allows busy older adults to skate after work.
- ☐ Plan for 1 parking space per 3,000-5,000 sq. ft. of skate park when feasible. This may be addressed by on-street parking when impacts to overall neighborhood supply are minimal.
- ☐ Provide water access / hook ups so surface can be pressure washed when needed.
- ☐ Every skate park design should include a unique "signature" defining element. Skate parks are more like playgrounds than basketball courts in this regard. Design ingenuity is what makes them unique, challenging, and popular<sup>1</sup>
- ☐ Skate parks have "traffic lanes" and good skate parks have many options. Flow and element placement are paramount.
- ☐ Skaters need space for runs. Don't overstuff the park with obstacles, it won't ride well. Instead expand the whole footprint and/or expand the diversity of elements.
- ☐ Focus on designing for a range of skill levels rather than for different ages. Some youth are more experienced than adults and all skaters can adjust their technique as needed. Beginners also like to watch and learn from experienced skaters. Small but poorly designed parks can be more

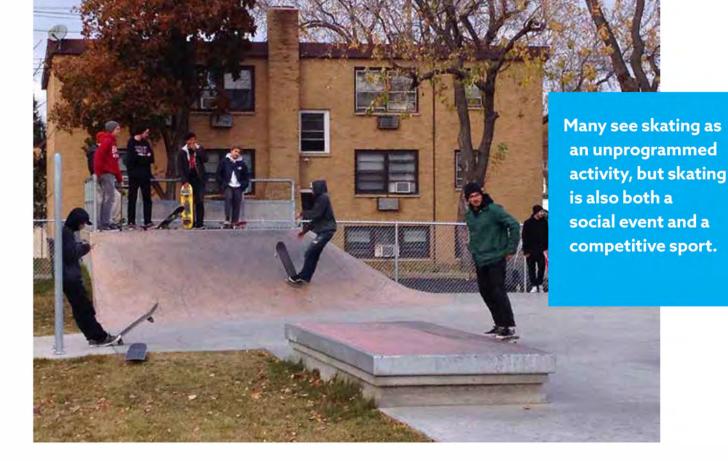
- intimidating or dangerous than large but well-designed parks.
- ☐ Respond to current trends, styles, technical developments, and aesthetics in skating nation-wide. Also seek input from and respond to the local community and skate culture, creating something unique and site-specific. Incorporate local history, iconography, culture and themes in the design. Create destinations for skaters and non-skaters alike.
- ☐ Allow water features, green spaces, and durable, purpose-built skateable public art in skate parks.

It is important to note that updates to an existing skate park might require a different approach than construction of a new park. MPRB should also consider that different types, styles, and sizes of skate parks might require different design and construction approaches, techniques, and expertise. Because of the individualized and creative nature of skate parks, they cannot be designed and built using a cookie-cutter approach. They should instead be planned according to quality national and international standards, while also responding to unique site conditions of surrounding communities and local culture. Because the construction of skate parks is as important to their success as the design of them, attention should be paid to ensuring quality consultants and contractors are selected for each.

<sup>1</sup> publicskateparkguide.org/design-and-construction/ factors-of-skatepark-design/

#### **RECOMMENDED CONTRACTOR SELECTION CRITERIA** FOR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Recommendation	How measure
A variety of local skaters should be involved in selection of contractors	<ul> <li>Have skaters on RFP review committee</li> <li>Have skaters experienced in planning &amp; working with MPRB, as well as those new to the process</li> <li>Have skaters representative of various skating styles, neighborhoods, and individual backgrounds.</li> <li>Balance numbers of skaters with staff</li> </ul>
Contractors should be skaters themselves or demonstrate considerable understanding of the sport	Require CVs or bios
Contractors should have a positive reputation among skate community and skate park users	Surveys, open houses, TAC review
Strike a balance between requiring experience in skate park design or construction, with providing opportunities for quality new consultants with fresh ideas to compete	Require images of prior projects, including unbuilt work (for designers only)
Contractors should demonstrate experience with using desired materials (such as concrete)	Require images of prior built projects
Choose contractors who can deliver/build a skate park as designed within budget	<ul> <li>Require list of what they've delivered in the past and at what cost</li> <li>Estimate total cost per square foot</li> <li>Encourage established partnerships for design-build, or award RFP to one contractor who can do both</li> </ul>
Contractors should demonstrate understanding of current national and international design and construction standards, as well as local needs and inspiring trends (e.g. sustainability, context-sensitive design, urban design that also engages non-skaters)	<ul> <li>Require initial sketches of design concepts, including ideas for signature and site-specific pieces</li> <li>Require images of past work</li> <li>Require description/narrative of their philosophy and approach</li> </ul>
Contractors should demonstrate capacity to professionally engage the public in design and construction process	<ul> <li>Outline past community engagement strategies and outcomes, new ideas</li> <li>Demonstrate understanding of local conditions with community analysis write-up</li> </ul>
Demonstrate proven ability to handle projects of the size and scale requested	Require images and specifications on prior built work
Encourage variety system-wide, do not rely on the same contractors to design and build all skate parks	In RFP process, award points to contractors who have not already built MPRB skate parks. Consider contractors who have not worked in Minneapolis, or ask those who have to demonstrate variety in their approach



### Environmental Sustainability Guidelines

- Consider incorporating innovative techniques to manage stormwater on-site such as rain gardens, bioswales, and infiltration basins.
- When possible, aim for design and operations to meet Sustainable Sites, LEED, or other comparable standards.
- Use concrete and other lowmaintenance, durable materials.
- Consider these suggestions from the Portland Plan:
  - Use coal combustion by-product 'fly ash' or furnace slag from steel production in the concrete mix, at least 15%
  - Use recycled crushed concrete for base rock under the concrete
  - Use Forest Stewardship Council certified wood products for framing of concrete forms
  - Use locally produced and/or manufactured goods
  - Use native vegetation for stormwater treatment and shade

 Use reused and/or recycled materials as secured by volunteers and as found acceptable by the contractor, e.g., imperfect granite and/or marble, and other recycled materials

## STRATEGY 3B: Operate and maintain skate parks to a level equivalent to other park facilities.

The following guidelines are meant to ensure high quality skate park experiences over time. Many of the items recommended below are no different than the maintenance and operations afforded to other MPRB facilities, while others may require special attention. Operations and maintenance procedures should be evaluated regularly and improved over time, with the core purpose being to provide an exceptional skating experience for users.

#### **OPERATIONS GUIDELINES** ☐ Skate Parks should be open the same ☐ Skate parks should remain open standard hours as parks are open vear-round when weather is according to current ordinance. amenable. However, similar to basketball and tennis courts, staff ☐ Skate spots and neighborhoodwill not remove snow from the level skate parks should be free to facility in winter. Facilities should be use. Small fees may be necessary to temporarily closed if weather creates support operation of a community unsafe conditions as determined by level skate park, and for classes or park staff. events. However the emphasis should primarily be on providing free access, ☐ On-site signage should be especially to Minneapolis residents, so provided to notify the public when as not to exclude or discourage users skate parks are closed, either for based on income. When fees must reasons of unsafe conditions or permitted events. charged, reduced or free options should be available on a similar ☐ Metal pegs should not be allowed system to other park facilities on bikes in skate parks, in order to prevent structural damage. **MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES** ☐ Document and remove graffiti containers nearby. and repair minor problems as Annual maintenance: conduct and soon as possible. Facility should be document annual checks of all skate temporarily closed during removal to parks in the system, as well prevent accidents. as repairs completed. ☐ Check with material manufacturers ☐ Periodic maintenance (every for correct removal process to prevent 3-5 years): evaluate park for any surface damage that would cause a necessary rehabilitation. skating hazard (such as sandblasting). ☐ Consider a separate maintenance ☐ Consider colored concrete or fund for larger skate parks, surfaces with murals as an additional particularly if outside sources help deterrent for graffiti. to provide capital funds. ☐ Provide brooms nearby so early ☐ Consider forming a partnership with a skaters can sweep up rocks, leaves volunteer organization or partnering and debris if staff aren't available, in with City of Skate to develop a order to prevent falls and encourage Friends program for additional care of a sense of ownership. the skate park. ☐ Routine daily/weekly maintenance:

☐ Refer maintenance concerns to the

MPRB point person for skate parks.

remove trash and debris, report any

concerns. Have trash and recycling



## STRATEGY 3C: Provide increased skate park programming, while reserving majority of skate park time for unstructured use.

Many see skating as an unprogrammed activity, wherein skaters visit parks with their friends and practice tricks. This is largely true, but skating is also both a social event and a competitive sport. It could also benefit from some scheduled programming, both to increase interest in the sport and to open park opportunities to new users not currently served by park programming. The majority of time at skate parks should be devoted to unstructured use, but the following are a variety of ideas for skate park programming.

#### **Programming Ideas**

 Partner with experienced skaters or outside vendors who have passed background checks to offer classes, camps and events, similar to Skyhawk sports camps agreement.

- Partner with MPRB's youth development department to promote youth leadership and to replicate or expand use of their mobile pop-up park trailer with skateboarding equipment.
- Provide skateboards and protective gear for rent or free check-out at recreation centers for day use only on park property. Equipment could be gently used or donated. This will be particularly important at skate parks implemented in areas of the city with economic challenges.
- Empower skaters to learn skills from each other via formal and informal mentorships.
- Bundle skate park classes and events with other programs targeting teens and young adults — music, films, art, or other action sports.
- Consider a city-wide learn-toskate program so access can be spread equitably across the city.
- Support the performance aspect of skateboarding

### Consider forming a partnership with a volunteer organization for additional care of the skate park.

with filming and demos.

• Organize skateboarding competitions, not unlike the meets or tournaments that take place in other sports

#### **STRATEGY 3D: Promote** safety at skate parks

All sports involve risk. In fact, the consideration of risk is healthy for children, teens, and adults. Skateboarding is sometimes perceived as overly dangerous because of the heights of elements and the hard surface below. In skateboarding, falling is to be expected, but serious injuries are not common. Nearly all fatal skateboarding accidents occur in public streets and sidewalks, not in dedicated skate park spaces. Most involve a motor vehicle. One-third of skateboarding accidents and injuries happen to people who have been skating for less than a week. That said, some simple safety measures can be put in place to limit injury to skaters and other park users.

#### **Safety Recommendations**

- Similar to bicycling on designated paths and mountain biking on trails, protective gear including helmets, pads, and wrist guards should be strongly recommended but not required for skate park users, whose use of the facilities will be "at your own risk.
- · Participants in Park Board sponsored classes and events should be required to wear protective gear, regardless of age, similar to organized

football and other sports leagues

- Like many other recreational activities, skate parks will generally not be supervised or monitored routinely by staff. There is an aspect of skating that is self-policing and older skaters often model behavior for younger skaters. Consider site monitors for largersized neighborhood and community parks if necessary, explore internal partnerships with Street Reach or Youthline staff, and consider using cameras if monitoring is not possible.
- Design and maintain skate parks for visibility so they are not hidden from public view and can be passively monitored. When possible, build within sightlines of recreation centers.
- · Post "skate at your own risk" signage that also lists requirements for protective gear, as well as the skate park address, to assist users in contacting emergency personnel.
- · Work closely with Park Board safety officers in the design of new skate parks, and during the first month after grand opening.
- Require youth to have a parent/ guardian signed waiver on file.

#### **STRATEGY 3E: Preserve and cultivate** partnerships in the implementation of the Skate Park Activity Plan

Skateboarding has always been driven by community investment from the ground up. Most early skate parks evolved out of partnerships between land-owners, skaters, and sponsors. The vibrant skating community in

The vibrant skating community in Minneapolis is ready to work with MPRB on planning, implementation, and promotion of skateboarding and skate parks in the city.

Minneapolis is ready to work with MPRB on planning, implementation, and promotion of skateboarding and skate parks in the city. The following recommendations delineate possibilities for working with partners, though this should not be seen as a comprehensive list. Creativity is key, and MPRB staff and partners should think outside the box when it comes to skate park development.

#### **Partnerships**

- · Maintain relationship, through the existing Memorandum of Understanding, with City of Skate as a primary implementation partner for idea-generation and feedback on siting locations, connecting with skate community, responding to challenges, programming ideas, pursuing funding, skate trends, neighborhood outreach, and any issues that might arise.
- · Seek additional partnerships with other skate advocates for specific projects, when warranted.
- Seek additional partnerships with BMX and other action sport advocates for specific projects, when warranted, such as The Factory or Ride MN.
- Formalize agreements with partners for specific projects whenever the partner plans to bring forward any technical expertise that would otherwise be contracted, any funding, or any volunteer labor or material donations.
- Assign one MPRB staff person to act as the key contact with City of Skate

- and other skate-related partners, and as the key resource for proper implementation of this plan.
- · Consider partnerships with schools, youth groups, and neighborhood organizations. They can provide outreach, fundraising, programming, equipment, and sometimes materials for construction
- Work with partners to educate the public about the opportunities for and benefits to recreation brought by skate parks, both to help grow the sport and to challenge misconceptions that could impede skate park system development
- Integrate any new skate parks and their programming and monitoring into MPRBs youth development programs. Make them available for youth development uses.
- Ensure that skate parks adhere to MPRB's naming policy, sponsorship policy, and any other applicable governing documents.
- Recognize community richness when establishing partnerships. Support and engage leaders of color, indigenous and women leaders in skate park communities.

Goal Three reporting: Along with other master plan implementation reporting requirements, MPRB shall document the status of existing partnerships, the development of new partnerships, and successes attributable to partnerships.



#### **Funding**

The Skate Park Association of the United States of America (SPAUSA) interviewed park and recreation departments across the US and heard repeatedly that public skate parks are wise investments because daily usage is so high.

The Public Skatepark Development Guide suggests that skate parks cost approximately \$40 per sq. ft. to implement. Some factors that may influence project costs are amenities, design constraints, contaminated soils, and donations - causing on average a 10% fluctuation in costs. Applying this to MPRB's 181,814 sq. ft. skate park goal totals approximately \$7.2 million to implement the entire public skate park system for Minneapolis (18 skate parks) over the next 20 years.

Potential funding sources include MPRB allocations within its Capital Improvement Program, including park dedication funds. MPRB may also

rely on community fundraising and private donations. Hennepin County Youth Sports Grants are a possibility for infrastructure costs, and requests should be integrated into MPRB's annual system-wide application process. State bonding is not a viable funding source because it is focused on state-level amenities and requires legislative champions which can be difficult, unless state bonds would be directed to a community-scale skate park with associated amenities.

Donation of capital project materials can potentially offset some costs, however it must be done carefully, with MPRB taking possession of the material on pallets and providing it to contractors. Staff should thoroughly understand potential liability implications before accepting donated materials for use in public projects. Donations of labor require additional scrutiny and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## **APPENDIX**

#### **EXISTING PARTNERS**

- City of Skate
- Midwest Skateboarding Alliance

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Juxtaposition Arts teens and urban arts
- Target community youth programs
- 3rd Lair/Cal Surf/Familia programming partner, equipment
- Be a Boarder equipment

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

As required by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Code of Ordinances, every construction or redevelopment project undertaken within the MPRB Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is to have a community engagement plan.<sup>1</sup> The plan serves as a guide for the community engagement process through the multiple phases of planning and project development. The plan may be modified as circumstance warrants during project duration. Substantial modifications are to be communicated to stakeholders and the MPRB Board of Commissioners.

#### **Project Description**

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board currently has a skate park in each of its six commissioner districts. These parks were planned and installed between 2002 and 2004. They include

at least 5,000 sq ft of hard surface and modular skate park equipment. Most of the parks have concrete modular equipment. Skate park design and technology has evolved since these first parks were installed and the MPRB is seeking to strategically determine how best to serve skate park users in Minneapolis. This project will included an evaluation of the current parks, skate park trends, operation and maintenance models, existing resources in and near the city, and the needs of local users. The result will be a skate park plan that articulates capital needs, sustainable goals for service delivery, maintenance guidelines, design standards that incorporate sustainable techniques, and sustainable maintenance and operating options to meet the diverse community needs of Minneapolis residents and visitors.

<sup>1</sup> Contents of this plan were reviewed by the Board of Commissioners prior to project start in 2013

#### **Project Funding Source(s)**

This project is included in the 2012 Planning Division work plan. Staff time of 600 hours is allocated to the complete the project.

• Capital Sources: N/a

· Amount: o · Expiration: o

#### **Engagement Recommendation**

• Level of Engagement: Consult

· This project is not anticipated to result in significant change to approved master plans for MPRB owned and managed regional parks. Therefore, an appointed community advisory committee is not recommended per policy requirements.

This project recommends a nonappointed CAC process in order to fulfill the following recommended charge:

· Determine capital needs based on an evaluation of current and potential infrastructure, sustainable goals for service delivery, maintenance guidelines, design standards that incorporate sustainable techniques, and sustainable maintenance and operating options to meet the diverse community needs of Minneapolis residents and visitors.

#### **Anticipated Project Outcomes:**

• The Skate Park Plan is intended to result in recommendations for future policy, infrastructure or programmatic changes to support

	Inform	Consult	Collaborate	Partner
Engagement Goal:	To provide stakeholders with factual, balanced, and timely information to help them understand the project.	To obtain stakeholder feedback on project analysis, alternatives, or decisions.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that perspectives are consistently understood, considered, and reflected in project decisions.	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of decision making in order to develop and implement collaborative project solutions.
MPRB Promise to the Public:	The MPRB will keep stakeholders informed.	The MPRB will keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge feedback, and work to ensure stakeholder feedback is reflected in alternatives developed.	The MPRB will work with stakeholders for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate recommendations to the maximum extent possible.	The MPRB and partner entity will be accountable to their roles as negotiated in the partnership and regularly evaluate overall success of the partnership.

- this activity and meet diverse community needs for skate park users as supported by the mission, vision, and goals of the park system.
- The project is supported by the following Vision Theme, Goal and Strategy of the MPRB Comprehensive Plan:

#### **Vision Theme**

Dynamic Parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs.

#### Goal

Park facility renewal and development respects history and focuses on sustainability, accessibility, flexibility and beauty

#### Strategy

Systematically develop activity plans that outline the delivery goals, benefits, facilities, operations, and maintenance required to provide each major recreation activity (or group of similar activities) in the park system. Use these plans to guide capital improvement and facility maintenance programs.

#### Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

All stakeholders are expected to work collaboratively to provide input toward final plan recommendations for approval by the Board of Commissioners. Participants are

expected to engage in the process in a manner that promotes respectful civil discourse and enhances mutual understanding of all stakeholder viewpoints. Any requests for public or project information should be directed to the project manager.

#### Identification of Project Stakeholders

Skate boarding includes several different types of skaters including street, vert, and DIY building skaters and appeals to youth as well as 40 + year-olds. As such, the needs of skaters vary from large outdoor bowl parks to a group needing open space to create its own park. It is also an activity that can be highly connected with local art culture, corporate sponsors and industry professionals. Stakeholder include (list may grow as project progresses):

- 1. Youth skaters
- 2. Vert skaters
- 3. Street skaters
- 4. Local shops
- 5. Local park operators
- 6. Industry experts
- 7. Artists connected to skateboarding
- 8. Corporate partners
- 9. DIY skaters
- 10. Community members
- 11. Parents/Advocates
- 12. Professionals
- 13. Schools

To assess the full range of facility and program needs it is critical to engage a diverse group of stakeholders through a technical advisory committee and project advisory committee.

#### **Technical Advisory Committee**

A technical advisory committee (TAC) will consist of (individuals will be invited to participate after December 5, 2012):

- Youth skater(s) 2
- Vert skater 1
- Street skater 1
- Local shop owner -1
- Local park operator -1
- Local artist 1
- Potential corporate partner 1
- DIY skater -1
- Parent/Advocate 1
- Professional 1
- Public Health 1
- Non-profit partnership advisor 1
- Community Member that is a neighbor to a current park - 1

#### Advisors:

Professionals

This group will be responsible for helping develop the outline for a draft Skate Park Plan in accordance with the recommended charge.

#### **Project Advisory Committee**

A project advisory committee (PAC) representing various MPRB divisions will be invited to participate in development of the activity plan. This staff group is an important link to establishing internal credibility and future plan efficacy. This group is responsible for communicating project information to their respective divisions, shepherding the outreach and engagement of the broader community, representing their work specialty and responsibilities at all committee meetings and public forums, and helping develop the outline for a draft Skate Park Plan in accordance with the recommended charge.

#### **Outreach and Research Methods**

To assist in project development, planning staff and advisory committee members will engage community members and solicit feedback from interested residents through community meetings, written comments and surveys, and other methods of direct communication. Engagement methods to target specific interest groups may include focus groups, staff attendance at community events, and individual meetings with community leadership or representative groups. The project will rely heavily on the PAC and TAC's recommendations for engaging the broader community in order to best identify community needs and priorities.



#### **Project Schedule**

Assemble advisory teams, conduct preliminary research and development of Skate Park plan. Hire consultant.	1/15/2013
Complete the community outreach for the skate park plan that will provide a baseline understanding of community needs for each activity and develop a communications plan for the project.	3/15/2013
Present the first draft of the Skate Park plan to the Board for approval of a 45-day public comment period.	5/1/2012
Present the Skate Park plan to the Board for approval.	9/1/2013

Public notification will include adherence to current policy recommendations for public meetings and public hearings regarding the project.

A project page will be developed and updated for the MPRB website. Information suitable for social media and email subscription communication will be distributed. MRPB recreation centers will be provided paper copies of the Skate Park Plan for public review and comment.

#### Resources

Planning staff time is necessary to develop materials, perform research, outreach and engagement, coordinate and facilitate various public meetings, coordinate all advisory committee work, analyze data collected, and draft the Skate Park plan.

Staffs from various divisions are needed to serve on the advisory committees and promote the intended outcomes and scope of the project to the public in various stages.

#### **Evaluation Summary**

The project manager has analyzed the effectiveness of the engagement process from both stakeholder and organization points of view and provided a brief summary statement. The summary statement indicates how the process has advanced policy goals and will assist the Board and staff in evaluating and informing an ongoing community engagement process.

#### **Summary Statement**

Statement pending plan completion.

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DETAILS**

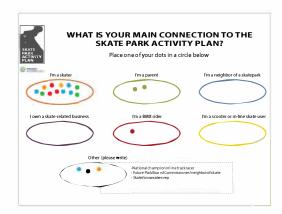
#### **Summary survey results**

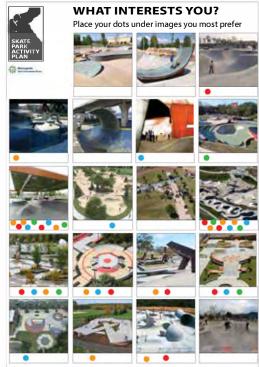
A majority of respondents:

- have been skating for more than 5 years
- skate a few times during the week, and every day on weekends
- are very interested in plaza/ street styles
- often drive to get to skate parks
- currently skate in the Central, University, and Northeast communities
- would like to skate in the Calhoun-Isles, Nokomis, Powderhorn, and Longfellow communities
- are interested in demonstrations, competitions, and contests rather than camps or lessons.
- are interested in skate parks without a fee, with open access, restroom access, cover and shade, extended hours, and lighting at night.

#### Survey additional information:

- MPRB skate parks farther from the city center such as Creekview, Armatage, and Morris are not being used as much by respondents as those closer to city center
- skate parks outside the MPRB system rank high in popularity with respondents
  - when comparing only MPRB skate parks, respondents are most satisfied with Bottineau
- small skate parks serve a neighborhood interest that is often younger and less experienced, while larger facilities will draw experienced skaters from farther distances.
- respondents use skate parks for related activities as well, such as BMX riding, scooter in-line skate use.







#### Survey results by question



#### **SURVEY SUMMARY**

Open-ended questions

Below are word clouds showing the most common responses to openended survey questions. The most commonly occuring responses are shown largest in size.



If respondents described themselves as "other", they meant:

> Longboard Par Rollerblader Skate Skateboard Skatepark Skater

When respondents travel to non-MPRB skate facilities, they go to:

> Con Reads Crystal \_\_\_Eden Prair Eden Prairie Eden Prarie Edina YMCA Familia HQ Lake Longham Oakdale Private Roseville Oval Skate Park Southdale YMCA Tri-city Street Woodbury Plaza zero Gravito

If respondents are unsatisfied with a skate facility, they suggest these changes to the facility to improve their experience:

> Better Layout Biggersux Borng Challenging Concrete Elliotre Ground ... Obstacles Pavement Plaze Style Ramps Skate Skatepark Skater Designed Snake Runs

Of all the locations at which respondents have skated, their favorites:

Armatage Bottineau Bracket Brackett Eden Prairie Eera Elliotramio Lair. Minnespots Morris Mound Owner Park Plaza WoodburyyMcA

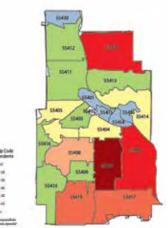
What respondents like most about their favorite skate location:

> Big Bowl Built Cement Close to Home Closest Concrete Factors Features Fun Good Flow House Ledges Leves Location in Obstacles Park Plaza Ramps Skate Smooth

Additional recommendations for improving skate facilities and skating in Minneapolis:

> Asphalt Basketbell Court BMX Bowls ... Graffiti draw Actility for Kids Half Pipes Plaza Ramps Skate Skateboarders Skateparks Skaters Snake Runs Travel Water Worth

Home zip codes of respondents who indicated they live in Minneapolis:



#### FEEDBACK BY TOPIC

Key takeaways from skater discussions, focus groups, interviews, online comments, and MPRB staff responses.

#### Plannina:

- conduct outreach to skaters and skate partners when planning new skate amenities and new park master plans
- · Provide CIP and park dedication fund allocations for skate parks
- research current skate trends and quality precedents
- a medium sized skate park in every neighborhood, with a larger community one in a significant and accessible place
- When looking at location, assess what businesses are there? This allows skaters to stop there during their other trips. Get some groceries, skate for 30 minutes. Throw your board in the trunk. Or let your kids skate while you get groceries, and join them afterwards.
- allow a DIY park and/or adjustable elements
- · consider skating as a form of healthy transportation
- · don't just plan a big park or make small moves but do both concurrently and strategically and in phases
- skate community needs something tangible not just plans - would like better skate parks now
- fix what we have rather than remove it, aim high for the best possible scenario while also having realistic goals so it actually gets done
- address the range of individual user types and preferences and types of skating and styles, multi-element park is ideal, plaza designs mixing ramps and street elements allow skaters of different styles to hang out with each other and try other styles, have

- both street and transition styles
- make multiple big skate parks then several smaller areas, Ideal would be to have medium sized park in every neighborhood/community
- static layout can get boring after a while so offer parks of various types and sizes throughout the city so there is a variety to choose from
- Plan bigger sizes and range of sizes
- put near playgrounds so parents with multi-age kids can recreate close to each other keeping families together
- better to build 1-2 really good skate parks than 5 "so-so" ones
- height restriction is a significant barrier and makes no sense for a large city like Minneapolis
- Skaters are not adequately served now. Skaters are of all ages, and need facilities challenging to all ages and abilities
- The skate park bar is set too low here
- Consider one in the center of the city
- Even though skate parks are often placed in left over land like under bridges because of noise, consider that skaters also want views and nice, safe locations to recreate in like anyone else. You might draw more parents and little kids if the location is safe, beautiful, and visible.

#### Design/Build:

- Use quality materials and professional experienced skaters as designers and construction contractors,
- Provide places for spectators to gather and watch, public art, environmentally sustainable features like rain gardens and stormwater management, screen areas for showing videos, shelter from rain and snow, views of nature and the city skyline, skateable public art, fun/unique features rooted in neighborhood context, increased



"There was a great Nike ad campaign a while back that showed joggers getting harassed and arrested, and it said 'what if all athletes were treated like skateboarders.' We are athletes and we just want to do our sport."

- element height, include music stage video, green space, restrooms, shade
- This area uses a lot of the same designers over and over again, all the parks are too similar to each other
- We skate the 6 modular parks MPRB has now because that's all we have, but good service to skaters outdoors would mean concrete skate parks
- They were obviously not designed by skaters. Modular, too small and difficult for new skaters to skate properly.
- Existing park designs don't have good flow
- With obstacles "less is more"
- Fencing is ugly, makes skaters feel "caged" and can be a safety hazard when at the end of a element as it causes skaters to crash into it — there needs to be more recovery space.
- They are already 15 years old, out of date

- make trails interesting by adding skateable furniture and elements to the sides (perhaps make a special skate trail similar to Wirth's mountain bike trails)
- use only concrete materials, modular parks don't serve skaters well
- build higher than 3 feet remove the Tier 1 restrictions
- Build different design types: plazas, bowls, runs.... if it isn't fun to ride it won't draw people to use it
- look at multiple schools of design
- · Create a plaza with a downtown atmosphere also used by non-skaters
- for ramps focus on the approach
- · have an individual focus at each skate park that makes it unique, provide amenities, uniqueness and local character
- need green space, restrooms, shade, nearby playgrounds so families stay together

- Events will typically build their own temp facility/elements so empty paved space nearby might also be useful for DIY or spectators
- · A good design will allow for skill advancement and new learning without re-design

#### **Programming:**

- · skaters are misidentified as ne'er-dowells and criminals – need PR effort tackling community misconceptions about teens & skate parks. There is a lack of understanding of recreation needs of teens who don't want team sports. Public relations about skating should improve so skating shouldn't be portrayed as a nuisance or illegal but instead send a positive message and tout the benefits.
- · Skating does not get the programming support it could, Skating is supported well in other major cities, why not here?
- · Have dedicated skate parks not all-wheel parks or at least dedicated skate-only times
- There is minimal programming
- need to promote skating to the community as a recreation option maybe have a calendar of events
- types of programming just learn to skate or competitions, provide some girls-only skate times or lessons, it's about support and the effort you choose to put into it
- spectators are great but parents can't and shouldn't hover when you skate
- · programming is a good idea but remember you can skate whenever it works for you — it's individual and not regimented like team sports
- Program skating at the Commons?
- · camps are more common now, after school and summer programs would be good,

• Need to be able to have a stage for music and video recording and viewing

#### Safety:

- Both good design and location siting impact safety
- Provide bathrooms and water
- Remove existing fences, they limit what can be done inside the small spaces, and can be dangerous barriers to skaters trying to execute tricks.
- Skaters should be able to skate as transportation without dangers of being in street – allow them to use trails without tickets
- Skate parks become positive social hubs for youth, focusing their energy
- Small elements are hard or unsafe to skate – there is less margin for error or creativity. Seems counter intuitive, non-skaters think big and tall elements are less safe but that is not necessarily the case.

#### **Operations:**

- · Would like ability to ride on bike trails without tickets
- Want reduced requirements for protective gear

#### **Maintenance:**

- fix the 6 skate parks we already have so they have better flow and layout
- Some have failing elements, and staff are not always trained on upkeep of these specialized elements

#### **Access:**

- Need convenient locations walkable/skateable from home
- Including lighting so can use at night
- Need parking and/or transit nearby
- put one skate park in an immigrant community, right by Brian Coyle. Folks there don't skate now because they don't know it's an option, but they are interested

- Build close to freeway systems and transit routes
- Make skate parks free to use
- Provide something centrally located with public transit/trail access (same as MPRB develops biking trails and other recreation amenities)
- Would be ideal to have one in Boom Island Park
- Barriers to use: height restrictions, modular non-concrete, fences, maintenance/surfaces, overstuffed parks lack flow

#### What Does Work in MPRB Skate Parks:

- There are "many" locations, in a number of parks, and close to my home
- Ledges/flat bars are standard elements, very functional elements
- Brackett is the most spacious and open
- Bottineau has a smooth surface, nice cement, nice obstacles
- They are located in a park so whole families can enjoy, there are multiple uses for all family members
- The fence keeps tennis balls out of the skate park
- If you build it (even if it is poorly designed & built) they will still come
- They are near schools

### What Doesn't work in MPRB Skate Parks:

- Brackett surface is rough
- Bottineau has not enough space – too tight
- All MPRB skate parks have not enough space (overall and between elements), they were not designed by real skate park builders
- Morris asphalt surface is terrible

   the heavy concrete elements
   sink into it which is a safety and

- maintenance issue (show close up image here of elements sinking)
- Bracket movable elements disappear at times (don't know who's taking them)
- Pre-assembled modular elements often fall apart
- Many elements in MPRB parks are for only one purpose so not very interesting
- Elliot it is hard to find parking
- Morris is far away, hard to access by bus if you come from north/NE sides of town
- Creekview also far away and hard to access by bus if from S/SW sides
- MPRB Thought they were making Tier 1 short elements for beginners, but the reduction in size actually makes it harder to skate and harder for beginners.
- Morris -Parks on asphalt (Morris) dangerous because elements sink

#### Other Local Skate Parks

- Woodbury has not enough elements, lacks good design, and is built on a hill so you have to work to go uphill, though some feel it uses space well
- Edina set up is awful, there's not good accessibility because you have to pay and wear pads
- St. Cloud has one of the best skate parks in MN, but it has no open ledge to hit, you have to generate a lot of speed, there is a 'crash derby' at some intersections and safety concerns, there is too much stuff packed in, speed is limited, people are constantly underfoot
- Ojibway skate park is spread out and has good ground
- New Hope has good ground movable ramps



"I'd like signs on paved trails that say it is ok for longboarders and skateboarders to be there, so cyclists don't get so upset."

- Front skate park in Saint Paul
- Skate plaza in Eden Prairie
- · Pool in city of Mound
- Burnsville
- · Maple Grove
- Bemidji
- New Richmond
- Wausau

#### **Other Precedent Skate Parks**

- Grant Park in Chicago, IL
- · Venice Beach in LA, CA
- North Houston in Houston, TX
- · LES in NY
- Parks in Malmo, Sweden

#### **Local Survey Respondents** Said they Like These **Skate Park Locations:**

· Merriam Park, St. Paul MN - big ramps, ledges, decent flow not just back and forth so you can maintain speed

- Front, St. Paul MN mini ramps, had a good process but need to trust skaters
- Mendota huge, has amenities, a lot of obstacles, multiple users, spread out, mini ramps
- · Zero Gravity Skate Park, Mound, MN
- · Maple Grove, MN
- · Plymouth, MN
- New Hope, MN
- City of St. Anthony after school programs and P.E. class
- Oakdale has a separated area. An unseen rhythm reduces crashes
- · St. Cloud
- Ojibway Phase 2 is coming, nice and empty
- · Lake Delton in Wisconsin Dells - variety of ramp heights, beginner & advanced

- Denver, CO smooth and wide open, ledge instead of fence
- Union St. in Phoenix
- Arvada Skate Park in Arvada, CO.
- Hood River, OR snake run and bowl, in the woods so has shade
- Portland, OR
- Battleground in WA
- Burnside in Portland, OR

- Glenhaven in Portland, OR
- Magdalena Ecke Family/ YMCA in Encinitas, CA.
- David Armstrong/Louisville Extreme Park in Louisville, KY.
- Paine's Park in Philadelphia, PA.
- The Forks in Winnipeg, Canada.
- Black Pearl in Red Bay, Cayman Islands.
- Factoria Joven in Merida, Spain

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENTS IN FULL

Will be included in the approved Activity Plan once available