



Chandler Park Skatepark Project



Introduction

Great things are happening at Chandler Park through the Chandler Park Conservancy (CPC). CPC is helping to improve the quality of life for youth, seniors, families and visitors from Detroit's East Side and across the region, by providing memorable experiences focusing on Conservation, Health, Recreation, and Urban Agriculture. CPC works closely with the City of Detroit to install great amenities, provide exceptional programming and create great places for people to gather, learn and play.



According to ConservationTool.org (A Pennsylvania Land Trust Association), *“City parks and open space improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work. Numerous studies have shown the social, environmental, economic, and health benefits parks bring to a city and its people”*. Statements like these confirm that we are on the right path.

Chandler Park is over 100 years old and has over 75,000 visitors annually. The Chandler Park community is an urban community comprised of over 25,000 residents where over 50 percent of the population is under the age of 18. Over the last four years the investment in capital improvements has been more than \$4.6 million dollars. Projects include: new athletic field, new t-ball field, refurbished comfort station, new tennis courts, a meditation garden, walking path, new soccer fields and a marshland.

Our next project is the design and installation of a 12,000 s/f skatepark. CPC is a recipient of a Tony Hawk Foundation matching challenge grant of \$250,000. The CPC Board of Directors and Board of Advisors have made this project a priority for 2020. CPC is seeking donor(s) to fulfill the match requirement of \$250,000. The project will meet the safety and standards for the latest skatepark design principles for skateboarders, scooters, and BMX riders to develop their skills. The design will be naturally integrated with the surrounding environment and feature a mix of street and transitional-style terrain, with elements designed for all age groups and ability levels. The design of the project should draw and engage local skateboarders to the skatepark and will challenge both beginners and experienced users.

Why a Skatepark?

Our mission suggests that we want to create healthy spaces that will provide benefits to the neighborhood and that visitors will enjoy. Skateparks build and sustain healthy communities. As a gathering place for dedicated, athletic youth, the skatepark provides the forum for visitors young and old, beginning and skilled, to meet and share experiences. For many skateboarding youth, the skatepark becomes a home-away-from-home.





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According to the Tony Hawk Foundation: *“Skateparks provide a physical activity for kids not interested in traditional team sports. Community skateparks provide a safe and challenging place for skaters of all levels to develop as athletes. Public skateparks provide healthy activity for kids and help eliminate boredom and drug use”.*

Also, young people need to feel like they are recognized and appreciated by their communities. In too many places skateboarders get the wrong message from local authorities who limit or outlaw skateboarding and ignore its inherent benefits. Skateparks are the solution. Every skatepark supports hundreds of kids that might otherwise have nowhere to go.

The thought process for developing a skatepark included input of the General Service Department of the City of Detroit, along with residents and local stakeholders. An article by the Spohn Ranch Skatepark, out of Los Angeles, CA. sums it up and aligns with our thinking.

1. Skateparks Reduce Illicit Behavior:

The myth surrounding skateparks is that they are a breeding ground for crime and other illicit activities. While there may be an occasional “bad seed,” providing designated spaces for positive activities is the best way to curb unlawful behavior among youth. When youth have nothing to do or nowhere to go – that is when they cause trouble.

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

2. Skateparks Provide A Safe Environment For Skateboarding:

The majority of skateboarding injuries happen outside skateparks. The most common injuries are falls due to surface irregularities and collisions with motor vehicles or pedestrians. Skateboarding is going to happen whether skateparks exist or not, so the best way to keep youth safe is to provide them access to safe, designated spaces to pursue their activity.

3. Skateparks Reduce Damage to Private Property:

Without designated skateparks, skateboarders will make use of any and all terrain in their community. This often includes the private property of home owners and local businesses, as well as public spaces such as downtown plazas. Metal skateboard axles and BMX pegs can destroy paint and chip concrete, causing thousands of dollars in damage every year. Public skateparks are a win-win because skateboarders have a safe place to pursue their passion, while law enforcement, business owners and community members no longer have to spend time, money and energy shoeing skateboarders away from their property.

4. Skateboarding Has Significant Physical Health Benefits:

Arguably the most important reason for participating in action sports is the fact that it keeps you healthy and physically fit. Skaters use their glutes, hamstring and quads muscles while pushing off the ground; abs and back muscles to help with balance; the small muscles in the calves, the stabilizing muscles in the hips and the muscles in the arches of the feet. This is an activity that gets kids off the couch and keeps them in shape and is vital for the youth of this nation, especially in this time of a national health crisis.



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5. Skateboarding Has Significant Mental Health Benefits:

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

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

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

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

6. Skateparks Have A Positive Economic Impact:

From the feedback we receive from other municipal skatepark managers, skateparks do seem to have a positive effect on businesses in the surrounding area. When a skatepark opens, it tends to draw people from the outlying communities to bring their kids to the skatepark, do some shopping, have some lunch, buy some gas, etc. Skateparks attract patrons to local businesses who might not otherwise be in the area.

On another note, skateboarders are tenacious and will go wherever the compelling terrain is. While skateparks with high visibility and ample community interaction are healthier environments, skateparks in challenging locations can often serve to activate an otherwise underutilized space.

Sustainable

While more access to healthy recreation is a fairly universal value, a 12,000-square-foot undulating slab of gray concrete that collects heat from the sun and diverts rainfall into storm drains can seem to environmentalists like an assault on the little natural space that might remain in their neighborhoods. A few designers have been incorporating newer environmentally responsible concepts into their skateparks, and in the process have created some novel and functional features, not to mention truly enriching public spaces with both social and environmental value. We plan to use some of the concepts listed in (appendix a) to meet our standards of including sustainable green design in our projects.

Appeal

There is no doubt that a skatepark would be a great addition to Chandler Park. It will provide a space where people gather and build community, a place where people of any age can get exercise and experience outdoors and a place that will enhance the value of the community. The Skatepark will be open to everyone and there will be no admission or registration fees. We will work with the local and national skate community to design programming and have special events.

We need your support helping to match the \$250,000 grant for The Tony Hawk Foundation, our deadline is March 31, 2020. To make a contribution go to our website at www.chandlerparkconservancy.org. To receive more information on how to partner with CPC on this project, contact Alex Allen at 313-264-1415 or email at aallen@chandlerparkconservancy.org

Appendix A

Built — to Play —

SUSTAINABLE SKATEPARK CONCEPTS



Raingarden integrated within the skate plaza

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces (like a concrete skatepark) can pollute nearby creeks and rivers and contribute to erosion. Green stormwater infrastructure such as raingardens, bioswales, and pervious pavement capture and clean runoff, which reduces impacts to adjacent natural systems. These concepts can be designed as a skateable element while demonstrating the importance of protecting the environment from development impacts.



Reclaimed concrete material

Reclaimed Concrete Material

An ideal green-skatepark site is a paved space that will be replaced. This may provide the opportunity to recycle the very material you're replacing with the skatepark. Reclaimed concrete material (RCM) is a great alternative to stone, as it reduces use of mined material and keeps old concrete out of the landfill. RCM can be used as base course for concrete. RCM is typically a lighter-weight material than stone and therefore can be a less expensive alternative.



Stormwater educational signage

Educational Signage

Skateparks should incorporate graphics, signage, or artwork to promote broader environmental awareness as well as the “sustainable” or “green” features of the skatepark. These signs can be integrated within the park and located in key entrances, gathering spaces and as a skateable element within the park itself.



Local stone integrated within skatepark

Skate Elements that Tell a Story

Skateparks should be designed as unique spaces that reflect the local community. Elements such as recycled granite, pavers, highway barriers, cauldrons, industrial forges, decommissioned buoys, etc. increase the variability of the terrain and keep items out of the landfill. Often, these materials can enhance the overall skate experience and reflect the local history of the site or community. It is these items that can make a place special.



Trees providing shade in the skate plaza

Shade Trees and Benches

Strategically spaced trees will provide necessary shade during summer months. These trees provide skaters a place to cool off during long sessions which benefits the overall experience. Location of trees should be considered to reduce leaf litter on skateparks. Benches provide seating for skaters and park visitors a place to rest and passively engage with the skatepark.



Sustainable additives reduce the impact of concrete

Sustainable Concrete Additives

Fly-ash (a by-product of coal burning) can be used to replace a percentage of cement in concrete. The use of fly-ash also reduces the energy demand of cement plants and space required for its dumping, thus reducing the environmental impact of both concrete construction and thermal power plants. These additives should be locally sourced if possible to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the project.



Skating under solar lighting in St. Louis Park, MN

Dark Sky Compliant - Renewable / Solar Lighting

Take advantage of solar opportunities for power, and use new- technology, low-wattage fixtures to minimize or eliminate reliance on external power sources. Lighting should be dark-sky compliant to minimize the harmful effects of light pollution. Consider providing on-site energy generation for lighting and other needs via solar photovoltaic panels. Even if the panels don't produce 100 percent of the energy the skatepark lights need, they will reduce the net draw of the skatepark lights.