



DALLAS PARK & RECREATION

SKATE PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

Version 1.0

Disclaimer

The City of Dallas Park and Recreation Department (PKR) does not guarantee, warrant, or make representations that the information in this document is complete, accurate, or current. PKR assumes no responsibility for the application of the material or information contained herein nor for any error, omissions, or other discrepancies. Nothing in the document is intended to create nor does it create any enforceable rights, remedies, entitlements, or obligations. PKR reserves the right to change or suspend any or all parts of this document without notice.

The designer of record is responsible to ensure a project is designed in a manner to comply with the applicable laws, regulations, codes, and design standards including, but not limited to, those related to non-discrimination.

Special Thanks

This document is the product of internal staff best practice research, internal staff evaluations, and stakeholder feedback and would not have been possible without the special expertise, drive, and encouragement of individual advocates and leadership from the everyday skater to our political leaders. In particular, PKR would like to thank City Council and Park Board Members, Park Maintenance, and PKR Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives, and PKR Planning, Design, and Facilities, for their roles in bringing this document to fruition. A special thanks to The Skatepark Project™, for inspiring us and allowing us to make reference to many of their best practices.



SKATE PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

All Skateboarding is, is putting ideas into action. - Marc Johnson

The City of Dallas Parks and Recreation is committed to increasing the diversity of our recreation offerings throughout our neighborhoods. All skate parks in Dallas will be designed for use by skateboards, roller blades, roller skates, BMX bikes, and non-motorized scooters. Increasing the number of all-wheel skate parks in our communities will increase access to one of the highest reported sports interests among high-school students and most frequently used outdoor recreation spaces in park systems across the United States. Skate parks offer low cost barriers for beginners in action sports and offer our residents new ways to improve their mental, physical, and social health.

CONTENT

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Table of Contents | 5 |
| Background | 6-7 |
| Best Practices | 8-9 |
| Site Analysis | 10-11 |
| Design Criteria | 14-15 |
| Classifications | 16-21 |
| X-Small | 16 |
| Small | 17 |
| Medium | 18 |
| Large | 19 |
| X-Large | 20-21 |
| Community Engagement | 22-23 |



BACKGROUND

A skate park is a specially designed & purpose-built space designated and equipped for "action sports," such as skateboarding, BMX riding, wheelchair motocross, roller (quad) skating, inline skating and scootering. - The Skatepark Project™. 2022 Skate park Best Practices.

Skate Park Design Guidelines are to be used by Dallas Park and Recreation Staff including but not limited to Planning, Design, and Facilities, Park Maintenance, Administrative and Finance, city vendors and the professional development community who partner with the department, and community stakeholders who contribute in making our skate parks a reality.

Intention of the Design Guidelines

The Skate Park Design Guidelines establish minimum best practice design guidelines that ensure all skate park projects incorporate best practices for sustainability, resiliency, health, and safety. Within the document, all guidelines indicate a peer reviewed preference or recommendation. Projects are encouraged, but not required, to achieve these guidelines to the extent feasible. PKR recognizes that the Design Guidelines cannot address all scenarios. Pertinent laws, rules, regulations, and codes take precedence over the Guidelines in the event of a conflict. When unique or special circumstances, extraordinary market conditions, or special community characteristics necessitate deviation from any aspect of the Guidelines, the project manager must make note and explain the project constraints and the rationale behind design decisions when presenting to the community and to board, commissions, and council, where applicable.

Periodic Updates

Park and Recreation staff intends to review and release guideline updates every 3 to 5 years, as needed.



BEST PRACTICES

Skate parks should be designed to meet the local community's needs. When best practices are followed:

SKATE PARKS ARE:¹

- PUBLIC
- CONCRETE
- PERMANENT
- UNIQUE TO LOCATION
- QUIET
- CENTRALIZED
- ACCESSIBLE
- INCLUSIVE
- ATTRACTIVE
- SELF-GOVERNING
- SAFE SPACE
- AN ASSET

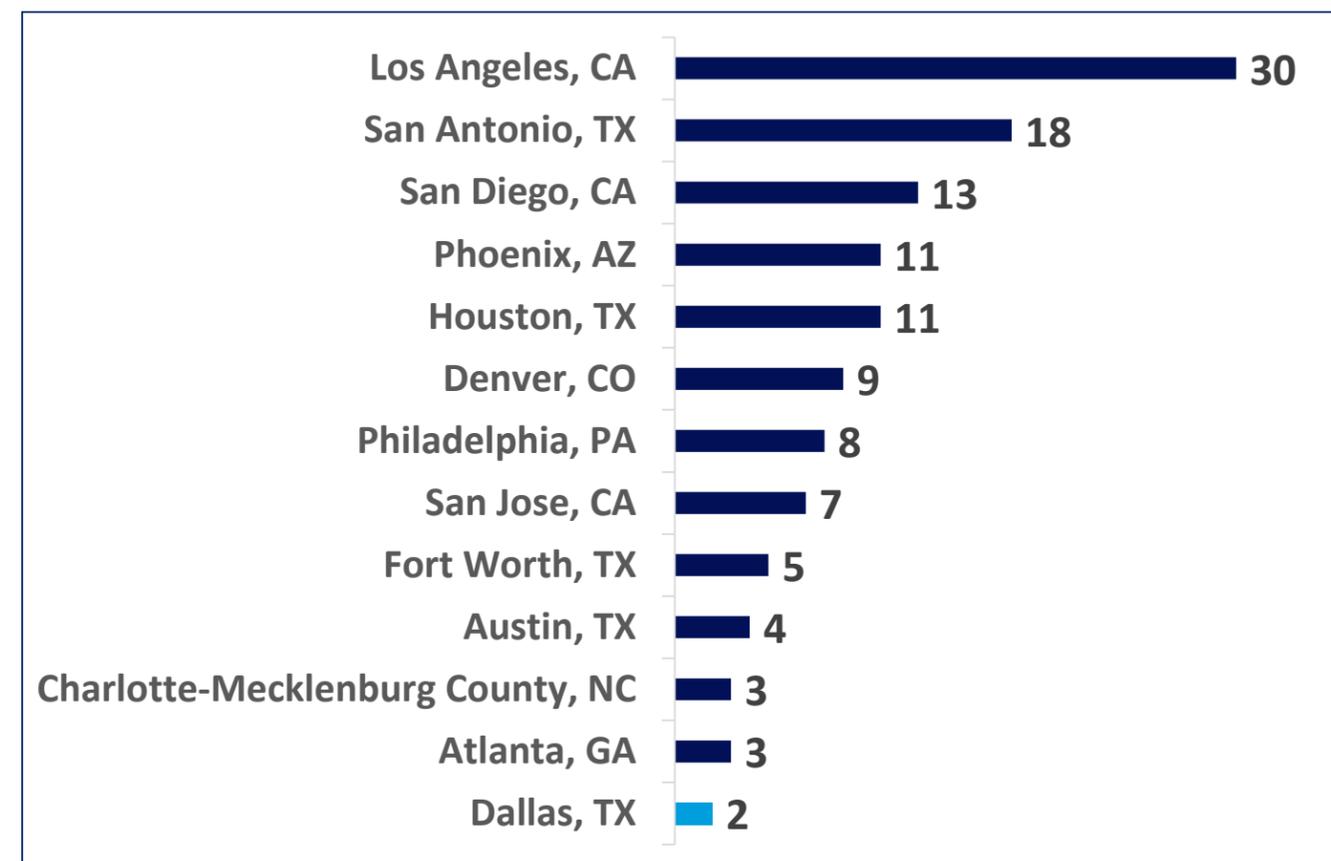
SKATE PARKS ARE NOT:²

- RESTRICTED
- PREFABRICATED
- TEMPORARY
- REPLICATED
- LOUD
- ISOLATED
- REMOTE
- EXCLUSIONARY
- UNATTRACTIVE
- LAWLESS
- DANGEROUS
- A LIABILITY

1,2 The Skatepark Project™. 2022 Skatepark Best Practices Guide. www.skatepark.org

As of 2025, the City of Dallas has a population of 1,299,553 people.¹ Based on our population, Dallas needs an estimated 469,821sq. ft. of designated skateable space.² As of 2025, Dallas has two skate parks located at Lakeland Hills in east Dallas and at Bachman Lake. This is equal to about 50,000sq. ft. of skateable area inside city limits, which is operating at 10% of our service area needs. This means Dallas needs to build roughly 24 additional skate parks to meet the current citizen demand for the recreational use.²

Peer Cities 2025³



1 City of Dallas. Office of Economic Development 2025 Demographics

2 The Skatepark Project™. 2022 Skatepark Best Practices Guide. www.skatepark.org

3 Trust For Public Land 2025 City Data



SITE ANALYSIS

Every increment of construction must be made in a way as to heal the city. -Christopher Alexander

Each neighborhood and region of Dallas has its own unique identity with different histories and cultures to be celebrated from the past, present, and future. Site Analysis ensures the site of the skate park is located thoughtfully and strategically, not only for its technical design and construction needs, but also for the community's enjoyment and ease of access.

When reviewing new locations for skate parks, the following site design guidelines should be taken into consideration.

VISIBLE: A clear line of sight through the skate park for users, spectators, park rangers and patrol will help increase community awareness and safe use of the park.

ACCESSIBLE: Centrally locate the skate park in neighborhoods that have diverse access options. This provides greater access for more users and their families, and may include DART routes, pedestrian and bike trails, sidewalk connections, and roads.

WALKABLE: Take consideration to prioritize and capitalize on existing pedestrian connections to and from adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and recreation centers via sidewalks or multi-purpose trails.

SAFETY: Consider signage to encourage safe practices, bollards for traffic mitigation, and installation of emergency call buttons on site. Use bollards to protect the park from vehicles and carefully access the site to determine if fencing is needed or not. Avoid fencing where possible.

LIGHTING: Park lighting can improve comfort and visibility, and increase hours of use. Existing sport lighting can be used, but lighting often needs to be installed along with the new skate park to ensure security and safety needs.

ACTIVE: Having a skate park near schools, other sports, public facilities like libraries, cultural centers, recreation centers, fire stations, and commercial corridors helps attract more users and contributes to "eyes on the street."

SOUND: Include smart obstacle orientation and landscaping to minimize sound. Fill in sidewalk cracks to minimize local skate travel noise to and from the park.

COMFORT: A site that already includes basic amenities like bathrooms, water stations and seating areas is likely to increase use of the skate park and promote better "informal/passive supervision" of the space. Comfort for neighbors should not include placing a skate park directly in front of a neighbor's house, but across a well used street, in the right circumstances can have the potential to work for everyone.¹

¹ The Skatepark Project™. 2022 Skatepark Best Practices Guide. www.skatepark.org



SITE ANALYSIS CONTINUED

SOIL: Overlay soil type and terrain maps over parks to determine suitability. Place footings where necessary.

TERRAIN: Work with existing topography and elevation changes to enhance the design of the skate park.

DRAINAGE: Ensure proper stormwater management, assess current and anticipate future floodplain and water table issues. Ensure geotechnical analysis and remediation requirements are met. Standing water in a skate park is dangerous and will degrade the site more rapidly.



*Skate park in Tulsa incorporates stormwater and tree protection.
Photo Credit: California Skateparks*

DISPLACEMENT OF TREES: Work around existing trees, but consider what they need to survive, and which species drop seeds and branches into the park. Work with Department arborists to mitigate and review design plans.

ENVIRONMENT: Do not locate skate parks in a designated conservation, natural or wildlife habitat area, or areas that will adversely affect fish and wildlife habitats. Work with Department biologists to mitigate and review design plans.

OUTREACH: Include feedback from Council Members, Park Board Members, Stakeholders, and Community when selecting and reviewing site analysis considerations.



DESIGN CRITERIA

Incorporate the neighborhoods unique history into the design. What will make this park stand out from others? Think outside the box. Can railroad track become a grind rail? Can a local artist honor a community activist, school, or environmental element from nearby? Think creatively and talk with the skater community. Be sure to include both street and transition elements in the design.

CLASSIFICATIONS



X-SMALL

<5K^{sq. ft.}



SMALL

<10K^{sq. ft.}



MEDIUM

<20K^{sq. ft.}



LARGE

<40K^{sq. ft.}



X-LARGE

<75K^{sq. ft.}

The following design criteria should be taken into consideration when working together with communities and consultants to design a new, or renovate an existing skate park.

STYLE OF PARK: Modern skate parks should be around 50% “street” and 50% “transition.” Include basic elements such as mini-ramp, flat bars, ledges, manual pad, pyramids, etc. Street elements are designed to mimic obstacles found in urban or industrial environments. This includes things like stairs, ledges, banked inclines, rails, and curbs. Transition elements are designed to mimic the curved radius inclines of backyard pools and ramps. This includes elements such as quarter pipes, hips, corners, spines, and escalators.¹ Ensure each skate park is unique, incorporating cultural and historical neighborhood elements into the design.

LOCATION: Ensure size and design are appropriate scale to existing and planned programming within the park and to adjacent surrounding uses.

FUNCTION OVER FORM: Prioritize experienced skate park design firms and skate park specialty construction firms that understand flow, capacity, and spacing to ensure long-term use. Engage local skating community experts in design process.

ACCESSIBILITY AND BEGINNER AREA: Ensure inclusive design for adaptive skaters. Gentle slopes, ride on grinds for beginners.² Skate parks can also be more accessible for blind and low vision athletes by including design elements such as high visibility markers, auditory beacons, and rumble strips.

REST AND VIEWING AREAS Skate parks located in areas with diverse attractions will draw spectators. Provide a place for observers to check out the action without feeling like they’re in the way or at risk of getting run into.³

LIGHTING AND SHADE Provide accessibility lighting for safety and greater usage at different times of the year. Incorporate shade sails, pavilion, etc. for cooling.

COMFORT AND AMENITIES Ensure budget and design include basic necessities like drinking fountains, restrooms, and repair stations.

MATERIALS: Skate parks should be designed only out of concrete. Do not use prefabricated materials, wood, or steel. Exceptions to this rule may include cultural elements that do not directly affect the skaters.

WEATHER: Design footers and other structural elements appropriate to extreme heat and freeze/frost line depth to prevent shifting. Consider locating a new park under a highway to help re-connect communities, while providing protection from the elements.

SUN GLARE/ORIENTATION: For safety, avoid positioning bowls deep end or a large wall where sun rises/sets.

X-SMALL



X-Small Skate Plaza or Skate 'Spot' are typically less than 5,000 Sq. ft. in size and are located in underutilized lots or plazas as stand alone parks or within existing park spaces. Design elements may include ledges, rails, gaps, quarterpipes, and manual pads.

SMALL



Small Skate parks are typically less than 10,000sq. ft. and may include elements such as cradles, bowls, rails, step ups, and ramps of various sizes.

MEDIUM



Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Queens, New York 16,000 sq. ft.
Photo Credit: NYC Parks



House Park Plaza
Austin, TX- 30,000 sq. ft.
Photo Credit: Newline skate parks

Medium Skate parks are typically less than 20,000 sq. ft. and may include elements such as banks curbs, hubbas, hips, ledges, fun boxes, and stairs.

LARGE

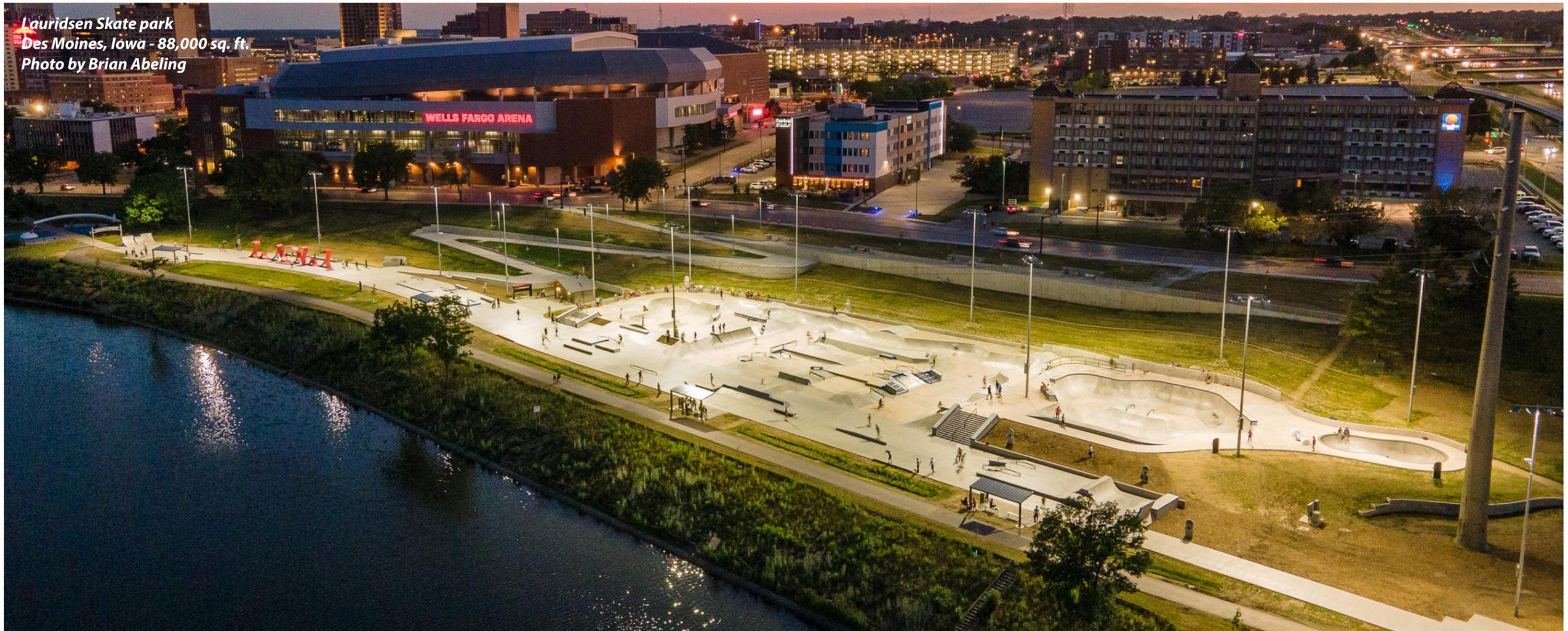


Bachman Lake Skate Park
Dallas, Texas; 45,600 sq. ft.
Photo Credit: City of Dallas, Richard Stauffer

Large skate parks are typically less than 40,000 sq. ft. and may include elements such as snake or ditch runs, flow bowls, backyard or vert bowls, BMX pump tracks, and more.



X-LARGE



At around 75,000 sq. ft. or more, a large city typically will only have one x-large skate park. Consider skate parks of this size as valuable if drawing in national or international competitions is a goal. Lauridsen Skate park cost \$7 Million to build, which includes \$600,000 in last minute donations (2019 funding year). This skate park opened in 2021.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging the community is key in finding support for new skate park locations. Strong opposition from neighborhood, is not uncommon, and education and transparency in the process is helpful when navigating a new neighborhood project.

“Skateboarding today attracts all kinds of demographics, from children to middle-aged individuals and across a gender spectrum that incorporates men, women, non-binary and gender diverse populations. Once associated with the USA and the West, newer skate scenes are emerging from as far apart as Palestine to Cuba. Skateboarding also has a broad social reach, from its subcultural origins to now being an Olympic sport. Yet unlike traditional organized sports, it remains a creative practice, and is adaptive rather than anchored to static rules. As such, skateboarding can provide innovative and fresh insights into creating safe, inclusive and sustainable public/ common spaces that are vibrant, multi generational, socially diverse and physically and culturally engaging.” - Dr. Indigo Willing, Sociologist¹

¹ The Skatepark Project™. 2022 Skatepark Best Practices Guide. www.skatepark.org.

In addition to analyzing land for site and design guidelines, successful steps towards meeting community and user needs include the following.

1. Involve all users and non-users in the conversation - neighbors, businesses, and stakeholder groups
2. Community Analysis - economic and demographic
3. Locating nearby parks and schools for predicting user routes and travel times
4. Accessing traffic patterns and locations of emergency services for safety

Hold at least three community meetings.

Meeting 1: Provide basic information, gather interest, possible locations, record support and concerns.

Meeting 2: Gather ideas from the user community about the scale of the park and the possible design elements. This may be best in the form of a design charrette. If a site has been selected, ensure the design suggestions are within the limitations of the topography. Gauge interest or identify unique cultural community aspects to include in the design.

Meeting 3: Present design proposals for feedback and revisions.



DALLAS PARK & RECREATION

Published November 6, 2025