

# CITY OF SEATTLE CITYWIDE SKATEPARK PLAN



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Skatepark  
Advisory  
Task Force

  
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# Acknowledgements

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Cover, bottom left photo and boy skating (graphic) photo taken by Mark Tagal.

### **Dedication**

In recognition of Tatsuo Nakata's instrumental role in advocating for and shaping the citywide planning process leading to this report, the Skatepark Advisory Task Force would like to dedicate the work it has contributed to this report to his memory. Tatsuo was an unfailing champion for young people in the city of Seattle, as well as a thoughtful force in city government. We will miss his leadership, passion for helping people, and gentle humor.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2006, the Seattle City Council adopted a resolution recognizing skateboarding as a healthy and popular recreation and resolved to establish a network of skateparks of various sizes throughout the City. Seattle Parks and Recreation worked with an appointed Skatepark Advisory Task Force and a consultant to develop this Citywide Skatepark Plan.

As a means to recognize the needs of skateboarders while addressing the concerns of neighbors, Parks hosted six public meetings and an open house during June and October of 2006 to hear ideas and opinions from residents about skateboarding and skateparks. This process engaged the community to assist the Task Force in assessing the need/demand for skateparks and to identify the best potential areas to locate them. Wide support for the planning process was expressed at the public meetings, with more than 400 community members attending.

Task Force members visited existing and planned skatepark sites in Seattle and the surrounding area to see how skateparks are sited, designed and functioning. The consultant spoke with Parks and Recreation and Police department representatives in other cities to understand the day-to-day impacts a skatepark may have on a community. The team also researched who skateboarders are and outlined some of the positive benefits skateboarding can have on a community.

Based on research and visits to skateparks, the Task Force developed a tiered system of sizes and types of skateparks that are most appropriate for the City of Seattle. Four different types of facilities/skateable terrain constitute Seattle's proposed system; Skatedots, Skatespots, District parks, and a Regional facility.

After conducting national research, the Task Force developed siting criteria and a framework of assumptions for choosing the most appropriate sites for skate facilities in Seattle's dense, urban environment. There are baseline criteria applicable to all sites and additional criteria for the District and Regional sites. The criteria reflect the different roles of each tier in the system.

During the month of June, citizens and public agencies nominated 130 sites for potential skateparks. A Task Force member and the consultant visited all 130 sites during July and August and then calculated a score for each site based on Task Force weighted criteria. The top 30 sites were discussed with the community and Parks. The Task Force recommends 26 sites for inclusion in the citywide plan. There are:

- 8 Skatedots
- 9 Skatespots
- 4 Districts
- 1 Regional
- 4 Potential Future Sites

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## Executive Summary

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Planning level costs for tiers in the system range from \$6.00 to \$45.00 per square foot. No funding is currently allocated for these facilities, so community-funding resources are identified. Additionally, the Task Force recommends that six sites receive priority funding by the City:

- Judkins Park/ Charles M. Stokes Overlook - Skatespot
- Roxhill Park- Skatespot
- Dahl - Skatespot
- Jefferson Master Plan Facility - District
- Delridge Playfield - Skatespot
- Brighton Playfield - Skatespot

Throughout the course of the planning process, the Task Force also developed several ideas for Seattle to begin incorporating skateboarding on a broad level throughout the City. These recommendations are as follows:

- **Fill geographic gaps in the recommended system**
  - Integrate skateparks in future park development
  - Integrate Skatedots into future waterfront planning
  - Allow use of wading pools for skateboarding during non-summer use
- **Set action items for Seattle Parks and Recreation and the Skatepark Advisory Committee**
  - Consider industrial site options that do not meet the site criteria identified in this plan
  - Work with Community Center Staff to allow skateboarding on surrounding hardscapes
  - Build partnerships with the Seattle Police Department, private developers and city departments to incorporate skateable design features and paths throughout the city
- **Skatepark design recommendations:**
  - Accommodate different skill levels
  - Hire reputable skatepark firms to design and build new facilities
  - Cover some facilities

This Citywide Skatepark Plan identifies a network of safe, legal places throughout the city, for people of all ages, races and genders to enjoy. It also offers recommendations that can begin to change the way people think about and experience skateboarding in the City of Seattle.

Parks briefed the Board of Park Commissioners on the plan on June 22, 2006 and October 24, 2006. They also held a Public Hearing on the draft plan on December 14, 2006. The Board unanimously recommended adopting the plan to Parks Superintendent on January 11, 2007.



Letter received from a West Seattle citizen during the site nomination period.

Hello, My name is Chris Noll  
I am writing you this letter  
to ask for the Denny Middle  
School Athletic Complex and the  
Roxhill park Skateparks to be  
put in.

I really love the Sport  
Skateboarding and I don't get to  
practice my dream of being a  
Skateboarder. I have to travel  
over 15 miles to get to the  
closest skatepark. With my parents  
busy schedules they have no  
time to take me to a skatepark.  
If these parks are put in me  
and my friends could skateboard  
down to the parks and skate  
all day.

Thankyou for reading my  
letter and I hope for the  
best of news involving the  
two skateparks I recommended.  
Thanks again.

-Chris Noll  
12 years old.



## Preface



### Why a Plan Now?

More than 10.5 million people skateboard nationwide, making it one of the fastest growing sports in North America. Skateboarding appeals to a wide range of people of all ages and backgrounds and requires specific facilities to appropriately accommodate the sport.

Due to a lack of public places within Seattle to legally skate, many skateboarders practice their sport on public and private property, often competing with other activities. As a means to address this issue, Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) adopted a Skateboard Park Policy in 2003, recognizing skateboarding as a healthy, popular recreational activity and a legitimate use to integrate into the parks system.

Several skateparks were sited in the City after the adoption of this policy and one was constructed. However, siting skate facilities proved to be a somewhat controversial process. Therefore, at the urging of skateboard advocates, in February 2006, City Council unanimously approved legislation to develop a comprehensive citywide skatepark plan. (See side bar and Appendix for the full Resolution).

An appointed Skatepark Advisory Task Force (Task Force), comprised of representatives from all areas of the city who have diverse backgrounds, professional expertise and bring both skater and non-skater perspectives to the planning process, worked with Parks and a consultant team during the course of ten months on Seattle's Citywide Skatepark Plan. The Task Force desired a holistic planning process resulting, not only in a network of skate

*The Resolution called for Seattle Parks and Recreation, a consultant, and a newly formed Skatepark Advisory Task Force to; “engage the community in a citywide planning process to develop a network of safe and accessible skateparks of various sizes” throughout the City of Seattle.*

## Preface

### Seattle Skatepark Advisory Task Force Members

**George Blomberg, Chair** – Environmental Planner with the Port of Seattle, and Chair, Seattle Planning Commission

**Joe Bell** – Director of Street Use and Urban Forestry Division, Seattle Department of Transportation

**John Carr** – PhD candidate at the University of Washington, Chair, Skatepark Advisory Committee

**Susanne Friedman** – Project Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation

**Jelani Jackson** – Active in the Seattle Young People's Project, Powerful Voices, and The Sound Board

**Matt Johnston** – Producer at PopCap Games, member of the Skatepark Advisory Committee

**Jeanne Krikawa** – Urban Planner and Architect, former Seattle Planning Commissioner and member of Seattle's Landmarks Board

**Christine Larsen** – Chair, Friends of Dahl Playfield, involved in Neighborhood Matching Fund projects

**Joyce Moty** – Involved with Parks projects; sits on the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee

**Scott Shinn** – Computer Programmer, Chair, Parents for Skateparks

**Nin Troung** – Landscape Architect, Art Director of Manik Skateboards

facilities, but also in a plan shaped by and reflective of the community as a whole. The Seattle Citywide Skatepark Plan considers a broad range of perspectives and determines the need for skateparks, inventories existing and proposed facilities, identifies skatepark typologies (hierarchy of facilities), creates siting criteria unique to Seattle's dense urban environment, and specifies where and how many public skateparks can best serve Seattle over the next 20 years.

There are a lot of perceptions about skateparks and skateboarders. Some can be tied to the wear and tear the sport can take on the built environment. Some of it is based on stereotypes. Therefore, equally as important as the developing the citywide system, the Task Force sought to learn about and educate others about skateboarding as a sport and skaters as a park user group.

The Task Force learned that when sited appropriately with community involvement, skateparks can be successful public spaces that add to the vitality of cities and help to build healthy neighborhoods. The Citywide Skatepark Plan seeks to add skateboarding vibrancy to the City of Seattle.

## Chapter 1: Public Process

### The Public Process

Seattle Parks and Recreation works with all citizens to be good stewards of the environment, and to provide safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn, contemplate and build community. In order to accomplish this mission Parks needs to hear the ideas, desires and concerns of citizens when considering new facilities. Therefore, the Citywide Skatepark Plan sought to engage all park users, skaters and non-skaters, in the planning process.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Parks developed a comprehensive public involvement process, including six citywide public meetings and an open house, a project web site, extensive community and media outreach, and a series of briefings with City leaders and various departments.

#### Public Meeting Goals

In June & October 2006, the Task Force and Parks hosted six public meetings. The primary goals of these events were to:

- outline the planning process
- educate people about the sport of skateboarding, skateboarders as a park user group, and the impacts a skatepark might have on a neighborhood
- engage in a dialogue about the citywide planning process



June Meeting

- receive feedback on all ideas generated by the Task Force
- solicit site nominations
- discuss the sites under consideration after evaluation

The primary goals of the first series of public meetings were to review the site criteria and solicit site nominations. The primary goals of the second series of meetings were to discuss the site evaluations and get feedback on the sites under consideration.

#### Meeting Format

Both series of public meetings followed the same format. After a presentation by the consultant, there was a question and answer session. The consultant and Task Force members responded to questions and then staffed information stations. These stations were set-up to encourage small group and one-on-one discussions and to record citizens ideas and concerns for later Task Force discussions.

**“I do not have children and I don’t skate. However, I want to offer my support for all skate-parks in Seattle. I live nearby (Ballard Commons) and I enjoy the culture and spectacle of the Ballard Bowl. I see people of all ages, genders and backgrounds skating harmoniously together. As a teacher I think this kind of gathering space is crucial for the future of communities. This is a positive use of taxes. Viva skate-parks!”**  
- Citizen comment



## Chapter 1: Public Process

### Ballard Open House

The open house at the Ballard Commons Park in June included a number of skateboard organizations and a Tuck Knee Tournament skateboarding demonstration. Citizens were invited to attend the open house to experience an active park environment that includes a skatepark, a water feature, and open space. Attendees experienced how a park can successfully serve the needs of different users groups and heard the level of noise generated by a skate bowl.

### OUTREACH

Community Centers, Libraries, Neighborhood Service Centers, interest groups, and interested individuals received fliers for all the public meetings. In addition, Parks mailed 50,000 fliers to citizens in close proximity to the “sites under consideration” for skate facilities and posted signs at all Parks, School District and Seattle Department of Transportation properties. Multi-lingual signs were also posted at key locations.

In addition to flier distribution, Parks and/or a Task Force member briefed 13 District neighborhood Councils, updated the project website with current information on the process, kept the community informed through neighborhood newsletters and list serves, and spoke with a number of organizations. (See Appendix: Community Outreach Details).

### Participation

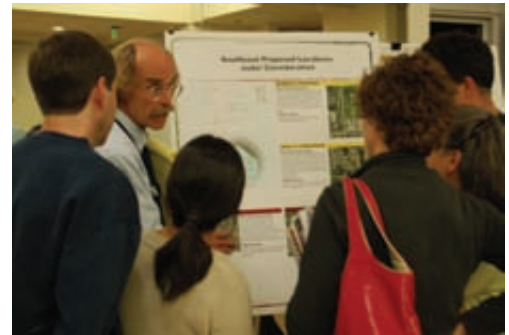
More than 800 community members participated in this planning process by providing insight, comments, site recommendations, and ideas at public meetings, via e-mails, phone calls, letters and comment forms.



*June Meeting*



*Open House at Ballard Commons Park*



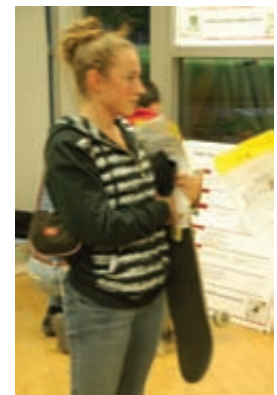
*October Meeting*

### The Results

There was overwhelming public support for the process and the plan. Over 90% of the participation at the six public meetings was very supportive.

- There was an expressed need for skateparks, that kids need active things to do, and they need safe spaces to go to.
- Skateparks were seen as a means to build community.
- There was some doubt expressed about the need for skateparks.
- There was a strong desire for skatepark facilities in West Seattle, as well as at Judkins Park (Judge Stokes Overlook) and elsewhere in South Seattle.
- The majority of concerns centered around design issues or the conception that skateboarding brings unsavory behavior to the area. (These comments were mainly from e-mail correspondence and not from the public meetings.)
- There was a concern that skatepark development would result in loss of open space.
- There were compliments to the Task Force and Parks for their vision and forward thinking in this comprehensive planning process.

*Public Meetings*



**“What a wonderful park in Ballard. What a GREAT place to be! The skaters are great. The sport will never go away, might as well give them a legal place to do it! The fountains are refreshing. The families seem so happy. I’m a mom of three in my 50’s. What a smart way of using land. Makes people of Seattle feel lucky.”**  
- Citizen comment







## Chapter 2: Skaters, Skateboarding & Skateparks

### What We Learned

During this planning process a number of different resources were used to gather information (See Appendix: References) about skateboarding, skateparks and skateboarders. The Task Force wanted to know more about the need for skateparks, who participates in the sport, why, and what is the experience of other communities who have skateparks.

### THE NEED/DEMAND FOR SKATEPARKS

One way to calculate the demand for skateparks in Seattle is to duplicate the method used by the Portland, Oregon Parks and Recreation department during their city-wide skatepark planning process, which is as follows. According to American Sports Data (2005), there are 10.6 million skateboarders nationwide. The U.S. population is 295,734,134 (2005 Census estimate), so we conclude that 3.58% of the population skateboards. Applying that percentage to Seattle's current population of 572,600 (2004 Census estimate), Seattle has about 20,500 skateboarders now, and by the year 2020 there will be upwards of 24,000 based on a projected population of 655,000.

A recent American Sports Data "Superstudy" conducted in the Seattle area estimates that there are 28,000 skateboarders in the City. Out of the thirty-three cities studied, Seattle ranked 6th highest in the number of citizens who skateboard.

According to the State's Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation in Washington, skateboarding is the fifth most frequently participated in outdoor activity only behind various forms of walking and jogging, and gardening.

But more important than calculating the exact number of skateboarders living in Seattle, it is important to understand that like all other Seattle Parks and Recreation facilities, such as tennis and basketball courts, soccer and baseball fields, Park's goal is to distribute its facilities equitably throughout the city. Seattle athletes have opportunities within their own neighborhoods to practice these sports: Parks seeks to offer the same opportunity to skateboarders.



*Young boy at Seattle Center*

**"It's hard to get to Burien...something close would be nice. I'm too young to drive, so I have to take the bus or get a ride from a parent to get to a park."**  
- Citizen comment

Chapter 2: Skaters, Skateboarding & Skateparks

Average Age of Participant by Sport

Skateboarding ...	14.0
Soccer .....	17.2
Football .....	17.9
In-line Skating....	19.8
Baseball.....	20.0
Basketball .....	23.7
Softball.....	29.1
Tennis .....	30.5
Golf .....	39.0

SKATEBOARDER PROFILE

People of all ages and backgrounds participate in and enjoy skateboarding for recreation and sport. Skateboarders are young and old, male and female. They are engineers, computer programmers, moms, the kid next door, and your neighbor’s granddaughters and grandsons.

That said, the average age of skateboarders is 14 years old, which is young compared to other sports (see side bar). This is important to note for several reasons:

- Limited activities are available to this age group that are not organized and expensive. Skateboarding is a good alternative for those who do want to play on a team, cannot make the team, or cannot afford the costs associated with team sports.
- Since there are limited legal places to skate and social stigmas towards skateboarders, a lot of younger skaters quit the sport before they reach adulthood.

- A large number of the skateboarding population is not old enough to drive to a legal and safe place to practice, therefore it becomes even more important to provide opportunities within walking distance or a short bus ride.
- According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, kids devote 6½ hours a day to engaging in media (television, the internet, video games, etc.) as compared to 1½ hours a day spent in physical activity. Access to a skate facility may encourage kids to get outside and be active.



Mother & Daughter

## SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS

Due to the ever-shifting nature of neighborhoods, Parks does not base facility distribution on demographics. However, as a discovery exercise, Parks created a series of maps illustrating where the following age groups live in largest numbers: under 18, 18-34, & 35-44. (See Appendix: Neighborhood Demographics Maps). The southeast and southwest areas of the City have the highest percentages of the under 18 population. The central City and the central-south portion of the north area have the highest percentages of people aged 18-34. The west/northwest area has the largest number of 35-44 year olds.

## SKATEPARKS AREN'T JUST ABOUT SKATEBOARDING

Skateboarding promotes physical fitness, self-esteem and discipline. It also provides an opportunity for people to interact in an unstructured activity while learning new skills.

Skateparks provide legitimate, safe, legal places to practice. If they are designed as part of a larger park they will attract a variety of spectators. The mingling of user groups can encourage positive interactions between different users of public space. Visit an area skatepark and you will likely see and hear people of all ages, skaters and non-skaters alike, encouraging the skaters. This interaction can help to break down barriers and build community.

**“At the Shoreline skatepark a young man said to my seven year old ‘Hey little dude, maybe I should get your autograph now because you’re going to be famous one day.’ Talk about self-esteem boosting. The ‘element’ at this park was very positive and supportive to the kids. I hope fear of the unknown doesn’t take away the opportunity for kids to get exercise and have fun in an appropriate environment.” - Citizen comment**



*Old Ballard Bowl*



*Generations of Skaters*



Ballard Commons



Lower Woodland Park



Dahl Playfield

## SEATTLE SKATEPARKS

Seattle has some skateparks, existing and planned, public and private.

### Existing Seattle Parks and Recreation Skateparks

Parks' manages one public skatepark, which is located in Ballard Commons Park, 5701 22nd Avenue NW. The skatepark is a 4,200 square foot advanced level, bowl style skatepark and is integrated into a larger park, which also includes green space and a plaza with a water feature.

Until December 2006 the City managed a second skatepark, SeaSkate located at the Seattle Center. The skatepark was removed in January 2007 to make room for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Campus, however the City is actively looking for a replacement location. The exact size of the facility has not been determined.

### Planned Seattle Parks and Recreation Skateparks

There are also plans to construct a District skatepark (19,000 square feet) in Woodland Park just south of Green Lake. This skatepark will have street and bowl features designed for several skill levels. Construction will be under way in 2007.

A 3,200 square foot beginner skate facility is in the design phase at Dahl Playfield in northeast Seattle, and the community is currently raising funds for construction costs. On Beacon Hill, the Jefferson Park Master Plan has space set aside for a community skatepark, but no funds are identified for design or construction.

### Other Skateparks

#### - Existing

There are other skateparks in Seattle that are not officially affiliated with Parks. Marginal Way, a skatepark in the central south area of the city, was built and is maintained by skateboarders. Inner Space, an indoor private "Pay to Play" skatepark is located on Stone Way in the Fremont neighborhood.

#### - Planned

Sea Mar Community Health Center has partnered with Grindline Skateparks and the South Park Neighborhood Association to design a 10,000 square foot skatepark in South Seattle called River City Skatespot. The group is fund raising for construction. A skatespot is being discussed in the Roosevelt neighborhood underneath I-5 at 65th Ave. NE. No funding for this skatespot is identified. (See map on page 24 for locations)

## SKATEPARKS IN THE REGION

### Task Force Field Trips

On two consecutive Saturdays in April, Task Force members toured 13 different skatepark facilities in surrounding jurisdictions to determine where and how other cities had sited and designed their skateparks. These visits provided an understanding of how siting decisions can affect the success or short-comings of skateparks. The most important conclusion drawn from these visits was that skateparks integrated into larger parks with high visibility and access had the broadest appeal (See Appendix: Task Force Skate Facility Visits). These site visits influenced the Task Force as they developed siting criteria for the citywide plan.

Concurrent to the Task Force visiting skateparks, a group of students from the University of Washington Seattle developed a map of skateparks in the region. Task Force members, who do not skateboard, were surprised to learn that Seattle ranked in the lowest tier for ratio of skateparks to population based on 2000 Census data. (See Appendix: Skatepark Ratio Map)



*Field Trip - Mukilteo*



*Field Trip - Shoreline*

### Task Force Visits to Area Skateparks

#### Seattle

Ballard Bowl  
Seattle Center  
Lower Woodland  
Marginal Way

#### Outside Seattle

Burien  
Des Moines  
Kent (Two facilities)  
Mill Creek  
Mukilteo  
Renton  
Shoreline  
Woodinville



## Chapter 2: Skaters, Skateboarding & Skateparks

### Parks & Police Departments Spoken To

Burien  
Des Moines  
Kent  
Mill Creek  
Renton  
Shoreline  
Woodinville  
Gig Harbor  
Puyallup

### Surrounding Area Parks & Police Department Perspectives

As part of the planning and educational process, the consultant spoke with nine local municipalities that operate skateparks in order to understand the day-to-day impacts a skatepark may have on a community. (See List of Contacts with Comments in Appendix) Additionally, in 2005, the consultant also spoke with 12 different town and cities in Washington and Oregon (See Appendix: References).

The Parks and Police staff of nine municipalities reported that when skateparks are highly visible, integrated into larger active parks, or next to active roads, minimal or no crime or drug usage is reported. Skateparks that are hidden away from public view and not integrated into a larger park can have more problems. Park and Police agencies stated that location and visibility are the most important aspects of siting a successful skatepark.

### Comments from Surrounding Municipalities

*"There is a perception that skateboarders are criminals because of the way they look, but Parks and Recreation has not received complaints about increases in crime or drug use at our [two] parks."*

– Laurie Flem, Kent Parks and Recreation

*"Areas that experience criminal activity could be helped by building a skate facility because bad people don't want to be near kids and their parents."*

– Paul Peterson, Kent Police Department

*"The skatepark is heavily used and I like to see public money invested in things that get used."*

– Bob Crannell, Mill Creek Chief of Police

*"There were a lot of the usual fears in the neighborhood about the skatepark, but those fears have not been realized and there are very few complaints about the skatepark. The skatepark in an unequivocal success."*

– Scott Thomas, Burien Parks and Recreation

*"The community and the police department expected a lot of problems when the park opened, but haven't seen many. There is a basketball court right next to the park and I expected conflict between the two user groups, but it hasn't occurred."*

– Cindy Parks, Renton Police Department

Trash is generated at skateparks, just like at any other heavily used parks facility. If there is a routine maintenance/management plan, litter should not become a problem. Graffiti at skateparks does occur and the faster graffiti is removed, the less frequently it reoccurs. Therefore, it's important to have a graffiti removal plan in place when the facility opens. Only those skateparks sited very close to homes had reports of noise complaints, which are primarily due to due music and yelling, not noise generated by skateboards.

Unanimously, Parks and Police staff reported that their skateparks were good investments. Even the Gig Harbor skatepark, which due to lack of public visibility has experienced more problems than any other skatepark in the area, is supported by the Police Department. A spokesperson from the Police said that the skatepark does have its problems, but it is a positive activity to provide for kids: "You've got to give them something to do or they'll get into trouble." The skatepark was redesigned in October 2006 to increase visibility into the site.



Mill Creek

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SKATEPARKS

### Liability

Liability for skateparks is just like any other public sports facility – all sports are played "at your own risk." As such, the City of Seattle is not liable for accidents. However, skateboarding isn't as dangerous as most people believe. (See sidebar)

### Noise

Noise studies indicate that skateboards produce intermittent noise: noise that occurs occasionally from the 'popping' tails and 'grinding' of the aluminum trucks (a part on skateboards) on the steel coping surfaces (usually around the edges of skateparks). These sounds are not sustained over long periods of time. Studies have shown that sounds emitted from skateparks are diminished completely by other noises such as traffic passing by and planes flying over. Outside urban noises, such as loading docks, automatic dumpsters and power lawn mowers are often much higher than sound made by skateboards.

(See Appendix: Noise Information)



Renton

### Injuries/100 Participants

Hockey.....	2.7
Football.....	2.2
Baseball.....	1.8
Basketball.....	1.6
Bicycling .....	1.1
Skateboarding .....	0.7*

- Skateboarders skating for less than a week account for 1/3 of all injuries
- Irregular riding surfaces account for over half the skateboarding injuries due to falls.
- In 2002, the Journal of Trauma concluded in their report that, "Skateboarding is a relatively safe sport."





## Chapter 3: The Citywide System

### Seattle's System

In order to identify and recommend a range of types and sizes of skateparks to build, Task Force members studied skateparks in the region, looked at Portland, Oregon's skatepark system and researched types of facilities built throughout the country. Then based on their research and experience the Task Force developed a tiered skate facility system appropriate for Seattle.

### TYPES & SIZES

The recommend Seattle skatepark system consists of integrated skateable terrain, a.k.a., Skatedots, smaller neighborhood Skatespots, medium-sized District skateparks, and one large Regional facility. Please see the next two pages for descriptions of each tier.

This system may evolve over time in response to need and new opportunities.



Chapter 3: The Citywide System

Skatedots

Skatedots are a unique concept and throughout the planning process many citizens expressed strong support for the idea. The idea evolved based on a paper written in 2005 by Task Force member, Matt Johnston, titled “Integrated Skateable Terrain in Seattle.” (See Appendix).

Skatedots, otherwise known as “integrated skateable terrain,” can be seamlessly integrated into small neighborhood parks and throughout the city by identifying existing spaces that already are or could be used for skating.

These elements are small, up to 1,500 square feet, and could be designed to avoid conflicts between skaters and other park users. The illustration (upper left) shows a simple raised embankment upon which skateboarders, rollerskaters, rollerbladers, and razor scooter enthusiasts can hone their skills next to other types of playground equipment, with a low-maintenance integrated element.

Integrated skateable terrain can also include benches, rails, and ledges that typically already exist in hardscaped areas.



Skatedots



Skatespots

Skatespots can range in size from 1,500 up to 10,000 square feet. These are considered neighborhood facilities that can accommodate up to 13 users at a time and are similar in size to a basketball court or single tennis court. Skatespots are often designed to serve one skill level: either beginner, intermediate, or advanced, because there is not enough room to successfully accommodate more than one skill level.



Skatespots



Half BB Court  
2,100 sq. ft.


Tennis Court 7,300 sq. ft.

Skatespot  
Size Comparison

Can be 1,500 up to 10,000 sq. ft.

Comparison graphics are not to scale

## Districts

District facilities can range in size from 10,000 up to 30,000 square feet and are about the same size as two to four tennis courts. These skateparks are meant to serve a larger area than just a neighborhood and, depending on the layout, can accommodate up to 30 users at a time. Due to their larger size, a wider range of skill levels can be accommodated.



*Districts*



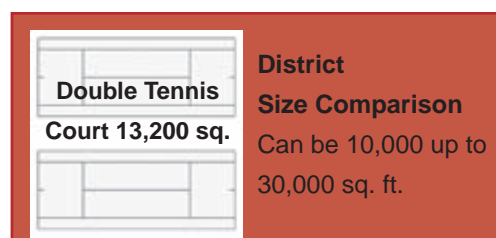
*Photo courtesy of Dan Hughes*

## Regional

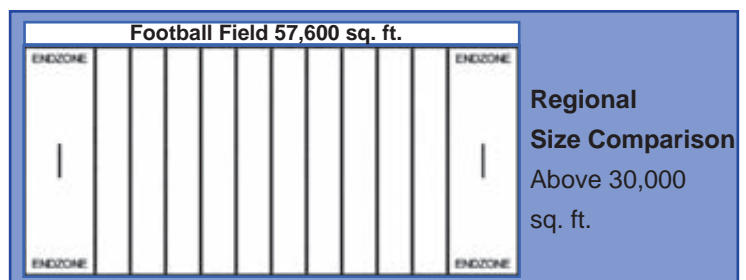
A regional facility is larger than 30,000 square feet and will attract users from around the region and possibly from around the world if it is well designed. This facility will be considered the crown jewel of Seattle's system and can accommodate up to 300 users at time. All skill levels can be accommodated and the facility can include a variety of vertical (bowls) and transitional (street) terrain. The facility should be large enough to host regional competitions and possibly produce revenue, not just through the venue itself, but also through goods and service purchased by visitors.



*Regionals*



*Comparison graphics are not to scale*



*Comparison graphics are not to scale*



## Chapter 4: Site Criteria and Framework

### The Foundation for Site Selection

Once the Task Force agreed on the system of sizes, site criteria were developed for each size of skate facility. These criteria ultimately became the foundation for analyzing each nominated site.

### FRAMEWORK OF ASSUMPTIONS

The Framework of Assumptions evolved while developing the site criteria. There were several criteria that the Task Force felt should be applied to sites as a pre-cursor to applying type specific criteria. An initial draft of the Framework of Assumptions was discussed with the community during the first series of public meetings. Based on public comment, the Task Force revised the framework to respond to the concern of losing open space and to clarify some questions regarding private property and recent planning projects.

### Frame Work of Assumptions

Emphasis will be given to the selection of sites that are 'gray-to-gray,' i.e. asphalt or other paving materials exist, and can be converted to skateparks.

#### **Sites will NOT:**

- Be sited in designated environmentally critical areas, natural areas, or greenbelts
- Interrupt planning projects underway or infringe upon recently completed project, i.e. Pro Parks Levy and Neighborhood Matching Fund Projects
- Be sited on private property
- Replace or remove existing active uses (e.g. Ball fields, play areas)

#### **Sites WILL:**

- Have adequate area available for appropriate size facility
- Be distributed equitably throughout the city



*Designated Greenbelt*

## Chapter 4: Site Criteria and Framework

### SITE CRITERIA

The Task Force used public input, national siting criteria, Portland's criteria, and Seattle's original Skateboard Park Policy, to develop criteria most critical to selecting sites in Seattle's unique, dense urban

environment. The site criteria are built on a tiered system that reflects the different types and sizes of skateparks proposed for the Seattle system. Each tier includes the baseline criteria.

### Baseline Criteria, Apply to All Types: SKATESPOTS, DISTRICT and REGIONAL

- Are compatible with existing uses (ex. Near an active area of the park rather than contemplative space), consider adjacent uses, and adjacent landscaping/surfaces is compatible with safe skate surfaces
- Limit off-site impacts to residential communities as consistent with city code, i.e. noise and lighting
- Allow for clear, passive observation by parents, emergency services, police and the public
- Are in close proximity to public transit, and have good foot, bike and vehicular access
- Are easily developable and have minimal construction impediments
- Allow for the creation of a safe and secure environment; providing for separation from vehicular traffic, vehicular and pedestrian access, and ease of routine maintenance
- Are located in a highly visible area with moderate to high pedestrian traffic, in an existing or new multi-purpose park, or in close proximity to other public facilities
- Can be integrated into a larger park space that provides other park amenities
- Consider sun and shade and protection from rain and wind
- Include a space for size appropriate community viewing
- Consider the environment for the well being of skateboarders, including noise and air quality





### Additional Criteria Apply to: DISTRICT and REGIONAL

District sites are larger than Skatespots and serve a different role within the tiered system and therefore require additional criteria:

- Offer adequate separation from other facilities/program at site
- Are in close proximity to water fountain, trash cans, restroom
- Offer potential space for 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



### Additional Criteria Apply to: REGIONAL

The Regional facility, the largest in the tiered system, plays a different role than Skatespots and District facilities and has two criteria in addition to all the criteria listed above:

- Have the capacity for concessions
- Promote action oriented sports activities and events







## Chapter 5: Site Recommendations

### Site Nominations

In June, a host of citizens and city departments, including Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Seattle Department of Transportation, the Port of Seattle, and the Seattle School District, nominated 130 sites throughout the city for the Task Force to analyze as potential locations for skate facilities (See Appendix: Nominated Sites).

### THE EVALUATION PROCESS

During the course of two months, the 130 sites were evaluated in the following manner.

#### Framework Application

The evaluation team visited each site, applied the Framework of Assumptions, and removed inappropriate sites. For example, sites that did not have enough room for a skate facility were removed from consideration (e.g. Beacon Hill Playfield). Seventy sites were removed during this phase of analysis.

#### Full Site Analysis

Sites remaining after the Framework application received a full site analysis. First, the team determined the type/size of facility appropriate for the nominated location. Some sites were nominated to be a specific type of skatepark (Skatespot, District, Regional) and some were nominated for general consideration. If the site was nominated for

a specific type/size, the team determined whether that size was appropriate. For example, the area around the SDOT Inter-urban Trail Project at Bitter Lake Reservoir was nominated to be a Regional facility, but was analyzed as a Skatedot based on the area available.

After determining the appropriate type/size of facility, the team completed an evaluation sheet in the field, ranking each criterion on a scale of 1-10 (one being the lowest, ten being the highest). For example, a criterion for a District site is “Are in close proximity to water fountain, trash cans, rest room.” If the site had all these amenities the criterion received a score of 10.

#### Weighting the Criteria

Running parallel to the site visits, weighted scores were developed for each criterion through a Task Force ranking process. Then a score was calculated for each site by applying the weighted criteria. (See Appendix: Alphabetized Individual Site Evaluation Sheets).

#### Discussed 30 Sites with the Community

The thirty sites scoring in the top 25% were presented to the community at the second series of public meetings. Based on community feedback and the goal to distribute skate facilities equitably, the Task Force eliminated the following sites; Cowen Park, Westcrest Reservoir, Fairmount Playfield and Denny Middle School Athletic Complex.



*Evaluated Sites*



## Chapter 5: Site Recommendations

### A Note About the Reservoir Sites & Northgate Park and Ride Lot

The Task Force is recommending that future planning efforts at three reservoir sites and the Northgate Park and Ride Lot consider including skatepark facilities along with other elements (such as ball fields, basketball courts, play areas, etc.).

The reservoir sites are owned by Seattle Public Utilities and are scheduled to be converted to enclosed reservoirs covered with concrete lids over the next fifteen years. Once the sites are covered by Seattle Public Utilities, Parks may have the opportunity to develop the sites as usable open space (example: Cal Anderson Park in Capitol Hill). Currently, no funding is available to develop these sites into parks. If funds become available to develop sites into parks, there will be a full public planning process to establish design and use of these spaces.

The Northgate Park and Ride Lot is in the process of being acquired from King County Metro Transit by Parks. During 2007-08, funds will be available for the planning and design of the future park at this site. A full planning process will commence with the neighborhood to determine the nature of the park. A skatepark may or may not be included in the final design based on community desire, but including a skatepark in the design dialogue is recommended by the Task Force.



*Myrtle Reservoir*



*Northgate Park and Ride*

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDED SITES					
NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	CENTRAL WEST	CENTRAL EAST	SOUTHWEST	SOUTHEAST
REGIONAL					
Warren G. Magnuson					
DISTRICT					
				High Point Playfield West Seattle Stadium	Genesee Playfield Rainier Beach Playfield
SKATESPOT					
Lake City Playground		Judkins Park/Judge Charles M. Stokes Overlook Pratt Park Miller Playfield		Hiawatha Playfield Delridge Playfield Roxhill Park	Brighton Playfield John C. Little Park
SKATEDOT					
SDOT Interurban Trail Project Sandel Playground Gas Works Park		Magnolia Playfield Myrtle Edwards Park	Garfield - Medgar Evers Pool Eastlake & Allison	Alki Beach	
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSIDERATION					
Maple Leaf Reservoir Northgate Park & Ride Lot Roosevelt Reservoir				Myrtle Reservoir	

See page 27 for map of all site locations.



Warren G. Magnuson



High Point Playfield



Magnolia Playfield



Garfield



Pratt Park



Delridge Playfield



John C. Little Park



Sandel Playground

### **BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS SITE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board of Park Commissioners was briefed on the plan on June 22 and October 24, 2006, and a Public Hearing on the draft Plan was held on December 14, 2006. Public input during the planning process, and testimony given at the Board of Park Commissioners' public hearing, was predominantly supportive of the planning process and the resulting plan. Citizens emphasized the need for facilities and a desire to begin implementation as soon as possible. There was an expressed need for skateparks and an understanding that kids need active things to do and safe places to go. Skateparks were seen as a means to build community.

After careful consideration of the public input and testimony given during this process, the Board of Park Commissioners unanimously recommended adopting the Plan to Parks Superintendent on January 11, 2007 with the following adjustments.

In order to attempt to fill in gaps in the Downtown core, Parks should:

- Collaborate with the Seattle Center to find a replacement site for SeaSkate,
- Continue to pursue other opportunities as may arise.

On the recommended site locations:

- The Board accepted Parks position to not include the Task Force recommended West Seattle Stadium site, as it is to be reserved for future golf course driving range development.
- Genesee Park continues to be identified as a possible location for a skate facility no larger than a district facility, subject to neighborhood input as to size, location, and whether to build one at all.
- Myrtle Reservoir and High Point Play field continue to be identified as potential sites for a skate facility, with the understanding that there would only be one facility sited between the two locations.



## CITYWIDE SYSTEM SITES







## Chapter 6: Costs, Funding Resources & Priorities

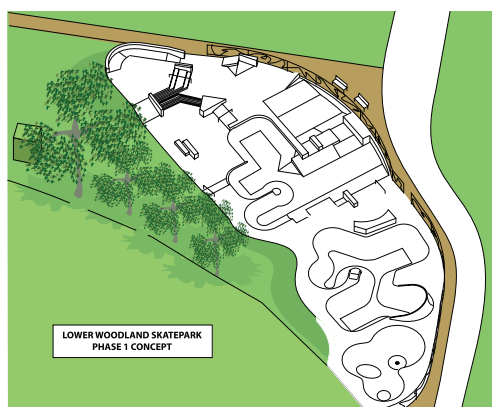
### Once a Skatepark is Approved for Development - What Next?

**G** grindline, a company that designs and build skateparks, worked with Parks to develop planning level cost estimates for the different types of facilities outlined in the Citywide Plan. These costs provide a framework for citizens to start fund raising for approved facilities. The Task Force also developed a list of prioritized sites for funding.

### PLANNING LEVEL COST ESTIMATES FOR SKATEPARK TYPOLOGIES

Planning level cost estimates are in 2006 dollars, unless otherwise noted. Square footage cost estimates were provided by Grindline and include mobilization, Temporary Erosion Sediment Control, compaction, excavation, formwork, concrete work and finishing. Estimates do not include landscaping, irrigation, benches, etc. (See chart below).

Maintenance and operations costs based on existing and proposed facilities for a District level skatepark, at approximately 20,000 square feet, run in the range of \$24,000 annually. These costs estimates are taken from the Lower Woodland Skatepark Project Proposal.



Task Force members visit Lower Woodland site

THE CITYWIDE SYSTEM			
	Size Range	Cost Per Foot	Planning Level Cost Estimates
<b>Skate Dot</b>	Approximately 20 sq. ft., but up to 1,500 sq. ft.	\$6.00	Up to \$16,000
<b>Skatespot</b>	Up to 10,000 sq.ft. .	Approximately \$40.00 per sq.ft.	Up to \$640,000
<b>District</b>	Up to 30,000 sq.ft.	Approximately \$40.00 per sq.ft.	Up to \$2 million
<b>Regional</b>	30,000 sq.ft. or larger	Approximately \$45.00 per sq.ft.	\$2 million and up

*Note: Per square foot construction costs are adjusted to include design, management, sales tax, and other costs to show total development costs.*

## Chapter 6: Costs, Funding Resources & Priorities

### FUNDING RESOURCES

There are several ways in which communities can attain funding for the skate facilities recommended in the Citywide Plan. Neighborhood groups can apply to the Department of Neighborhoods Matching Fund Award Program, which has Small and Simple Awards (\$15,000), and Large Project Fund Awards (\$100,000) available to community groups for planning, design, and construction work. Groups can also apply to foundations such as the Tony Hawk Foundation to acquire funds.



SPAC Representatives

The Seattle Parks and Recreation's Skate Park Advisory Committee (SPAC), is an advisory group who provides guidance to the Parks Department on skatepark issues. SPAC has developed a "recipe book" for community groups to use when seeking to raise funds for an approved skateboard facility. The "recipe book" walks through a step-by-step process designed to assist communities to make a skatepark a reality. In addition to fund raising information, the web site also contains information about skatepark advocacy & organization, planning and design. See <http://www.parks4sk8parks.org/spac/Fundraising.html>.

Skaters for Public Skateparks is also a resource for fund raising information. See <http://www.skatersforpublicskateparks.org>.

**"If residents want to get a jump start on building a skatepark for kids in their neighborhood, the Citywide Plan provides them with a pre-screened and approved site."**  
**- Matt Johnston,**  
**SPAC Representative**  
**and Task Force**  
**Member**

### PRIORITIZED PROJECTS FOR FUNDING REQUEST

The Task Force recommends that the following priority projects be considered for funding, for future planning, design and construction.

#### 1. Judkins Park/Judge Charles M. Stokes Overlook (Skatespot)

Planning level cost estimates are up to \$640,000 depending on the final design and size of the facility.

#### 2. Roxhill Park (Skatespot)

Planning level cost estimates are up to \$640,000 depending on the final design and size of the facility.

#### 3. Dahl (Skatespot)

\$205,000 is needed to complete construction of the approved plans.

#### 4. Jefferson Master Plan (District)

The current Pro Parks Levy Master Plan for Jefferson Park includes a place holder for a District sized skatepark. The Task Force recommends adding funds to Pro Parks Levy money to facilitate planning, design and construction work. Planning level cost estimates are approximately \$1 million, depending on the final design and size of the facility.

### 5. Delridge Playfield (Skatespot)

Planning level cost estimates are up to \$640,000 depending on the final design and size of the facility.

### 6. Brighton Playfield (Skatespot)

A Pro Parks Levy project is scheduled for 2007/2008 to develop a science park in conjunction with the middle school next to the site. Physics could be studied and illustrated (and fun!) by incorporating skateable terrain into the science park. Planning level cost estimates are up to \$400,000 depending on the final design and size of the facility.

**Additionally, Parks requests the inclusion of:**

### 7. A Skatedot Pot

This 'pot' of \$160,000 would allow Parks to implement skateable elements and wading pool modifications. Planning level cost estimates to implement these modifications are approximately \$16,000 each.

**"I have lots of friends around Delridge (Playfield) that I skate with, but have to travel to either SeaSkate or Burien (to skate), which is a pain. It would be GREAT to build one here. I would skate almost every day. I love this idea and would really enjoy it if a skatepark is built here." - Citizen comment**



*Judkins Park/ Stokes Overlook*



*Roxhill Park*



## Chapter 7: Recommendations

### Citywide Recommendations

The following recommendations represent the groundwork for future facilities and design, however they do not preclude additional future opportunities for skate facilities or skateable terrain development not specifically identified in the Citywide Skatepark Plan. These recommendations set the stage for creating an intentionally skateable Seattle.

The Skatepark Advisory Task Force offer the following recommendations to implement the Citywide Skatepark Plan:

#### A. ADOPT THE CITYWIDE TYPOLOGY SYSTEM

See Chapter Three for a description of the recommended Citywide System.

#### B. APPLY THE DEVELOPED FRAMEWORK OF ASSUMPTIONS

See Chapter Four for the full Framework of Assumptions.

#### C. ADOPT SKATEPARK SITING CRITERIA

See Chapter Four for site criteria for each type of facility recommended in the Citywide System.

#### D. ADOPT LIST OF RECOMMENDED SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT AS FUNDING BECOMES AVAILABLE.

See Chapter Five for the types and locations of the recommended sites. The appendix (Site Details) includes detailed information for each site including, on-site and adjacent uses, and a summary of public comment.

#### E. CONSIDER POTENTIAL SKATEPARKS ON FUTURE LIDDED RESERVOIR SITES AND NORTHGATE PARK & RIDE LOT

The reservoir sites identified in this plan and Northgate Park and Lot represent large parcels of land with the potential to accommodate the desires of a wide-range of park users. See Chapter Five for further details.

#### F. PROVIDE FUNDS FOR THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIORITIZED PROJECTS

See Chapter Six for a list of prioritized sites and planning level cost estimates.

#### G. FILL GAPS IN CITYWIDE SYSTEM

There are obvious gaps in the current geographic distribution of facilities in the plan. Therefore the Task Force recommends:



*Magnolia Playfield*

“What a nice opportunity to create green space with adjoining recreational space for a skatepark. Why not daylight Thorton Creek and weave skatepark features through and over the creek at Northgate.”  
- Citizen comment

## Chapter 7: Recommendations

### G.1 Consider integrating skateparks in future park acquisition and development design dialogues.

- In keeping with the North Downtown Park Plan, continue to pursue collaborative options with Seattle City Light substation development for possible park and skateboard siting in South Lake Union or Denny Triangle Neighborhood
- Consider options for skate facilities if the Aurora corridor is lidded
- Strive for a facility in the Georgetown area
- Consider skate facilities in Greenwood Park expansion
- Consider skate facilities at any new Park facilities in the Downtown or Capitol Hill area
- Continue to pursue other opportunities as the arise

### G.2 Consider integrating Skatedots into the future waterfront planning efforts.

Additionally, Parks recommends the following:

### G.3 Allow use of wading pools for skateboarding during non-summer use

Incorporate skateable elements inside various wading pools, adding coping around the pool, or making some safety improvements to wading pools in areas that lack opportunities for skate facilities.

The following list of wading pools represent those areas that are currently used for skating by the local community and pools that could help fill geographic gaps in facility distribution:

- East Queen Anne Playfield
- Sandel Playground
- Georgetown Playfield
- Beacon Hill Playfield
- Gilman Playfield
- Powell Barnett Park



*East Queen Anne Playfield wading pool with skateable “hump”*



## H. ACTION ITEMS FOR SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION AND THE SKATEPARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SPAC)

### H.1 Consider industrial site options

The site criteria developed in this plan seek to integrate skateboarding into park settings. However, there may be sites in industrial areas, under bridges, etc., that do not met the established site criteria, but have potential for a skate facility.

### H.2 Work with Community Center Staff (maintenance and operations....crew chiefs,...) to allow skateboarding, when appropriate, on hardscapes surrounding facilities.

The Task Force recommends that Parks work with Community Center staff to identify areas that could be used for skating. Instead of putting in skate stoppers and posting “No skateboarding allowed,” “Okay to skate here” signs could be posted, skate stoppers removed and skateable furniture (skateboard wear and tear resilient) installed.

### H.3 Build Partnerships

- Work with the Seattle Police Department to make skateboarding legal throughout the city in designated places.
- Foster relationships with private developers to educate them about

skateboarding and the Skatedot idea.

Developers may be open to the idea of incorporating skateable terrain, i.e. Skatedots, into new developments and associated open space if they understand more about the sport and the benefits of skateboarding.



*Northgate Community Center*

**“A thorough plan, accompanied by site recommendations, and implementation guidance is a splendid product. It may be that an additional recommendation, emphasizing potential future skate opportunities would be helpful. I am particularly interested in what I have learned from the Task Force concerning skatedots and integrating skating opportunities into streetscape/landscape design, with the notion that the next step is to make skate design a known, predictable element of project decision-making.”**

**- George Blomberg, Task Force Chair**

## Chapter 7: Recommendations

- c. The Task Force further recommends that city departments work to incorporate broad thinking and integrate skate design principles into normal project review processes.
- d. Additionally, the Task Force recommends that SPAC act as interface and work with the city and the community, on skatedot opportunities.
- e. In addition to the recommendations in section G.1., collaborate with the Seattle Center to find a replacement site for SeaSkate somewhere in the downtown core.

### J. DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

#### J.1 Accommodate different skill levels in park design, including street style and transitional elements

When space is available every opportunity should be made to accommodate different skill levels and include street style and transitional elements. This will help attract a broad range of users and make the facilities family-friendly. Furthermore, older skaters who have worked so hard to get safe, legal places to skate are often good stewards of skateparks and can serve as a good role models for younger skaters.

#### J.2 Hire Reputable Skatepark Firms

Reputable skatepark firms should be hired as part of the team for design and construction of Seattle's skatepark system.

#### J.3 Cover Some Facilities

During the public process, the Task Force heard repeated requests for Parks to cover some of the facilities. This is an added expense and is not necessary for all the facilities, however it should be considered, at least in part, in future park design for the District skateparks. Also, a Regional skatepark should be at least partially covered, to maximize the investment by attracting users year round.



*Covered Skatepark in Lincoln City, Oregon*



The Pacific Northwest, despite the rainy climate, is famous for its skate friendliness. Seattle can enhance this reputation by creating a city where skateboarding is embraced and encouraged. This plan is a first step towards that goal.

“I think this is a really awesome and optimistic plan.”  
- Citizen comment

