

City Center Skatepark

Planning Workshop #1 Summary Report

Date/Time:	<i>Tuesday, May 6, 2008; 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM</i>
Location:	<i>Campbell Center, 155 High Street, Eugene</i>
Facilitator:	<i>Robin Hostick, City of Eugene Parks and Open Space</i>
Other Staff:	<i>Tim Patrick, Carrie Peterson, Tom Powers, Adam Steffen, Carolyn Weiss</i>

BACKGROUND

City of Eugene Parks and Open Space Planning staff hosted the first planning workshop to discuss a proposed, regional skatepark in downtown Eugene. The project was put forward with strong public support during the recent city-wide master planning process for Eugene parks, and was adopted as a high priority by the Eugene City Council in 2006 through the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Project and Priority Plan. Proponents identified a preferred location in Washington/Jefferson Park under the I-105 Bridge between the railroad tracks and First Avenue because it met several key criteria, including full cover, lights, a central location, and easy access to promote use in all weather conditions, year round. The project is also seen by advocates as a way to improve the culture of the park by bringing in more legitimate public use.

Due to the presence of existing uses in the study area, community discussion and consensus on a location for the skatepark would be needed to move forward with the project. Key goals for the workshop were:

1. Share information about the project
2. Gather community input regarding the proposed location, and explore alternate locations

ADVERTISEMENT

The following advertisement was undertaken to notify the public of the event:

- Postcard invitations were mailed to 1400 neighbors within ½ mile of the study area 14 days prior to the event
- Additional postcards were mailed to neighborhood leaders, as well as individuals or organizations that have held events in the park in recent years
- Personal contact was made to neighborhood leaders about 3 weeks prior to the event
- The event was posted on the City of Eugene Community Calendar and Parks and Open Space Division calendar of events
- A Council Newsletter item and news release were prepared and distributed
- The event was picked up in the community events section of the Register Guard
- The event received some radio and television coverage

PRESENTATION

About 35 neighbors and interested parties convened in the Campbell Center for the event. Following an overview of the workshop goals and agenda, a slide show presentation was given to provide background and context for the project, including planning framework, prior public input, criteria, goals, funding sources and time line. Findings of a preliminary site analysis of the study area were shared with the group, including comments from operations, public safety and recreation staff, as well as a skatepark design advisor. The presentation concluded with a walk-through of the study area using photo images to re-acquaint participants with four (4) separate options for locating the proposed skatepark within the study area, and a summary of use patterns, conditions, and opportunities and constraints. Print copies of a spread sheet matrix containing this information were shared with the participant group, including blank spaces for participants to write in additional criteria and other potential sites.

A question and answer session followed the presentation, including the following questions and comments:

- What about air quality under the bridge? Is that an issue?
 - Follow up needed during detailed site analysis
- What is the situation with the water table in the playground area? Is there a possible sink effect?
 - Follow up required during detailed site analysis
- Is there adequate parking? How about a nearby bus stop?
 - Portland study suggests that 1 parking space per 1000 sq. ft. of skatepark is adequate
 - 15 – 20 spaces needed for proposed skatepark
 - Currently significant on-street parking on Washington and Jefferson, however follow up is needed to determine adequacy
 - Participants confirmed there is one adjacent bus stop, and numerous others nearby
- Can a snack bar or vendor be added?
 - Currently not allowed in parks per Parks and Open Space policy
 - Participants noted that a convenience store is going in at corner of 1st and Jefferson
- Other site selection issues:
 - Oregon City has a skatepark right next to their horse shoe pits. It's very loud for the horseshoe players.
 - Pedestrian bridge on east side of the playground inhibits visibility into this area
 - Concern about portable restrooms being vandalized at this location
- Other design suggestions:
 - Need both transitional (tranny) and street style of skate park design
 - Don't fence the skatepark
 - Recreation staff would like on-site storage

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

To maximize individual participation and discussion opportunities, attendees were asked to gather in several small groups to discuss the challenge of where to locate the skatepark. Members of certain groups, including neighbors, users of particular facilities, and City staff were asked to divide themselves among the groups to promote a mix of interests and perspectives at each table. Instructions were given to the groups to:

1. Evaluate existing uses
2. Discuss opportunities and trade-offs
3. Explore alternatives
4. Work towards consensus

At the end of an approximately 40 minute discussion period, each of the four groups was asked to record their comments and present to the rest of the participants. Each group's response is summarized below:

Group 1

- Preferred location is playground area
 - Alternate location for playground would be in the open area west of the stage/basketball court
 - No sand in new playground
- Keep stage – good compatibility with new skatepark for events, etc.
- Design:
 - Provide nice seating for observers of skatepark, e.g. decks, benches, etc. – social opportunities
 - Don't crowd skatepark with chain link fences near edges
 - San Rafael skatepark is a good example of open access/seating
 - Problems w/bike use – separate (see Salem skatepark)
 - Provide drinking fountain
- Design process:
 - Include skaters and bikers of all ages in process
 - Possibly do a design charrette in combination with City recreation summer camp – tour sites
 - Dreamland is a good company to do design (Battleground and Reedsport skateparks good examples)

Group 2

- Preferred location is playground area
 - Best side protection from rain due to terrain on the sides (e.g. hills/bridge)
 - Possible expansion in future
 - Best overhead clearance
 - Need lots of light to skate well
- Move playground and replace it with something cool that kids will like
 - RiverPlay may fulfill need already
 - Best to have playground farther from skatepark to protect little kids
 - Needles in sand problem w/current location/design
 - PG is old and worn
- Bathrooms are funky
 - Keep and remodel bathroom
 - Concession stand/vending needed
- Horseshoe second choice
 - Maybe smaller horseshoe courts possible elsewhere? Can it be less?
 - Open and light
 - Good visibility
 - Keeping horseshoe area will allow for light and visibility into skatepark
- Maybe use both playground and horseshoe area
- Possible BMX park in back stage/slope area
- Leave basketball
- Design:
 - Add lots of decking and benches
 - Stairs or deck for specific entry and a good waiting area needed
 - No skate stoppers
 - No bikes – dangerous

Group 3

- Didn't pick a single site but preferred either the playground area or the horseshoe areas
- Playground:
 - New playground (RiverPlay) was just built – maybe fulfills need
 - Playground and skatepark may not be compatible
 - Skatepark may bring more kids to the playground area
 - Playground area has the most negative use
- Possibly re-locate horseshoe courts to south of RR tracks
- Parking:
 - Modify on-street parking on Washington and Jefferson to be head-in to maximize capacity with minimal cost
 - Don't forget the availability of the Rose Garden parking lot
- Alternate options:
 - Make a linear skatepark with lots of connected nodes throughout area (dispersed)
 - Across from library
 - Skinner City bridge (farther north under I-105)

Group 4

- Didn't pick a preferred site, however:
- General support for locating the park under the bridge in the study area
- Playground area seemed like best location
 - Presents opportunities to improve park for many reasons
 - Does playground need to be replaced at all?
 - If not, costs should be less (needs served by RiverPlay, right?)
 - Water table/construction cost issue?
- OK with moving horseshoe courts if they can have cover and same number of courts
 - Possibly south of RR tracks
 - Only formal state tournaments use all horseshoe courts
 - 16 courts available now
- Restrooms:
 - Restroom not fair to include in costs of skatepark analysis – existing need
 - Should be dealt with regardless of skatepark project
 - Can restroom stay if option 3 is chosen?
 - Public safety funds available to make modifications?
 - No need to have restroom covered
 - Group was OK with modest restroom facilities – portables or Euro style
- Keep in mind the idea of phase 2 skatepark
- Back stage/slope area interesting depending on footing/engineering issues
- Basketball area not a good option – keep existing use
- Design issues:
 - Viewing capabilities important to consider – keep in mind parents
 - Visibility and viewing best in stage/slope and basketball area options
 - How to keep BMX riders from using the park?
 - Rain often comes from west

FINDINGS

Given the scope of notice and level of participation, the group appeared to offer a reasonable representation of community interest regarding site selection. While the participant group suggested several questions to be answered in order to determine a final location for the skatepark, there appeared to be clear support for the proposed location within the study area in Washington/Jefferson Park. No major concerns were raised or otherwise submitted during the event.

Two of the four groups responded most favorably to the playground/restroom area as a preferred location for the proposed skatepark. Although only two groups presented a clearly preferred location, when asked following the presentation to describe their tendency, the two non-committing groups suggested that the play area was probably the most preferred. However, it was suggested that the horseshoe courts should also be considered, given an adequate replacement. Only these two groups included members of the Emerald Horseshoe Club.

Meeting attendees were encouraged to not only examine possible sites in the study area but also to explore alternative locations. While some groups offered and discussed several alternatives, these did not appear to garner discernable support among the participants.

In summary, the participant group at this event appeared to favor a location for the proposed skatepark in the current playground/restroom area, with a strong indication that the horseshoe area should be explored as well.

CLOSING

Participants were thanked for their attention and valuable feedback. Next steps in the process were described, including analyzing the results of the online questionnaire and following up on outstanding questions and concerns. Given the high level of consensus and absence of significant concerns at this event, additional public meetings would likely not be needed regarding location of the skatepark. **This information will be combined with questionnaire results, additional stakeholder interviews, and technical information to assist City of Eugene Parks and Open Space staff in making a final recommendation for the skatepark site.** Staff suggested that several weeks would be needed to gather information and make a recommendation, and that participants would be notified of the result.

After a location is determined, staff indicated that work would be able to begin on concept design. Many participants expressed strong interest in broad public involvement for the design phase of the project, and were assured that this is the intent. An estimated two to four public meetings will likely be held during the design phase, possibly including a design charrette, one or more focus groups, and questionnaires.

PARTICIPANTS

The following people participated in the event:

Alex Cribbs	Mark Blaine	Jason Cook
Richard Cribbs	Ryan Kelly	Conner Drost
Jerry Gorton	Vanessa Hellman	Alden Elias
Kimberly Knowles	Eric Purdy	Josh Frasier
Dominic Ruscio	Jason Purdy	Bob Chandler
Janet Brown	Billy Purdy	Matt Patton
Adam Steffen	Kemal Ishag	Lowell Davis
Tom Powers	Sopaul Nhep	Dharmika Henshal
Tim Patrick	Shane Frasier	Louisa Hamacher

APPENDIX A: Written Comments

The following comments were recorded on comment sheets distributed at the workshop and turned in to City staff at the end of the event:

1. *What do you feel are the **most important issues** to consider regarding skatepark location?*
 - Bikers and kids getting in the way, and other people's needs
 - The space and if the area is used a lot
 - No bikes
 - Time
 - That the parks all have lights
 - Central location, cover from rain, having the central location will cut down on people needing to drive to skatepark
 - Centrally located, rain cover
 - Centrally located; covered and dry w/side angle protection; lights for both security and safety (1. so officials can scan the area for hazards; 2. so skaters can see park transition)
 - Covered, not sketchy, good designer, skater only park\
 - 1. cover from rain; 2. bus and bicycle access; 3. near other activities that draw safe people
 - That it is under cover good so water won't get in
 - Covered
 - Safe, easy access; evenly spaced throughout city; under cover
 - Covered area to avoid rainy season as much as possible; central location; patrolled area
 - Access; safety; protection from weather; neighborhood suitability
 - Covered

2. *What is your **preferred location** for a City Center Skatepark?*
 - I have none, I think the spot is great
 - Playground
 - Horseshoe courts
 - Under the bridge giving cover, shade and not affecting other people
 - W/J bridge
 - Covered open space
 - Under W/J bridge where the playground is
 - Under the W/J bridge
 - Playground/restrooms; these structures should be moved to where the stage is now
 - Washington/Jefferson park
 - W/J park under overpass where now it's a children's playground
 - Downtown; under W/J
 - Playground
 - Downtown, W/J park; under cover
 - Option 3 – playground and restrooms; best clearance; best lighting; covered area
 - Wa/Jeff
 - W/J park, playground horseshoe areas

3. *If you preferred location is **already used**, what would you do with the existing facilities?*
 - Move the facility to a different location [horseshoe]
 - Take them out
 - Relocate [playground] to the "stage area" or to any of the open areas east or west of the basketball courts
 - Move them to another location; In fact, the park is already being used but they aren't being used as much as the skatepark would be

- Relocated – the playground is mainly used in good weather and this doesn't require cover
- We should move the children's park to behind and next to the stage
- Bathrooms are important – move [playground] away to another spot outside in same park – or skip it – you have great

playground along river; how about area on river path on way to Skinner Park

- Move them to different location of park
- Move
- Put a roof over it; better fencing/separation
- Relocate [playground] to stage area
- Relocate and/or eliminate

4. *What other considerations are important for the success of the project?*

- Food and drink vendors; designers
- To strictly enforce no bikes at the skatepark; to hire Dreamland or Grindline only! To design + build the park; Cooperation with local law enforcement in "policing" park; addressing parking issues
- Noise mitigation for neighbors, involving them in the design for things like noise mitigation and landscaping; giving them an opportunity to be involved; lots of seating for people to watch
- Possibly lights for evening skate and definitely a no bikes policy since this isn't enforced at any other parks in town; this rule is very important to us; hire Dreamland or Grindline park builders
- Get skater and park designer input
- Involve skaters and bikers in design; multi-level skate – all levels; find separate

area for bikers to reduce conflict; skate only skatepark is key for child safety

- Keep bums and sketchy people out of the park
- Have a bathroom
- Supervision; no drugs; safe separation of space, between skaters and bikers
- We should hire Dreamland skateparks; they design skateparks that cater to all levels. All Dreamland's are "on the map" – people come from all over to skate them
- Dreamland design will be key for bringing this to fruition
- Project design

5. *Any other comments?*

- I think that it should be a street park, with some transition
- Build the park
- Portable toilet to save money is okay with me; Not a brightly painted restroom as at Monroe Park; Toilet at this park should be open all hours and all seasons; Please keep Whiteaker Community Council and neighbors informed and excited about developments, with articles for WCC newsletter and website, link on a WCC website, making simple partnerships. I'd like to help with that (I'm on WCC board).
- No bikes or in line skaters
- Having a skatepark with a playground nearby is ideal for providing families a place to play together; seems like the playground area is in need of remodel and

placing the skatepark in that location will "kill 2 birds with one stone."

- I think this skatepark could provide a new reputation for this W/J park and attract a new crowd; hope for a positive change for the area
- No bikes – collisions; lighting – sodiums or halides existing now? Halides illuminate better, are spectrally better for humans, and fail less (yes, I'm a lighting tech – be happy to share more)
- Consult people who know something about skating and make park for all styles and levels of skating
- We need covered skate park!!! Yay! Great plan, City.
- Make the park sick [excellent]; maker of Battleground

- Squishy rubber mats under playground instead of sand
- Multiple skill levels; no bikes; keep dry

- If we do it, it should be done right

END