



Revitalize Rochester

Using Skate Parks to Improve
Rochester's Neighborhoods

Researched and Written by: The Genesee
Community Charter School Sixth Grade
Class of 2012



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About the Authors



The Genesee Community Charter School is a K-6 elementary school. The school prides itself on project-based learning with a sense of purpose. Many of the projects are related to service for the community. This philosophy is taken from the Expeditionary Learning model that the school exhibits.

The purpose of Expeditionary Learning (EL) is to get students involved in and connect with their community. Students are encouraged to step out of their comfort zones and persevere. Expeditionary Learning offers "learning expeditions," or what might be called "units of study." The Genesee Community Charter School is organized into three expeditions per school year. However, sixth graders focus on one main topic for the entire year. Expeditionary Learning is related to the community because first students learn something new and then they share that with the community. There is a final product connected to each expedition, which is usually something beneficial for the community.

Because the school is an Expeditionary Learning School, sixth grade can do a project like proposing a skate park to make a better community. A common quote about EL schools is, "The world is our classroom." Students go out to do fieldwork and meet guest experts to help gain information. Another great benefit of EL is that students step out of their comfort zones in some way to push themselves academically, socially, and physically.

About ROC City Skate Park

The mission of the Friends of the Roc City Skate Park is to pursue the creation, maintenance, and growth of a skate park system in the City of Rochester, New York and to serve as an advocacy group for all progression-oriented sports.



The efforts toward creating Roc City Skate Park started with a fundraiser and father of four kids who participated in progression-oriented sports. He was frustrated with paying a small fortune to take them to private parks and realized that most cities across the country have free, public skate parks.

The father mentioned above had never participated in any of these sports, so he went to the experts at KRUDCO Skateshop. The combined expertise and knowledge proved to work well together and progress toward establishing the largest public skate park in the United States, right here in Rochester, has moved quickly ever since.



“Skaters are all slackers.”

“They hang out with gangs that bully kids and pick pockets.”

“They curse, skip school, and commit crimes every other day.”

Imagine a landscape of ramps and pools. Imagine the breeze of air that alerts you to look both ways. Imagine the sound of polyurethane wheels on cement. Imagine the sounds of teenagers talking. This is a skate park. Even if the sound of teenagers talking isn't music to your ears, this is what *they* call paradise. And this, Rochester, is what we are missing as a city. Many people have turned down the idea of a skate park because the stereotype of a skater scares them.

“Skaters are all slackers.”

“They hang out with gangs that bully kids and pick pockets.”

“They curse, skip school, and commit crimes every other day.”

This is stereotype and a misconception. These are not the people that will come to the skate parks we build. Actually, the main reason people do these awful things is that they don't have any place to go. Sometimes, this can cause them to hang around the wrong people at the side of a curb, where they are encouraged to do things that are illegal. A skate park would allow them to have a safe environment. They need support from their community, but they have been misjudged for years. We are pursuing this project to change the minds of those who think of this image when they think of a skater, and convince those who haven't given this much thought that skaters are regular kids just like us.



Skate parks could reduce crime rates, lower obesity rates, help the economy, and keep kids in Rochester!

A lot of the youth in Rochester love this city and think it's a good place to call "home." However, there are a few serious problems that need to be resolved if we want the youth to keep calling this place "home" as we become adults.

We need to fix things such as obesity rates, crime rates, and the economy. A skate park could help make progress towards most of these issues. A skate park would help reduce crime rates because it would be a positive environment where kids could go after school instead of someplace bad where they could possibly commit a crime. It would lower obesity rates because the skate park would be a nice, safe place where kids could have fun and exercise. The skate park would help the economy because it would attract tourists and businesses related to skateboarding. The last reason a skate park would be beneficial to have in Rochester is because a skate park would make us want to stay in this city so that one day we can tell our kids this is where we grew up and this is the place that we helped create in sixth grade.



Our Mission:
To propose satellite skate parks for priority neighborhoods in Rochester.
- Dr. James Maddison - Friends of the ROC City Skate Park

In the fall of 2011, on our way out for recess, we were surprised to see approximately 20 skateboarders and rollerbladers doing tricks on the museum property. Dr. Maddison, the president of The Friends of ROC City Skate Park board, pulled us aside and told us our mission for this year. He explained that The ROC City Skate Park would be a destination skate park located in downtown Rochester. However, he felt that this may attract new interest in skateboarding and perhaps smaller skate parks could be installed around the city. Therefore, our mission was to locate the priority neighborhoods that needed a skate park in Rochester. Together, we identified priority neighborhoods as areas with a high population of youth, high crime rates, and a high percentage of childhood obesity. Vacant land space and little access to programs and facilities for kids were also a consideration.

After completing Dr. Maddison's charge, we now plan to share our year-long research, results, and neighborhood proposals with you so that you can see the benefits of this possibility for Rochester.



Our “Four Cities” Research

In the first week of March, our sixth grade class embarked on a journey to four model communities with destination skate parks as well as several successful neighborhood skate parks.

Choosing the four cities required some research. Before our trip, we set our criteria and selected eight possible candidate cities. We split up into crews of three or four people and each group was assigned one of the eight cities to research and present what was compelling about that community. We presented our findings to local skateboard experts and GCCS board members to help narrow it down to only four cities. Our final cities were Louisville, KY; Phoenix, AZ; San Diego, CA; and the San Francisco Bay Area. In these cities, we learned about skate park design, planning for and funding skate parks, youth programming, and the benefits of skate parks in a community. We spoke with a wide range of people, from actual skateboarders to elected city officials. Based on our research, we have several recommendations for building destination and neighborhood level skate parks in Rochester. We will share our

recommendations using the following categories: planning for a skate park, rules, regulations, and maintenance, programming and marketing, and potential problems, solutions, and benefits of a skate park.

PLANNING

The first thing you need to do when planning a skate park is to survey the public, both skaters and non-skaters, to see if there is a want and a need. What the adults think is a good idea may not make sense to the kids who actually skate, and what kids want may not be realistic in terms of budget and space. One of the models we learned about required putting modular (moveable) components in a proposed space, called a skate spot, so you can see if the kids are interested in a skate park and get feedback from the skaters, the neighbors, and the community stakeholders. The last thing you want to happen is for you and the planning committee to spend thousands of dollars on the park, only to have it be barely used!

We were given the suggestion to look at expert skate parks around the country to hear about successful skate parks before going into the design stage. Also, make sure to hold community meetings to get input from the community about the idea. These meetings should be held throughout the design process.

Then set up a request for proposal. Once a design team is selected, plan in phases, which will make the planning process a lot easier and more economically manageable. We learned that it is important to design a skate park based on the environment around it. It's important **not** to choose a cheaply-made generic design because the skateboarders will recognize that very little thought went into the design.

When choosing a site for a skate park, the most important thing to think about is its location. It should be easily accessible. For example, the skate park could be near a bus stop or a bike path. You should consider parking issues as well. The skate park could also be added to an existing park or Community Center so that people can do something else in that area besides skate. For example, there could be a playground for younger kids or a baseball field for kids who want to play baseball or softball. Noise level in the area should also be considered. A quiet, residential neighborhood may not be the ideal site for a skate park, but next to a school, it would fit in perfectly. Safety is another concern, so you could put the skate park near fire or police stations so when there's trouble, adults can handle the problem quickly and safely.

While planning for a skate park, you need to think about the other components. First, you need to think about your riders (BMX, rollerbladers, skaters, scooters, etc.). You need to make your park available to all skill levels. You should probably show the skill levels so visitors are aware of how easy or difficult an obstacle is. For example, at Louisville Extreme Skate Park, they use the same circle, square, diamond system you would see on ski trails to show difficulty level. If you want BMX bikers to be welcome, you may need to install metal edges along pool, bowl, and ramp edges to help maintain the concrete, which might be damaged by BMX pegs and pedals as well as hard-riding skateboarders. You might also want to consider making it handicapped accessible as well, as many wheelchair athletes might like the challenge of some lower obstacles.



The planning team should also think about amenities like food, water fountains, bathrooms, shade, shelter, and a place for spectators. Those are important because you want the guests to feel comfortable.

It's important to think about emergencies. While many of the parks we visited were unstaffed, it might be wise to have an emergency button that goes straight to 911. If the park is located near a Community Center, a first aid kit inside would be good for medical needs. Some skate park features and obstacles require skilled riders. They should also be designed for first responders to get to quickly as well. For example, it is a good idea to have a shallow end in a pool, a common skate park feature, so that medics can have easier access to the pool. Open-ended bowls are fun to ride, but they are not so safe for the skaters because people can fall out. Some parks we visited had video surveillance systems installed. Surveillance can also help because you can hold people accountable for their actions, but it also sends a message to the skating community that you may not trust them.

One of the controversial issues we learned about was around safety gear. Larger, regional skate parks that are staffed often require helmets as a minimum. Others, like Lake Cunningham Regional Skatepark in San Jose, CA, require helmets, knee, and elbow pads along with a signed waiver. Neighborhood skate parks post rules that require safety gear be worn, but we witnessed that very few skaters followed that rule. Usually it was young skaters (five to eight years old) and middle aged skaters (in their late thirties and early forties) wearing gear. We highly recommend that safety gear be required but it depends on the local laws of each community.

As far as the materials you use are concerned, you should look at concrete even though there are many different options. You should choose concrete because wood and modular parts are expensive to maintain. When you get to the point of elements and ramps you should do what we did, and look at other skate parks to see their most popular features. Some of the most popular ones we have seen are pole jams, pump bumps, stairs, quarter pipes, and pyramids.



RULES, REGULATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE

There are lots of rules that can help keep skate parks running smoothly, safely, and efficiently. There are three main categories of rules that apply to skate parks: rules imposed by governments, rules made by the park, and rules skaters are willing to follow. We already spoke briefly about how most skaters ignore safety gear rules. They do so for a number of reasons, but the reality is that most skateboarding injuries and deaths result from not wearing safety gear.

As of 2005, New York State Law requires every skateboarder under 14 to wear a helmet while skating in public areas, including public skate parks. Parents of children who fail to follow this law can be fined up to \$50. We feel it only makes sense that kids wear helmets – and pads, too – as they learn the sport.

Our first recommendation is that skate park rules should be posted at the entrance of each skate park.

These rules may include:

- Skate at your own risk
- Closed when park closes (hours – sunrise – sunset, for example)
- Require safety equipment for all riders under the age of 14
- No smoking, alcohol, or drug use allowed
- No pets
- No vandalizing

We also recommend that consequences should be enforced if any of the above rules are not followed for the sake of the city and the safety of others. We recommend having a park monitor through police patrol, surveillance cameras, and/or neighborhood watch to enforce these rules and perform other duties such as:

- Keep the park clean (litter, proper use of bathrooms, etc.)
- Enforce rules
- Prevent bullying
- Make sure everyone can use and enjoy the park

Another idea we came up with is having an ID pass for two important reasons; so you can keep track of who is using park, and who is causing trouble. The ID pass scanner can be computerized so it is connected to all parks so troublemakers will not be able to cause trouble at multiple parks.

If you want to keep your skate park clean, then you should come up with a maintenance plan before the park opens. Some ideas are to clean restrooms daily (if restrooms are at the park) and clear all litter from the park for safety **and** cleanliness reasons. You should install and encourage the use of recycling bins. Also, maintenance employees should maintain the parks just like they do playgrounds, soccer fields and baseball diamonds. When planning and building the park, keep in mind materials that are good for skating, but are also easy to clean. For example, if you have a viewing area, put rough, textured cement around it so skaters will be discouraged from skating there.

According to our research, graffiti is a big problem in most skate parks so be prepared to remove graffiti frequently. However, as the old saying goes, “if you can’t beat them, join them.” This means that instead of viewing graffiti as a problem, view it as an opportunity to encourage young artists by installing a wall or features that are not for skating but made so youth can share their art with the larger community without damaging the rest of the



park. We also learned that most of the damage to skate parks is vandalism **not** caused by skaters. Skaters usually take pride in their local parks and help to keep them safe and clean. It will be important to reach out to the users when problems start to occur.

Desert West Skateboard Plaza hosted the World's Greatest Shows from 1994-2001. The monies raised were used for the development of the skate park.

PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING

A busy skate park is a safe skate park. Programming is one way to make the skate park popular and keep it busy at all times of the year. Programming means planning activities and events that draw skaters and non-skaters to the skate park.

One purpose of contests is to engage youth to come to skate parks. For example, at Desert West, in Phoenix, AZ, they have competitions where all levels of skaters come and show their skills. Judges give the skaters scores and prizes are awarded to the winners. Desert West also holds a "Best Trick" contest, which has its own live webcast. Larger, regional parks have also hosted X-games and touring skate and extreme sports exhibitions. These are often great ways to make money and raise awareness of your park.

It can be beneficial to offer classes, lessons, and camps at the skate park. They should be offered throughout the year because there will always be new skaters and new tricks to

learn. Each camp should vary in experience, with classes offered for beginner, intermediate, and expert-level skaters. Camps and lessons are a great way for kids to learn new skills, build confidence, develop safe skating habits, and become more comfortable skateboarding.

Demonstrations are a great way to get kids motivated and excited to not only skate, but to push themselves to learn new tricks. Demos involve intermediate to pro skaters teaching rookie skaters how to skate or to give tips on how to do tricks. Just like demos, there are skate park exhibitions. These are for skaters to invite friends and family to watch them skate and learn about their sport.

One way to get people to come to the skate park is by hosting themed events. They create a fun feel at the skate park and draw a lot of people together for a celebration. For example, Lake Cunningham Regional Skate Park hosts a St. Patrick's Day Skate/BMX Jam. A themed event could be "Hawaiian Beach Day" where everybody wears leis and the skate park is decorated like a beach. Having private birthday parties could be a great revenue source as people would pay a fee in order to reserve part of the skate park. Themed events, holiday parties, private birthday parties, and the skate park's anniversaries are great ways to keep a skate park busy.

Some public, indoor skate parks we saw offer "lock ins," or overnight trips, where kids pay a fee to skate, sleep in, and skate some more in the morning. We can also target special groups of people to get them more interested in skating. We could plan father-son events or mother-daughter events, or target people with special needs by forming a rider group just for them.

You need to advertise your skate park somehow, otherwise nobody will know about it. You can partner with youth organizations so that they can promote the skate park to the youth and parents. Youth organizations, summer camps, and after-school care sites could use the skate park to get kids outside and active. However, most Parks & Recreation officials we interviewed talked about how word of mouth is the most effective way to get people to come to their park. This means that people who know about the skate park tell their friends, who tell their friends, who tell their friends, and so on.

Likewise, social media can be used to advertise the skate park, for example Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. Sending a Tweet like "This is the coolest skate park I've ever seen!" could make hundreds of people interested in going to the skate park. The skate park could have its own website and/or Facebook page that would inform people about skate park features and amenities, when the skate park opens and closes, where it is located, what local skaters have rated it, and when upcoming events will be held. E-mail blasts can also let people know about skate park events.

To advertise a skate park, you could use television commercials, but these are very expensive and may not reach your target audience. For very little cost, you could put up fliers in community centers, local businesses, libraries, and schools. The fliers should be designed to make kids excited to learn to skate and to go to the skate park.

When the skate park opens, have a huge Grand Opening Ceremony. Invite professional skaters, local skaters, and the media to let people know that the skate park is here and open.



PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS, AND BENEFITS

There are many misconceptions about skate parks and skaters. Too many people see skater as teens who don't wear safety gear, who skate in unauthorized places, and who just hang out. They don't see the younger kids learning to skate or the 30 and 40 year-old moms and dads who were also once teen skaters. Skaters are seldom the problems at skate parks. Some of the real problems come from others using the facility. Communities worry about crime due to skate parks. People say that skate parks will attract the "wrong crowd." By this they mean kids. This is unfortunate because skate parks are places kids can play safely and stay out of trouble.

One of the major concerns is drug use. Careful placement of the skate park is important. It should be in plain sight, on a main street and ideally in an area where public parks or playgrounds already exist. Drug use by some people in skate parks gives all skaters a bad name. Drug use by teens and young adults is not limited to skate parks but no one says stop building basketball courts, lacrosse fields or swimming pools, in spite of the number of teen athletes abusing drugs in these sports.

Gang violence can also be an issue, but not one that only affects skate parks. Being aware of the neighborhood's needs can make the skate park a worthwhile investment in gang eradication. Gangs who are claiming turf often aren't interested in skating and when more people use a skate park, more people are watching what's going on. People who break laws are not likely to be hanging out where there could be dozens of potential witnesses. A solution to both the drug issue and gang issue would be to locate the park wisely; it may even become part of the local neighborhood watch or regular police patrols.



Another potential problem for skate parks is noise and traffic. Pedestrian traffic around skate parks increases because people are going there. Car traffic may also increase when families drive younger skaters to parks. Neighbors may not appreciate the extra traffic, so it is important to provide wider sidewalks, parking spaces, and realistic skate park hours that balance what neighbors want and what skaters need. Noise can be a problem when skateboards echo off of cement features, but the sound of skating is less than a football game or even regular traffic on the street rolling past the skate park! Making sure neighbors understand this will help keep the peace.

Truancy, or skipping school, can be a problem in some communities, but skate parks don't cause truancy. Kids go to skate parks because they feel safe and welcome there. They want to be seen by friends and peers as cool (let's face it, skating is a cool sport!). Bullying, too, can happen at skate parks. It also happens on basketball courts, in school hallways, at home, and really just about anywhere. Skate parks don't create bullies and usually skaters look out for one



Sometimes skate parks get vandalized. Graffiti is the number one problem. In each community, experts we spoke with said graffiti is something that must be planned for. Some graffiti is viewed as art – but most of it is the work of taggers or tagging crews that simply want to leave their mark. Sometimes graffiti is the work of gang members staking a claim on territory. Most communities have graffiti abatement teams that remove graffiti. In many cases, gang graffiti is removed within 24 hours. Sometimes the local neighborhood adopts the skate park and takes care of things like graffiti and trash removal. In a few places, graffiti walls were built so people would tag the wall and leave the skate park alone. Skaters know that paint on bowls and other features can affect the quality of the ride. They want to skate in clean parks, too.

Garbage can also be an issue. Many skate parks have encountered problems with trash. People leave their snack wrappers, Red Bull cans, and other garbage all over the skate park. A solution to this is to provide trashcans. These may need to be chained so they don't get dumped or used by selfish skaters as obstacles. Parks also create carry-in/carryout policies for trash. Sometimes the problem can get bad, but usually the skating community pulls together to find solutions. Local neighborhood associations, scouting organizations and volunteers have all pitched in to keep the parks clean.

Skateboarding is a vital part of many people's lives, as we learned from visiting communities with successful skate park systems. There will be problems that pop up at skate parks, just as there are with playgrounds, soccer fields, and recreation centers. Skate parks that are well - designed, located in highly obvious places, and attract skaters from nearby neighborhoods are the successful ones. These give the kids who don't always like organized sports a place to play and meet new friends. Skate parks provide safe play areas for intergenerational skaters. The more people who use these parks, the more likely they are to police themselves, and problems don't pop up as much.

In Sacramento, CA, the Robla Community Park was an area of known gang activity. To help shine a light on the illegal activities, the park was redeveloped and a skate park was added. Gang activity dropped and the park is now one of the most used in the Sacramento parks system.

Art and design at Ken Wormhoudt Skate Park in Santa Cruz, CA, the full pipe element has a breaking wave painted on it, reflecting the community's other popular sport, surfing.



Rochester's Priority Neighborhoods

Before we could make decisions on where to place our neighborhood skate parks, we needed to do some background research on Rochester. We spent several weeks analyzing census data, examining the media's perspective on skateboarding, surveying the youth in Rochester, and researching existing programs for youth. We also visited neighborhoods to see availability for satellite skate parks. We would like to share a summary of our findings with you before we unveil our proposal.

Graph 9: Percent of Population by Major Age Groups for Rochester and Zip Codes (2000)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

DEMOGRAPHICS

Our class spent several weeks looking at census data on youth population in Rochester. We wanted to find out how many kids live in Rochester and in each sector. We also wanted to research the obesity and crime rates for Rochester. According to census data from 2010, youth under 18 make up approximately 25% of the population in Rochester. Of that number, the largest percentages of ethnicity were black, white, and Hispanic. Even though America's childhood obesity rate is 32%, a recent study from the U of R Medical Center stated that the childhood obesity rate in Rochester is 40%.

Based on a study conducted by Community Place, we learned of three sectors that were identified as "high need" for Rochester. These identified areas are sectors 8, 9, and 10. Using 2009 census estimates, sector 8 that includes the 14609 zip code, 79% of the total population are 19 and younger. Sector 9 (the 14621 zip code) has 66% youth. Finally, sector 10 has 46% of youth for the area. These are

very high percentages compared to the overall population of youth for Rochester.

Rochester Violent Crime Index



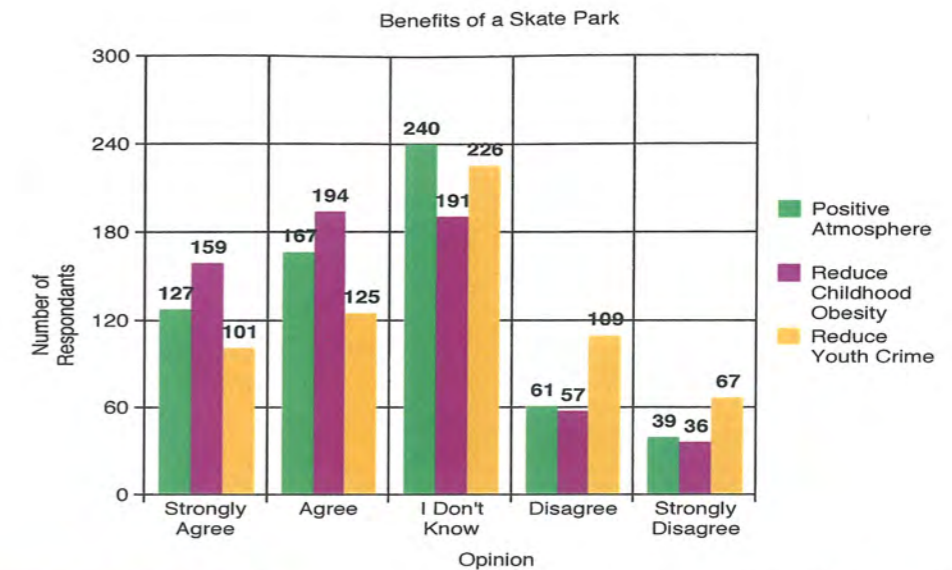
Crime Index corresponds to incidents per 100,000 inhabitants

According to the Crime Index from CityRating.com, Rochester's crime is showing a decreasing trend each year. However, it is significantly larger than the New York and National averages. Overall, crime is highest in sectors 8, 9, and 10. Even though the crime rate has decreased in these sectors as well, it hasn't stayed that way and continues to be a problem for these areas.

PAST AND PRESENT VIEWS OF SKATEBOARDING

The media have portrayed skateboarding as many things, from a hobby to a sport, and sometimes they see it as a nuisance. Skaters often do things differently than most athletes, but for a long time skateboarding was viewed as a weird, even geeky thing to do. When it was first introduced, it was odd and unfamiliar. Skaters dressed differently, had their own lingo for tricks, and liked to hang out with one another. People don't always think a group of young people together in one spot is a good thing and they are afraid. Skaters are no better or worse than any other group of young people in large numbers. People didn't like the new way kids were playing and travelling. As time passed, they didn't like that they were riding and doing tricks in front of businesses and on the streets. Soon skateboarding became a crime.

Skateboarding is not a crime, but *not* providing places for youth to skate is part of the problem. In Rochester, NY, a city with almost a quarter million people, there are no public skate parks. In the smaller suburban towns we counted five skate parks. Even Canandaigua, which only has 12,000 people, built a skate park for their skaters last year. Other towns have petitions and plan to build parks in the future. Rochester's skateboarding ordinance clearly says where skaters may and may not skate, but kids under twelve can't even practice their tricks on the street and are often told by joggers and walkers to get off the sidewalks. Where exactly are kids



SURVEY ANALYSIS

Surveys are important because they give information about what people want and need. The purpose of our survey was to see who skates, scooters, BMX bikes, and other activities, where they skate, when they skate, and if they want a skate park in their community. Without surveys people would not know what the kids need or prefer in their skate park. Two pertinent questions we asked were, "Are you a skater or a non-skater?" and "Would you and others in your neighborhood make use of a skate park?" We also asked, "How often do you see skateboarders?"

In April, we sent out over 800 surveys to different schools around Rochester, N.Y. Our return rate was excellent, 83%. We received approximately 700 out of over 800 surveys sent out! There were 16 zip codes represented, and there were 170 surveys that did not include zip codes. Out of all of the surveys, we found that approximately half of the kids surveyed skate, BMX, scooter, or in-line skate. We also found out that of the people surveyed, there were almost exactly half male and half female.

One survey question asked was, "Would you

and others in your neighborhood make use of a skate park?" The majority of the people surveyed either answered, yes, maybe, or not sure. A statement that the kids responded to was, "A skate park in my home neighborhood would create a positive atmosphere." Three quarters of the surveys responded with either a strongly agree, agree, or I don't know. The next statement that the kids responded to was, "A skate park in my home neighborhood would help reduce childhood obesity." Again, approximately 75% either strongly agreed, agreed, or answered I don't know to this question. There was one final statement about a skate park reducing youth crime in their home neighborhood. Answers were more spread out for this statement with the majority being in either the agree, I don't know, or disagree category. The survey also asked about the frequency kids see skateboarders in their neighborhood. 231 respondents answered almost everyday and 141 answered about once a month with the remaining half answering rarely or never see skateboarders. The final question that the children answered was, "Do you think your neighborhood would benefit from a skate park?" The majority said that either they would benefit from a skate park or they didn't know for sure.

Here is what City Recreation has to offer at your neighborhood center:

	Homework Study Table	Reading/Tutoring	Arts & Crafts	Computer Programs	Kids Cafe	Gym	Group/ Gym Games	Outdoor/ Lawn Games	Game Room	Youth Basketball	Adult Basketball	Youth Floor Hockey	Flag Football	Youth Softball	Flower City Youth Soccer	Volleyball	Pool/ Swimming Lessons	Fitness Programming	Weight Room	Double Dutch/ STEP	Youth Council	Cheerleading	Photography	Martial Arts	
Campbell Street Community Center 524 Campbell St. 428-7860																									
#43 School Recreation Center 1305 Lyell Ave. 428-7212																									
Edgerton Community Center 41 Backus St. 428-6769																									
#41 School Recreation Center 279 W. Ridge Rd. 428-1480																									
Pierpont Recreation Center 219 Pierpont St. 428-6859																									
#42 School Recreation Center 3330 Lake Ave. 428-7829																									
David F. Gantt Community Center 700 North St. 428-7149																									
Carter Street Community Center 500 Carter St. 428-7890																									

EXISTING YOUTH PROGRAMS

As another deciding factor for Rochester's priority neighborhoods, we looked at the recreation centers and programs available for the youth in Rochester. As we stated earlier, there's not a single public skate park in downtown Rochester. However, there are several other facilities available for children in our city. There are 14 recreation and community centers available in Rochester. Children also have access to an indoor ice skating rink, water spray parks, pools, baseball, basketball, hand ball courts, and soccer fields. Rochester also has two "Recreation on the Move" vans that travel with recreational equipment to recreation centers and other sites.

There are many non-governmental organizations in Rochester. Some of these organizations are: YMCA, ArtPeace, Community Place, and Center for Youth. All of these organizations have multiple programs and choices for children. For example, YMCAs have sports, aquatics, education, childcare, family game night and different camps. ArtPeace provides after school programs in the arts category such as theatre, music, visual arts, and dance.

The Center For Youth has counseling and educational services. Community Place provides many programs and services for all ages and abilities. There are aging, family, early childhood, and disability programs and services. There are also after school programs for kids. Community Place also has summer camps available. They have an eight-week summer program, overnight, and day camps. All of these organizations have a lot in common. They all give people healthy and happy opportunities. However, certain sectors in Rochester have more access to these facilities and programs than others do.

Based on our Rochester data, our class went on a day-long Rochester neighborhood exploration to three different zip codes: 14609, 14605, and 14621. We visited many sites that could be a possible neighborhood skate park but we had to narrow it down to four, and we did. Here are the sites we picked for Rochester's first neighborhood skate parks.

Our first site is on the corner of Bay and Goodman where there is a vacant, fenced-in lot. The full area is about 21,000 ft². This area is more than we need for a skate park since most neighborhood skate parks are between 5,000 and 10,000 square feet. So a portion will be dedicated to the skate park. School #25 and a doctor's office are across the street from this area.

Another site we picked for our top four is at the Carter Street Community Center. This is a location owned by Community Place and the city, and there are many other amenities available at this site. The space we are thinking about putting the skate park is about 5,000 ft². Third, we found a plot of land in the 14605 neighborhood that we are calling, "The Marketview Heights Lot." This is a large piece of land located adjacent to the Peace Baptist church that appears underutilized. A portion of the land could be used for a neighborhood skate park. Our final choice is a plot of land on Grand Avenue where School #33 used to be. There are two

playgrounds (one owned by the city and one owned by Community Place) that could use some repair, a community center in the back (again owned by Community Place), and an open field with a picnic area nearby. The field is more space than we need, with an approximate total area over 37,000 ft². These are all very possible spaces for a neighborhood skate park. Now, here is a more in depth plan on each neighborhood.

Neighborhood Skate Park Proposal

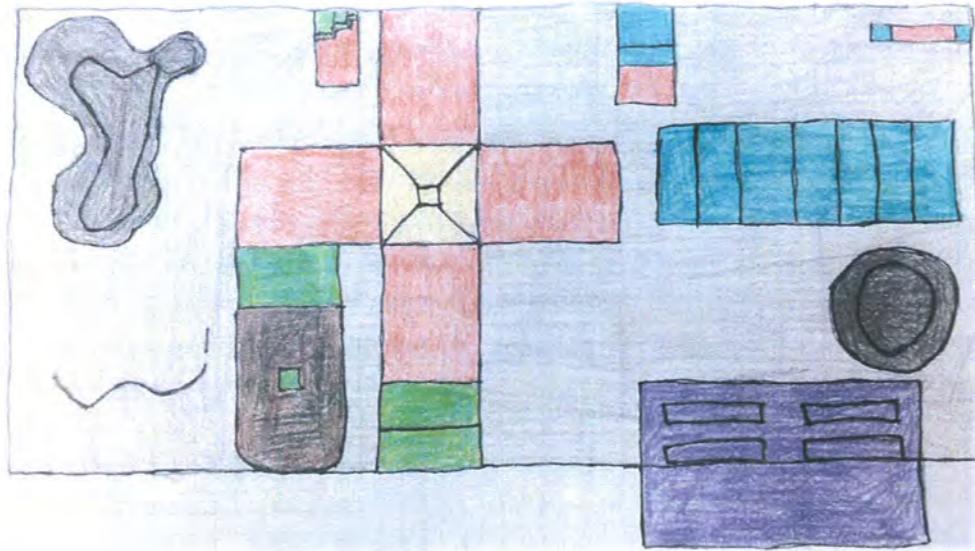




BAY AND GOODMAN

We chose a large lot on the corner of the Bay Street and Goodman Street for many reasons. Based on a report by Community Place using 2009 estimates in the 14609 neighborhood, 79% of the population is 19 years old and under. That is a large percentage of youth in this area. It is in a neighborhood that needs more activities to occupy the youth. A skate park there would help kids not wander

off and get into trouble. However, this lot is next to school #25 and students could use this during their recess or PE time. This location is a wide, open park that has fencing. A bus stop is located at the far corner of the lot, which makes it accessible for everyone. Based on our surveys for this neighborhood, 70% said they would or might make use of a skate park. In addition, approximately 41% said they see skaters almost every day.



This skate park would be approximately 7,000 square feet alongside Goodman Street. To get to the skate park, skateboarders would go through a building that has refreshments and restrooms. In this skate park, there will be three connected bowls and one little bowl on the other side of the park. There will also be a half pipe, a long rail, a flat rail, a magic carpet, a camel hump, and different sized ramps (see glossary). The fencing will surround the entire lot and the entrance to the park will be at the corner. We are recommending a camera and overhead lighting for surveillance when school is not open.

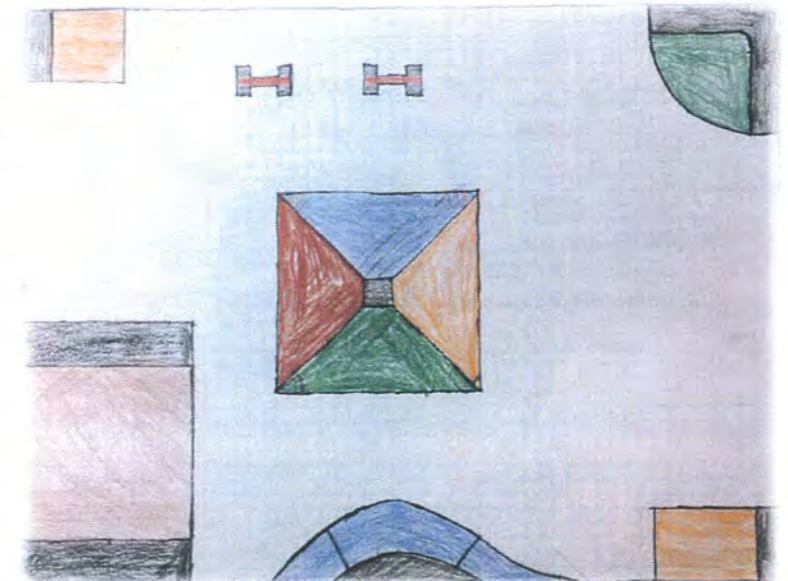
The corner of Bay and Goodman is a good location for our skate park. There is also a crosswalk on the corner so skaters can get there safely. It is very visible and there is still room for grassy areas where there can be picnic tables. Students from School #25 and other neighboring schools can also go skate and hang out there. In fact, based on our survey for this zip code, 39% of the students surveyed already consider themselves to be skaters!



CARTER STREET COMMUNITY CENTER

Carter Street Community Center is an excellent place for a skate park. It already has a baseball field, a basketball court, a tennis court, and a spray pad. The Community Center itself is big enough for large groups of people to meet when the weather is uncooperative. The skate park would be a great addition to the area. There are bus stops around the area, a parking lot, sidewalks, and residential streets in this neighborhood. It is also located close to schools and churches and would be an important part in strengthening the community by bringing people together. There is already a fence located around the community center and more activities for people to participate in. It is easy to get to, visible to the public, and is a great way for people to do something and get active.

The features that we have chosen are a pyramid, a half pipe, two rails, a c-ramp, a corner ramp, and a quarter pipe (see glossary). The name of the skate park will be after the street it's on, Carter Street Skate Park. It will have sidewalks leading into the skate park as well as a fence surrounding the entire area. We would like to put an awning to provide shade to the skaters. To make a pretty and positive atmosphere, we would plant flowers and bushes. We will chose perennials to save money because they grow back every year. Lots of different color landscapes will make the skate park beautiful and inviting. This will create a positive environment and a nice addition to the community.



The neighborhood can benefit from this because it will provide any skateboarders in the neighborhood a place to skate taking them away from places where they can't. In the 14621 neighborhood, 66% of the total population are ages 19 and under. Since the percentage of obese youth in the city of Rochester is 40%, approximately 9,500 children are obese in this neighborhood. Therefore, they need to find more ways to get fit and be healthy. It also can give kids who want to learn skating a place to practice and meet other skaters. Since it will be by the community center, if a skater's siblings don't like skating, they can go to the playground or baseball field and do something else. It could change the community for the better.

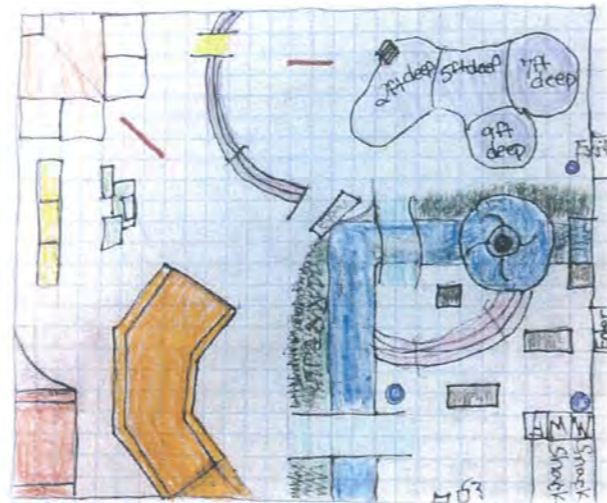


MARKETVIEW HEIGHTS LOT

We chose this plot of land behind the Peace Baptist Church in the Marketview Heights Neighborhood based on our observations and results of our data. First of all, in the 14605 neighborhood, 46% of the population are 19 years old and under. Even though we know that skate parks are successful near community centers, we chose a very large plot of land behind Peace Baptist Church near Oregon, Hudson, and Harrison Streets. This still allows for community gatherings and events to be held in this park.

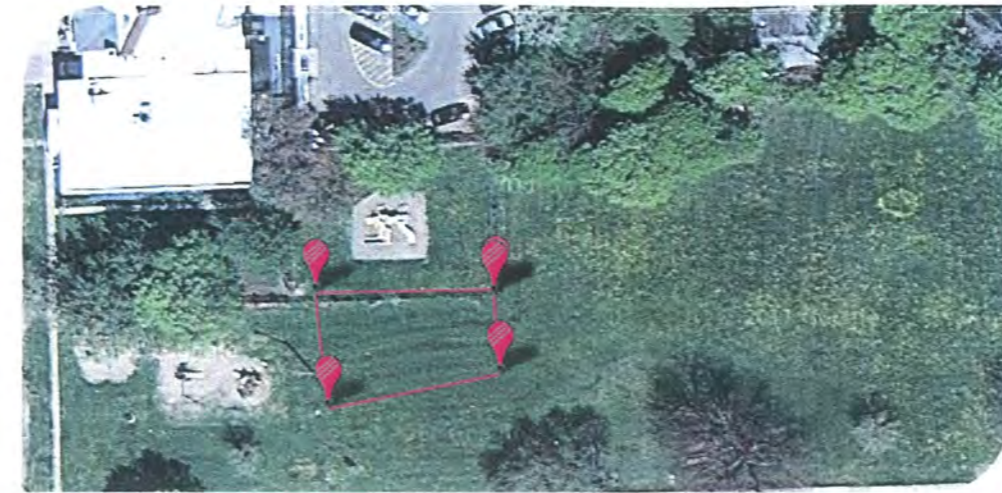
Based on the surveys that we collected, new skateboarders should begin on small ramps and flat areas. We have included lots of flat areas

so newer skaters can skate around and not get hurt on the larger obstacles. The flat area also benefits the experienced skaters, so they can pick up speed before they skate down a more complex obstacle. We decided that our park would take the model of a transitional park. A transitional park is when you go from one obstacle to the next. The park also has a waterfall and a creek with fish. There is grass around the creek to prevent skaters from skating over or into the 10-foot wide creek. There is a spectator area, where there are the bathrooms, a snack shack, and the entrance. There is a bridge-ramp over the creek so the skaters can enter the park. The



stove pipe ramp was highly recommended by a few skaters, which led us to believe that it was a popular and interesting obstacle. Then there is a bowl, which increases in depth for medical access. There are also stairs that lead into the bowl, which is also for medical access. There will not be lighting with the hope that kids will be discouraged from skating at night. A sign at the front entrance will say, "Skate at your own risk." The sign will also address that safety equipment is highly recommended, but not required (unless you're under 14).

The Marketview Heights neighborhood will benefit from a skate park in many ways. One of the reasons is because of the 6,602 youth in the area. It is estimated that 1,056 kids in that neighborhood skate. This means it would get used often. We learned from a guest expert we spoke to that the neighborhood should be renovated and revitalized within the next ten years. We also chose this neighborhood because roughly 2,640 kids are unhealthy and overweight. Skateboarding will hopefully reduce this number by giving kids a healthy way of getting out and being active.

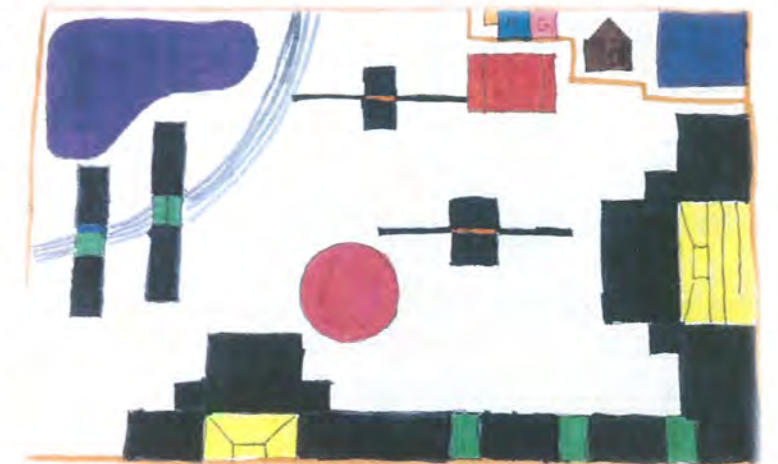


OLD SCHOOL #33 LOT

We decided on the 14609 zip code because the youth population is 79% and the crime rate is approximately 74 crimes in a month. But, it only has two parks and recreation centers. That

shows us that this neighborhood is in high need of a skate park. One of the four spots we have chosen is the Community Place backyard, which is the site of the old #33 school. We chose this location because it has many things that a skate park needs. It is visible to residents, is an open and usable space, and many more. This spot will make a good location for a neighborhood skate park.

In the design plan for the old school #33, we want to include a ramp n' rail, half pipes, quarter pipes, a pole jam, and gaps (see glossary). We also want to include other features already mentioned in other neighborhood design plans such as different sized ramps and bowls. There are also many things to make the skate park better. We want to include bathrooms, lights, water fountains, and all the other amenities already stated in the other design plans.



For example, metal edging to make our features last longer. Also this particular spot is right next to Community Place, so the park could be supervised without too much cost or having no supervision.

A skate park would be effective and beneficial for the Beechwood neighborhood when held at the old # 33 school campus. 70% of the people surveyed answered "yes" or "maybe" when asked, "Would you and others make use of a skate park?" Another question, which was "Do you think your neighborhood would benefit from a skate park?" Approximately 50% of the surveys came back as yes.

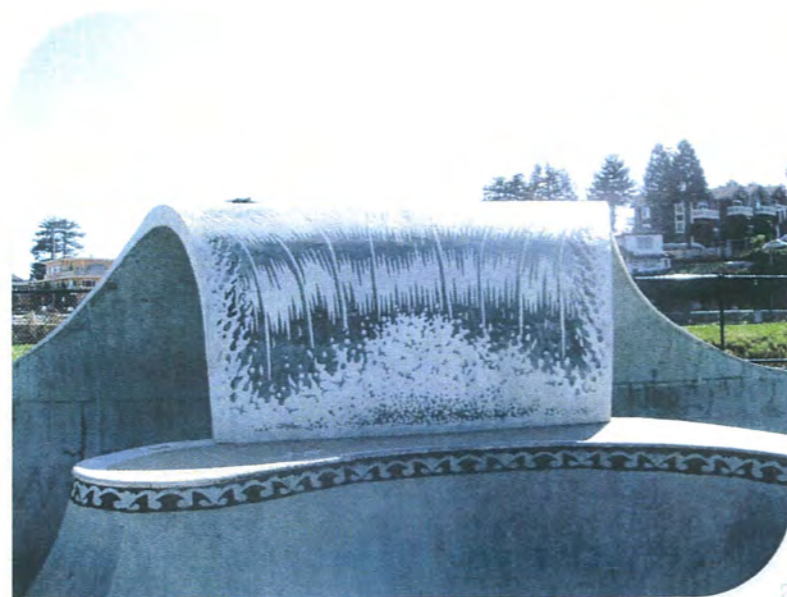
The supervision from Community Place would also most likely lower or eliminate the youth crime rate in the park as well as the entire Beechwood community. The skate park would also give kids something to do outside. We believe this will lower the childhood obesity rate and provide kids with a suitable hobby they can do almost whenever they please.



Even though some skaters may make bad decisions, they're just doing what they love to do.

We hope that you will agree that neighborhood skate parks are a part of the solution to the problem of youth engagement. We believe these possible skate parks have the potential to reduce crime and childhood obesity as well as bring a community together.

Skaters are doing what they love to do-skiate. Some may make bad decisions, but most are responsible athletes. From our research, we learned that skaters have their own culture and think of the skate park as a safe place to be. Imagine what Rochester could be if more people got together with a common interest. Kids would have a safe place to go and things to do outside of school. Please consider these neighborhood skate parks for a good cause.



Glossary of Skate Park Features

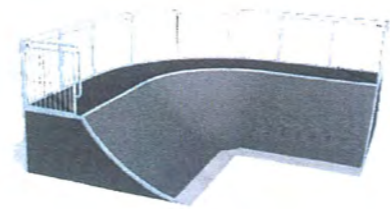
Pictures were taken from Google Images



Bowl



Magic Carpet



Corner Ramp



Pole Jam



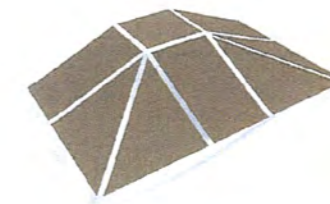
Curved Rail



Pump Bump



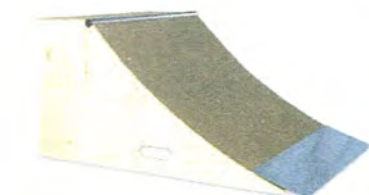
Flat Rail



Pyramid



Half Pipe

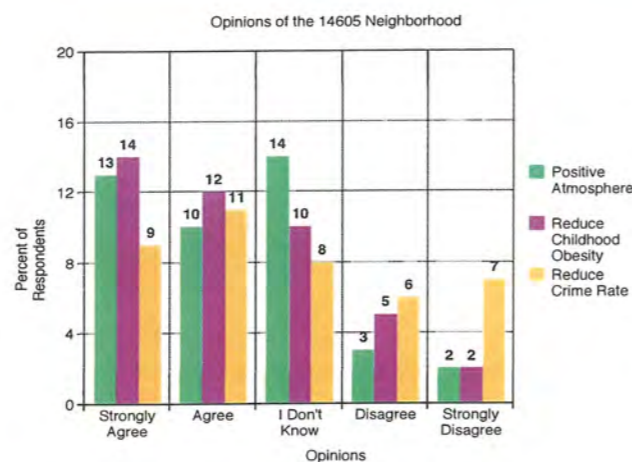


Quarter Pipe

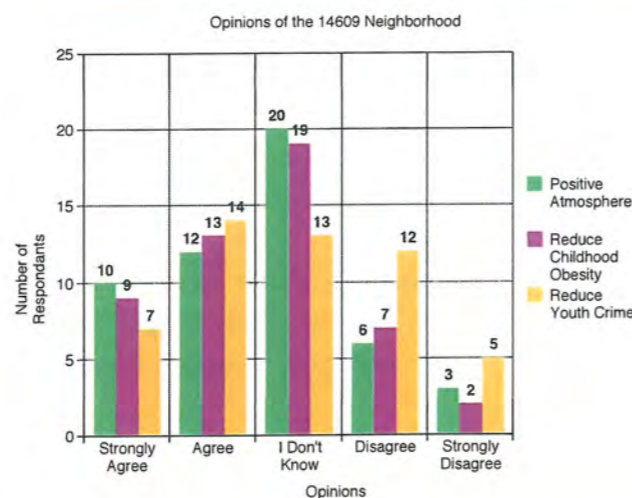
Appendix

Neighborhood Graphs

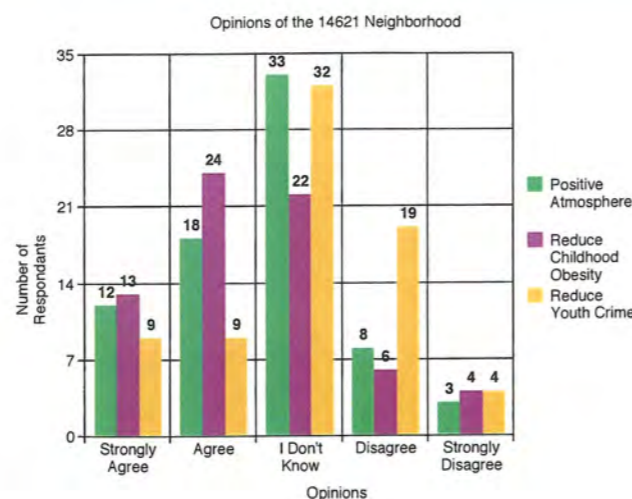
14605 Neighborhood



14609 Neighborhood



14621 Neighborhood



Date ___ / ___ / 2012

Skate Park Survey

Dear RCSD Student,

Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out our survey. We are doing research on the benefits of skate parks in neighborhoods. Please answer the questions below to the best of your ability. We thank you for your honesty.

Sincerely,

The Sixth Grade Class at the Genesee Community Charter School

- Please circle one.
Do you consider yourself to be a Skater (skateboard, scooter, BMX, in-line skates) or Non-skater?
- Male Female
- What age range are you in?
5-6 7-8 9-10 11-12 13-14 15+
- What school do you attend? _____
- What is your zip code for where you live? _____
- In terms of ethnic origin, do you consider yourself to be
 White Black Hispanic
 Asian Pacific Islander Racially Mixed
 Other: _____ No comment
- What do you do for fun in your neighborhood?
- What level of skateboard experience do you have?
 No experience Novice Intermediate Expert
- Would you and others in your neighborhood make use of a skate park?
 Yes Maybe No Not Sure
- What recreation/community centers, parks, or playgrounds do you go to regularly?

11. Would you recommend safety equipment to a new skater (such as helmets, knee pads, etc.)?

Yes Maybe No Not Sure

12. Please circle either *Strongly Agree, Agree, I don't know, Disagree, Strongly Disagree* for the following statements:

"A skate park in my home neighborhood would create a positive atmosphere."

Strongly Agree Agree I don't know Disagree Strongly Disagree

"A skate park in my home neighborhood would help to reduce childhood obesity."

Strongly Agree Agree I don't know Disagree Strongly Disagree

"A skate park in my home neighborhood would help to reduce youth crime."

Strongly Agree Agree I don't know Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. I see skateboarders in the neighborhood where I live...

Almost every day at least once a week about once a month

I rarely or never see skateboarders

14. Do you think your neighborhood would benefit from a skate park? Yes No IDK

If so, how?

15. What obstacles would you recommend for a new skateboarder? Why?

16. What obstacles would you recommend for an experienced skateboarder? Why?

Other questions or comments:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME ☺



The Genesee Community Charter School's sixth grade class always studies a topic related to revitalization and/or increasing awareness of community problems.

In 2006, a sixth grade class studied the merits of the Grasso-Zimmer proposal to re-water the downtown Erie Canal bed. The class split up and traveled to four cities to look at canals. In the cities, they looked at the surroundings of the canal and how the community was affected. Their research reawakened the possibility of having the Erie Canal downtown. The class used their research to present to the Mayor of Rochester, City Council Members, and community stakeholders.

Other sixth graders studied public art to examine how it can revitalize a community. They also traveled to four cities to look at public art in those communities. They worked closely with guest experts to create their proposals. The first year sixth graders studied public art, they helped to propose ideas for the ArtWalk2 extension on University and Goodman Avenue. They presented the results to the Mayor, city council, and the steering committee for ARTWalk2. The second year, Mayor Duffy gave the students the charge to present public art that could be installed in their honor downtown. The students chose the proposed Erie Canal site for their public art ideas.

Many projects that past sixth grade classes have done were focused on raising awareness about a community or worldwide issue. One example of this kind of project was childhood obesity. Another example was the study of Colony Collapse Disorder (the mysterious disappearance of bees).

During the project on childhood obesity, the class travelled to cities to study museums with good health exhibits. They travelled to Denver, Houston, Columbus and Pittsburgh. They took the best ideas from the other health exhibits and exhibit experts and put them into their design. By the end of the year, sixth graders designed and proposed a health exhibit for the RMSC that had a spy theme with villains and heroes. The villains were things like Mrs. Couch Potato and Dr. Fructose and the heroes were the participants in the exhibit. They also hosted a 5K for kids to help kids ages 8-18 stay healthy.

During the project on Colony Collapse Disorder, the class travelled to the Adirondacks area to interview beekeepers. They were trying to make people aware that bees are disappearing and how that is a problem. They did this by writing a report about the benefits of bees and beekeepers.

This year, students are combining the reasons to revitalize and how to increase awareness by proposing neighborhood skate parks for priority neighborhoods in in Rochester.

Class of 2012

Abigail
Alana
Amany
Anas
Cabral
Christina
Ethan
Frederick
Gabrielle
Gianni
Haley
Isabella
Jacob
Katherine

Kieran
Maia
Mariana
Matthew
Maya
McKenna
McKenzie
Nolan
Remington H.
Remington R.
Sarah
Terra
Tim
Traiva
Trinity



Genesee Community Charter School
at the Rochester Museum & Science Center
657 East Avenue Rochester, NY 14607