



City of Ottawa

**Skateboard and Roller Sports
Strategy**

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Executive Summary

The Skateboard and Roller Sports Strategy is an updated framework for planning, designing, and renewing outdoor skateboard and roller sport parks city-wide. This update expands on the [2012 Interim Skateboard Strategy](#) to include rollerblading, scooters, adaptive riding, and BMX. It incorporates extensive public engagement, consultation with user groups, and current best practices for inclusive, accessible, and diverse park design.

Introduction

Background

This strategy updates the [2012 Interim Skateboard Strategy](#) to better reflect the growing diversity of skateboard and roller sports. It builds on the two-pronged approach endorsed by Council in the 2005 Community Infrastructure Report, which recommended continuing the development of smaller neighbourhood and community-level permanent outdoor skateboard parks across the City, while also pursuing opportunities for District- or City-wide facilities. The 2012 Skateboard Strategy was intended as an interim approach, with a comprehensive update to follow the completion of the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan in 2021.

Since the 2012 strategy, 11 additional parks have been constructed with these amenities for a total of 24 skateboard and roller sport parks across the city. Current provision ratios are 1 skateboard park per 50,800 residents and 1 BMX and pump track per 213,300 residents. Additionally, the City of Ottawa capital budget has funds allocated towards six projects to enhance existing and build new skate parks. This strategy will provide direction to enhance distribution, design quality, and accessibility across the network.

Development of the Strategy

Methodology

The updated strategy was developed through an inclusive and collaborative process led by Recreation, Cultural, and Facilities Services department (RCFS) with input from Infrastructure and Water Services Department, Public Works Department, skateboard advocacy groups, riders, and residents. Public engagement ran from August 10 to October 15, 2025, which included surveys, in-person pop-ups, and feedback sessions.

Public Engagement Key Facts:

- 440 English and French survey responses received
 - 250 people attended thirteen in-person consultations
- 800,000 estimated impressions from the public engagement awareness social media campaign that ran from August 10 to October 15, 2025

Public Engagement Highlighted Feedback:

- Prefer multi-use parks that support a variety of roller sports
- Amenities to support longer visits
- Design considerations that offer varied, skill-building terrains
- Ongoing community involvement in the development of city-wide skateboard park system

Full engagement results are available in the [Skateboard and Roller Sports Strategy What We Learned report](#).

Key Considerations:

The following guidelines have been developed, based on community engagement and best practices, to provide direction for the planning, renewal, and development of skateboard and roller sport parks across Ottawa. They are intended to ensure that parks are designed as part of a cohesive network, reflect user needs, and support safe, inclusive, and enjoyable recreation spaces.

1. Consultations for future parks

Planning and design for new and renewed skateboard and roller sport parks will include early, continuous, and meaningful consultation with park users, youth, underrepresented communities, and relevant associations to ensure facilities reflect a broad range of needs, abilities, and cultural perspectives. Engagement begins at the concept development stage and will continue through design refinement, helping to identify preferred features, skill progression needs, accessibility considerations, and safety priorities.

Consultation will use established City engagement processes including in-person and digital methods, such as open houses, design workshops, pop-up engagement at existing parks, online surveys, and interactive feedback tools. Where possible, staff will engage directly with park users through on-site observations and conversations to understand how spaces are currently used and where improvements are needed. To support broad and inclusive participation, staff will collaborate with local skateboard, BMX, scooter, and roller sport associations, youth-serving organizations, community groups, and local businesses to promote engagement opportunities using multiple communication channels, including social media, project webpages, email lists, and in-park signage. In effort to reduce barriers to participation staff will strive to offer varied engagement times, family-friendly formats, and accessible language, with targeted outreach to underrepresented groups such as girls and women, newcomers, Indigenous communities, and people with disabilities. All feedback collected will be clearly documented and meaningfully reflected in design decisions, with summaries shared to demonstrate how community input has informed outcomes.

This inclusive and transparent approach to consultation helps create balanced, well-used, and community-supported facilities that foster a sense of ownership among

users, promote respectful shared use, and support safe, enjoyable recreation for people of all ages and skill levels.

2. Creating an interconnected skateboard park system

Skateboard and roller sport parks would benefit from being planned as a connected citywide network, rather than isolated facilities. The concept of a park network emphasizes a coordinated, city-wide approach to planning skateboarding infrastructure. A network approach ensures a balanced distribution of park types and features, allowing riders to access different styles, difficulty levels, and amenities. Given the unique nature of skateboarding, each park within the network is intended to be purposefully designed with distinct features, ensuring it meaningfully complements the other skateboard and roller sport parks within the park system.

To ensure that individual parks are not developed in isolation but as interrelated components of a comprehensive system, key principles include:

- Planning new skateboard and roller sport parks with consideration of existing facilities nearby, ensuring complementary designs
- Prioritizing locations that are transit accessible and along active transportation networks for district skateboard and roller sport parks, recognizing that riders are willing to travel for larger or specialized facilities
- Ensuring the network supports a range of users, including beginners, advanced riders, and diverse roller sports
- Creating a city-wide network vision with a mix of facility types including district skateparks, local neighbourhood parks, micro-features/skate sports and roller sports spaces.

This system promotes diversity through varied park designs, features, and themes, allowing each park to offer a distinct experience while collectively meeting the needs of Ottawa's skateboarding and roller sports communities.

3. Design element considerations

Historically, many Ottawa skateboard and roller sport parks have followed a generalist design model, resulting in similar features across facilities. To diversify the network, new and renewed skateboard and roller sport parks will be designed to incorporate a broader range of design elements. The elements addressed in this section should be considered from the initial design stage.

Professional skateboard park designers can be consulted and engaged at the earliest stages of the design process, where applicable, to ensure best practices are embedded from the outset. These professionals are typically part of the larger standing offer design team which follows existing processes for specialized parks and amenities. They bring specialized expertise in feature design, safety standards, rider flow, and emerging trends within the skateboarding community. These specialists, working in close collaboration with City of Ottawa Parks Planners, will play a key role in guiding the overall vision, technical layout, and functional programming of the facility. Their

involvement will help translate community feedback into practical, well-designed features that balance skill progression, accessibility, durability, and longterm usability. Early engagement with these professionals supports the delivery of a highquality skate park that reflects both community aspirations and industry best practices.

Meaningful collaboration with local residents, user groups, and other interest holders will continue to be an integral part of this process, ensuring the resulting design is inclusive, context appropriate, and responsive to community needs.

All user groups, regardless of skill level or preferred wheeled sport, should be able to safely and enjoyably access Ottawa's skateboard park network. Collectively, the network is intended to provide obstacles that support a broad range of skills and abilities. While individual parks may emphasize certain features or difficulty levels, the distribution and proportion of obstacles at each location will be considered in relation to other parks across the network to ensure balanced city-wide access and progression opportunities.

In addition to obstacle variety, skateboard park designs will work to address the following considerations:

- Flow and skill progression that encourage intuitive movement and gradual advancement for users
- Inclusivity for beginners, youth, and multiple wheeled sports such as skateboarding, BMX, scooters, and inline skating
- Environmental sustainability, including durable materials, effective drainage, and integration with surrounding landscapes
- Safety, incorporating Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to promote visibility, comfort, and appropriate use
- A substantial variety of features and distinctive park layouts to support diverse experiences across the network.
- Distinct skateboard park themes that reflect local character, community identity, or site context.

Detailed skateboard parks design elements can be reviewed in the [Recreation Facilities Infrastructure Standards \(2019\)](#).

Site considerations

Where feasible the following should be prioritized:

Shade

Skateboard and roller sport parks typically feature large areas of open pavement and hardscaping. These spaces tend to absorb significant amounts of solar radiation and heat up more quickly. The consideration for shade and seating, through permanent structures and tree installation can limit the solar gain of the hardscape and provide

respite for site users. Permanent shade structures with seating in areas of respite may also be able to shelter users from inclement weather

Water

Water bottle fill stations will be considered with the selection of new locations. Site considerations include the location of potential potable water sources, the complexity of providing connections to existing sources, as well as the capital and ongoing costs for the provision of drinking water. When possible, co-location with existing facilities should be prioritized.

Lighting

Lighting for prolonged park use in the spring and autumn will be considered in new park designs. Consideration and feasibility for power availability, costs and construction complexity must be evaluated.

Building materials

Building materials and design requirements vary by skateboard and roller sport park style and by community needs. While poured concrete is the standard for skateboard parks, BMX parks are typically built using a mixture of asphalt and packed dirt, similar to the pump track at Manotick Arena – Centennial Park.

Concrete

Poured-in-place concrete custom parks are the preferred standard for skateboard parks. Concrete is highly durable, with a long lifespan, and typically generates lower relative noise compared to other materials.

Asphalt

Using asphalt as the base surface provides a cost-effective construction option and allows for minor site considerations, such as soils with unsuitable bearing capacity for concrete surfacing. This material is particularly well-suited for pump tracks and some BMX parks.

Alternative surfaces

Alternative surfaces may be used to add novelty to elements of parks. These surfaces can include:

- Brick
- Exposed aggregate
- Granite
- Steel

Skateboard park styles

Skateboard and roller sport parks come in a diverse range of styles. To facilitate the creation of a city-wide network, considerations should be made to incorporate a variety

of features to suit different park styles, ensuring the network accommodates a diverse range of roller sports activities into new builds and renewals throughout the City.

Park types include:

- Street plaza:
Designed to replicate urban landscapes and plaza where skateboarding originated, modern parks work to incorporate structural and cosmetic enhancements, features include:
 - o Ledges, rails, stairs, and other elements inspired by urban environments
- Bowls/transition style parks
Built to mimic empty pools, these parks are now purpose built and are considerable in size. Parks of this nature tend to include more curved and inclined surfaces that offer varying angles and heights, bowls and transitions can be either above or below grade.
 - o Provide curved surfaces and bowls that support flow-based riding
- Hybrid
Hybrid parks work to incorporate both plaza and bowl/transitions style parks into one. These parks require larger space and require better spatial organization, which can offer complex design challenges and increased overall cost.
 - o Combine elements from multiple styles to accommodate a variety of users

Park design elements can include a mixture of styles such as:

- Freestyle areas
 - o Dedicated open spaces designed for more technical, flat-ground usage.
- Slalom run
 - o A smooth, flowing line where a user weaves back and forth through features.
- Snake run
 - o A long and winding smooth pathway that curves back and forth, designed for continuous carving and pumping.
- Bowls and pools
 - o Large, curved riding areas, made for ariel tricks; similar to empty swimming pools.
- Half pipe
 - o U-shaped ramp made of two opposing curved walls, with a flat section between them. Used by riders to gain speed and go back and forth from side to side.
- Full pipe
 - o An enclosed, circular tube-like structure where users can ride through. Typically made of metal or concrete.

Location selection and transportation

Skateboard and roller sport park users and area residents have consistently identified the importance of locating future parks within close proximity to public transit routes and the active transportation network, including sidewalks, multiuse pathways, protected bike lanes, and trail systems. Transit accessible locations improve independent access for youth, and users who do not have reliable vehicle transportation, while active transportation connections support safe, low cost, and sustainable travel to and between parks. Thoughtful siting along these networks also encourages shared use, allows users to visit multiple facilities ease, and helps distribute park usage more evenly across the city.

Where feasible, new parks should be located adjacent to or integrated with existing recreation facilities, such as community centres, arenas, playgrounds, or sports fields. Co-locating facilities allows skateboard and roller sport users to benefit from established amenities, including potable water, washrooms, seating, lighting, and parking, which improve comfort, safety, and duration of use. Shared sites also support passive surveillance, operational efficiencies, and opportunities for multi-generational and cross-program recreation, contributing to more vibrant and well-used public spaces.

An equity-based evaluation will be incorporated into site selection and prioritization to ensure inclusive, city-wide access to skateboard and roller sport parks. This evaluation will consider factors such as neighbourhood access gaps, proximity to underserved or equity-deserving communities, youth population distribution, transit service levels, and the presence of physical or socio-economic barriers to participation. Applying an equity lens helps ensure that parks are not disproportionately concentrated in a small number of areas and that investment decisions support fair access to high-quality recreation opportunities for residents across the city.

4. Maintenance

Infrastructure

The long-term performance, safety, and usability of skateboard and roller sport parks will be supported through consistent application of Asset Management lifecycle policies. These Council approved policies will guide the monitoring, maintenance, rehabilitation, and eventual reinvestment of park infrastructure to ensure facilities remain safe, functional, and responsive to user needs over time. Lifecycle-based planning will consider the unique wear patterns associated with wheeled sports, including high-impact use, weather exposure, and surface fatigue, and should be integrated into broader parks and recreation asset management programs.

Cleaning, repair, and reporting

Routine cleaning aligns with existing park maintenance quality standards. schedules, with regular inspections by parks maintenance staff.

Cracks, surface deterioration, holes and other deficiencies will be repaired by the Public Works Department in accordance with the Council approved Maintenance Quality Standards(MQS). Skateboard park Maintenance Quality Standards may be subject to review as part of a future update to the standards, as appropriate.

Skateboard and roller sport park users are encouraged to contact 311 for any maintenance or offensive graffiti issues at the park.

Next steps

The City of Ottawa will implement this strategy for the design of renewed and new skateboard and roller sports parks.

References

- City of Ottawa (2026). Skateboard and Roller Sports Strategy: “What We Learned” Report
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- City of Ottawa (2018). Equity & Inclusion Lens Handbook
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- City of Ottawa (2004). Maintenance Quality Standards