



Date: April 20, 2015

**TO:** Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
**FROM:** General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Mount Pleasant Skateboard Facility Location

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## RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Board approve locating an intermediate skill level skateboarding facility in Jonathan Rogers Park; and
- B. THAT the Board recommend one of the following options for the Mount Pleasant Park Skateboard Facility:
- Option 1 - Convert the Mount Pleasant Park skateboarding facility for beginner skateboarding use;
- Option 2 - Remove this facility and convert it to a grass lawn;
- Option 3 - Remove this facility and engage with local residents to determine a more appropriate use for the area.
- With the details for Option 1, 2 and 3 described within this report.

## POLICY

The Board approves the design and development of parks.

## BACKGROUND

In 2005, the Vancouver Park Board approved the Skateboard Strategy for Vancouver. This document discusses a long-term strategy, including criteria for selecting skateboard facility locations and designs that meet the needs of skateboarders, other park users, and residents living near the facilities. The report's strategic action items include:

- providing additional skateboard facilities in Vancouver;
- providing variety in the skateboarding system including destination and local serving facilities for a variety of skill levels from entry level to advanced;
- providing variation in the styles of facilities (e.g. including *bowl* and *street style*) ;
- and locating new skateboard facilities in parks that meet as many of the following criteria as possible:
  - where support services are available nearby (e.g. public washrooms, drinking fountain, youth worker, first aid);
  - where noise can be minimized for nearby residents;
  - where it is visible from a Park Board building or from a nearby street;

- where other established park uses or a group of park users will not be displaced; and
- where it is not significantly out of character with the park.

The strategy acknowledges skateboarding as an important recreational activity that needs a proactive approach, and provides a framework for capital investments in skateboarding by identifying overall priorities and by setting out location criteria to identify and assess candidate sites for new skateboard facilities.

Currently, a variety of sizes and styles of skateboard facilities are located throughout Vancouver, including bowls, ramps, hip-boxes, and street-style layouts. Skateboard facilities are open to everyone and can be reserved for regular practice, a special event, or tournament. Data for skate park use is collected by park board staff who comment that each skateboard facility is well utilized with the largest facilities (Downtown Skateboard Plaza, Kensington, and Hastings) attracting dozens of users during peak times. The popularity of new facilities at Kensington Park and at Mount Pleasant Park indicates that supply has not fully caught up with demand.

There are a total of 9 skateboard facilities on publicly owned land in Vancouver, 7 of the 9 facilities are located in parks (China Creek, Coopers, Hastings, Kensington, Mount Pleasant, Quilchena, Strathcona) and 2 of the facilities are located in Engineering Street right of ways (Downtown Skateboard Plaza and Leaside Tunnel) as shown in Appendix A.

Mount Pleasant Park is a 1.12 hectare park situated at Ontario Street and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The future of the park has been subject to extensive public discussion since 2000 when Council and the Board decided to move the community centre to a new location at 1 Kingsway. A recommended concept plan for the Mount Pleasant Park upgrade was developed, was well supported by the community, and was adopted by the Board in October 2010. Throughout 2011-2012 the park was constructed in accordance with the adopted concept plan, including a small skate boarding facility for young children as a conversion of the former wading pool.

The skateboard facility is designed for novices; however, what works well for young children learning to skateboard is also fun for skateboarders of all ages and skill levels. The fun of skateboarding comes from the tricks you are performing and not necessarily from the obstacles you are performing them on. Since opening in 2012, the facility is well used by all users, including children in the day and primarily by young adults in the evenings.

## **DISCUSSION**

Skateboarding at Mount Pleasant Park was occurring after 10 pm and prior to 6 am, which causes significant unintended noise impacts for nearby residents, especially at night when used by young adults. Staff did not anticipate the need, the high use by adult skateboarders, and the noise resulting from this location.

Noise has been the top concern for residents, and an independent noise assessment was arranged. The results of this study indicate that the skateboarders at this facility are producing noise that exceeds decibel levels for this Quiet Zone as outlined in Noise Control By-law No. 6555. The noise assessment report is attached as Appendix B.

Staff retained an independent engagement consultant (Verlaan) to dialogue with stakeholders and residents to review the issues and to make recommendations for improvements. As a result in 2013, staff produced an action plan to improve the situation and met with the residents and the Vancouver Skateboard Coalition on several occasions. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix C. Siting and designing a new skateboard facility in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood for older and more skilled skateboarders is integral to the ongoing management of the issues as indicated in the independent consultant's report. Staff therefore embarked upon a location study for a new facility in 2014.

### **Location Study for the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Skateboard Facility**

Two park sites in Mount Pleasant neighbourhood were identified as feasible park locations for a new facility and no other available City owned sites were found.

Robson Park (located at Kingsway and St. George Street) and Jonathan Rogers Park (located at Manitoba and West 7th Avenue) were rigorously reviewed, involving the application of the Skateboard Strategy's location criteria to assess the suitability of each park (see Appendix D for more comparison information).

In January 2014, a public consultation professional (Verlaan) was engaged to conduct one-on-one interviews with stakeholders with interests proximate to both sites. As no obstacles were identified that warranted excluding either location, a park design professional (Golder and Associates) was engaged in February 2014 to take a public consultation process forward and to focus stakeholder and community input on determining which of two proposed locations is the most suitable for the new facility.

In April 2014, public engagement opportunities (including a well-attended open house held in the Mt. Pleasant Community Centre lobby and an on-line questionnaire) ensured broad awareness of this initiative and resulted in 367 completed questionnaires.

The public consultation process provided an opportunity to understand the needs of the community and the benefits and impacts that a new skateboard amenity could have on the park and surrounding neighbourhood. The engagements were promoted via emails to local stakeholders, on the City's website, through social media, through an advertisement in the Vancouver Courier and through the delivery of notices to business and residents in a 2-block radius around each park.

Based on the public consultation feedback received, and the compatibility with the criteria outlined in the Skateboard Strategy for Vancouver, Jonathan Rogers Park is the preferred candidate location for a new skateboard facility. This is the location local residents' show a preference for where 56% of respondents think Jonathan Rogers is a suitable location for a skateboard facility compared to only 48% for Robson Park. The survey results are illustrated in Appendix D. The questionnaire also revealed that 75% of respondents live or work within 1 kilometre of either Robson or Jonathan Rogers Park and 32% of respondents skateboard themselves or have children that skateboard, noted in Appendix D.

Jonathan Rogers Park is located in a light industrial zone and is surrounded by a variety of local businesses. It has a public washroom and has street frontage on all sides. The new mid-sized skateboarding facility will need to be fully integrated with existing park uses, including

the community garden, an out-of-service wading pool, and playground. Complimentary park upgrades including the demolition of the out-of-service wading pool and a new playground can be included with this project.

A skateboard facility located in Jonathan Rogers Park will benefit from easy access to public transit; good visibility from surrounding streets; close proximity to support services (including a drinking fountain and washroom located in the field house); and compatibility with the informal character of park. This aligns with the criteria for skateboard facilities outlined in the Skateboard Strategy.

Staff will continue to collaborate with local residents, business owners and interest groups to produce a coordinated final design for the eastern portion of the park that includes the skateboard facility if approved, the community garden, playground and other amenities. The final design for the skateboard facility will be confirmed through this upcoming process and there is a great opportunity to renew the eastern portion of the park to suit a range of ages, and outdoor recreation interests in an accessible space.

A budget of \$200,000 is available for the skateboard facility and funds for related and needed park improvements at Jonathan Rogers Park such as: playground upgrades, wading pool removals and conversions, and accessible pathways and design fees, are also available in the 2015-2018 Capital Plan.

### **Addressing the Mount Pleasant Park Skateboard Facility**

Subsequent to the noise assessment and consultant's report, staff made efforts to address noise impacts; one of the Mount Pleasant skateboard facility features was modified and a 10' high chain link fence and signs were installed around the perimeter in 2013. The skateboard facility entry gates are manually locked and unlocked daily at 9pm and 9am, respectively. Signs note permitted hours of use (9am-9pm), respect for nearby neighbours, and safety information - illustrated in Appendix E.

Despite efforts to address impacts to neighbouring Mount Pleasant Park residents, noise complaints are on-going. When the weather is ideal for skateboarding, Park Rangers regularly attend Mount Pleasant Park after closing time to address after-hours use. The Vancouver Skate Coalition volunteer and promote positive behaviors, cleanliness and use, and the staff Skate Park Host has a regular presence at the Mount Pleasant skate park.

Additional adjustments to the skateboard facility features and size and programming may be needed to promote use by children learning to skateboard and to reduce its use by skilled skateboarders.

Going forward, possible directions to consider for the Mount Pleasant Park skateboard facility are:

1. Converting the Mount Pleasant Park skateboarding facility for beginner skateboard use, at an estimated cost of \$25,000, and continuing with the monitoring by Park Rangers, volunteers, the staff skate host, and promotion of children's programs;

2. Removing this facility and converting it to a grass lawn at an estimated cost of \$40,000; or
3. Removing this facility and engaging with residents to determine another appropriate use for the facility, such as a garden or a tricycle run for young children, at a cost to be determined when the use is identified.

Funding to address the issues at the Mount Pleasant Park Skateboard Park can be prioritized in the 2015 capital budget.

## **SUMMARY**

The recommended location for a new skateboard facility in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood is Jonathan Rogers Park, as it is supported by community members and skateboarding enthusiasts, and as it is the park location that aligns best with the criteria outlined in the Vancouver Skateboard Strategy. Detailed design discussions, including working closely with local stakeholders, residents, and skateboarding enthusiasts to explore a renewal plan for the eastern portion of the park will begin after Park Board approval of the location. Construction of the facility and related park improvements can begin in 2016.

General Manager's Office  
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
Vancouver, BC

Prepared by: Parks Planning & Development

DB/TM/BH/clc

## APPENDIX A

### Locations of Existing and Proposed Skateboard Parks in Vancouver

#### *Skateboard Facilities in Vancouver*

At present, there are nine skateboard facilities in Vancouver parks:

- China Creek Skateboard Park
- Coopers' Skateboard Park
- Downtown Skateboard Park
- Hastings Skateboard Park
- Kensington Skateboard Park
- Leeside Tunnel Skateboard Park
- Mount Pleasant Skateboard Park
- Quilchena Skateboard Park
- Strathcona Skateboard Park

To view the Skateboard Strategy for Vancouver, visit the project website:

[vancouver.ca/mtpleasantskateboard](http://vancouver.ca/mtpleasantskateboard)





**APPENDIX B**  
**Mount Pleasant Skateboard Facility**  
**Noise Assessment Report**

August 17, 2012

File: 1486-12A

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
2099 Beach Avenue  
Vancouver, BC  
V6G 1Z4

Attention: Tiina Mack

Dear Tiina:

**Re: Noise Assessment for Mount Pleasant Skateboard Park**

BKL Consultants visited the site of 62 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street on July 13th, 2012 to measure the current noise levels on this property. Our objective was to quantify and assess noise from the skateboard park and to identify any opportunities for noise mitigation. It is our understanding that the primary concern is the intrusion of skateboard park noise and associated outdoor speech at the park area directly opposite the residence.

**Noise Assessment Criteria**

Sound levels are measured according to a logarithmic decibel (dB) scale. As a general 'rule of thumb' human beings usually perceive an increase in sound level of 10 dB as being twice as loud. A decrease of 10 dB would be perceived as being half as loud. An increase or decrease of less than 3 dB is generally not noticeable subjectively. Whether or not skateboard park noise is a significant disturbance to the residents depends primarily on the Signal to Noise Ratio (SNR) which describes the skateboard park noise at the point of reception in the neighbour's property relative to ambient noise levels at the time. It also depends upon the characteristics of the intruding sound. For example, variable sounds with information content such as loud voices or music, are more annoying than steady broadband noise sources such as road traffic.

The City of Vancouver noise by-law 6555 states:

*"No person shall make or cause, or permit to be made or caused, any noise or sound in a street, park or similar public place which disturbs or tends to disturb unreasonably the quiet, peace, rest, enjoyment, comfort or convenience of persons in the neighbourhood or vicinity."*

Additionally this by-law provides quantitative requirements of 55 dBA at the property line of the receiver during the day and 45 dBA at night for 'quiet zones' generally qualified as residential areas.

### Noise Monitoring Results

Noise levels were measured on the balcony of 62 West 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue since the unattended noise monitoring equipment could not be left at the property line where bylaw noise limits apply. Cadna/A acoustic modelling software was used to adjust the levels measured on the balcony to the levels that would have occurred at the property line. Three distinct noise sources were dominating the environment. These were traffic noise on West 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, noise from skateboarding activities (mostly loud clapping sounds of skateboards landing on concrete with the occasional ringing of metal impacting with metal) and human noise (people talking, shouting and cheering) in the park.

Property line values are shown in Table 1 below. The skateboard park noise and human noise was quantified using a slow-response A-weighted maximum level, as specified in the noise by-law. Ambient noise levels vary considerably over time depending upon traffic volumes but for the purpose of our assessment, we have compared skateboard noise against the background levels that exist in the absence of skateboard park noise, human noise and traffic noise. In Table 1, background noise levels are presented as Equivalent Sound Levels ( $L_{eq}$ ) which is an energy average sound level. Night time hours shown below are between 10pm and midnight. A Signal to Noise Ratio of 10 dBA or more is quite significant as it indicates that the intruding noise (the "Signal") sounds approximately twice as loud as the ambient noise (the "Noise"). It should also be noted that setting the sound level meter on "Slow Response" as specified in the noise bylaw, underestimates the subjective perception of impact noises such as those produced by skateboards. Faster response time settings such as "Fast" or "Impulse" would provide a better correlation with the subjective perception of impact noise. On the other hand, noise from the skateboard park will be less intrusive than indicated in Table 1 on many occasions since traffic noise levels can be well above the background noise level. For example, the  $L_{eq}$  of the average vehicle pass-by is estimated to be approximately 54 dBA.

**Table 1: Noise Levels at Property Line of 62 West 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Background level <math>L_{eq}</math> (dBA)</b>	<b>Skateboard Noise <math>L_{ASmax}</math> (dBA) (SNR)</b>	<b>Human Noise <math>L_{ASmax}</math> (dBA) (SNR)</b>
Friday night	42	57(15)	54 (12)
Saturday morning	44	67 (23)	n/a
Saturday night	44	59 (15)	56 (12)
Sunday morning	39	70 (31)	60 (21)
Sunday night	41	70 (29)	n/a



## Noise Mitigation

Opportunities for noise mitigation are very limited. Apart from limiting hours of use, the only practical noise mitigation measure would be a transparent noise barrier between the skateboard facility and the sidewalk on the north side of the road. Therefore, we investigated the requirements and potential benefits of this approach.

During the measurement period of three days, the maximum skateboard levels shown above for Sunday morning and Sunday night were reached less than 1% of the time. As such, we based our preliminary design on a more representative statistic, the level exceeded for 5% of the time ( $L_5$ ). This value is 65 dBA as opposed to the  $L_1$  level of 70 dBA. As discussed with you previously, any noise barrier at this site would have to be at least partially transparent so as not to obscure the skateboard facility from the street. It would also have to avoid existing trees.

In order to determine the type and placement of noise barrier that would be most appropriate for this site, we utilized our sound modelling software. Input data consisted of aerial photos (taken prior to construction of the skateboard park) plus sound level measurement data acquired during our visit to the site. Noise level contours for the current situation, as computed by the software, are shown in Figure 1. In order to most effectively attenuate the current levels, a noise barrier located as shown in Figure 2 is recommended. The effectiveness of such a barrier would depend upon its height so we have produced noise contours for two different heights. Figure 3 shows the contours for a 2m high barrier and Figure 4 shows contours for a 2.5m high barrier. Specific requirements for the noise barrier are outlined below.

## Sound Barrier Requirements

To effectively mitigate noise for residents, the sound barrier should have the following properties:

### Location

The noise barrier should be located as close to the edge of the skate park as possible. The barrier needs to extend beyond the east and west edge of the skateboard park as shown in Figure 2. This configuration will also reduce human noise related to activity in the playground area adjacent to the skateboard park.

### Height

A 2m high barrier would provide approximately 9 dBA of sound attenuation at the receiving property line. This would be adequate to reduce noise levels at the property line of the most affected properties to the daytime bylaw limit (55 dBA) for 95% of the time. A 2.5m high barrier would provide an additional 2 dB of attenuation, resulting in an overall 11 dB reduction in noise levels at the property line. The table below summarises the predicted attenuation of noise at the property line of the nearby residences on West 16<sup>th</sup> with regard to different barrier heights.

**Table 2: Estimated Property Line Levels on West 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

Barrier height (m)	Property line levels (dBA)	Attenuation achieved (dBA)
no barrier	64	n/a
1.5	57	7
2	55	9
2.5	53	11

### Material

The denser the material the better its ability to inhibit transmission of sound. However, in the case of outdoor noise barriers bending of sound over top of the barrier is generally what limits the attenuation achieved so a minimum surface weight of 10 kg/m<sup>2</sup> (2 lbs/ft<sup>2</sup>) is more than adequate. It is very important that there are no gaps in the barrier that could allow sound to pass through or under the barrier so there must be no gap between the bottom of the barrier and the ground. As noted above, the barrier must allow for adequate sight lines into the skateboard area but this does not necessarily mean that the entire barrier need be transparent. For example, the bottom 1m could be a concrete or brick wall with upper sections of the barrier transparent. One noise wall manufacturer that offers transparent barriers is **Armtec**, 604-278-9766 (ask for Doug Carter) but there are likely a number of others. Potential suppliers should be contacted and asked to provide their recommendations considering such factors as durability and maintenance of the transparent panels.

### Side-effects (sound reflection)

It should be noted that placing a barrier in this position will likely cause traffic noise from West 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to be reflected off the barrier and directed towards the residential units. This will result in a maximum 3 dBA increase in traffic noise, but this may be an acceptable trade off to the reduction in skateboard park noise as traffic noise is less intrusive in nature. Although some skateboard noise will also be reflected off the barrier towards the houses on the north side of West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, it is unlikely to result in a perceptible increase at these locations.

### **Conclusions**

Construction of a transparent noise barrier would significantly reduce day time levels for the majority of skateboard park noise as shown in Figures 3 and 4. Unfortunately, it is not possible to attain the necessary attenuation to meet night-time bylaw requirements using a barrier alone. This is especially true since there are trees in the immediate area of the skateboard park that may limit the height of a barrier. A possible solution may be to restrict the use of the skateboard to day-time hours only. The bylaw defines "daytime" as the hours between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm on weekdays and Saturdays and between 10:00 am and 10:00 pm on Sundays.

Detailed design of the structural, environmental and aesthetic requirements for the barrier is not within our current scope of work but we would be pleased to provide additional services if required to assist

Tiina Mack

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August 17, 2012

you in further assessment of this proposed approach. If you have any questions in the meantime, please let us know.

Sincerely,

**BKL Consultants Ltd.**

per:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Boetzer".

Briët Coetzer MMus (Technology), EIT

Enclosures



File: 1486-12A

Figure 1: Current Noise Levels Surrounding Skateboard Park

Date: August 2012



File: 1486-12A

Figure 2: Position of Noise Barrier Adjacent to Skateboard park

Date: August 2012





**File:** 1486-12A

**Figure 3:** Noise Contours Showing Levels with 2m High Barrier

**Date:** August 2012



**File:** 1486-12A

**Figure 4:** Noise Contours Showing Levels with 2.5m High Barrier

**Date:** August 2012

“Perspectives: Summary report from  
interviews regarding the Mt. Pleasant Park  
skatespot facility”

7/22/2013

Vince Verlaan & Emory Davidge  
*Golder Sustainable Communities Group*



## Section A – Introduction

In May 2013, the Sustainable Communities Group of Golder Associates was contacted by senior management of the City of Vancouver Park Board regarding the “skatespot” facility in Mt. Pleasant Park.

This recently refurbished park, located at Ontario and 16<sup>th</sup> Ave, is heavily used by local residents and people from across the city. It has a long history of serving community needs, and an active Community Association and residents played important roles in the planning for and redesign of the park. It is a highly visible park, located along busy traffic routes, on a major bike route, adjacent to an elementary school, and in a dynamic, popular and growing area of the city.

From the time construction on the park began, some local residents have been concerned with the siting, opening and operations of a “skatespot” facility (a relatively small, custom-designed skateboarding space intended for use by children and beginners) in the park. Recently the number and intensity of complaints regarding noise from the skatespot, its hours of use, user demographics, illegal behaviours, and impacts on residents directly across 16<sup>th</sup> Ave and other park users have increased.

However, compliments on the skatespot facility have been received by the Park Board, and it also appears to be a well-used and popular facility serving a growing need for skateboarding facilities in the city. Accordingly, staff were reluctant to make major changes to the facility without fully understanding the issues as well as learning from the perspectives of park users, skateboarders, and residents.

A Park Board “Action Plan” to address resident concerns was initiated in May 2012, and implementation is ongoing today. The Action Plan includes: an acoustic study to assess the noise level coming from the skatespot; increased enforcement of bylaws and hours of use; improved signage; outreach to skaters; and, graffiti removal. Park Ranger presence was significantly increased in May 2013.

Given that these efforts did not resolve the complaints, Park Board staff requested assistance on this challenging issue from Golder staff who use “community engagement” techniques to understand and respond to such issues at the site, neighbourhood, or city level. This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of two Golder staff who interviewed 21 people between May 30 and June 15, 2013, including:

- 3 park users;
- 7 skatespot users;
- 8 local residents; and
- 3 Community Association members.

The interview questions used and the methods used for identifying the interviewees can be found in Appendix B. Please note that the interviews were designed and executed to support **identification and analysis** of the various perspectives that different people bring to an issue like this. This initial step of an engagement project is known as “surface and sort”, where diverse information, thoughts and comments on a clearly defined topic or issue are gathered and then organized into a logical framework.

In the attached summary table (*Appendix A*), the reader can see how interviewee comments landed in 5 major categories: Process Issues (pre-opening), Process Issues (post-opening), Content Issues (design of the facility), Content Issues (use / impacts), and Resolutions (proposed).

Given that the summary table is organized with rows assigned to residents, skaters or other park users/association members, the reader will also see that while a few issues and facts are perceived similarly by the various people/groups interviewed, many are not. This, of course, has huge implications for moving forward thoughtfully and in a way that de-escalates the issues and treats all parties with respect. A primary finding, however, is that everyone interviewed hope negative impacts on residents can be reduced, and hope further conflict between different park users and/or residents is avoided.

## **Section B – Key Findings and Related Recommendations**

What follows are a set of key findings that emerge from the summary table and the “surface and sort” exercise, as well as recommended next steps, all organized by the 5 categories noted above.

### ***Key Findings and Recommendations for Process Issues (pre-opening):***

Many of the comments made during interviews with concerned local residents related to perceptions about how the decision to design and site a facility like the skatespot in the park was made. Participants commented that the skateboarding facility ranked last of 15 options in a consultation process run by the Park Board,<sup>1</sup> that the siting of the facility in this location and in this kind of park runs counter to established Park Board criteria, that the size and design elements of the facility were unilaterally changed “behind closed doors”, and that the size and design does not suit the intended audience of children and beginners.

Skaters argue that the design and size of the facility does serve its intended audience, acknowledge that some elements of the skatespot’s design are responsible for some of the identified concerns, and share a perception that the design had changed from an earlier, smaller concept. Other interviewees mentioned the influence of community pool supporters on the consultation and design process, and a mismatch between the results of the consultation effort and the need for a skatespot facility.

***Recommendation 1:*** *given that the process concerns identified by residents speak to fundamental issues of trust, competency and responsiveness, we suggest the Park Board briefly but clearly document and communicate the major steps in the process by which the park redesign was undertaken. While doing so,*

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<sup>1</sup> The open house was one method the Park Board used to receive input to inform a decision on renovating Mt. Pleasant Park. The process also included input from children, focus groups, and existing recreation strategies and experience. At the open house, 15 options for the park were offered to residents to comment on, and all 15 (except a pool and water park) were provided in the renovated park. While the skatespot was not a preferred option for adults, it was a high priority for local children. The pool and water park were not provided in the renovated park. This decision was based on focus group observations that it would be better to have the option to potentially have a pool in the future rather than settle on a water park in the short term.

*the Park Board should clearly document and communicate how community consultation activities contributed to the eventual decision to site a skatespot facility in the park, and what other factors may have contributed to that decision. The Park Board should also review its communication efforts during the redesign process, and then share a timeline and related communication material.*

**Recommendation 2:** *given concerns regarding the intended audience for the skatespot, the rationale, audience and design instructions for the facility given to New Line by the Park Board during the park redesign process should also be gathered and circulated. In addition, any design or siting modifications or adjustments made during the skatespot design process should be documented and shared.*

**Recommendation 3:** *given the concerns with the skatespot design and siting not following relevant and established Park Board criteria, the Park Board should clarify whether there are established criteria for such facilities, when they came into being, whether they apply citywide and to all such facilities, and whether they were or might have been considered in this design process by referring to the Vancouver Skateboard Strategy.*

**Key Findings and Recommendations for Process Issues (post-opening):**

The main resident concerns in this section relate to the perception that their complaints and concerns are not being taken seriously enough or are being handled ineffectively by staff and/or elected officials. Related concerns include bylaws not being enforced, the conflict that arises from this ongoing situation, the perceived undue influence of certain stakeholders, and the appropriate level of influence that the most heavily affected local residents should have on this issue.

Skateboarders interviewed were less aware of concerns raised and any attempted responses, and felt detached from any meetings or planning organized by the Park Board in response. Other interviewees mentioned little notice being given for planning meetings, and little visible enforcement response.

**Recommendation 4:** *since the concerns of residents here relates to the whether their complaints are being handled seriously and effectively, Park Board staff should meet with the residents to document the actions that have been taken to date, communicate their commitment to address concerns immediately and over the short term, and provide a rationale for why this engagement process has been undertaken.*

**Recommendation 5:** *since awareness of the concerns raised and of response made is so low, and since future solutions (other than closure and removal of the skatespot facility) will likely depend on a broad and community-based response, Park Board staff should work with community association members, local residents and skaters to substantially raise the profile of this issue and of responses being taken.*

**Recommendation 6:** *since different groups feel less or more involved in Park Board efforts to understand and address these issues, the Park Board should make greater efforts to communicate about future planning efforts (including meetings) with a wider group of stakeholders, park users and local residents.*

***Key Findings and Recommendations for Content Issues (design of facility):***

Concerns raised by residents regarding the design of the facility focus on whether it is suitable to the park, whether its location is appropriate given how close it is to their homes, whether the size and design match the intended audience, and whether it is truly a local-serving facility. Skateboarders see it as a well-designed, unique and much needed facility that brings different ages together, and serves its intended audience. They also believe it serves a wide range of users and supports the transfer of both technical and social skills, but acknowledge that younger users can get pushed out by adults. Other interviewees concur that it is a much needed and well-used facility. A user survey completed in summer 2012 indicated that local skateboarders are the primary users of the skatespot.

***Recommendation 7:*** *given the disparity in views on who is using the facility, documentation of the age and skill level of those currently using the facility most often is greatly needed to supplement a user survey completed in summer 2012.*

***Recommendation 8:*** *given that the skatespot was designed for beginners and children, reasonable efforts to provide instruction and programming for those audiences should be made in the near future. Focused efforts should be made to move more skilled skateboarders to other facilities.*

***Recommendation 9:*** *given the concern regarding the appropriateness of the siting this type of facility so near homes, the Park Board should formally acknowledge the impacts being felt by local residents and agree to address the impacts immediately, in concert with other park users.*

***Recommendation 10:*** *given the support for the facility shown by skateboarders and other park users, any suggestion that the facility be immediately closed and/or removed should be set aside until efforts to publicize and reduce undue impacts on local residents are made.*

***Key Findings and Recommendations for Content Issues (use / impacts):***

Resident concerns here centre on the serious impacts that certain uses of the skatespot are having on their enjoyment of their homes, their quality of life, their peace of mind, their ability to relax and recharge, and their use of the park. Noise (and its influence on both external and internal private spaces) is clearly the largest issue, with skateboard noise and yelling/swearing being most disturbing to residents who live very close to the skatespot. This is multiplied by loud and jarring noises happening at “all hours” with little regard to mandated hours of use. Other concerns include litter, drinking, smoking, public urination and graffiti. Impacts on other park users, and the “threatening demeanour” of young male skateboarders was also mentioned.

Skateboarders mentioned feeling blamed for the actions of others who drink/smoke/litter in the park, feeling misunderstood and scapegoated, being concerned over conflict with residents, and suspecting that residents have vandalized the skatespot. More positive comments related to the positive social

environment at the park, the growing social community of people using the skatespot, and how the skatespot and the redesigned park were attracting people to live in the neighbourhood.

Other park users mentioned pre-existing problems in the park being blamed on skaters, and concern that the average skater is being misrepresented as a “problem”. Other comments confirmed the problem with a lack of washroom facilities in a heavily used park, but did not replicate concerns over noise.

**Recommendation 11:** *given that the acoustic study verified that the noise level of the skatespot facility exceeds allowable levels, and given the disturbance this causes for residents living very near the facility, the Park Board should acknowledge and publicize that this is a genuine concern that will be addressed.*

**Recommendation 12:** *given that the impact of the noise emanating from the skatespot facility on local residents would be greatly reduced if operating hours were respected, there should be a very focused effort (combining education, signage, self-policing and enforcement) between July and October 2013 to limit skatespot use to agreed hours, with frequent spot checking to verify success.*

**Recommendation 13:** *Given that many of the behaviours that concern local residents are inappropriate to a family-friendly and community-serving park such as this, education, signage, self-policing and enforcement efforts to reduce swearing, yelling, graffiti, smoking, drinking and litter should be undertaken between July and October 2013 with spot checking to verify success. This enforcement must be conducted throughout the entire park – not just the skatespot area.*

**Recommendation 14:** *given that this facility is intended to serve beginners and children, the Park Board should work with other stakeholders and the local community association to program the skatespot over the summer with highly visible activities designed to serve children and/or beginners<sup>2</sup> Scheduling this activity at peak use times such as late afternoon/early evening and on weekends will help shape behaviour at the skatespot, deflect more skilled skateboarders to other facilities, establish clear expectations regarding who is best suited to use the facility, and support the growth of skateboarding for and with intended audiences.*

**Recommendation 15:** *given that the skatespot is located next to a toddler play zone and there is a gate that opens between the two areas, a redesign and replacement of the fence between the two facilities should be completed immediately.*

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<sup>2</sup> Based on Park Board education and programming experience, one week-long program during the summer and one weekend course could be appropriate for the skatespot.

**Key Findings and Recommendations for Resolutions (proposed):**

Resolutions offered by the residents focused on the complete removal of the skatespot facility, and on conversion of the space into a different kind of children’s play area. There was limited support for modification to the skatespot to make it less attractive to older users, as well as support for the creation of a new skate facility nearby to draw older users away from Mount Pleasant Park.

Landscaped buffers of shrubbery and/or grass and soil berms were the most suggested resolution from skateboarders. However due to existing trees located south of the skatespot, installation of a soil berm is not possible. The acoustic study results suggest that landscaped buffers or a berm would not reduce noise enough. Other suggestions included built-form solutions such as a ‘rideable’ wall running the south end of the skatespot (similar to a ¼ pipe) backed by a soil and grass berm to deflect the noise from the nearby residences. While a berm would not be possible, due to the need to protect the roots of existing trees, the acoustic study’s findings suggest that a wall 70 to 80 meters long across the front of the park could reduce noise. Increased enforcement, including cameras and fines, coupled with more explicit signage were also suggested. Many skateboarders wanted the opportunity to meet with the affected neighbours to better understand their issues and to be able to work together to find a solution.

Other park users felt that any landscape or built form solution needed to be CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) compliant in order to keep the park safe at night. They also felt that all types of park misuse needed to be addressed, throughout the park.

**Recommendation 16:** *given the wide disparity in the awareness, perceptions and suggested resolutions between the groups, information should be shared between all groups and then a facilitated meeting should be held in the park bringing together representatives from all sides of the issue (residents, skateboarders, community association members, and other park users). This meeting would focus on increasing understanding and awareness, in order to build a foundation for shared action.*

**Recommendation 17:** *the Park Board should launch an education campaign focused on skateboarders currently using the park, and clearly outlining the issues and potential repercussions of continued misuse. The Park Board should work closely with stakeholders to deliver the message while also exploring the use of alternative signage that ‘speaks the skateboarder’s language’ (i.e. DNV Parks).*

**Recommendation 18:** *an examination of CPTED compliant built-form solutions should be explored as a potential and additional solution to the noise complaints. A built-form solution (wall) coupled with other mitigation approaches (i.e. programming and increased enforcement) may reduce the noise issues.*

**Recommendation 19:** *given the increasing demand for skatepark facilities in this part of the city, the Park Board should immediately seek funding and a location for a larger, adult-oriented skatepark to be built within close distance of this facility. This would provide a positive outcome to this situation, add capacity for skateparks in the city, and draw more expert skaters away from the skatespot.*

# **Appendix A:**

## **Summary Table**

A. Process Issues (pre-opening date)	B. Process Issues (post-opening date)	C. Content Issues (design of facility)	D. Content Issues (use / impacts)	E. Resolutions (proposed)
Residents	Residents	Residents	Residents	Residents
<p>A1 - The skatespot came 15th in rank in community consultation by PB for park redesign so it should not have been built.</p> <p>A2 - The siting of this facility in this park is counter to the 5 established PB criteria for skate parks so it should not have been built where it was.</p> <p>A3 - Problems with the facility started very early, with skaters tearing down fences during construction. PB had to spread sand to stop them.</p> <p>A4 - Skatespot design and size changed behind closed doors and 'slipped past' us. It should not have been built this large.</p> <p>A5 - Design and size of facility does not serve stated intended audience of kids. Should not have been built like this.</p>	<p>B1 - CoV bylaws are being broken often and continuously.</p> <p>B2 - the acoustic study that was done shows how high the noise levels are and validates our concerns and should have been acted on.</p> <p>B3 - There has been no effective response to these problems and our complaints even though we have been patient.</p> <p>B4 - PB staff won't admit their mistakes and change course.</p> <p>B5 - There have been many failed and expensive efforts ro resolve problems to date, and the same is likely in future.</p> <p>B6 - PB commissioners don't want to face issue or admit mistakes</p> <p>B7 - concerend about the influence and bias of the skateboard coalition president since she owns a skateshop</p> <p>B8 - local residents are more affected so should have greater say in what happens</p>	<p>C1 - This facility does not suit this area.</p> <p>C2 - This facility does not suit this type of park, and location next to toddler park illogical and unsafe.</p> <p>C3 - Location of facility in park does not follow PB criteria, e.g., too close to homes.</p> <p>C4 - Size is too big and design is at root of these problems.</p> <p>C5 - Design, size and users do not fit the announced / intended users.</p> <p>C6 - Skatespot users heavily tilted to young adult makes, 90% plus. Not inclusive of all.</p> <p>C7 - It was intended to be local serving but draws from the region.</p> <p>C8 - Signage and hours don't match and are not being respected.</p>	<p>D1 Use - Noise: Banging of boards on concrete and grinding on rails very loud and continuous; also yelling / whooping and swearing.</p> <p>D2 Use - Time skatespot in use: all hours/days, no breaks unless raining. Very late at night, after bars close, and early in morning. Happens whether it is dark or light out.</p> <p>D3 Use - Skaters smoking cigarettes/pot, both not legal, influencing kids, related litter.</p> <p>D4 Use - Skaters drinking alcohol illegally, related litter.</p> <p>D5 Use - Skaters urinating in bushes in the park.</p> <p>D6 Use - Graffiti</p> <p>D7 - Parking and traffic increased</p> <p>D8 Use - Skaters threatening demeanour and disrespect of others</p>	<p>E1 - If everyone could behave respectfully it would all resolve.</p> <p>E2 - Enforcement of hours and bylaws, including fines.</p> <p>E3 - Modify it to reduce negative impacts (e.g. add bright lights, change surface to reduce noise).</p> <p>E4 - Modify it so it is less attractive to adults, better for kids</p> <p>E5 - Relocate it away from residences.</p> <p>E6 - Convert it to a space for a different use by kids.</p> <p>E7 - Build a new one nearby to serve older people.</p> <p>E8 - Remove it and build a new facility somewhere else to draw older users away</p>



A. Process Issues (pre-opening date)	B. Process Issues (post-opening date)	C. Content Issues (design of facility)	D. Content Issues (use / impacts)	E. Resolutions (proposed)
	<p>B9 - there has been a high-conflict incident in the park when skater asked to change behaviour</p> <p>B10 - some residents are now afraid to speak out for fear of retribution</p>		<p>D1 Impact - Skatespot noise makes resident's external spaces (decks / gardens) unusable, decreasing enjoyment / ability to rest and relax.</p> <p>D2 Impact - Skatespot noise makes internal spaces including bedroom and living rooms (windows can't stay open, etc.) less peace of mind / relaxation / sleep. Pervasive impacts, very serious</p> <p>D3 Impact - Skaters are reducing use / enjoyment of other park users like young families.</p> <p>D4 Impact - Residents will have reduced property values?</p>	<p>E9 - Remove it.</p> <p>E10 - Clarify process by which this all happened.</p>
Skateboarders	Skateboarders	Skateboarders	Skateboarders	Skateboarders
<p>A1 - The designers (new line) should have known there would be noise issues. If layout had been considered at all, there wouldn't be issues.</p> <p>A2 - Original plan was much simpler and was only to cover area of the old wading pool.</p> <p>A3 - Intended audiences: both beginners and children.</p>	<p>B1 - We haven't heard much about these issues before now, other than through letters to editor and gossip.</p> <p>B2 - We did not know about recent meetings that happened in the park. Some people just "stumbled across it" by chance.</p>	<p>C1 - Great mixed use park. Can skate while kids play, use other facilities, family park.</p> <p>C2 - Skatespot is great for kids and beginners to learn on. Learning technical skills and social skills.</p> <p>C3 - Skatespot is the only facility of its type in Vancouver (has bowl / street / FS elements). Something for everyone.</p>	<p>D1 - Some of us suspect that skatespot opponents among residents have vandalized it with playground sand &amp; broken glass</p> <p>D2 - Residents are threatening, loud, gesticulating, taking photos of kids, telling skaters to move cars, etc.</p> <p>D3 - Misuse / drinking in the park is done by many people, not limited to skaters. May look like skaters, but aren't</p>	<p>E1 - Buffer with trees/shrubs.</p> <p>E2 - Install a soil / grass berm between park and street.</p> <p>E3 - Add a rideable wall (1/4 pipe on south side) to buffer sound.</p>

A. Process Issues (pre-opening date)	B. Process Issues (post-opening date)	C. Content Issues (design of facility)	D. Content Issues (use / impacts)	E. Resolutions (proposed)
		C4 - Skatespot used by all ages (from 4-45) and abilities.  C5 - Parents can skate with their kids, and are 'living the dream'.  C6 - Beginners aren't necessarily kids - beginners are of all ages.  C7 - Skatespot is small - the first to get 'pushed out' are younger kids and girls.	D4 - A great community is forming at this park.  D5 - Bought a house in the neighbourhood due to this park.  D6- Concern of retribution against vocal opponents by disgruntled skateboarders  D7- Mentorship of younger kids by older skaters at park is invaluable - skills+etiquette	E4 - make it CPTED compliant.  E5 - Increased enforcement and / or fines (rangers - not police)  E6 - Cameras to help with enforcement, self policing.  E7 - Add clear signage stating 'park will go if you skate at night'  E8 - Assign times for use by different ages (lessons).  E9 - Staff the park full time.  E10 - Provide education on issues; support discussion among groups/ages.  E11 - Have a bbq party with residents and skaters to increase awareness, understanding, joint action.  E12 - Build another skatespot nearby - will draw older skaters away and can be used as A/B testing comparison re: complaints/issues
Park Users / CA members	Park Users / CA members	Park Users / CA members	Park Users / CA members	Park Users / CA members
A1 - Problems began before park and skatespot even opened - Now trust is broken. (e.g. skaters taking down fence). PB has only been reactive since.	B1 - Appears there was little notice given re: meetings in park, action plan, etc.	C1 - See strong use by intended audiences, which demonstrates the need for this facility in this area.	D1 - Have always been issues in the park: large homeless population, pool noise, drinking, off-leash dogs, etc. Now getting blamed on the skaters.	E1 - Fence it off.

A. Process Issues (pre-opening date)	B. Process Issues (post-opening date)	C. Content Issues (design of facility)	D. Content Issues (use / impacts)	E. Resolutions (proposed)
<p>A2 - Results of consultation efforts were not indicative of actual need / desire for facility.</p> <p>A3 - Consultative process was heavily influenced by pool lobbyists.</p>	<p>B2 - Haven't noticed increased security / patrols at night.</p>	<p>C2 - Skatespot great for our kids (getting mentorship, learning etiquette, learning tricks, skilled skaters mingling with kids).</p> <p>C3 - When skatespot gets too crowded, skaters use the basketball court.</p>	<p>D2 - No bathroom in park affects all park users.</p> <p>D3 - Proximity / access to toddler area is a safety issue.</p> <p>D4 - Intimidation / yelling from neighbours.</p> <p>D5 - Neighbourhood business owners living on 16th love it and have kids who use the park.</p> <p>D6 - 20/200 employees of Hootsuite use the park regularly; see it as a great place to do business/relax/bond as a team.</p> <p>D7- Expected conflicts (between users older/younger) have not surfaced as expected.</p> <p>D8 - Noise is in the background, doesn't even register on me</p> <p>D9 - During previous work with skateboarders found that skateboarders are actually on average, well educated, mid-income, non-drug users... contribute a lot to society</p>	<p>E2 - add cameras for surveillance</p> <p>E3 - Provide more monitoring or programming, like a pool.</p> <p>E4 - CPTED needs to be considered with any solution.</p> <p>E5 - Enforcement of all park misuse not just skateboarders.</p>

# **Appendix B:**

## **Interview Questionnaire**

**Mt. Pleasant Park**

**Skatespot Consultation**

**Interview Questionnaire**

## **BACKGROUND:**

- In July 2012, the Park Board reopened an upgraded Mt Pleasant Park with many new features and amenities including a skateboard spot designed for young children and beginners.
- The facility did not properly anticipate the growing demand for skate spaces by a wide range of users.
- The skate spot quickly became popular with older skateboarders who frequent the park during the day and after hours which resulted in the neighbourhood being exposed to unanticipated noise and inappropriate behavior
- Over the past year, the Park Board has met with concerned local residents and representatives from the skateboard community about the impacts of this use.
- An action plan was developed to try and mitigate the situation including a more active presence by Park Rangers and Community Police, onsite skate host and skateboard coalition volunteers, signage, graffiti removal, an acoustics study and after hours security
- The measures have not adequately resolved the noise and behavior concerns, especially during park closure hours

## Mt. Pleasant Park Skatespot Consultation – Interview Questionnaire

- 1) How often and in what ways do you use the park, as a citizen or local resident?
- 2) How often and in what ways do you **use** the park, as a member of an organized group or a representative of an agency?
- 3) Do you ever use or visit the Skatespot facility?
  - a) When and how?
- 4) Have you seen others using *the skateboard spot facility* and if so when and how?

## Mt. Pleasant Park Skatespot Consultation – Interview Questionnaire

- 5) Did you know that the Park Board has received both *complaints and compliments* from local residents about the use of the skateboard spot?
- 6) Do you know what the complaints and compliments were about?
- 7) What impacts, positive or negative, have you noticed from the use of the skateboard spot, and what is your experience with this facility?



## Mt. Pleasant Park Skatespot Consultation – Interview Questionnaire

8) What other information can you share with us about this issue?

9) What ideas do you have for finding a resolution?

10) Who else should we talk to?

## Mt. Pleasant Park Skatespot Consultation – Interview Questionnaire

## APPENDIX D

### Jonathan Rogers Park Location and Current Amenities



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## JONATHAN ROGERS PARK

Location: Manitoba Street and West 7th Avenue

Current Amenities:

- **Playing Field** - organized sports and informal use
  - **Community Gardens** - Proposal for expansion currently being reviewed by the Park Board.
  - **Field House** - public washrooms, storage and caretaker residence.
  - **Playground**
  - **Grassy slope and viewpoint to downtown** - popular for informal seating, relaxing and tobogganing.
-

## Robson Park Location and Current Amenities



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### ROBSON PARK

Location: Kingsway and St. George Street

Current Amenities:

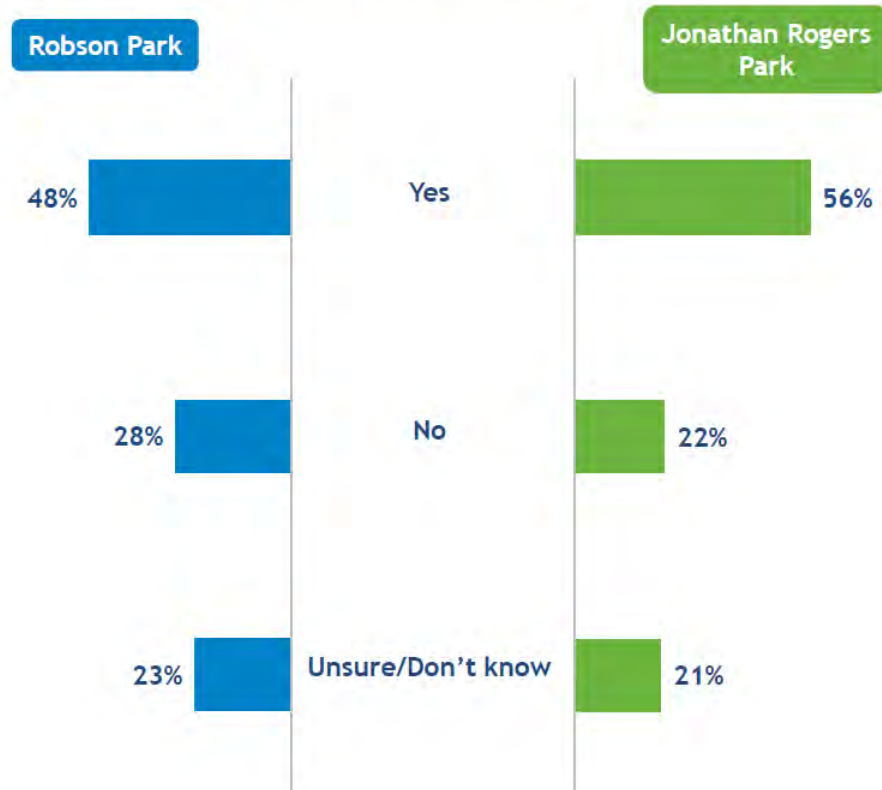
- Playing Field - organized sports and some informal play
  - Tennis Courts - organized and recreational games
  - Basketball Courts - basketball and ball hockey
  - Community Gardens
  - Fieldhouse - washrooms, storage and caretaker residence.
  - Playground
  - Wading Pool
  - Mount Pleasant Family Centre
-



## Public Engagement Questionnaire Findings April 2014



### Suitable Location for Skateboard Facility



Base: All respondents (n=367)

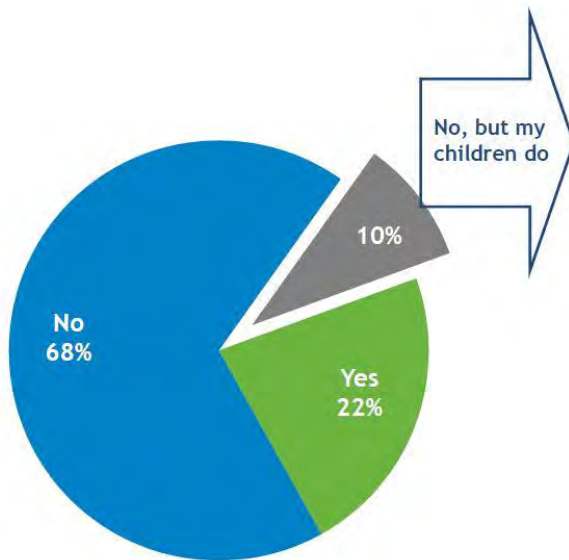
*Do you think ROBSON PARK is a suitable location for a skateboard facility?*

*Do you think JONATHAN ROGERS PARK is a suitable location for a skateboard facility?*

## Public Engagement Questionnaire Findings April 2014



### Skateboarders in Family



Among those who say they have children who skateboard, the average number of children in the following age groups are:

- 0 to 4 years: 0.11
- 5 to 14 years: 0.97
- 15 to 18 years: 0.31

Base: All respondents (n=367)

*Do you skateboard?*

*Please indicate the number of children you have in each of the following age categories who skateboard.*

## APPENDIX E

### Signs Installed at Mount Pleasant Skatepark


**Welcome**  
to the Mt. Pleasant "Neighbourhood"

**SKATEBOARD SPOT**

- **Enjoy riding from 9:00am to 9:00pm**
- **The Skateboard Spot is Closed 9:00pm to 9:00am**
- **Park neighbours are nearby, please be respectful of these hours**

**Have fun, share and be safe! Thank you.**

Questions or Concerns? • Call **311**



 **Mt. Pleasant SKATEBOARD SPOT**

**Read This Safety Notice**

- Use at your own risk. This is an unsupervised facility. You are responsible for staying within your abilities.
- Wear safety equipment: a helmet, knee pads, elbow pads and wrist pads are recommended.
- Inspect the skateboard spot for debris before participating.

**Please Be Respectful**

This skateboard spot is near a children's playground and park neighbours.  
Do not: use after dark, add ramps or other structures, tag or litter.

**Slippery When Wet**

**Call 311** [vancouverparks.ca](http://vancouverparks.ca)