

The Memorial Skate Program

A presentation to the Park and Recreation Commission

For the consideration of a temporary skate park and skate program at Memorial Park in the spring of 2014

Overview and Statement of Need

Skateboarding continues to grow in popularity throughout our community, which is not surprising given its growing reputation and worldwide appeal. In San Anselmo, there are kids both young and well into their late teens who are skating throughout the town and city streets each day. Whether they are involved in a structured sport such as basketball, baseball or soccer, kids still seek out the thrill and excitement of skateboarding as an effective physical activity that keeps them fully entertained, focused and engaged.

The issue we face in San Anselmo, however, is a lack of safe, accessible and legal places for kids to skate. Because of this lack of resources, kids skate on city streets and/or in areas that are prohibited, making skateboarding looked down upon by many. If they continue to skate in areas not designated for skating, young skateboarders could be subject to citations issued by law enforcement, which would treat the sport and its riders in a criminal manner as opposed to a sports activity. This would be detrimental to the futures of our young riders in our community. Young people in our town are keen to have a safe place to skate away from traffic and pedestrians. A place that is local where young people can get to it easily by walking, biking, skating or taking the bus from school. Most kids are unable to access other skate parks in Marin County unless their parents drive them there.

The purpose of developing a temporary skate program at Memorial Park is to provide a safe, local and highly accessible place where kids can ride that is off the streets and away from automobiles. This past year alone, nationwide statistics show that incidents involving automobiles accounted for 80% of all skateboard-related deaths. A skatepark that is centrally located, adjacent to and part of the San Anselmo Recreation Center, visible to law enforcement and close to Red Hill Shopping Center, creates an ideal environment and multiple opportunities for skaters of all ages in our community to thrive.

Why Build a Temporary Skate Program at Memorial Park Now?

Compared to other sports programs in town, skateboarding is gravely underserved in San Anselmo yet the numbers of young people taking up skateboarding for sport keeps growing every day. Young people are seen skating throughout the city streets and public areas of San Anselmo and Fairfax, making it critical that we address the need now for a safe and accessible skate park as opposed to tabling this for years down the road.

By developing a temporary Skate Program at Memorial Park, we will be able to draw in beginning, intermediate and advanced skaters with skate equipment and instructional classes and camps that meet their varying skill levels. The very limited skating programs currently offered through the San Anselmo Recreation Department only are for kids up to age 10. A fully endorsed skateboarding program that is part of the SA Recreation Department offerings appeals to kids ages 4-18. This ability to serve all ages and demographics creates an opportunity to engage youth and young adults (who may not necessarily be interested in traditional competitive sport activities) into positive activities that are beneficial to keeping them safe and away from trouble. It also provides an opportunity for youth skaters to take part in becoming a Jr. Counselor to beginner skaters or other leadership roles as the program grows, which builds self-esteem and character while going through the sometimes-turbulent teen years.

We saw a good example of this during the summer as the SA Recreation Department, under the teaching leadership of Tim Musselman (*PE Coach, credentialed teacher, camp counselor and skate aficionado*) provided 3 one week skate intensive summer camps complete with a newly built half-pipe skate ramp for the program. The skate camp quickly sold out each week with a wait list of kids who wanted to get in. In addition to the young kids (ages 5-10) who participated in the camp, Tim was able to recruit a team of young helpers he called *junior counselors*, who were kids (*skateboarders*) from the local public and private middle schools (ages 12-16) and local skate semi-pros who led the kids in instructional tricks. The camp was an outstanding success for all who participated, and parents and kids were thrilled that the SA Recreation Department allowed the Half-Pipe to remain for the summer and into the fall so that skateboarding could continue. Many skaters are grateful for the half-pipe, and use it today.

What are the Benefits to building a temporary skate park at Memorial Park?

There are many benefits to building a temporary skate park that impact not only the skaters but the San Anselmo Recreation Department and the community at large. Here are a few of the benefits:

1. Like the Redhill Field, the baseball field at Memorial Park or Juan's Gymnastics, a skate park enables young skaters and those who ride scooters to be active and develop a healthy lifestyle that rewards them with personal achievement and peer approval.
2. A skate park in San Anselmo opens up the opportunity to provide healthy activities for young children and kids up to 18 years old that are not normally or effectively served by traditional recreation programs in the community.
3. A skate park can provide additional revenue opportunities for the SA Recreation Department by making it available for community events, private birthday parties, local skate competitions, skate park private rentals and skate safety events for all.
4. A skate park can provide all skill level classes and camps that generate income for the SA Recreation Department and specialized skate instruction and skate leadership training for all interested.
5. A skate park can provide a positive and easily accessible after school activity for kids.
6. Young and old people use skate parks.
7. Skating in a park is much safer than skating in the streets.
8. Local merchants and pedestrians will be happy to have skaters redirected to a safe and legal place to skate.
9. Skate parks can displace other less desirable activities in an area.
10. Skateboarding is seen as mainstream and "cool" and can enhance a community's reputation.
11. If a town does not have a skate park, it is a skate park.

How much will it cost?

We are still in the planning stages and working with a few companies that build temporary and permanent skate parks throughout the country. The idea is to come up with a cost-effective park that meets the traditional and current interest of skaters of all ages. It is critical that we obtain equipment that can withstand weather elements for the next 4-5 years or whatever time frame we are given for a temporary solution.

We are seriously considering a wooden ramp and equipment surface that is made from a product called skatelite pro. The manufacturing of this surface allows for it to be weather resistant and pleasing to the eye. It is used for most of the x-games ramps and skate surfaces and has a plastic coating to the wood which makes it very smooth and popular among riders. Ramps and equipment purchased are assembled and can be placed in any skate design desired.

To complement the skate ramps and equipment, it is crucial that the skate surface be smooth for riders. We are currently assessing a number of options for resurfacing the basketball court and

proposed skate area. Not only would this be beneficial to a skate program but it would greatly enhance a very outdated and run down basketball court for kids who wish to play. We feel that we could acquire a new surface through working with local asphalt companies and our local Department of Public Works. The idea would be to resurface the area in the most cost effective way. We could obtain this in a couple of ways:

- 1.) *Working with an asphalt company to acquire the end of job asphalt, which cuts down costs considerably.*
- 2.) *Collaborating with the town and its plans for street and road resurfacing. There could be an opportunity to see if the proposed park area could benefit from any remaining asphalt from the job. Dave Donery is checking into this with the Department of Public Works.*

We estimate the total cost of a temporary skate park to be somewhere between \$30-40,000 but our committee is fully invested in keeping this cost as low as possible.

Where will the money come from?

We plan to go after funding for the skate park from a number of local sources. We also plan to look for "in-kind" donations to lower our overall costs. We have committee members who work in the field of sponsorship, advertising, graphic design, non-profit corporate fundraising and construction. We feel confident that we can raise funds through many of the following sources:

Parent/Individual Donations (tiered levels), business sponsorships (signage opportunities), corporate and foundation grants, government/board or supervisors grants, skate for a cause event, skate jam fundraiser for kids (offered up by Triumph), Parent fundraisers, kid centric bar-b-que/movie night fundraisers.

Estimated Timeline

Our hope is to get approval from both Park and Recreation and the SA Town Council in a manner that allows for a spring 2014 Opening of the temporary Memorial Skatepark. This would be complete with classes, camps and workshops offered through the SA Recreation Department Programming Guide.

Memorial Skate Park Program Volunteer Leadership

The Memorial Skate Park Program is being spearheaded by a group of parents, architects, contractors, teachers and local skaters who are committed to making this a reality for kids and older teens in our community. We are combining our talents to procure outside support of a park and to conduct the appropriate fundraising that will be needed once a temporary skate program is approved by the San Anselmo Town Council. Through our relationships with families and people in our community who support skateboarding as a sport, we have garnered a lot of support for a location that can address the growing need. We are also blessed to be consulting with experts in the field who are well versed in building skate parks, temporary or permanent, and understand what is required of towns to get things moving. Lastly, we are taking the kids' interests and enthusiasm into consideration as we design a program that they feel connected to and engaged in. The small volunteer team consists of the following people:

Lisa Graham (parent of skaters, fundraiser, marketer, public relations)

Elizabeth Flanagan (parent of a skater, artist/designer, web developer, marketer)

Scott Flanagan (parent-of-a-skater sponsorship procurement)

Tim Musselman (skate instructor, teacher and hero to our local skate kids)

Darren Kelly (architect)

John Corr (contractor/parent of a skater)

Jeremy Bouche (local pro-skater)