



## **“The Courts Skatepark” Community Guidelines, Design Principles and Spatial Needs**

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## **Purpose of this Document**

The purpose of this document is to:

1. Inform the Britannia Planning and Development Committee of agreed upon community guidelines, design principles and spatial needs for a proposed skateboard area within the Britannia Renewal Master Plan
2. Create a basis for an official Skateboard Committee to advise the Britannia Planning and Development Committee

## Community Guidelines

The Courts Skatepark was founded in 2017 and is a core part of the Vancouver skateboard culture as it is rooted in community, trust, transformation, and inclusivity amongst thousands of local skaters. The unique environment of The Courts Skatepark promotes personal growth and connection through collaborative building projects, perpetual user-led redesign and the daily maintenance of our grassroots facility. The community behind The Courts Skatepark looks to further deepen our partnership with Britannia Community Centre and Schools through scheduled programming, timing coordination, new events and student involvement.

The following are the Community Guidelines:

- Safety first
- No racism
- No sexism
- No violence
- No prejudice
- No discrimination
- Yield to beginners
- Respect others space
- Clean up after yourself
- Acknowledgement of the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selílwitlh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations
- Promote community through a culture of care and support
- Work with the Britannia Secondary School, Elementary School and Community Services Centre to create Joint Programming (ex. skateboarding workshops, obstacle building, school-only time, beginner time)

## Design Principles

The Courts Skatepark is a rare skatepark based in DIY-culture and has become the most popular and fastest growing skatepark in Metro Vancouver. The unique context within an authentic set of tennis courts is a distinguishing characteristic and a valuable aspect to the space. The classic character of the tennis game surface is appreciated by the moveable and customizable features which often refer to the colours and stripes for position. The wall is a key aspect as the one and only permanent structure. With all of the moveable features, the skatepark as a whole can adapt depending on skill level, usage, innovation and/or community needs, allowing for multiple skateparks in one.

The following are the Design Guidelines:

- 2x-3x Tennis court (no posts/nets)
- 1x Solid wall (height: 12 cinder blocks)
- 1x Roof (detached)
- 8x Flood lights
- 1x Water fountain
- 3x Bathroom access
- \*Community built features
- \*Community curated features
- \*All features moveable (2-4 ppl)
- 3x Waste/recycle/compost bins
- Signage:
  - Emergency/First Aid
  - Upcoming events
  - Rules signage
- Installation recognizing the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selilwítlh Nations
- Wall Space for community and student art
- Storage Area Access for tools and cleaning supplies

*\*All skatepark features to be built, maintained, placed, coordinated and installed by members of the skateboard community*

## Spatial Needs

The Courts Skatepark provides much-needed rideable space for the local skateboarding community. With the highest concentration of riders per square metre of any skatepark in Metro Vancouver, The Courts Skatepark fills a unique niche with its flexibility and variety of obstacles found nowhere else in Metro Vancouver.

The existing space is 30 metres wide x 35 metres long, with 1050 square meters of rideable area, including a wall at the north end which supports certain terrain and directs flow. At a minimum, the skateboarding community desires to see the essence of this space re-created.

More spatial configurations include:

- Additional space for beginners
- Additional features integrated into multi-use spaces & pathways around Britannia Community Centre and Schools (ex. \*skate-friendly seating with 3 granite benches)
- A larger concrete area with lights and full roof cover
- A differently shaped flat concrete space of minimum 1050 square metres, minimum 10 metres wide at the narrowest, also with lights and shelter
- A combination of indoor and outdoor skateable spaces with a minimum combined size of 1050 square meters

Consideration should be given to the timeline of construction and availability of rideable space. If The Courts Skatepark is removed and replaced during construction activities of the Britannia Renewal Master Plan, the community will appreciate access to an alternate space to use in the interim.

In the Vancouver Parks Board's Cityskate strategy, sheltered skate spaces have been identified as the top priority to supplement the current skatepark network. Efforts can be made to utilize Parks Board resources to serve Britannia's skateboarding community and ensure there is no loss of skateable area during redevelopment.

*\*Contact the Vancouver Skateboard Coalition  
([community@vancouver skateboard coalition.ca](mailto:community@vancouver skateboard coalition.ca)) for granite benches*

## Reference Photos



*AERIAL OF THE COURTS SKATEPARK*



*STOP, DROP & ROLL EVENTS AT THE COURTS SKATEPARK*



*CONSTRUCTION OF OBSTACLES 1*



*CONSTRUCTION OF OBSTACLES 2*



*THE COURTS SKATEPARK DURING THE DAY*



*THE COURTS SKATEPARK DURING THE NIGHT WITH LIGHTS*





*THE COURTS SKATEPARK COMMUNITY EVENT*



*THE COURTS SKATEPARK SOCIAL*



*BEGINNER LESSONS AT THE COURTS SKATEPARK 1*



*BEGINNER LESSONS AT THE COURTS SKATEPARK 2*

## Media

1. "Beloved skate park's survival depends on community engagement"
  - August 12, 2021
  - Angela Sterritt
  - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/britannia-community-skate-park-1.6136711>
  
2. "Who belongs at skate parks?"
  - August 25, 2021
  - Alia Youssef
  - <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-who-belongs-at-skate-parks/>
  
3. "Why Vancouver Changed its Mind About Skateboards"
  - October 14, 2021
  - Uytæe Lee (About Here)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5MJQsPeMlo>

British Columbia

## Beloved skate park's survival depends on community engagement

East Vancouver's Britannia skate park grew organically at the tennis court site

CBC News · Posted: Aug 12, 2021 6:00 AM PT | Last Updated: August 12



Professional skateboarder Fabiana Delfino at the Britannia Community Centre's skate park. (CBC)

A beloved skate park in East Vancouver, built up by the community, will require some advocacy if it's to remain a fixture in the community.

The skate park, which is located on the old tennis courts of the Britannia Community Centre, organically came together over the past few years, beginning in 2016.

Cynthia Low, the executive director of the Britannia Community Services Centre, said the park which features many handmade curbs, ramps, and kickers, has been built up gradually.

"The tennis courts [had] fallen into disrepair and tennis may not be as popular as it used to be. So there was a self-organizing group that started using the skate park for skating," said Low.

"[The year] 2016 was when it sort of started being used more regularly; 2018 was a time it became known as the skate park."

Today, it is a popular spot for all ages, demographics and skill levels.



Rose Archie is the co-founder of Nation Skate Youth, a non-profit that teaches skateboarding and other skills to Indigenous youth. (Angela Sterritt/CBC)

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Rose Archie, long-time skateboarder and president of and co-founder of Nation Skate Youth, says the handmade aspect is the best part about this skate park.

"Britannia courts is so important because it's DIY. We're doing it ourselves. We're making the ramps. It's all a community project. It's a space that we made safe for everybody to enjoy," Archie said.

- **VIDEO** [Shop owner, skateboarder excited about Olympic skateboarding](#)

The park also played host to "Stop, Drop and Roll," a skate contest for women, trans, non-binary, and/or gender non-conforming skaters which Archie co-founded.

Skateboarding — which has a relatively small barrier to entry: a board — has enjoyed a great deal of popularity in recent years. It even [debuted to fanfare as an Olympic sport](#) at the Tokyo Olympics.

Archie says she's seen an uptick in skateboarders during the pandemic.

"Skateboarding is a healing activity that you can do on your own," she said. "You're pushing yourself to learn tricks and to maintain [your skills]."

The park has even caught the eye of the professionals. Fabiana Delfino, a professional skateboarder from Boca Raton, Florida who now lives in Vancouver, says it's her favourite skate park in Vancouver.

"Young people come in all the time," Delfino said. "It's a really great community."

- [Japan's Momiji Nishiya, 13, leads teen sweep of women's skateboarding podium](#)

But the future of this park's survival depends on the community's advocacy.

In 2018, Vancouver city council approved a renewal of the centre, but those master plans don't include a skate park. The focus is on the replacement of the pool and rink.



Rose Archie, right, poses with Fabiana Delfino, a professional skateboarder from Boca Raton, Fla., who now lives in Vancouver. (Angela Sterritt/CBC)

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Low says it's important that the community speak up at an upcoming engagement session about how to integrate a skate park into the renewal.

"As institutions, we may not always understand what the needs of the community are but as long as we try to support those aspirations, I think that's important," she said.

The Britannia Community Centre will be hosting public engagement events on Sept. 16 and one specifically with the skate community that will soon be announced.

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*With files from Angela Sterritt*

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# Who belongs at skate parks?

**ALIA YOUSSEF**

SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

PUBLISHED AUGUST 25, 2021

UPDATED OCTOBER 26, 2021



Kealy Allen skates at an East Vancouver skate park.

ALIA YOUSSEF/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Vancouver City Council didn't anticipate a surge of interest in skateboarding when it approved a renewal of East Vancouver's Britannia Community Centre that did not include the skate park, which was built years ago atop an old tennis court. But over the course of the pandemic and Tokyo Olympics, grassroots organizations have made a big impact on the popularity of the sport.



Ryme Lahcene is the founder of Takeover Skateboarding, which organizes meetups, events and informal mentorships for women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and two-spirit folks at skate parks around the city. The organization's goal is to claim space for underrepresented groups in the skateboarding community.



Ryme Lahcene, founder of Takeover Skateboarding which is a grassroots organization that hosts meetups, events, and informal mentorships for women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and two-spirit folks, at an East Vancouver skate park.

ALIA YOUSSEF/THE GLOBE AND MAIL



Lahcene helps a person learn how to skateboard.

ALIA YOUSSEF/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

“All my life I thought I couldn’t skate because I had never really seen anyone like me skate,” Lahcene said. “When I was first starting, I really felt like I was taking up space because I was slower, I was learning to push, and I really felt like I was in the way, but actually I wasn’t. I was allowed as much as anyone else to occupy the spaces.”

“There’s so few activities for youth that are free and accessible in Vancouver. ... It’s BIPOC kids that pay the price. We need to show up for Black, Indigenous and POC kids and offer spaces where they get to be in touch with their creativity, they get to be around community, and where they get to experience movement.”



Allen skates while a group of people join a Takeover Skateboarding meet up in the background.

ALIA YOUSSEF/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Skateboarder Kealy Allen attended a recent meetup at the Britannia Community Centre.

“Takeover Skateboarding provides females with a sense of belonging in the Vancouver skate community,” she said. “Their positivity, encouragement and inclusivity always motivates me to skate more. The courts are more than just a place to skateboard. They bring community and are a second home to many, including myself. Taking the courts away from the Vancouver skate community wouldn’t go down without a fight. I’d literally tie myself to a ramp.”



Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and Tokyo Olympics, grassroots organizations have made a big impact on the popularity of skateboarding.

ALIA YOUSSEF/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

*Words and photos by Alia Youssef*

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351 King Street East, Suite 1600, Toronto, ON Canada, M5A 0N1

Phillip Crawley, Publisher



Why Vancouver Changed its Mind About Skateboards

27,498 views · Oct 14, 2021

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I had the pleasure of making this video for the Vancouver Park Board who's currently asking for public input on a new skateboarding strategy for the city. Check out <https://shadesourch.ca/skateboard-a/> to learn more.

Much of the footage for this video was also shot by Chance Swenson who was a wonderful person to work with and a great videographer in his own right. Check out his channel here <https://www.youtube.com/user/ChanceW>. His Instagram is <https://www.instagram.com/chanceswenson/>.