

ENG301: Professor Stamper

Skate Park Proposal

In the community of Verrado

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Date: March 14, 2012
To: Verrado Community Association & Buckeye Parks Office
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Subject: Proposal for Skate Park within the Verrado community

Purpose

Within this proposal, I aim to suggest the construction of a skate park / plaza to remedy the amount of delinquency and interference associated with pedestrians and the skateboarding population, within the community of Verrado. In addition, the construction of such a facility will further the community's goal of an engaging lifestyle, and create a positive influence among its youth. Not only will this help the community here in Verrado, but the larger city of Buckeye as well.

Summary

Skateboarding is a rapidly growing sport that is often over looked, or deemed less valuable compared to other team based sports. On the contrary, skateboarding is a high energy activity that can build a strong body and mind, self reliance, and interaction with others. The lack of facilities and parks can lead individuals to skateboard in dangerous locations, often interfering with pedestrians and places of business.

This problem can be seen in Verrado, as there are often groups of skateboarders recreating near offices and local shopping centers. Not only does this create a dangerous environment for pedestrians, but the skateboarders themselves. Too often, these situations lead to conflict or even unintentional destruction of property. In a July of 2005 issue of the *Sacramento Business Journal*, Karin Knorr who is a senior real estate manager faced this very issue. According to Knorr, "Skateboarders regularly wear down concrete surfaces, scuff up

painted exteriors, and damage planters, handrails, and fountains. But those are just some of the routine issues” (Pulley, 2005). The growing popularity of skateboarding has increased these types of situations, and the costs of such damages can be expensive; “Knorr budgets about \$500 a month per community shopping center to repair damage caused by skateboarders...Court plaza alone was estimated at \$4,000” (Pulley, 2005).

As a result, the community of Verrado would only benefit from the construction of a skate park or plaza. Instead of having skateboarders damage property and interfere with business, this designated recreational area can provide enforceable regulations for non-skating public areas. A skate park can also, overtime, become a better financial alternative to constant repairs caused by skateboarding. The creation of such a park, as mentioned, can actually benefit the youth by providing a safe place to recreate, and generate involvement in their community as well.

Introduction

I intend to focus on approving the construction of a skate park or small plaza where skateboarders can safely recreate within the Verrado community. *DMB Associates, Inc.* is the developer behind Verrado, an 8,800 acre development on the eastern side of the White Tank Mountains. Developers at *DMB* ensured this community sponsored an engaging and active lifestyle with its many amenities, and take great pride in this achievement. However, lacking among these recreational areas is a skate park or plaza, which as mentioned, can create many issues. With the creation of such an area, to be located next to an existing community center, their goal of an engaged community will certainly be furthered (Reagnor, 2012).

One way in which the construction of the park can benefit the community is through the creation of a positive outlet for youth and teens. In a 2010 study regarding the psychological

effects of a phenomenon called “Intrinsic Motivation”, skateboarding, as a lifestyle sport, was analyzed for its role in these two concepts. As Seifer and Hedderson mention, intrinsic motivation is “Associated with deep cognitive engagement, mastery goal orientation, and self-esteem” (Seifer & Hedderson, 2010). In this study, a range of twenty skateboarders were observed while recreating, and interviewed when the opportunity presented itself. The age of these skateboarders ranged from fifteen to eighteen years old, and when interviewed, were asked to explain what made skateboarding so appealing. In this analysis, three main responses arose; satisfaction and accomplishment, freedom and autonomy, and the challenge (Seifer & Hedderson, 2010).

While observing these skateboarders, their responses were in fact supported. Those claiming to enjoy the satisfaction of a successful maneuver were observed to repeatedly attempt a certain move, even in the face of failure. Others seemed to be absorbed into their stunt; displaying strong focus and determination to conquering the obstacle at hand. Perhaps the most common answer, freedom, can be attributed to the nature of the sport itself. In skateboarding, there are no rules or regulations, leaving a sense of freedom for skateboarders; “I just feel so carefree whenever I am skateboarding...I can pretty much do what I want. I feel I am in charge” (Seifer & Hedderson, 2010).

Contrary to misconceptions, skateboarding does in fact provide a host of benefits for those who partake in this sport; benefits that could have positive effects within any community, not just here in Verrado. In addition to benefits that sponsor a healthy psychological development, –teaching confidence, control, self-motivation, feelings of accomplishment, determination, and limitations- skateboarding can also be a great way for youth and teens to maintain an active lifestyle.

Skateboarding is often described as a “lifestyle” sport; as those who skateboard often develop a long term commitment to the sport itself. Because of this characteristic, skateboarding can generate a healthy lifestyle for those who recreate. Too often, childhood obesity is attributed to the sedentary lifestyles youth adapt. Traditional team sports can sometimes require an immense amount of commitment, which can be intimidating. Skateboarding acts an alternative to such sports, and helps sponsor a healthy lifestyle. However, its image as an “extreme” sport often hinders its ability to generate mass public support. Although it is true that risk of injury is a characteristic of skateboarding, like any other sport or activity, by constructing designated recreational areas, the amount of injuries can be substantially reduced (Dumas & Laforest, 2009).

Objective

The successful construction of this skateboarding area here in Verrado will accomplish a number of objectives. These include:

1. *Provide Skateboarders with a designated and safe recreational area*

As mentioned above, the amount of injuries related to skateboarding can actually be reduced with the construction of such a recreational area. According to Dumas and Laforest, “Studies show that the street represents the most common location for injuries, with motor vehicle collisions being the most serious” (Dumas & Laforest, 2009). Here in Verrado, thankfully no such vehicle collision injuries have occurred. However, it is only a matter of time due to the close proximity of streets and popular skating spots.

In addition, by having a designated area, there can be rules set to ensure safety even within the facility itself. These rules can include the wearing of adequate safety equipment (e.g. helmets), all of which are enforceable. With the creation of this area,

local businesses and pedestrians here in Verrado can also benefit greatly by reducing the possibility of incidents (accidents and property damage), and creating a safer environment.

2. *Provide a healthy and active activity for kids and teens*

It's no secret that the popularity of skateboarding has been on a constant rise in recent years; according to the *SkatePark Association USA*, "Today we have over 12,000,000 skateboarders...and its growing" (SkatePark Association USA, 2011). By providing an area to recreate, Verrado would combat the sedentary lifestyle of kids and teens by engaging them in some type of physical activity. As mentioned, this could also work to benefit the larger city of Buckeye, Arizona as well.

3. *Provide a great opportunity for kids/teens to become involved in their community*

Often times, in order to successfully build a skate park or skate spot (smaller version), kids and teens are the ones organizing and lobbying. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, an example of community involvement can be seen in Los Angeles where a "Youth led lobbying group got city and federal funds to build the nation's first inner-city park" (Johnson, 2000). Events such as these are common, and youth here at Verrado will certainly be ready for such organization. In addition, kids and teens are often encouraged to volunteer at their local skate parks. Ms. Heidi Lemmon, founder of *Skate Park Association USA*, has acted as an advisor for such youth organizations and believes, "Local kids should volunteer manual labor, which not only keeps down skate park costs but tells politicians that kids are willing to work for what they want" (Johnson, 2000).

Budget

For this project, there are many options for establishing a budget; depending on the desired material used in construction. In addition, the size of the project also leaves flexibility for the build. Depending on available funding, the best option for the Verrado skate park would be to build in phases; funds can be acquired through the city, private donations, or sponsorship. By doing this, the park can begin as a small skate spot, expanding as further funds become available. This will ensure the lowest possible cost for a long term investment.

The most efficient and cost effective material to use would be concrete, as it the longer lasting material with the least amount of maintenance. According to the *Skate Park Association USA*, the costs of skate parks and materials are the following:

	Ramp Parks	Skate Spots	Concrete Parks
Size/Costs	<i>Average:</i> 10,000 sq ft	<i>Average:</i> 10,000 sq ft	<i>Any size</i>
	<i>Cost:</i> \$100,000	<i>Cost:</i> \$24 a sq ft	<i>Cost:</i> \$35 sq ft
Pros/Cons	<i>Pros:</i> Small area	<i>Pros:</i> Small area, recreate popular spots, made of concrete or desired material	<i>Pros:</i> Large Scale, Any kind of Obstacles
	<i>Cons:</i> Requires regular maintenance	<i>Cons:</i> Only "Street" obstacles	<i>Cons:</i> Expensive

Table 1: Created based on information provided by the *Skate Park Association USA* (Skate Park Association of the United States of America, 2011)

As seen from the table above, the most practical and cost efficient for Verrado would be the building of a "Skate Spot". These parks are not the lowest in cost, but certainly not the highest. With the successful completion of this skate spot, all the described benefits can be obtained here in the Verrado community. Obtaining the desired 15,000 sq ft park can be an on-going process, but to initiate the build, design companies like *Pillar Design Studios* located in Tempe, Arizona should be contacted. This can be done as funding becomes available.

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