



# CONSULTATION MANUAL

FIRST STEPS TO GET STARTED



## WHY IS CONSULTATION IMPORTANT?

### IT'S ALL ABOUT GIVING POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Every successful community-build project is based on two very important notions: the need for vision and the need for leadership.

When it comes to skate park planning, leadership can take many different forms and come from unexpected places.

Young people are increasingly taking serious, positive, professional steps to successfully bring a skate park to their town.

People who you might think would be opponents (like moms and even insurance companies) are taking lead roles in grassroots organizing.

Together, these different voices have been able to articulate a common vision that mobilizes the entire community.

# STEP 1: CALL A MEETING

## OBJECTIVE: ORGANIZING THE PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Remember that a vibrant, sustainable project (and community) is one with a large and diverse number of stakeholders. Encourage key citizen groups to take ownership, and address their needs and concerns up front – you’ll head off dozens of potential obstacles.



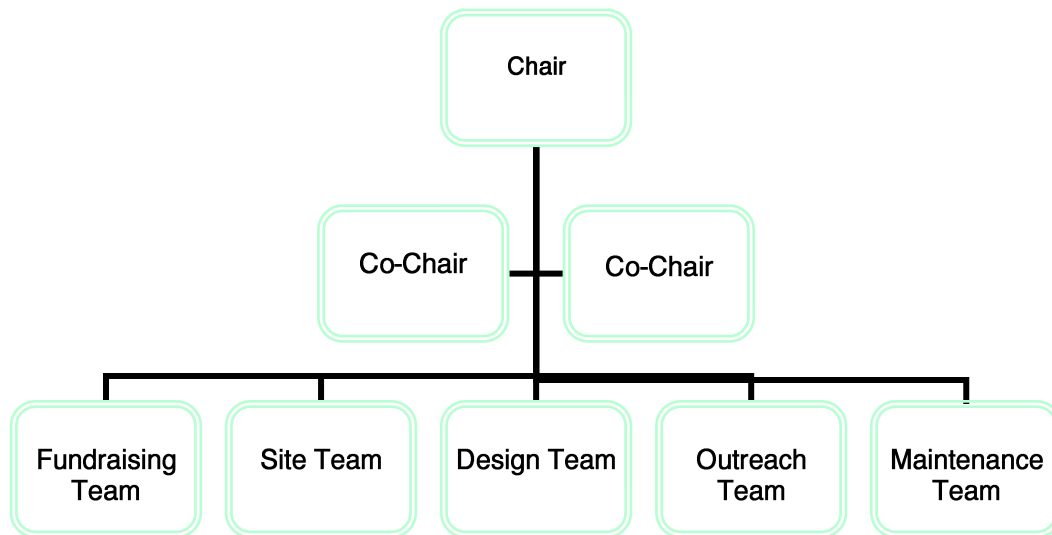
**TIP!** Be prepared for a diversity of opinions amongst future park users. Just because they are all on board, bike or blade does not make them think alike. Users’ opinions will vary widely depending on whether they bike, board or blade, their ages, their skill levels and so forth. Furthermore, skating is a very individualistic kind of sport. Your goal in engaging them should not be to find consensus (nearly impossible!) but instead to **leverage** their knowledge and experience to gain insight and feedback.

## STEP 2: SET UP A COMMITTEE

### OBJECTIVE: ASSIGN ROLES TO GET ORGANISED

The vast majority of problems that arise with publicly owned skateparks can be avoided through careful and considered planning. A central skatepark planning committee, filled with representatives from each of the above groups is the best way to divide and share responsibilities for the many aspects of this project.

Here is a common committee structure for community-build skatepark projects:



- **Fundraising Team:** Recruit confident people who feel comfortable with a diverse fundraising strategy. In the absence of direct experience, motivation and enthusiasm go a long way.
- **Site Team:** This team will research potential locations and report back on each site's size, existing features and amenities, safety considerations, accessibility, proximity to bus or rail lines, visibility, potential usage conflicts, preparation needs (digging, leveling, removing permanent fixtures) and potential for expansion.
- **Design Team:** You won't have trouble finding volunteers to choose the ramps, rails and pipes for the future Skatepark, but this team's mission is much more involved. It will be this team's job to research every aspect of Skatepark design and construction: research that's needed to make reasoned, cost-effective and long-term decisions. Team members will report to the committee on different construction materials – cost, advantages and disadvantages, installation, and maintenance considerations – as well as the vendors who supply them. They'll survey the ages, needs, skating styles and skill levels of different user groups in the community, and they'll research the various design successes and failures of the other community-build Skateparks. It's a big job, but this team's work will form the basis of the entire project.

- **Outreach Team:** This team is responsible for recruiting and maintaining as broad a base of community support as possible. Primarily, this team will recruit volunteers, but can also help the fundraising team in terms of in-kind donations. One way to accomplish this is through a concerted public relations campaign involving fliers, banners, a project Web site, special events and media coverage; another is by simple, door-to-door grassroots organising. Partnerships with other organisations will be the key to this team's success.
- **Usage / Programming / Maintenance:** This group takes the long view in planning for the Skate park's ultimate safety, longevity and popularity. Team members will report to the committee on solutions for liability issues related to general park management, safety rules and site supervision. They will develop a comprehensive plan for maintenance of the Skate park, and they'll create ways to involve the park in community life through after-school programming and special events.

## STEP 3: CREATE A TIMELINE

### OBJECTIVE: KEEP FOCUSED

Rather than being tied to fiscal-year planning or the school calendar, a community-build Skatepark project is generally dependent upon the progress of the community fundraising effort. For this reason, it's very important that the planning committee set a series of manageable, achievable goals and work toward completing fundraising by a certain date. Committing to a timeline up front will create a sense of urgency, making it easier to stay motivated and focused.

Open-ended projects lose momentum. Pick ideal dates for the community build and work backward. This should also help you fill in a calendar with planning meetings, fundraisers and outreach tasks. With a clear timeline, you'll be ready to go!

## STEP 4: KEEP IN TOUCH!

We hope you find this material useful. Remember that for further steps and more information you just need to give us a shout, we are always happy to help!