Exploring the Role of Skateparks as Places for Young People: a case study of skateparks in Prince George, B.C.

by

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SKATEPARKS AS PLACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: A CASE STUDY OF SKATEPARKS IN PRINCE GEORGE, B.C

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University of Guelph, 2018

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Although some people suggest that skateparks enable undesirable behaviour and increase crime, others argue that skateparks provide much needed public places. The aim of this study is to explore how skateparks may address the needs of young people in Prince George, B.C. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants involved in the planning, design and implementation of two skateparks in Prince George, B.C. Data on user experience and the role of each skatepark was collected through secondary data analysis. Results revealed that skateparks are in-demand facilities that may provide places for young people to use legitimately, where individuality, acceptance and creativity are welcomed; where young people meet and socialize with others and engage in unstructured, accessible, low-cost recreation and physical activity and stress release. Engagement and strong partnership between adolescents, community members, skatepark designers, and municipalities in the early planning stages may be associated with higher levels of community satisfaction.

Keywords: skateparks, skateboarding, exclusion, public space, places for young people
DEDICATION

For the skaters, the riders, the movers, the artists, the creators, the brave ones, the shy ones, the forgotten ones, and young people everywhere.

“two hundred years of American technology has unwittingly created a massive cement playground of unlimited potential, but it was the minds of 11-year old’s that could see that potential”

Craig Steyck, 1975

To Jack Rosevear, for leaving us a legacy of trailblazing, storytelling and a love of life and snow.
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DEFINITIONS

young people, youth - people between the transition between childhood up until adulthood (UN)
Adolescence – stage of life between ages 10-19 (WHO)
DBFSP – Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skatepark Bravery Fitzpatrick Skatepark
KWIC – key words in context
SP – skatepark
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CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

Young people are recognized as a user group with specific needs that can be supported in the physical environment (Owens, 2001, p.782; Stanton and Graves, 2000). Within the realm of landscape architecture, planning and urban design there is a growing interest in understanding how the spatial and social needs of adolescents may be supported in the physical environment (Stanton and Graves, 2000).

An issue identified in the literature on public space and young people is an overall exclusion of young people in society (Owens, 1988) that carries over into the public realm (Rogers and Coaffee, 2005). Despite this recognition, there are a lack of places designed with young people in mind in the public realm (Wood et. al., 2014; Jones and Graves, 2000) including places which young people are free to use legitimately as open space (Valentine, 1996). While some argue there are a lack of places for young people in public space, on the other hand, others have identified skateparks as a typology of place that have been designed for young people in the public realm (Owens, 1997, p.162; Owens, 2001; Chipuer and Pretty, 2000; Wood et al., 2014).

1.1 | THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis contains six chapters. This first chapter introduces the topic and provides a brief background and context to the study. Chapter 2, the literature review, opens with the purpose of the review and proceeds to the relationship between adolescent development and the physical environment, the health and well-being of adolescents as it corresponds to the physical environment and concludes with a section on skateparks as places for young people in public the public realm, the focal typology of this research. Chapter 3 identifies the research problem, goals, questions and objectives of the current study. Chapter 4 outlines the research design and discusses the research strategy and methods conducted in this study. Chapter 5 reports the results and analysis of the secondary data description and key informant interviews. Chapter 6 presents the findings of this research. Chapter 7, the last chapter, notes limitations of the study, suggests opportunities and recommendations for future skateparks, proposes topics for future research and ends with a conclusion.
Chapter 1 focused on introducing the topic of the research and on illustrating the structure of the thesis as shown in Figure 1. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature opening with the purpose statement of the literature review, followed by a discussion on the literature relevant to skateparks as a typology specifically, and then expands into a broader discussion on the background themes of young people in relevance to adolescence, development, leisure and health in relationship to the physical environment in order to provide a framework for the study.
Fig. 1 Thesis Outline Flowchart
CHAPTER 2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | PURPOSE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between young people and the physical environment is one that is complex and multi-faceted. Due to this complexity, the literature on young people and their relationship to the physical environment and the public realm spans a wide variety of topics as well as disciplines. For the purpose of providing a contextual background on the topic of the role of skateparks as places for young people, a discussion on the themes of adolescent development, leisure, health and the physical environment follows. Further, a review of available literature identified a need for further research into the problems associated with adolescents and public space, particularly on issues of exclusion.

2.2 | PLACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: SKATEPARKS

Young people need things to do and places in which to perform them in the manner they desire (Hall, Coffey, and Williamson, 1999). During the past twenty years, a consensus in the literature spanning western countries has been that planned and designed places for young people have been few in number (Owens, 1998; Dunnett et al. 2002; Owens, 2002; Chipuer and Pretty, 2000). Within North America, many municipalities have recognized this void of places for young people and have thus, taken measures towards providing such places (Shannon and Werner, 2008). However, despite the effort to provide places for young people (as argued in Owen’s major study on community skateparks in America) many communities remain uncertain as to what these places should be (2001, p.791). To complicate matters further, an issue underlying the lack of designed places for young people has been the exclusionary practice of avoiding and neglecting young people in the design of the public realm (Nemeth, 2006; Woolley, 2001; Owens, 2002; Brown, 2013). Nevertheless, despite the exclusion of young people in the public realm, skateboard parks have been acknowledged as one of the few provided places for young people in public space (Owens, 1997, p.162; Owens, 2001; Chipuer and Pretty, 2000; Wood et al., 2014).

2.2.1 | A BRIEF HISTORY
First developed out of an alternative to surfing when the ocean was “flat”, (Borden, 1998a; Bradley, 2010) skateboarding has largely been recognized to have reached its peak in importance in California in the 1950s (Chiu, 2009; Woolley and Johns, 2001). The advent of skateparks and the style of vertical or “vert” skateboarding traces back to a severe drought in California in the mid-1970s, which left a vast supply of empty, beautiful, oval-shaped suburban pools to be appropriated for skateboarding (Reft, 2010). On a global scale, designed skateparks, whether private or public, have been in existence since the 1960s and 1970s (Bradley, 2010). Initially, skateboards were outfitted with clay wheels, but the advent of the urethane wheel in 1973 by Frank Nasworth advanced the activity to new heights, creating a safer, smoother and lower ride with the possibility of trick advancement (Deen, 2017; Skateboarding Magazine, 2013).

In the Canadian context, Canada’s first skatepark, Selynn Bowl, opened in West Vancouver in 1978 (Pablo, 2014). Provincially, B.C. has been a leader in the Canadian skateboarding scene, with a fervent level of support stemming from Vancouver, B.C. (Deen, 2017). Although skateboarding has been more readily accepted as a sport and activity generally, decades of battles beginning in the 1990s were fought against B.C. municipalities for the “right to ride” (Zeidler, 2017). It was only in 2003 that the City of Vancouver relaxed its by-laws on skateboarding, scooters and non-motorized skates to permit the legal use of “non-motorized skates, skateboards and push scooters to use minor streets with appropriate safety devices” (City of Vancouver, 2005, Street and Traffic BY-LAW 77 AND 77A).

### 2.2.2 | POPULARITY OF SKATEPARKS AND SKATEBOARDING

Once considered to be a fringe activity, in recent years, skateboarding has escalated in popularity within mainstream culture (City of Toronto, 2016). Several reasons for the increase in, and popularity of skateparks, skateboarding and riding activities have been stated in both the grey and academic literature. Indeed, within the past two decades, skateboarding and related riding activities have been recognized “as a sport and meaningful leisure pursuit for young people” (Childress, 2004; L’Aoustet and Griffet, 2001). Additionally, skateboarding’s candidacy for consideration in the 2008 Summer Olympics may be a contributing factor in promoting the development of the sport (Tokyo, 2020). Moreover, in an effort to include youth-based sports and audiences, the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Committee recently announced that park terrain skateboarding will be in the Olympics for the first time in history (City of Toronto, 2016).
Another indicator of increased interest in skateboarding has been demonstrated through the number of cities hosting qualifying events for skateboarding competitions. These competitions include the 2015 X Games Qualifiers in Montreal, as well as the 2016 Vans Pro Skate Park Series Qualifier held in Vancouver. As cities play host to competitive skateboarding events, there is an increase in public exposure to skateboarding and riding activities that may subsequently contribute to the developing trend in skateboarding and demand for skatepark facilities, BMX parks riding facilities.

The number of skatepark surveys, studies and reports in Canadian municipalities alone has increased within recent years. To date, Hamilton, Kitchener, Waterloo, Vancouver, Vaughn, Pickering, London, Toronto and Calgary have all conducted a report, survey or skatepark study to bring greater understanding of, and support the demand and interest in, skateboarding and related riding activities. Accordingly, several authors have reported that a growing number of municipalities have responded to the popularity of skateboarding and lack of identifiable young people places with the provision of skatepark facilities (Jones and Graves, 2000; Spohn, 2002; Shannon and Werner, 2008).

Interest in skateboarding has also extended to the formation of community-based riding groups. These groups include the Toronto Skateboarding Committee, Babes Brigade, Malvern Family Resource Centre, the Oasis Skateboard Factory in Toronto and the Vancouver Skateboard Coalition, (City of Toronto, 2016).

Furthermore, skateparks have been thought of as a comparatively recent phenomenon (Hill and Hill, 1986). The Canadian Infrastructure Report showed that skatepark facilities were the newest asset type in Canada, with 77% of the skatepark inventory less than 20 years old (2016). Therefore, not only has there been a recent growing interest in skateboarding as an activity, but municipalities have been developing skatepark projects at a more rapid pace, and in greater volume, as compared to other facility types. Reasons given for the construction of municipal skateparks have included meeting the leisure needs of young people, decreasing “loitering and delinquency” and safeguarding property and safety of citizens (Rice and Dolgin, 2008).

Although skateparks have been recognized as one of the few provided places for young people, earlier studies argued that the supply of skateparks had not yet met the demand. In 2001, a study by Wooley and Johns (2001) identified a deficiency in the number of skateparks.
Reasoning behind this limited provision of skateparks may be related to the conflict street skateboarding has typically created between customers and skateboarders and thus, business owners (Borden, 1998). Additionally, some public members have found skateboarders to hinder their “enjoyment and safe passage” on the sidewalks and streets both groups mutually use (Jones and Graves, 2000). Even more, as designed skateparks are relatively new in age, (Bradley, 2010), a deficiency in the supply of skateparks compared to older, more commonly offered sports facilities like baseball diamonds is to be expected.

2.2.3 | ASPECTS OF SKATEBOARDING

According to Bradley (2010), skateboarders themselves may be attracted to the activity due to its “unstructured and unregulated character”, (2010, p.303) while several authors have determined that young people enjoy unstructured activities (Gambone and Arbreton, 1997; Kleiber, Caldwell, and Shaw, 1993; Kloep and Hendry, 2003). These findings are particularly interesting as a dueling debate on the merits of structured versus unstructured activity exists. This debate has been fueled by studies that have suggested one’s involvement in unstructured leisure may not result in the “same degree of positive developmental outcomes as structured activities” (Bartko and Eccles, 2003; Larson, 2000). In a similar vein, Kloep and Hendry found that adults largely “do not value” teen behavior that entails unstructured social activity, for example, “hanging out” (2003). As a result, places to conduct less formal and less structured activities have generally been less provided for (Hendry et al., 2002; Thomson, 2000).

On the contrary, a key finding of Bradley’s study contributed to the somewhat limited body of research (Bartko and Eccles, 2003; Larson, 2000; Abbott and Barber, 2007) indicating that some unstructured recreation activities have positive outcomes and do not affect participants negatively (Bradley, 2010). It should be noted however, that this finding does not negate the volume of evidence that unstructured activity has associations with “problematic outcomes” (2010).

2.2.4 | CULTURE

Present-day skateboarding has roots in the styles developed by the surfers-turned-skaters from the Zephyr Competition Team, a legendary group of skateboarders hailing from Dogtown — a highly localized, ethnically diverse, working class area of West Los Angeles near Venice
and Santa Monica Beaches (Cave, 2018; Peralta and Stecyk, 2001). In Dogtown, local skaters fiercely protected territory used to surf and skate; outsiders were not welcomed (Peralta and Stecyk, 2001). From the Dogtown scene, an in-group culture and identity developed that accepted and promoted a skater’s expression of style, self-expression and individualism (Peralta and Stecyk, 2001). Eventually, a skate team called Zephyr formed from the Dogtown skate scene. Since many Zephyr skaters came from challenging family circumstances, the team provided a collective social environment that many of the skaters lacked. The Dogtown skateboarding scene and Zephyr skateboarding team have been highly influential; the influence of Dogtown and Zephyr seems to have persisted into the contemporary culture of skateboarding (Peralta and Stecyk, 2001). For example, studies have inferred inclusion in the culture of skateboarding through lack of negative emotion towards participants and incidents of support, encouragement and appreciation displayed despite age, gender, discipline or ethnicity (Moore, 2009).

In another vein, skateparks have been described as “predominantly male” places (Bradley, 2010). This being said, the masculinity exhibited at skateparks has been an alternative form of masculinity that has departed from more conventional masculine values in that freedom, individualism, cooperation, creativity, artistic and self-expression have been accepted and welcomed, yet competition, aggression and power — often common in sports — has been limited (Beal 1996; Beal and Weidman, 2003; Moore, 2009; Olivo, 2015). While most participants at skateparks are male, from the researcher’s observations in community-based (neighbourhood) skateparks in Canada, diversity in age and gender seems to be on the rise.

Beyond a sport or activity, skateboarding has often been considered a “way of life” or lifestyle and thus, skating has extended into such cultural avenues as language, music, fashion, entertainment and even attitude (Bradley, 2010). Vernacular language regarding skateboards, tricks, and venues has been central to the culture (Woolley & Johns, 2001). Preferences in music have fluctuated, but hip-hop and rock remain long-standing genres (Denholm, Horniblow, & Smalley, 1992). Style of dress has changed from punk and hippy influences in the 1970s and 80s, to oversized and ripped sweatshirts, t-shirts and baggy jeans and shorts (Chiu, 2009; Rice & Dolgin, 2008) and requisite brand name skate shoes like Vans, DC and Etnies in the 1990s and early 2000s, to tighter-fitting clothing more recently (Bradley, 2010). Commercial films, photos, DVDs, amateur video footage of tricks and magazines, social media outlets and websites related to skateboarding or authored by skateboarders, have further reinforced,
reflected and expressed this subculture (Chiu, 2009; Snow, 1999). Rebellious, anti-authority and non-conformist attitudes have been associated with skater culture. Collectively, these attitudes have been perceived as counter-culture to some (Beal, 2003; Chiu, 2009; Davis, 2004). This may explain the polarizing attitudes that are sometimes expressed towards the activity and accompanying culture. Such challenges will be addressed and expanded upon in the forthcoming section on challenges with skateparks.

2.2.5 | CHALLENGES WITH SKATEPARKS

Although skateparks have been recognized as one of the few provided places for young people, earlier studies argued that the supply of skateparks had not met the demand. In 2001, a study by Wooley and Johns (2001) identified a deficiency in the number of skatepark facilities. Reasoning behind this limited provision of skateparks may be related to the conflict street skateboarding has historically created between customers and skateboarders and thus, business owners (Borden, 1998). Additionally, some public members have found skateboarders to hinder their “enjoyment and safe passage” on the sidewalks and streets they both use, albeit for different purposes (Jones and Graves, 2000). Even more, as designed skateparks are relatively new in age, (Bradley, 2010) a deficiency in the supply of skateparks compared to older, more commonly offered sports facilities like baseball diamonds is to be expected.

Despite the increase in skateparks being built, a review of the literature revealed varying and often conflicting views on skateparks, skateboarding and the related subculture (Jones and Graves, 2000; Stratford, 2002; Wooley and Johns, 2001; Wood, 2014). As places, skateparks have historically tended to carry embedded negative associations and connotations. For example, from a real-world perspective, skateparks and skateboarding have at time been strongly criticized by opposing neighbourhood residents, businesses and citizens (Zeidler, 2017). Common complaints used to justify the opposition to skateparks have included exceeding the threshold of acceptable noise levels (CBC News, 2015), attracting illicit drug and alcohol use, crowds and littering as recently described in flyers distributed against the development of a skatepark in Edgemont A.B. recently in 2015, (Clare, 2015). Street skating on the other hand, has been criticized for costly property damage, disturbing flow and safety of pedestrians, and being a general disturbance (Zeidler, 2017). Although neighbouring residents and other opposition cite such complaints, much of this reasoning seemed predicated on stereotypes, stigmas and persistent images rather than being evidence-based. It was rare that
flyers cited any credible sources to verify predicted problems with skateparks, as in Edgemont, A.B., where diction selected for the flyers appeared to be strongly biased and persuasive (Clare, 2015).

Even more, the nature of skateboarding and its related lifestyle has been considered by some to be counter-culture. Yet, it has been this very rebellion against conformist ideals that many skateboarders and their allied BMX, scooter and other riders seemed to have found appealing. In this manner, the social culture of skateboarding could be ascribed to be a sub-culture (Shannon and Werner, 2008) where a collective group who value riding activities, alternative fashion, music, cultural preferences (Woolley and Johns, 2001) and above all freedom for individualism, have found solace in a place where difference is welcomed and celebrated.

Dispelling such notions, a study by Wood et al. concluded that skateparks have been shown to promote pro-social behaviour over negative behaviour (2014). Despite such studies, cases of skateparks across Canada being built and subsequently demolished, removed, or at risk of being re-designed into ‘pleasing’ green spaces have continued to occur, as is the case, for example, with the closure of Deerpath Park in Guelph, O.N. in 2009 (Seto, 2013) and with the threatened closure of Mount Pleasant Skatepark in Vancouver (Harrington and Beluja, 2015).

Skateparks have often carried the stigma of attracting or promoting negative behaviour and activity. Some scholars have further argued that skateparks have been stereotyped as undesirable places and sites of criminal activity that attract such activities as illicit drug and alcohol consumption, as well as bullying (Bradley, 2010, Nemeth; 2006; Howell, 2001).

In terms of the provision of skateparks, some sources have declared that “if a city doesn’t have a skatepark the city is a skatepark” (Skaters for Public Space, 2011) other sources have argued that “skateboarders want a place to skateboard, but also to be able to skateboard when and where they want” (Owens, 2001, p. 791). Additionally, providing skateparks has led to restrictions on skating in areas elsewhere from skateparks and some have argued that these restrictions have been an effort to increase control and power over young people (Owens, 2001; Woolley and Johns, 2001). In terms of street skating, efforts to prevent and limit skateboarding in non-designated skating areas have also been implemented through purposely designed defensive architecture (Howell, 2001). Therefore, some authors have challenged the idea that
riding facilities meet the needs of all young skateboarders and fellow riders (Shannon and Werner, 2008).

While a significant amount of literature has served to support persistent and residual negative sentiments, views, stigmas and stereotypes towards skateboarding and skateparks, it is important to note that recent literature by Borden projected that a gradual shift in favor of skateboarding has been occurring. In Borden’s “new city”, skateboarding and similar activities would not be treated as counter-culture or something to be “repelled” or prohibited (Borden, 2015).

2.3 | BACKGROUND CONTEXT TO STUDY

Whereas the previous sections of the literature review outlined issues pertaining to skateparks directly, the following section expands on the relationship between adolescents, leisure and the physical environment. This section has been included in order to provide contextual background on adolescents, leisure and the physical environment and to situate the current study within a related body of academic discourse.

2.3.1 | ADOLESCENCE AS A STAGE OF LIFE

Much attention has been given to adolescence as an important stage of life, given the impact and lasting effects of adolescent experience on the future adults these teenagers will become. As Lieber described, “qualifying oneself for adulthood” is one of the driving themes of adolescence (1995, p. 721). Furthermore, adolescence is a time marked by change and growth in an individual. While these changes are necessary for identity formation and maturation, the process of aging and developing in adolescents tends to be precarious in nature. As a particularly vulnerable and impressionable stage of life, adolescence has also garnered much attention in recent years with contemporary health issues such as illicit drug use, suicide and concerns over mental and sexual health continuing to rise (Woolley, 2001).

2.3.2 | ADOLESCENCE AND LEISURE

In terms of leisure, the period of adolescence gives rise to increasing independence for young people; meaning, adolescents find themselves with more discretionary time and more freedom
in how to use such discretionary time (Shannon and Werner, 2008). Furthermore, Larson and Verma estimate, up to 40 percent of a nonworking adolescent’s life can be designated “free time” (1999). With such a significant portion of adolescents’ life occupied by unstructured time, it is important to recognize how leisure pursuits contribute to adolescent development. As Caldwell and Witt’s research found, how young people spend their leisure time has vital “developmental and health implications” (2011). For example, unhealthy or unproductive pursuits were linked to young people feeling bored during leisure hours and that they had a lack of things to do (Caldwell and Witt, 2011).

More recent discourse on adolescent development has supported the concept that leisure contexts and activities may affect young participants in multiple ways (Bradley, 2010). Several researchers have suggested that participation in leisure activities has afforded several opportunities for positive self-development in young people (Eccles and Barber, 1999; Kleiber, 1999; Larson, 2000; Mahoney and Stattin, 2000 and Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). These opportunities for self-development in young people include, but are not limited to, better socialization, the development of self-identity and self-esteem (Shaw, Kleiber and Caldwell, 1995) skill formation and “positive values” and pro-social behaviours (Eccles and Barber, 1999; Kleiber, 1999; Larson, 2000; Mahoney and Stattin, 2000 and Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). From a social perspective, McGee, Williams, Howden-Chapman, Martin, and Kawachi found leisure to assist with various “outcomes” such as family attachment, school attachment, peer relationships, and social support” (2006). Figure 2, a diagram by Bradley (2010) illustrates such opportunities and variables resulting from participation in leisure, including skateboarding.
Fig. 2 Conceptual diagram of variables that precede or are a result of participation in leisure contexts and activities focusing on skateparks and skateboarding (Bradley, 2011)
Furthermore, not only has research shown that involvement in constructive leisure activities provides opportunities for positive self and social development in young people. Conversely, a lack of things to do has been associated with undesirable behaviour in young people (Caldwell and Smith, 2006) with several studies reporting a lack of accessibility to leisure activities to predicate “delinquent” and illegal behaviours (Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell and Dintcheff, 2007; Eccles and Barber 1999; Palen and Coatsworth, 2007).

2.3.3 | ADOLESCENTS AND THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Tying this background literature on adolescent development to its relevance to the physical environment, a range of studies have identified relationships and benefits associated with adolescents and the environmental contexts they inhabit. For example, local places and environments have been found to have a significant effect in fostering a breadth of capacities in adolescents (Day and West, 2010) including physical, social, emotional skills and development (Moore, 1986; Hughes, 1991; Pellegrini and Smith, 1998; Seaman, 2004; Wood, 2014). Given the effects of environmental contexts on the development, health and well-being of young people, attention to the environment and its effect on young people’s lives is justifiable. Furthermore, in relevance to environmental design, it has been recognized that the well-considered design of places may improve the often-challenging transition from childhood to adulthood (Owens, 1997, p.159; Day and Park, 2010). As Katz posits, “the environments of young people speak to them of the future” (1998, p. 141).

2.3.4 | PLACES TO SUPPORT ADOLESCENT LEISURE

Beyond the social importance of being places for young people to engage socially with the greater public, public spaces act as sites of everyday life and activity, and, in this manner, are essentially “leisure settings” (Johnson and Glover, 2013, p.190). Consequently, if public spaces serve as venues in which young people pursue leisure activities (where they socialize with others and engage with the physical environment) then, an exploration of leisure as the pursued course of “action” that young people perform in the environment is warranted. Additionally, the activities young people choose to pursue in their free time have direct effect on their development and how they use the space and physical environment available to them. Thus, knowledge of leisure activities may inform what environmental provisions and facilities are required to support young people’s chosen recreational pursuits as well as their development.
2.3.5 | HEALTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Within the research on people and place, several environmental psychology scholars have found relationships between the quality of one’s environment and their health and well-being (Saegert, 1986; Thomson, 2000). As Day and Park highlight “…young people need good quality public space” (2010). Not only have some researchers suggested that access to quality outdoor spaces may contribute to a breadth of capacities in young people, but it has also been found to promote healthy behaviour in young people (Day and Park, 2010). Such findings are crucial, as healthy behaviour patterns developed early in adolescence are more likely to continue into adulthood.

2.3.5.1 | PHYSICAL HEALTH

Considering the obesity and inactivity crisis in Canada, the pressure to develop ways to alleviate this critical public health crisis has grown (Canadian Health Measures Survey, 2009-2011). Obesity and inactivity are of great concern, since being overweight and physically inactive has been linked to higher chances of mortality and morbidity (Tremblay et al., 2016). Furthermore, current research published in the Participation Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young people ranked the sedentary levels of children and young people as “F” in Canada, in comparison to 38 other countries surveyed (ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young people, 2018).

Exercise is important for physical health and development. There is evidence from a variety of settings that factors in the local environment can affect levels of, and attitudes towards exercise and physical activity among children and young people. For example, Evenson et al. (2007), in US study found that lower BMI in 11–12-year-old girls was associated with access to specific facilities, witnessing other children play outdoors and the presence of bike and walking trails in their neighbourhood. Similarly, Alton et al. (2007) on a study in the United Kingdom found that 9 to 11-year old’s who walked more were less likely to report the absence of parks or sports grounds nearby and were also less concerned about strangers.

While it has been recognized that regular physical activity has been linked to the overall health and well-being of young people, the nature of how young people engage physically in their environment has changed over time. As Lieberg emphasized, structured team sports have
quickly replaced earlier “spontaneous play”, groups of young people have been fewer and smaller in number, and the use of various meeting places in a neighbourhood has decreased (Lieberg, 1995). This advent in formalizing how young people have used public space, and the organization of physical activity and play into more structured formats, may discourage young people from engaging with outdoor space.

Findings from the fields of Recreation, Sport and Health have reported significant benefits in through participation in outdoor active play. According to the Report for Physical Activity on Children and Young People, the recommended daily allotted time for moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) for young people is 60 minutes per day (2016). An association between outdoor physical activity and an increase in more daily MVPA and a decrease in sedentary time has also been found (Cleland V, Crawford D, Baur LA, et al., 2008; Pearce M, Page AS, Griffin TP, Cooper AR, 2014; Schaefer L, Plotnikoff RC, Majumdar SR, et al., 2014; Stone MR, Faulkner GEJ., 2014; Gray C, Gibbons R, Larouche R, et al.; 2015). Therefore, as outdoor facilities, skateparks may help facilitate and encourage young people to engage in more physical activity. According to Michele Olson, a professor of exercise science at Auburn University in Alabama, the activity of skateboarding has been shown to burn 8-12 calories per minute on flat surfaces and to require a similar energy output to skipping during extreme physical movement (Olson, 2015). Moreover, as public facilities, skateparks act as a conduit to the activity of skateboarding which then supports physical activity, an essential component, and a current public health concern surrounding the health and well-being of young people (Wood et al., 2014).

2.3.5.2 | MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Stressing the importance of mental health, recent statistics have cited suicide as the second leading cause of death in young people aged 15-24 in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2014). Whereas, on a worldwide scale, mental health issues have been found to be the greatest cause of concern in terms of disease in adolescents (WHO, 2017). Attention to such statistics and early intervention are critical given the World Health Organization reported that 50 percent of mental health issues begin by the age of 14, yet most instances are not detected and treated (WHO, 2018).
Likewise, with the education of the mind often separated from the education of the body, social and emotional development and physical health may often be thought of as separate entities to be addressed and treated as such. When in contrast, as several studies support, both factors of mental and physical health are said to complement one another. For example, a study by Boutcher demonstrated the connection between physical activity to mental well-being, supporting the view that mental and physical health is intertwined and dependent on one another (2011).

As such, according to the World Health Organization, health encompasses a complete state of physical, social and mental well-being (WHO, 1948). In other words, being ‘healthy’ does not only involve the absence of disease but is defined as an integrated and holistic state of wellness. As adolescence is an impressionable time in one’s life, the need to cultivate healthy behaviours, life skills and habits to carry one through into adulthood could be given much greater attention.

2.3.6 | SOCIAL AND SPATIAL NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people have unique social and spatial needs in the physical environment. A study on skateparks by Jones and Graves (2000) discussed how a growing body of research on the “social and spatial needs of teenagers”, has been in development since the 1970s. Such studies draw attention to the existing research base on young people and the environment and, more importantly, shed light on ways in which young people’s needs can be facilitated by the “creation of” built, physical environments (Jones and Graves, 2000, p.136).

A study by Hester (1984) determined characteristics valued by adolescents to be similar to those of children, adults and seniors alike. In contrast, a study by Owens, four years later, in 1988, suggested a counter finding: that valued characteristics of adolescents were indeed different. Therefore, identifying the needs of young people is an important part of developing an understanding of how to design for this population.

Within the study of landscape architecture and related fields, several scholars have contributed to the body of research on young people and the physical environment thus far. Appleton (1975) focused on the concept of prospect and refuge, or, the need to “see without being seen” (1975, p.67) in a given place. The concept of prospect and refuge was further confirmed by
Owens’ study in 1988. Lynch and Banerjee’s study in 1981 (p.175) discovered that young people have a preference for unprogrammed places while Owens identified a number of “characteristics” of outdoor spaces which adolescents need and value: environments where they can be with friends, as well as alone; places they can claim as their own; accessible spaces; and, places where they can enjoy natural elements (1988, p.24).

A great majority of the research conducted on the spatial use of the physical environment by adolescents has emphasized valued places (Eubanks Owens, 1988, 1994), preferences in place (Malinowski and Thurber, 1996) and, favourite environments (van Andel, 1990; Korpela, 1992; Liefberg, 1997). What follows is an expanded discussion on the social and spatial needs of young people including identified preferences, valued and favourite places. In conjunction, key design factors associated with greater utilization of an environment are discussed as a backdrop to how landscape architects may apply such findings in the literature to the practical design of the physical environment.

As a baseline, the results from Kevin Lynch’s project, Growing Up in Cities (1977) and its subsequent follow-up study by Louis Chawla in 2001, was used as the foundational basis for these social and spatial needs. According to Travlou, Growing Up in Cities is recognized as the most influential study between “young people’s perception and experience of their local environment” and for paving the way for related studies globally (Travlou, 2003, p.3). For this study Lynch conducted research in Cracow, Melbourne, Warsaw, Salta and Mexico City, Toluca and Warszawa to understand the use and perceptions of young people’s experiences in the urban environment. This body of research sought to better understand and incorporate the experiences of young people into the design of more livable cities (Chawla, 1997). GUIC’s remains unique as a project for its cross continental and longitudinal nature (Travlou, 2003).

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Reviewing the social and spatial features associated with positive environments for young people, it seemed the social and spatial needs of adolescents were often dependent on one another. From a social perspective, what has been discovered is that adolescents enjoy the act of “getting together” or “hanging out”. In studies by Lynch and Owens, their findings show that some of the favourite places of teens allowed for the opportunity to “be with their friends” (1977; 1988). As described by one interviewee,” it’s a place where I can be with my friends”; it seems the need for gathering places for adolescents where they are welcome to gather and socialize may be significantly beneficial to the lives of young people (Lynch, 1977; Owens, 1988, p.20).

The “opportunity to be alone” was equally reported in the literature, as was the desire for characteristics of nature by teens (Owens, 1988). Solitude seems to be an important factor in the physical environment for young people. Underlying this desire for young people to be alone may be layered issues of privacy, safety, and freedom, as Owen’s study found that teenager’s opportunities for solitude in their cars, homes, or even personal rooms may be few and far between (Owens, 1988). It seems there are few opportunities to be alone in the built environment that continues to increase in population and in existing urban areas where space is already a premium. For example, the simple pursuit of young people occupying places where they can be alone often places teens face to face in conflict with adults. Such conflict is an issue, as young people are often looking for space in the physical environment to be the young people they are and are not intentionally seeking to cause trouble or disrupt others in the process.

Key social needs of young people cited in the literature include a desire for feeling social integrated and accepted and the existence of a “cohesive community identity” (Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001; Travlou, 2003). In terms of spatial needs, places where young people may gather meet and ‘hang out’ were a primary concern for young people (Lynch, 1977; Owens, 1988; Roberts, 200a; Liepens et al., 200; Chawla, 2001). Other spatial needs noted in the literature include places where young people felt an overall sense of personal safety and freedom of control and movement away from authority figures (Lynch, 1977; Ertel, 1975; Chawla, 2001); places to be alone (Owens, 1988; Roberts, 2000b); places that afford various and interesting activities (Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001); places they can legitimately use (Roberts, 200b); places that are easy to access (Roberts, 2000b); when possible, green spaces for informal use, to explore and for sports (Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001); places they
can claim as their own (Bradley, 2010) and lastly, centrally located public spaces (Owens, 1997; Matthews and Limb, 1999; Lieberg, 1995).

### 2.3.6.1 | NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE LITERATURE REVIEW CHART

Key social, spatial, health and leisure needs of adolescents in relationship to the physical environment were identified from a review of relevant literature. These identified needs were then synthesized into the following visual matrix chart. The matrix chart was created as an introductory aid to equip practitioners and professionals with an informative, easy-to-use reference tool on young people’s needs in relation to the physical environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPATIAL</th>
<th>Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleton (1975, p. 67) Owens’ study in 1988</td>
<td>The concept of prospect and refuge, or, the need to “see without being seen”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynch and Banerjee’s study 1981 (p.175)</td>
<td>Preference for unprogrammed places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, 1988; Roberts, 2000b</td>
<td>Places to be alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, 1988, p.24; Bradley, 2011</td>
<td>*Places they can claim as their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, 1988, p.24</td>
<td>*Places that are easy to access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts, 2000b</td>
<td>*Places they can legitimately use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001</td>
<td>Green spaces for informal use, to explore and for sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, 1997; Matthews and Limb, 1999; Lieberg, 1995</td>
<td>*Centrally located public spaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| SOCIAL         |                                                                     |
|---------------|                                                                     |
| Lynch, 1977; Owens, 1988, p.20 | **“Getting together” or “hanging out”; “be with their friends” |
| Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001; Travlou, 2003 | *A desire for feeling socially integrated and accepted and the existence of a “cohesive community identity” |
LEISURE

Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001
*Places that afford various and interesting activities

HEALTH

ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young people, 2018
60 minutes of MVPA/day

* Indicates needs parallel to current study findings

Fig. 3 Needs of Young People in Relationship to the Physical Environment (Literature Review version)

2.3.7 | EXCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

A growing concern over the exclusion of young people in public space was resonant in the allied fields of landscape architecture, planning, urban studies and child and adolescent development and health in western cultures (Owens 1988, p.17; Wood, 2011, p.2). Designers have attempted to design and understand the needs of varying age groups in an effort to provide public places and facilities for a wide demographic. Despite this effort, a recurring theme argued by authors in the literature is the concept of young people as “not only being overlooked”, but as avoided and excluded from the “design of the built environment” (Owens, 1988, p.17) resulting in the larger issue of inequality in the “environmental experience of children and young people” (Day and Water, 2010).

It seems, that in most instances, the design of the physical environment has prioritized the needs of adults and failed to understand and fulfill the environmental needs and experiences of adolescents (Owens, 1997, p.162; Freeman and Riordan, 2002; Day and Wager, 2010). Exclusion of young people in public space is a crucial matter; young people lack the financial and economic means to possess private space of their own and in addition, they represent one of the largest consumers of public space (Childress, 2004, De Visscher and Bourverne-De Bie, 2008). From a planning perspective, Freeman and Riordan believe that the training and practice of the profession tends to focus on adults, with a limited understanding of young people and their relationship with the environment and society (2002, p.298).

Young people represent a large proportion of society. Thus, not only does their exclusion create an imbalanced and undemocratic representation of what overall society wishes for public space, but issues surrounding the rights of the child galvanize the problem further. As the UN
Convention on Rights of the Child states in Article 31, “State Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.” (1989). One major step forward in transitioning from exclusion of young people towards more inclusive planning and design has been cited as “recognizing the legitimacy of young people’s rights to partake in society” (Freeman and Riordan, p.298).

Furthermore, motives for the provision of facilities for adolescents have at times been hidden, either unknowingly or knowingly, behind a “veil of doing something good for teens” (Owens, 1997). Owens argued that facilities for adolescents have been provided when it was beneficial for the greater public; examples include, removing teens from areas when other groups wanted to use them, or, if their presence was felt to be somehow offensive (Owens, 1997, p.162). Likewise, it has been debated that young people and children have become “less tolerated in public space”, as so, there seems to be a shift in public space being appropriated as an “adult domain” (Massey, 1998; Matthews et al. 2000a). Additionally, adolescent facilities have enabled adults to surveil and control the activities of teens while also providing an “excuse” for limiting teens from other places (Owens, 1997, p.162).

Several authors have explored how children and young people feel separate from and evermore “alien” to their communities (White, 1996; Valentine, 1997; Hill and Bessant, 1999; Crane and Dee, 2001). Adolescent activity has been limited because it conflicted with other “potential users”, because it was predicated, they were “up to no good”, or, because the activity of young people was seen to be destructive to public property (Owens, 1997, p.162). Awareness and attention to exclusion in the local physical environment could be given greater weight. Evidence exists that young people may reify these experiences into future understandings of their place and belonging in the world.

Pertaining to the current study, Bradley has suggested that riding activities have great potential to affect “personal social integration” and social bonding for participants (2010). The value inherent to these activities is in providing opportunities for positive development for a male demographic that may otherwise be challenging to reach (Bradley, 2010).
CHAPTER 3 | THE CURRENT STUDY

3.1 | PROBLEM

Skateparks are commonly misunderstood places. While some have suggested that skateparks are nuisances that may attract negative behaviour, others have argued skateparks provide much needed places for young people. Some claim skateparks are places conceived and built to address the problem of “what to do with young people”, still yet, others have argued that skateparks only fulfill the needs a specific demographic. Despite these conflicting views, there remains to be few communal public spaces where young people can ‘hang out’; as an activity, skateboarding on private property often poses conflicts between property owners, municipalities and skateboarders alike as previously addressed in the challenges section (Wood et. al., 2014). Therefore, many municipalities have been developing skateparks in recent years. Given there is an increasing number of and demand for skateparks in Canada, there is a need to explore how these places impact young people.

3.2 | APPLICATION TO PRINCE GEORGE B.C.

Prince George is the largest city in Northern British Columbia with an estimated population of 70,316 (Stats BC, July 2017). As a northern community, Prince George is more isolated from major city centres and thus, in more need of its own community recreation services. According to the municipalities’ latest Community Recreation Services Plan (CRSP, 2014) there is a growing demand for skatepark facilities in the city. A CRSP public stakeholder survey (2014) determined that 36% of participants would like to see an overall increase in skateparks in the city, particularly in destination parks.

Currently, there are two skateparks in Prince George. The downtown 19,000 square foot Rotary Skatepark built in 2002, and the 8,000 square foot Corporal Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skatepark Bravery Fitzpatrick Skatepark in the Hart neighbourhood constructed in 2017. While the addition of the Corporal Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skatepark Bravery Fitzpatrick Skatepark is a significant and valuable addition to the skatepark amenities in Prince George, other neighbourhoods in the city are now requesting skateparks and related wheeled parks in their
own neighbourhoods, namely Blackburn and College Heights (City of Prince George, 2014; Clarke, 2017).

At the junction of the Fraser and Nechako rivers, the geography and land use planning of Prince George reflects the natural limitations imposed by these two rivers. Neighbourhoods are dispersed, posing challenges for young people to easily access skatepark facilities downtown, and in other neighbourhoods. Given people are more likely to frequent recreation service amenities that are closer and more local to their homes, skatepark facilities at a neighbourhood scale would provide convenient, and easily accessible recreation for young people and the community at large.

Despite a recognition and desire for further skatepark amenities in the city, the cost to develop skateparks has risen considerably with the Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skatepark Bravery Fitzpatrick Skatepark costing $500,000, double what the Rotary Skatepark downtown cost yet half the size (City of Prince George, 2017). This poses future issues, as the City’s small population results in a similarly smaller pool of financial and economic resources to draw from. Thus, visioning and planning of community recreation services based on evaluation of existing facilities and community needs is integral to future community resource planning.

The Rotary Skatepark and Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skatepark are recognized as facilities with high levels of use. As highly utilized and valued leisure service amenities, investigation into key elements attributed to the success of skateparks of Prince George and what they provide young people could help better inform future skatepark projects as well as associated community service facilities.

Therefore, an in-depth exploration of one case study city, Prince George, will help to draw further understanding and knowledge of the role of skateparks in Prince George to inform future skatepark projects as well as associated community service facilities.

3.3 | GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The goal of this study is to explore the role of skateparks as places for young people in Prince George, B.C.
Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- Explore existing research and findings on skateparks specifically, and more broadly on adolescent development, leisure and health in relationship to the physical environment through review of the literature.

- From the literature, identify young people’s social, spatial, health and leisure needs in the physical environment.

- Evaluate case study skateparks in Prince George, B.C. to identify affordances and needs addressed by skateparks.

- Identify elements associated with the success of skateparks in Prince George, B.C.

- Evaluate the results and develop a set of opportunities and recommendations to inform future skatepark planning and design.

3.4 | RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What needs and affordances do skateparks provide for young people?

- What elements are associated with the success of skateparks in Prince George, B.C.
CHAPTER 4 | RESEARCH DESIGN
4.1 | METHODOLOGY

Ethics clearance for this research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Guelph.

The approach to this research was qualitative in nature as it promoted exploration of the concept of skateparks as places for adolescents. Furthermore, this study encouraged evaluation (Francis, 1999) of skatepark facilities post-development, and post occupancy as such evaluations are not readily performed on skateparks. Specifically, the researcher developed a research design that sought to investigate the needs addressed and affordances supplied by skateparks, as well as key elements associated with the success of skateparks in Prince George, B.C. The methods adopted for this study included secondary data description and key informant interviews. See Figure 6 for an expanded, visual flowchart of the research design and process used in this study (page 32).

4.2 | CASE STUDY APPROACH

A case study approach was selected to focus the investigation on one typology and one community from a real-world perspective. As this research was situated in a real-world context, a case study approach had value for this study in that it assisted in retaining “holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life situations” (Yin, 1994, p. 3).

4.2.1 | APPLICATION OF CASE STUDY APPROACH TO PRACTICE

From a practice-based perspective, using a case study approach can be particularly effective for practitioners of landscape architecture, and therefore, in the practice of designing and developing future skateparks. For this research, it was determined that a case study approach would help build on existing skatepark precedents in Prince George through an understanding of affordances of skateparks and successful elements of these case study sites (Francis, 1999).
In this manner, these affordances and elements could be gleaned and applied to future skatepark projects to “replicate successes and avoid failures”, another utility of case studies (Francis, 1999, p.18). Given that skateparks are concrete in materiality and therefore more permanent in nature; require a vast amount of community effort, provide a place for young people and are expensive to build and challenging to re-develop, ensuring success of these projects and avoiding closures and re-development is vital.

**4.2.2 | CASE STUDY CITY SELECTION**

The rationale behind selection of Prince George as a city for the case study, took into account the high demand for skate park facilities from the public; (1) the high level of interest in developing future skate parks in the Blackburn and College Heights neighbourhoods of Prince George; (2) the number of, and receptiveness of professionals and community members that were willing to participate in the study as key informants; (3) the feasibility of conducting the study due to the small pool size of current existing facilities; (4) the need to contribute to research in northern communities and lastly, (5) a need for evaluation of skatepark facilities in Canada.
4.2.3 | CASE STUDY SKATEPARK SITES

Fig. 4 Rotary Skatepark (Newline)
Fig. 5 Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skatepark (Newline)
Fig. 6 Expanded Methodology Flowchart

Research Methodology

Secondary Data Description

- Collect & summarize the info, experiences & observations from other investigators in secondary sources.

Collection of Secondary Data from newspaper articles and electronic sources (social media, films, photographs and websites)

Analysis of Secondary Data

- Transfer of secondary data to Saturate (web-based qualitative analysis program)
- Line-by-line coding for key words in context
- Membing (capture ideas of researcher in note form)

Transfer of coded data to a CSV file (Excel spreadsheet)

Organization of coded data in CSV file into themed categories

Analysis of data in thematic categories for application to research questions

Development of Results and Findings

Key Informant Interviews

- Development of K.I.I. questions informed by research questions, objectives and goals of study.

Development of Criteria for Key Informants

1. Experience & Knowledge
2. Opportunistic (willing & able)
3. Purposive (could provide relevant info)

Interviews conducted & recorded using ACR voicerecording application

Transfer of recorded data to otter.ai for transcription to written form

Analysis and Coding of transcribed interview data using Saturate, an online coding program

Coded data categorized into sub-themes of Affordances, Needs and Elements of Success
4.3 | SECONDARY DATA DESCRIPTION

The first method selected for this research was secondary data description. This method supplied data from direct users as well as observers of the skateparks. The strength of this method was that it enabled the researcher to collect data in an unobtrusive manner, meaning, the method was “non-reactive” and did not affect the subject or object of study (Robson, 2011). Additionally, this method allowed the researcher access to a larger data set from a greater spectrum of sources. Key themes informed by the literature review were used to guide the data collection and analysis of the secondary description.

This research strategy comprised of collecting and summarizing the information, experiences and observations recorded by other investigators in secondary sources (Deming and Swaffield, 2011). The secondary data was collected from an online search for “Prince George skateparks” specifically, the Rotary and Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skateparks. The sources produced from this search included newspaper articles, electronic sources (e.g. social media sites, Facebook and YouTube), films, photographs and related websites.

Collected secondary data was then transferred to Saturate, a web-based qualitative analysis tool. The researcher employed a line-by-line coding technique in order to analyze the secondary data text for key-words-in-context. Memoing (a strategy to capture ideas and thoughts of the researcher in note form) were used to further aid the researcher in the analytical process.

Once coding and memoing were complete, the researcher compared the coding results between sources using a comma-separated-file (CSV) in Microsoft Excel. This allowed the researcher to sort the data according to various fields. Codes that were most frequently noted or were considered most relevant to the research study were developed into thematic categories. These themes were derived to organize and best communicate the results of the research.

4.4 | QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

A semi-structured format was chosen for the key informant interview questionnaire (see Appendix A). This format involved the use of pre-developed questions yet allowed participants
the flexibility to contribute their own answers and explanations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Questions developed for the key informant interviews were informed by the research questions and objectives in order to increase the likelihood of gathering data that would best fulfill the objectives of the study.

### 4.4.1 | SEMI-STRUCTURED KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

A sequence of key informant interviews was employed as the final research strategy. The key informant interviews involved in-depth interviewing of a non-random sample of experts who have knowledge of the organization or issue (Lavrakas, 2008). Reasoning behind the selection of this method was two-fold. First, Deming and Swaffield (2011) indicated this method had application to a research question that engaged people in a specific landscape. In this case, the focal population was the community of Prince George, and the specific landscape was skateparks. Second, it was determined that this method had the potential to gather data that was both relevant and robust (Deming and Swaffield, 2011, p.155).

Three criteria were used in the process of selecting key informants. First, key informants were selected based on their experience and knowledge of the planning, design and or implementation of these skatepark sites in Prince George, B.C. Second, a sample of key informants were selected based on opportunistic reasoning; essentially, these individuals were willing and able to participate in the study (2011). Third, key informants were chosen for purposive reasons as there was a 'need to select key informants who [were] most likely to provide information that [would] address the research questions being asked' (Deming and Swaffield, 2011, p.155).

The researcher conducted a preliminary search for skate parks in Prince George through a search of electronic sources. From this search, plausible key informants were identified from readily available public newspaper articles and from the City of Prince George’s website. These key informants were then contacted via phone call or electronic mail with a brief background on the study and were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. Interested participants replied with convenient days and times and the researcher and participant mutually decided when to meet. Interviews were conducted in-person, or, by distance via telephone. Snowball sampling was an additional strategy used to identify other key
informants that would otherwise be challenging to locate and contact (Deming and Swaffield, 2011).

Key informants were provided with a background description of the research goals, objectives and interview questions. Each key informant was provided with a brief description of the research and the interview questions prior to the meeting. Key informants were also given information on what their role as participants would entail, including anticipated timing (within one hour), the opportunity for confidentiality, a request to be voice-recorded, and the verification of their responses before inclusion in the thesis. During the interview, the author recorded data through note-taking and the use of a digital voice recorder. In accordance with the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board standards, consent to voluntary participation in the study as well as being voice recorded was received prior to conducting interviews.

Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder or by an electronic application called ACR. These recorded interviews were then removed from the voice recorder and the ACR application and transferred onto a USB flash drive for security reasons. The researcher then transcribed the interviews using Otter.ai, an online transcribing software program. For further accuracy, the researcher listened to the interviews to correct and edit the transcriptions manually. The final transcribed interviews were then analyzed and coded by the researcher using Saturate (an online coding software program) for key concepts under the major themes of affordances, elements of project success and opportunities and recommendations, themes that had been previously established from the research questions.

Electronic recordings of each key informant interview were transcribed, analyzed and coded. The researcher then analyzed the codes for common sub-themes determined through a search for patterns within the codes. Codes were then categorized into appropriate themes determined through reviewing the coded data for common patterns. The codes and data within each theme were then further analyzed by the researcher for further meaning and depth in relation to the research study.

This chapter described the methodology, overall research design and questionnaire development process used in this study and focused on the two main methods selected for the current study: secondary data description and key informant interviews. A case study approach on the City of Prince George, B.C. was used to focus the research on a specific
context and place within the time and resources available. The following chapter will describe the relevant results of the data.
CHAPTER 5 | ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter outlines the results of the secondary data and the key informant interviews. Chapter 5 is divided into two sections. The first section presents the results of the secondary data and the second section presents the results of the key informant interviews. I begin chapter 5 with a brief overview of the six themes generated through the organization of the codes from the secondary data into thematic categories. From this overview of the themes, I then present in detail, each theme as a numbered section using accompanying key quotes from the secondary data as evidence, and to explain the findings. Six key themes were found: skateparks as a needed and valued resource; inclusion/exclusion; developmental skills; social connections and positive benefits; accessibility and lastly, health. Whereas chapter 4 encapsulated the methodology of the study: how the research was conducted, and the data gathered, chapter 4 is focused on what was found from the data that is relevant to the research goals, objectives and questions.

5.1 | SECONDARY DATA RESULTS

Six key themes were determined from the results of the secondary data set. These themes are described in relationship to the first research question: What needs and affordances are associated with skateparks in Prince George, B.C.?

The first of these six themes was an overall need and demand for more skateparks in Prince George. This narrative was repeatedly found in the secondary data set and seemed related to a lack of resources in local neighbourhoods; a lack of things to do in general; boredom; a lack of places and things to do for young people specifically; a place to safely practise riding activities and places to legitimately skateboard. The second theme focused on skateboarding and skateparks as inclusive places. This theme was determined from user’s descriptions in several online newspaper articles. The third theme, the cultivation of developmental skills through skateboarding, was detected by the researcher in the language expressed by skatepark users to describe the activity of skateboarding. The fourth thematic category was social connections and positive benefits. This affordance was interpreted by the researcher through the language expressed by users and was primarily documented in online newspaper articles. Fifth, accessibility was a pertinent theme expressed by secondary sources. Lastly, health was the sixth theme determined to be relevant to this research.
Several interviews documented in online sources: newspaper articles and videos, photographs, images and other written information, provided rich secondary data from the perspectives and views of skatepark users, community members and those involved with the planning, design and development of the skateparks in Prince George. As a presentation of the secondary data, what follows is a narrative of these results primarily described through user experiences of the skateparks reported in the secondary source data.

5.1.1 | NEED AND DEMAND FOR SKATEPARKS

The theme of a skatepark as an in-demand facility and amenity was determined through many of the user’s comments on the skateparks in Prince George. This narrative was repeated by a broad spectrum of the users in the secondary data and was related to a lack of resources in local neighbourhoods, a lack of things to do in general, boredom, a lack of places and things to do for young people specifically, a place to safely practise skateboarding and other wheeled activities, and, places to legitimately skateboard.

Table 1 Key Words and Concepts Associated with the Need and Demand for Skateparks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurjata and Tucker (CBC, 2016)</td>
<td>“desperate need for recreational facilities”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis (CKPG News, 2016)</td>
<td>Hart neighbourhood has least amount of parks in City, (underserviced), top of needs list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous (Waters, 2016)</td>
<td>needed spatial and recreation facilities in Hart neighbourhood for a long time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niessen (Peebles, 2010)</td>
<td>lack of places and things to do for young people specifically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Morvan (Kurjata and Tucker, 2016)</td>
<td>demand and excitement for DFBSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown, (Kurjata, CBC News, 2017)</td>
<td>petition: “I would like to see a skatepark in the Hart”; “lots of kids will use it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simcoes (Clarke, 2014)</td>
<td>They’ve got big hearts, they all really enjoy the sport, and that's what they're here for.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 1, results strongly suggested there was an overall need for recreational facilities and services in the Hart neighbourhood. Several sources expressed their concern for gaps in facilities and services and, for their support of current, and future, wheeled park facilities. For example, CBC journalists Kurjata and Tucker (2016) reported, “a desperate need [for] more recreational facilities” expressed by the community. Verifying this idea, comments by Francis, a volunteer for the Hart Community Association in Prince George, similarly suggested the Hart neighbourhood was underserviced in terms of park facilities in comparison to the rest of the city. In recognition of a lack of parks, Francis also emphasized the critical need for a park in the Hart area. As Francis explained, “The Hart actually has the least amount of parks in the whole city, so we’ve been at the top of the needs list for many years…it was critical that we had this park developed in our area” (CKPG News, 2016). Further, Waters, a Prince George Now journalist, reported comments by an anonymous resident who similarly expressed sentiments of the need for a skatepark in the Hart area. As this resident noted, “This is fantastic. This is a long time coming up on the Hart. We raised our three kids – they grew up on the Hart Highway – and I can only imagine if they’d had this then. But all these young people have it now. I’m just glad it got here before my grandkids did” (Waters, 2016). Specifically, Niessen, a local business owner whose property had been used for skateboarding, expressed that while younger kids were provided for in public space, older young people were often neglected. As Niessen said, “…the Hart is well provisioned with parks for smaller children, but once kids reach a certain age and energy capacity, there isn’t anything for them” (Peebles, 2010).

Cumulatively, these comments provide evidence to indicate that the Hart has been underserviced for many years and that a gap in services and facilities has persisted for much longer than the community anticipated. Further, it may be inferred that this delay may have shifted the need for skateparks to an urgent concern. In this manner, the requests from the community were no longer desires, but are now “desperate” needs they have been waiting to address for several “years” (CKPG News, 2016).

5.1.2 | LEGITIMATE FACILITY FOR RIDING ACTIVITIES
Evidence of the need for a facility to legitimately use for riding activities was suggested in the secondary data. As shown in Table 1 in the previous section, CBC journalist Peebles (2010) reported, young people like local Hart resident McCreadie felt forced to use the highway and other areas not deemed safe or permissible for BMX riding, due to the lack of riding facilities.

According to McCreadie, he used the highway “almost every day”, which seemed to indicate that a riding facility was not only greatly needed but would be frequently used. Significantly, McCreadie’s comment and act of continuing to practice BMX riding seemed to provide evidence of the dangerous length’s users would go to continue to practice their wheeled activities. Essentially, through this consistent daily practice, it seemed McCreadie exhibited a commitment and willingness to face injury and danger in order to pursue BMX riding. Due to the severity of risk involved, it seemed McCreadie’s actions reinforced the case for a legitimate, all-wheeled park in the Hart. In a similar manner, project manager for the City of Prince George, Le Morvan, suggested how eager groups of users were to ride at the DFBSP prior to its official open, “…he’s had reports of up to a hundred children and teenagers at a time eager to use the park being built in the Hart neighbourhood of Prince George” (Kurjata and Tucker, 2017). Collectively, these comments seem to provide evidence, first-hand from McCreadie, and second hand from Le Morvan, to show how critically users desired a legitimate all-wheels park for the Hart neighbourhood. Moreover, young skateboarders and riders may have felt there were few alternatives places to practise riding activities, or that barriers existed to accessing the current provision of skateparks.

5.1.3 | INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency in Data Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acceptance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age inclusive</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belonging</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A broad theme categorized as “inclusion” was determined from the analysis of the coded secondary data. As shown in Table 2, codes related to inclusion appeared 15 times in the data set. The following codes were identified as being associated with theme of inclusion: inclusion itself, inclusive, acceptance, age inclusive, belonging, every, everybody, gender inclusion, multi-generational and a wide range of ages and abilities.

Table 2 Codes Associated with Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>everybody</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inclusion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inclusive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inclusive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wide range of ages and abilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Types of Inclusion and Sources

Types of inclusion and *in vivo* codes (*in italics*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>Social Inclusion</th>
<th>Age Inclusion</th>
<th>Variety of skill levels</th>
<th>Gender Inclusion</th>
<th>Multi-use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td></td>
<td>daughters accompanied by their fathers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 visually represents the secondary data from the popular newspaper articles and was organized according to source (y-axis), and type of inclusion (x-axis). Shown in Table 3, the source was the skatepark user reported by journalists in the secondary data set. The types of inclusion used as categories (x-axis) were social inclusion, age inclusion, inclusion of a range of skill levels, inclusion of gender and multi-use (inclusion of a variety of wheeled sports).

As shown in Table 3, the sub-category of social inclusion was dominantly represented in the secondary data set with a frequency tally of five. These in vivo codes were everyone, everybody, belonging, acceptance and part of their community.

The codes everybody and everyone seemed to be related to the concept of inclusion in the secondary data set. Further, as repeatedly found concepts in the data with clear and strong connotation, the codes everybody and everyone seemed to encompass this idea of inclusivity at the skateparks.

For example, Blaine Radford, a 22-year-old male, had been a user of the Rotary Skatepark since he was 15 (Clarke, 2014). From a personal perspective, Radford attributed the presence of the skatepark in his life to his eventual integration to Prince George after a move from Fort St. John, a much smaller city of 20,155 inhabitants. In Radford’s experience, the Rotary Skatepark afforded a place that he could legitimately visit in his leisure time, and which additionally served as a consistent meet-up place (Clarke, 2014):

“I had somewhere to come and it was always a meet-up spot” (Clarke, 2014). This comment suggests that Radford found the skate park to be a reliable place to go, and that it afforded him a place to meet up with others, key needs not only for a young person, but also as a newcomer to Prince George.
Radford also used the terms “everybody” or “everyone” which seemed to suggest the concept of inclusion and inclusivity in relation to the Rotary Skatepark and the activity of skateboarding. In Radford’s opinion, “This is a thing to get everybody involved in skating [to]...give everybody a turn to show us what they've got…” (Clarke, 2014).

Radford’s use of “everybody” twice in the same paragraph may suggest that he found the Rotary Skatepark to be a place where anyone felt welcome to skateboard and where “everyone” was able to participate, display or show off their skateboarding skills. Analogously, Simcoes, a counsellor in Prince George at Intersect Young People Family Services (a non-profit society that offers voluntary counselling for children and young people, in addition to being the fiancée to Welygan, a prominent figure at the skatepark) explained that the skateparks had consistently served as places where everyone felt a “sense of belonging”, and as a place where everyone was accepted (Clarke, 2014). Francis, also a mental health counsellor, expressed that skateparks as places may help young people feel like they belong and are “a part of their community” (CKPG News, 2016).

Furthermore, when paired with the terms “acceptance” and “belonging”, the repetition of the code “everyone” seemed to strongly suggest that the skateparks were deemed inclusive places; and, equally as important, that there was a need for, or lack of, places where young people felt accepted and a sense of belonging.

Acceptance and belonging, as related aspects of inclusion, may be considered associated contributors to a sense of feeling included. Accordingly, these concepts of acceptance and belonging were reported in Simcoes’ statements (Clarke, 2014). Simcoes’ background in counselling young people as well as being partner to Welygan, known as the unofficial “King of the Skatepark”, (Clarke, 2014) positioned this data to be particularly informative since she is an experienced professional counsellor and has presumably, greater knowledge and awareness of the young people issues in Prince George. Additionally, she is likely to have spent a great deal of time observing skateparks over the course of her relationship with Andrews. Therefore, her observations are informed by longer periods of time and experience.

On the other hand, the word “everyone” when prefaced with “not” seemed to indicate the idea of exclusion in relation to young people being excluded from traditional sport. Specifically, Francis
(2016) suggested that some young people were excluded from participation in traditional sport due to a lack of financial means. For instance, according to Francis (2016), “not everyone” can afford the cost of sports, so parks provide the opportunity for kids from all backgrounds to participate in “being physical and connecting with one another” (Francis, 2016).

Similarly, comments by Niessen, a local business owner, seemed to suggest that young people were inadequately provided for in public space compared to children. As Niessen said, the “Hart is well provisioned with parks for smaller children, but once kids reach a certain age and energy capacity, there isn’t anything for them” (Peebles, 2010). Notably, these comments served as evidence to show how the need for inclusion was suggested by secondary sources. While most of the comments explicitly used words or language associated with inclusion, the last two comments suggested a different aspect of inclusion, that there may be a lack of, or need for, inclusion of young people in public space. Shown in Table 2, sub-aspects of inclusion emerged from the secondary data set: age inclusion, inclusion of a variety of skill levels, inclusion of the male and female gender, and inclusion of wheeled sports beyond skateboarding.

In terms of age inclusion and male and female gender inclusion, Andrews and Bachand described observations of both forms of inclusion (Giancola, 2016; Bachand, 2016). Andrews witnessed a trend in older men skateboarding, something he had not observed as much in the past (Giancola, 2017). As Andrew said, “…a lot of guys get into it around 18, or 19, later than they used to” (Giancola, 2017).

Bachand, a television and radio host in Prince George, similarly described the skatepark as inclusive of a range of ages, “from young to old” (Bachand, 2016). While Bachand explained that “men and women” (2016) were all present at the park. Additionally, Andrews found that many daughters were accompanied by their fathers at the skatepark (Giancola, 2016). Meaning, not only had sources observed both female and male genders using the skatepark, but also there was evidence to suggest more than one generation used the DFBSP.

Bachand (2016) and Andrews (Giancola, 2016) also commented on their observations of the skatepark being used for a variety of wheeled sports: “bikes, boards and scooters” and that the design of the skatepark seemed to cater towards a variety of skill levels. Given the above, it
may be seemingly inferred that various wheeled sports and abilities were included and provided for at the DFBSP.

Whether focused on exclusion or inclusion, the comments on a whole seemed to provide a significant body of evidence to indicate that inclusion was an aspect that respondents associated with the Skateparks. Specifically, social inclusion seemed to be the dominant form of inclusion noted by the respondents.

5.1.4 DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS

Table 4 Codes Associated with Developmental Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency in Data Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accomplishment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dedication</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>show off/demonstrate skills</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pride</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-esteem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individualism</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Affordance of developmental skills in young people associated with skateboarding or the skateparks in Prince George was another theme that emerged from the secondary data set. A total of nine codes under this theme were identified in the secondary data set. As shown in Table 4, accomplishment, commitment, creative, individualism, dedication, demonstrate skills, show off, pride, self-esteem and individualism were identified as codes related to the theme of developmental skills in young people.
According to Radford, the sense of accomplishment that results from landing a specific trick was beneficial for one’s self-esteem (Clarke, 2014). As Radford explained, skateboarding also allowed for the opportunity to show off and “show us what they’ve got”, that is a part of the skateboard culture (Clarke, 2014). With the opportunity to perform developed skills, it seemed that “showing off” could also contribute to the development of self-esteem.

Commitment and dedication were also expressed by Welygan as skills developed through the pursuit of skateboarding. Welygan explained that the motivation to skateboard cannot be driven by a desire to look “cool”, but instead was driven by a commitment to be at the skatepark “day in and day out” (Bachand, 2016). Additionally, independence and creativity may be developmental skills afforded by the nature of learning to skateboard. As Baker explained, skateboarding was not something that could be taught. Rather, Baker emphasized that as a skateboarder you, “kind of just learn your own way” (Bachand, 2016). As an activity, skateboarding can be considered creative because it allows the skaters to develop their own technique and way of approaching the activity and is not something that needs to be performed in a prescribed manner. Given the skateboarder is free to approach the activity as their own and as they like, skateboarding may afford the opportunity to develop independence.

Individualism was also noted as a characteristic of skateboarders that may contribute to self-expression and thus, identity formation. As Bachand reported, he found the skatepark to be “full of individuals” (2016). In turn, with the freedom to practice skateboarding independently and explore one’s own creativity, it could be reasonably predicated that these skills may contribute to the formation of self-identity, a key factor in adolescent years.

5.1.5 | SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND POSITIVE ELEMENTS

Table 5 Codes Associated with Social Affordances and Positive Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Frequency in Data Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>social cohesion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social connection</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several instances of codes associated with social connections were present in the secondary data set. These codes were extracted from a broader sample. The sample ranged from younger users of skateparks, parents/guardians of skatepark users to those involved in the planning, design and development of the skateparks.

As shown in Table 5, a total of seven codes under this theme were identified in the secondary data set. Codes used included social, social connection, friends, makes kids happy, positive activity, positive feedback and positive role models. Key results described skateboarding as a positive leisure activity to pursue with friends and skateparks as places to cultivate social relationships with others. Overall, reports of positive feedback and positive emotions were also expressed, which may demonstrate that the skateparks were associated as being positive places.

Logan Robertson, a 13-year old user of the Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skatepark Bravery Fitzpatrick Skatepark, suggested that the DFBSP served as a place to develop a relationship with others and made him “feel happy”. As Logan explained, “It’s a good way to come together and build up a relationship with others, it makes me feel happy” (Waters, 2016). This comment seemed to suggest that Robertson found the skatepark to be a positive place to meet up with friends, in addition to a place to help foster relationships.

In a similar manner, Mitchell Brown, a nine-year-old skatepark user, developed a petition to request a skatepark from City Hall. As Brown reasoned, it’s a "positive thing to do with my friends" (Kurjata, 2017). Additionally, as shown in Figure 7, the petition seemed to be a symbol of collective support from young people as displayed in the handwritten pencil and marker signatures adorning the petition. Such comments and actions seemed to emphatically suggest there was a need for a skatepark, not only from the adults, but also from young people alone.
Although the petition may have been influenced or suggested by an adult figure (as young people are not often aware of their ability and right to pursue political involvement), the petition stands as evidence of political action taken by youth that more of a rare occurrence.

5.1.6 | ACCESSIBILITY

Table 6 Codes Associated with Accessibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency in Data Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>skatepark that is accessible for kids</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parks as accessible</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travel out of area for things to do</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long drive to other skateparks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public transit accessibility issue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young people dependent on parents and friends for transportation to skateparks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results showed the ability for young people to access skateparks was a concern. As seen in Table 6, phrases related to the concept of accessibility were noted six times in the data set. Also shown in Table 6, phrases found in the secondary data coded for accessibility included: accessible for kids, parks as accessible, travel out of area for things to do, long drive to other skateparks, public transit accessibility issue, and young people dependent on parents and friends for transportation to skateparks.

Prior to the construction of the DFBSP, Meisner expressed a desire for a skatepark facility in the Hart neighbourhood as the location of the Rotary Skatepark was challenging for young people in the Hart area to access (2015). As Meisner reported, there was a “need for a skatepark in the area” as the “location [is] difficult for Hart area young people to access” (2015).

Riley Sadowick, a 14-year old BMX bike rider, noted his issue with the current facility provision of ride parks and further, with challenges posed by transit. Sadowick explained, “I like to ride at
the skatepark downtown, but I can’t get a ride down there every day “(Peebles, 2010). Regarding riding the bus, he would gladly use that option “but they only take two at a time if you’ve got bikes” (Peebles, 2010). In conjunction with the general demand and call for skateparks from young people and the public, these comments seem to provide reasonable evidence that may the link the issue of accessibility to the demand for skatepark facilities in local neighbourhoods. Paired with limitations of the present capability of buses to carry more than two bikes, users such as Sadowick may be more dependent on others in order to BMX bike and additionally, may not be performing the activity as frequently as desired.

Elizabeth Gables, a mother interviewed on CKPG News, similarly reported a need for accessible leisure in the Hart neighbourhood:

We need more activities for the young people to do up here. We don’t have a lot for them to do. They easily get bored. We’re always going into town looking for things. We’ve been going to Duchess Park a lot. They’ve got the park there where they can ride their bikes. We don’t have a lot of these opportunities here (CKPG News, 2016).

Such comments suggest a general lack of things to do for young people in the Hart neighbourhood. Additionally, Gables’ comments on the need to travel downtown with her children for things to do, and particularly, of travelling to Duchess Park also located downtown, highlight the disparity between the Hart neighbourhoods with other areas in Prince George. Her comments also seemed to stress a need for more leisure and spatial affordances for young people and specifically for the Hart neighbourhood.

5.1.7 | HEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code/In vivo Code</th>
<th>Frequency in Data Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>healthy: “healthy for you”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stress relief: “getting some energy released”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results showed that health and wellness was another affordance associated with the skateparks in Prince George. Table 7 presents the data on health and wellness. Healthy and stress relief were codes found two times in the data set. Although the frequency of these codes
was lower compared to codes in other themes, it may not necessarily suggest that health was not associated with skateparks. It may be more plausible, that health benefits are not something immediately connected with skateboarding perhaps, because the activity is not readily considered a sport.
Fig.7: Petition by Mitchell Brown for Skatepark in College Heights (Mitchell Brown/City of Prince George, 2017)
Evidence of health as an affordance of skateparks, is shown in Figure 5, as previously mentioned, the petition led by Mitchell Brown, a nine-year old boy in Prince George for a skatepark in the College Heights neighbourhood where there is currently no skatepark facility. As shown in the Figure 7 petition letter, Brown wrote to Mayor Lynn Hall, “I would like a skatepark here in College Heights”. As Brown’s first reason he stated, “Here are a couple of reasons, [number one], skateboarding, scootering, etc. is healthy for you.” (Kurjata, 2017).

These comments seem to provide evidence that Brown, and likely Brown’s family and those in support of the petition, associated skateparks as places that fulfilled health needs such as the need for physical activity, since this is a direct benefit of any active pursuit.

Additionally, statements by Niessen suggested BMX bike riding provided opportunities for young people to expend energy that may afford health benefits in the form of stress release. According to Niessen, the bikers “are out there getting some energy released” (Peebles, 2010). Considering the background of Niessen as a business owner, such comments may suggest that Niessen may find that BMX riding and related activities, may be a positive and constructive way for young people to engage in an activity “out there”, or outside, beyond the comfort of their homes, to expend built up energy and stress, to build strength and endurance and importantly, away from their businesses.

5.1.8 | LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE

Through numerous searches for the Rotary Skatepark, DFBSP and the Prince George skateparks on the internet, the researcher found a higher level of web-based media videos and news articles on or related to the Prince George skateparks than compared to searches for other Canadian skateparks. The use of a personal, narrative journalistic style exemplified in the Figure 7 petition document and the story of young people campaigning for a skatepark in College Heights (Kurjata and Tucker) seemed to be persuasive, effective and more likely to illicit positive support in favour of the Skateparks. Other forms of media coverage, such as CKPG News, centered on the challenges faced by a lack of skateparks and were supported through personal,
narrative-driven accounts from a mother and a Rotary volunteer. Since positive media coverage may help facilitate and spread awareness of, and support for the Skateparks, the researcher predicated that local media coverage may have contributed to the success of the skateparks by developing knowledge, awareness and support for the skateparks and additionally, for more practical reasons such as stimulating much needed fundraising or in-kind services to get the projects developed.

5.1.9 | SOCIAL MEDIA, FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Results were also found from social media and films as secondary source data. Social media outlets such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter seemed to play an important role in how young people shared and connected with others outside of the skateparks. Film provided another medium in which users of the skateparks captured and shared their “tricks” and “skills” with one another. Additionally, film provided the opportunity for users at the skateparks to watch themselves skateboard or ride, through viewing videos of their “tricks and skills” post-ride. In this manner, skateboarding and related activities seemed to be unique in that they allowed users the opportunity to view and re-view their own skateboarding skills and technique. The opportunity to view these videos seemed significant as such “trick videos” may further provide users the infrequent opportunity to re-play and self-observe themselves “in action”, to self-reflect on ways to improve their skills and to so do in a manner that accommodates their own pace and discretion. As well, filming tricks affords young people the opportunity to improve independent of coaches or teachers typical of other traditional sports and may be particularly attractive to young people that appreciate higher levels of independence or the chance to improve on their own or learn from peers rather than leaders or teacher figures.

Photography provided another form of unobtrusive data to capture, communicate and document information on the skateparks. The number of photographs available on the skateparks in Prince George may provide evidence to suggest how the community of Prince George values the skateparks and takes pride in them as facilities. In conjunction with the number of news articles written on the skateparks, these results seem to suggest that the success of the skateparks may be associated with the promotion and support of the skateparks by local media outlets.
5.2 | KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RESULTS

Section 4.2 presents the results and analyses from the key informant interviews. Within this section, the results are presented as two broader themes: (1) affordances and needs, and (2) elements of project success. These themes were established to correspond to the two research questions of the study. In review, the two research questions were, (1) What social, spatial, leisure and health needs do skateparks address for young people? (2) What elements are associated with the success of skateparks in Prince George, B.C.?

Within these broader themes, sub-themes were determined from related recurring codes and concepts to organize the information into associated categories and to bring greater clarity to the results. For illustrative purposes, each sub-theme is accompanied by summary tables of key information and may include supplementary figures. Whereas the previous secondary data section included the frequency of code and concepts in the body of the text, in this section, the frequency was noted in the tables, but excluded from the written description as the sources were all from key informants and would not provide a strong basis for comparison. Further, the focus of the results in this section was on the excerpts and quotes from key informant since in qualitative research, the quotes of key informants are considered to be robust and rich with important and informed information.

For greater comprehension, details and analysis of the results are presented in a narrative format. This narrative format contains quotes and extracts from the respondents to provide context, and to support how results and interpretations were developed from the data. Since the secondary data came from a variety of different source types, frequency of codes and concepts were explicitly noted in-text and in accompanying tables in order to provide a basis in which to compare the various sources.

Seven key informants were contacted and then interviewed. These interviewees were selected based on their knowledge and experience with the planning, design and development of the skateparks in Prince George, B.C.
Table 8: Key Informant Codes and Associated Professions/Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>Skatepark Designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>Municipal Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI3</td>
<td>Municipal Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>Volunteer 1 Community Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI5</td>
<td>Volunteer 2 Longtime Community Organization Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>Volunteer 3 Community Organization Leader, Background working with Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>Volunteer 4 Community Organization Leader, Experience in Journalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 8, the roles or backgrounds of the interviewees ranged from skatepark designer, landscape architect/planner, community municipal staff and volunteers (both individuals and volunteers affiliated with community organizations). Six of the key informants were based in Prince George. One was based out of Vancouver. These key informants provided specific contextual data pertinent to this case study.

5.2.1 | NEEDS AND AFFORDANCES

This section presents the results related to the affordances associated with the skateparks and what the activities of skateboarding, BMX riding, scooter riding provides for the community of Prince George, B.C. The definition of affordance in this study was adapted from Gibson’s Theory of Affordances (1977). Gibson’s Theory of Affordances follows:

The *affordances* of the environment are what it *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill. The verb to *afford* is found in the dictionary, but the noun affordance is not. I have made it up. I mean by it something that refers to both
the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment (Gibson, 1977).

Several sub-themes were identified from the interview data: Accessibility; Local Facility and Recreation; Inclusion; Social Opportunities, Community Development and Positive Places; Young people Involvement and Engagement; Legitimate Place for Young people; Destination and Valued Place; Recreation Facility and Service; Individual Activity and Alternative to Traditional Sport; Skill Development and Pro-Social Behaviour in Adolescents; Health; Adaptability and Unstructured Leisure.

5.2.1.1 | ACCESSIBILITY

Significantly, most of the respondents, 6 out of 7, suggested that skateboarding, riding activities and skateparks were associated with accessible leisure opportunities. Additionally, accessibility was coded eleven times in the key informant interview data set. Accessibility was defined in two ways: financially accessible and accessible by transportation or accessible through proximity to one’s home or institution. Overall, respondents described skateparks and riding activities as providing leisure that was financially accessible.

Table 9: Financially Accessible Concepts and Key Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency in Data Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>a place to go that is free; even high school sports cost money; having these things available to young people that are free; growing population of kids cannot access structured activities; divide between have and have-nots is increasing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>only need one piece of equipment: “just need a scooter or a bike”; more affordable for underprivileged young people: “young people or children that can’t afford team sports”</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>“for families that can’t afford more organized sports”; doesn’t require a lot of equipment; can’t afford organized sports; something affordable</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 8, key words and phrases used to describe accessibility in a financial dimension include: *very accessible, less costly than many team sports, place that doesn’t cost money for young people, divide between have and have-nots growing, only need one piece of equipment, more affordable for underprivileged young people, accessible for “families that can’t afford more organized sports”, doesn’t require a lot of equipment, can’t afford organized sports, something affordable, accessible sport, affordable recreation and alternative to organized sport.*

Various forms of accessibility associated with the skateparks in Prince George were identified by the respondents. Skateboarding and riding activities were found to be accessible due to the minimal amount of equipment required to participate. KI2 described this accessibility as, “you just need a scooter or a bike”. Similarly, KI7 conferred that activities at skateparks do not “require a lot of equipment” when compared to other common sports and leisure activities that require equipment, and therefore, more monetary means to participate. For example, there are few sports or leisure activities where a single piece of equipment permits an individual access to participate.

5.2.1.2 | AFFORDABLE RECREATION

Further, KI6 spoke of a need for leisure pursuits that are free to participate. According to KI6, it was important to “[have] these things available to young people that don’t cost money”. Additionally, comments highlighted how respondents described accessibility through varying definitions. For example, not only was equipment a barrier to participation in other activities and sports, but the direct fee associated with the cost to participate in many programs and activities, and to continue participation in leisure, seemed to be a critical barrier that better positioned riding activities as low-cost, accessible alternatives. Additionally, KI4 and KI7 spoke of riding activities as being associated with affordable recreation. KI4 referred to the concept of “affordable recreation” while KI7 noted that skateboarding provided “something affordable”.
Lastly, KI4 suggested skateboarding was accessible in that the activity was associated with the concept of being financially inclusive since riding activities at skateparks “encompassed a range of financial demographics”. Such comments provide evidence to suggest that financial accessibility was a key contributor and feature of skateparks and riding activities. Respondents highlighted different perspectives of financial accessibility, while some stressed the general affordability of riding activities, others specified the minimal amount of equipment required to participate. Overall, the results seemed to show that financial accessibility was a distinct factor associated with skateparks and riding activities.

5.2.1.3 | SOCIALLY ACCESSIBLE

Notably, KI6 stated that in their experience working in children’s and young people mental health, they found an increasing separation between those that were privileged and underprivileged. KI6 noted twice, “the divide between the have and have-nots is growing” and “that there was a growing population of kids that could not access structured activities”. This comment further detailed that even in high school, sports that were previously free of charge and thus, much easier to access, now required a fee to participate. These comments seemed to indicate that as a result of a growing socio-economic divide, places that provided free or low-cost recreation were increasingly important. While these comments provided the context that predicated the need for accessible recreation, most of the remaining comments directly described a need for, or the provision of, affordable leisure and sport through riding activities.

In a similar vein, the concept of accessibility was described by KI2 as skateparks and skateboarding being accessible in terms of location, or, in other words, how easy the skatepark was to access for young people relative to their home, school, or by transportation. As KI2 explained, a key reason behind the development of the DFBSP, was the geographical distance of the Hart neighbourhood in proximity to the existing Rotary Skatepark located downtown. As KI2 described, “…the reason it came about was the Hart was so far removed from the downtown, and it’s difficult for kids to get there with the transit system and even relying on parents and that sort of thing. So, they needed something up there”. Notably, the provision of a skatepark in the Hart may be an important developmental affordance for the young people of Prince George as it may provide more autonomy in their ability to access skateparks. KI6 spoke of a need for leisure pursuits that are free to participate in and referred to “having these things available to young people that doesn’t cost money”. Such comments further highlighted how
respondents described accessibility in varying definitions. For example, not only was equipment a barrier to participation in other activities and sports, but the direct fee associated with the cost to participate in many programs and activities, and to continue participation in leisure was a critical barrier that made skateparks and riding activities more accessible.

Generally, KI4 and KI7 spoke of riding activities as being associated with something affordable. KI4 referred to the concept of “affordable recreation” while KI7 noted that skateboarding provided “something affordable”. Lastly, KI4 suggested skateboarding was accessible in that the activity was associated with the concept of being financially inclusive since riding activities at skateparks “encompassed a range of financial demographics”.

### 5.2.1.4 ACCESSIBLE TO NEIGHBOURHOODS AND TRANSPORTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>“Hart so far removed from downtown”; something to do that is accessible to kids in Hart neighbourhood</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI5</td>
<td>not easy for Hart young people to travel downtown</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>Rotary Skatepark accessible to transportation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI3</td>
<td>something to do in their own community, on their own time without parents; after-school activity; can easily walk or bike ride over without cost of transit; place to go when they want, when they can</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>want things in their own community (limit driving)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2.1.5 LOCAL FACILITY AND RECREATION

Similarly, a common view amongst interviewees was that there was a need for, or that current skateparks provided, a recreational and leisure activity and facility that was locally accessible. Five out of seven respondents described comments related to the theme of local recreation services and facilities in relation to the skateparks. As shown in Table 9, key words
and concepts for local recreation included: “Hart so far removed from downtown”, something to do that is accessible to kids in the Hart neighbourhood; not easy for Hart young people to travel downtown; Rotary Skatepark accessible to transportation; something to do in their own community, on their own time without parents; after-school activity; can easily walk or bike ride over without cost of transit; place to go when they want, when they can; and want things in their own community.

Participants expressed varying views in relation to young people being able to access the Rotary Skatepark, (the first skatepark built in Prince George). While KI7 indicated that the Rotary Skatepark was accessible to transportation since it was located near bus stops, “Yep, it’s on a bus route and not far from shopping, the major shopping mall as well”. On the other hand, KI5 indicated that due to the geography of Prince George, it wasn’t necessarily easy for the young people in the Hart community to travel downtown to use the Rotary Skatepark. These comments may provide evidence to suggest that young people may be limited in their ability to access skateparks outside their neighbourhood. Reasons behind this limitation for young people to access skateparks may stem from an inability to afford transit and from a preference to avoid traveling to skateparks outside of their neighbourhood.

Likewise, KI2 expressed a need for local skatepark facilities. As KI2 said, the “Hart was so far removed from downtown”. Therefore, the Rotary Skatepark, currently the only other skatepark in Prince George and located downtown, was not easily accessible to the Hart community. Results also suggested that the DFBSP was locally accessible to neighbourhood young people and residents. KI2 explained that one of the key driving factors for the DFBSP was due to the geographical location of the Hart neighbourhood in relation to the existing Rotary Skatepark downtown.

As KI2 described, “...the reason it came about was the Hart was so far removed from the downtown, and it’s difficult for kids to get there with the transit system and even relying on parents and that sort of thing. So, they needed something up there”. Similarly, KI6 suggested the Hart community had a desire for “things in their own community” in order to reduce the amount of driving parents had to do. According to KI6:

I know in the grand scheme of things like driving from the Hart to downtown. It isn't far really like, I think it's all-relative. And when you live here, like we always talk about
driving into town. Oh, I don’t want to drive into town. It’s like a 10-15-minute drive. But that’s what we got, feedback from lots of people that they want things in their community. They don’t want to keep driving into the Bowl or other parts of Prince George, they want it here. So, I think the park just makes that more accessible for people.

Additionally, KI3 indicated that having something for the young people in the Hart to do after-school that was easily accessible without driving or taking transit was important:

So, for kids to go do something. Their parents have to drive them into town and most of the parents have worked all day in town and don’t want to drive back into town. Yeah, to do more activities. So, I think this is just another case in point where kids can come home from school and just go do something right in their own community, on their own time without their parents. They can walk or bike ride over there and do their skateboarding activity, without again, that being scheduled or the cost or transportation issue. And I think that’s why the Hart wanted one and Blackburn wants one and now I think College Heights wants one is having just a central skateboard park doesn’t accommodate kids that just want to do it after-school.

Together, these results provide important insights on the need and demand for local, neighbourhood-based skateparks in Prince George. Specifically, the results show that the DBFSP provided a neighbourhood community service and facility for the Hart neighbourhood that young people could use after-school due to its proximity to their homes. Such a community service is important as it may help alleviate issues concerning access to the Rotary Skatepark downtown and may reduce the amount of driving required by parents to transport their children to the Rotary Skatepark, and overall, afford young people a sense of independence.

5.2.1.6 | ALTERNATIVE TO ORGANIZED SPORT

Additionally, three out of seven respondents suggested that riding activities were accessible as they provided an alternative to costly organized sports. According to KI2, skateparks afforded leisure opportunities for “young people or children that can’t afford team sports”. This comment was substantiated by KI7, who suggested riding activities provided accessible leisure “for families that can’t afford more organized sports”. Such comments provide evidence to indicate there is, in general, a lack of alternative and financially accessible leisure activities to organized sports, that may position skateboarding and riding activities as more desirable and popular leisure options.

5.2.1.7 | INCLUSION
Shown in Table 10, most respondents, 6 out of 7, described an aspect of inclusion in association with the Skateparks. Two main forms of inclusion emerged from the results: inclusion of a wide range of age groups and social inclusion. The opportunity for the inclusion of a wide range of ages in the planning and design phases of the DFBSP project seemed to be a result of the variety of age-friendly activities requested and planned for the project as a whole.

Similar to results reported in the secondary data section, KI2 described the concept of inclusion in terms of the planning process, and of the behaviour of users at the Hart Skatepark itself. KI2 explained that the consultations used in the design and planning process of the Hart Skatepark were inclusive of a wide age demographic. That “everyone from elementary school to young adults” participated, and additionally, that young people were “definitely engaged in visioning sessions”. These comments may suggest that the consultation process provided an opportunity for all ages to participate in the process of planning the Hart Skatepark that may otherwise not have occurred.

Table 11 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Age Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>opportunity for entire community to be included in park design; provided activities and amenities for multiple generations and interests; inclusive of skill and ability levels; space where young people are welcome</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>age inclusive; design and planning inclusive of all ages; inclusion with other uses (mixed community use); multi-use facility &quot;there's other options&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI3</td>
<td>could go with their whole family; a nice age range like from like guys in their 20s; right down to like you know 8, 9, 10-year-old; Bravery Park to be a destination park where people would go with their whole family; multigenerational; everyone could go and do something</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>how often are teenagers somewhere where young kids are trying to do something that they're already doing well</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KI6 described a comment on multiple activities in the feedback they received on the “park as a whole” that seemed to be related to the concept of inclusion. The following feedback related to multiple activities were received: “playground upgrades were pretty high priority”, that the “dog park was big” and also, that the skatepark and a walking trail was requested. These results were important since the range of uses requested from the community, would likely result in a similar provision of a range of age-friendly activities at the DFBSP. For example, the skatepark would likely attract a younger demographic, the playground would provide a play facility for children, whereas the walking trail would permit recreation for a broader demographic.

Like results reported in the secondary data section, KI2 described the concept of age inclusion in terms of the planning process and of the behaviour of users at DFBSP. KI2 explained that the consultations used in the design and planning process of the DFBSP were inclusive of a wide age demographic. That “everyone from elementary school to young adults” participated, and additionally, that young people were “definitely engaged in visioning sessions”. These comments may provide evidence to suggest that the process provided an opportunity for all ages to be consulted in the process of planning the Hart Skatepark. As shown in Table 10, results suggested skateparks were used by a wide range of ages. Reporting on actual usage of the park, one respondent, KI2, had observed a broad range of ages at the skateparks. As KI2 said, “there are everything from itty bitty little guys on a scooter, like we’re talking preschool to, you know, people in their early 20s.”

Table 12 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Social Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>feedback from community on what they wanted in park (activities and amenities for all); space where young people are welcome</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data suggested the concept of social inclusion was a fundamental aspect of the DFBSP from the initial visioning sessions through to design and final use of the park. Although respondents did not outright name inclusion as an intentional element of the DFBSP, the researcher reasoned this through analysis of respondent's language that focused on the concepts of multiple use and multi-generational. For example, KI2 stated that initial park planning centered on the "vision of it being multi-purpose", and for a breadth of ages. As KI2 said, "We started sort of visioning what we wanted the park to look like, and we always had this vision of it being multi-purpose and for a wide range of ages, like we saw like from 0 to 90, sort of thing. Like for it to be for all ages, for families". Likewise, KI6 highlighted that one of the key features of DFBSP was its potential to function as a multi-purpose and multi-generational place, and that the park was designed to encourage young as well as older children to use it. As KI6 noted:

You could have a skatepark and you could still have this playground for young kids and their families and seniors walking... an adult park. I think the best feature is its potential to be more multi-use and multi-generational, one thing we really wanted to see was not just older teens, but you know, allowing space for the younger kids to come out.

KI3 verified this concept of DFBSP providing multi-generational recreation, "As a destination park where people would go with their whole family, multiple generations could go and do something"
Table 13 Key words and concepts associated with Social, Community and Positive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>helps build community; a bunch of people out to a spot; meet people; if you go skate by yourself, it's not the same as skating in a group; seems like an individual sport, but is massively social; from a social aspect, it brings like-minded people to the same location; community feel, like an outdoor community centre</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>from son’s personal experience, provided a real social network with friends; opportunity to socialize over team sports (less structured); some older kids accommodate younger kids; mentoring and good role models; social hierarchy developed, helps to reinforce positive conduct and behaviour; poor behavior not tolerated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI3</td>
<td>for teens social part is a bunch of kids in the same thing at the same time;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>pretty social sport; have more fun if someone is there, but can go independently and practice; opportunity to chat and meet new people without formal structure; some mentoring of young people; mostly welcoming pro-social behaviour towards younger kids; a win from a social perspective</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>central location makes connection to community even stronger; Bravery Park as stand-in for a community centre in fall, spring and summer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>form of socially acceptable play; some mentoring, older kids try and look out for younger ones; a little bit of conflict and undesirable behaviour; overall kids good at targeting undesirable behaviour</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social opportunities, community development and skateparks as positive places, were related themes that emerged from the key informant interview data set. Shown in Table 12,
almost all respondents suggested the skateparks in Prince George were social places, and/or, that the activity of skateboarding afforded social opportunities. More specifically, KI1 seemed to suggest that skateboarding was more enjoyable when in the company of others, that skateparks brought people with similar interests together, and that skateparks could serve as outdoor community centres:

Yeah, it just helps build community. Right. A bunch of people out to a spot where they can be creative and recreate and usually the vibe is good, and you meet people and you can push each other so yeah; definitely from social… I talk about this with my friends, if you go skate by yourself, it's not the same as skating in a group. And it seems like it's an 'individual quote unquote sport, some people don't call it a sport, but I think it's massively social. You have a lot better time if you have friends around pushing each other or just having fun.

KI4 supported this idea that skateboarding was more enjoyable when performed collectively. According to KI4, skateboarding was a “pretty social sport; you have more fun if someone is there, but you can go independently and practice.” Together, these results seem to indicate that skateboarding tends to be social in nature and that the users value and enjoy the social aspect of skateboarding over practising independently.

Additionally, comments by some respondents seemed to suggest the Skateparks provided a venue in which a sense of community was developed based on similar interests. As KI1 said, “So I think from a social aspect, it brings like-minded people to the same location…that’s where, sort of, that community feel comes in right, like an outdoor community centre basically”. In terms of skateparks serving as “community centres”, KI6 confirmed KI1’s comments. As KI6 said, they hoped DFBSP being so centrally located in the Hart neighbourhood, would “stand-in for a community centre in fall, spring and summer”. These results may provide evidence to indicate that the Hart neighbourhood needs a community centre, but in the meantime, as hubs of social and community activity and often centrally located, skateparks may serve as alternative outdoor community centres. Likewise, from an activity-based perspective, KI3 seemed to indicate that the social component of skateboarding was rooted in the act of people doing the same activity altogether. As KI3 noted, “For teens, the social part is a bunch of kids in the same thing at the same time”. This comment seems to provide evidence to show how important it is to have a common place to skateboard in order for skateboarders and other riders to have a mutual spot to meet. Reasons behind this need for a common place to skateboard may be due to the nature of skateboarding, particularly street skating, in which
users ride various terrain around a city whereas, the skatepark acts as a known common meeting place for skateboarders and other wheeled enthusiasts. Moreover, results suggested the informal social character of skateboarding was an attraction for users of skateparks. As KI4 stated, “But as I said, and if somebody else is there you sort of can end up having a chat of sorts…”. In conjunction, these comments seem to provide evidence that skateparks and skateboarding may provide a common, yet informal social and leisure activity as well as a meeting place for like-minded individuals.

5.2.1.9 | PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

In terms of pro-social behaviour and social opportunities, most respondents found older young people to be generally respectful of younger children using the skateparks as they had witnessed older kids mentoring or assisting younger children. Notably, three respondents perceived a form of unofficial, voluntary, self-governance and mentoring followed by users at the skateparks. For example, KI4 stated, “You know they watch out for them and kind of everybody makes sure that they get their turns and that they’re, you know, no one is pulling them down or they’ll show them something and give them a little encouragement or, you know, it’s pretty cute.” This mentoring between older kids and younger kids was substantiated by KI2 who noted, “Some of the older kids…can be very accommodating to the younger kids and kind of show the way to be a good citizen”. Further, KI7 indicated that the kids “self-policed”, seemingly to maintain positive conduct at the skateparks: “There is some mentoring, you know, going on where I think some of the older kids do try and will look out for the, for the younger ones as well. By and large, I think the kids have actually been quite good at, at self-policing, you know, the behaviour there”. KI4, directly stated how the RCMP reported few problems at the skateparks, “Yeah and the RCMP told me that they didn’t really have issues there. They weren’t getting calls for trouble there, that the kids actually governed themselves quite well”. These results are significant in that the self-governance or “code of conduct” enacted by the users, seemed to facilitate cooperation between differing user groups such as BMX riders and skateboarders and between age groups, for example toddlers and adolescents which therefore, may help to reduce conflict and need for external policing and assist in increasing the overall feeling of safety in the skateparks.

Although comments seemed to emphasize observations of pro-social behaviour of skatepark
users, some respondents described some conflict and undesirable behaviour at the skateparks. Some respondents recognized that some “bad apples” and undesirable behaviour occurred. As KI4 said, “…there’s always the bad apples in there, in any gathering of people, but you know the vast majority are really quite you know, loving the little kids there”. While KI4 seemed to think overall the young people enjoyed the presence of younger children at the skateparks, KI2 seemed to suggest that the older young people had further progressed beyond “enjoyment” of having children around at the Skateparks to a more protective leadership role towards the children. As KI2 said:

“…and you’ll get the opposite. You’ll get real you know you get a kid that’s actually kind of a jerk, but it's funny if the other ones are there that are quite good kids, the jerk kind of gets driven out because everyone’s like, hey, not cool like you know, we’re all here together until they kind of get edged out”. Additionally, the idea of “bad kids” getting “edged out” was conferred by KI7, though in this case the language was described as “targeting” problem behaviour. As KI7 said, “I mean, you know, there’s always going to be a little bit of conflict, but overall I think the kids have been quite good at really sort of targeting, you know, the problem behaviour and the problem people and keeping that to a minimum”.

Results also showed that skateparks were generally associated with social opportunities and for being social places. As KI1 explained, “Perhaps you don’t even skate but your friends do so you go there to socialize”, and that skateparks encouraged a “bunch of people out to a spot where they can be creative and recreate and usually the vibe is good and you meet people and you can push each other so yeah.” Further, KI1 emphasized that riding activities provided more opportunities to develop a “social network” than traditionally structured team sports. These comments collectively seemed to indicate that skateparks and skateboarding might provide multiple opportunities and ways in which users may engage socially.

5.2.1.10 | YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Results suggested the Skateparks were associated with opportunities to involve and engage young people in the planning, design and development of the skateparks. Shown in Table 13, three respondents expressed comments related to this theme.

Table 14 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Young People Involvement and Engagement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
</table>


Overall, KI1 described in great depth, the consultations and processes their skatepark company used for DFBSP, essentially, what was effective in engaging and involving young people in the planning and design process. When asked about successful features, KI1 responded, “Local input and the consultation process were very important”. These consultations may be considered successful features as they play a role in how much participant data is reflected in the resulting skatepark designs. KI1 also described the processes involved in the consultations. Once the initial site for the skatepark was selected, the company conducted a presentation at the initial consultation called “Skateparks 101”. This presentation provided a background into modern skatepark facilities, which according to KI1, “informs what skateparks look like these days, versus what the older ones were like” and to “profile how much more popular they are becoming”, since as KI1 explained, a common challenge the company faced was “we often get a bit of pushback” dependent on what the local community is like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KI1</th>
<th>local input and the consultation process were very important; Skateparks 101</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>opportunity for young people to give input at several events; kids laid sod at DFBSP-opportunity for them to be involved- vested interest</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>opportunity for young people to work with CAs; opportunity to connect with others and build community through common spaces and physical activity</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KI1 also described a process in tangent with Skateparks 101 to engage the young people in attendance, a participatory activity where young people fill out a feedback form on the “type of skatepark terrain they want and the type of features they want”. The young people participants communicate their preferences by placing dots on four boards that have different features on them. Lastly, the young people get to vote on their favourite skatepark terrain and features. From the information gathered at the initial consultation, KI1 said the skatepark company developed 2-dimensional design options after which, “we'll come back and do another workshop with them and get feedback on the option they prefer, and then after that we create a 3d model to share with the community”. The initial participatory exercise and subsequent series of workshop iterations seemed to demonstrate how young people were engaged and involved in the skatepark planning and design in an accessible and democratic manner. While, the first
activity may seem basic, the intention of having the design of the skatepark derived from the young users and then ensuring that this data is realized appropriately through Newline’s design would provide some assurance of these users being more satisfied with the resulting skatepark and shows a commitment to an inclusive planning and design process (best practices).

For Rotary Skatepark, KI4 reported that young people were given several opportunities to give input on the skateparks and assist in the process of developing the park:

They had several events where we asked the kids to come in and give input and give their ideas. And they came and laid sod once it was built. The city would have done it, but we kind of wanted them to have a vested interest, so on a weekend we had a big event and all the kids showed up and everybody got to help lay sod. So yes, we had a few things where the kids came in and gave a hand so... okay yeah, we wanted them to have a vested interest and have a hand in that.

Overall, these comments seemed to provide evidence that KI1, KI4, KI6 and other community volunteers made a conscious effort to include and engage young people in the skatepark development. This engagement occurred through invitation to participate in the consultations for the skateparks and through the accessible design activities that directly asked for young people input in the design process. Additionally, KI4’s example showed an instance where young people were invited to assist in the construction of the skatepark through an invitation to lay sod at the Rotary Skatepark. Such examples are important in that they may seemingly help young people develop a “vested interest” and commitment to caring and respecting the skatepark as a valued place that they had a firsthand opportunity to plan, design and construct.

5.2.1.11 | LEGITIMATE PLACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

As shown in Table 14, results seemed to indicate that designed skateparks were associated with being legitimate places for young people in public space, as well as being places to conduct riding activities. Generally, most respondents thought designed skateparks helped to alleviate the conflict between private property owners, street skateboarders and BMX riders who had previously been using streets and private property to skateboard in the absence of a skatepark.

In response to a question on how skateparks helped to address the conflict between street skaters and private property owners, KI1 replied, “Well, A, you won’t get kicked out. It’s meant
to be skated and used”. This comment seems to provide evidence to indicate that KI1 found the skateparks served as legitimate places where young people were permitted to skateboard and where they did not have to worry or fear they would be harassed or experience conflict for using the space for riding activities.

Additionally, KI1 suggested skateparks provided a place designed with young people in mind in which they were welcome to use, “…of having a space that’s designated for young people to come and use”. This comment is significant in that it suggests that there may be a lack of places for young people to use and therefore, skateparks may be posed as important places to help address this void of legitimate places for young people.

Table 15 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Legitimate Places for Young People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>won’t get kicked out, meant to be skated and used; space that’s designated for young people to come and use; creating a space where young people are welcome</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI3</td>
<td>businesses helped fund as they were tired of having kids use their property to skateboard</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>young people needed some surfaces to use, they were getting in trouble; need something like that, the kids wouldn't be getting in trouble if we had one</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI5</td>
<td>no designated place for skateboarders, skateboarders were using parking lots and private spaces which created conflict</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>giving them the space to recognize that they need space; stepping away as adults to let them define the space</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a similar vein, but described from a needs-based perspective, KI3 and KI4 suggested there was a need for legitimate places to skateboard in Prince George. According to KI3, businesses contributed to funding the skateparks, “Because they were really tired of these kids skateboarding all through their parking lots, and so they were really willing to support the skateboard park partly to help the kids but partly to get them off their own property”. Additionally, KI4 confirmed the need for a designed skatepark in two personal examples based on her son’s own experience:

They were good, and he loved it, but they needed some surfaces to do it and they were getting in trouble of course. And a local skateboard shop actually sponsored him, and I would talk to them and say well you know when are you going to get a local skate park. We need something like that, the kids wouldn't be getting in trouble if we had one.

The second example provided by KI4, showed how their son and his friends had experienced direct conflict with security for skateboarding at the University of Northern British Columbia to the extent that they had their skateboards confiscated by security. KI4 also suggested the severity of how much the skatepark was needed, that the need for a skatepark was recognized and was in the process of getting “developed” and that in the current situation, skateboarders “don't have anywhere to go”. As KI4 explained:

Okay and before they would go and get chased out. Bill and his buddies had gone up to UNBC to skate and, I got a call on my cell phone from this guy, and he’s like, this is Joe from security at UNBC ... And they were all up here skating and I’m taking away their skateboards away. So, I said I would come and get them and that I was working on getting a skatepark developed. It should be here soon. They don't have anywhere to go. So, I had to bail them out of security jail.

KI5 also conferred that there was a need for designated and designed places for skateboarding due to the lack of skateboarding facilities and the resulting conflict that ensued between private property owners and skateboarders. As KI5 said, “There was no designated place for skateboarders and the skateboarders were using parking lots and private spaces which created conflict”.

Additionally, KI7 suggested that the provision of designed skateparks provided the young people with the opportunity to “recognize” that as a demographic, they could be included in public space design and that young people had autonomy to “define” this space as they
wished. As KI7 said:

Yeah, I don't think it's, you know, pushing the kids into a space, yeah I don't think that that's it at all and saying, you know, you will play here. It's not that at all. I think it's far more just giving them the space to recognize that they need space, but I think it's also then stepping away as adults to let them define the space.

This comment suggested that KI7 thinks young people may not recognize their public space needs. With this lack of recognition, KI7 seemed to emphasize that skateparks were important because they served as examples to show that young people too, can be included in public space. Furthermore, the last part of this comment, to “let them [young people] define the space”, may provide evidence to indicate that KI7 thinks skateparks provide an opportunity for young people to cultivate and adapt a space to suit their needs in a manner that reflects young people as opposed to being a product of adult influence.

While KI1 provided comments to support skateparks as designated places for young people, on the other hand, it is important to note that KI1 countered that the provision of a skatepark may not deter those attracted to a unique skate able feature regardless of whether it was on private property or outside of the designated skatepark.

Overall, these results seem to suggest that designed skateparks were considered by most respondents, to be places that may assist in reducing the amount of conflict between young people and private property owners and, additionally, that the Skateparks served as examples of places where young people may carve and define a public space.

5.2.1.12 | DESTINATION AND VALUED PLACE

A recurrent theme among more than half of the respondents, was a sense that the Prince George skateparks were considered destinations and unique places from a design standpoint. Additionally, comments from one participant distinguished the DBFSP and the park, as being a special place in the Hart neighbourhood. These sentiments seemed to stem both from a socio-historical need as well as a lingering negative stigma associated with the Hart neighbourhood.
Table 16 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Destination and Valued Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>each park is unique and offers different terrain; all skateparks are different</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI3</td>
<td>destination park; for whole family, multigenerational</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>destination skatepark</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>opportunity to make special park happen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shown in Table 15, KI1 supplied numerous comments that focused on design and further, seemed to distinguish designed skateparks from street skating terrain. KI1 emphasized that skateparks were unique onto themselves because each skatepark had a distinct and different design from its counterparts. Additionally, KI1 found that in general, sports facilities were quite similar to one another. For example, a baseball diamond was standard in design from place to place, but in comparison, the design and the features of each skatepark varied from one park to the next. As K1 said:

Every skatepark is different and offers something a little more unique. I think that's something that draws people to them. Whereas, a baseball diamond is a baseball diamond. All the dimensions are the same. So, even if you love baseball, you're not necessarily gonna go play at that same field right by your house. Whereas, all skateparks are different. So, people travel to different locations, because it offers different terrain and different experience and different things to challenge themselves on.

Further evidence of skateparks as destination places was found in KI4’s description. In this description, KI4 noted how her son had moved away from Prince George but highlighted his desire to return home to skateboard at Rotary Skatepark, primarily, that Rotary remained one of his favourite places to skateboard. As KI4 said, “For my son, it’s one of his favourite skateparks. He still skates and is 33, but he doesn’t live here. He comes back and skates the park. He’s skated all over and says it’s still one of my favourite skateparks.” Whereas KI1’s comments seemed to provide evidence to suggest skateparks were unique to other sports facilities, KI4’s comments provided evidence in the form of direct, secondary observation: of KI4’s son repeated return to the skateparks in Prince George. Comments by KI3 explicitly expressed an association of DFBSP as a “destination park”. In this instance, however, the park was referred to as a destination because the park was designed to be multigenerational, and thus, provided activities and facilities that would appeal to an entire family. According to KI4, “The Hart
Association has always said they wanted Bravery Park to be a destination park where people would go with their whole family”. Significantly, KI6 confirmed this idea of DFBSP as a destination place and, further, recognized the DBFSP as a special place for the Hart neighbourhood:

The Hart’s always sort of been the black sheep of the community to some degree. And you know, even looking at that park plan how we've been so underutilized for parks for so many years. So, I think, I think this park, it's special that way because it's just something special for the Hart. And you don't always hear about special things happening in the Hart.

In support of the Hart as a neighbourhood in need of resources, KI6 emphasized how the DFBSP provided a special feature for a community, as an “opportunity to make a special park happen”, that seemed to show the great need and appreciation for such a community facility. These comments seemed to provide evidence to indicate that the Hart as a neighbourhood had been under-resourced and associated with a negative stigma, “as a black sheep”, for some time. Whether a factor in the reasoning behind the underutilization of parks in the Hart neighbourhood, KI4’s comments seemed to serve as socio-economic and historical background on the neighbourhood, and, critically, as an indicator of a place in need of community resources.

With this being said, it may be reasonably established that the provision of a “special” or “destination” place for the Hart, may have helped to challenge and dismantle the residual stigma associated with the Hart. In summary, these results seemed to provide evidence to indicate that the DFBSP, was viewed as a destination place for the design features, multigenerational character, and more significantly, as a much valued, unique and special feature for the Hart neighbourhood.

5.2.1.13 | MULTIPLE USE RECREATION FACILITY AND SERVICE

Table 17 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Multiple Use

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<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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Over half of the respondents, suggested a key feature of the DFBSP, was the aspect of multiple use functionality afforded by this park. For example, KI6 stated that, “The best feature is that that we’re situated in a park in the main part of the Hart…and that we can do other things in the park”. In support of this idea, KI7’s comments focused more directly on the multiple use aspect of DFBSP. According to KI7:

We’re getting back that multi-use thing and in comparison, to more common sports like basketball, what else can you do on it? Besides play basketball, like I suppose if you had a group of people, you know, show up, who decided to play hockey on it. But the problem is then that group is playing hockey on it and nobody can play basketball. But the magic of the skatepark is that, a group of kids can be, using their BMX bikes, or their scooters and they can all use the park at the same time.

Additionally, KI2 seemed to confirm that having multiple options in the DFSP was associated with success. As KI2 said, “It’s great because there’s more things for people to do. So, if you have a family, you can go use the basketball court at the same time or go play tennis or there’s other options. So definitely, like I said, having those factors but also in a multi-use park”. Together, these comments seem to provide evidence to suggest that multiple uses are an important feature of the DFBSP. These comments may indicate that skateparks are unique from other more common leisure facilities in that they enable users to use one space in multiple ways simultaneously.

In terms of multiple season use, two respondents reported the Skateparks being used in multiple seasons, surprisingly even in winter. KI2 said, “We’ve seen many times and late, early winter, late winter, marginal months, where kids are out there with shovels and they’re shoveling off the skatepark.” KI7 conferred the skatepark facilities were used in off-season winter months:
5.2.1.14 | ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL SPORT

Table 18 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Alternative to Traditional Sport

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<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>teenagers as demographic in need; gives kids edged out of traditional sports something to do</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>skateboarding as alternative to kids not interested in traditional sports</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>bunch of kids don’t do regular sports</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several respondents stated comments that suggested the concept of the skateparks provided an alternative to traditional sport. As shown in Table 17, KI2 mentioned this concept repeatedly and highlighted teenagers as the demographic in need: “When you hit that sort of 13-18-year-old demographic, and, “It's when you get to teenagers that it’s more challenging”. KI2 also recognized the need for an alternative to sport in the following comment, “If you're not in a specialized team sport, or are not interested in it, what do you do?” Further, KI2 associated the idea of a need for alternate activities to the prevalence of competition in formal sports and the exclusion that might occur with such pressure. As KI2 said, skateboarding and riding activities:

Gives these kids something to do... [that if they] kind of fall between the cracks in terms of other sports...it gives something for them, I think, and this is sort of a national trend, right? You've got, like I said, team sports don't always work for kids by that age or girls are interested more in shopping, a lot of the team sports will edge out the kids who just want to play, let's say, baseball, but it's such a high level of competition now, that those kids get edged out, like they feel they don't have a place they've just been kind of kicked out if you know what I mean?

KI6 confirmed the need for young people to have an alternative to sports in the following comment, “A whole bunch of kids don't do the regular typical sports”. Thus, this comment seemed to suggest KI6 found there was a group of kids who faced a need for alternative activities to “typical sports”. KI4 conferred that the skateparks provided a leisure alternative for young people who were not interested in traditional sport. According to KI4, “It [skateboarding] gives kids that aren't interested in even traditional kind of sports like something for them to
KI6 also identified that there were many other ways in which one could be physically active and that riding activities at skateparks provided an additional opportunity and means in which to be physically active. As KI6 stated, “There’s a lot of other ways to be physically active. Right. And so, I think, it’s just another opportunity...”. Such comments served as evidence to suggest that KI2, KI4 and KI6 found there was a challenge to provide leisure alternatives to traditional sports, particularly for the teenage demographic. Furthermore, that skateboarding and riding activities may offer an alternative for young people to participate in physically active leisure activities if they do not have access, skill or interest in more traditionally offered sports.

5.2.1.15 | INDIVIDUAL, INDEPENDENT AND INFORMAL LEISURE

Table 19 Key Words and Concepts for Individual, Independent and Informal

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<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>unorganized sport, can come and go as you want; can perform individually or in groups</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI3</td>
<td>trend in informal recreation, low cost, own pace, at own time, not programmed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

KI1 and KI3 differentiated riding activities from other leisure sports as they associated skateboarding as an activity that may be conducted individually, or as a group. Additionally, KI3 and KI3 associated skateboarding with providing unstructured recreation in the time, manner and pace that they preferred. According to KI3:

There’s more interest right now in individual activities where you can do it at your own time, at your own pace, without being scheduled or programmed and without afee or much of a cost to it. So, things like running and walking and hiking and bird watching and skateboarding, you know, those types of things where people can just go out and do those things: bike riding, be active, but not be scheduled and not have to pay or be somewhere at a certain time.

KI1 further described the benefits related to the unstructured character of skateboarding. First, that as an unorganized activity, participants were free to come and leave the skatepark as
they pleased. Second, that at the skateparks, users could participate individually, as well as in groups. Third, that as an alternative to more commonly offered sports, skateboarding catered towards different types and interests of young people.

As KI1 expressed,

It's one of the spaces too where it's unorganized sport. So, you can come and go as you want. If you're just an individual you can come, if you're a group of ten you can come. It's not like a sport compared to like hockey or baseball or organized sport and obviously there's different personalities of children.

KI3 also stated a key feature of riding activities is that participants were able to access the skateparks independently from their parents, guardians and families:

So, I think this is just another case in point where kids can come home from school and just go do something right in their own community out on their own time without their parents. They can walk or bike ride over there and do their skateboarding activity, without again, that being scheduled or the cost or transportation issue.

This result, albeit similar to results in the accessibility section, was unique in that it emphasized a sense of independence, autonomy and an informal, or “unscheduled”, leisure option for skatepark users.

5.2.1.16 | UNSTRUCTURED LEISURE AND FLEXIBILITY

| Table 20 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Unstructured and Flexible |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| **Key Informant** | **Concepts** | **Frequency** |
| KI1             | definitely, the unstructured; unorganized sport, come and go as you want, if you're an individual you can come, if you're a group of ten you can come | 2 |
| KI2             | informal recreational activity, have less time to devote to traditional sport | 1 |
| KI7             | unstructured play time | 1 |

Likewise, KI2 suggested skateboarding was an informal recreational activity that supported contemporary fast-paced society in which families have less time and resources: “...it's an informal recreation activity and with our society, having less time, less ability to, to tailor to kids
and having less traditional sport, it fills that niche very well”. This comment seemed to provide evidence that part of the attraction or trend towards skateboarding and other similar unstructured recreational activities may be that the unstructured character of skateboarding is in alignment with today’s busy lifestyle in which parents may have less time to transport their kids to sports practices and games typical of traditional sports. In response to features or benefits provided by the skateparks in Prince George, KI1 confirmed that, “Definitely, the unstructured” nature of skateparks was a key benefit of skateparks. KI1 further explained this aspect of flexibility and informal nature of skateboarding, that, as an “unorganized sport”, skateboarding allowed users to “come and go as [they] want”. KI1 further highlighted, “If you’re an individual you can come, if you’re a group of ten you can come”, this comment seemed to indicate how skateboarding was socially flexible in that it can be performed individually or in groups. Interestingly, KI7 used similar language in their comments, but seemed to emphasize the element of “play”. As KI7 said, as a parent personally, “What I like about it is that it is unstructured playtime”. This comment seemed to provide evidence that KI7 may think there are fewer opportunities for older young people to engage in informal “play” or activity for enjoyment and recreation as society expects them to have matured or grown out of “play”.

5.2.1.17 | SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN ADOLESCENTS

Skill and adolescent development was another theme that emerged from the key informant interviews. While only three out of seven respondents alluded to skill and adolescent development, as shown in Table 18, these results were significant in that they provided evidence to suggest that uncommon positive development and skill acquisition was associated with riding activities.

Table 21 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Skill Development and Pro-Social Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>creativity (2); encouragement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>edgy; adrenaline rush; challenging</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>element of risk-taking; safe risk taking they can control; challenge oneself, set own limits</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interestingly, in Table 18, KI1 stated not only once, but also twice, that creativity was a skill that could be cultivated and expressed through riding activities. As KI1 described, “A bunch of people out to a spot where they can be creative…” and again, cited “creativity” as a benefit when responding to a question on benefits and features for young people. These comments are significant in that creativity is not a skill that is often associated with other more traditional sports activities. Therefore, these results may indicate that creativity is a unique skill associated with, or developed through, riding activities.

A small number of those interviewed suggested that riding activities allowed young people the opportunity to engage in risk taking and challenging oneself in a safe manner, that part of the attraction to the activity was the “edgy” appeal of extreme riding activities. KI2 spoke of their observation and experience of this, “They [extreme riding activities] give you the adrenaline rush and they give everything that these kids are looking for. Those challenges to get to the next level and I, and I'm speaking again for my kids because I see it. So, and it's edgy, they kind of like that too.” Another interviewee, KI7, corroborated the idea of risk-taking through their experience as a parent of a young scooter rider, “Speaking on the parent's standpoint...the trick is there's an element of risk taking”. KI7 provided a more detailed narrative of risk taking in relationship to extreme riding activities:

... that all kind of young kids want to work out of their system, and so a skatepark I think is a way where kids can engage in, you know, low level to sort of moderate level risky behaviour, but it's not you know it's not anti-social risky behaviour. It's risky behaviour that they control. You know they decide for the most part of - yes there's sort of some peer pressure, especially with the boys of, you know, "come on, you can do this trick you can do that trick", but for the most part they set their limits and you know and they decide what they're capable of or not and so yeah I think that's quite positive.

Collectively, these results seemed to provide evidence to suggest that extreme riding activities may provide a level of risk taking that is considerably safe in that the young people are able to “set goals” to challenge themselves to progress towards, for example, being able to accomplish an advanced “trick”, while being able to set their own limits on what they are capable or comfortable with. What seems equally as significant is KI7’s comment on risky behaviour being “anti-social”, which may be an indication that KI7 thinks other forms of risky behaviour may encourage more social isolation.

5.2.1.18 | HEALTH
From a health perspective, the skateparks were associated with providing opportunities to be physically active and importantly, as places to encourage young people to leave their homes and disengage from technology. As shown in Table 19, the majority of participants responded with comments that suggested skateboarding provided an opportunity to engage in physical activity. KI4 commented numerous times on this theme, therefore, their comments are highly represented in this section.

Table 22 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Physical Health

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<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>place to get away from technology and out of house; provides outdoor recreation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>way to get rid of energy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI4</td>
<td>gets kids moving, a win from a health perspective; way for kids to release energy; huge physical workout; physical element and outlet to release energy; physically demanding; physical exertion</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>physical activity opportunity; other way to be physically active; place to be physically active</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>physical activity, not on couch gaming</td>
<td>1</td>
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Three of the respondents suggested that the skateparks and riding activities provided a healthier alternative to leisure time spent using technology-based activities such as gaming. KI4 suggested that young people have become dependent on technology and that riding activities provided an alternative to the often sedentary and anti-social behaviour associated with excessive use of technology. According to KI4:

"They’re so glued to their phones and Netflix and it’s frightening, and they have no interest in getting out and doing anything. And I think the parenting has changed too, we’re busier so that keeps them entertained. Anything that gets the kids out moving, is just a win from a health perspective, from a constructive use of their time perspective, from a coordination perspective and from a social perspective."

Additionally, KI1 and KI7 expressed that skateparks afforded a place to not only get away from technology, but to encourage users to leave their homes and go outside and be physically active. According to KI1, "So that'd be one of the massive benefits I think is just
having a place that they can go that gets them or provides an option to get away from some of the technology and get them out of the house.”

Specifically, KI7 spoke directly of the health benefits of riding activities as physical activity instead of being sedentary and gaming, “Well, and I mean of course then there’s just the you know the health component is that they’re not sitting on a couch gaming you know, they’re actually physically active.” Analogously, a small number of participants suggested riding activities were a way to release “energy”. According to KI4, “and that age bracket, that awkward social age. And you get those teen years and there’s hormones and adrenaline, they are all trying to figure out and to have a physical element and having an outlet to go release that energy is a good thing.”

Results also showed that respondents found riding activities to provide another option for physical activity. As KI6 noted, “There are other ways to be physically active”. This comment seems to provide evidence to suggest that skateboarding provided an alternative way to be physically active that differed from more common sports or leisure activities and is significant in that the need for alternative leisure options may not be as commonly considered or provided for.

5.2.1.19 | ADAPTIBILITY

Table 23 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Adaptability

| Key codes, words and concepts for adaptability | KI1: Everyone uses it differently, you might just use one part of the park, if you like different terrain you might use the whole park, go there to socialize |

Comments by KI1 suggested an element of adaptability is afforded through the design of the skateparks and through the nature of skateboarding and other riding activities. As KI1 described, “Everyone’s going to use it [the skatepark] a little differently”. While the nature of skateboarding supports freedom, individualism and expression in how it is performed since there is no “right” way to partake in the activity, unlike traditional sports which are structured through rules and regulations, KI1 emphasized that the design of the skatepark itself affords the opportunity for users to take advantage of the “whole park” if you value varying terrain, or if you
are beginner you “might just use one part of the park” and focus on improving skills, or if someone doesn’t skateboard, but their friends do, you might choose to “go there to socialize”.

5.3 | ELEMENTS OF PROJECT SUCCESS

While the previous section highlighted the results of the interviews that pertained to the first research question, this section provides the results of the interviews that relate to the second research question: what elements are associated with the success of skateparks in Prince George, B.C.?

Elements of project success were defined as factors that contributed to the overall progress and realization of the skatepark projects. Elements were categorized as either socially relevant, such as community effort, or, design-based, as in location. Overall, six elements of project success were identified from the key informant interview data set. Thus, these elements are presented as individual sub-sections in 5.3. These elements include community involvement and partnership; young people participation and engagement; community leaders; community consultations; location and surveillance, and design.

5.3.1 | COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP

A common thread suggested in the various responses of the participants was the role that community organizations and community partnership played in the skatepark projects. Coding related to community partnerships as an element of success was noted 20 times in the key informant interview data set. Overall, several respondents seemed to indicate that the skatepark projects were a collaborative effort between community associations, the Rotary, local businesses, young people, community members and the City of Prince George. As KI6 stated, the City of Prince George is one of the few municipalities that relies on community associations to provide low-cost recreation. Such comments by KI6 seemed to suggest that KI6 felt the community associations were given a level of responsibility and work comparable to city employees. These comments may also provide evidence to suggest that KI6 may have felt that the City’s expectations had exceeded what they considered reasonable for volunteer work.

Despite community associations, volunteers and businesses collaborating and contributing, it was significant to note that KI6 stated that they were ready to step down from their leadership role in their community association. KI6, stated that they felt it was time for younger volunteers
to step in and join the community association, as KI6 said, “I think we need more new or newer energy”. This is important, as it may signal that volunteers and community associations may become burnt out or feel overburdened by the amount of work required to develop such community projects like skateparks.

**Table 24 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Community Involvement and Partnership**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Concept(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KI1</td>
<td>Skateparks 101; several steps to consultation process: “we'll come back and do another workshop with them and get feedback on the option they prefer, and then after that we create a 3d model to share with the community”; theirs not ours; interactive design charrette process with users; simple and accessible design engagement process</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>came from the kids to give them something to do; young people were invited through the schools, through the Hart Community Association and others and social media</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI6</td>
<td>partnership between kids and CA; possibility to join forces; young people expressed interest in petition for DFBSP</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI7</td>
<td>large group of young people attended public consultations</td>
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</table>

Results indicated that community involvement was an integral element of success in the skatepark projects. As shown in Table 20, all respondents stated comments that suggested community involvement was an element of success of the skatepark projects. For example, KI6 seemed to strongly suggest that collaboration between parties working or “coming together” was a key step in making DFBSP a reality. According to KI6, “It was a joining of forces that helped it happen and the Rotary.” The Rotary really is also another unsung hero...so yeah it was I guess community stakeholders if you will, coming together.” From a similar perspective, KI2 described the different partners involved in getting the DFBSP developed while highlighting that community groups and interested parents as catalysts of the project that “friend and fundraised” to get the park funded. As KI2 stated:

> Both of them were pretty much started from the ground up by... I would say, community groups or interested parents, starting with the one that was opened...I think it was about 2002 -2003. That one was a mom who got together with a number of other parents and then they were able to friend and fundraise and they got working with Rotary, they got one quarter of the funds needed and then it was constructed.
Additionally, comments by KI4 seemed to corroborate the importance of volunteer community involvement in the creation of the DFBSP; the City was willing to support the community associations in their effort to develop a skatepark, but volunteers were the primary community leaders. As KI4 said, “The City’s pretty good about pitching in, if they feel there’s a need for it and if there’s parties willing to help out. They gave us a lot of help, but we did a lot as well, we were the face of it, we drove it. It was me who was visiting all the rotaries, but the City was ultra-supportive”.

In addition, respondents identified relationships as a key element in the development of the DFBSP. KI4 emphasized the significance of relationships in the following comment, “It’s also relationships and how you approach it. How much work you’re willing to put into it.” KI5’s comments also seemed to support the role of partnership in the DFBSP projects. KI5 described how they “partnered with the Hart Community Association, the Hart took the lead and the Rotary Club fundraises but doesn’t take ownership.” In sum, these comments seemed to provide evidence to indicate how the involvement of community partners created incentive for other stakeholders, like the City of Prince George, to invest in the skatepark projects. In an analogous manner, KI7 also suggested that “unified” community support of a project may result in political backing of the skateparks, “…politicians being politicians, if they see, you know, a community is by and large, unified behind something and there’s an opportunity to build political goodwill by getting behind a project that the community is behind then, of course, that's what they're going to do it.”

Correspondingly, results suggested that community partnerships played a key role in the success of the skateparks; namely; in raising enough money to fund the skateparks. Several respondents indicated the role of partnerships in their comments. For example, KI3 noted the combined effort of people and organizations involved in the fundraising effort:

We had Rotary sponsor it. We had local business sponsorship like Tim Horton’s and the local hardware store and other local businesses up there. We had big contractors contribute like geotechnical surveys for the ground surveys excavation equipment geotechnical like all these big companies came forward and said, we won’t give you money, but we’ll do some services that will cost you get normally. So those were all in kind. Yeah, like engineering firms, contractors… like they all came forward. The City kicked in a whole bunch of money, our communications people did a great job of promoting the open houses and the consultations.
KI5 confirmed the aspect of multiple partner involvement in fundraising in that the Rotary funded plans for the DFBSP while engineering and surveying was offered pro-bono by individual Rotary members. Further, KI7 stated that the thing they learned from the DFBSP was it’s “easier to raise that kind of money when you have lots of community support”.

5.3.2 | YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Results showed that young people played a large part in the initiation and planning of the skatepark projects. In the DFBSP project and in the prospective College Heights and Blackburn Skatepark projects, young people communicated their interest in the development of a skatepark in their respective neighbourhoods through petitions. Since it is less common for young people to involve themselves in political and public affairs, the voices of young people may hold more weight at the City given young people are considered to be “the future generation” society hopes to provide for.

Table 25 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Partnership and Engagement with Young People

<table>
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<th>Key Informant</th>
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As shown in Table 23, some key informants suggested that young people themselves initiated the skateparks in Prince George. According to KI2, “…it really came from the kids to give them something to do” since the “Hart was so far removed from downtown and it’s difficult for kids to get there….so they needed something up there. Something very urban that they could do their
scootering and skating and biking”. In addition, KI2 indicated how young people were engaged in the skatepark planning process, “Young people were invited through the schools, through the Hart Community Association and others and social media got people there. And so, everything from, I would say, everyone from elementary school to young adults.” These comments provide evidence to indicate that young people were not only catalysts for the skatepark projects, but that they were actively invited to participate in the planning of the skateparks by the community associations. Therefore, it may be inferred that the community associations recognized young people’s input as an important and valuable contribution to the success of the skateparks.

Additionally, KI1 noted a process that Newline Skateparks had developed in which the young people in attendance were engaged through accessible planning and design activities. KI1 described a process in tangent with Skateparks 101 to engage the young people in attendance, a participatory activity where young people fill out a feedback form on the “type of [skatepark] terrain they want and the type of features they want”. The youth participants communicate their preferences by placing dots on four boards that have different features on them. Lastly, the young people get to vote on their favourite skatepark terrain and features. From the information gathered at the initial consultation, KI1 said that Newline developed 2-dimensional design options after which, “We'll come back and do another workshop with them and get feedback on the option they prefer, and then after that we create a 3d model to share with the community”. The initial participatory exercise and subsequent series of workshop iterations demonstrated how youth were engaged and involved in the skatepark planning and design in an accessible and democratic manner. While the first activity may seem basic, the intention of having the design of the skatepark derived from the young users and then ensuring that this data is realized appropriately through Newline’s design would provide some assurance of these users being more satisfied with the resulting skatepark and therefore, overall, greater levels of satisfaction from the community. KI1 described the skatepark planning process:

And so along with Skateparks 101, we do an exercise where the young people there can a, fill out a feedback form, and on that feedback form it asks the style of terrain that they like. So, they basically get to put up these four boards that show a bunch of different features, and they get to actually, physically, put a dot on the features that they like. It sounds a bit rudimentary I guess, but when you stand back and look at it, it all becomes very clear what the local group wants and the type of terrain they are looking for. So, after that we'll come back and do another workshop with them and get feedback
on the option they prefer, and then after that we create a 3d model to share with the community.

Further, KI1 inferred that they viewed the skatepark as “theirs” not ours. As KI1 said:

Yeah, I mean the background for us, or our philosophy on it is that it's not our skatepark, it's theirs, and there's usually a skate group that has ideas of what they want. So, it's important that it meets what they want, because you can have so many different styles of skatepark. If you didn't go asking anyone, you could really miss what they wanted.

Such comments provided important evidence to indicate KI1 saw the skateparks as “belonging” to the young people as opposed to Newline. With this said, requests from young people were more likely to be represented in the planning and design of the Skateparks planning and design. This higher representation of youth likely resulted in increased satisfaction for users which were primarily a youth demographic which may have contributed to the overall success of the skateparks. Moreover, involvement and engagement of young people was invoked by the Hart Community Association, Newline and the City of Prince George. Such effort and commitment to engage young people may serve as evidence to indicate how valued and important young people input was in the skatepark planning and design process.

5.3.3 | COMMUNITY LEADERS

Individuals and groups willing to lead and advocate for young people were also found to be key elements of project success of the skateparks. Many parents, particularly Moms, seemed to be dedicated to getting the skateparks built and were determined to see the projects become a realization. In the case of the Rotary Skatepark, this was particularly true as no formal community association led that project.

Table 26 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Community Leaders
For example, in Table 24, KI4 noted how Moms were the primary volunteers involved and willing to lead the project:

Well, we were just a couple of Moms and that the City really wanted somebody to make enough noise to start the motion...And I said, okay what's it going to take to make this happen and get going? And they said, well, somebody to pick up the project? And so, I went back and kind of told them that and I'm not exactly sure how, but it ended up being me. I unintentionally got into it without really realizing I was invited.

This comment suggests that without community leaders like the moms involved in the skatepark projects, it may have been much more challenging to secure the support of the City of Prince George and to get the skateparks developed. Additionally, KI3’s comments suggested how much the Hart Community Association cared about and was committed to developing Bravery Park, that they were the “voice” of the project. As KI3 stated, “I think they did a bit of fundraising. So, they were kind of the voice I guess of the project….and they really cared about that park”. This commitment seemed to be exemplified in a Go Fund Me campaign launched by the Hart Community Association described by KI3:

And then before it was opened, there was no more money to put in any sod or grass and so the Hart Community Associations thought it just didn't look very good. Without that, especially right before the grand opening. So, they coordinated a Go Fund Me page like literally a week before the grand opening and then maybe in two weeks they got enough money. They really rallied they did this Go Fund Me page that got several thousand dollars and I think they just gave it to the City to put the thought in but it just made such a difference to how it looked at the grand opening to make yeah like it was cared for and finished.

5.3.4 | COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

The opportunity for the Hart community to engage with one another was also presented by KI2. According to KI2, “A real Win-Win was having the people interested in the park and the
skate park there in one room in one night”. This suggests that a key element of success was providing an opportunity for the community to meet altogether and consult and dialogue with one another regarding their interests or concerns about the skatepark. The community consultation process was inclusive of all community members, whether supporters or opposition. One particular comment stressed this idea: “an opposing community member, who lived right next to the park was very opposed to the skatepark” attended the consultation. They had “had a lot of problems with teenagers being very disrespectful, driving through the neighbourhood fast, ruining her property, things like that…”. The following excerpt demonstrated how the consultation provided an opportunity for the community member in opposition to meet and develop understanding of the skatepark users:

We talked to her, we introduced her to some of these, you know, all of these people, and she actually sat down with them and they explained how they - like these young people were talking about all the things they want in the skate park and this and that she actually got to meet some respectful young people and it changed her mind. And she said, "You know what, I'm actually welcoming this to the neighbourhood because I see if it attracts people like this…that it would be a boost to our neighbourhood.

Such consultations afforded the opportunity for all voices of the community to be heard; in this case, the consultations provided opportunities for participants to meet each other, challenge stereotypes and develop greater understanding of where each party was coming from. Numerous comments from all respondents suggested that community consultations might have contributed to the success of the skatepark projects. Main findings from the key informant interview dataset suggested that community consultations were an element of success because the consultations themselves were well-attended; provided an opportunity for the community to meet one another; presented an opportunity for young people to be engaged in the skatepark projects; and lastly, because the consultations were well-designed, delivered and the content, activities and process had been honed and improved from previous skatepark consultations.

3.4.1 | WELL-ATTENDED AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Table 27 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Well-Attended and Inclusive

<table>
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<th>Key Informant</th>
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Results showed the consultations were well attended and inclusive. This was important as it may have resulted in a broader range of people’s voices being heard and represented in the final skatepark design. As shown in Table 25, several respondents reported inclusive code words such as “everybody”, parallel to results in the secondary data section, and stated varying demographics in attendance of the consultations. According to KI3, “that (DFBSP) public consultation was really well done and really well accepted here. Everyone was there, like from kids to neighbours to people who wanted to support it, and sponsors.” The idea of a range of ages attending the consultations was confirmed by KI6, although in this case, KI6 emphasized adolescents and seniors as key demographics: “we had a packed house of young people attending that meeting. And when I say young, like I mean kids from their 13 to their late 20s that were all boarders and BMXers that attended that. There were a lot of them, but we also had seniors there. I think because, simply, we were at the Seniors Centre and lots of them go there anyways.” Additionally, KI6 highlighted how one of the consultations attended by young people provided critical information regarding young people wanting to use their BMX bikes. As KI6 said, “We had this big group of it was mostly 11, 12 and 13 year old kids with their parents squished into the room, talking about a skatepark, and that was when we learned that lots of kids want to use their BMX bikes which I hadn't heard that before, and I didn't know.”

### 5.3.4.2 | EVENT FOR COMMUNITY TO MEET AND EXPRESS CONCERNS

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<tr>
<td><strong>Table 28 Key Words and Concepts Associated with Meet and Express Concerns</strong></td>
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</table>

| KI3 | public consultation really well done and really well accepted here; everyone was there, like from kids to neighbours to people who wanted to support it, and sponsors | 2 |
| KI6 | packed house of young people attending that meeting… also had seniors there; that was when we learned that lots of kids want to use their BMX bikes, I hadn't heard that before | 2 |
| KI7 | well-attended | 1 |
Respondents also described a scenario that suggested the consultations provided an opportunity for the community to meet one another and to express concerns, challenge stereotypes and build a greater sense of trust and understanding. KI2 noted how the consultations provided an opportunity for various community members and users to meet and discuss issues surrounding the skatepark projects. Specifically, KI2 detailed how a local resident had initially attended the consultation to oppose the skatepark, but after speaking to the young people at the meeting, the future users of the skateparks, she changed her mind and instead welcomed the skatepark. As KI2 explained:

She had a lot of concerns with this drawing more of them and overtaking the neighbourhood. So, when she was there. She came very, very opposed, but by the end of the evening, you know, we talked to her, we introduced her to some of these, you know, all of these people, and she actually sat down with them and they explained how they - like these young people were talking about all the things they want in the skate park and this and that she actually got to meet some respectful young people and it changed her mind. And as KI2 paraphrased, "You know what, I’m actually welcoming this to the neighbourhood because I see if it attracts people like this".

Consultations also seemed to be elements of project success as they allowed the opportunity for young people to identify specific features they wanted at the DFBSP and, overall, to engage young people in the planning and design of the skatepark they will eventually use. This is significant in that it may help to foster a sense of responsibility and ownership of the skatepark that may translate into positive conduct and feelings of inclusion for young people and, more practically, that the design would better reflect what the end users were expecting and desiring in the skatepark.

Particularly, interview results indicated the consultations led by Newline for the DFBSP, (the skatepark designer), seemed to be well thought out, planned, delivered and well attended. The following comment seemed to suggest that KI7 found the consultations were well-attended, that the users “didn’t stay home” and how they provided the opportunity for young people to

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<td>KI1</td>
<td>local input and the consultation process were very important”; Skateparks 101- to deal with pushback</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KI2</td>
<td>opportunity for various community members and users to meet and discuss issues: opposer of SP changed mind after speaking to young people; stakeholder consultations conducted with change in parks</td>
<td>2</td>
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express their opinions to people “who spoke their language” on the features they desired in the skatepark:

And because now they’re so connected with their devices and on social media, that you know when there were community consultations where the specific designers wanted the feedback from the kids that was well attended. The kids didn’t stay home, they came out and then somebody was asking for their opinion and they very much wanted to talk to people who spoke their language about rails and ramps and that sort of thing. I think it was very valuable, because the Hart Skatepark is smaller than the Rotary Skatepark and has fewer amenities.

KI1’s quote seemed to highlight how the consultations seemed to be successful in engaging and involving young people in the planning and design process. While all respondents provided comments, data pertinent to the consultations, was particularly detailed in KI1’s interview. When asked about successful features of the skateparks, KI1 replied, “Local input and the consultation process were very important”. This comment was confirmed by KI2 who stated, “…we always do stakeholder consultation with any change in parks like that, even for that dog park, whatever it is. And so hopefully it alleviates most of the concerns and it’s been successful so far in everything we do.” Collectively, these comments offer evidence to suggest the overall importance of the consultations to the success of the skateparks. KI1’s comments described the processes involved in the consultations. As KI1 reported, once the initial site for the skatepark was selected, the company conducted a presentation at the first consultation called “Skateparks 101”. This presentation provided a background into modern skatepark facilities, which according to KI1, “informs what skateparks look like these days, versus what the older ones were like” and to “profile how much more popular they are becoming”, since as KI1 explained, a common challenge the company faced, was “we often get a bit of pushback dependent on what the local community is like”. These results suggest that Skateparks 101 is a key element of success of the community consultations Newline conducts. Not only is the presentation delivered prior to any design work, but also Skateparks 101 provides an introduction on the background of skateparks as places, likely highlighting affordances, features and benefits of a skatepark. Additionally, KI1 mentioned that at times, “the local community may have negative stigma around skateparks”. Therefore, Skateparks 101 and the community consultations may help address stigmas, stereotypes and other issues surrounding skateparks prior to having to deal with any in-house opposition from the community.
KI1 also described a process in tangent with Skateparks 101 to engage the young people, a participatory activity where the youth participants fill out a feedback form on the “type of [skatepark] terrain they want and the type of features they want”. The youth participants communicate their preferences by placing dots on four boards that have different features on them. Lastly, the young people vote on their favourite skatepark terrain and features. From the information gathered at the initial consultation, KI1 said that Newline developed 2-dimensional design options after which “we’ll come back and do another workshop with them and get feedback on the option they prefer, and then after that we create a 3d model to share with the community”. The initial participatory exercise and subsequent series of workshop iterations demonstrates how young people were engaged and involved in the skatepark planning and design in an accessible and democratic manner. While, the first activity may seem basic, the intention of having the design of the skatepark derived from the young people and then ensuring that this data is realized appropriately through Newline’s design would provide some assurance of these users being more satisfied with the resulting skatepark. Thus, indicating a commitment to an inclusive planning and design process (best practices). Further, these consultations and processes may play a role in how much participant data is reflected in the resulting skatepark designs. Therefore, this may indicate the final park would be in greater alignment with the community itself, which may contribute to overall user satisfaction of the skatepark project.

The processes mentioned above were best encapsulated through KI1’s description of Newline’s own philosophy, “it’s not our skatepark, it’s theirs”. In review of Newline’s approach to skatepark planning and design process, it seems this philosophy of engaging and listening to the community input and the integration of community priorities into the design of the skateparks may be associated with the project success of the skateparks in Prince George.

Results showed community consultations afforded the opportunity for the community to discuss challenges and issues surrounding the skateparks. KI1 noted how a Hart neighbourhood resident who was initially opposed and resistant to the skateparks, developed greater awareness, understanding and tolerance towards DFSP. According to KI1:

There was a pretty vocal woman there that didn't like skateboarders, because I think she actually had like kind of had a spot in front of her house, so people would skate in front of her house. She came in, I'll give her credit because she came to Mike actually came to talk to the group and there was actually a good group of guys that were a little
older, I want to say like late 20s, and she didn’t come up yelling and screaming, but she wanted to get like a better idea of the mentality behind it. So, they actually, I chimed in here and there, but I just listened to them chat and they kind of... I think after the chat, they both understood each other a lot better. And she’s a lot more comfortable to have had the skate park coming in the park like across from her house.

Such comments may demonstrate how consultations provide a public forum for the community to collectively gather and may help facilitate greater understanding between groups and differences. Comparable to results reported in the secondary data section on age inclusion, the skatepark consultations were also found to be successful in that they welcomed all ages to the event, thus promoting multi-generational involvement. This is significant in that it would provide information from varying perspectives and seemingly may be more representative of the collective neighbourhood as opposed to a select few.

KI7 also suggested the consultations helped managed expectations and prioritize what could be included in the final skatepark design. According to KI7, “so it quickly managed expectations that this isn’t going to be Rotary Skatepark and it helped prioritize…you know what is essential? And what is well, nice to have, but we don’t really need it.

The processes mentioned above were best encapsulated through KI1's description of Newline's own philosophy, “it's not our skatepark, it's theirs”. In review of Newline’s approach to skatepark planning and design process, it seems this philosophy of engaging and listening to the community input and the integration of community priorities into the design of the skateparks may be associated with the success of the skateparks in Prince George.

5.4 | CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 5 presented the key results and analysis of the secondary data description and key informant interview methods used in this study. These results were organized by each method, and then grouped as themes and sub-themes under each corresponding method. The next chapter will present the discussion and findings of this study.
CHAPTER 6 | DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The following two questions guided this research: (1) “what affordances and needs do skateparks address for young people?”; and (2) “what elements are associated with the success of skateparks in Prince George, B.C.? “ In order to answer these questions, the research study fulfilled the following objectives: (1) explored the existing background, research and findings on adolescent development, leisure and health in relationship to the physical environment through review of the literature; (2) evaluated case study skateparks in Prince George, B.C. to identify affordances and needs addressed by skateparks; (3) identified elements associated with the success of skateparks in Prince George, B.C.; and, (4) evaluated the results and, developed a set of recommendations and opportunities to inform future skatepark planning and design. The fifth objective, the set of recommendations and opportunities will be covered in chapter 6 as part of the conclusion.
Several affordances and needs associated with skateparks were determined by analyzing and cross-comparing the two data sets used in this study; however, a few overarching affordances and needs were more highly represented in both data sets overall. What follows is a discussion of these needs and affordances and subsequently, elements of project success organized by sub-sections. Also, an updated version of the needs of young people in the physical environment is provided in a chart to compare and visually illustrate the findings of the current study with the needs of young people identified in the literature.

6.1 | DEMAND FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD-BASED WHEELED PARKS

Overall, the findings suggested there was an overarching demand for more skateparks, BMX parks and all-wheeled parks in Prince George. Evidence of this was indicated in the College Heights petitions (Figure 7), newspaper articles, and results from the key informant interviews. A continued demand for ride parks continues to be relevant and pertinent to Prince George, evident in undergoing plans for a new BMX bike park in the Blackburn neighbourhood (Burr, 2018; CKPG News, 2015). This demand for wheeled parks was not only verbally expressed in the data but was physically enacted through the desperate actions of young people risking their safety and lives by BMX biking near a highway in order to have a place to practise BMX biking. Additionally, the trespassing of up to 100 people at the DFBSP prior to its opening, (Kurjata and Tucker, 2017) provided further support for the hypothesis that there was a limited supply of, and overall enthusiasm towards riding facilities.

6.2 | NEEDS AND AFFORDANCES
6.2.1 | ACCESSIBLE LEISURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Based off the cumulative data results, findings indicated that accessibility was a predominant affordance associated with the skateparks in Prince George. Two main forms of accessibility were stressed by respondent data: spatial accessibility and financial accessibility. To clarify, spatial accessibility referred to the location of skateparks as accessible for users within their own neighbourhood. If located beyond one’s neighbourhood, accessibility referred to the ease of accessing the Skateparks via transit. Financial accessibility referred to affordability.

Given neighbourhoods in Prince George are geographically dispersed, my findings posited that spatial accessibility was a crucial affordance and component of skateparks. This affordance of
spatial accessibility was particularly applicable and important to young people who had limited options in how they accessed skatepark sites. Thus, this limited means of transport may affect young people’s ability to participate in riding activities as frequently as they would like. Greater attention to accessibility is hypothesized as it affects the opportunities and likelihood of young people being able to use and access skateparks on a regular basis. With this said, location, was an associated element cited in the literature especially within landscape architecture and allied disciplines and was stated in the study findings. Speaking specifically on our case study sites for this research, in terms of siting and location, our findings suggested the Rotary Skatepark provided users with a centralized, downtown location that permitted a broader demographic access to the skateparks, whereas, the location of the DFBSP provided a core meeting hub that was neighbourhood-specific.

In the case of the DFBSP, our findings suggested the location and spatial accessibility permitted ease of use for riders within the Hart neighbourhood. As a user group, factors of spatial accessibility and location were critical, as young people needed facilities they could access during after-school hours, since most of their daytime hours were occupied in school. Further, key informant findings found young people preferred leisure and amenities that were within lose radius to their homes and neighbourhoods again, since they would primarily be using the skateparks during limited after-school hours.

Significantly, these findings may help us to understand that in the context of Prince George, and possibly in other similar-sized communities, access to skateparks may be more related to the proximity to amenities that its citizens had become accustomed to, rather than as an indicator of actual, physical distance. Instead, the psychological feeling of distance may be more related to the scale and context of Prince George; as a smaller city, people in Prince George may be less willing to travel the distance that a larger city with subsidiary suburbs would regularly expect. As a result of the geography and planning of the city neighbourhoods in Prince George, there seemed to be greater pressure on the need for locally-based skateparks within neighbourhoods.

**User Affordability**

With cost being a consideration of leisure activities for the general population of young people, a critical finding of our study was that skateboarding and related riding activities provided a
leisure option that was financially accessible. Several reasons were used to determine this provision of affordability. First, riding activities only require a single, one-time purchase of a skateboard, bike, pair of rollerblades or scooter in order to participate. Furthermore, this equipment can be purchased second-hand, therefore reducing the associated cost to participation. Second, as public places, skateparks are facilities that are free to use, and the equipment itself can serve as a mode of transportation to the skateparks themselves, further reducing costs of participation. As such, the main expenses associated with riding activities were the cost of equipment and transportation. In comparison to other major leisure activities noted in the literature, such as video games and other technology-related activities, shopping, eating out and watching movies, the long-term costs are significantly lower.

As said by Francis (2018), “not everyone can afford sport”, therefore, skateboarding may provide an alternative to structured team sports that are typically more costly because structure team sports often involve lessons, require more equipment than riding activities, are pay-per-use, and commonly require a vehicle or other mode of transportation to attend regularly scheduled practice and games. The sentiment of young people needing or seeking leisure activities that are financially accessible, was repeated by the majority of the interviewees and found in the secondary data. Whereas, in the past, participation in team sports could be freely and readily accessed through school programs, more often, these same programs require a fee to participate, thus limiting the ability for adolescents to freely participate in team school sports. Moreover, contemporary society and the busy lifestyle that often accompanies it, presents a situation where families are pressed for time. Parents and guardians simply have less time to drive their kids to sport and activities. Thus, provision of leisure activities that can be accessed independent of young people’s parents and families may be increasing. As such, skateboarding and related riding activities that are located nearby in local neighbourhoods, like the DFBSP, afford opportunities for young people to be able to engage in after-school leisure “at their own time”, and at their own discretion (Key Informant 2) without the need for vehicular transportation.

Lastly, our findings also suggested that continued participation in structured sports may decrease as young people age, given sports tend to become more competitive as one ages. Therefore, as KI2 found, “kids get edged out” if they lack the ability or skill to perform at a competitive level, or, if they do not wish to participate in highly competitive sport. With this being said, further research and provision of self-paced, or more recreational-level leisure, may
be hypothesized to assist in addressing the current gap in recreational leisure provision for young people.

**6.2.2 | LOCAL FACILITY AND RECREATION FOR THE HART**

In recognition of a need for local, neighbourhood-based recreation and service amenities and facilities in Prince George, our findings suggested that the Rotary Skatepark provided a central skatepark amenity for Prince George. It is important to bear in mind, some people reported the downtown Rotary Skatepark as challenging to access. Users lived further away from downtown, or, they simply did not wish to drive there. On the other hand, findings showed that the DFBSP was ideally sited and afforded a much needed local skatepark, “outdoor community centre”, and central hub and meeting spot for the Hart neighbourhood. With this said, data subsequently highlighted how the DFBSP functioned not only as a skatepark, but as a larger multi-use park, therefore providing a much needed, local, neighbourhood recreation service amenity and place for the Hart community.

**6.2.3 | DESTINATION AND VALUED PLACE**

Intriguing in this study, from a design perspective, findings suggested skateparks were unique places in and of themselves, because each skatepark was found to be distinct and different in design from its counterpart. Moreover, these distinctions contributed to the association of skateparks as destination places in Prince George (since each skatepark afforded a different combination and variation of design features and elements in one space that attracted users locally, or from afar). Evidence of this was indicated by a key informant’s son traveling to Prince George to use the skatepark after having moved away from the city.

Further, as a key informant noted, skateparks were distinguished from other facilities in that they were not based off a typical standard model compared to other similar recreational facilities. As a typology, variation in design was valued and expected in skateparks, whereas in comparison to say a baseball diamond, complied standards in design were adhered to due to the regulations and structure of such sports.

Equally as compelling, one of our findings suggested that the DFBSP symbolized something “special” and significant for the Hart. This finding is important as it suggests the development of
the park signified a shift in the recognition and status of the Hart neighbourhood: from a place that was underserviced and possibly lower status to a place of greater value and importance in the community of Prince George. This was notable, as our findings indicated the Hart was historically neglected and socially positioned as an “underdog” whose associated voice may not have been treated with as much consideration or value, as other wealthier or higher-positioned socio-economic areas. The aforementioned value of the DFBSP, to the Hart community, and to Prince George, was significantly noted in the wealth of positive feedback received on the park to date.

6.2.4 | INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

In comparison to the provision of other places for young people in the public realm, findings in the current study indicated that skateparks attracted a broad range of ages and social demographics. As several respondents stressed, skateparks were inclusive in that they allowed participants to engage in a wide variety of activities simultaneously. This finding is important, as it is not only unusual in comparable facilities to have multiple activities performed at once, but from a recreational service perspective, the Skateparks seemed to provide more value per square footage due to this multi-functionality. As it is rare to have three leisure activities concurrently operating in such a small space, the skateparks afforded a high value service amenity, especially when considering free entry, low cost of equipment and socio-economic inclusivity.

Although further data collection would be required to confirm full participant statistics of the Skateparks, as mentioned above, the data for this study showed that a wide range of ages used the Prince George skateparks. Analysis of the secondary data highlighted multiple generations using the DFBSP (fathers and sons), which was further confirmed by key informants who stated that toddlers up to men in their 20s were observed using the Skateparks.

Additionally, findings from secondary sources suggested skateparks were places that afforded aspects of social inclusion. Additionally, findings from a secondary source and key informant, both with counselling backgrounds and first-hand experience with youth issues showed that belonging and acceptance were key social affordances experienced by users as the Skateparks. From a broader perspective, this finding is timely, evident in the recent university-
partnership projects led by the United Way and Mitacs that is similarly focused on the topic of inclusion within major cities of Canada.

6.2.5 | LEGITIMATE PLACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Critically, analysis of our findings showed skateparks served as legitimate places for young people, both as designated places to practice riding activities, and as places in which young people were welcome to use as public spaces. In consideration of the issue of exclusion of young people in the public realm and in society (that is widely and critically noted in the literature) this finding is particularly significant for the future design and planning of places for young people and for skatepark design specifically. This finding may provide evidence to indicate skateparks have contributed to filling a void that young people, being a marginalized demographic in society, have faced in the past and continue to experience.

This finding has important implications in the development of future spaces for young people as the finding highlights the need for attention to legitimacy in places for young people. Whereas the literature brought to attention the void of places for young people in the public realm, this study helped to demonstrate how the concept of legitimacy is a fundamental element to consider in the provision of places for young people. Legitimate places may signal to young people that they are a part of the public realm and more critically, legitimate places serve as examples of public spaces where young people have agency to assert themselves and have their voices heard.

Furthermore, this finding served as an example of a place in which young people are not only welcomed but celebrated. This celebration of young people is somewhat of a rare occurrence in public space since the act young people ‘hanging out’ can be viewed as problematic, unproductive and at times associated with criminal activity. Thus, the significance of providing designated and legitimate places for young people is that much more important. If young people do not feel comfortable, safe, or welcome to use public space, the hypothesis follows that they will likely avoid or gather in other less desirable places as mentioned in the literature, for example shopping malls or derelict spaces.

Designated skateparks were also shown to reduce conflict between property owners and riders in our study. This was important in that conflict between property owners and skaters and
BMXers was a prevalent issue, both in the literature, and in the case study city of Prince George. Such conflict is predicated to affect and influence how young people experience and navigate public space. One key example was shown by young people BMX biking near a highway in Prince George as they had no other designated place to do so.

Although one key informant noted that the provision of designed skateparks would not prevent participants from using private property to skate on, the remainder of the key informants suggested it had significantly reduced or alleviated the issue. Moreover, one of the primary motivating factors that drove business owners to fund the Skateparks was a desire to reduce the amount of private property being used for riding activities. These findings may help inform how to approach and develop fundraising strategies for future skateparks given the motivation to reduce riding activities in skateparks and the resulting issues it creates (businesses losing parking spots of potential customers and safety concerns) may assist in securing and prompting businesses and private property owners to support such projects.

6.2.6 | INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY AND ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL SPORT

Options to practice leisure activities individually were affiliated with skateparks and riding activities. Despite recognition of changes in leisure trends and a developed base of leisure research, findings suggested the dominant provision of recreational facilities was in greater alignment and understanding with common or traditional sports. Reasoning behind this may be linked to the young age of skateboarding and associated riding activities; meaning, that as a relatively young sport, ride parks are similarly not as well provisioned for. Additionally, it could be predicated that other sports are given financial and social priority because of their affiliation with corporate sponsorship, wider and more prominent national and global media presence, and an attachment to associated lifestyles and the ‘celebrity-dom’ of sports athletes that seem to be revered in a current world state that is increasingly obsessed with sports, competition, image and an addiction to “winning”.

Consequently, skateboarding and other related activities, may then be affiliated with the “other”, associated with rebellion, the unstructured and unproductive, as not belonging to the more commonly understood production and output of sport, in which practise and improvement of skill and set exercises demonstrates “achievement” and success that modern, western society seems to idealize and value.
6.2.7 | UNSTRUCTURED AND INFORMAL LEISURE

Interestingly, findings of the current study suggested skateparks afforded the opportunity to engage in unstructured leisure. Although the literature mentioned varying views on the merits and fallbacks of unstructured leisure, with many leisure scholars finding unstructured leisure to be associated with negative outcomes, key informants in this current study found that the unstructured nature of riding activities to be an attractive aspect to young people, possibly due to the lack of accessible, unstructured, group, outdoor physical leisure activity options available to young people in Prince George. One key informant significantly noted that skateboarding provided for different personality types of young people that may similarly be seeking alternative opportunities. For example, young people who may be shy, or less willing to commit to structured sports, may feel more comfortable participating in riding activities where they have more flexibility to come and go as they please, where they can perform the activity individually or socially, and in which there are fewer rules and regulations. Additionally, findings showed the unstructured character of riding suited today’s busy lifestyle in which parents have less time and energy to transport their children to scheduled practices and games common to more structured leisure activities. Lastly, another unexpected finding indicated that riding activities afforded young people an opportunity to engage in a form of unstructured play that was more socially-acceptable for their age, that hypothetically may provide opportunities to re-engage with joy and creativity.

6.2.8 | DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS

Beyond the previously mentioned broader social and positive associations with skateboarding, analysis of findings revealed nine development skills as being linked to riding activities: accomplishment, commitment, creativity, individualism, dedication, recognizing achievement (pride and showing off skills), self-esteem and individualism, risk-taking and setting boundaries. The current study found that creativity was a unique and key developmental skill afforded by riding activities. As a key finding, creativity was more of an anomaly as it is was not a factor previously associated with riding activities in the literature and otherwise, may not readily be associated with riding activities, or, with sport in general. Additionally, the unstructured nature of skateboarding seemed to support this aspect of creativity, as the divergence from structure permitted participants the freedom to perform the activity in a more personalized and individual
manner. Taken together, these findings suggest a role for the unstructured nature and informality inherent with riding activities in that these qualities may provide users with the opportunity to be creative.

In further detail, riding activities allowed users to cultivate their own technique and manner in which they performed riding activities; there is no set methodology or technique that needs to be adhered to, and as a result of this greater freedom and flexibility and paired with the study data, it can be predicated that opportunities to be creative are present in the activity of skateboarding and at skateparks. Similarly, as a collective whole, riders seemed to adopt and take pride in the cultivation of an alternative culture. Importantly, with this freedom to diverge and disconnect from common or status-quo norms and expectations, findings suggested elements inherent in riding activities work together to support participants in the pursuit of a self-expressive, creative identity and further, as an expression of resistance by acting and identifying with a culture that is created by in-group users. Important to note, the rebellious history of skateboarding that underlies the culture and lifestyle affiliated with skateboarding is not necessarily the pre-dominant attitude carried by most riders in Prince George, but seems to be a continual, underlying influence.

Additionally, as mentioned in previous sections, risk-taking was a critical affordance derived from the analysis of our findings. Young people are often interested in exploring and testing boundaries of what is expected and considered to be “safe” by nature of the course of their brain development and the various hormones and chemicals that influence their behaviour. Therefore, safe risk-taking can be an important development skill to consider in leisure activities for young people. Despite risk-taking not being dominant in the data set as compared to other developmental skills, adolescents’ general propensity for engaging in risk-taking behaviour would suggest that the consequences of not taking this finding seriously may greatly affect the development and safety of adolescents. Critically, acknowledgement of risk-taking as an important developmental skill to consider in the provision of leisure activities and in further research is advised.

6.2.9 | SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND POSITIVE BENEFITS

In support and alignment of Wood et al.’s 2014 study that significantly challenged persistent negative stereotypes of the behaviour of young people at skateparks, this study demonstrated
evidence of young people at skateparks exhibiting pro-social behaviour. Critically, this study found older youth mentoring, accommodating and adopting protective roles towards younger children. While pro-social behaviour was found, it should be noted that some data showed negative behaviour occurred at the Skateparks. Most respondents had not emphasized these occasions, or, their comments on negative behaviour were more predicated on knowledge and awareness that delinquency occurred in more isolated incidents, or in after-hours use of the park except for one incident that stood out. This incident involved a discrepancy over turf fundraised from a GoFundMe campaign, which was subsequently clarified through key informant comments. In this situation, KI1 had worked extremely hard to get enough funds to purchase turf to surround the concrete portion of DFBSP, which at the time, was left as bare soil. The turf was vandalized shortly after, and understandably, the key informant leading this turf campaign was disappointed and upset and seemed to feel as though the effort to fundraise and install turf was underappreciated. However, after conducting another key informant interview, it became clear that the vandalism of the turf was not an intentional act to damage the turf. Instead, it occurred in the excitement leading up to the opening of the DFBSP. A key informant suggested that the young people essentially stormed through the turf because of their heightened enthusiasm for using the new facility. Consequently, the newly installed turf was unable to take root and was damaged in the young people’s pursuit to fulfill this desire. Unexpectedly, results of this study found young people self-policing themselves at skateparks with reports of the RCMP rarely having to intervene in conflict. This finding is particularly relevant as it provides evidence that beyond some associated negative stigma and stereotypes affiliated with skateparks as places, the skateparks in Prince George have served as places in which evidence of pro-social behaviour was overall more strongly indicated.

Additionally, analysis of the findings showed the Skateparks were places that provided positive aspects for Prince George, with the majority of the data heavily weighted on pro-social comments as opposed to negative feedback or criticism. Direct, first-hand comments gathered in the secondary data (from Logan Robertson and Mitchell Brown) provided robust evidence to indicate this experience of the Skateparks as a positive place and activity.

Commonly held notions of riding activities as being anti-social in nature identified in the literature by Taylor and Khan (2011) were dispelled by findings in this study that found young people preferred to conduct riding activities in social groups because overall, riding socially was experienced as more enjoyable compared to independently riding. KI3 even stated that the
social component of skateboarding was rooted in the act of skateboarders and other riders performing the same activity simultaneously.

6.2.10 | COMMON PLACE

From a spatial standpoint, findings also suggested that skateparks served as common meeting places in which people with similar interests and like-minded people could meet and connect. As such, skateparks, as community meeting places for riders, provided a much-needed space (as legitimate and widely-known place throughout the community) that may facilitate more opportunities for socialization within riders as an in-group. Indeed, some respondents used such terms such as “outdoor community centre” and “community centre” to describe skateparks which confirmed their idea of skateparks as collective places to meet in the public realm which is that much more important given Prince George is a city void of official community centres.

6.2.11 | HEALTH

Another important finding of this research supported the idea that the Skateparks were examples of places that encouraged young people to detach themselves from technology and to participate in leisure pursuits outside of their homes (as places of comfort). From a physical health perspective, skateboarding, BMX biking, scootering and other riding activities at skateparks afforded young people opportunities to engage in physical activity and further, offered an alternative to common or traditional sport. As obesity and sedentary behaviour persists as a pressing public health issue for youth, opportunities that provide and encourage physical activity may be considered significant, positive affordances for young people.

Moreover, beyond the obvious benefit of direct physical activity, findings from this study also suggested that riding activities provided an outlet to release built-up stress and energy in a manner that is relatively ‘safe’. This finding is important as adolescence as a stage of life associated with hormones and adrenaline, can be challenging to address, let alone find ways in which young people can safely express and release such energy, as interest and experimentation in alcohol consumption, illicit drug use and greater sexual desire and curiosity often increases and continues to be an ongoing issue.

6.3 | ELEMENTS OF PROJECT SUCCESS
6.3.1 | INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

Young people played a vital role in catalyzing the skateparks projects in Prince George. In the case of the Hart Skatepark, young people initiated a request for, and expressed interest in, a skatepark in the Hart neighbourhood through a petition to the mayor and council and through contacting their local community association, the Hart Community Association. Having young people be the first to express interest and desire for a skatepark is important as not only are young people the main users of the skateparks, but in general, young people less frequently participate or engage in the formal process of planning and design compared to adults. Therefore, it may be predicated that the need for a skatepark may have received greater attention because it was delivered by young people themselves.

Additionally, young, future users of the Hart Skatepark, attended the community consultations for the DFBSP project. Participation in the consultations provided young people the opportunity to understand the scope of the project and the limitations involved, while concurrently providing the opportunity for young people to contribute their own ideas and concerns through a process led by Newline Skateparks. This ensured, young people were able to voice their priorities for the skatepark design. This was particularly important in the case of the Hart Skatepark, as this skatepark was much smaller. As a result, it could not contain all the same features as its predecessor, the Rotary Skatepark. K17, expressed that young people’s involvement in the process of prioritizing features of the DFBSP, “managed their expectations” of the resulting skatepark. Therefore, the consultation process provided a better representation of the final project to the young people, that prospectively speaking, would limit the amount of dissatisfaction with the project.

Likewise, a main factor in the success of the skateparks seemed to be the community consultations. These consultations acted as a forum in which the users as well as the neighbouring residents and business owners had equal opportunity to express their opinions and concerns in one place and at the same time (Key Informant 2). Furthermore, the importance of these consultations was shown in the broad range in ages of the people attending the consultations, from kids to young people to adults and seniors and in the opportunity for all these attendees to engage and speak to one another. One instance that several of the key informants mentioned was an incident involving a community member who attended the consultation with the intent to express her strong opposition to the skatepark in the Hart
neighbourhood. This resident lived in close proximity to the skatepark, and her previous experiences with young people had influenced her impression of them. For example, she described instances in which young people had trespassed onto her property in order to skateboard. Despite her intention to oppose the DFBSP, during this consultation the resident was encouraged to meet and speak to the young people in attendance and through this process, the resident developed a better understanding of the young people and who they were and as a result ended up in favor of the skatepark. The resident expressed her support for the skatepark in a letter to the Prince George municipality which expressed how positive an impression the young people left on her, that she now viewed the young people as a “boost to the community” and how important the consultation process was to the success of the skatepark in reducing future issues and conflict.

6.3.2 | COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Overall, the current study found that community support was an essential element of success of the Skatepark projects. Whether through formalized organizations such as the Hart Community Association or the Nechako Rotary Club, or through more general support from the public, community support was an integral element. Factors of community support which helped in the process of getting skateparks developed in Prince George consisted of the initial express of interest for skateparks at the municipal level, to securing enough funds to finance the skateparks, to the in-kind donations from local businesses, small monetary donations from private donors, and overall, through enough support to gain approval of the projects as well as in continued maintenance and sustainability of the skateparks in the communities of Prince George. Together, these factors of community support seemed to indicate that one of the key elements of project success of the Skateparks resulted from the overall level of community support in Prince George as a whole. Therefore, it seemed that the context of this case study played a significant role in the success of the skateparks. Despite this finding, it is important to bear in mind that the current socio-economic and political climate of a municipality can critically stall and limit the chances of a skatepark getting developed. In the current study, the DFBSP had been delayed for years despite being partially funded, in a large part due to the council in leadership at the time that was less than supportive of skatepark development. However, findings that may be applicable to most community projects indicated that critical mass of support from the public would likely result in council approval of skateparks, given the political
outcomes and repercussions that may ensue from alignment of political decisions with
community request.

6.3.3 | COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Within the context of Prince George, findings showed that community associations were
responsible for the development of low-cost recreation and thus, their existence and the efforts
they provided were directly related to the success of the Skatepark projects. Additionally,
findings showed community associations in Prince George had another layer of pressure and
responsibility to bear. Combined with the findings of this study, that indicated the members of
the community associations felt stressed and under-resourced in terms of volunteer numbers,
these findings may help us to understand that community associations need extra support
such as in an increase in membership and/or resources available to the community
associations.

6.3.4 | COMMUNITY LEADERS

Notable from the findings, community leaders played crucial roles in the success of the
Skatepark projects. More specifically, in both the Rotary Skatepark and the DFBSP, these
leadership positions were adopted by mothers who were essentially the “face” of the projects
and remarkably, the Rotary Skatepark was led by one mom without the support of an official
community association unlike the DBFSP. One of the more significant findings to emerge from
this study was that community leaders, functioning as overworked, unpaid volunteers, may be at
higher risk of burnout. With awareness of the pressure placed on community lead volunteers,
greater attention to the recognition and value of community leaders as well as on establishing
reasonable expectations of, and respecting limits of such volunteers, may help to reduce the
pressure felt by such individuals.

Moreover, findings suggested that soliciting additional volunteers to distribute the workload
may assist in achieving a more balanced and sustainable volunteer base. Although the
community associations in Prince George are responsible for the provision of low-cost
recreation programming, findings suggested that volunteers felt at times as if the expectations
of their duties and workload to be likened to that of an employee. Seeing as though volunteer
community leaders contribute such valuable efforts that are free of cost, awareness of this
group’s limits and vulnerabilities could be a vital future recommendation for the longevity of community associations and further, may be a transferable consideration that can be applied to other volunteer groups.

6.3.5 | COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP

Allied support from varying partners were found to be an important element of success. Primarily, this finding was tied to fundraising as a necessary aspect of many community design projects. Partnerships and relationships between community associations, the municipality of Prince George and local businesses were identified as being primary elements of project success.

Most importantly, analysis of data found that the success of the skateparks in Prince George were greatly attributed to the collaborative effort between organizations and partnerships. The language used to describe the importance of community partnerships strongly suggested this. Phrases used include “joining of forces”, “coming together” and “friend and fundraised”. Since relationships can be challenging to establish and maintain, attention to community partnerships and awareness of key components to facilitate this process may help to solidify and expedite the process of fundraising, planning and design of skateparks. More specifically, methods to establish connections between varying partners was a key finding suggested by key informants. These methods could be more informal, such as in the development of social networking groups via Facebook or other forms of social media in order to leverage the ease that such forms of networking afford. Findings showed that a municipality liaison was already established and had aided in facilitating meetings between partners, although findings suggested additional resources and means to further the connections and ease of communication between partnering organizations could.

6.3.6 | COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Community consultations were found to be a key element of success in that these events seemed to provide an organized, public event in which anyone in the community of Prince George could attend. Aside from community consultations, in a city the size of Prince George, there seemed to be limited opportunities and resources to support additional opportunities for people to meet and discuss their common interest or address concerns on skateparks.
Additionally, the skatepark designer leading the consultations and the process they had established, for example, Skateparks 101, seemed to be equally as important to the success of the Skateparks. It can thus be suggested that the combined knowledge, experience and the ability of Newline to communicate with young people in the vernacular language of skating facilitated this. Moreover, another aspect of the community consultations that seemed to support the overall success of the Skateparks was that they provided an opportunity for concerned citizens and naysayers, as well as those in favor of the skateparks, to meet and exchange varying perspectives and thus, possibly develop better understanding and a higher degree of trust in one another vital to not only getting the skateparks developed, but in the sustainability and longevity of these projects.

6.3.7 | MEDIA COVERAGE

Findings of the current study showed higher incidence of local media news coverage on Prince George’s skateparks as compared to other similarly sized cities. Since the impact of media coverage can have great influence on how a population views an issue paired with the fact that Prince George is a relatively small city, it is reasonable to predicate that media coverage was an element of success that contributed to the overall success of the Skateparks in Prince George. Additionally, the narrative style of journalism used in the Figure 7 petition document and in video-based newscasting, may have also played a role in influencing the opinion of the general public, particularly news coverage centering on personal accounts of young people and their families who expressed their desire for more skateparks and for a lack of things to do.

Key needs of young people in relationship to the physical environment were noted in the literature review. Comparing the findings of the current study with this set of needs, a number of similarities between both sets were found. Legitimate places for skateboarding activities, places that were easy to spatially access, places to be with friends, places that young people were free from the control of authorities, places to conduct a variety of activities and places to be physically active.

6.4 | COMPARISON OF NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LITERATURE WITH FINDINGS
Key needs of young people in relationship to the physical environment were noted in the literature review and illustrated earlier in Figure 7. Comparing the findings of the current study with the needs from the literature, several similarities between both sets were found. Half of the needs identified in the literature were consistent with the present study’s findings. As shown in Figure 7, the needs identified in the literature that were consistent with the study findings include legitimate places for skateboarding activities, places that were easy to spatially access, places to be with friends, places that young people were free from the control of authorities, places to conduct a variety of activities and places to be physically active. Such parallels between the identified needs of young people in the physical environment in the literature and the study findings may infer that the Skateparks in Prince George may have addressed several social, spatial, health and leisure needs for participants. These parallels may also provide some reasoning behind the demand and popularity of skateparks in Prince George by young people.

**6.5 | CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter presented the findings determined from the analysis of the secondary data description and key informant interview data sets. These findings were then divided into two sets. The first set of findings related to the affordances and needs associated with Rotary and Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Skateparks, and the second set pertained to elements of project success associated with the Skatepark projects. Key findings suggested that the Skateparks were in demand places that were associated with the following affordances and needs for young people: accessible leisure; affordability; locally-based places and recreation; destination and valued places; inclusion; legitimate places; alternative to traditional sport; individual recreation; unstructured and informal leisure, places to be social; opportunities for positive experiences and development; common places for rider to meet and opportunities to improve health. Elements of project success included the involvement of young people; community support; community organizations, community organizations; community leaders; community involvement and partnership; community consultations and the overall media coverage on the Skatepark projects.

Needs of young people in the physical environment identified in the literature review that were consistent with the study findings included legitimate places for skateboarding activities, places that were easy to spatially access, places to be with friends, places that young people were free from the control of authorities, places to conduct a variety of activities and places to be
physically active. Chapter 7 is the last and final chapter of the thesis and will close with limitations; future research; recommendations and opportunities and concluding remarks of the current study.
CHAPTER 7 | CONCLUSION

Introduction Statement

The central goal of this study was to explore the role of skateparks as places for young people with the objective of identifying key affordances, needs and elements of project success associated with skateparks in Prince George, B.C. While several authors argue that young people have been excluded from the design of the built environment, conversely, others have identified skateparks as one of the few place typologies and contexts provided for young people in the public realm. Thus, this study was designed to extend our current research base on skateparks in landscape architecture and to determine opportunities and recommendations that may potentially be used in future skatepark planning and design. Broadly, the study sought to explore and develop greater understanding of the provision of places for young people in the physical environment.

A review of the literature was conducted to develop a background context of the underlying major issues and needs surrounding the provision and design of places for young people in the physical environment more generally in public space, and on skateparks specifically. Two methods were selected for this study. Secondary data description allowed for the unobtrusive collection of a larger data set from a broad range of sources, from both direct users and observers of the Skateparks. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven key informant representatives from planning, landscape architecture, skatepark design and volunteer backgrounds on the two current skateparks in Prince George.

Affordances were gleaned from the results, in order to deepen the understanding of how the activity of skateboarding and skateparks facilities, may address the needs of young people. Elements of project success associated with skateparks were determined to understand the factors that may contribute to future successful skatepark development and possible factors inherent to successful skateparks that may be transferable to other places for young people.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Need from Literature</th>
<th>Similar Findings from Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appleton (1975, p. 67) Owens’ study in 1988</td>
<td>The concept of prospect and refuge, or, the need to &quot;see without being seen&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynch and Banerjee’s study 1981 (p.175)</td>
<td>Preference for unprogrammed places</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Owens, 1988; Roberts, 2000b</td>
<td>Places to be alone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Owens, 1988; Bradley, 2011</td>
<td>Places they can claim as their own</td>
<td>Key Informant Data:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KI1: “it’s not our skatepark, it’s theirs”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KI3: Something to do in their own community, on their own time without parents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>KI7: giving them the space to recognize that they need space; stepping away as adults to let them define the space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, 1988; Roberts, 2000b</td>
<td>* Places that are easy to access</td>
<td>KWIC from Secondary Description and Key Informant Data:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>accessible for kids, parks as accessible; something to do that is accessible to kids in the Hart neighbourhood; can easily walk or bike ride over without cost of transit; place to go when they want, when they can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, 1988, p.24</td>
<td>Places where they can enjoy natural elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynch, 1977; Ertel, 1975; Chawla, 2001</td>
<td>*Places where young people felt an overall sense of personal safety and freedom of control and movement away from authority figures</td>
<td>Key Informant Data:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KI1: won’t get kicked out, meant to be skated and used; space that’s designated for young people to come and use; creating a space where young people are welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Key Informant Notes</td>
<td>Secondary Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts, 2000b</td>
<td>*Places they can legitimately use</td>
<td>&quot;I had somewhere to come and it was always a meet-up spot&quot; (Clarke, 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KI1: won't get kicked out, meant to be skated and used; space that's designated for young people to come and use; creating a space where young people are welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KI4: young people needed some surfaces to use, they were getting in trouble; need something like that, the kids wouldn't be getting in trouble if we had one</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KI5: no designated place for skateboarders, skateboarders were using parking lots and private spaces which created conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001</td>
<td>Green spaces for informal use, to explore and for sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, 1997; Matthews &amp; Limb, 1999; Lieberg, 1995</td>
<td>*Centrally located public spaces</td>
<td>Rotary Skatepark centrally located downtown; Hart is centrally located in the neighbourhood context of the Hart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Informant Data:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KI6: Central location makes connection to community even stronger; Bravery Park as stand-in for a community centre in fall, spring and summer</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KI7: Rotary Skatepark accessible to transportation</td>
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</table>

SOCIAL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lynch, 1977; Owens, 1988, p.20</th>
<th>“Getting together” or “hanging out”; “be with their friends”</th>
<th>Secondary Description KWIC: social, social connection, friends, makes kids happy, positive activity, positive feedback and positive role models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Informant Data:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>KI1:</strong> helps build community; a bunch of people out to a spot; meet people; if you go skate by yourself, it’s not the same as skating in a group; seems like an individual sport, but is massively social; from a social aspect, it brings like minded people to the same location; community feel, like an outdoor community centre</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>KI2:</strong> from son’s personal experience, provided a real social network with friends; opportunity to socialize over team sports (less structured); some older kids accommodate younger kids; mentoring and good role models; social hierarchy developed, helps to reinforce positive conduct and behaviour; poor behaviour not tolerated</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>KI3:</strong> for teens social part is a bunch of kids in the same thing at the same time</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>KI4:</strong> pretty social sport; have more fun if someone is there, but can go independently and practice; opportunity to chat and meet new people without formal structure; some mentoring of young people; mostly welcoming pro-social behaviour towards younger kids; a win from a social perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>KI6:</strong> central location makes connection to community even stronger; Bravery Park as stand-in for a community centre in fall, spring and summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>KI:</strong> form of socially acceptable play; some mentoring, older kids try and look out for younger ones; a little bit of conflict and undesirable behaviour; overall kids good at targeting undesirable behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001; Travlou, 2003 | * A desire for feeling socially integrated and accepted and the existence of a “cohesive community identity” | KWIC from Secondary Data: 
- inclusion itself, inclusive, acceptance, age inclusive, belonging, every, everybody, gender inclusion, multi-generational and a wide range of ages and abilities. 
- everyone, everybody, belonging, acceptance and part of their community |

**LEISURE**

| Lynch, 1977; Chawla, 2001 | *Places that afford various and interesting activities | Several riding activities conducted simultaneously in one place. 
KI2: more things for people to do, multi-use; 
KI6: multi-ages, multi-use; potential to be multi-use and multi-generational; for younger kids not just older young people; multi-purpose area right in the epicentre of the Hart 
KI7: And the fact that it's, that it's multi use, you know, it's for everyone; trying to include the local senior population as a place where they would want to come and use the park for their own recreational purposes 
- multi-use thing, simultaneous multi-uses which is uncommon in other facilities; kids shovel off in winter |

**HEALTH**

| ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, 2018 | 60 minutes of MVPA/day | Burns 8-12 calories per minute on flat surfaces. Requires a similar energy output to skipping during extreme physical movement (Olson, 2015) |

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*Fig. 7 Social and Spatial Needs of Young People (Discussion version)*

**7.1 | LIMITATIONS**
Notwithstanding, several important limitations need to be considered. The first limitation was the relatively small sample size of key informants interviewed. Since Prince George has a smaller population, the volunteer and professional staff involved in the skatepark projects were similarly few in number. Additionally, the sample size of key informants was limited by time constraints of the study as the researcher had a short timeline in which to conduct interviews to accommodate the parameters of set deadlines. Also, the limited access the researcher had to the community as an outsider to Prince George also affected the sample size of key informants.

Second, although a spectrum of backgrounds was represented in this research, there were absent perspectives from the key informant sample (local business funders and engineers etc.). As well, the key informant data was more representative of volunteers and landscape architects, with only one planning professional key informant. Further probing of previously interviewed key informants for other contacts and/or the use of other strategies to identify other potential key informant participants could be used.

Third, the timeframe of the study was relatively short to comply with university program duration for thesis study completion. A longitudinal study may be able to determine more variable patterns over time, allow for clearer focus and validity and be more effective in revealing developmental trends, but would require a vast amount of time. Lastly, as there are only two skateparks in Prince George, correspondingly, there were only two case study skateparks surveyed. A study using a greater number of case study skateparks might draw more definitive conclusions. Furthermore, this study looked at Prince George specifically. Adding sites from similarly sized and regionally-based cities like Kamloops may assist in drawing broader findings that may be more relevant to northern communities.

While noting these limitations, the study did have key strengths. The first being the case study focus on Prince George, B.C. skateparks alone which allowed for in-depth study on a single place and context. Second, to my knowledge, this is the first known academic study on skateparks in Prince George. Third, this study was unique in its research design that combined secondary data from skatepark users and community members with key informant interviews. And, overall, the extensive depth of analysis employed by the researcher predicated on long-standing social-science strategies and research techniques added to the overall strength of this
study.

7.2 | OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What follows is a series of eleven opportunities and recommendations posed to guide the improvement of the planning, design, development and research of skateparks in Prince George, B.C. and beyond.

*Relevant to Prince George*

1. More post-occupancy evaluations of skateparks could be conducted at various scales: municipal, regional and nation-wide within Canada. Such post occupancy evaluations may help determine how skateparks are functioning and could be conducted using the same method or platform so that results would be more consistent and reliable.

2. Place more responsibility with the users of skateparks by actively seeking out ways to further engage young people in the overall skatepark planning and design of skateparks. Such efforts may help to reduce the workload of municipalities and volunteers, thus preventing burnout from volunteers. More importantly, such efforts may contribute to a shift towards a more active, ground-up process in the design of skateparks, and may add to the overall feeling of stewardship and responsibility of skateparks with young people: to create a sense that this is ‘their place’ to use and care for.

3. Develop a skatepark report in Prince George. B.C. to identify the elements and precedents that have been successful in the city and, to make the skatepark planning process more public and transparent. On a broader scale, document the process of successful skatepark planning and design on a Canada-wide scale, to serve as case study examples for future skatepark projects, which could then be developed into a guide and resource tool for landscape architects, planners, skatepark designers and municipalities.
4. Provide more support for community associations. This may require an increase in community responsibility that may be challenging in modern day, fast-paced society.

5. Recognize community leaders as equal and key contributors to skatepark development and success.

Relevant to Landscape Architecture/Design of Skateparks Generally

6. Democratize the planning process of skateparks by using digital citizen participatory tools to provide more agency and equality in skatepark planning and design and to ease the workload on municipalities and volunteers. This may be achieved through the creation of, and or use of, tools or programs that enable independent and digitally-based data collection on skateparks. It is important that such tools be accessible and easy-to-use for skatepark participants in order to increase the usability of these tools for skatepark users and to boost the volume of data gathered. For example, the development of an app requires fewer financial resources and could be a pilot project of a future researcher.

7. Increase public knowledge on skateparks. Promote sustainability and longevity of skateparks as places through community stewardship, maintenance projects, and marketing and social media campaigns.

8. Develop best practices or key criteria for skatepark planning and design.

9. Conduct further research on places that are multi-use and multigenerational in relation to skateparks, which may involve greater integration of existing facilities and amenities that complement one another. For example, site skateparks near already established young people organizations such as the YMCA, schools, young people and family centres and increase collaboration and opportunities with such organizations to increase programming opportunities for young people with riding activities.

10. Recognize the aesthetic potential of skateparks as places of sculptural beauty, public art etc. For example, DFBSP is both a memorial as well as a multi-use and multi-generational park.
11. Celebrate skateparks and ride parks through events, programming etc. as community hubs and spaces. Given they are rarely standalone facilities, there are opportunities for multi-generational celebrations and activities at skatepark facilities.

Relevant to Young People

12. Knowledge mobilization between partnerships, academics and planning and landscape professionals may assist in filling the knowledge gap on young people and public spaces and in implementing new knowledge into policy and practice. Although partnerships already exist, the links and relationships between these parties could be strengthened. Therefore, a suggestion is to improve the process for how public and partners network and communicate with one another.

7.3 | FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research focusing on skateparks as contexts that address young people’s needs and on the relationship between young people and the physical environment, would be of great help in developing a stronger evidence base on how such needs may be facilitated and addressed through skatepark facilities, as well as through the planning and design of the physical environment. More specifically, areas of future research may consider trends in urban recreation, young people and alternative forms of recreation, and studies at multiple scales, such as at the municipal, regional and nation-wide level within Canada. Furthermore, as outlined in the literature, a gap exists between the application of available academic research on young people and the physical environment and the actual practice of landscape architecture. Efforts to align academic research on young people and the physical environment with the practice of landscape architecture may help in shifting towards more evidence-based design for youth populations. Specific to this study, understanding what skateparks provide and afford for young people and communities will help in developing future successful skateparks and in adding to the relatively unexplored territory of planning and design for young people in landscape architecture.

Another possible area of future research would be to conduct a longitudinal or cross-comparison study between similar cities, for example, with Red Deer, AB and Kamloops, B.C. A cross-comparison study may help to develop findings on what skateparks provide communities from a regional, northern perspective and could also be used as a basis of comparison with other regions.
With the growing trend and demand for multigenerational parks and places, and with organizations like 8-80 as leaders in developing age-friendly places being used as primary planning and design concepts of future parks in Prince George, another area of future investigation could focus on the role of skateparks in multigenerational parks or as multigenerational places.

Beyond constructed skateparks, there lies great potential for skateable design interventions in the urban infrastructure of a city. Such interventions could be realized in the form of skateable networks, much like bike paths or shared wheeled paths or through sculptural elements such as public art. Another opportunity could be through small skateable features within public space areas. As skateparks designers increasingly focus on the facilities of skateparks, landscape architects have consequently experienced a departure in request for their services as the market becomes saturated with leading skatepark design companies. Skateable design interventions could be an avenue for landscape architecture to explore, lead and excel in. Additionally, skateable design interventions may encourage people to view riding activities as a part of a city — as an activity, sport and way to promote physical activity, somatic movement, use and connection to the urban terrain in a new, novel and intertwined manner. Portland, OR has implemented and developed a plan to integrate skating elements into the urban infrastructure of the city and may serve as a precedent for similar initiatives in other cities.

7.4 | CONCLUDING REMARKS

The results of this research have enhanced our understanding of what skateparks in Prince George may provide for young people and the respective community at hand, and, in identifying elements of project success that may contribute to improving future skatepark design and development. A key finding of this study indicated that accessibility was a primary provision linked to the activity of skateboarding and skateparks themselves. Skateparks appear to have great potential as being financially accessible, low-cost forms of recreation, in which a breadth of ages and people from various backgrounds may participate in a form of unstructured, informal leisure and physical activity that is less bound by the convention of sport. Additionally, skateparks were suggested to be places where individualism and creativity are welcomed and expressed, and where a collective culture, identity and activity may serve to
unify participants in one common setting. As places, skateparks are distinguished from other sport and recreational facilities in that they are less standardized in design and multi-functional in nature; each skatepark offers a unique layout and set of skateable features that is specific to each park, whereas, three riding activities (skateboarding, BMX riding and scootering) can be performed simultaneously in a single, all-wheeled park. The value per square footage associated with the multi-functionality aspect of all-wheeled parks has significant cost implications for municipalities seeking to provide a variety of recreation options within budget constraints.

Interestingly, from combined findings, the researcher determined that visitors may perceive skateparks as destination places, and that Prince George residents themselves view the skateparks as much needed special places and local neighbourhood amenities. Socially, in alignment with Wood et Al’s leading study that found skateparks to be contexts for pro-social behaviour for young people (2014), incidences of pro-social behaviour and opportunities for positive development among young people were suggested by respondents of this study. As places designated and designed for riding activities, skateparks afforded a legitimate place to conduct and perform riding activities and provided viable alternatives to street skating that often situated young people in unnecessary conflict with businesses and private property owners. However, the skateparks were not without minor conflict and issues. Littering in general, and isolated cases of undesirable behaviour and vandalism were noted by respondents.

In terms of participation, the flexibility to participate in riding activities independently, and in groups, may be an attractive option to users. Furthermore, opportunities to explore risk-taking in a reasonably safe manner were correspondent with skateboarding and related activities. This is an important implication, as I hypothesize that skateboarding and related activities offer an outlet for adolescents to experiment and challenge boundaries of movement and ability and that such opportunities may be less present in more common and less extreme recreational pursuits.

Half of the needs of young people in the physical environment identified in the literature review were supported by the current study findings. These needs were legitimate places for skateboarding activities, places that were easy to spatially access, places to be with friends, places that young people were free from the control of authorities, places to conduct a variety of activities and places to be physically active. Parallels between the identified needs of young
people in the physical environment in the literature with the current study findings may suggest that the Skateparks in Prince George have addressed several social, spatial, health and leisure needs for participants. These consistent findings may also provide some reasoning behind the demand and popularity of skateparks in Prince George by youth participants.

Engagement and strong partnership between adolescents, community members, skatepark designers, and municipalities in the early planning stages may be associated with higher levels of success. Involvement of young people in community consultations, particularly, the opportunity for young people to contribute their preferences and priorities in the design features of a skatepark may result in overall higher levels of satisfaction with the resulting skatepark design. Local media coverage and publication of skatepark precedents may also play a role in promoting awareness, understanding and support for skatepark facilities.
References


City of Vancouver, Street and Traffic BY-LAW 77 AND 77A - Riding, Coasting and Sliding on Streets, (February 25, 2005).


De Visscher, Sven and Bourverne-De Bie. Recognizing Urban Public Space as a Co-Educator:


The members of the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board have examined the protocol which describes the participation of the human participants in the above-named research project and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University’s ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2nd Edition.

The REB requires that researchers:
x Adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and **approved** by the REB.

x Receive approval from the REB for any **modifications** before they can be implemented.

x Report any **change in the source of funding.**

x Report **unexpected events or incidental findings** to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants, and the continuation of the protocol.

x Are responsible for **ascertaining and complying with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements** with respect to consent and the protection of privacy of participants in the jurisdiction of the research project.

The Principal Investigator must:

x Ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of facilities or institutions involved in the research are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

x Submit an **Annual Renewal** to the REB upon completion of the project. If the research is a multi-year project, a status report must be submitted annually prior to the expiry date. Failure to submit an annual status report will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated.

The approval for this protocol terminates on the **EXPIRY DATE,** or the term of your appointment or employment at the University of Guelph whichever comes first.

**Signature:**

**Date:** April 5, 2018
Stephen P. Lewis

Chair, Research Ethics Board-General