

Kentville Skatepark

Located within Memorial Park on Gary Pearl Drive, Kentville

PROJECT COMPONENTS:

- The Kentville Skatepark originally opened in 2018 within Memorial Park
- The skatepark includes rails, ramps, and the local “Gremlin” feature, and provides an exciting way for skaters, scooters and wheelers to have fun, test themselves and develop new skills
- Designed by locals citizens, with different pieces representing local landmarks and gives a sense of ownership
 - The stairs represent the old school
 - The half turn represents Blomidon

RATIONALE FOR INITIATIVE:

- The community had been asking for a skatepark
- Kentville Skatepark Association (KSA) pulled people together, organized fundraising and advocated for the building of a skatepark

COMMUNITY AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT:

- KSA involves community members, many of whom are youth and together, the members designed the park

POPULATION SERVED:

- There is no front entrance to monitor who and which demographics are using the park; however, the town estimates that 70% of are teenagers and the remainder are adults and younger children
- There is a large gender discrepancy, with around 80% of users being male – but the Town of Kentville is working to change this by holding workshops for girls with the local skateboard shop

WHO USES IT:

- Approximately, 70-140 users a day
- Adults and serious skaters tend to come in the morning when it’s quieter to practice and train
- The Town of Kentville and local skateboard shop hosts workshops for girls and families as parents wanted to learn as well

FINANCES:

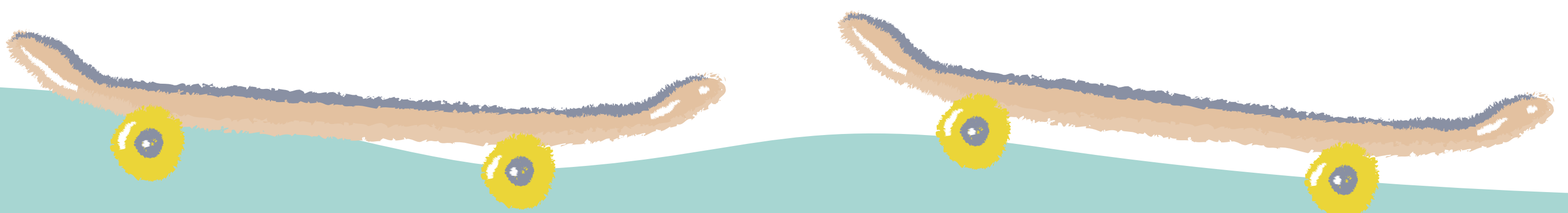
- Funding for the initial build came from community fundraising, grants and the Town of Kentville
- Maintenance is funded through the Town of Kentville

EVALUATION:

- There is no formal evaluation, the majority comes through community feedback
- The Town of Kentville keeps track of the turnout at programs and events
- In 2020, the Town put together a focus group with skatepark users, police and facility management to discuss how things were going with the skatepark and what needed to be adjusted

ACCESSIBILITY & ACTIVE TRAVEL:

- The location of the skatepark was very intentional accessibility-wise and to ensure it was as visible as possible
- The skatepark was purposely put on a trail system so people could walk or bike to the park
- It is close to the school, soccer field, etc.



CHALLENGES:

- FUNDING: Any type of facility and expenditure targeted towards youth, especially a free facility is a hard sell to council
 - Unstructured play is not seen as “valuable” compared to structured play, organized sports, etc.
 - Finding money and grants for these types of projects is a hurdle
- POPULARITY DURING COVID-19: The facility was overwhelmingly popular during COVID-19 lockdowns as it was not closed
 - Had to find ways to ensure people were safe
 - New types of users flocked to the skatepark, including parents with children and girls
 - Folks that have used the park all along became frustrated due to the new users
 - Community education on proper use, safety measures, etc were necessary
- Vandalism is always a concern; however, there has been very little due to its open, visible location on a corner lot

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT INITIATIVE:

- Free public access and open year-round from dawn to dusk
 - Open to all ages and abilities
- Helmets are always mandatory (despite Olympians, professionals, ads not using helmets, which leads to park users not wanting to wear helmets)
- Skateboards, scooters and helmets are all available to borrow from Parks and Recreation Dept (Town Hall, 354 Main St, Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30)
 - They also lend bikes, but trying to discourage bike use at the skatepark
- [Skateboard Etiquette Document](#)

WHATS NEXT:

- The next project is building a skate bowl
 - Proposed to be built in summer 2021 (waiting on funding approval)
- May add art to the skatepark at some point

ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

- Don't do projects like this without the community
 - There is such ownership over this park, and now with people coming from all across the province to use it, folks from Kentville that helped to build it want to ensure that everyone knows the rules
 - When the skatepark is disrespected, the community takes it personally
- It was important that people saw themselves in the facility, especially because this group doesn't see themselves represented anywhere else
- The Town of Kentville works closely with local skateboard shop and run events together to keep the community connected

FREE PLAY:

- When everything was shut down due to COVID-19 restrictions and no other sports were being offered – the skatepark was incredibly popular
- The skatepark is surrounded by 4 soccer fields, 5 ball fields, and a major playground yet they were all empty while the skatepark was full
 - Easily 100 people at a time, and the town had to hire people to monitor and ensure users were sticking to the allowed 30-minute time slots to ensure everyone could use it
 - Not just used to skate, but also to socialize and hang out
- Many people feel welcome here even if they've never touched a skateboard
- There is no “model” attached to skateboarding, it is all trial and error, you can create your own style, use creative expression
- Learn to skate by watching others
- More experienced skaters act as mentors

