

A Small town Unites Around a New Skatepark



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Where is the best new Skate Park in the

State of Colorado? Milliken, Colorado has it. While I am no longer employed with the Town of Milliken, the Skate Park project was one of the more inspiring projects of my 25-year career as a Planner.

Armed with breakfast burritos and steno notebooks, the Parks Director (Josh Roseberry) and I reached out to local school Principals and sought assistance as we are not skateboarders ourselves. We requested a list of students who had skateboarding prowess as well as leadership traits. We requested the ability to meet with the students during class time. We requested commitment from the students, their teachers and families. This commitment grew organically and led to the achievement of remarkable results.

The Principals were thrilled as skateboarders are not often selected for community leadership activities. We met with the students, sought their input, and genuinely listened to their desires. We were able to forge a common vision and constantly communicated the vision to the community.

The Leadership Team invited GOCO to a May team meeting to learn of grant opportunities, the competitive nature of the grants, and to share their ideas for a new park. GOCO was a funding partner and without their support, the project would not have come to fruition as expeditiously as it did. The Town did their part to be competitive in the grant review cycle. Once submitted, the Skate Park Leadership Team and the Town pursued other funding opportunities, continued to hold fund-raisers and tried to keep the enthusiasm high with the local stakeholders. For their initial investment of \$100,000, the Town realized a gain of a \$450,000 Skate Park, opportunities for local businesses to grow and cater to the new amenity in Town. As one local business owner stated, "There is a buzz here. I can't believe it's Milliken."



Through constant communication, Town management, as well as appointed and elected officials, understood how important it was to listen to residents, including the youth about what they wanted in their skate park.

Community engagement takes time to nurture and grow. Without pre-conceptions, the Town of Milliken genuinely listened to the students and engaged students who might not have ever been considered for leadership roles. The Milliken Skate Park Leadership Team became community leaders. They felt empowered by the project and have a sense of ownership of the resulting park.

