



OTTAWA  
SKATEBOARD  
ASSOCIATION

# Transforming Ottawa's Skatepark Landscape through Collaboration

A Proposal to Build an Indoor Skatepark



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# Executive Summary

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The Ottawa Skateboard Association (OSA) proposes a forward-thinking Public-Private Partnership with the City of Ottawa (the City) to address the critical lack of indoor skatepark facilities. This collaboration seeks to develop a sustainable, long-term solution to meet the needs of Ottawa's growing wheeled action sports community.

Recognizing the gaps in existing facilities and the need for inclusive recreational spaces, the OSA seeks to work collaboratively with the City to create a vibrant and active community space for wheeled action sports. This proposal was developed with the support of a broad network of community organizations in Ottawa that need indoor facilities for wheeled action sports, including skateboarding, biking, inline skating, roller skating, and scootering.

## Urgency of Action

Ottawa currently faces a severe gap in indoor facilities for wheeled action sports, with the recent closure of private skateparks, such as The Yard and the end of the Aberdeen Pavilion project. This leaves no available indoor space for organized wheeled action sports during the harsh Ottawa winters or wet days. With the nearest facilities located in Montreal and Toronto, Ottawans are left without adequate options from late fall to mid-spring, or during summer rainy days.

The OSA, in collaboration with numerous community organizations, is prepared to activate, program, and manage a dedicated indoor space, offering inclusive programming for all skill levels and demographics, including women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals as well as people with disabilities.

## **Short-Term Proposal and Objective (2025)**

### **1. Immediate Facility Replacement**

- Identify an interim facility to replace the Aberdeen Pavilion's temporary indoor skateboarding program, ensuring a space is available during Ottawa's winter months.
- An interim indoor skateboarding program can be quickly and affordably implemented. The Aberdeen Pavilion setup was completed for under \$5,000, demonstrating the low-cost feasibility.
- The City already has the infrastructure for reservations in place, and the OSA, along with stakeholders, has established programs, communication materials, and operational plans ready to go.
- This solution can be activated within 48 hours, with no additional obstacle costs, ensuring minimal delay in providing a winter facility for the community.

### **2. Community Programming & Management**

- Leverage OSA's expertise in community engagement and facility management to create a welcoming and inclusive space for all wheeled action sports.

### **3. City Commitment**

- Secure the City's support in providing adaptable facilities to meet the diverse needs of the wheeled action sports community.

### **4. Inclusive Programming**

- Ensure the interim solution is tailored to meet the diverse needs of all wheeled action sports enthusiasts by creating an inclusive space with dedicated sessions for a diversity of users, such as the Aberdeen skateboard sessions that were targeted for women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals. These sessions provided a safe environment for those who may feel uncomfortable around more experienced skateboarders.

## **Long-Term Proposal and Objectives (2024 to 2030)**

### **1. Permanent Indoor Skatepark**



- Commit to a comprehensive plan for a world-class indoor skatepark facility in Ottawa, with collaborative input from the wheeled action sports community on design, location, and sustainable construction.

## **2. Community-Driven Design**

- Engage key stakeholders to ensure the facility is accessible, inclusive, and designed with flexibility to accommodate various wheeled sports and community needs.

## **Proposed Approach**

The proposal centers on a phased approach with the following key elements:

### **1. Funding Commitment**

- The City to provide funding to support both the short- and long-term objectives for the establishment and maintenance of a permanent indoor skatepark in the Ottawa region.

### **2. Collaborative Partnerships**

- The City to collaborate with representatives from the wheeled action sports communities to harness management and programming expertise that reflects a diverse range of activities within these sports.

### **3. Community-Centric Decision-Making**

- A collaborative decision-making process to be implemented to ensure the facility aligns with the needs and aspirations of the community.

### **4. Integrated Programming Initiatives**

- Programming initiatives to be designed to maximize the facility's potential as a community space, transforming it from a mere venue for wheeled action sports into a cultural hub that hosts events, workshops, and activities appealing to a broader audience.

## **Key Recommendations**

### **1. Establish a Skatepark Advisory Council**

- Form a dedicated Skatepark Advisory Council composed of representatives from the City, the Ottawa Skateboard Association (OSA), local wheeled action sports communities, the general public, and business organizations. This Council will ensure that diverse voices are heard in the planning process.

### **2. Engage in Meaningful Consultation**

- Facilitate regular and meaningful engagement with the Skatepark Advisory Council to guarantee that expert advice on wheeled action sports is integrated into the planning and management processes of both future and existing skateparks in Ottawa.

### **3. Interim Planning for Temporary Solutions**

- Task the OSA or the Skatepark Advisory Council with devising an interim solution that provides a temporary indoor facility for wheeled action sports. This solution should be developed as quickly as possible to address the immediate need for indoor spaces, particularly as all indoor venues in Ottawa have now closed.

### **4. Identify and Designate Temporary Facilities**

- Collaborate with the City to identify suitable existing indoor facilities that can be designated for temporary use as spaces for wheeled action sports. This will help ensure continuity for athletes during the winter months and on wet days.

### **5. Design and Programming Recommendations**

- Empower the OSA or Skatepark Advisory Council to recommend inclusive programming and design elements for the indoor skatepark. This includes dedicated sessions for underrepresented groups (e.g., women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals) to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all participants.

### **6. Develop a Comprehensive Plan for Permanent Facility**

- Collaborate with the Skatepark Advisory Council to create a detailed, comprehensive plan for a permanent indoor skatepark facility in Ottawa. This plan should prioritize sustainable construction and community involvement in the design process.

### **7. Foundation for a Business Plan**

- Utilize this proposal and recommendations from the Skatepark Advisory Council as the foundational framework for a business plan for an indoor skatepark, aiming for a facility size of 10,000 to 30,000 sq. ft.

## **8. Budget Identification and Funding Coordination**

- Identify a clear project budget and explore potential sources of sponsorship and funding, including public and private partnerships, to support both the development and ongoing maintenance of the skatepark.

## **9. Determine a Permanent Location**

- Conduct a thorough assessment to identify a permanent location for the indoor skatepark that meets the needs of the community, ensuring accessibility and alignment with existing recreational infrastructure.

## **10. Establish a Focus Group for Design Options**

- Create a focus group dedicated to exploring various design options for the skatepark, ensuring that it includes diverse obstacles and fosters creativity, especially in smaller spaces.

## **11. Community Engagement for Diverse Programming**

- Engage the community in discussions to determine programming requirements for various wheeled action sports. This process should focus on meeting the needs of skateboarders, while also gathering input from BMX riders, roller skaters, inline skaters, and scooter enthusiasts to ensure dedicated time and space for each audience.

## **12. Flexible Design for All Users**

- Design the indoor skatepark primarily for skateboarders but ensure the layout allows for flexibility to benefit all wheeled action sports enthusiasts. This includes providing varied obstacles and features that cater to different skill levels and types of wheeled sports.

## **13. Transform the Skatepark into a Cultural Hub**

- Aim to transform the indoor skatepark into a cultural hub that extends beyond mere recreational use. This facility should host events, workshops, and activities that appeal to a broader audience, fostering a sense of community and promoting the cultural significance of wheeled action sports.

This proposed Public-Private Partnership represents an opportunity to create a lasting legacy for the Ottawa sporting community. By combining the City's resources with OSA's passion, expertise, and community networks, we can build a world-class indoor skatepark together that reflects Ottawa's vibrant and inclusive spirit.

**Let's shape the future of Ottawa's recreational landscape together.**



Temporary indoor skatepark sessions at the Aberdeen Pavillion (2024 and 2023).

# Short Term Proposal and Objectives (2025)

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## Indoor Skateboarding Proposal: Building on Aberdeen's Success

Ottawa winters are notoriously harsh, often leaving skateboarding enthusiasts without suitable practice spaces. The Aberdeen Pavilion indoor skateboarding program, launched in 2022, offered a solution—an affordable, temporary, and community-driven initiative. This program demonstrated how quickly and effectively an indoor skateboarding facility could be set up and managed. With its closure, the OSA urges the city to support a similar initiative to address the community's needs. The closure of Aberdeen has left a void for Ottawa's skateboarding community. Efforts to secure alternative spaces from over 35 Ottawa community centers have been unsuccessful. While many indoor spaces are available for other activities, skateboarding remains overlooked due to a lack of political leadership and commitment.

## The Success of Aberdeen: A Model to Replicate

The Aberdeen program was a remarkable success, providing folks with a heated, dry environment during Ottawa's coldest months. This initiative demonstrated the following key aspects:

- **Low-Cost Implementation**  
The program was set up for under \$5,000 with community based funds, utilizing community-donated obstacles and a simple reservation system.
- **Efficient Use of Space**  
The temporary setup leveraged an existing facility and modular design, allowing the space to be shared with other users.
- **Community Building**  
Sessions fostered inclusivity, welcoming participants from diverse backgrounds, genders, and skill levels in a safe and encouraging environment.
- **High Demand**  
Over 3,900 reservations were made in just three months, with sessions often fully booked shortly after opening.

## Immediate Solution Proposal

An interim indoor skateboarding facility can be quickly and affordably implemented:

1. **Requirements**

- Flat indoor surface, a minimum of 3,000 square feet (e.g., unused recreational halls, curling rinks, basketball court, community room).
  - Heated and dry environment.
2. **Cost-Effectiveness**
- No obstacle costs: obstacles can be donated or repurposed from the OSA
3. **Rapid Activation**
- The OSA and stakeholders have programs, communication materials, and operational plans ready.
  - Volunteers can transport and set up obstacles within 48 hours, and they are modular and can be set up and stored in about an hour.
  - With the City's infrastructure for reservations, the program can be operational in the short run.

## **Call to Action**

The OSA urges the City of Ottawa to take decisive leadership in securing a space for indoor skateboarding this winter. The Aberdeen Pavilion program demonstrated that a simple, affordable, and effective solution can be successfully implemented. By acting now, the City can provide skaters with a safe, inclusive space to practice, building on the momentum we've already created and ensuring Ottawa continues to support diverse community recreation during the winter months.

Ottawa boasts an abundance of facilities for various sports and activities, yet there remains a significant gap when it comes to dedicated space for skateboarding. With so many other specialized spaces already in place, not providing for this growing community is a missed opportunity for the city. It represents a loss in terms of value for taxpayers and the well-being of our youth.

The community is ready, the OSA is prepared, and all that's needed is for the City to take action and activate a space. Together, we can ensure Ottawa remains a leader in inclusive recreation for all. Let's keep the momentum going—our community is ready to take the first push.

# Long Term Proposal and Objectives (2024 - 2030)

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## Benefits of an Indoor Skatepark

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Ottawa has grown into a city of one million residents. Over the next 25 years, that number is expected to grow to more than 1.4 million.<sup>1</sup> With that kind of growth, we need to re-envision how the City approaches recreation and the growing need for indoor recreation facilities, particularly given Ottawa's long winter/wet months. Given that 94% of Ottawans use the City's indoor facilities throughout the year<sup>2</sup> and, with the expected increase of Ottawans and interests, the demand for indoor recreational facilities with diverse programming will likely grow.

Wheeled action sports communities have distinct indoor recreational preferences and requirements that are not currently offered in the City. To foster healthier, more engaging communities, it is crucial to move beyond the traditional model of piecemeal private and public initiatives for skatepark facilities and wheeled action sport programming. There is a compelling need for diverse recreational outlets that can accommodate different activities.

*"Since I'm a single mom, it's hard to do activities with little to no money and being able to skateboard indoors made it easy that our family was never turned away due to lack of funds.*

*It's a really tough conversation to have with your kid when you can't do something because you don't have the money. I tell ourselves often this is just temporary and I really believe it is but since losing my small business and house to the pandemic, having to claim bankruptcy and essentially losing my job because of the stress of it all, the indoor skatepark is a place where you can feel other things than all the stress and pain you're going through." **Sara Anne Mailhot**<sup>3</sup>*

An indoor skatepark will reinforce the City's strong commitment to healthy residents, diversity, inclusivity, accessible programming, and vibrant community living. It also supports the City's

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<sup>1</sup> Ottawa, [Transportation Master Plan Update](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ottawa, [2021 Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan | Engage Ottawa](#)

<sup>3</sup> Ottawa Skateboard Association, Indoor Park Survey (Appendix)

Master Plan for recreation. For example, for the past 15 years, the City has successfully offered recreational skateboard programs, including camps, lessons, in public outdoor skateparks. It is clear that skateparks are an integral part of overall park infrastructure in the City. Building an indoor skatepark would be a strong opportunity for the City to show their commitment to affordable and accessible recreation for all Ottawans that would offer safe learning environments for wheeled action sports enthusiasts year-round.

By understanding and catering to the unique needs of the wheeled actions sports community, we embark on a journey to redefine recreation, ensuring that our recreational spaces evolve with the diversity of our residents.

## Value for Ottawans

An indoor skatepark would not only add to the existing outdoor skatepark experience, it would also offer an alternative model and approach to creating safe learning environments for all wheeled action sports year-round. Below lists why an indoor skatepark would benefit Ottawans.

- **Health Benefits**

- Wheeled action sports are physically demanding activities that promote cardiovascular fitness, strength, balance, and flexibility<sup>4</sup>. Incorporating an indoor skatepark would offer residents a different way of staying active throughout the year, particularly during the winter months and wet days.

- **Tourism**

- A well-designed indoor skatepark could host community/ municipal/ provincial/ national/ international events and competitions for Ottawans to participate in or watch.

- **Learning and Mentorship**

- An indoor skatepark encourages a non-judgemental learning environment for all wheeled action sports in a safe and secure space and could offer mentorships to kids and youth by connecting experienced athletes with new learners. Many beginners do not feel comfortable or may feel intimidated learning in an outdoor skatepark environment for a variety of reasons, including not understanding the “skatepark culture” or concern of having no help if they sustain an injury. An indoor skatepark would take a different approach, it would offer (1) a safe and inclusive space where everyone would feel comfortable, and (2) enforces a code of conduct that ensures that it remains a friendly learning or mentorship

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<sup>4</sup> Dumas and Laforest. 2008



environment for everyone. Like public pools, staff at indoor skateparks are like lifeguards - they would monitor all users and ensure that the environment remains warm and helpful. All action sports are inherently dangerous and high risk, which is why a lot of people become interested and committed to the sport in the first place. Learning and taking risks in a safe and positive environment would engrain confidence in students by teaching them risk ratios that will inevitably result in stronger, smarter, and strategically-minded athletes.

- **Low Cost and Low Maintenance**

- An indoor skatepark is a good investment for cities. Compared to other recreational facilities, a well-built and well-designed skatepark can last for an extended period<sup>5</sup>, with minimal repairs and upkeep over time<sup>6</sup>. A flexible design would also allow for modifications based on budget constraints and would ensure long-term sustainability.

- **Affordability for Ottawans**

- When compared with ice hockey or other gear-intensive sports, wheeled action sports are a low-cost recreational investment for kids/parents/adults. For example, a complete skateboard and associated safety equipment can cost less than \$200, which is an affordable way to get exercise, pick up a sport, and maybe meet new friends along the way.



In a clockwise direction, [Ashlynn skating at Aberdeen](#) (temporary park), McNabb park (closed), [The Yard](#) (closed).

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<sup>5</sup> [Public Skatepark Development Guide](#), 2024

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

# An Indoor Skatepark and the City's Strategic Direction

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## The City of Ottawa's Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2021)<sup>7</sup>

Although there are good intentions from the City for wheeled action sports, demonstrated by the existing investments in outdoor skateparks, there is one recommendation in this Master Plan that we oppose.

The recommendations state that the City “investigate the opportunity to redirect funds collected from the 2004 Facility Needs Study, to support a partnership development of an indoor skateboard park, towards new and redeveloped outdoor skateboard parks”. We ask that the City keep these funds as originally committed and invest in an indoor skatepark rather than reallocating the funds to outdoor skateparks. In the greater Ottawa region (~1.5 million residents), there are already 29 outdoor skateparks<sup>8</sup> (not including Gatineau), and not a single indoor skatepark.

The City's policy to apply the gender lens to this Master Plan will also be central to future programming for an indoor skatepark to ensure that it aligns with the City's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Although more women and girls are participating in action sports in general, they represent a far smaller share of the overall participation numbers than boys and men.<sup>9</sup> Per Statista's survey results for 2019-20 (in the US), 79 percent of skateboarders identify as male and 21 percent identify as female.<sup>10</sup> But with girls and women showing up in greater numbers to learn action sports—and with skateboarding and freestyle BMX now identified as Olympic sports—there has been a corresponding need for the industry and recreational programming to adapt, with gender-based programming and initiatives to balance out participation numbers and welcome new athletes.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ottawa, [Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan](#), 2021

<sup>8</sup> Ottawa, [Dynamic Map of Skateboard Parks](#)

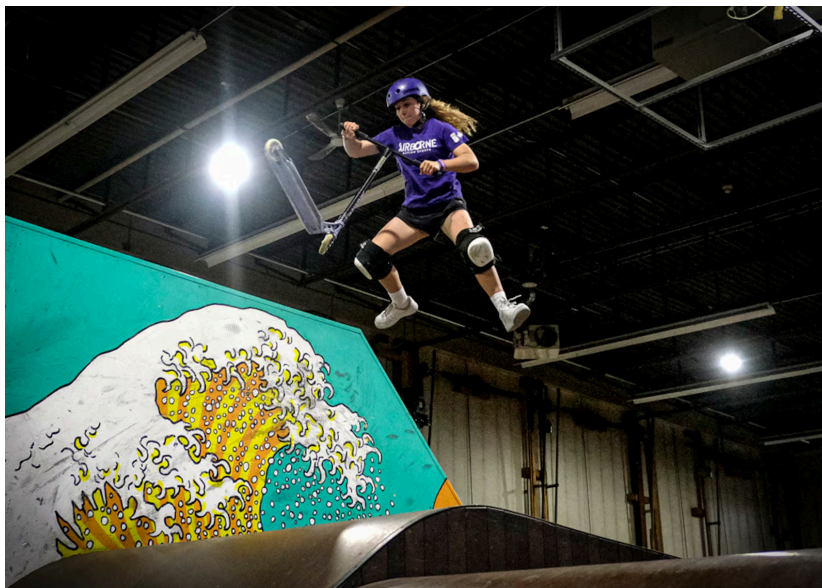
<sup>9</sup> Forbes, [Woodward Offers New Action Sports Programs For Girls And Women With Lizzie Armanto And Jamie Anderson](#)

<sup>10</sup> Forbes, [Woodward Offers New Action Sports Programs For Girls And Women With Lizzie Armanto And Jamie Anderson](#)

<sup>11</sup> Forbes, [Woodward Offers New Action Sports Programs For Girls And Women With Lizzie Armanto And Jamie Anderson](#)

A couple of local inspirations include Léa Mai Pellerin<sup>12</sup> (won 7th place at 2024 [Scootering Park World Championships](#)<sup>13</sup>), Shandril Mintenko<sup>14</sup> (finished in fourth place of the [skatergirl showcase](#) in her division for Ontario Skateboard<sup>15</sup>), and Ashlynn Barrett-Tucker (age 8, finished second place in the [Ontario skatergirl showcase](#) for the under 10, and second place in the Canada skateboard digital open competition two years in a row for the under 12 street).

All have done their learning and training in indoor skateparks and are local legends who continue to inspire other women and girls. In addition, developing indoor skatepark programming will open the doors to offer opportunities to work with existing wheeled action sport associations that focus on encouraging and promoting gender diversity (e.g., the Girls+ program, learn-to-skate programs, longboarding organizations, and roller derby leagues).



[Léa Mai Pellerin](#) practicing at the now closed The Yard. Photo from [Le Droit](#).

## Inclusive Recreation<sup>16</sup>

The City already focuses on “inclusive recreation” where specialized programming is offered to persons with disabilities. A thoughtful and well-designed indoor skatepark could be aligned with programming that is tailored to all age groups, abilities, genders, and backgrounds. For example, a program could be developed for a dedicated Autism Program designed to provide a unique and

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<sup>12</sup> Le Droit, [Le saut payant de Léa Mai](#)

<sup>13</sup> World Skate, [Scootering Park World Championships Deliver Insane Action in Ostia](#)

<sup>14</sup> Move How U Want, <https://movehowuwant.com/>

<sup>15</sup> Ontario Skateboard Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/ontarioskateboarding.ca/reel/DACi6Q2pb1d/>

<sup>16</sup> Ottawa, [Inclusive Recreation](#)

inclusive space for children on the autism spectrum — the Yard had programming for people who are blind and wanted to learn how to skateboard. Recognizing the challenges some face in traditional team sports, targeted programming could offer a non-judgmental and encouraging environment.

*“(...) Personally, when indoor skateparks existed we were there consistently because it gave our daughter an athletic outlet that exponentially increased her confidence, and our Autistic son a form of physical therapy that we have yet to match. Skateparks were critical to our family's growth and it has been incredibly sad since they stopped.”* **Charles Segal**<sup>17</sup>

Programming could also be inspired by the OSA's initiative *For Pivots Sake*<sup>18</sup>, which aimed to provide free gear to families in need and leveraged its expertise to also promote autism awareness in the skate industry. By incorporating occupational therapy elements into teaching wheeled action sports to different types of learners, this type of program would go beyond recreation, addressing sensory, motor, and social skills. This could be done through one-on-one skate lessons, anti-bullying education, and within the walls of a predictable, safe indoor skatepark environment, without wet or winter weather impeding development.



OSA's volunteer Jordan Wells teaches skateboarding at the Yard to 11-year-old Ollie Acosta-Pickering, who is blind after cancer treatment. Photo from [Ottawa Citizen](#).

▶ "You can still do it" 10-year-old blind cancer survivor back on his skateboard

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<sup>17</sup> Ottawa Skateboard Association, Indoor Park Survey (Appendix)

<sup>18</sup> Ottawa Skateboard Association, [For Pivot's Sake](#)

By investing in an indoor skatepark, the City will be able to demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of Ottawans, which will, in turn, encourage healthy living and strengthen connections between neighbourhoods.

Perhaps, the most critical aspect of this project is that we are introducing the first indoor facility dedicated to skateboarding and wheeled activities. While we understand the City of Ottawa faces financial constraints, it's important to note that the city already provides a wide range of indoor recreation options. In recent years, there's been a noticeable shift in recreation trends, with more people choosing wheeled sports as a way to stay active and engaged. Introducing just one facility to cater to these activities would greatly enhance the city's recreational offerings, fostering a more diverse and inclusive program lineup.

Currently, without a dedicated space for skateboarding and similar activities, we are excluding a significant segment of the community. By adding an indoor skatepark, we aren't just meeting an unmet need—we are providing a space that encourages healthy, active lifestyles. Unlike adding more facilities for sports already well-represented in Ottawa, this single facility would fill a gap in our recreational infrastructure, serving a broader audience that currently has limited indoor options.

# Challenges and Opportunities

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The City has been the home of 12 privately owned indoor skateparks in the past 30 years, however, none have been able to stay open in the long term due to a variety of reasons.<sup>19</sup> The OSA has reviewed the history of indoor skateparks in Ottawa, and lessons could be learned from the diverse history and landscape of indoor skateboard facilities that have existed in the City (e.g., varying sizes, setups, and ownership structures). As noted earlier, there are 29 outdoor public skateparks in the greater Ottawa region<sup>20</sup>, and not one public indoor skatepark that caters to all-wheeled action sports.<sup>21</sup> The closest indoor skateparks to Ottawa that cater to wheeled action sports are in Toronto<sup>22</sup>, Newmarket<sup>23</sup>, or Montreal<sup>24</sup>.

*“My wife and I started skating with our daughter after sending her to summer skate camp at The Yard. It has been a real bonding activity for our family. We’ve used some of the outdoor parks, however find it difficult in the wet/winter months. We sometimes travel to TAZ in Montreal, but time and budget doesn’t always allow for this. Having an indoor park would allow us to skate together as a family year round. Skateboarding has also been a great way to stay active because generally we’re not gym/sporty people. Skateboarding is a fun activity that doesn’t feel like exercise so it’s been easy for my wife and I to motivate ourselves. This summer we went to the outdoor parks almost everyday and we are worried with fall/winter that our activity levels will drop off because we have nowhere to go. I truly hope Ottawa considers building an indoor park so our family can pursue our passion for skateboarding year round.” **Pippa Rogers**<sup>25</sup>*

It is widely recognized by Ottawans that the City has good intentions to support wheeled action sport enthusiasts given the current investments into outdoor skateparks. However, there are key challenges and limitations for users using outdoor skateparks. These include: (1) they are

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<sup>19</sup> The most recent skatepark, the Yard, closed in 2024 due to a sharp increase in rent and difficulties in recuperating revenue due to the pandemic closures.

<sup>20</sup> Ottawa, [Dynamic Map of Skateboard Parks](#)

<sup>21</sup> One exception, On Deck, a skateboard shop in Ottawa, has a mini ramp and offers skateboarding lessons, but does not cater to other wheeled action sports.

<sup>22</sup> CJs Skatepark, <https://cjsskatepark.com/>

<sup>23</sup> City of Newmarket, [Recreation Youth Centre & telMAX Indoor Skate Park](#)

<sup>24</sup> Le TAZ, <https://www.taz.ca/>

<sup>25</sup> Ottawa Skateboard Association, Indoor Park Survey (Appendix)



unusable and inoperable during the winter months and wet days; (2) they are use-at-your-own-risk, without staff monitoring safety and codes of conduct; (3) there is no programming or reserved times for beginners; (4) there is a culture at many outdoor skateparks that can be intimidating; (5) kids/youth/adults all use the skateparks at the same time without realizing that skateparks can be dangerous - this can cause chaos and friction between users of all ages, as well as parents/guardians of users; and (6) all skateparks in Ottawa are designed differently with permanent structures, which can create some spaces where experts are wedged in the same area as beginners.

Building an indoor skatepark would address the key challenges for users listed above, and would be an opportunity for the City to support Ottawans by (1) having a skatepark that caters to all wheeled action sport enthusiasts/beginners year-round that would not be weather-dependent; (2) creating jobs where staff would be on site to teach, ensure all users are safe, and that codes of conduct are followed; (3) encouraging a strong learning environment for beginners of all ages and abilities; (4) establishing a friendly and positive culture and creating a community hub; (5) teaching the flow and expectation of how skateparks operate so users/learners can seamlessly transition between indoor and outdoor skateparks; (6) working effectively with an Advisory Council to design an indoor skatepark with a collaborative approach and informed by wheeled action sport experts/teachers, city officials, and others who have built/maintained indoor skateparks, as well as the potential to fold in corporate partners.



[Gloria](#) quad skating at The Yard (now closed).

This proposal is also a golden opportunity for the City to address this gap in recreational programming by establishing a multi-stakeholder Skatepark Advisory Council that could provide guidance in addressing the above challenges, as well as other key challenges that could inhibit the long-term viability of an indoor skatepark, such as (1) the lack of consistent business support or inadequate community engagement; (2) insufficient understanding of the market and spatial needs; (3) the absence of corporate partnerships, and (4) challenges related to programming and design. Despite these challenges, previous indoor skateparks, such as McNabb, EQ, and Aberdeen, have thrived by prioritizing the expertise and input of community members. Success was driven by engaging community experts, fostering broad community support, involving user groups in programming decisions, and thoughtfully addressing spatial needs. This underscores the value of a dedicated Skatepark Advisory Council to ensure meaningful and collaborative community involvement moving forward.

Striking a balance to accommodate different wheeled action sports communities will require strong collaboration to ensure that a skatepark would be an inclusive environment for all. Some work has already been done in this regard, for example, the OSA released an audit of Ottawa's skateparks from the summer of 2018 to the start of 2019<sup>26</sup> that provided recommendations to reshape the current approach to the development, construction, and long-term maintenance of skatepark infrastructure in Ottawa. This renewed approach would foster a more vibrant and inclusive wheeled action sport culture. An Advisory Council would ensure that the indoor skatepark appeals to a wide range of enthusiasts, maximizes revenue potential, and contributes to the growth and interconnectedness of the entire wheeled action sports community in Ottawa.



Joshua Stewart-Boyd inline skating at The Yard (now closed).

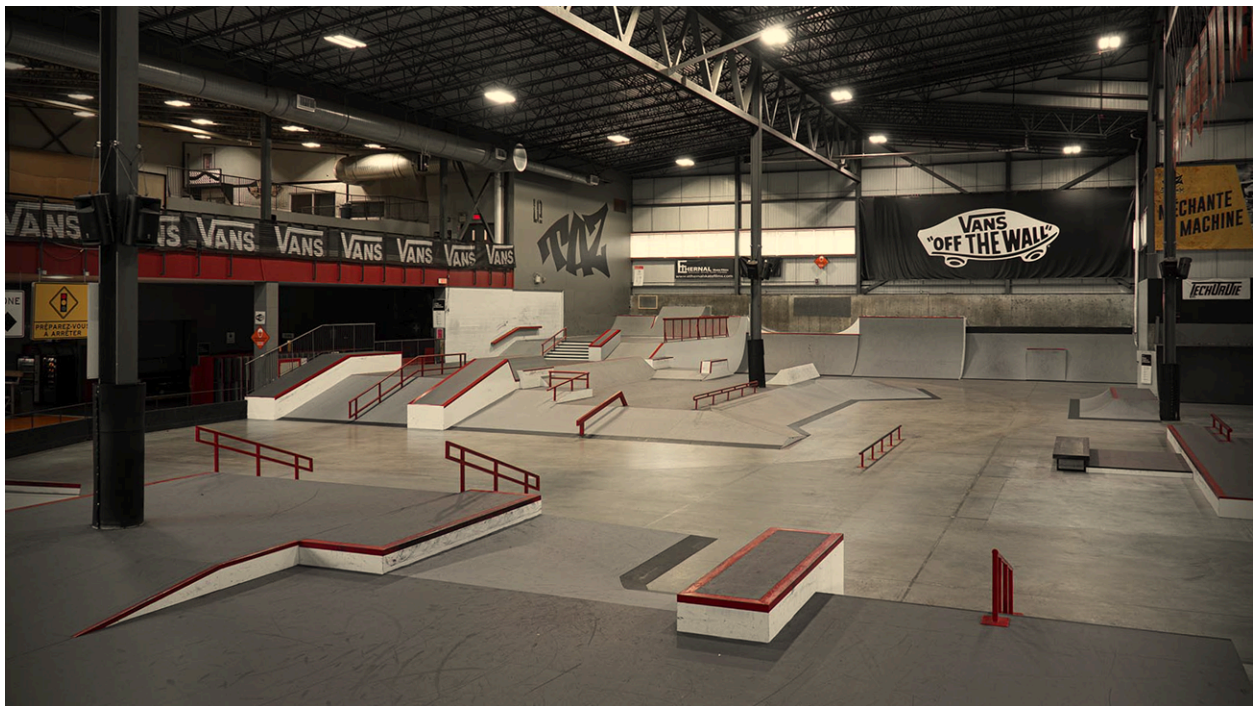
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<sup>26</sup> Ottawa Skateboard Association, 2019



# A Potential Model for Ottawa's Indoor Skatepark: TAZ Skatepark

Montreal's *TAZ Skatepark*<sup>27</sup> stands as a prime example of how a successful indoor skatepark can come to life through collaboration between different levels of government and the local skateboarding community. Established in the late 1990s as a private facility in the Montreal downtown core, TAZ's journey is a testament to the power of community engagement and public-private partnerships. There are lessons learned from TAZ's history, structure, and operations that create its own vibrant indoor skatepark that caters to skateboarders, scooters, inline skaters, and BMX riders. It remains one of the most successfully run facilities in North America.



Le Taz Skatepark in Montréal. Photo from [Le Taz website](https://www.taz.ca/).

## Taz's History and Funding: A Collective Effort

The original downtown TAZ location in Montreal closed in 2003 due to redevelopment, but the skateboard community wasn't ready to give up. Skaters and supporters advocated for years to bring TAZ back, eventually opening its doors again in 2009 at a larger facility in the Saint-Michel district. The success of this revival was due in large part to a combined effort between the City of Montreal, provincial, and federal governments.<sup>28</sup> Montreal provided crucial

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<sup>27</sup> Le TAZ, <https://www.taz.ca/>

<sup>28</sup> Wikipedia, [Taz \(Montreal\)](#)

support, supplying the building itself and granting municipal subsidies to keep operations sustainable. The project also received private sponsorship and donations, showing the power of multi-tiered funding to realize large-scale community projects like TAZ. Montreal supported the project financially, and let a non-profit run the day-to-day operations in close communication with key stakeholders.

By using TAZ as a model, the City can see how different levels of government can unite to support an initiative that benefits local youth, skaters, and the greater community. With proper funding and support, a public indoor skatepark in Ottawa could not only provide a much-needed space for wheeled action sport enthusiasts during the long winters but also become a hub for youth engagement and recreational activities.

## **Designed and Run by Skaters, for Skaters**

One of the key factors that sets TAZ apart from other skateparks is that it was built and is largely run by skateboarders. In general, skateboarders understand the design needs that would allow for a space to cater to all levels of wheeled action sports enthusiasts. This ensures that the space meets the needs and preferences of the community it serves. TAZ was thoughtfully designed with skateboarders in mind, featuring various sections for different skill levels—from beginner street sections to advanced bowls and mini-ramps. A major advantage of having skateboarders involved in both the design and management of an indoor skatepark is that it creates an authentic, functional, and inclusive space where people feel comfortable honing their skills.

This same model could work well in Ottawa. By involving local skateboarders and organizations like the OSA throughout the planning and design processes, the City can ensure the indoor skatepark reflects the community's needs and desires. Skateboarders know best what type of features work in a skatepark, how the space should flow, and what materials will stand up to the demands of consistent use. Skateboarders are also highly aware of how these features are used by other wheeled action sports enthusiasts.

## **A Range of Services and Accessibility**

TAZ is more than just a skatepark—it's a versatile recreational facility. While skateboarding is its primary focus, it also offers space for BMX riders, inline skaters, and scooter riders. This multi-disciplinary approach opens the door for a wider variety of users, making it a community hub where people with different interests can gather under one roof.

In addition to its skate and BMX areas, TAZ provides lessons, rentals, camps, and hosts competitions and events. These types of services help to create an inclusive environment that welcomes newcomers to the sport, as well as offering experienced riders a platform to progress and showcase their skills. TAZ also accommodates youth programs, making it accessible to

younger audiences and serving as a place for healthy, supervised activity. This diversity in offerings makes TAZ not just a skatepark but a key player in youth outreach and recreational programming.

If the City adopts a similar approach, an indoor skatepark would offer spaces that cater to a variety of wheeled action sports, helping ensure that the indoor skatepark remains financially viable that attracts a broad user base. Offering lessons and community events will also make the indoor skatepark a central part of the City's recreational programming, providing year-round services and activities that engage young people in constructive and exciting ways.

## **A Blueprint for Ottawa's Indoor Park**

By looking at TAZ Skatepark as a blueprint, the City can build a thriving indoor skatepark that caters to the needs of local skateboarders and other wheeled action sports enthusiasts, while fostering community engagement. Key takeaways from TAZ's success include:

- **Collaborative Funding:** Bringing together municipal, provincial, and federal resources, along with private donations, to create a sustainable, multi-use facility.
- **Skater-Driven Design:** Ensuring that skateboarders are involved in the design and management to create an authentic and functional park.
- **Diverse Services:** Offering a range of activities, from youth programs and community events, to make the park accessible to everyone.

# Recommendations to Build a Sustainable Indoor Skatepark

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Constructing an indoor skatepark that stands the test of time involves careful consideration of size, design, and community needs.

- **Optimal Size:** The ideal size for an indoor skatepark in Ottawa is between 10,000 and 30,000 square feet. According to the OSA, this size would adapt to the needs of expected users in Ottawa. This recommended size is based on lessons learned from existing and past indoor skateparks, such as On Deck, Aberdeen, EQ, and McNabb's facilities for the local community.
- **Diversify Obstacles:** Prioritize diversity in obstacles rather than over-relying on specific types that cater to a niche group. Emphasize lower cost, flexible, and lower impact obstacles in the park's design.
- **Creativity in Small Spaces:** Challenge the misconception that skateboarding demands large, rectangular areas. Embrace budget-friendly and creatively designed parks in smaller spaces. Focus on innovative features that cater to the needs of wheeled action sports enthusiasts without compromising on the overall quality and experience.
- **Strategic Location:** Choose a strategic location that is easily accessible. Consider amenities such as parking facilities and accessibility via local transit to ensure convenience for wheeled action sport enthusiasts and their families. A central location with good connectivity will improve the skatepark's visibility and accessibility.
- **Design:** According to the OSA, the indoor skatepark would ideally offer a balance between transition-style obstacles and street-inspired elements, to promote a dynamic environment that appeals to a broad audience. Drawing inspiration from successful models like Aberdeen and the indoor facilities at McNabb, we embrace a collaborative approach and broad appeal of a skatepark. The establishment of a Skatepark Advisory Council will be crucial to properly design an indoor skatepark in Ottawa. The indoor skatepark should cater primarily to skateboarders while incorporating features that allow flexibility and space. Recognizing the non-linear and challenging learning curve of skateboarding and other wheeled action sports enthusiasts, a long-term sustainable design of an indoor skatepark prioritizes elements that encourage a positive learning environment, facilitates progression, and creates a safe space where all users of all skill levels can thrive. The indoor skatepark's design would aim to maximize benefits for beginners and seasoned wheeled action sport enthusiasts/athletes, fostering a

community-driven space that encourages mentorship, community connections, and new friendships.

- **Programming:** An indoor skatepark could develop cost-recovery programs that include summer camps, targeted programming for different types of learners (e.g., persons with autism, visual-impairments), group/private lessons, birthday/private parties, adult-only sessions, after-school programs, or workshops.
- **Partnerships with Existing Organizations:** There is strong potential to integrate the indoor skatepark programming with existing initiatives, such as the Girls+ program, learn-to-skate programs, longboarding organizations, and roller derby gatherings. Another way to secure partnerships could include working with local retail shops that organize major events like Go Skate Day or community roller discos. The indoor skatepark can align with existing community efforts, further enriching the wheeled action sports experience in Ottawa.
- **Advanced/Professional Skateboard Events:** An indoor skatepark would be an opportunity to engage advanced and professional wheeled action sports athletes. These events could include a yearly best trick competition during the winter months, injecting excitement during the traditionally slower season, organize official competitions aligned with the programming developed by Canada Skateboard and in collaboration with Olympic events. The goal is not only to create thrilling events but also to establish the indoor park as a key player in the broader skateboarding and wheeled action sports landscape, aligning with national and international initiatives.
- **Wheeled sports in Schools:** In order to improve community engagement, establishing partnerships with local schools to utilize the indoor skatepark could result in generating revenue from school boards. This would offer a unique space for physical education classes, extracurricular activities, or special events - while potentially broadening the interest of wheeled action sports, in general.
- **Centralizing Programming Throughout the City:** The indoor skatepark could be the hub to all programming for wheeled action sports in Ottawa to ensure alignment with the existing and future programs and increase affordable recreation options for Ottawans. Centralizing programming could include establishing consistency in curriculum, approaches to teaching, and diversity in complementary programs.
- **Specialized Time and Space:** Similar to the TAZ approach, segmented schedules for beginners, or designated sessions for BMX riders, scooter riders, inline skaters, and skateboarders would help the flow of the indoor skatepark. This approach provides dedicated time and space for each audience, fostering inclusivity without compromising the quality of the indoor skatepark experience.

# Preliminary Financial Estimates

The OSA team has developed preliminary estimates for the costs of developing and operating an indoor action sports facility in Ottawa, Ontario, based on both secondary research as well as insight provided by other indoor skateboard parks in Canada. It is important to acknowledge that these estimates are preliminary and based on a multitude of simplifying assumptions, many of which may not match the exact situation faced by the City of Ottawa if a permanent indoor space were to be developed. However, the insights derived from these examples intend to provide a baseline indication of the financial feasibility of such an initiative, into which the OSA recommends the City of Ottawa complete further research prior to the development of a facility.

The OSA’s preliminary estimates suggest that operating a 15,000-square-foot indoor action sports facility would cost between 3.2 and 6.7 million Canadian Dollars (CAD) in a given year, depending on the development scenario chosen:

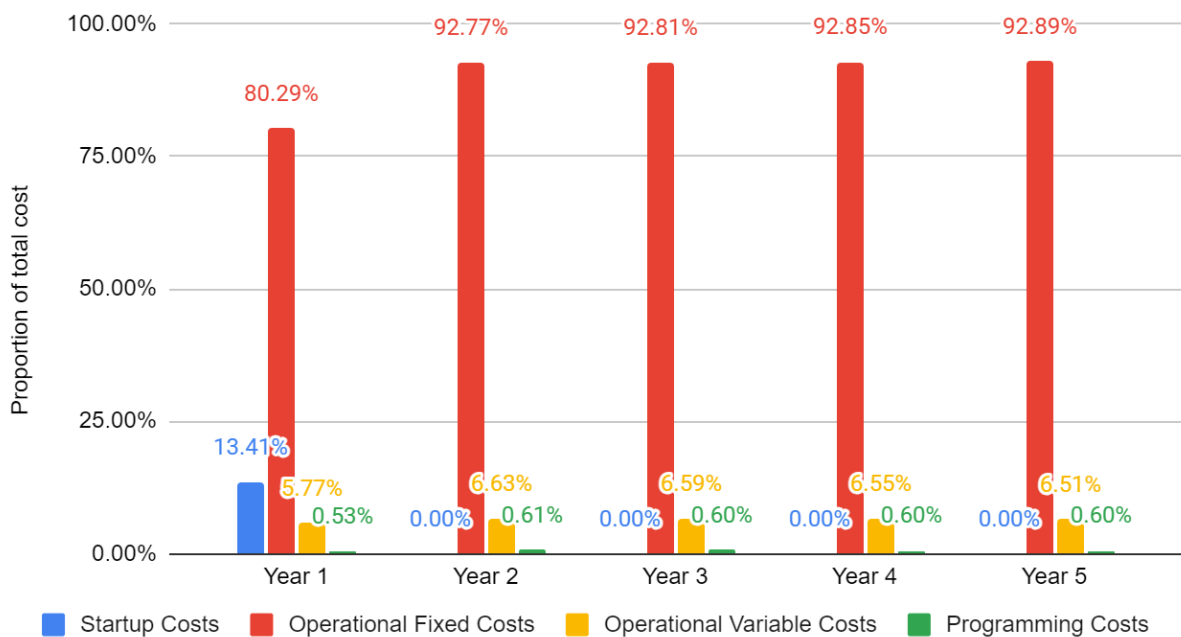
	Estimated Annual Costs (2024 CAD)				
Development Scenario	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Development Scenario 1 (Moveable features, low facility transition costs)	3.7 - 4.5 million	3.2 - 4.0 million	3.3 - 4.0 million	3.4 - 4.1 million	3.4 - 4.2 million
Development Scenario 2 (Permanent features, high facility transition costs)	5.5 - 6.7 million	3.2 - 4.0 million	3.3 - 4.0 million	3.4 - 4.1 million	3.5 - 4.2 million

Perhaps unsurprisingly, based on the OSA’s preliminary cost estimates, we believe that the most financially feasible option for an indoor action sports facility would include smaller, modular obstacles where little to no facility transition costs would be incurred (e.g., an empty warehouse where the floors do not need to be resurfaced). Therefore, all results and figures presented moving forward are based on Development Scenario 1.

When analyzing the evolution of facility cost estimates over time, two things become clear. First is that costs are expected to be significantly higher in the first year relative to following years due to start-up costs. Start-up costs include the construction of obstacles, and may also include the storage of obstacles, and the cost to transition the facility.

The second takeaway can be seen in the figure below: Operational fixed costs (made up of rental costs, property taxes, facility and obstacles maintenance, insurance, along with smaller costs such as legal and banking fees), make up nearly the entire facility cost in all years of the analysis, while operational variable costs (i.e., non-program labour costs and utilities) and programming costs make up a relatively minuscule percentage of total costs.

Proportion of Total Cost By Category - Development Scenario 1



Our estimates find that the main cost driver of the facility is the cost of rent, which is assumed to be CAD 15 per square foot. Our estimates indicate that at a rate of CAD 15 per square foot, rent alone would amount to nearly 75% of the total annual facility costs. High rental costs being the main cost driver of an indoor action sports facility was a common theme heard when speaking with other facilities operating in Canada.

The following table provides preliminary baseline estimates of the costs of an indoor action sports facility under Development Scenario 1:

Time Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Facility transition costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Obstacle costs	\$535,853.82	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Storage costs	\$8,400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Start-Up Costs	\$544,253.82	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Rent costs	\$2,700,000.00	\$2,767,500.00	\$2,836,687.50	\$2,907,604.69	\$2,980,294.80
Property tax costs	\$309,137.51	\$314,129.93	\$319,202.97	\$324,357.93	\$329,596.15
Maintenance costs	\$243,214.63	\$243,214.63	\$243,214.63	\$243,214.63	\$243,214.63
Insurance costs	\$4,500.00	\$4,572.67	\$4,646.52	\$4,721.56	\$4,797.81
Other operational fixed costs	\$2,100.00	\$2,133.91	\$2,168.38	\$2,203.39	\$2,238.98
<b>Total Operational Fixed Costs</b>	<b>\$3,258,952.15</b>	<b>\$3,331,551.15</b>	<b>\$3,405,920.00</b>	<b>\$3,482,102.21</b>	<b>\$3,560,142.38</b>
Non-program labour costs	\$195,464.80	\$198,621.46	\$201,829.09	\$205,088.53	\$208,400.61
Utilities costs	\$38,710.82	\$39,335.98	\$39,971.23	\$40,616.75	\$41,272.69
<b>Total Operational Variable Costs</b>	<b>\$234,175.62</b>	<b>\$237,957.44</b>	<b>\$241,800.33</b>	<b>\$245,705.28</b>	<b>\$249,673.30</b>
<b>Programming costs</b>	<b>\$21,488.67</b>	<b>\$21,835.70</b>	<b>\$22,188.34</b>	<b>\$22,546.67</b>	<b>\$22,910.78</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$4,058,870.26</b>	<b>\$3,591,344.29</b>	<b>\$3,669,908.66</b>	<b>\$3,750,354.16</b>	<b>\$3,832,726.46</b>

## Revenue Estimates

The OSA's preliminary estimates for annual skateboard-specific revenues accrued by the indoor action sports facility vary between CAD 150,000 to 190,000 in the first year, with the potential to reach CAD 200,000 by year 5, as shown in the table below.

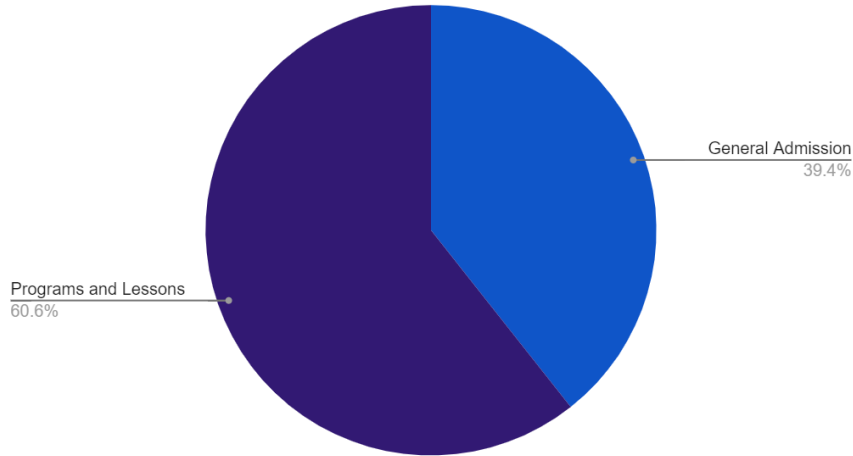
Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Estimated annual skateboard-specific revenues (2024 CAD)</b>	150k-190k	155k-190k	160k-195k	165k-200k	165k-200k

Our skateboard-specific revenue estimates can be broken down further to general admission revenues (e.g., revenues generated from drop-in or open sessions) and programming revenues (e.g., summer programs as well as individual and group lessons).

Our estimates suggest that programming and lessons would make up the largest proportion of the operational revenue, mainly due to relatively higher prices charged per hour. This conclusion is based on independent research and discussions with other action sports facilities operating in Canada.



### Revenues by Revenue Stream (Year 1)



The following table reports our estimated price charged per hour, along with the price charged per person, by admission type. Estimated prices charged are based on the average of price data reported by other indoor action sports facilities operating in Canada, including the McNabb Indoor Skatepark that previously operated in Ottawa.

Admission Type	Price Charged	
	Per Hour	Per Person
General Admission	\$3.45	\$5.17
Camps and Programs	\$9.99	\$349.58
Individual Lessons	\$54.00	\$54.00
Group Lessons	\$19.95	\$19.95

Revenue estimates are also a function of estimated attendance, which we have based primarily on attendance data from the Aberdeen and McNabb initiatives, and corroborated through discussions with other indoor action sports facilities in Canada. The section on [Estimated Demand For An Indoor Action Sports Facility](#) discusses the assumptions underpinning the estimated attendance numbers in more detail.

We have considered two other common sources of income for an indoor action sports park; corporate sponsorships and public grants (e.g., government funding).

After discussions with other indoor action sports facilities, our understanding is that corporate sponsorship is often a relatively under-utilized income stream. As a result, we have excluded all corporate sponsorship revenues within our preliminary baseline estimates.

Another common theme that appeared in discussions with action sports facilities operating in Canada was that there is funding available by way of public grants or government subsidies at the federal, provincial, and municipal level. For a more comprehensive review of external funding opportunities, see the section on [External Funding Opportunities for an Indoor Action Sports Facility](#). Nonetheless, public grants are often inconsistent from year to year. Therefore, in order to ensure that our preliminary baseline revenue estimates are conservative, we have also chosen to exclude revenues from public grants or government subsidies.

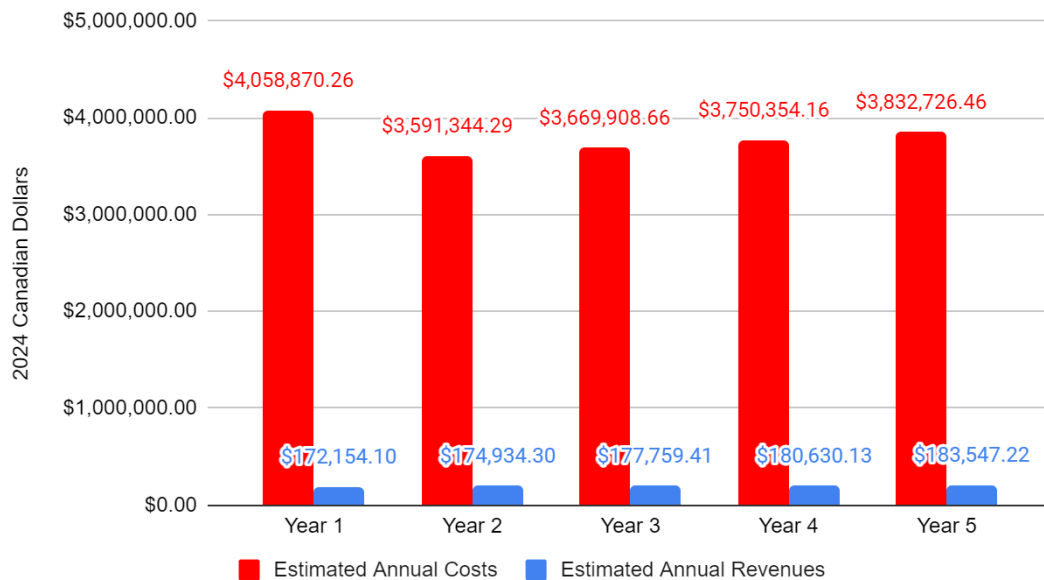
The following table reports our preliminary baseline skateboard-specific revenue estimates for a 15,000 square foot indoor action sports facility in Ottawa, by income stream:

Income Stream	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
General admission revenues	\$67,746.46	\$68,840.53	\$69,952.27	\$71,081.97	\$72,229.91
Program revenues	\$104,407.64	\$106,093.77	\$107,807.13	\$109,548.16	\$111,317.31
Corporate sponsorship income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Government subsidy income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$172,154.10</b>	<b>\$174,934.30</b>	<b>\$177,759.41</b>	<b>\$180,630.13</b>	<b>\$183,547.22</b>

## Profitability Estimates

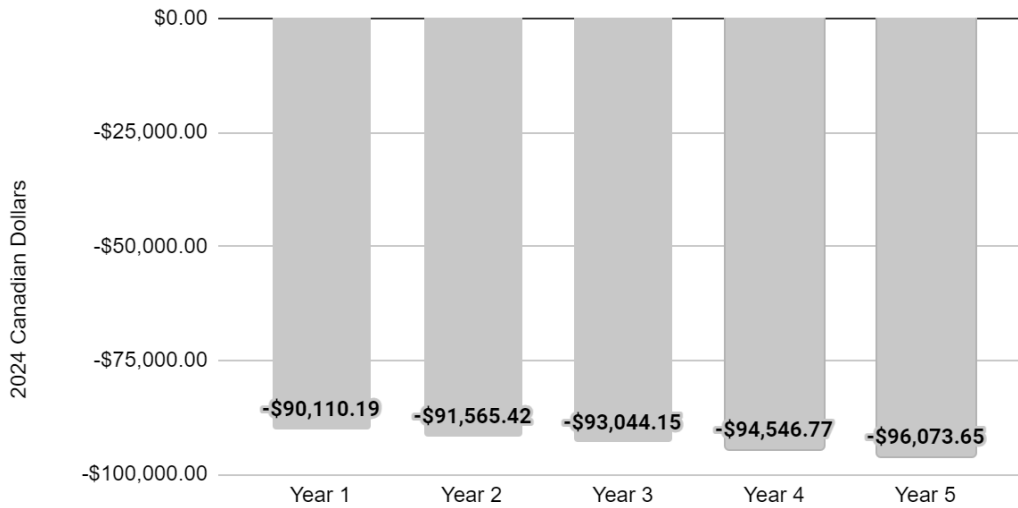
Our preliminary baseline estimates suggest that the skateboard-specific operational revenues would not be able to cover the high start-up costs along with the operational fixed costs (which include rent, property taxes, and facility maintenance costs). This leads to a net loss between CAD 3.5-4 million each year for the first five years of operations, as shown in the following figure.

### Estimated Annual Costs and Revenue Estimates by Year



However, when assessing the operational profitability of the indoor action sports facility excluding the start-up costs, rental costs, property taxes, and facility maintenance, mimicking a situation in which the indoor action sports facility is developed as part of a new or addition to an existing recreation facility located in the City of Ottawa, the skateboard-specific revenues are estimated to nearly cover the other operational costs (which include labour, programming, utilities, insurance, and other operational fixed costs such as advertising, legal, and banking fees). Our preliminary baseline estimates suggest a 15,000 square foot action sports facility would generate a loss between CAD 90,000 and CAD 100,000 each year for the first five years, as shown in the figure below.

### Operational Profitability (Excluding Start-Up Costs, Rent, Property Taxes & Maintenance)



Although an estimate of negative profitability is not promising in a traditional business sense, we believe that the results presented still represent a viable opportunity for the City of Ottawa for two reasons.

The first reason is that the net loss of CAD 3.5-4 million annually is a very small addition to the City's budgeted CAD 79 million in expenditures on community recreation and cultural programs for 2024, as reported on page 95 of the City of Ottawa (2023).

The second reason is that, when comparing our preliminary baseline estimate of the revenue per dollar spent for an indoor action sports facility under Development Scenario 1 (not including rent, property taxes, or property maintenance) to the 2024 budgeted revenue per dollar spent of the City of Ottawa's community recreation and cultural programs, the return is greater for the indoor action sports facility in all years except year 1 (due to the additional start-up costs).

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Operational Costs (Excluding Rent, Property Taxes & Maintenance)	\$806,518.11	\$266,499.72	\$270,803.56	\$275,176.90	\$279,620.87
Operational Revenues	\$172,154.10	\$174,934.30	\$177,759.41	\$180,630.13	\$183,547.22
Operational Revenue per Dollar Spent (Excluding Rent, Property Taxes & Maintenance)	\$0.21	\$0.66	\$0.66	\$0.66	\$0.66

2023 Budgeted Revenue per Dollar Spent of the City of Ottawa's Community Recreation and Cultural Programs	\$0.38	\$0.38	\$0.38	\$0.38	\$0.38
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-\$0.16</b>	<b>\$0.28</b>	<b>\$0.28</b>	<b>\$0.28</b>	<b>\$0.28</b>

Additionally, we believe that these profitability estimates are conservative for three main reasons:

1. Our preliminary baseline estimates do not include any income from sources outside of attendance. We do not assume that any income would flow into the facility from external sources such as corporate sponsorship or government/third-party grants, though this may be possible.
2. Our preliminary estimates are based on historical attendance data from facilities with limited schedules. Both general admission and summer programming attendance numbers are based on data from the Aberdeen indoor skatepark program and the McNabb summer indoor skateboard park program. In the case of both these programs, the indoor skateboard park did not run year-round, and in the case of Aberdeen, was only open on certain weeknights for a few hours at a time. It may be the case that additional timeslots will result in additional induced demand. However, given that we do not have concrete evidence to support this claim, we have chosen to utilize historical data for our estimates.
3. Modular obstacles can be moved/stored during slower periods, opening the space up for other revenue generating activities. By developing obstacles that are able to be moved into storage, there is potential to utilize the space for other action sports (e.g., roller derby) as well as non-action sports (e.g., futsal or pickleball). Multi-use space could generate additional attendance during traditionally slower periods for action sports parks (e.g., weekday mornings), increasing revenues.

In conclusion, our preliminary baseline estimates suggest that, if privately run, an indoor action sports facility is empirically unlikely to sustain itself. This is especially the case in Ottawa's current high rental rate environment, which constitutes a substantial barrier to profitability. We also acknowledge that our estimates are preliminary and based on a multitude of simplifying assumptions. Notwithstanding, an indoor action sports facility's potential for financial sustainability increases drastically if it is operated on municipally owned property (i.e., when rent, property taxes, and facility maintenance are covered). Our financial model provides well-supported and carefully calculated evidence to suggest that the City of Ottawa adequately consider the development of a permanent indoor action sports facility for the vibrant and growing action sports community within the National Capital Region.

# Estimated Demand For An Indoor Action Sports Facility

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Estimating demand without solid data for any business is challenging. Relevant to our preliminary financial estimates is the issue of pricing dynamics as they relate to the public use of indoor spaces. Determining supply and demand is especially tricky, because both the indoor space at McNabb and Aberdeen were below market pricing and free to the public, respectively. The shift from free sessions to a paid model introduces uncertainties regarding its impact on participation rates. Striking a balance between affordability and operational viability is crucial for the success of the facility.

The psychology of free services is a crucial consideration, as research consistently highlights the influence of complimentary offerings on consumer behaviour. The transition to a paid model necessitates a keen understanding of how this shift might affect attendance figures, as perceptions of value and willingness to participate can be influenced by a change from free to paid services.

*“An indoor skatepark represents a vibrant haven for my daughter's growth and self-expression. It's a space where she can continue to develop her skills, push boundaries, and build confidence on her board. Beyond the thrill of tricks and techniques, it's a community that nurtures her passion, connecting her with inspiring role models and like-minded peers. With an indoor skatepark, I envision my daughter flourishing amidst a supportive network, guided by experienced mentors who embody resilience, creativity, and perseverance. This sanctuary would provide a sheltered environment for her to take risks, learn from setbacks, and celebrate triumphs, ultimately shaping her into a fearless, compassionate, and empowered individual.”* **Virgilia Partridge**<sup>29</sup>

The competitive landscape also contributes to the complexities of estimating demand. Awareness of other recreational options in the vicinity, coupled with an understanding of their pricing structures, is essential. The demand for the indoor facility may be influenced by factors such as the quality of competing facilities and their pricing strategies.

Seasonal variations pose another challenge, especially for an indoor action sports facility. Weather conditions and seasonal preferences can significantly impact attendance patterns,

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<sup>29</sup> Ottawa Skateboard Association, Indoor Park Survey (Appendix)

necessitating careful consideration and anticipation of these fluctuations for effective resource allocation and operational planning. Unfortunately, we are not aware of any public year-long data available for analysis.

In conclusion, estimating demand requires a multifaceted approach with careful attention to a multitude of socioeconomic factors to ensure that the indoor space remains responsive to the interplay of community preferences and competitive dynamics.

In assessing potential demand for an indoor action sports facility, we rely on two primary data points: i) two years of attendance figures from the Aberdeen initiative (2022 and 2023), and ii) three months of attendance figures from the McNabb initiative (June, July and August of 2011). These figures serve as anchors for our estimates, but several challenges and considerations need to be acknowledged when interpreting and extrapolating from this data.

## Aberdeen Numbers

The Aberdeen figures present challenges due to their limited scope and nature. The sessions occurred only two nights per week and never on weekends, introducing bias as demand likely varies depending on which days sessions are offered. It is plausible to assume that the facility may experience higher usage on weekends. Further, the skateboard-specific and otherwise non-inclusive nature of the sessions might not accurately reflect the broader demand of an indoor action sports facility. Additionally, the sessions at Aberdeen were free, a factor that research indicates can influence the psychology of attendance, possibly skewing the figures upwards (Higgerson et al., 2018).

Summary of challenges with Aberdeen Numbers:

- **Possibly Higher participation:** The figures could be higher if the facility were open more days per week, as demand may be spread across a broader timeframe.
- **Bias Due to Free Sessions:** The cost-free Aberdeen sessions might artificially inflate attendance figures, as people tend to respond differently to free services.
- **Bias Due to Non-inclusivity:** Conversely, the non-inclusive nature of the sessions might underestimate demand, as additional programs (e.g., collaboration with local schoolboards or summer camps) could attract more participants.
- **Net Neutral Impact:** The concentration of demand on two specific nights could result in a net neutral impact, with users reallocating their attendance on other days.

For estimates regarding general admission, the Aberdeen numbers provide a baseline estimate, but caution is warranted due to the outlined biases. The bare minimum expectation can be considered, with the possibility that demand for a paid, more inclusive facility could be 2 to 3 times higher, based on observed participation rates in similar private settings. The following table reports attendance metrics for Aberdeen between 2022 and 2023.

## 2022

Metric	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Total Admissions	n/a	235	731	83
Number of Sessions	n/a	7	17	6
Average Admissions Per Session	n/a	34	43	13

## 2023

Metric	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Total Admissions	1,104	1,511	1,307	n/a
Number of Sessions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Average Admissions Per Session	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

## McNabb Indoor Facility Numbers

The figures from McNabb offer a representation of attendance during summer months (i.e. June, July, and August). However, the challenge lies in the facility being heavily subsidized and offering low-cost sessions. If we adjust for market rates, there might be a portion of the user group that would not have attended. Nevertheless, considering the presence of children who tend to utilize indoor facilities during summer, the McNabb numbers are used as a fair representation of potential demand in spring and summer months.

Month	General Admission Attendance
May	1039
June	1180
July	743
August	541



### Summary of challenges with McNabb numbers:

- **Community Growth Factor:** Recognizing that the action sports community in Ottawa has likely grown since the McNabb initiative, we anticipate a relative increase in demand. However, for the purpose of this forecast, we maintain the McNabb figures as a baseline.
- **Subsidized Operation:** The McNabb facility operating under heavy subsidies and offering low-cost sessions poses a challenge when estimating demand at market rates.
- **Potential Non-Attendance at Market Rates:** Adjusting for market rates may indicate that a portion of the user group would not have attended if not for the low cost, especially during the summer months.

Both the Aberdeen and McNabb numbers were used to develop our estimates of general admission attendance. For the winter months (October to March), where demand is assumed to be heightened due to the inability to participate in many action sports outdoors, we rely on the average of the 2023 Aberdeen attendance numbers. For all other months we rely on average attendance numbers from McNabb.

Due to issues with data availability, attendance estimates for camps, programs, and lessons are developed primarily from insights gathered during discussions with other indoor skateboard parks across the country. These estimates should be refined further prior to the development of an indoor action sports facility to more accurately capture potential demand for more focused programs and sessions, as well as account for the potential additional demand from other non-skateboard action sports that may be accessing the facility.

The following table reports the estimated monthly attendance numbers (by attendance type) used to develop our estimates for skateboard-specific revenues generated by an indoor action sports facility in Ottawa:

[illegible]

Estimated monthly attendance - Lessons (Group)	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
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Moving forward, a dynamic and adaptive approach is crucial. Continuous monitoring, feedback, and flexibility will ensure the indoor park aligns with evolving community needs and economic dynamics. By combining quantitative and qualitative insights, the potential to create a recreational space that resonates with the diverse audience of action-sports enthusiasts and others alike.

*“Skateboarding and similar sports are the best physical and creative outlet for folks that don’t connect with traditional team sports like hockey. It’s unique in that there are no rules and no referees, just people of all backgrounds and skill levels learning with each other and trying new things.*

*I’m a new resident in Ottawa and love it! It feels like a hidden gem and my mid-30’s friends from Toronto and Montreal are a bit jealous, we just need a few more big cities amenities and an indoor skatepark would be a huge success”. **Christopher Ray**<sup>30</sup>*

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<sup>30</sup> Ottawa Skateboard Association, Indoor Park Survey (Appendix)

## Further Reading

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Rawal, Smith, Quach et Al. 2020 “Physical Activity among Adults with Low Socioeconomic Status Living in Industrialized Countries: A Meta-Ethnographic Approach to Understanding Socioecological Complexities”. Journal of Environmental Public Health.

Casper, Bocarro, Kanters and Floyd 2016. ““Just Let Me Play!” – Understanding Constraints That Limit Adolescent Sport Participation” Human Kinetics Journals.

Taylor and Khan. 2011. "Skate-Park Builds, Teenaphobia and the Adolescent Need for Hang-Out Spaces: The Social Utility and Functionality of Urban Skate Parks" Journal of Urban Design

Bradley, 2010. "Skate Parks as a Context for Adolescent Development" Journal of Adolescent Research.

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Lisa, Carter, and Martin, 2014. "Dispelling Stereotypes... Skate Parks as a Setting for Pro-Social Behavior among Young People" Current Urban Studies.

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<https://ottawaskateboard.ca/posts/audit-of-ottawa-skateboard-parks/>

# Appendix

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## **Indoor Skatepark Pitch website – Ottawa Skateboard Association:**

<https://ottawa-indoor-park.notion.site/Indoor-park-push-2024-70d48d10ebc5439b99272b47636fceb>

## **Skateboard Infrastructure Strategy – Ottawa Skateboarding Association:**

<https://ottawaskateboard.ca/posts/osa-skateboard-infrastructure-strategy/>

## **Audit of Ottawa Skateboard Parks – Ottawa Skateboarding Association:**

<https://ottawaskateboard.ca/posts/audit-of-ottawa-skateboard-parks/>

## **Aberdeen Pavillion Indoor Program – Success Story:**

<https://ottawaskateboard.ca/stories/lansdowne-indoor-skateboard-sessions/>

## **Support for an Indoor Park – Video Testimonials:**

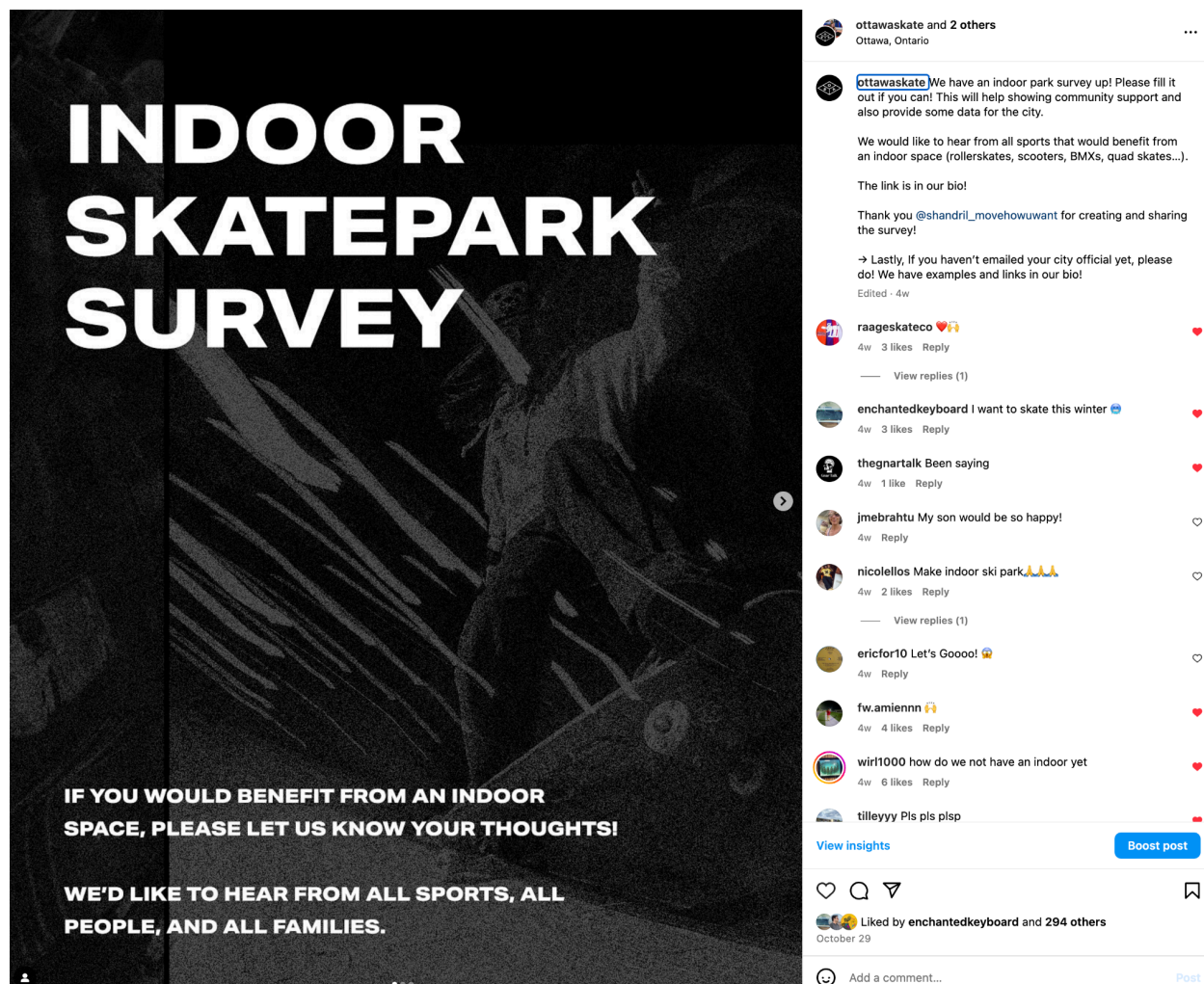
- Short videos from Instagram:
  - <https://www.instagram.com/ottawaskate/reel/DAJedV1RUF9/>
  - <https://www.instagram.com/p/DAbblweRWIH/>
  - [https://www.instagram.com/ottawalongboardcommunity/reel/C\\_yF-fHxAPH/](https://www.instagram.com/ottawalongboardcommunity/reel/C_yF-fHxAPH/)
  - [https://www.instagram.com/ottawalongboardcommunity/reel/C\\_iNsyXxNhB/](https://www.instagram.com/ottawalongboardcommunity/reel/C_iNsyXxNhB/)
  - [https://www.instagram.com/ottawalongboardcommunity/reel/C\\_T3Z2pxKoa/](https://www.instagram.com/ottawalongboardcommunity/reel/C_T3Z2pxKoa/)
- Complete Testimonial Video on YouTube:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0sWQhRuWcc>

## Survey Report: Indoor Park

With the help of Shandril Mintenko (former general manager at The Yard), we conducted an online survey campaign between October 29 and November 22, 2024, to understand some of the needs and preferences of the wheel-sports community.

We got 161 responses across wheel-based sports communities (skateboarding, roller skating, BMX, mountain biking, scooter, etc.).

This survey should be used for reference purposes only, as we still need more respondents from other communities and people not reached by our social media efforts to reduce biases.



Instagram post as part of the communication efforts of this survey.

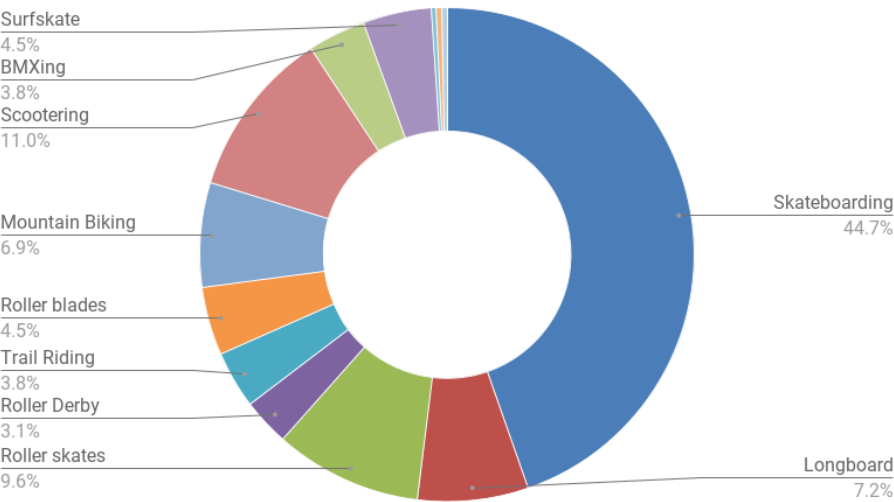
# Survey summary

Date of the survey: October 29 to November 22, 2024 | Number of respondents: 161

## Wide range of wheel sports

There's a wide range of wheel sports that will benefit from an indoor park: BMX, Scooter, Mountain biking, Roller Blades, Roller Skates, Roller Derby, Skateboarding, Longboarding, etc.

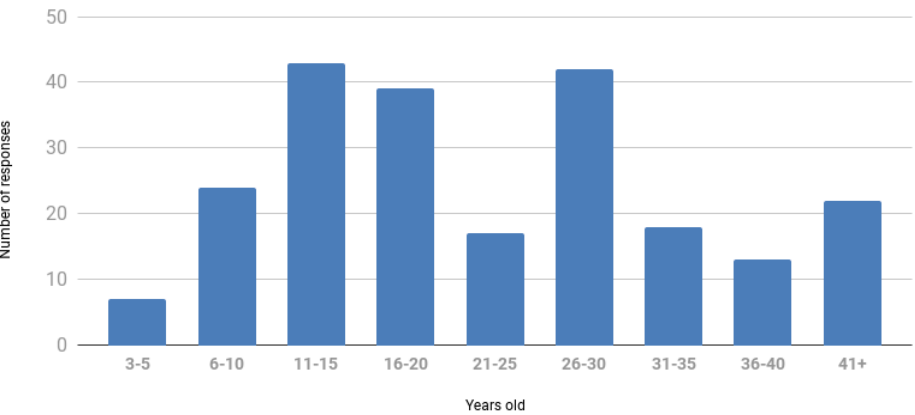
What type of roller sport do you or your family participate in?



## All-ages activity

It's an all-ages activity, mostly with athletes from 11 to 40 years old. Ages 11-20 are the most common (51% of answers) but ages 21-35 are close behind (47.8% of answers).

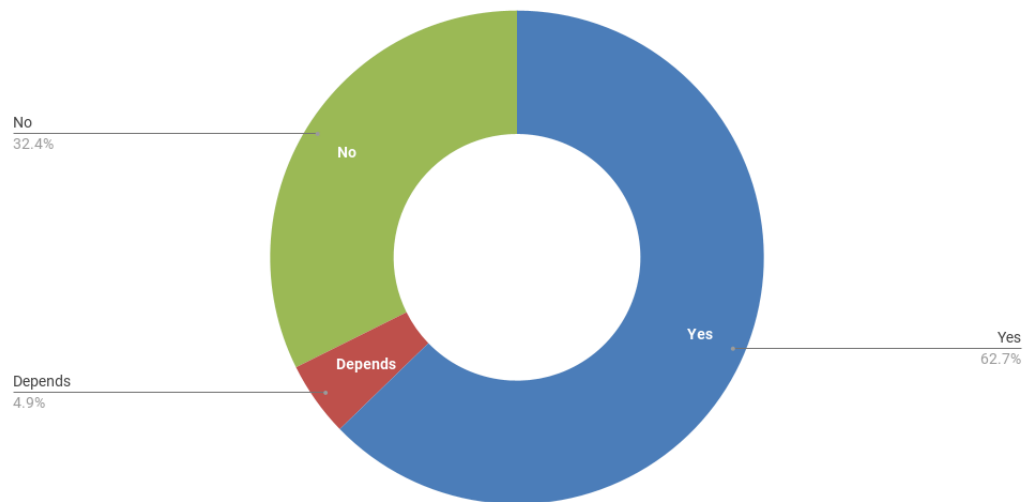
How old are the people that will utilize an indoor skatepark?



## Lessons and camps

Most people will register themselves or their kids for lessons and camps in an indoor space.

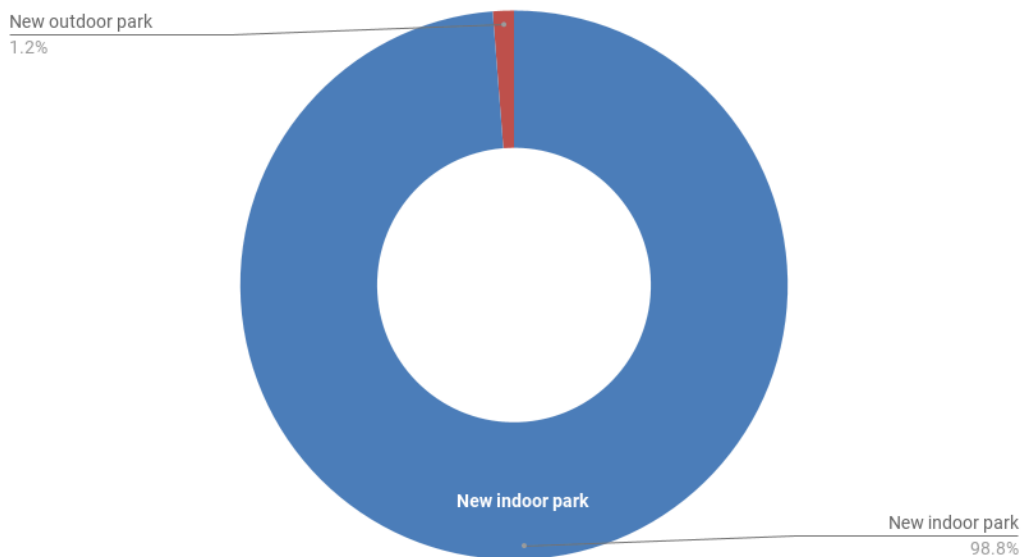
Would you register yourself or your children for riding lessons, camps, or PD days at an indoor facility?



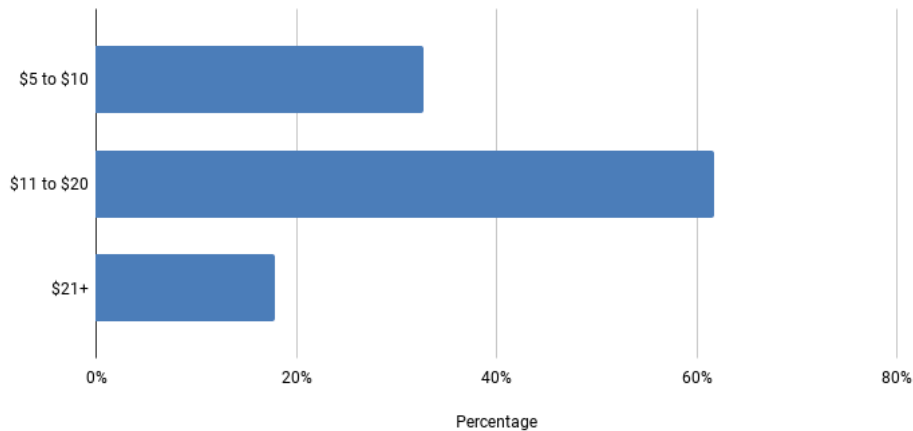
## Indoor vs Outdoor parks and ticket cost

The overwhelming majority of respondents would like an indoor skate park over an outdoor park. They are willing to pay from \$5 to \$20 for a day pass and up to \$100 for a monthly pass.

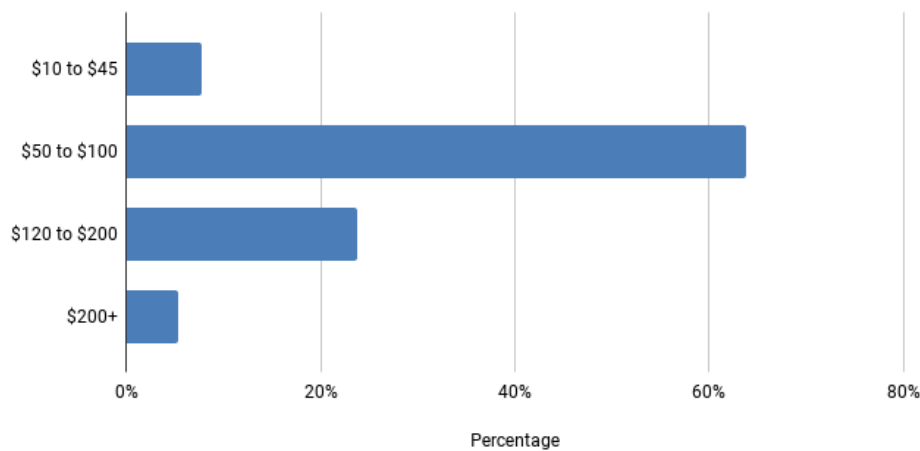
If you were given the choice what type of park would you vote for?



How much would you be willing to pay for a day pass?



How much would you be willing to pay for a monthly pass?



## Survey summary: How would an indoor skatepark benefit the city of Ottawa?

We asked an open-ended question. This is the summary of the replies:

### Benefits of an indoor skatepark

- Year-round, all-weather safe and accessible space for wheel sports of all levels.
- Supports local talent and potential Olympians.
- An opportunity for recreational activity beyond traditional sports like hockey.



- Fosters community engagement, social connections, physical activities and artistic expression.
- Acts as a community hub for events and camps.
- Promotes resiliency, independence, camaraderie, and fitness for all ages.
- Creates a welcoming, inclusive, and safe space for diverse groups and skill levels.
- Offers an escape and positive energy outlet.

### **Winter skateboarding challenges**

- Skaters resort to parking garages or travelling to Montréal for indoor parks.
- There's a desire for a safer and more controlled environment for skateboarding. Concerns about safety and encounters with security or police in current covered spots (parking garages, tunnels, etc.).

### **Community and inclusivity**

- Families bond over skateboarding, finding it a valuable activity year-round.
- Encourages socialization, friendships, and community building.
- Indoor skateparks create a sense of belonging and pride in the community.
- Supports child's skill development and confidence building.

### **Physical and mental health benefits**

- Supports an active lifestyle and mental wellness year-round. Space for exercise, stress relief, and skill improvement.
- It offers a space for individuals to connect, learn new skills, and combat seasonal depression in a controlled environment.

### **City development and tourism**

- Enhances Ottawa's sports offerings and promotes a healthy, active city.
- Offer a space for families to engage in physical activities together.
- The National Capital Region can become a hub to wheel-sports.
- Boosts community development and local engagement.
- Attracts visitors, creates volunteering opportunities, and stimulates local businesses depending on the location. If you build it, they will come.

## Survey summary: Quotes

Collection of answers from the open questions *1. How would an indoor skatepark benefit the city of Ottawa?* and *2. What would an indoor skatepark mean to you or your family on a personal level?*. They authorized their name to be published.

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“It is critical for the vast majority of children and families who don't have the \$, time, or affinity for hockey, especially for young girls and at risk groups. It is an accessible and engaging way to create community, encourage activity and exercise, and most important, confidence.

Personally, when indoor skateparks existed we were there consistently because it gave our daughter an athletic outlet that exponentially increased her confidence, and our Autistic son a form of physical therapy that we have yet to match. Skateparks were critical to our family's growth and it has been incredibly sad since they stopped.” **Charles Segal**

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“We used to have an absolute blast at The Yard. It was a place where my kids felt comfortable and allowed them to build confidence in their physical abilities. My kids hadn't taken to other sports, so the indoor skatepark allowed them a year-round place to practice, meet friends, and push themselves to achieve something challenging.

With The Yard closed this winter, I'm worried my kids will lose their passion for this one physical activity that really motivates them. (Honestly, we all cried when we heard The Yard was closing.)

If I could share one anecdote, it would be the huge, proud smile on the face of my son when he would achieve something at The Yard. He always felt sort of left out of sports with his friends and the indoor skatepark allowed him to finally be proud of his physical accomplishments. I can't tell you how nice it felt to see my son and daughter push themselves and build resilience while building their skills in a safe and warm environment.” **Blayne Beacham**

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“Everything! Since I'm a single mom, it's hard to do activities with little to no money and being able to skateboard indoors made it easy that our family was never turned away due to lack of funds.

It's a really tough conversation to have with your kid when you can't do something because you don't have the money. I tell ourselves often this is just temporary and I really believe it is but since losing my small business and house to the pandy, having to claim bankruptcy and

essentially losing my job because of the stress of it all, the indoor skatepark is a place where you can feel other things than all the stress and pain you're going through." **Sara Anne Mailhot**

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"For me, it would mean being recognized by my city after years of feeling left out. It's great that mainstream sports get a lot of resources but there are youth out there looking for a community that isn't there for them year round. Team sports are a great way to build interpersonal skills and develop positive habits by that is taken away for part of the year for those who gravitate to alternative sports." **Jared Lebel**

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"Provide us with a space like we had out in the maritimes (Riverview Skatepark and Youth Center). Giving a welcoming location that our whole family loved to go to and engage with the community was large. Through lessons, camps, BBQ's and family friendly arts activities etc.

Personally, it has helped my child overcome confidence problems and has done wonders for family mental and physical health.

Unfortunately here in Ottawa with the pavilion not being an option over the winter there is now no location for us to go." **Ryan Thorburn**

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"An indoor skatepark represents a vibrant haven for my daughter's growth and self-expression. It's a space where she can continue to develop her skills, push boundaries, and build confidence on her board. Beyond the thrill of tricks and techniques, it's a community that nurtures her passion, connecting her with inspiring role models and like-minded peers. With an indoor skatepark, I envision my daughter flourishing amidst a supportive network, guided by experienced mentors who embody resilience, creativity, and perseverance. This sanctuary would provide a sheltered environment for her to take risks, learn from setbacks, and celebrate triumphs, ultimately shaping her into a fearless, compassionate, and empowered individual."

**Virgilia Partridge**

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"Allows people who participate in these sports a space to use over the winter.

Helps these individuals with mental health over the harder times of the year when they may not be able to participate in their sport of choice

Skateboarding and scootering is a lower cost sport that people with lower income families can still enjoy

Skateboarding and scootering is great for children who deal with neurodivergence. These sports help these kids focus, get the sensory input they need and help with proprioception

For more competitive children, Ottawa has no indoor space for children who may have higher goals in a sport they love. Montreal and Toronto are both too far enough away to be easily accessible. Both these cities have spaces where these kids can train and learn to compete at higher levels. Ottawa has some talented young athletes that in the coming years will struggle to keep their skills over the winter months with a lack of indoor skateboarding spaces.” **Rebecca Barrett**

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“Skateboarding and similar sports are the best physical and creative outlet for folks that don’t connect with traditional team sports like hockey. It’s unique in that there are no rules and no referees, just people of all backgrounds and skill levels learning with each other and trying new things.

I’m a new resident in Ottawa and love it! It feels like a hidden gem and my mid-30’s friends from Toronto and Montreal are a bit jealous, we just need a few more big cities amenities and an indoor skatepark would be a huge success”. **Christopher Ray**

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“My wife and I started skating with our daughter after sending her to summer skate camp at The Yard. It has been a real bonding activity for our family. We’ve used some of the outdoor parks, however find it difficult in the wet/winter months. We sometimes travel to TAZ in Montreal, but time and budget doesn’t always allow for this. Having an indoor park would allow us to skate together as a family year round. Skateboarding has also been a great way to stay active because generally we’re not gym/sporty people. Skateboarding is a fun activity that doesn’t feel like exercise so it’s been easy for my wife and I to motivate ourselves. This summer we went to the outdoor parks almost everyday and we are worried with fall/winter that our activity levels will drop off because we have nowhere to go. I truly hope Ottawa considers building an indoor park so our family can pursue our passion for skateboarding year round.” **Pippa Rogers**

# Letters of Support

Collection of letters of support from private businesses, NGOs, members of Provincial Parliament, and community centres.

## Somerset Street Chinatown BIA

Subject: Letter of Support: Advocacy for Establishing an Indoor Park in Ottawa

To the City of Ottawa,

As Somerset Street Chinatown BIA, a committed stakeholder and advocate for diverse recreation opportunities for our city, we are writing to underscore the critical importance of addressing the pressing need for an indoor park facility in our city's recreational landscape.

For the past two decades, Ottawa has grappled with providing adequate resources to meet the diverse needs of rollerbladers, roller derby enthusiasts, skateboarders, and bikers. The limitations of private parks in providing sustainable facilities have accentuated the necessity for public intervention to bridge this gap effectively.

We recognize the impact that action sports have on the engagement and well-being of our city's youth. The successes of projects such as Aberdeen and McNabb indoor skatepark facilities serve as compelling evidence of the positive outcomes achievable through collaborative endeavors with the action sports community.

By championing this initiative, the city can significantly contribute to fostering a vibrant and inclusive recreational environment for our residents. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you,

Kind regards.  
Yukang

Lucille Collard, MPP



## Lucille Collard, MPP / Députée

Ottawa-Vanier

Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the initiatives being brought forth by Ottawa Skateboard Association (OSA), a passionate organization composed of skaters and skate enthusiasts.

The city has faced a 30-year systemic failure in adequately supporting skateboarders with respect to indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure. Recognizing the gaps in existing facilities and the rising demand for inclusive recreational spaces, the OSA seeks to work collaboratively with the city to create a vibrant skateboarding community.

After reading their proposal, which addresses both short term and long-term needs for this collaboration, I feel that the residents, especially our youth would benefit from the facilities needed to allow them to participate fully in this sport. The proposal not only ensures an inclusive space, but also an accessible space for all. Skateboard parks, specifically, offer a myriad of benefits, ranging from health advantages and tourism opportunities to fostering mentorship, creating social spaces for youth, making fiscally conservative investments, and promoting an inclusive activity accessible to all.

In essence, the proposed indoor skateboard parks are not just recreational additions but strategic assets aligning comprehensively with the City of Ottawa's master plan. Through robust public consultations and strategic recommendations, these indoor parks emerge as catalysts for creating healthier, more inclusive, and vibrant communities, woven seamlessly into the fabric of Ottawa's progressive urban vision.

**Constituency Office / Bureau de circonscription** 237, ch. Montreal Rd., Vanier, ON K1L 6C7

Tel / Tél. 613-744-4484 | Fax / Téléc. 613-744-0889 | Email / Courriel

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[www.lucillecollard.onmpp.ca](http://www.lucillecollard.onmpp.ca)



## Lucille Collard, MPP / Députée

Ottawa-Vanier

I hope to see a seamless collaboration with all levels of government on a project that would not only be beneficial for my community, but for the entire city.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Collard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lucille Collard

Member of Provincial Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier

**Constituency Office / Bureau de circonscription** 237, ch. Montreal Rd., Vanier, ON K1L 6C7

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# Glebe Neighbourhood Activities Group



Glebe Neighbourhood Activities Group

## Letter of Support - Indoor Park Ottawa

### To Whom It May Concern,

As the Executive Director of the Glebe Neighbourhood Activities Group (GNAG), I am deeply committed to fostering inclusive spaces for youth that allow for diverse programming and recreational activities.

Having accessible space for recreational sports is crucial in building a strong sense of community and encouraging active lifestyles. Due to space limitations, GNAG currently does not offer programs such as rollerblading, derby, or skateboarding. However, we fully recognize the positive impact these activities have on the youth of our city.

On a personal note, as a resident living near McNabb Park, I am delighted to witness the constant use of the outdoor skate park. Seeing individuals engage in these activities daily brings a smile to my face and reinforces my belief in the power of recreation to bring people together.

I am a strong advocate for any hobby that encourages youth to step away from screens and engage in activities that promote skill development and social interaction. Public recreation spaces play a vital role in providing equitable access, fostering safety, and offering inclusive programming that unites communities.

I believe that this proposal would be a valuable addition to public recreation in our city, and I hope it will be given thoughtful consideration.

Thank you for your time and attention.

*Sarah Routliffe*

Sarah Routliffe  
GNAG Executive Director  
613-233-8713

175 Third Avenue Ottawa, ON, K1S 2C8  
info@gnag.ca 613-233-8713 GNAG.ca

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## Birling Skate Shop

**Subject: Letter of Support: Advocacy for an Indoor Skatepark in Ottawa**

To the City of Ottawa,

On behalf of Birling Skate Shop, a long-standing hub for Ottawa's skateboarding community, we are writing to express our strong support for the establishment of an indoor skatepark in Ottawa. This initiative would address a critical gap in accessible, year-round recreational spaces for skateboarders, BMX riders, rollerbladers, and other action sports enthusiasts.

For over two decades, Ottawa has struggled to provide adequate resources to sustain its vibrant action sports community. The reliance on private facilities has often proven unsustainable, leaving enthusiasts, particularly youth, without consistent opportunities to practice and connect during our long winters. Publicly accessible indoor facilities, such as those previously established at Aberdeen Pavilion and McNabb, have demonstrated the transformative impact these spaces can have on community engagement, youth development, and overall well-being.

At Birling, we witness firsthand how skateboarding fosters resilience, creativity, and community among participants. An indoor skatepark would build on this foundation by creating an inclusive space that accommodates people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Moreover, by collaborating with local action sports groups and businesses, the city has an opportunity to design a facility that meets the community's needs while promoting active lifestyles and social cohesion.

We urge the City of Ottawa to prioritize this project as a step toward fostering a more vibrant and inclusive recreational environment for our residents. Birling Skate Shop is ready to contribute its expertise and resources to ensure the success of this initiative.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,  
Kyle Robertson, Owner  
Birling Skate Shop

## Platform Skateboard Distribution

Subject: Letter of Support: Advocacy for Establishing an Indoor Park in Ottawa

To the City of Ottawa,

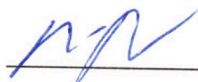
My Name is Dennis Regan and am the owner Of Platform Skateboard Distribution. We are support diverse recreation opportunities for Ottawa and all of Canada, we are writing to underscore the critical importance of addressing the need for an indoor skateboard park in Ottawa.

For the past two decades, Ottawa has grappled with providing adequate resources to meet the diverse needs of rollerbladers, roller derby enthusiasts, skateboarders, and bikers. The limitations of private parks in providing sustainable facilities have accentuated the necessity for public intervention to bridge this gap effectively.

We recognize the impact that action sports have on the engagement and well-being of our city's youth. The successes of projects such as Aberdeen and McNabb indoor skatepark facilities serve as compelling evidence of the positive outcomes achievable through collaborative endeavors with the action sports community.

By championing this initiative, the city can significantly contribute to fostering a vibrant and inclusive recreational environment for our residents. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,



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Dennis Regan