

Charlottesville Skate Park

Shedding Light on the Communities of Charlottesville and Albemarle County

Ever since its official opening in April of 2019, Charlottesville Skate Park has become a beacon within the community of Charlottesville. This park is a place that transcends all cultural and societal barriers. Folks of any age, race, gender, socio-economic level and skill level can visit, enjoy and feel welcome. It is for this reason that both the community and the City are working jointly to raise funds for one of the final features for this park, its lighting.

The lighting was originally included in the plans for the construction of the park. As is common with such large-scale construction projects, budget concessions had to be made in order to complete construction. Since the park was completed during the spring of 2019, both the Charlottesville Skate Park Advisory Committee and the City of Charlottesville have agreed that the lighting could be postponed, and additional funds could be acquired at a later date.

Since that time, priorities and timelines have shifted, but both the Charlottesville Skate Park Advisory Committee, and Charlottesville Parks & Recreation have taken on the task of raising funds in order to complete this essential component of the park. The community feels an urgency to finish this piece, and we are reaching out to you in the hopes that you will see the significant contributions this park has made to the Charlottesville and Albemarle County areas.

Sincerely,
Charlottesville Skate Park Advisory Committee

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Introduction

Charlottesville's skaters have long understood the community strengthening potential of skateboarding. An accessible, well built, and well-maintained park has the unique ability to unite people with wildly disparate backgrounds and experiences. Over the past four decades, Charlottesville's skate community has been focused on the mission of bringing a world-class park to the city. The City's support in these efforts has been critically important at every step of the way. Now, with the new park operational, momentum is building to finish the first phase of the buildout, and to create plans to leverage Charlottesville's new park as a tool for strengthening our community. Funding from the Perry Foundation for completion of the park's lighting infrastructure will ensure that the park is utilized to its fullest extent, making it more accessible to more people for a greater amount of time. This funding will build on decades of community enthusiasm and momentum and will help strengthen future outreach projects and improvements.



Recipient Name
October 21, 2020
Page: 2

Importance of Lighting

We feel that proper lighting is not only convenient and expands the use of the facility but is also a very important safety factor. Keeping the skate park lit will ensure that the participants, many of whom are children, will have adequate visibility during open use hours and will also have lighting toward the twilight hours so that exiting the park area can be safely done.

Lighting will allow the park to be accessible for the largest and most diverse group of users for the greatest amount of time. It will benefit users who are unable to visit the skate park during daylight hours in winter because of school or work, as well as users in the hot summer who prefer to visit the skate park toward evening when temperatures are cooler. Lights will also allow for an expansion of family and community-oriented programs and events: e.g. evening skate clinics, family night activities, etc.

The lights are LED fixtures from MUSCO Lighting, chosen for their low-light pollution, energy use, heat emission, as well as their longevity. While less expensive lighting options exist, it has been shown that LED lights are 25% more efficient and last 50 times longer than other systems.

Role in the local Community

All major cities and towns have community areas and gathering places where all residents can go for events, classes - or in the case of a park, to simply enjoy the outdoors. Charlottesville and Albemarle are fortunate to have an abundance of both local parks as well as nature preserves and trails. While our community benefits from these existing structures, the Charlottesville Skate Park is unique in that it provides residents and outside visitors (who come from a wide range of distances and localities) an opportunity to meet and socialize in a way that is unlike any other park. It is a gathering place for parents watching over their children; a place where the older guard can mentor younger kids as they start exploring skateboarding, scootering, rollerblading or biking; and, at its core, simply a park where you can skate. We challenge you to find another park that offers such a unique experience.

We have heard often: “the park is our second home”, “oh, you can always find us here”, described as a “place where my child finally feels welcomed and accepted for who they are.” It is a place where one can go and not have to fit into a specific mold or expectation. There is a freedom that comes from being at the skate park that is simply not found anywhere else, and it is for these reasons we come to you asking for assistance. This park is important to the community at large and we have come together to do whatever we can to help our park. The City itself has seen an incredible amount of interest and support for Charlottesville Skate Park in the popularity of the classes it has been able to offer throughout this past year. Seven weeks of skate camps were offered both in the spring and summer (many were filled to capacity), and more are slated for this coming spring and summer. The City offers late afternoon and Saturday morning classes. There are parent-and-me classes to help newer skaters get started as well as the bonus of promoting quality family time in the outdoors. They have an Adaptive program for individuals with disabilities that has had a tremendous response. Skateboarding has been described as recreational therapy, as it not only promotes physical health and fitness, but also brain health. All these kids and adults are out there for hours at a time doing something that keeps them active and fit, but nobody notices because they are enjoying themselves too much.