

Municipal Maryland

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION of THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

May/June 2009



Award for Excellence

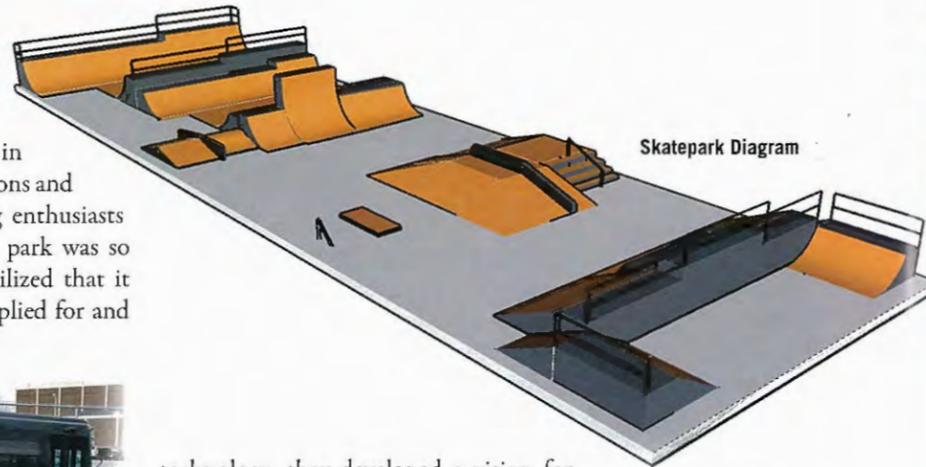
Large City

Westminster Skate Park

Kelley Martin, Information and Communication Specialist

It Takes a Skateboarding Community

The City of Westminster originally installed a skateboard park in May 1999, in response to requests from local organizations and businesses to relocate the skateboarding enthusiasts from streets and public property. The skateboard park was so popular with our skateboarders and so heavily utilized that it soon needed renovation. In 2007, Westminster applied for and



technology, they developed a vision for the park along with a Request for Proposal (RFP). This RFP was put out for bid in November and the response was good, with several companies submitting bids. Unfortunately, the lowest bid was \$400,000, way over the Program Open Space funding.

Nor to be deterred in their efforts to produce a first-class skateboard park for their children, the group approached the Carroll County Career and Technical Center with the idea of using the students in various programs to create the ramps. The group of parents was soon joined by an enthusiastic principal, five



Students from the wood working shop, fashion design class, metal and welding shop, and the welding class all helped build the new skate park.



Students enthusiastically embraced this project and since many of them are skateboarders they had a vested interest in the finished project.

teachers and 100 students in the effort to build the skate park envisioned in the RFP. Never to be underestimated, the Carroll County Career and Technical Center faculty and students embraced this project and all areas became involved:

- ❖ The wood working shop was responsible for the actual construction of the ramps and treatment of the wood.
- ❖ The fashion design class used the pattern provided from the White Fish Skate Company to transfer the design to manila board so that it could be used to replicate the ramps in other communities.
- ❖ The metal and welding shop created coping, transition plates and stamped handrail post supports as well as fabricated brackets.
- ❖ The welding class did the welding work.
- ❖ The communications department, in conjunction with the Community Media Center, religiously videotaped every aspect of the construction to produce a documentary film for our public cable channel and websites.

Using the Carroll County Career and Technical Center students was a stroke of genius because many of the students actually used the skateboard park and had a vested interest in the finished product. When the students found out they were going to be participating in the actual building of the park the following school year, their excitement was contagious. And soon after they returned to school in the fall, the finished ramps threatened to take over the entire parking area of the Carroll County Career and Technical Center before they could be moved to the park.

At the same time that the Carroll County Career and Technical Center students were constructing the

ramps, the City was busy preparing the existing skateboard park site. In November, the Street Department dismantled the old ramps and removed the blacktop. Eighty percent of the blacktop and 100% of the metal was able to be recycled by a local contractor. Two days before Thanksgiving, the new concrete slab was poured and in January the school system relocated the ramps from the Carroll County Career and Technical Center to the skateboard park location.

The ramps were permanently placed on the site in April and a Community Help Day in May put the finishing touches on the new park.

Unfortunately, during the construction phase of this project, one of the skateboarder students on the committee was involved in a fatal car accident. In honor of his contribution to the project, a memorial day will be held on June 20 featuring a skating tournament, autograph signing, demonstrations, and a memorial concert. A memorial garden will be planted on the site, featuring a bench dedicated to the student.

In addition to recycling the old asphalt surface and metal, other green features and equipment include:

- ❖ Double sealed lumber was used in the ramp construction to increase longevity.
- ❖ All lumber was purchased from FSC (Forest Sustainability Council) certified distributors.
- ❖ The surface of the ramps is Skatelite Pro made from FSC harvested wood; the surface is the most durable offered by Skatelite so it will not need to be replaced in the near future.
- ❖ The benches and trash recycle center are composed of recycled material.

Probably the most "green" aspect of this project, however, is the desire of the Carroll County Career and Technical Center to make available the drawings, the pattern and the video to any other community in Maryland that wants to develop or improve a skateboard park. If you are interested in pursuing this project, you may contact Ron Schroers (rschroers@westgov.com) to arrange for the use of the plans. ■



Westminister Public Works employees installed the skate park components in April.

received grant funding in the amount of \$130,000 from Program Open Space from the State of Maryland.

When the announcement of Open Space funding appeared in the newspaper, several local parents of skateboarders, and two parents who are themselves skateboarders, stepped forward and offered to help with the project. They spearheaded a two day weekend fact finding survey to determine what the skateboarders wanted to see in the new park. Over 75 skateboarders participated and gave input. Supplementing this local initiative, the group searched the internet to explore the latest innovations in skate parks. Using their skills in engineering, design, and computer