

Springville Skatepark

Springville, NY

SETTING



Rural

COST



\$400,000

SIZE



0.3 acres

OPEN SINCE

June
2022

GRANTEE

Local
non-profit

A skatepark for all ages to roll through

Project Overview

The Springville Skatepark project was a long-awaited reconstruction of a run-down “skateplex” located in what is now Heritage Park in Springville, a rural village in Western New York. The process was kickstarted by a committee of parents and kids who recognized the importance of teen spaces and championed skateboarding as a form of free play, even if the previous ‘skateplex’ did not do justice to the sport.

Before the reconstruction, skaters in Springville lacked a high-quality nearby skatepark that they could visit for free and level up their skills. The skatepark is one of many live community development efforts in Springville, including a mural program, a community theater, a community-owned arts center and cafe, and a play walk (also funded by Built to Play). The space offers an opportunity for physical activity for adults and kids alike, while also providing an important social space for teens in particular.



The fact that [young adult skaters] were involved in the design and that the design is really high quality for its size makes a big difference. They’re really into it.

SETH WOCHENSKY
Executive Director of Springville Center for the Arts, Board Member of Green Springville & Project Lead



↑ **Varying levels of difficulty**, including different sized features that appeal to beginner, intermediate, and advanced skaters alike.



↑ **Public restrooms** improve comfort and invite more people to use the space, and **the pavilion** is a community gathering space that doubles as a venue for skatepark spectating.



↑ The skatepark has been described as a “moat” for skaters with play on the inside. Equally important is the **active perimeter trail around the skatepark** that invites guardians and others to stay active as well.

Origin story

THE SPARK – IMPROVING AN EXISTING TEEN SPACE

The original “skateplex” consisted of a littered asphalt pad with 90s-era metal ramps. A committee of parents and young kids came together in an effort to secure funding for skatepark improvements so that Springville could have a safe space for skating, especially for teens.



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION – BALANCING PRIORITIES

Construction of the skatepark was the last piece in the east side of Heritage Park that completed the whole park area. Prioritizing between environmental design features and skatepark features introduced a budgeting challenge - project leadership wanted a geothermal feature to heat the surface and extend the skating season, but funding was insufficient; the team settled on a bioswale rain garden.

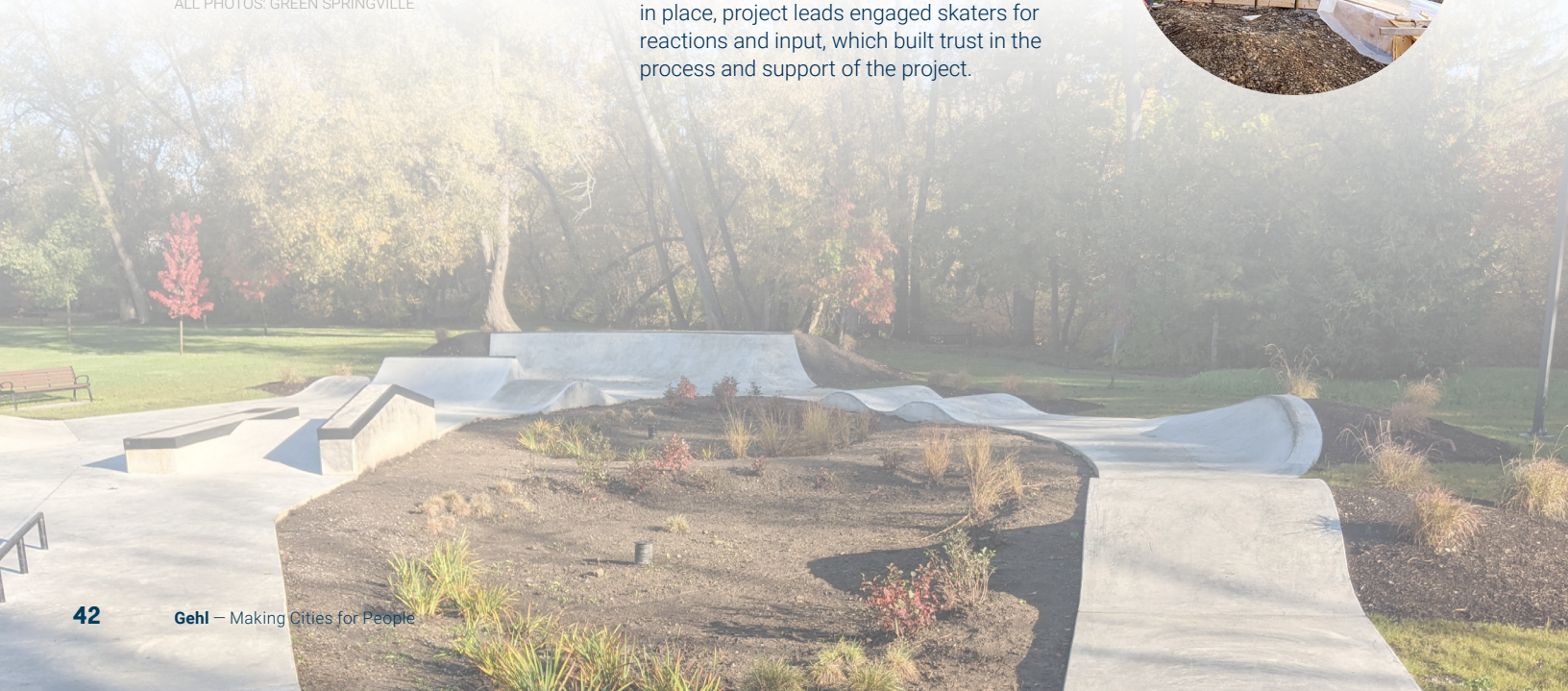


COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION – A CHALLENGING BUT SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT

The grant was awarded a few weeks into the COVID-19 pandemic, putting a strain on engagement and fundraising. To grow momentum, the project started a Facebook page and GoFundMe site to achieve the matching grant. Once initial designs were in place, project leads engaged skaters for reactions and input, which built trust in the process and support of the project.



ALL PHOTOS: GREEN SPRINGVILLE



Lessons learned

1

OUTCOME

SKATEPARK INVESTMENT SPARKED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BEYOND SKATING.



“One of the great features of the park is that it feels like you can run around and do stuff. There’s a creek on a big chunk of it. The (kids) are not going to get away. You feel comfortable as a parent to leave them and go take a walk.”

– Seth Wochensky

LESSON

Concentrate investment through strategic adjacencies.

Locating spaces that give kids and parents opportunities to be physically active near each other allows multigenerational families and groups to stay engaged for longer visits.

2

OUTCOME

SPRINGVILLE SKATEPARK SHIFTED PERCEPTIONS OF SKATING.



After upgrading the metal skateplex to a high-quality skatepark and designing the space within a landscaped berm, noise complaints around the park have reportedly decreased. Further, **75% of people surveyed at the skatepark indicated they would support more city funding** for skateparks like this one.

LESSON

Build visibility of skaters in the process.

The process of building a skatepark can publicly elevate the voice of the local skating community and deter skeptics. By involving skaters in the public conversation, skating gains greater visibility and acceptance.

3

OUTCOME

THE PROJECT BUILT CAPACITY FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE VILLAGE AND LOCAL LEADERS.



Green Springville initially faced challenges fundraising during the pandemic; the organization worked with the Village Administrator, Liz Melock, who unlocked public funds to take the new skatepark to across the funding finish line.

LESSON

Use the skatepark development process as an opportunity to build bridges.

Play is a unique shared priority for parties that might not otherwise collaborate. The process of co-creating a vision for a play space — and if possible, building it together — can seed relationships and build trust across difference.