

# SKATEPARK MASTER PLANNING MODEL

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**The Question** – How many square feet of skatepark does my community need?

Spohn Ranch's *Skatepark Master Planning Model* is a valuable tool for municipalities and community groups who are beginning the skatepark advocacy process. The model uses simple formulas to determine how many skaters are in your community and how much skateable terrain you will need to fully accommodate them. After some simple arithmetic, you will have a solid understanding of the number and size of skateparks needed for a successful master plan.

## Step 1: Define the Target Area

Choose a target area that is well defined, ideally one that has recent census data. Visit [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) to find the most recent population figures.

This will tell you: What is the overall population of the city, town or community I am planning for?

## Step 2: Apply the skateboarder percentage

Recent statistics from the *National Sporting Goods Association* and *American Sports Data* estimate that between 2-5% of the U.S. population are skateboarders. In our experience, we've found that using 2% will accurately reflect the number of skaters in your target area.

**The Equation:** Population of target area x 2% = Total number of skaters

This will tell you: How many people have access to a skateboard and will ride it at least one time?

## Step 3: Define the number of regular skaters

If you had to plan as if every person with a skateboard was going to use the skatepark every day, your final numbers would be astronomical. It makes more sense to plan for the population of skaters who ride on a regular basis.

**The Equation:** Total number of skaters x 25% = Number of regular skaters

This will tell you: How many skaters will frequent the park at least a few times per year?

#### Step 4: Apply the skate session percentage

For the average skater, there are roughly 10 skateable hours during the day (10am – 8pm). With the average skate session lasting about 2 hours, there are 5 sessions during the day. While these sessions will obviously overlap, this model gives a good sense for how skaters will ride at different times.

**The Equation:** Number of regular skaters / 5 = Number of skaters riding at one time

This will tell you: How many skaters in the target area will be riding at one time?

\*Note – this model is skewed towards medium-sized communities

- If the target area population is more than 100,000, divide number of regular skaters by 10
- If the target area population is less than 10,000 divide number of regular skaters by 3

#### Step 5: Define the ideal square footage of skateable terrain

For the past 10 years, Spohn Ranch has visited thousands of skateparks across the country and collected observable data on the number of skaters it takes before a park feels crowded and skating quality is affected.

- 5,000 square foot skatepark reaches crowding point at 15 skaters
- 10,000 square foot skatepark reaches crowding point at 30 skaters
- 20,000 square foot skatepark reaches crowding point at 60 skaters

1 skater needs 333 square feet of skatepark (roughly an 18' x 18' square)

**The Equation:** Number of skaters riding at one time x 333 square feet = Square feet of skatepark

This will tell you: What is the ideal square footage of skatepark needed to satisfy the target area?

#### Step 6: Distribute the terrain

Skateparks distributed across the target area will better serve the local skateboarding community. If your recommended terrain is 10,000 or larger you may consider distributing that total footage across more than one site in your target area. If your recommended terrain was less than 8,000 square feet, no distribution is necessary. A single facility should meet the target area's needs provided it is centrally located.

## Skatepark Typology

The modern skatepark offers a wide variety of terrain in order to accommodate a broad diversity of skaters, BMXers, and inline skaters. It combines traditional features like bowls and half-pipes with street skating elements like stairs and benches to create a comprehensive and flowing masterpiece.



The modern skatepark also goes beyond a collection of a few ramps on a tennis court, by integrating landscaping and site amenities to create an inviting recreational space. As cities around the world are beginning to see the benefits of skateparks, skatepark master planning has taken off. These modern skateparks, which offer something for everyone, have become the centerpieces in citywide skatepark systems. When augmented by smaller skate spots, skate dots, and skate plazas, these large skateparks can serve a significant portion of a city's skating population.

## Skate Spots

The newest trend in municipal skatepark master planning, skate spots range in scope from small skateable elements integrated into the existing landscape to larger areas that can accommodate up to a dozen riders. Typically comprised of several elements and ranging anywhere from 2,000-5,000 square feet, a series of skate spots provides a great addition to any community's action sports master plan.



Since almost 75% of skaters consider themselves street skaters, many of them will avoid traditional skateparks in order to ride "real" street elements. A well-designed skate spot delivers this authentic street experience in a controlled environment.

Many cities are installing multiple skate spots to serve the action sports community by providing safe, engineered spaces that still feel "real" to the users. Subtle changes to real world geometry and a super-smooth finish make Spohn Ranch skate spots safer and more fun to ride.

In cities with only one central skatepark, many users are dependent on motorized transportation to reach the park. The lower cost and easier installation of skate spots allows for more places to ride — serving a larger action sports population in a more efficient way.

### Skate Dots

Going one step further, skate dots are even smaller than skate spots. These spaces are typically comprised of one or two elements designed to integrate skateboarding into the public realm. Even with a small budget and limited space, skate dots can be a valuable addition to any community's skateboarding scene.



Consisting of only a few basic elements, these spaces help spread out the skateboarding population and reduce crowding issues commonly found when a city has only one central skatepark. Young skaters with limited transportation now have more designated places to skate, without having to find a ride to the central skatepark.

When the creative mind of the skateboarder goes to work, a simple spot like this can provide endless hours of entertainment.



## Let's run through an example!

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Target Area: City of Silver Spring, Maryland

Step 1:

Population is 76,540

Step 2:

$76,540 \times 2\% = 1,531$

There are 1,531 skaters in Silver Spring

Step 3:

$1,531 \times 25\% = 383$

There are 383 regular skaters in Silver Spring

Step 4:

$383/5 = 77$

At a given time, there will be 77 skaters riding in Silver Spring

Step 5:

$77 \times 333 \text{ square feet} = 25,600 \text{ square feet}$

In an ideal world, Silver Spring would have 25,600 square feet of skateable terrain

Step 6:

- One central facility of 12,000 square feet
- Three skate spots of roughly 4,000 square feet dispersed throughout the City
- Two skate dots of roughly 1,000 square feet each

Please note:

Our model addresses the ideal square footage for an optimal skateboarding experience.

For help with this model, please contact Spohn Ranch today. Our team of dedicated professionals will guide you through your skatepark project from start to finish!