

MONTGOMERY PARKS



# SKATE PARK

## MONTGOMERY PARKS 2023 COUNTY-WIDE SKATE PARK OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

COMMUNITY INPUT FINDINGS & RESULTS





## INTRODUCTION

**Montgomery Parks**, a department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) manages more than 37,000 acres of parkland and 419 parks. These parks support quality of life in communities by providing opportunities for physical activity, social connectivity, environmental stewardship, and access to the outdoors. In addition to the pursuit of improved facilities for these important community and environmental functions, Montgomery Parks is committed to making equitable investments in our parks, and providing opportunities for teenagers, working-age adults, and seniors in the park system. Recent research conducted as part of the 2022 Parks, Recreation, Open Space (PROS) Plan, which outlines the parks department’s vision for the coming years, identified skate parks as an important and desired amenity, particularly for the younger demographic in Montgomery County.

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**Skate Park Outreach:** In July 2023, Montgomery Parks launched a county-wide skate park outreach campaign to engage target audiences about plans to update and/or develop new skate parks throughout the county. With five new skate parks on the short list of projects for Montgomery Parks, project planners were looking for input to understand the interests and desires of skaters and action-sport enthusiasts to inform design and delivery of skate park facilities throughout the county.

More than 730 members of the community responded to the call and provided a tremendous amount of valuable data for park planners and designers. Respondents to the outreach represented a diverse group and broad age range from elementary-school-aged children to adults 65 and over. The following pages summarize the data analysis and findings from the input received. Many thanks to all who participated.



# MONTGOMERY PARKS SKATE PARK INVENTORY

## Montgomery Parks Proposed Skate Parks

- 1 Ovid Hazen Wells Skate Park
- 2 Wheaton Action Sports Park
- 3 Long Branch Local Park Skate Park
- 4 South Germantown Rec Park Skate Park
- 5 Fairland Rec Park Skate Park
- 6 Centerway Local Park Skate Park
- 7 Stoneybrook Local Park Skate Park

## Montgomery Parks Existing Skate Parks

- A Olney Manor Skate Park
- B Takoma-Piney Branch Skate Park
- C Woodside Urban Park Skate Spot

## Other Skate Park Facilities

*"Olney Manor has the best smooth roll-in options in the region. It has three levels that can all be accessed by skaters of different abilities."*

### Olney Manor Skate Park

*"It has great ledges, a flatbar, a nice hip, and just generally has most things I like to skate."*

### Takoma-Piney Branch Skate Park

*"Proximity, good use of space, opportunities to be creative as a skater."*

### Woodside Urban Park Skate Spot

**Montgomery Parks Existing Skate Parks**

**Olney Manor Skate Park**

**Woodside Urban Park Skate Spot**

**Takoma-Piney Branch Skate Park**

# OUTREACH GOALS & CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

## GOALS

**Input** – Gather input from skate and other adventure sports communities regarding general skate park desires, interests, and feedback on existing and proposed parks.

**Constituent list** – Compile names and contact information of interested citizens and groups to be used for future advocacy, project-specific public input, and focus groups.

**Create excitement and goodwill** – Generate buzz around Montgomery Parks and skate parks.

## STRATEGY

**Survey** – Solicit general input with a 20-question survey.

**Social media** – Utilize “influencer” marketing to target youth skaters by creating content through various channels.

**Signs** – Provide skaters with QR code link to survey through the use of strategically placed signs.

**Table at events** – Include giveaways and surveys.

## Citing surging demand, Montgomery County plans five new skate parks

In a county survey, nearly 12 percent of respondents said there were not enough skate parks



By Mary Claire Molloy

August 8, 2023 at 12:57 p.m. EDT



Montgomery Parks

2,094 followers

4mo •

Director Mike Riley wants your feedback. Tell him what you want to see at our new skate parks. Take the survey: <https://lnkd.in/eEHR6k5Z>



Fun with Otus the skateboarding owl

# BUILDING THE STUDY

## Data Collection

Surveys of park users were analyzed to examine activities, preferred features, styles, and amenities in skate parks, as well as the participants' go-to skate parks and the reasons for their visits to the parks. Data was collected in the summer of 2023 and resulted in 731 participants of the survey.

## Data Analysis

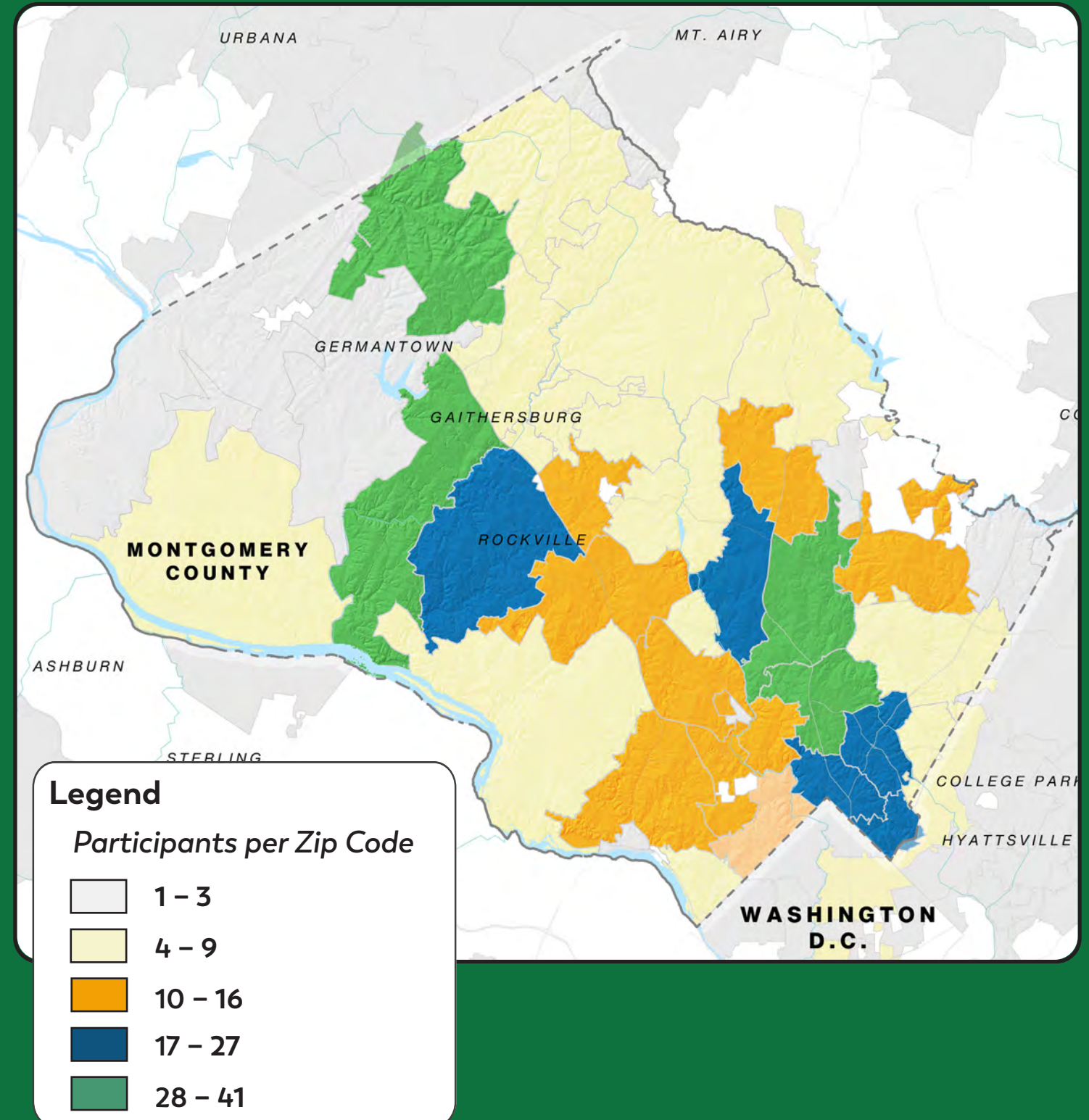
### Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics summarize general findings based on the responses from the 731 participants that represent the skate park user population in Montgomery County and surrounding geographical regions. Chi-square statistics and logistic regression were used to assess if and how preferred activities, styles, features, and amenities may vary by age, gender, skill levels, and geographical areas. Noted that exclusion criteria were applied to the sample for statistical tests: (1) no response or indicating as prefer not to disclose; (2) responses that chose the "other" category in the gender question were excluded as the sample size was not sufficient for analysis. Sample size was reduced to 625 for the regression models that estimated the association of age, gender, and skill levels with skate park use preferences. In the regression models that estimated the association between geographical areas where participants live and skate park use preferences, sample size was reduced to 357 as respondents who lived outside of Montgomery County and the zip code areas surrounding the proposed skate parks were excluded.

### Content Analysis

A conventional content analysis approach was used to analyze responses from open-ended questions, which identified themes emerging from original responses. The process consisted of four steps: (1) researchers individually examined each response and identified open codes; labeled the words/terms from the text that captured a main concept or opinion; (2) researchers worked collaboratively to identify axial codes (i.e., main themes) that emerged from the open codes; (3) themes were interpreted based on how they related to the survey question and purpose; (4) data (i.e., quotes) were selected to support the interpretation.

# SKATE PARK SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY ZIP CODE



# CONTENT ANALYSIS: WHAT ATTRACTS USERS TO SKATE PARKS?

01



**Design /  
Layout**  
(199)

- Features**  
(116)
- Mixture of Difficulty**  
(57)
- Flow**  
(77)
- Newly Built**  
(5)

02



**Amenities**  
(45)

- Lighting**  
(24)
- Shade**  
(11)
- Water Fountain**  
(3)
- Parking**  
(2)
- Seating**  
(2)
- Trash Can**  
(1)

03



**Location**  
(222)

- Proximity**  
(211)
- Access**  
(14)
- Light Traffic**  
(2)

# CONTENT ANALYSIS: WHAT ATTRACTS USERS TO SKATE PARKS?

04



**Operation**  
(40)

- Open Access**  
(14)
- Well-maintained**  
(9)
- No Supervision**  
(8)
- No Cost**  
(6)
- Staff/Rules**  
(12)

05



**Activity**  
(99)

- Social Connectivity**  
(58)
- Physical activity/Exercise**  
(25)
- Learn skill/Practice**  
(21)
- Other Activities**  
(15)
- Hobby/Interest**  
(4)

06



**Social  
Environment**  
(44)

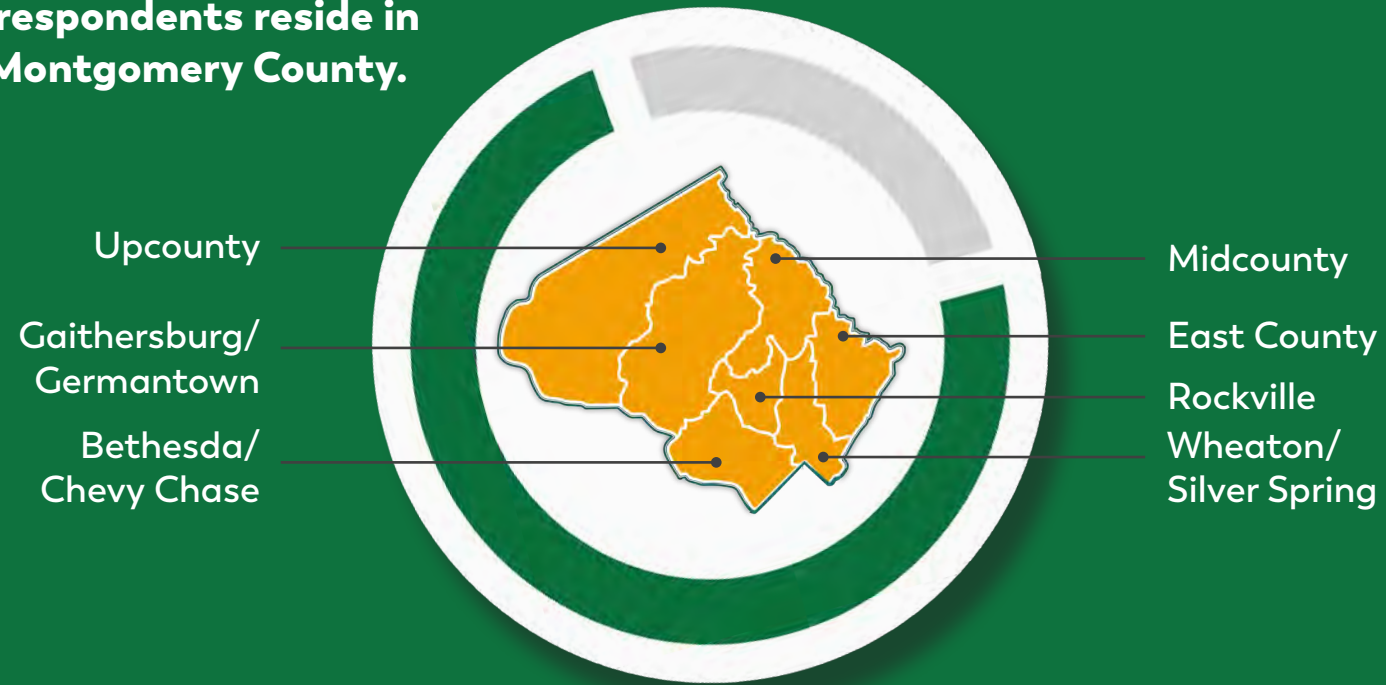
- Culture**  
(20)
- Sense of Security**  
(12)
- Welcoming Environment**  
(10)
- Familiarity/Local**  
(6)

Survey Question:  
Why do you go to that park? (N=536)

Note: Theme (# of counts by person)  
Sub-theme (# of mentioned times)

# SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

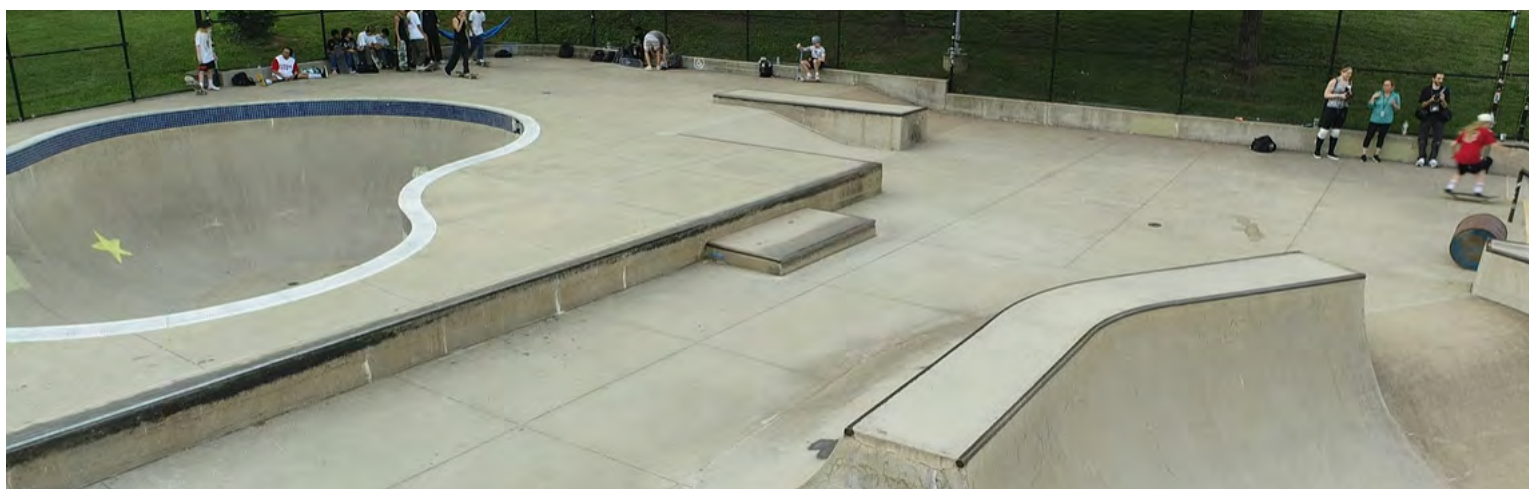
**74%** of survey respondents reside in Montgomery County.



**45%** of survey respondents were between the ages of 13 to 29.

\*Total Survey Respondents = 731



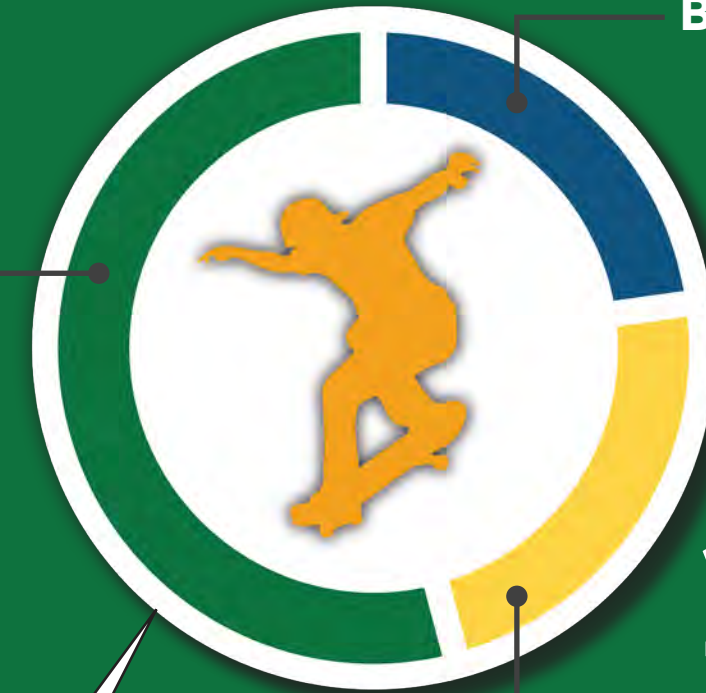


## SKILL LEVEL

Among **731** survey participants, more than half rate themselves as **intermediate-level skaters.**

**23%**  
Beginner

**54%**  
Intermediate



**23%**  
Advanced

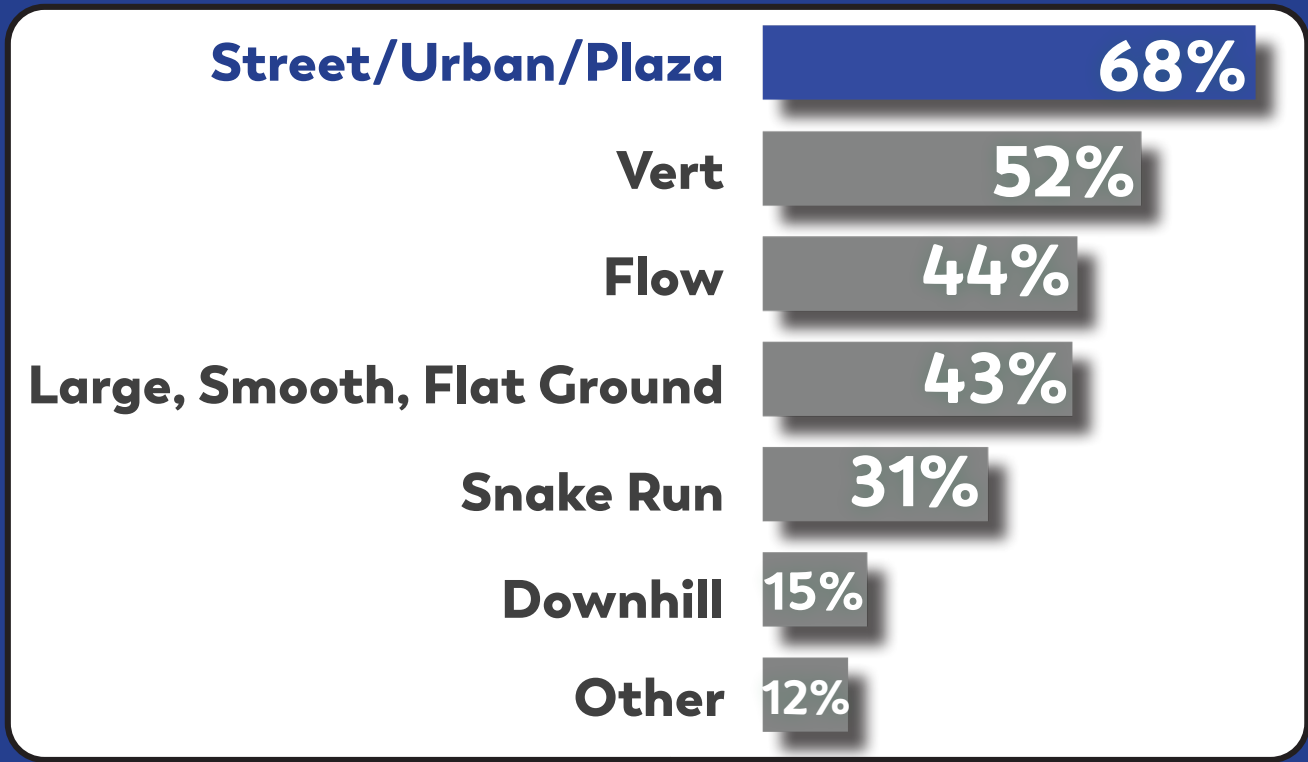
"The other thing that is interesting is that beginner obstacles end up being the obstacles that us older skaters gravitate toward. Smaller ledges, mini ramps, ride on grinds, stuff like that, the little kids and old duffers can shred on."



# SKATE STYLES

## Street/Urban

is the preferred style of a skate park.



"The street plaza [at Rockville Skate Park] is probably the best in a 50-mile radius. It has every single basic obstacle that you would need and it is built very well."



Fig. 1. Person skating during Skate Malmö Street event in Sweden from: Nils Svensson, Alexander Olivera, Emil Olsson & Sarah Meurle. 2018.



Fig. 2. Person vert skating from: Thaler, Casey. "Vert Skateboarding [An Epic Guide]." 2022.

**Street/Urban/Plaza** skating is a style that involves obstacles that mimic what you would find in the urban environment or in public places — things like ledges, staircases, handrails, banks, curbs, and more.

**Vert** or transition skating refers to the vertical walls of a halfpipe or other curved feature that mimics the inclines of a backyard pool or ramp.



Fig. 3. Person skating from: Torgerson, Davis. "What is Freestyle Skateboarding." 2023



Fig. 4. Skatepark overhead shot showcasing flow from: The Skatepark Project, "Skatepark Best Practices Guide." 2022.

**Large, Smooth, Flat Ground** areas are important for skaters of all abilities to have room to practice basic and advanced tricks.

**Flow** can be defined as the overall functionality of obstacle, geometries, proportions, sizes, orientations, and spacing of elements. The goal is for each obstacle to function both independently and in a series with other obstacles providing skaters with the freedom to create lines.



Fig. 5. The Seyllynn Snake Run in Vancouver from: Burrow, Erik, "The Seyllynn Snake Run - Vancouver" 20, June 2014.



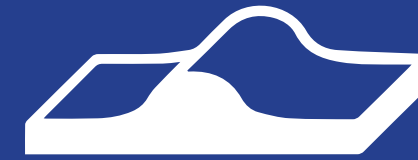
Fig. 6. Person skating down hill from: Red Bull Steep Crest 2014.

**Snake Runs** are characterized by a long path or gully flanked by banks and berms that allow a rider to cruise around as opposed to doing tricks. Snake Runs are great for beginners who are learning how to navigate parks.

**Downhill** is typically done by longboarders and involves skating down large hills while maintaining balance and speed.



## SKATE STYLE PREFERENCE BY SKILL LEVEL



**Beginners** would appreciate a  
**large, smooth, flat ground** style.

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**Intermediate to advanced**  
skateboarders are **2x** more likely to favor the  
**Snake, Flow, and Vert** styles.

# SKATE PARK FEATURES

**74%** of survey participants want skate parks to be **designed for users of all skill levels & abilities.**

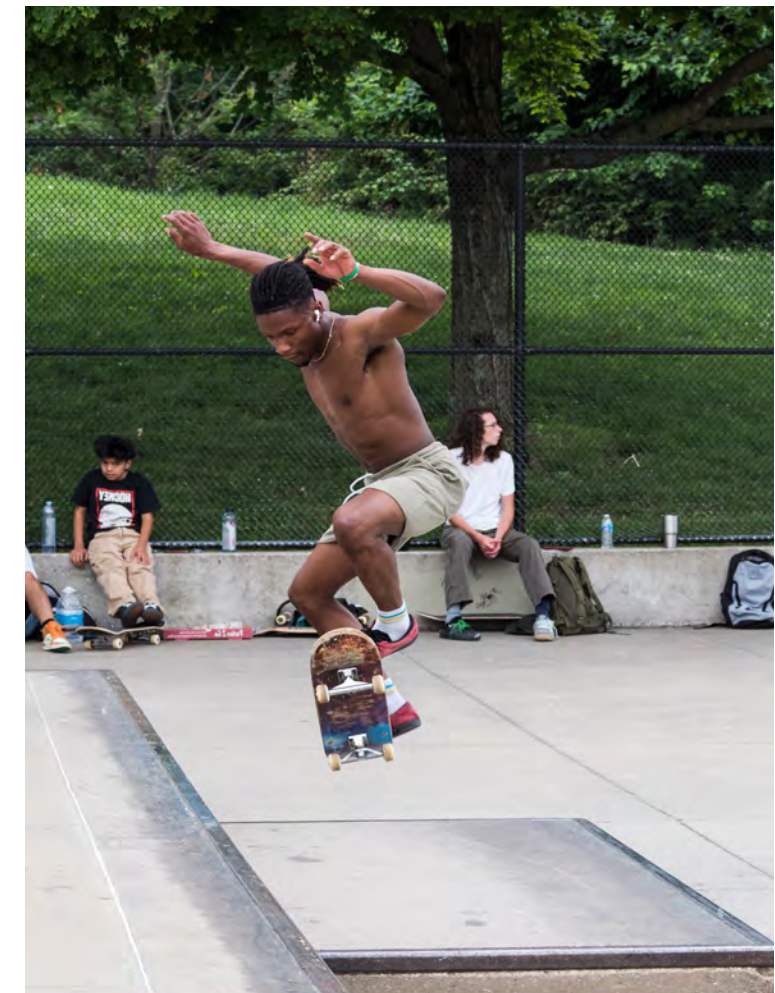
Designed for all Abilities **74%**

Lighting **64%**

Public Art **31%**

Designated Beginner Area **28%**

"It is often the lowest and simplest part of each skate park that gets the most use. Even the most talented skaters will spend a lot of time on the smaller obstacles to warm up, or to learn new tricks."





## SKATE PARK FEATURES



The most commonly requested features are

**bowls, pump tracks, mini-ramps, ledges, snake run, and pool coping.**

"[Olney Manor Skate Park] has a very good mix of street/plaza style skate obstacles, a big bowl and quarter pipes for transition skaters and places for people to just hang out and watch what's going down."

# FEATURE PREFERENCE BY SKILL LEVEL



Beginners would appreciate

**designated beginner areas,  
regular programs and lessons,  
presence of supervisory staff, and  
public art.**

"We like the fact it [Rockville Skate Park] has staff, it has places for parents to sit and wait, it has a lot of various things in the park, it has great lighting, and it attracts the right people, open to skaters, scooters, and bikes."

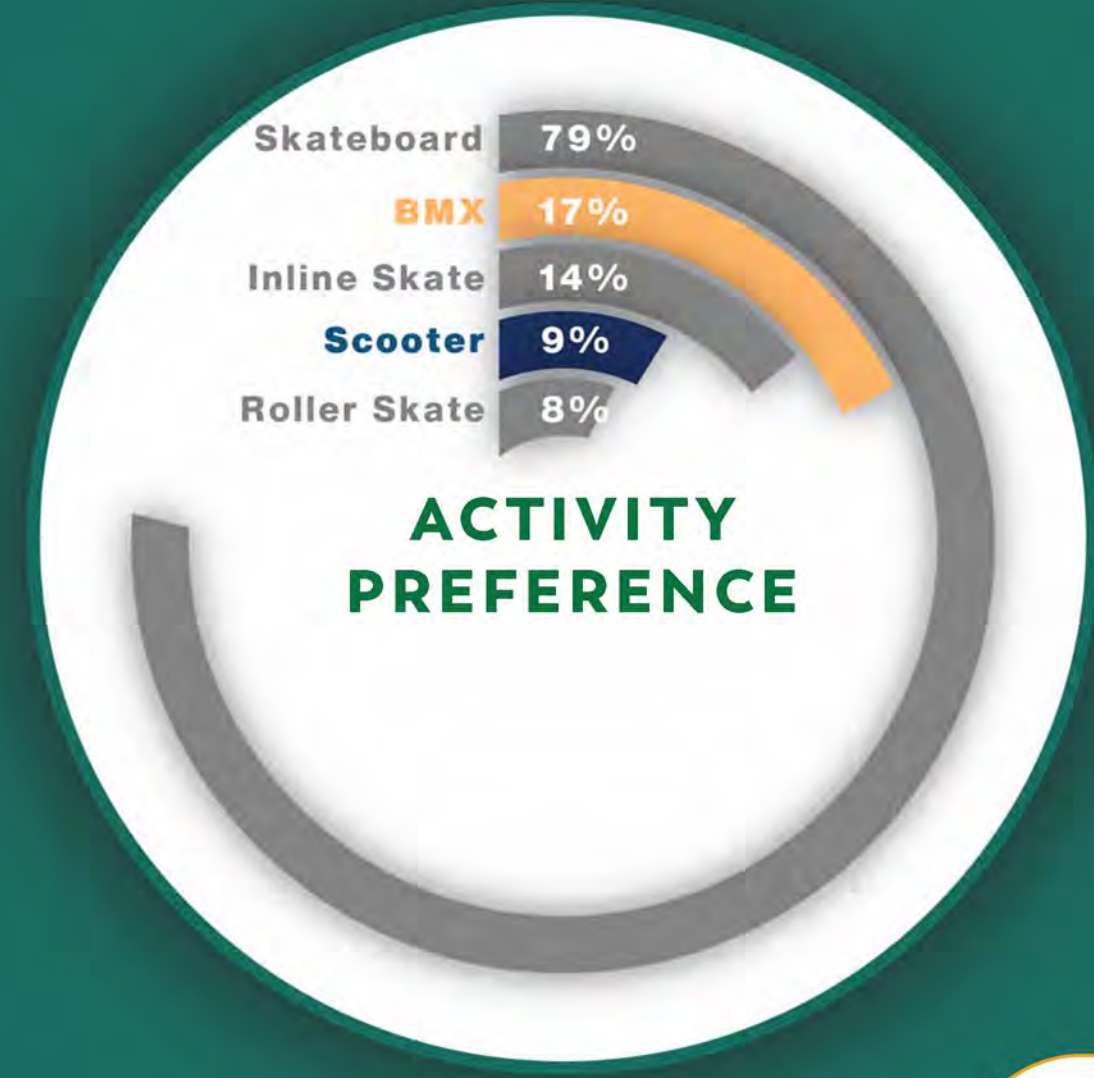




# ACTIVITIES



While skateboarding is the overall preferred activity, people in communities Upcounty, the Gaithersburg/Germantown area, and Midcounty are more likely to scooter in skate parks than people in other regions.



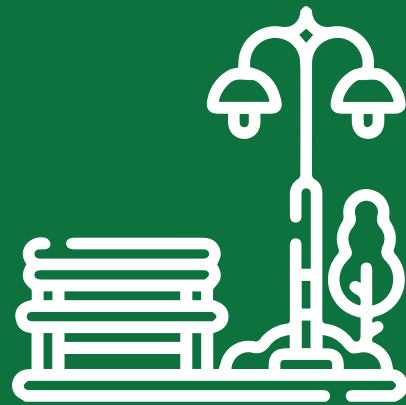
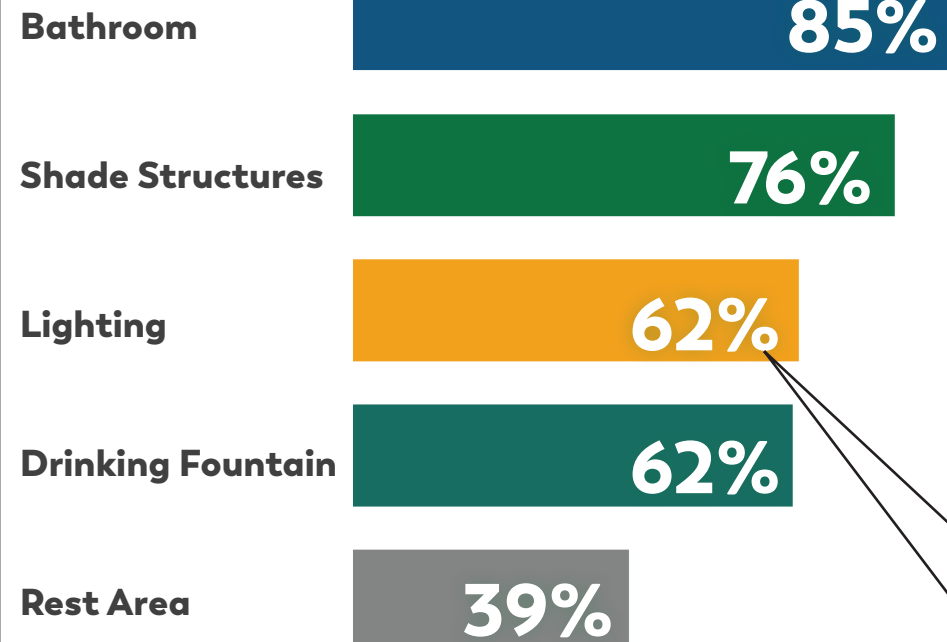
Communities in the Southeast region are more likely to favor BMX.



**BMX**

# AMENITY PREFERENCES

**Lighting, bathrooms,  
shade, drinking fountains,  
and seating areas**  
were all favored amenities to be included in  
future skate park designs.



**Lighting is more  
important to  
advanced users than  
beginners.**



Fig. 7. Overhead shot of Pizzey Park Skate Park in Miami, Queensland from: Schreder "Pizzey Park Skate Park." 2022.



Fig. 8. Overhead shot of Pizzey Park Skate Park in Miami, Queensland from: Schreder "Pizzey Park Skate Park." 2022.



## PROXIMITY/LOCATION



Being  
**close to home**  
is the No. 1 reason why  
people visit a skate park frequently.

Users are  
**willing to travel  
25+ minutes**  
to larger regional skate parks.

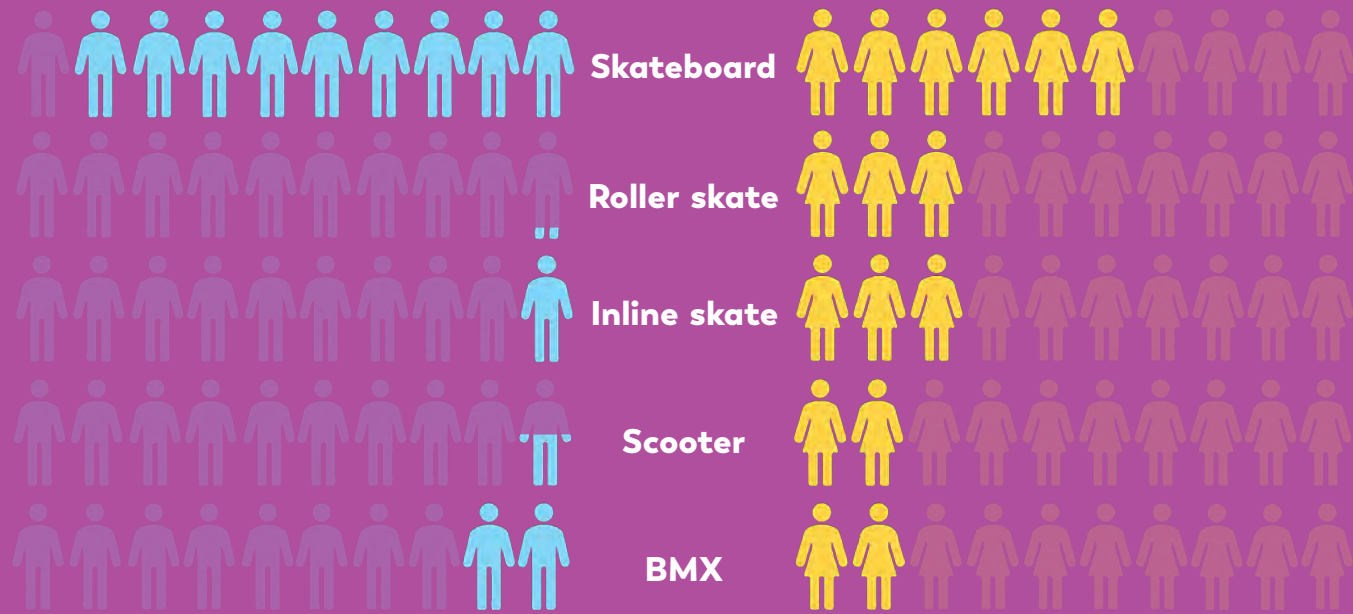
"Please build a skate park in Bethesda. For me and many other skaters, the only way to get to a park is by bus or metro. To have a park so close by that me and my friends can skate to and skate at, would be a huge deal."



# PREFERENCE BY GENDER

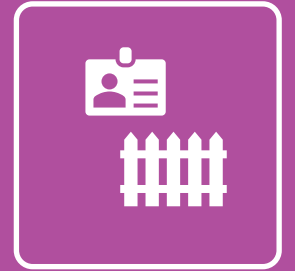
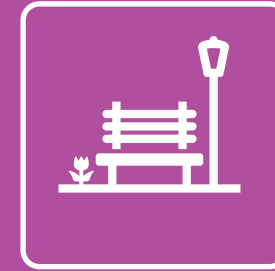


While skateboarding dominates what people do in a skate park, **female respondents** are more likely to participate in non-skateboarding activities, such as **inline skating** or **roller skating**.





## PREFERENCE BY GENDER



Features and amenities that females tend to prefer:

- Well-maintained Bathrooms
- Seating Areas
- Fenced Space
- Regular Programs/Lessons
- Presence of Supervisory Staff



Females are **2x** more likely to favor large, smooth, and flat ground surfaces for warming up and practicing new skills.

# PREFERENCE BY AGE



Although various styles are preferred among the respondents as a whole, some styles are more likely to be favored by a certain age group than others.



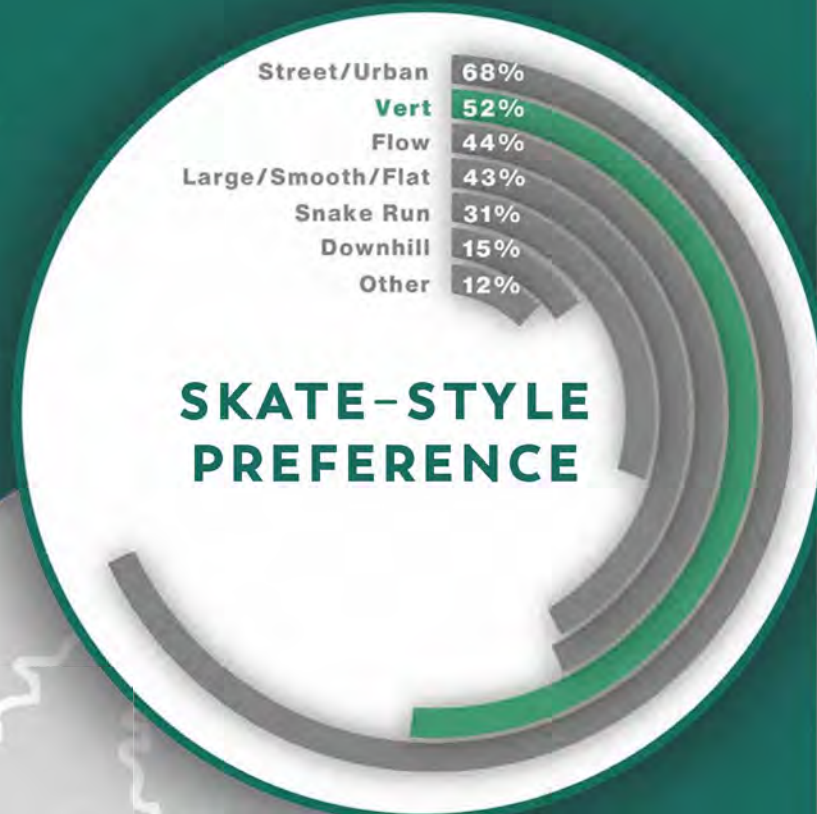
School-aged and female skateboarders are more likely to appreciate the presence of supervisory staff and fencing while some suggest open access and oppose on-site facility supervision.



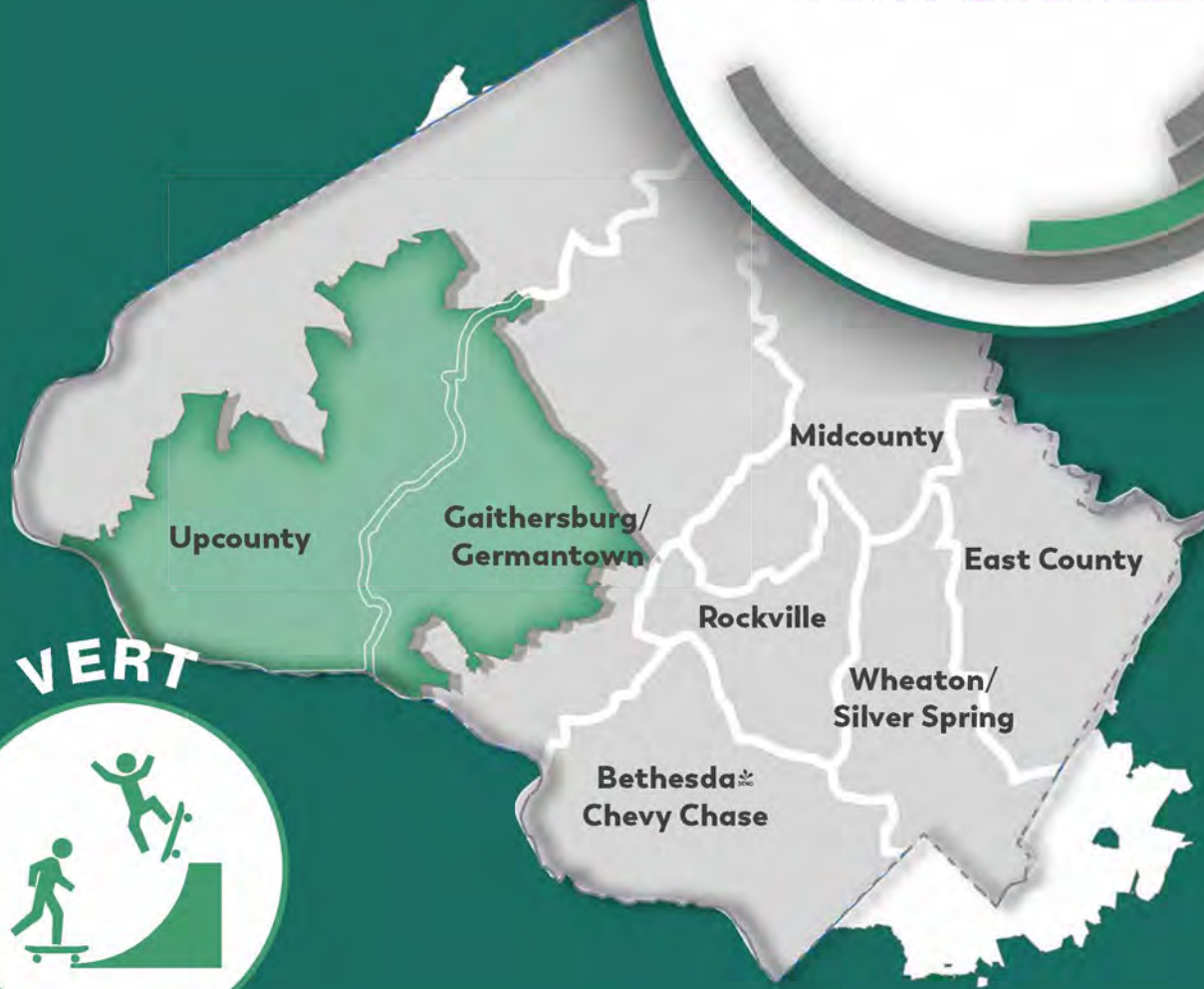


# GEOGRAPHIC SKATE-STYLE PREFERENCE

While Vert was the second-most popular style, people living in the Southeast region of Upcounty and Southwest region of Gaithersburg/Germantown are **2X** more likely to favor this style.

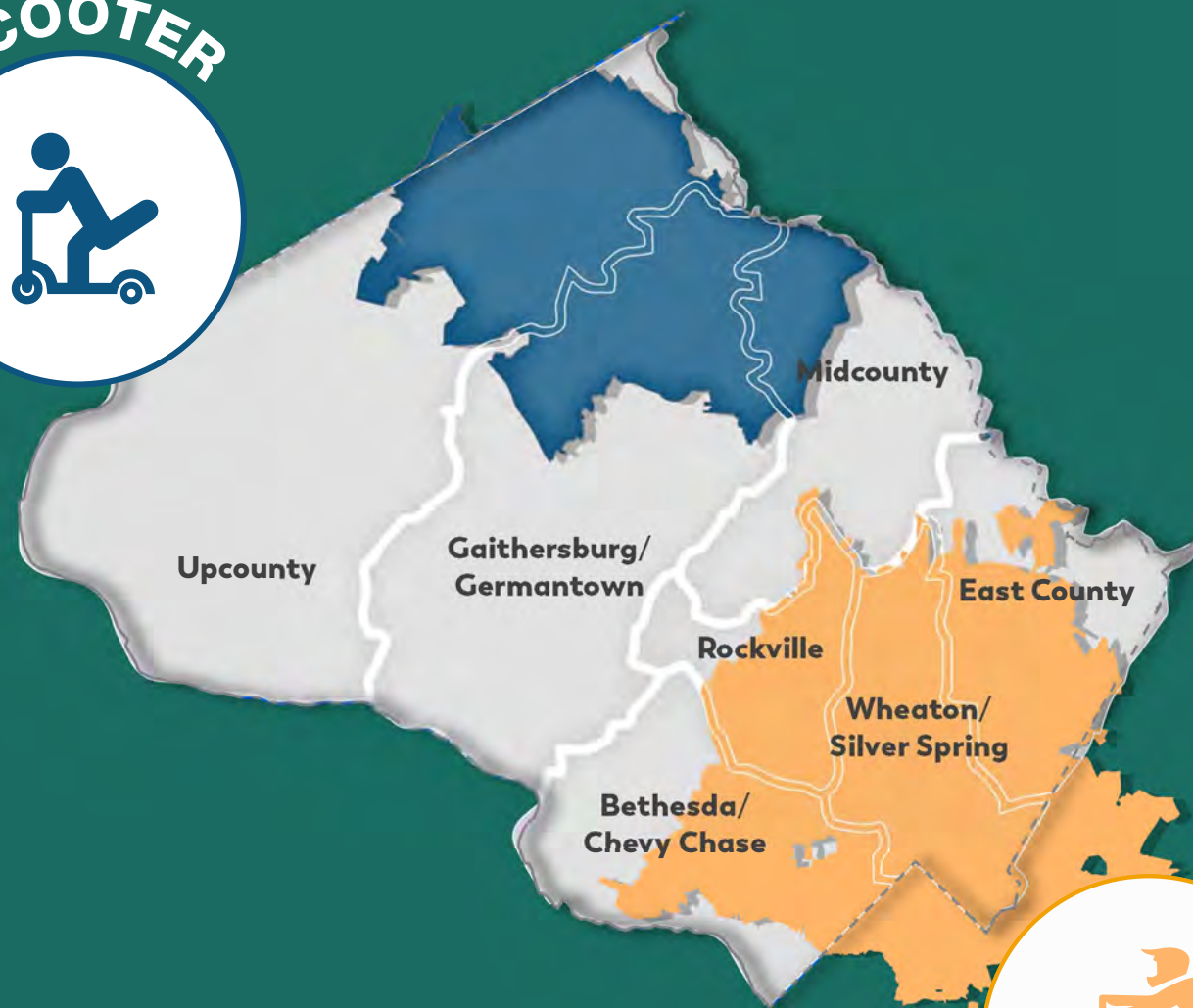


## SKATE-STYLE PREFERENCE

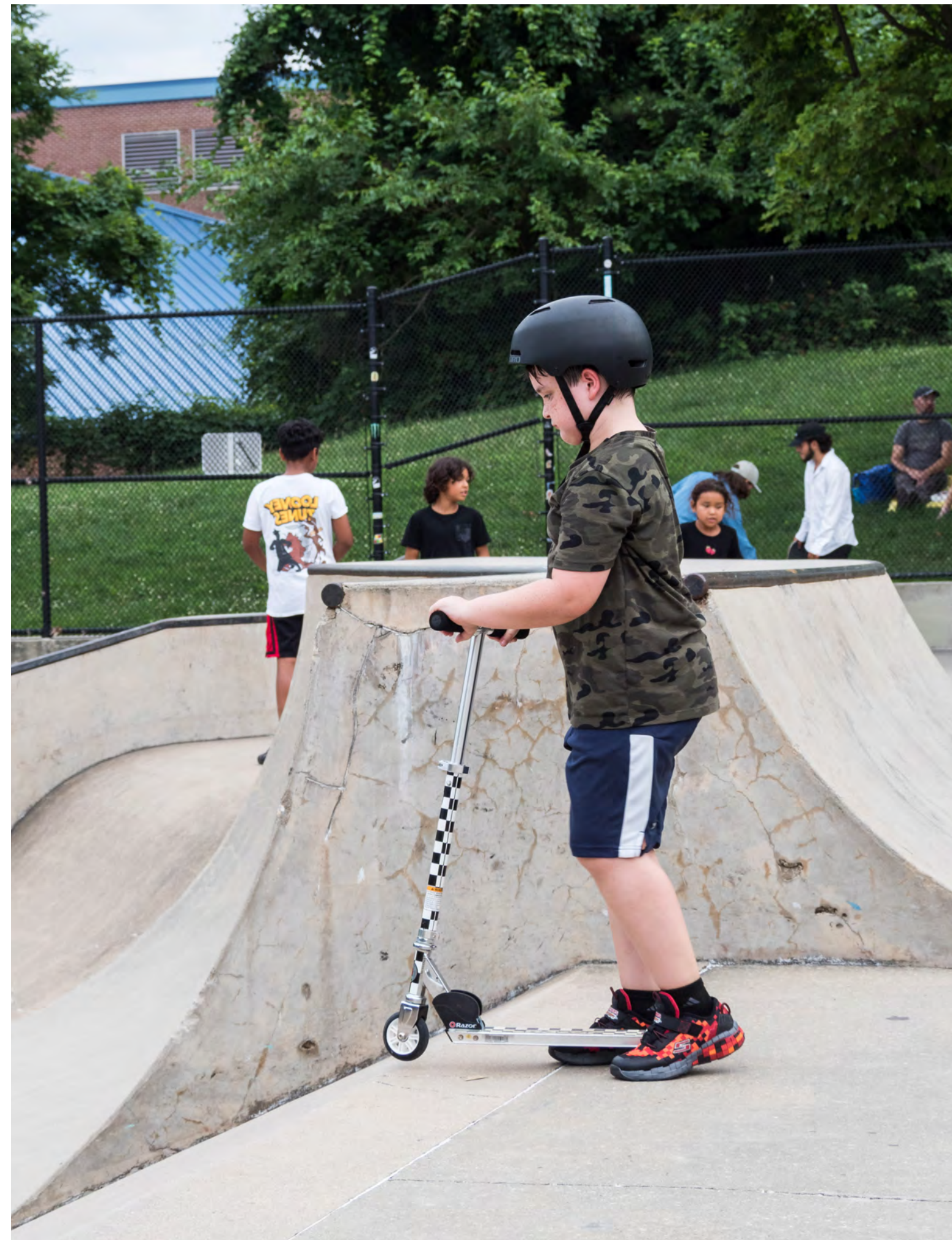


# GEOGRAPHIC ACTIVITY PREFERENCE

Although skateboarding was the most participated activity in skate parks among respondents, preferences for activities vary by geographic areas. The communities in the northern portions Upcounty, Midcounty and in Germantown/Gaithersburg are more likely to favor scooters whereas people living in the Southeast region are more likely to favor BMX biking in skate parks.



BMX



# CHECKLIST FOR A QUALITY, WELL-DESIGNED SKATE PARK

## I. LOCATION/PROXIMITY

- Located no more than a 15-minute walk to nearby users, if designated a local skate park.
- Located no more than a 25–30 minute drive to nearby users, if designated a regional skate park.
- Accessible by bus or metro for users who lack access to cars or prefer to use transit.

## II. STYLE OF PARK

- Influenced heavily by Street, Urban, and Plaza skate elements.
- Incorporates Vert and Snake Run styles to accommodate all age groups.
- Prioritizes function over form with good flow, capacity, and spacing.
- Designed for users of all-skill levels and abilities.

## III. PARK FEATURES

- Incorporates elements such as bowls, pump tracks, mini-ramps, ledges, snake runs, and pool coping with sufficient spacing between obstacles.
- Incorporates a designated beginner area consisting of a large, smooth, and flat surface with small features that allow for progression.
- Provides regular programs and lessons with the presence of supervisory staff.
- Accommodates other recreational activities such as scooters, BMX riding, inline skating, and roller skating.
- Incorporates well-integrated public artwork.

# CHECKLIST FOR A QUALITY, WELL-DESIGNED SKATE PARK

## IV. AMENITIES

- Incorporates rest and viewing areas with drinking fountains, lighting, and shade.
- Incorporates conveniently located bathrooms.

## V. CULTURE/INCLUSIVITY/DIVERSITY

- Accommodates users of all age groups, skill-levels, and genders.
- Provides safety measures through usage of well-lit, easily visible areas.
- Utilizes spectator areas to help foster interaction amongst users while reducing potential conflicts.



# PHOTO CREDITS

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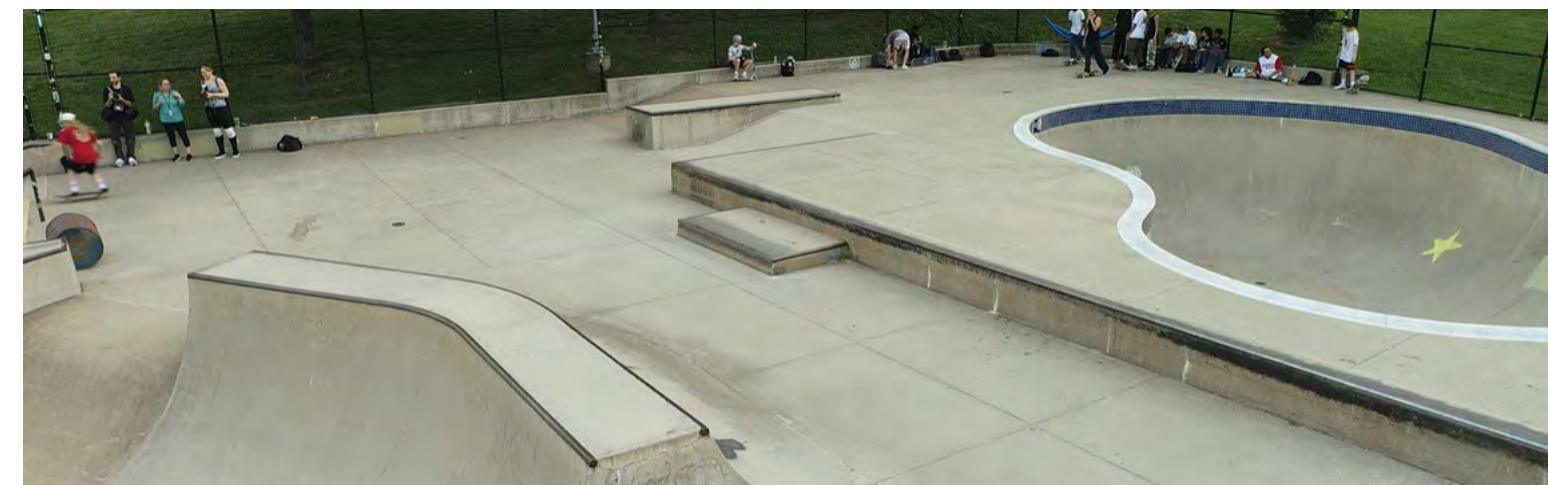
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**\*WOOT WOOT\***

"Thank you to all survey participants and residents of Montgomery County for making this possible!"

- OTUS