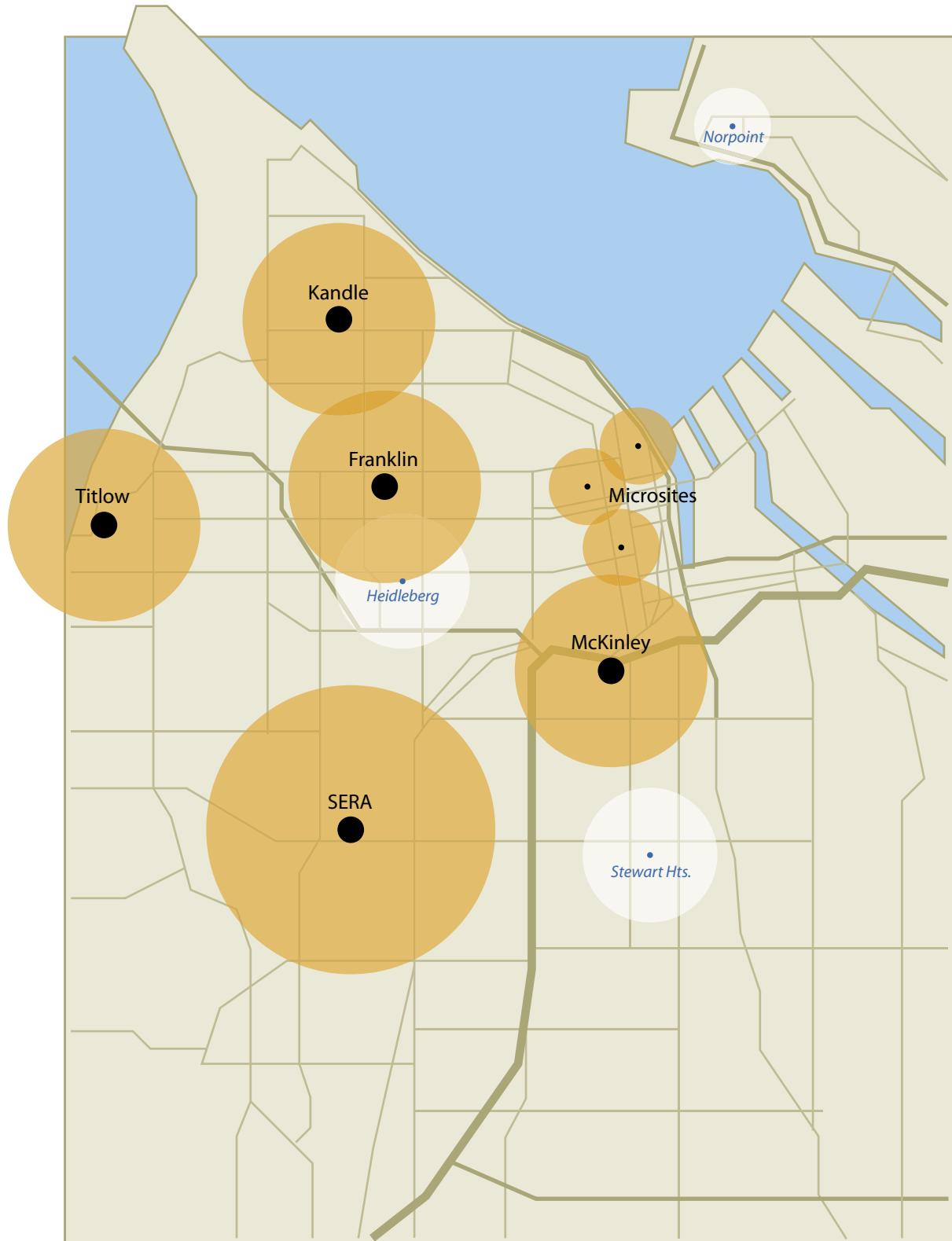


TACOMA X SKATEPARK

PRESERVING AND PROMOTING TACOMA'S SKATEPARKS & SKATEBOARDERS



SKATEBOARDING BAN

No major American city has instituted a successful skateboarding ban. Bans have always resulted in inconsistent enforcement, misunderstood policy and boundaries, and unnecessary conflicts between law-abiding citizens and law enforcement. Tacoma's proposed ban presents nothing that other cities have not tried and ultimately abandoned.

The result of a skateboarding ban will be that local skateboarders face these unattractive choices:

1. Continue to skate in defiance of the law.

We know what skateboarders want to do. They want to skate. No skateboarder wants to be considered a "criminal" for participating in one of America's most popular athletic activities. With nearly 13-million skaters nationwide, approximately 4,000 in Tacoma alone, few alternatives are left for those favoring the kinds of elements found around Tacoma's business district. If we criminalize skateboarding, we do a great disservice to a substantial and important segment of our community.

A skateboarding ban will create unnecessary "criminal" activity.

2. Don't skate.

Skateboarding has been popular long enough that 3 generations are now participating together. For most individuals and even some families, skateboarding is an intimate component of their lifestyle. It is unlikely that a ban would have any impact on the individual who feels drawn to this creative, athletic sport.

A skateboarding ban will not compel people to quit skateboarding.

3. Skate somewhere else.

A skateboarding ban does nothing to remove the attraction of a particular ledge or bank. In fact, there are similar ledges and banks all over Tacoma, not just downtown. By discouraging skaters from skating downtown through tickets and confiscations, the problem will only intensify elsewhere. A downtown ban sets a precedent for other areas of Tacoma to adopt the same policy.

At best, a skateboarding ban simply moves the problem.

The solution is clear. Skateboarders simply want legitimate, safe places to skate. We are in the position right now to deliver those places and solve the problems faced by skateboarders and business owners alike in a creative, collaborative, and progressive way.

SKATEBOARDING BANS ELSEWHERE

The Herald, Randolph, Vermont (8/23/01)

A skateboarding ordinance in Randolph, Vermont failed when residents wanted to include scooters which were then considered a nuisance and threat to public safety. The whole issue was abandoned due to the difficulty of establishing a purpose and scope.

Skateboarders aren't the only contributors to the problem.

Portland Office of Transportation, Portland, Oregon (Ordinance #175211)

In 2000 Portland, Oregon changed their long-standing skateboarding ordinance, which included inline skates, when in-line skates also became a popular mode of transportation around downtown. They also acknowledged the benefit of encouraging people to explore non-motorized modes of transportation.

Many Tacomen skate as an alternative form of urban transportation.

The Toccoa Record, Toccoa, Georgia (8/20/04)

When Toccoa, Georgia realized that its ordinance was failing, county administrator Darrell Hampton concluded that the solution was to direct the skateboarders to a preferred destination rather than push them from attractive skateboarding spots.

Tacoma can learn from Toccoa's experience.

Ids News, Bloomington, Indiana (9/28/00)

Concern for parked automobiles in a popular garage skatespot led Bloomington to consider a skateboarding ban at peak garage hours.

Creative solutions like this can work to everyone's benefit.

Metroland, New York, New York (6/06/02)

Albany, New York's ordinance was the subject of controversy when some skaters were penalized even though they were within their legal boundaries. Inconsistent enforcement led to the perception that skateboarders were being unfairly treated.

Tacoma's ban, if not communicated effectively to ALL parties, will lead to unnecessary misunderstandings between skateboarders and law enforcement.

The Badger Herald, Madison, Wisconsin (9/23/03)

Skateboarder Brandon Blaschka received a \$285 ticket for skateboarding in an abandoned bank parking lot. Because he wasn't actually skating at the time the police arrived, he was ticketed for trespassing. The area police "use their own discretion as to whether or not they will write a ticket," according to Madison police officer Ben Newman.

Press of Atlantic City, Atlantic City, New Jersey (12/03/02)

Cape May, New Jersey opted to not support a proposed ordinance when it was pointed out that the ordinance actually banned the possession of a skateboard.

What will Tacoma's ban actually prevent?

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Norpoint

Designed by inexperienced skaters and located in a remote portion of the city, the skatepark at Norpoint serves only the surrounding neighborhood.



Heidleberg

One of the first skateparks in the Northwest, the skatepark at Foss is ready for retirement. Located in the corner of a parking lot on rough, sloping asphalt, the steel ramps and concrete obstacles offer little challenge or interest to Tacoma's skaters.



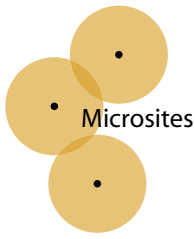
Stewart Heights

Though built with good intentions, the Stewart Heights skatepark was not designed or built for sustainability. It requires frequent inspections and repairs. The design lacks challenging elements, though it serves the immediate neighborhood well.



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Microsites

Skating downtown is a nuisance to property owners. Microsites each feature a small obstacle in a low-traffic area to offer street skaters a safe, designated place to skate and mitigate damage to popular ledges.



McKinley

The 14,000 square foot skatepark at McKinley will appeal to a broad range of abilities and tastes. It will be located at the south end of the existing park with visibility to McKinley Avenue.



Franklin

The skatepark at Franklin will be a smaller bowl complex designed to attract older skaters that typically prefer transitioned elements. This park will be relatively small in size but attract skaters from around the south sound area.



Kandle

This skatepark will be designed for beginning and intermediate skaters and lean slightly toward street elements. The park will serve the northwest portion of Tacoma.



Titlow

The skatepark at Titlow will appeal to street skaters and feature popular replica elements of world-famous structures found elsewhere. Titlow will also serve to draw street skaters away from downtown.



SERA

The skatepark at SERA will be larger and designed to appeal to a broad range of tastes and abilities. Relying on world-famous skatepark designers and builders, SERA will be Tacoma's "crown jewel" skatepark.

MICROSITES

Microsites are designated as appropriate downtown skate spots. Each microsite features one or more skateable structures. The structures are characterized by their appearance; they do not look like traditional skatepark obstacles. Rather, they look (and may serve as) benches, stairs, and other ordinary urban structures.

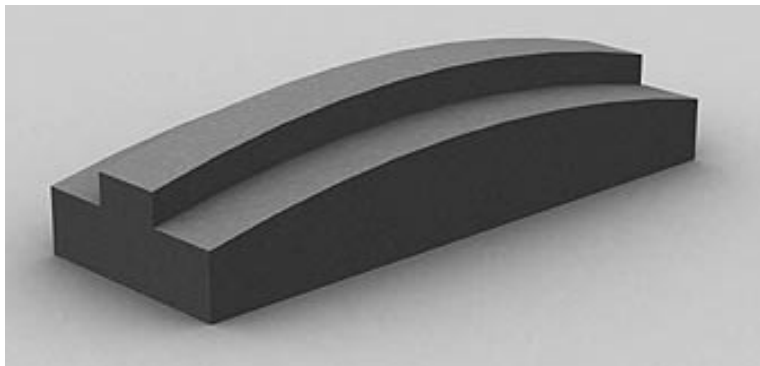
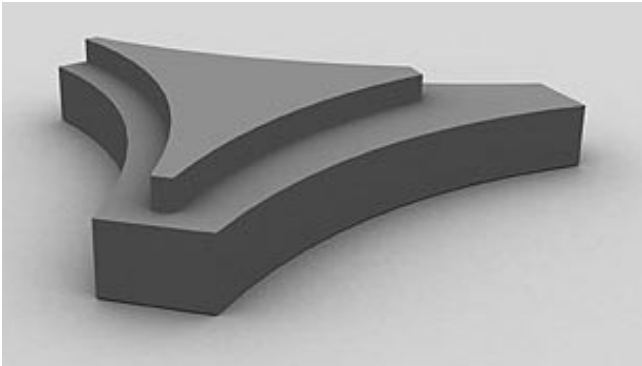
The designs might be simple. These pictures show popular skating structures that also serve a greater public need. The second two pictures feature structures that were designed to be used by skateboarders but are placed in a public, visible area; not in a skatepark.



The designs might be moderately complex but not excavated. The Oregon spot below is placed in an urban green space and augments the large public skatepark nearby. The device on the right was designed as a skateable art installation. Several of these skate-art sculptures are placed around town.



Singular structures can serve as seating and visually pleasing. They can be artistically detailed to suit a particular theme.



MICROSITES

Sites should be arranged around the area so that no structure is adjacent to a popular, but forbidden, private structure. Replica structures can be constructed in areas that do not pose a nuisance to property managers but are still accessible to the public.



SMALL ATTRACTIONS

For every popular ledge or set of stairs in Tacoma's business district, replica attractions should be constructed in the vicinity but at sites that do not present a nuisance for pedestrian traffic. These attractions are designed to draw skaters away from less desirable, private property or public property not intended for skateboarding.

The proposal illustrated below shows an example of a simple ledge constructed on a sidewalk. The ledge is positioned in a way that doesn't impede pedestrian traffic or a nuisance for car doors. The ideal spot for a device like this would be in areas without dense automobile traffic (and with less parking than the example photo). The top would be covered with an attractive slab of marble or granite.



EXAMPLE: THEA'S PARK

Thea's Park is located close enough to draw skaters away from Tacoma's downtown business district. It is currently a popular and well-used skate spot in spite of the metal lugs installed to prevent the activity. With a shortage of appealing skate spots like Thea's, skaters migrate back to the ledges and stairs downtown.

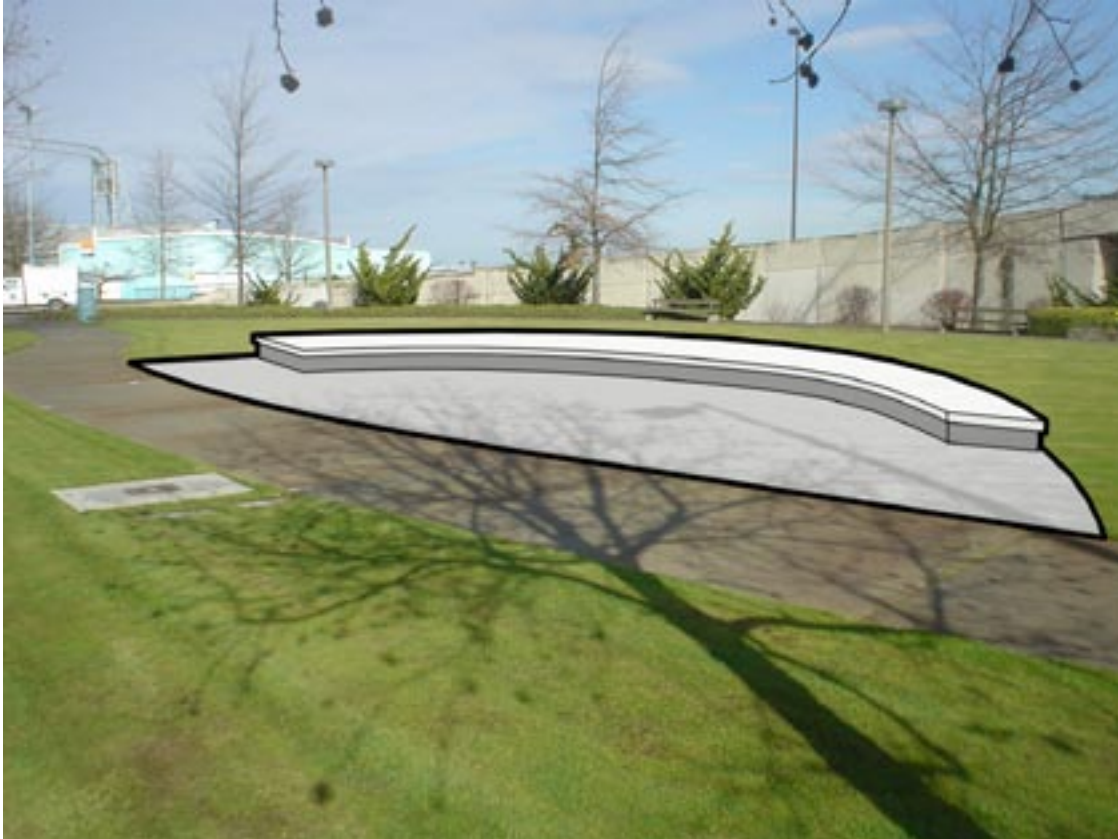
The proposal illustrated below shows a 5-foot by 20-foot elevated platform. The top edges are a natural stone, probably granite or marble. The platform may be used during public events for additional seating during waterway events.



SMALL SPACES

This small park on Thea's waterway is an ideal site for skateable terrain. The ledge illustrated below borrows from the forms in the landscaping and mimics those found at Thea's Park nearby. The structure itself is a replica of the ledges found at University of Washington's Tacoma campus which currently sees a great deal of skateboarding activity.

A structure like this would have the same appeal presented by the ledge found at the UWT campus.



CONCLUSION

As a Tacoma resident, homeowner, professional, and father of two skateboarding kids, I am excited about the potential for Tacoma to demonstrate the leadership and vision required to identify real solutions to challenges posed by downtown skateboarding activity.

We know why it's happening. It's not because skaters want to cause damage. It's because skaters want to have challenging places to skate...and those places don't currently exist for Tacoma skaters.

Tacoma business owners and skateboarding citizens are at a crossroads. Together we face an opportunity to work together and find equitable solutions that will demonstrate that we have a vision for Tacoma that includes all of its citizens.

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