

## LGFCU Excellence in Innovation Award Project Evaluation

<b>Project ID</b>	GG-14
<b>Title of Program</b>	The Ogden Slatepark
<b>Program Category</b>	General Government
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<b>Implementation Date</b>	5/1/2016
<b>FLSA Designation</b>	Both (if applicable to a team)
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### Description of Productivity Improvement

In 2014, the New Hanover County Commissioners allocated money for the construction of a skatepark in Ogden Park. Planning for the skatepark began and it quickly became clear that in order to build the type of park the community wanted, additional funds would have to be found. The Ogden Skatepark project showed how to leverage public dollars with private donations to enhance a County project. More than \$120,000 in grants and cash gifts was raised, and over \$120,000 in in-kind donations of construction materials and services was donated. From the beginning, skaters, bikers, and the public were involved in the process and they were also instrumental in helping raise the funds needed to make their dream park a reality. What does a skatepark bring to our County?

- Proven positive economic impact- we have people travelling from all over the country to skate the park.
- Develops new community partnerships- skateboarders have not traditionally been involved with county government. This project enabled both the skaters and the county to work together in creative and productive ways.

- Creates a top quality regional attraction- the project received funding from The Tony Hawk Foundation as well Mr. Hawk's personal involvement in designing the bowl. The "stamp of approval" by a world-renowned skater like Tony Hawk is invaluable.
- Strengthens community image and creates a sense of place- the surrounding neighborhoods have embraced the skatepark. Each day, the bike racks are full from kids who are now able to ride their bike to the park.
- Contributes to health and physical well-being of the community, particularly our youth- more than 50 kids a day are using the park and skating for an average of two hours each time they visit.
- Provides positive youth development in a safe, secure environment

### **Description of why this project was initiated**

Skateboarding and BMX bikes have been an important part of New Hanover County's culture since the 1970's. Before the Ogden Skatepark, they were tucked away in backyards, driveways and parking lots all over our region. You would find a skate and bmx scene where do-it-yourself projects were the name of the game and the closest skatepark facility was 10+ miles away. This dedicated community of beginners and experts, young and old had gone long enough without a public place to call home and that's why, as part of the Parks and Gardens Department's mission to provide safe and healthy activities "" the County built this skatepark. The Skatepark is open during park hours and is free. It is open to skaters and bikers alike. The next closest skate facilities all charge a fee to skate or bike. By locating the skatepark in our existing Ogden Park, we were able to make a high quality, free skatepark available to thousands of local skaters.

In the 2014 budget, the New Hanover County Commissioners allocated \$265,000 in capital funds for a new skatepark to be constructed at Ogden Park. Ogden Park is located in northern New Hanover County and is surrounded by neighborhoods and used by thousands of people every year. Currently, the closest skateparks are more than 12 miles away for skaters in this part of the County. Our Mission?

- To establish a premiere concrete skate park where skaters can exercise in a clean, safe, environment without endangering people or damaging property.
- To develop a well-maintained park open to skaters who are willing to uphold the park's rules and restrictions.
- To view this park as a community project, designed to satisfy the needs of skaters, bikers and families.

The Skatepark is open during park hours (8am-dusk) and is free. Ogden Skatepark is open to skaters and bikers-we are the only skatepark in the area to open to both everyday.

Fundraising for the Ogden Skatepark began after the New Hanover County Parks Conservancy received it's 501(c)3 designation in the fall of 2014. In the summer/fall of 2014, we assembled a committee made up of local skaters of all ages, businesses that cater to skaters and parents of skaters and began the process of selecting a design firm for the OSP. The design was completed by Grindline Skateparks out of Seattle, Washington. The design process included input from all ages, expertise, and a wide range socio-economic factors. We included public meetings, feedback on Social Media, and distribution of "Idea Books" throughout the community. Once the design was finalized, we then advertised for pre-qualifications for construction. Grindline Skateparks was selected to lead the construction.

Construction began in the Spring of 2016 and was completed in February 2017. We anticipated that the Ogden Skatepark would attract thousands of skaters and BMX bikers yearly. We estimated that 5,000 skaters and bikers would use the park in the first year- we are currently on track to surpass that

number in the first three months of opening. We are also working with The Tony Hawk Foundation to schedule his "Get Rad for Ray" event at our skatepark. The plan is for this yearly event to have a permanent home at Ogden Skatepark. The Get Rad for Ray event will bring in thousands of visitors and will be recognized nationally in the skate community. As the only Tony Hawk designed bowl on the eastcoast, our skatepark will be a destination for skaters from across the country.

**Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).**

**Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings**

New Hanover County has always shown a strong commitment to Parks and Gardens. In 2006, a Parks Bond was passed by voters. These bonds enabled the County to greatly enhance our parks, but bond money does not last forever. All funds have been expended from those bonds, so funding for improvements and additions to our parks must be included in the County budget for Capital Improvements. That is our new reality in new Hanover County for the foreseeable future. The County initially allocated \$265,000 for this project. When the design firm was chosen and community in-put received, the price to design and construct the skatepark was larger than expected. The County was able to allocate additional dollars, but it was not enough to complete the project as designed. So we got creative and worked with The Parks Conservancy of New Hanover County (the newly created non-profit fundraising organization that exists solely to support New Hanover County parks) to raise the monies needed. We experienced a groundswell of support from local companies who have stepped up to support the development of the Ogden Skatepark. We have approached the project from both sides- increasing revenue and decreasing expenses. We used the following techniques:

- Individual Gifts- from local skate/surf shops, local businesses, and skate enthusiasts
- Grants from The Tony Hawk Foundation
- Food Truck Rodeos- The Conservancy started a Food Truck Rodeo event where local food trucks gathered at one of our parks on a Sunday afternoon and a portion of proceeds from food sales were designated for the skatepark. The event started with five trucks and has now grown to include more than twenty food trucks and vendors.
- Crowdfunding through an IndieGoGo site
- Pennies for the Park by the elementary school located adjacent to the park- Eaton Elementary School 5th graders
- BMX Bike and Skate Competitions
- A local wine shop held two fundraisers- the owner used to skate when he was younger and has become one of our strongest advocates and supporters.
- Sale of t-shirts, hats, sweatshirts
- ABC Cares- an online voting contest by ABC Mortgage- we won 3rd place and were awarded \$500

We also asked local companies to supply us with free or reduced-cost materials/services. The response was overwhelmingly positive:

- Concrete was provided at a reduced price per cubic yard
- Fill dirt was completely donated- saving us over \$70,000
- All labor of concrete flatwork was donated
- The landscape materials were installed by a local landscape company at no cost
- Port-o-johns and a dumpster were donated at no cost for use during construction
- A reduced cost of forms, lumber and hardware by a local supply store
- Stone was provided at a reduced cost per ton
- The Parks Department provided the site clearing at no cost to the project

-Steel was being provided at a reduced rate  
-An awning structure that was being removed from one of our library branches was re-purposed as our shade structure

**Other descriptive information**

The Ogden Skatepark is worthy of this award for the following reasons:

- 1.It provides a roadmap for future funding of parks improvements and enhancements.
- 2.We engaged a previously disenfranchised/politically uninvolved segment of the population in a county government process and they are now part of a successful county project, greatly increasing the likelihood of them becoming involved in the future.
- 3.We filled a gap in services by building a skatepark in a part of the county that had no easy access to a skatepark.
- 4.We are improving the health of kids by providing them with a park within biking or walking distance of their homes.
- 5.We are providing a safe, secure space for skaters and bikers to practice their sport- as opposed to the empty lots and backyard ramps they had been using.
- 6.We are enhancing economic development in our county by adding a skating destination to the area.