



Community Development and Recreation Committee
January 17, 2018
Friends of Regent Park

Dale Howey

Good morning Chair Pasternak and Committee. My name is Dale Howey and I am here on behalf of Friends of Regent Park—a group of residents who share a common vision of animating public community spaces in Regent Park. I am here to speak on the benefit of accessible and affordable skate rentals. The Friends of Regent Park supports Councillor Layton’s recommendation for the Community Development and Recreation Committee to request the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report on the possible approaches to skate rental programs at City-Operated Outdoor Rinks.

Friends of Regent Park further urges the creation of affordable skate rentals to make skating accessible to all. A skate rental program is beneficial for many reasons, ranging from physical health to social inclusion. There are numerous health benefits of encouraging physical activity, especially during the winter months when people are more likely to stay indoors. To add, creating an affordable skate rental program removes financial barriers. This can greatly benefit families who desire to skate but have not been able to pursue it due to the cost inefficiency of buying skates for growing children.

Once these barriers have been eliminated, it encourages more social interaction for groups as they are out in the community and making use of under-utilized city resources. Affordable skate rental programs can be complemented with more opportunities for collaboration and community building. For instance, community groups and agencies in Regent Park will be hosting skate days in the next two months like the DJ Skate Events at the new Bentway Skate Trail. We’re excited to be working with the community and with the City to animate the Regent Park rink.

I’ve been involved with the Regent Park Community for around three years. I was introduced to the community when I was brought in to train users of the wood fired oven. I have enjoyed working and meeting with community there so much that I continue to volunteer for events there with the Friends of Regent Park. Regent Park is a vibrant community filled with a diverse population. The summer events prove to be very successful in building connections and fostering community. We hope that an affordable skate rental program can extend this spirit during the winter seasons, in Regent Park and beyond.

The Friends of Regent Park looks forward to a report on recommended approaches for skate rental programs in Regent Park and across the city. We are excited to work with the City and community groups to make this initiative a reality in Regent Park. We believe that by collaborating with the City we will find realistic and affordable ways to leverage existing resources (staff, facilities, skates, community groups) to create a program that improves access to recreation and increases positive health outcomes in communities across the city.

Thank you.