

# City of Palm Desert Staff Report

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**Meeting Date:** May 5, 2026

**Prepared By:** Shawn Muir, Community Services Manager

**Department:** Public Works

**Subject:** Establish a Subcommittee and Its Responsibilities for the Civic Center Skate Park

## Recommendation

1. Establish a subcommittee of two Parks and Recreation Committee members for the oversight and review of the Civic Center Skate Park (skate park) during a 12-month trial unsupervised operational model.
2. Establish the term and responsibilities of the subcommittee, including monitoring parameters, defining “success” for the change in operational model, and reporting schedule.

## Background

At the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee (Committee) held on March 3, 2026, staff presented an item regarding the operational model for the Civic Center Skate Park (skate park). During the discussion, Committee members shared feedback from the local skating community indicating that constant supervision may be perceived as a barrier to use. Members noted that some skaters feel the presence of an attendant “watching over” the park may discourage participation and detract from the informal, self-regulated culture typical of skate parks, as well as expressed concerns regarding strict enforcement of elbow and knee pad requirements.

The Committee unanimously recommended transitioning the skate park to unsupervised use through the end of the calendar year as a pilot program. The intent is to evaluate whether this operational change increases accessibility and usage while maintaining acceptable safety and maintenance conditions.

Following this recommendation, staff presented the item to the City Council on March 26, 2026. While staff supported the Committee’s recommendation, they advised that a 12-month pilot program would be preferable to capture seasonal variations, weather impacts, and school schedules, thereby providing a more comprehensive assessment.

To support evaluation, the following recommendations were presented to the City Council, should they opt to proceed with the pilot unsupervised operational model:

- Implementing weekly monitoring of park conditions, usage patterns, and any incidents or maintenance concerns.
- Forming a subcommittee to determine responsibility for conducting weekly monitoring.
- Compiling Desert Recreation District usage data to establish a baseline of attendance under current supervised operations for comparison during the pilot.

Findings from the pilot, including usage data, observed trends, and operational or safety considerations, will be presented to the City Council at the conclusion of the pilot period.

The City Council voted unanimously to implement a 12-month pilot program transitioning the skate park to an unsupervised facility, while ensuring compliance with California Health and Safety Code § 115800 through required signage and enforcement of protective equipment requirements. Staff now recommend that the Committee appoint two members to establish a Skate Park Subcommittee to work with staff in implementing the pilot, including the monitoring and reporting program outlined above.

## **Legal Review**

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

## **Financial Impact**

The Skate Park's operation under an unsupervised model is anticipated to result in cost savings through the elimination of attendant staffing. The extent of these savings will be evaluated during the pilot period. Minor costs associated with signage, periodic monitoring, and maintenance are expected to continue.

## **Attachments**

1. Presentation