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Courtesy City of Reading | City officials said this image shows how a proposed skatepark near Reading Area Community College might look.

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Reading backs effort to build skatepark near **RACC**

Reading Eagle

Wednesday April 26, 2017 12:01 AM

READING, PA — City officials on Tuesday announced plans for a concrete skatepark on about 30,000 square feet of open space along Riverfront Drive.

The multi-use park would accommodate skates, bicycles, inline skates, scooters and other recreational vehicles and would be between Penske Trucking and the Reading Area Community College campus.

Plans are for the skatepark to be lighted at night, which would make it a welcome addition to the Schuylkill River Heritage Trail that runs through the area.

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"A safe, free, and easily accessible concrete park will provide the youth and millennials with a place to have fun and enjoy our city's beautiful park system and riverfront trail area," Reading Mayor Wally Scott said.

Upon completion, the park will attract action sports enthusiasts from all over the country and promote physical fitness, motivate our youth, and strengthen our community by connecting the park to future improvements along Penn Street, Scott said. Similar parks are in place in York, Bethlehem, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia, and there are plans for a new one in Allentown. Such venues are credited with eliminating blight, deterring criminal activity, and redeveloping underused vacant land, the mayor said.

In addition to the support provided by Scott and the Reading Redevelopment Authority, the Reading Skatepark Association, the group seeking the area, also has received letters of support from state Sen. Judy Schwank and state Rep. Mark Rozzi.

RSA - which has applied for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, said it will provide immediate funding to design of the park; it has started a GoFundMe site seeking to raise \$250,000.

For more information about the RSA's efforts and future fundraising events, including the upcoming ShReading Festival benefit concert on June 24, visit the group's Facebook page at facebook.com/readingskateparkassociation.



6

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