THE PAST

In 2010 a small group of skateboarders built a ramp on an old abandoned patch of land between I-610 and some train tracks. It was an old piece of Humanity Street. And it was skateable. Word spread fast in the skateboarding community - soon there were skaters from across the region, of all ages and backgrounds. What emerged was New Orleans’ first public skatepark: The Peach Orchard.

Back then, the builders bought concrete with pocket change and later held skate contests and benefit shows at the park. They taught themselves how to design, build, and maintain the skatepark, sharing methods and meeting new people all while addressing a vital need for the skateboard community. When the trains went by, skaters would holler, “Tricks for trains, tricks for trains!” and would bust out special moves for the conductors, who blasted their horns in appreciation. What looked like a ragtag playground from a distance was, up close, a little utopia - peaceful, fun, tucked into a blighted and forgotten corner of the city. The Peach Orchard was demolished on May 14th, 2012. The only skatepark in New Orleans was gone.

Within weeks, however, skaters from all over the city returned to the spot to offer support. The skatepark was gone, but the community was still there. They moved a few yards away, under Interstate 610, and began skating. And in no time, the slab was cut, the concrete was poured, and the first ramp under I-610 was skated by its proud builders. Word spread fast in the skater community – soon the builders were left with no choice than to keep building in order to meet the demand of skaters in the area. Parisite Skatepark (named after its proximity to Paris Ave.) was born.

In 2013, Parisite Skatepark was officially recognized by the City of New Orleans, which designated the area under I-610 between Paris and Hamburg Street as a “Skatepark Recreation Area”. “What makes the place so incredible and so different from other skateparks is the way that the builders engage the community each step of the way,” one skater said. “It’s not like they just design the park and throw it in, they actually teach the kids at the park how to build, giving them a sense of ownership and pride over the place. This is what the kids need – life skills and tools to better themselves and their communities. This is what Parisite is all about.”
TRANSITIONAL SPACES designs and implements quality public skateparks in the state of Louisiana that focus on safe recreation and educational opportunities for youth.
PRESENT & FUTURE
After the city got wind of Parisite Skatepark, skaters formed a Louisiana Nonprofit Corporation called Transitional Spaces and began negotiations with New Orleans Recreation Department Commission (NORDC) to save the park. The Brees Dream Foundation and the internationally-recognized Tony Hawk Foundation awarded Transitional Spaces funding to continue the DIY efforts at Parisite, while the city designated Parisite a “Skatepark Recreation Area” and arranged the placement of ramps donated by Red Bull and Spohn Ranch Skateparks at Parisite. After several years of hard work spent advocating for skateparks in New Orleans, teaching kids how to skateboard, funding skateparks in New Orleans, attending City Hall meetings, and modifying DIY ramps to meet accepted design standards, the skaters began to realize how far they had progressed and that their work would be enjoyed far into the future. Made up of skaters, teachers, architects, builders, artists, and students, Transitional Spaces has given voice to the skateboarding community and has formed a working relationship with the New Orleans Recreation Department.

In the past year Transitional Spaces has held several neighborhood meetings and design charrettes with local skaters to inform a comprehensive design of Parisite that is in line with our mission of creating inclusive, safe, and educational skateparks. We are working with the Tulane City Center and other designers to bring our skatepark ideas to reality at Parisite, while continually shaping the space through events and programming such as all-girls skate nights and neighborhood BBQs. At regular clean-up and ramp-building days, Transitional Spaces works with youth in the area teaching design and construction skills by creating and repairing ramps, while regularly engaging them in positive activities such as nature walks and chalk art on site. Parisite provides an arena of interaction for people of all walks of life, and Transitional Spaces works to communicate with park participants towards shaping their skatepark to their dreams.
WORKING TOGETHER

As specialists in urban play spaces and safe recreation areas, Transitional Spaces opens new lines of communication and interaction between park participants, neighbors, designers, builders, and administrators: a valuable resource to the City of New Orleans, the New Orleans Recreation Department, park users, and the surrounding communities. We believe that the best parks are free and open to the public, instilling a sense of ownership, responsibility, and pride in both their participants and neighbors. This accessible, responsive connection to one’s surrounding environment is an essential element of skateboarding. We believe that increased communication, interaction, and ownership for all parties involved in the conception, design, build, and daily use of a park will create a great asset for a community.

Parisite Skatepark has been shaped by a multitude of organizations and individuals:
- Transitional Spaces
- Skaters, Neighbors, and volunteers from across the country
- New Orleans Recreation Department Commission
- Spohn Ranch Skateparks, Red Bull, and Action Park Alliance
- Tulane City Center
- Tony Hawk Foundation
- Drew Brees Dream Foundation
SKATEBOARDING AND YOUTH IN AMERICA

Skaters are woven into the cultural fabric of every urban community in the United States. They are the stewards of the creative force that adds diversity to our cities. Skateboarding is an essential option for a huge percentage of today’s youth. Nearly a quarter of the 61-million youth in the United States skated this year, and most of them identify themselves as “skateboarders.” It is astonishing that so many cities have multiple skateparks to meet the needs of their youth. We should support healthy, positive activity that skateboarding promotes by making sure there are enough skateparks and places to skate that are designed for sustainability and success.

16% of the population in the United States between the ages of five and twenty-four are skateboarders

93% of all skateboarders in the United States are younger than twenty-four
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
347,645 people
2,960 people/m²

TAMPA, FL
347,645 people
2,960 people/m²

ANAHEIM, CA
343,248 people
6,747 people/m²

NEW ORLEANS, LA
369,250 people
2,960 people/m²

**WHY DOES NEW ORLEANS NOT HAVE A SKATEPARK?**

Though there’s a vibrant community of skaters in New Orleans and surrounding parishes, there are no public skateparks. Instead, skaters can be found on the streets, on homemade elements, and wherever there is a smooth surface and topography to be found. According to the Tony Hawk Foundation, an international skateboarding advocacy group, there are an estimated 7,908 skaters in New Orleans. To fully provide for this community, New Orleans needs 228,000 sqft. of skateparks. Further, THF cites an immediate need of 43,000 sqft. of skateparks in New Orleans. It is undeniable that the New Orleans skateboarding community is in great need of safe, quality recreation spaces.

7.6% of skateboarders in Louisiana live in New Orleans, yet New Orleans has no Skatepark

Each Skateboard represents a skatepark in a comparable city.
Youth of all ages participate in skating and biking at Parisite Skatepark. Families gather to watch their children as they enjoy themselves on the ramps and other skateable elements. This inclusivity is always encouraged at Parisite.
While many of New Orleans’ youth grow up at risk of being victims of violent acts or entering the prison system, the New Orleans Recreation Department has undergone restructuring which provides less reliable funding from the City. One of Transitional Spaces’ prime directives is to provide service where it is most needed. Unstructured recreation areas such as skateparks allow youth to build self-confidence as they creatively interact with their environment as well as one another. Skateboarding tricks are mastered through peer support rather than coaches determining the best way to participate. This fosters creativity, self-expression, cooperation, leadership skills and other valuable life lessons. There may be no city in America that has suffered more from the lack of recreational and educational opportunities for youth than in New Orleans. Transitional Spaces recognizes that this great need is in fact a great opportunity.

11% of Louisiana teens ages 16-19 are not in school and have not earned a high school diploma or a GED

34% of children in New Orleans live in poverty

The percentage of children living in poverty in New Orleans is 14 percent greater than the national average.

20% is the national average percentage of children living in poverty

New Orleans youth are underserved and misrepresented. Transitional Spaces recognizes this and understands that skateparks provide recreational and social opportunities for Louisiana youth.

46% of teen homicides in Louisiana were from Orleans Parish

The percentage of children living in poverty in New Orleans is 14% percent greater than the national average.
They opened up a girls skate night and we decided to come. And we’re just learning and nobody’s judging us and everyone’s helping us and it’s really cool.

Taylor, Freda, & Kate

This is why we came. This is why we drove two and a half hours to this city, to be here at Parisite. If you want to know what is going to bring people to New Orleans, this is what is going to bring them here.

Lee Trahan & Friends

Well, this is my first time here, and I’m with my family. I really like it. It’s somewhere safe for the kids to be. We need more places like this in the city.

Toni Simm & Family

This place is great, built by skaters for skaters. So, it is everything we want because we built it ourselves. I’d love to see a bowl here sometime soon. We should get working on that!

Tommy “Bama” Stevens
St. Bernard Recreation Center

RTA Bus Line 52:
St. Bernard - St. Anthony

I-610 westbound exit 2C for Paris Ave
Leads directly to Parisite Skatepark

Columbia Parc Housing Development
(Former St. Bernard Housing Projects)
- Future Elementary School
- YMCA
- Grocery Store

Future Site of John McDonogh HS

(Former) Peach Orchard Skatepark

Parisite Skatepark

Medard H. Nelson Charter School
UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

Parisite Skatepark is situated beneath I-610 at the base of the Paris Ave. exit, next to NORDC St. Bernard Recreation Center. Parisite is within walking distance of schools, housing developments, City Park and the New Orleans Fair Grounds - two public spaces already being utilized as gathering spaces. The site is also equidistant from Uptown, New Orleans East, and the Lower Ninth Ward, providing a place in the geographic heart of New Orleans for everyone to utilize. Developing Parisite beautifies a formerly barren area below transportation infrastructure, protecting from the sun and rain,
**FIGHTING THE BLIGHT**

TS is committed to fighting the blight in New Orleans. Before skateboarders filled it with life, the Peach Orchard was a haven for torching stolen cars. In 1980, a recreation area with tennis and basketball courts, grills, and picnic tables was built where Parisite now stands, but was removed after falling into disrepair. As of summer 2012, New Orleans contained 35,700 blighted properties, 3,100 of which are owned by the city. TS serves to assist the City by converting under-used or neglected spaces into safe public recreation areas.

**DIY ACTIVATION DOES GOOD**

Years ago, a neighborhood artist painted chess boards on tables and left them in the shade under I-610, where they became quite popular. A few feet away, many of the interstate columns between Hamburg St and St Bernard Avenue were colorfully painted by neighborhood youth, and remain graffiti-free. Across the street, however, the columns are all solid colors or left unpainted and are constantly targeted by taggers.

**SKATE JAM ECO**

By using environmentally sustainable design practices, Transitional Spaces helps The New Orleans Recreation Department realize their own goal of creating “world class public parks” in accordance with New Orleans’ Comprehensive Water Management Strategy. In Parisite’s design, stormwater flows to feed native plant gardens and bio-swales, retaining water in soil instead of sending it directly to pumps. By micro-designing areas for sustainable flood control, the city relies less on large scale engineering and instead on small-scale neighborhood revitalization which is more economically feasible and has a longer lasting impact.

**INCLUSIVITY**

Recreational spaces are often dominated by men, leaving women feeling vulnerable and unsafe. Transitional Spaces works to create safe spaces in which women and girls are welcomed. Regular communication with participants on-site informs our design of safe spaces that foster creative expression, confidence, and self-esteem. Skateparks - particularly DIY skateparks - have a tendency to become territorial spaces dominated by talented and intimidating skaters. Parisite hopes to break these tendencies by providing both skateable and non-skateable elements for an inclusive design. Skateparks can and should serve a community beyond just skateboarders. Therefore, Parisite’s design include green space, public meeting areas, outdoor classrooms, and safe supervising areas for parents.
Construction of the Parisite Skatepark began in May 2012 after the demolition of the Peach Orchard Skatepark, located within yards of the Parisite. The Parisite team began building “Pleasure Island” in parts. The people of Parisite also built the “Volcano” which they modeled after a feature built by architect Janne Saario of Finland. The concrete features, three quarter-pipes and a half-pipe have been inspected by a licenced engineer and have been approved as the first permanant installments for the Parisite Public Skate Park, New Orleans.
PHASE TWO

In 2011, Spohn Ranch Skateparks designed and built ramps for the Red Bull Mississippi Grind Tour. The tour sent the Spohn Ranch ramps and a collection of professional skaters down the Mississippi River on a barge from Minneapolis, Minnesota to New Orleans, Louisiana. The ramps were donated to the City of New Orleans and have been in storage awaiting a destination. Transitional Spaces has been working with NORDC, Capital Projects, Spohn Ranch, and Red Bull to coordinate the installation of these ramps at Parisite with design input from local skaters and complete funding by Red Bull.
PHASE THREE
Transitional Spaces hopes to make the Parisite not only an environment for skaters, but also the community. Collaborating with the Tulane City Center, TS plans for this phase to include outdoor classroom spaces for New Orleans youth, seating and picnic areas for the public, as well as rain gardens and storm water diversion system to alleviate flooding and beautify the site. Public skate parks have been built around the world, but Transitional Spaces hopes to help pioneer a new frontier where skateparks can be fun, safe places for everyone, not just skaters. Phase three will help them achieve that goal.
PHASE FOUR

Phase four is being developed in collaboration with the Tulane City Center to make Parisite Skatepark a world-class skatepark and set an example for other groups and cities who want to add to their community with public skateparks as well. We hope to achieve this by adding to the flow section of the park with a snake run and bowls for all skill levels. This phase also includes skateable art influenced by the neighborhood culture and give Parisite Skatepark unique features reflecting its location.
Shown here are common skating obstacles often found in Skateparks. Some obstacles are considered street, like rails and stairs, while others like a bowl and snake run are definite transitions. Regardless, these elements can be combined and paired together with other custom elements in such a way to create a unique skating experience.
STREET PLAZA
These spaces tend to feature exclusive street-style attractions. They mimic and involve the usage of urban obstacles like stairs, hand rails, benches, and other street furniture. Skaters perform tricks around and over these obstacles which are not curved and maintain a rigid orthogonal or angular structure. These spaces are attractive to both skaters and the broader community while being less intimidating than the deep precipices found in transition style parks.

TRANSITION / BOWL / VERT
Transition is a broad term that refers to any significantly curved portion of a skatepark. Skaters enjoy moving from one skate element to the next enjoying the flow rather than performing tricks, unlike street. Types of transition elements include bowl and vert. Elements similar to swimming pools are bowls while any portion of a transition skating surface may reach a vertical angle is called a vert. It is also common for skateparks to have a small amount of skatable surface to be overhanging, beyond vertical.

FLOW COURSE
While the descriptive term is not widespread, there is a style of design that relies heavily on the undulating forms found in transition, but unlike swimming pool replicas, never reach the dramatic depths or angles found in true “vert.” These areas are sometimes called beginner areas, though a skater of any experience level can find ways to challenge themselves with the smaller forms.

DO IT YOURSELF / DIY
There is no shortage of DIY success stories. As municipalities have been slow to provide adequate skateboarding terrain, skaters have relied on innovation and anti-institutional philosophies to create their own recreation spots. Though many cities have destroyed the DIY skate structures as they appeared, others have negotiated particular constraints and made concessions to allow the activity to continue. Popular examples of DIY Skateparks include Burnside in Portland, OR.
BURNSIDE DIY SKATEPARK
PORTLAND, OREGON BENEATH BURNSIDE BRIDGE

In 1990, a small group of skateboarders in Portland, Oregon armed with only a few bags of concrete, brooms, and shovels, headed over to the space beneath Burnside Bridge which would later become Burnside Skatepark. Though the park was originally built without any legal permission, it stands now as a city approved skatepark and one of the most famous examples of “Do It Yourself” skatepark construction in the United States. Burnside is a great model for studying a smooth layout, transitions, DIY construction, and the challenges of building beneath an interstate. The founding designers and builders of Burnside have since become skatepark developers of Dreamland Skateparks, an organization which prides itself in innovation and their ability to build great skateparks because they are professional skateboarders themselves.

+ Great Transitions
+ Innovative Design beneath bridge which is similar to Parisite’s conditions

- Territorial
- Lack of diversity between Beginner, Intermediate, and Expert ramps
Daybreak Sculpture Garden was designed and built by Spohn Ranch Skateparks, the same company who has donated ramps to New Orleans for use at the Parisite Skatepark. The garden doubles as a community park filled with sculptural art and a public skatepark for the neighborhood kids. It beautifies the neighborhood and provides a safe place for people to enjoy as spectators and skaters.

+ Public park and skatepark
+ Sculpture beautifies neighborhood and is skatable

- Not a skatepark built beneath an interstate
- Not a DIY skatepark
In 2010, Baton Rouge’s Department for Parks and Recreation completed the construction of Louisiana’s premier skate park as an edition to its Perkins Road Community Park. This park now includes parks for BMX, cycling, and rock climbing, making it an excellent example of how a city can create places for the community—especially the youth. The Perkins Road Skate Park is a favorite among skateparks in Louisiana. This park has vert and street features for either kind of rider. The flow bowl has great size with fast banks for maximum speed. The street section is complete with hubbas and rails, and manual pads.

- Separate street and flow sections of the park
- Open to the public
- Diverse skill levels

- Not a DIY park
- Not built under cover from rain and sun
- Far from New Orleans

LOCAL BUILT BY CALIFORNIA SKATEPARKS
HAMMOND DREAMLAND SKATEPARK

HAMMOND, LOUISIANA

Dreamland Skateparks, the founders of Burnside, came together and designed and built a skatepark for Hammond, Louisiana finishing its construction in 2005. It is one of the only skateparks in southern Louisiana located only a one hour drive from New Orleans. Hammond boasts a population of 20,122 people whereas New Orleans has a much larger 369,250. Hammond’s Skatepark, though not located beneath an interstate, provides a good example for what a skatepark in southern Louisiana should look like, a skatepark New Orleans needs to build.
ONLINE
Visit “Parisite Skate Park” on Facebook and at www.parisitediy.org
Email us at TransitionalSpacesNOLA@gmail.com

GET INVOLVED!
You can help progress our work in several ways:
We accept tax-deductable donations of funds, materials, or tools.
Come out to Parisite Skatepark for our regular clean-up and maintenance sessions, Saturdays at noon.
Start an advocacy group for a skatepark in your district.
Host a fundraiser for Parisite/Transitional Spaces

If you are interested in having an event at Parisite Skatepark contact Transitional Spaces.