

# ParkOurPark

## 'Parkour Vision'

Parkour is the art of overcoming obstacles effectively and swiftly using only our bodies. Fundamentals include running, jumping, crawling, and climbing, and we build on these in order to improve our ability to pass over, under, around, and through obstacles that we naturally encounter. Parkour offers a full-body workout to people at any level of experience or fitness; it improves our ability to move, increases our confidence, and changes how we see the world.

**Physical benefits:** Parkour practioners are called traceurs. As a system of fitness training, traceurs condition themselves to improve strength, speed, agility, coordination, stamina, endurance, and precision. When a simple set of railings becomes a playground, a gym, and a public stage, lifelong fitness becomes accessible to everyone regardless of resources.

**Mental benefits:** Parkour is also a mental exercise that builds confidence and creativity. Obstacles and barriers become opportunities and new paths. The first time a person, regardless of age, balances on a rail or vaults a bench, their perception changes. Their confidence builds. Parkour helps us see new ways to creatively use our environment to challenge ourselves, while encouraging respect for training grounds and responsibility in facing fears.

Parkour teaches us to concentrate on incremental improvements and development within ourselves. It's not about making big jumps—it's about developing gradually better landings. It's not about compensating for bad technique with padding or safety equipment—it's about starting with what we are comfortable with and progressing within our limits. And it's about being prepared, learning to check our landings before we even jump at all.

*"Where most people see walls and divisions, traceurs see opportunities for overcoming obstacles and barriers both physical and mental."*

*– Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

*photo: Tim Kahn*

What

if we could

**see** them in a

whole **new** way? A

way that promotes

**creative** play and lifelong **fitness**

no matter what's around us!

**We see them every day:**

Bus stops - Bike racks - Curbs - Concrete barriers - Benches - Picnic tables - Railings - Stairs - Walls

## ***A parkour Holding Pattern property***

Remember playing "the ground is lava" as a child, jumping from curb to curb and clambering over obstacles so that your feet never touched the ground?

We envision a Holding Pattern property outfitted to be a parkour park—a safe, interpretive, skill-building place where people can have fun and navigate objects that they see every day in a whole new way. Like using a piece of railroad track as a balance beam, or a curb as a jumping obstacle. Or even a reinforced bus shelter for pull ups.

Outdoor parkour parks are beginning to emerge in Europe, and a few are in development across the US. But this would be the first of its kind to create an inviting space using familiar, urban objects. ParkOurPark would be a place for the community to move, train, and safely experience the physical and mental benefits of parkour practice. A collection of pieces from urban life—the number determined by the size and condition of the property available—would be cleaned, securely installed, and developed as obstacles or training stations. Informational signs, similar to those in the par courses and Vita parks made popular in the 1970s, would provide information and advice to drop-in visitors interested in parkour.

There is no "right" way to traverse a space—traceurs are encouraged to develop and use their strengths and find their own paths. ParkOurPark visitors will be able to tailor their actions to their own strengths and curiosity. Jump. Balance. Crawl. Hang. Play tag. Work out. The community will shape the ways they use the park as the park shapes them.

ParkOurPark would be a park for all ages. Kids are drawn to parkour, because it's an extension of what they do naturally: play. What we give them are obstacles, challenges, and the discipline to grow. We work with children as young as six and professional adults in their forties and beyond who are excited to take advantage of a safe space to learn new ways to move.

ParkOurPark would be a place for the community to gather, and we would be intentional about building relationships with the park's neighbors. Parkour Visions would move some of our regular classes to the outdoor space temporarily, and offer on-site instruction and mentoring from professional parkour instructors to drop-in community members.

## ***Where is ParkOurPark?***

Like parkour itself, our park plan is adaptable to different kinds of surroundings. We expect that most of the empty lots identified by Holding Patterns could meet our needs with minimal modification. Foundations or retaining walls, concrete or blacktop, grass or dirt—parkour uses all of it and more. Ramps and fences excite us. Holes in the ground become opportunities for climbing.

Ideally, ParkOurPark would have:

- Some level concrete foundation areas
- Plenty of open space
- Foundation or retaining walls for climbing

A location near residential, highly trafficked neighborhoods would be ideal, to encourage drop-in visitors. Our photos are of a lot at 19<sup>th</sup> and Madison in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.



*photo: Paula Thomas*

*"[Traceurs] see the sterile, urban environments others see in totally different ways, as backyards of challenge and opportunity. No special equipment needed. Forget the gym or the pool – Parkour can be done anytime, anywhere."*

*– Seattle Times*

## What would we need?

Parkour doesn't have any required equipment, and our goal is to make this a temporary, cost-effective project consistent with the parkour goal to use your environment. Our dream for ParkOurPark is to recycle building materials and city equipment, like retired bus shelters, extra parking curbs, and unused city benches. A team of volunteers, led by the experienced builders who constructed our indoor gym obstacles, would handle installation. Volunteers would clean the material, stabilize it, paint it, and use it to make physical training fun. We would solicit in-kind donations from construction and other companies, as well.

## Leave No Trace

At its core, parkour is about movement through an evolving landscape—ParkOurPark would be temporary, disassembled easily whenever the property is ready for development. And, consistent with the philosophy of parkour, the property would be left in better condition than we found it. Traceurs understand and practice the idea of Leave No Trace, remaining aware of and taking personal responsibility for our surroundings. The places we train are our playgrounds, and we rely on our obstacles and materials to support us. We make sure the screws are tightly bolted, and any broken glass or litter we find is picked up. We stress knowing our equipment and our environment, and leaving our training ground as good as, or better than, we found it.

## Why parkour?

Parkour is a growing sport in the United States. What started with a few YouTube videos is now the feature sport of an MTV series, found in almost every new action movie and video game, and the focus of a growing number of gyms, facilities, and followers across the country. Through an outdoor, community-based parkour park we hope to capture this interest and help children and adults appreciate their innate love of movement, connect with their surroundings, and experience the potential of what their bodies have evolved to do.

## What is Parkour Visions?

We push Play.

Parkour Visions is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation based in Washington state. We comprise a diverse group of individuals for whom Parkour is an important part of life, and we care about its future. Our charter is, foremost, to teach the safe and effective practice of parkour in our community, and to connect traceurs in the region and across the world. More information is available on our website, [www.parkourvisions.org](http://www.parkourvisions.org)

Parkour Visions, originally called the Pacific Northwest Parkour Association, was formed in 2007. Through programs like Jump Washington, we try to introduce parkour to more than 500 at-risk youth every year from low-income housing, teen crisis centers, and public schools in poor neighborhoods.

We opened a gym dedicated to parkour training in 2009. Located in the Fremont neighborhood of Seattle, the gym provides a home for our academy classes, bridges the gap to our outreach programs through events and sponsorships, and acts as the center of operations for our growing troupe of passionate volunteers.



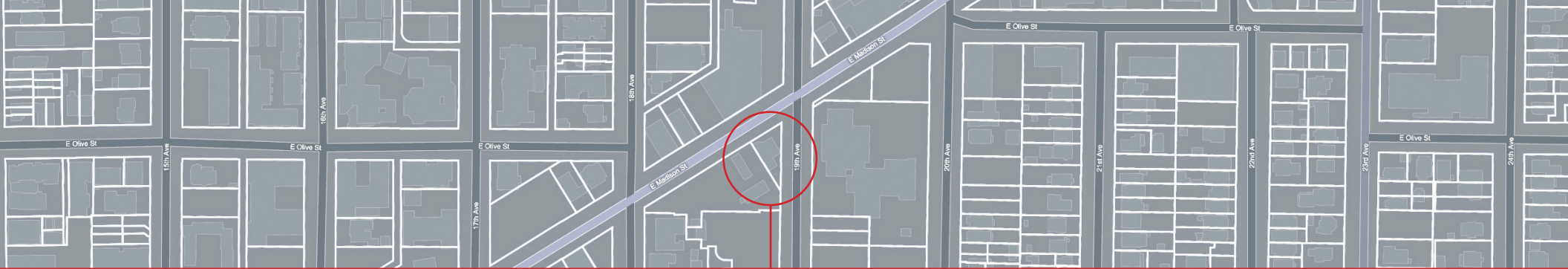
*Proposal respectfully submitted to the Seattle Design Commission on May 24, 2010, by the volunteer Holding Patterns team and the staff of Parkour Visions. With special thanks to CAST architecture for renderings and graphic design.*

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**PARKOUR  
VISIONS**

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