

Ashbridges Bay Skate Park

Toronto, ON, Canada (2009)

PRODUCT USED:

Hard-Cem®

OWNER:

Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ARCHITECT:

LANDinc

DESIGNER:

Spectrum Skateparks

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:

Blackwell Structural Engineers

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:

Pine Valley Corp.

READY-MIX SUPPLIER:

St. Marys CBM

DISTRIBUTOR:

Form & Build Supply

BACKGROUND

Several years after designing the City of Burnaby's Metro Skate Park, which won multiple awards and remains a structural icon in British Columbia, Canada, Spectrum Skateparks went on to create another municipal marvel. This time, it would be for the City of Toronto in Ontario, Canada.

Much like the City of Burnaby, Toronto realized they needed to accommodate a growing number of local skateboard enthusiasts. As a result, they decided to construct a street-style skate park in Ashbridges Bay. However, they wanted to provide a truly urban and original experience that would appeal to beginners and seasoned pros alike. So Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation brought in an expert construction team, which included the award-winning companies Spectrum Skateparks and LANDinc as the skate park specialist and architect, respectively. Under the oversight of Pine Valley Corp., a highly regarded general contractor, this team planned out Toronto's largest and only urban street plaza park.

Like any other urban street plaza park, it would simultaneously mimic and improve upon the thrill of skateboarding in the city, using typical urban structures, such as rails, stairs, and ledges. However, it was also a much more ambitious project that would take up an extensive 1,200 m³ (21,500 ft²). Throughout all that space, the park would feature multiple unique, sculpturally complex, and diverse hybrid shapes along with a distinctive mix of straight lines and two- and three-dimensional curves. These would help form key skateboarding structures, such as a floating manual dish, concrete recliner, kinked steeped bank, and a Daewon Song-style pad.

But to create these features, the skate park construction team would first need to exploit the full spectrum of versatility that concrete could offer. The designer, known for using harder, thicker concrete and more rebar than other skate park builders, also needed to ensure their work would be cost-effective and offer long-term durability. Additionally, the team wanted to minimize the potential for road rash (also known as road burn) that inline skaters in skate parks occasionally suffer from regardless of their skill level. So, in short, they needed a cost-effective, long-lasting concrete surface that would be as smooth as possible.



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SOLUTION

Knowing that Kryton's Hard-Cem could provide that surface and more once added to the team's concrete mix, Form & Build Supply recommended the concrete hardening admixture. Following that recommendation, St. Marys CBM, the team's ready-mix supplier, added Hard-Cem to the 1,200 m³ (21,500 ft²) of concrete needed to fulfill the cast-in-place skate park design specifications.

Because Hard-Cem is an integral admixture, the team already saw immediate reductions to the cost of their construction. With Hard-Cem at their disposal, they spent less on labor as they didn't have to apply a costly surface-applied concrete hardener. Instead, they added Hard-Cem directly into their concrete mix at the time of batching. That also reduced costs related to quality control as there was no concern over missing a spot during application. The admixture simply permeated the concrete mix, providing all the concrete structures with thorough, full-depth hardening that would double their wear life and increase their abrasion and erosion resistance.

On top of that, the integral aspect of Hard-Cem made the admixture compatible with horizontal, vertical, and inclined concrete surfaces. It ensured that no matter the unique shape of the different skate park features, the admixture could be applied to properly protect them from wear and tear. As a result, skateboard enthusiasts would be able to safely enjoy a smooth experience at Ashbridges Bay Skate Park for years and years.

To add to that experience, the team also provided the concrete with a glassy, lasting concrete finish. It reduced the friction that people at the park would experience when falling on the concrete, which would increase their safety as they'd be able to slide harmlessly across the surface.

Overall, it made for a progressive design that took advantage of innovative solutions like Hard-Cem to create better, more durable concrete. It made Ashbridges Bay Skate Park a regional delight that captivated many Toronto skateboarders, and national and international visitors, over the years. And it enabled the park to win an award for product innovation and architectural hardscape from the Ontario Concrete Awards just a year after its construction was finished, proving just how much Hard-Cem and other innovations enhanced its design.

