

The Reality of Street Skating in Tokyo and Its Potential Acceptance in Public Spaces

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[S Y N O P S I S]

Urban sports, which take place in various urban spaces, are popular as creative and cultural activities. However, they are sometimes regarded as acts subject to regulation in public spaces. In particular, skateboarding in urban areas (street skating) is widely supported by practitioners due to its cultural background, but it is often subject to restrictions due to concerns over noise, curb damage, and other issues. In Tokyo, prohibitory signs against skateboarding are frequently observed, raising concerns that excessive regulations may limit the diversity of activities in public spaces. In contrast, some overseas cities, such as Melbourne, Australia, and Bordeaux, France, have taken initiatives to accommodate street skating, which was once a target of regulation.

This study aims to (1) examine how street skating has been accommodated in overseas cities and (2) clarify the current state of street skating in Tokyo, including activity locations and regulatory conditions, to explore the potential for its acceptance. A literature review and interviews were conducted regarding the initiatives in Melbourne and Bordeaux. Additionally, in Tokyo, interviews were conducted with skateboarders, followed by field surveys of the activity locations identified through these interviews.

The findings indicate that in overseas cities, authorities and practitioners collaborate to identify urban spaces where the risks associated with skateboarding—such as noise, damage, and collisions—can be minimized, adopting an approach that actively allows these activities. On the other hand, in Tokyo, 255 major street skating locations were identified, revealing that activities take place in various urban spaces, including privately owned public spaces. However, regulations were found to be in place at approximately 80% of these locations, even in areas that meet the conditions for risk mitigation. This suggests that factors beyond the inherent risks of street skating may be influencing these regulations.

For street skating to be more widely accepted in Tokyo, a phased approach is necessary. In addition to adopting similar strategies to those seen in overseas cities, collaboration between various public space managers, including private entities, and practitioners is essential to initiate small-scale efforts toward greater acceptance.