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Skate park highlight of Coachella's \$2.1 million renovation

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The Coachella Valley's newest skate park opened Friday at Dateland Park in Coachella.

City and community members gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the \$2.1 million in improvements that include a 4-acre skate park — the city's first.

Festivities continue today at 10 a.m. at the park with food vendors and entertainment.

"This is a very special moment," Mayor Eduardo Garcia said on Friday.

With 41 percent of the city's population 18 years old and younger, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, such amenities are important, city officials and residents say.

"The city of Coachella is a relatively young city — young in growth and (age) of the people coming in," said Robert Hernandez, a member of Our Lady of Soledad Catholic Church and Inland Congregations United for Change.

"This was a soccer field and some baseball diamonds. There was nothing for kids to play. There was nothing for the family. Now we have this," said Hernandez on Friday looking around the new park.

The park is located at the southwest corner of Shady Lane and Bagdad Avenue.

The enhanced park now includes two new playground areas, a large turf area, a water play area, new restrooms, picnic tables, walking paths, monument signs and expansive lighting.

"This is definitely something Coachella needs. It took them awhile, but they got it done," said Zulma Hernandez, a resident with two young children.

The improvements were made possible, Garcia said, with the help of local organizations such as ICUC and RAICES, Coachella Valley Unified officials and residents.

With Bobby Duke Middle School located next to the park, students and employees there have been watching what was an open field slowly transform into a park that rivals others across the valley.

"It was real messed up before, and now it's real nice," said 12-year-old Christian Molina, a student at Bobby Duke.

Molina and some of his other classmates think the new skate park will get plenty of use.

There are at least five other skate parks in the valley. Coachella's is believed to be the sixth.

"Now they have their own place," said Zulma Hernandez about the skate park. "It will keep them out of trouble."
