



Ask the Expert

Why have an urban boulder in the city?

A bunch of people today are only climbing on artificial walls with plastic holds, and that's OK. It's a complete sport with tons of health benefits, but it's very different from climbing on real rock. The experience of climbing actual granite is more adventurous—there's no bright pink hold showing you where to put your foot. But climbing on rock in the city is

something that doesn't exist; it's not offered anywhere. We began OnSite five years ago with a vision to change that.

We go into quarries, and we carefully shop our pieces. We look for rocks that have interesting features that we know are going to be fun to climb. We use those natural features, and we climb them over and over, tweaking them—sculpting



Pascal Godin, Co-founder and Head of Design, OnSite

Rock climbing is a great way to connect with nature and challenge yourself—all while getting a workout. But until recently, if a city dweller wanted to go rock climbing on a natural surface made of real granite they had to plan a trip, load up the car, and head out into nature. Now, thanks to the Montreal-based company **OnSite** and its team of engineers, designers, and passionate rock climbers, cities are bringing that natural experience into local parks. **Pascal Godin**, co-founder and head of design at OnSite, explains the benefits of installing a natural climbing boulder in an urban environment.

the rock face to add or change holds—so the climbing experience is optimized. We put all those routes into our app so climbers can find the route that matches their skill level.

Then we bring these huge rocks into the urban landscape so people can commute to local parks and climb for free. You don't have to take your car and drive for hours to get to the mountains. Just bring your landing pad and you're ready to go.

When installing our urban boulders we work with each city and their landscape architects to make sure our rocks are placed in the best possible locations. First, climbers need to be able to find and

enjoy the boulders. We want to create an atmosphere where people can rock climb while they picnic or hang out with their families and friends. We also have to be focused on safety, and we work with each city's unique set of norms and rules to be sure we're providing a safe experience. Finally, each rock is positioned beautifully so it improves the landscape and makes the park look great, resulting in natural monuments that are both visually interesting and actually useful.



Read more from OnSite when they tackle indoor rock climbing walls in the **Summer issue** of **gb&d**.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ONSITE



OnSite brings real granite boulders carefully selected from quarries to cities and parks, so you don't have to spend hours traveling in a car to go rock climbing.