

Thursday, March 1, 2007

## **Great Park to cost \$1.1 billion**

**Many factors weigh into whether the Great Park will cost less or more than the estimate that will be presented to the board today.**

By SONYA SMITH  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

IRVINE – Ken Smith's Great Park vision will cost about \$1.1 billion.

That total cost is based on 2007 market estimates of what it will take to design and build the park.

The estimates will be presented to the Great Park Corp. board at an 11 a.m. study session today. In the coming months and years, park board members and ultimately the Irvine City Council will decide what gets built when.

"This represents the starting point for determining ultimately what gets built in the park," said Yehudi Gaffen, the park design team's project manager. "We are putting our estimates on the table, so we can start refining the park design."

The cost includes things as big as the canyon and as small as park bathrooms, but excludes a main veterans memorial, botanical gardens and all museums but the aircraft museum. For example, the gardens are expected to be paid for by Great Park Conservancy fundraising efforts.

The \$1.1 billion figure could be affected by the market and design changes. For instance, a high demand for concrete in construction-heavy China would mean higher concrete costs in Irvine. And as designers get into the nitty-gritty details of building the park, cost estimates will become more reliable.

So how will officials come up with the money?

The secured funding includes:

- \$200 million** paid by the Lennar Corp. for the park as required developer fees.
- \$201 million** paid by the Lennar Corp. for roads, sewers and utilities shared by the Great Park and surrounding Lennar development.
- Redevelopment funding.** The Redevelopment Agency can receive up to 1 percent of the property taxes based on what will be developed on the old El Toro base. Current projections say the agency will receive about \$200 million in the next 12 years, according to Thom Maxwell-Miller, senior project manager for the design team. That funding may change depending on property values.

Other possible funding sources include:

- Money gained from interest and temporary leases on base property.
- Planners also suggest tapping into local, state and federal grants; private donations; and money for demonstration projects such as a solar-energy farm.
- Public officials will consider advertising, corporate sponsorships and admission fees.



**AIR TRAVEL:** Designers are working on an orange passenger-carrying balloon for the Great Park.

RENDERING COURTESY GREAT PARK DESIGN STUDIO

**Graphic: Great Park cost estimates**



## NEXT STEPS

**Today:** The Great Park board meets at 11 a.m. in Irvine City Hall, at Alton Parkway and Harvard Avenue, to hear the design team present the master-plan cost estimate in a study session. No decisions will be made.

**March 22:** The Great Park board receives and reviews the park's business plan.

**June:** The Great Park board reviews the park master plan and phasing plan.

**Mid-2007:** Expected launch of orange helium balloon.

**Mid-2008:** The Lennar Corp. plans to have the first homes open and for sale.

**2009:** First phase of the Great Park expected to open.

*Source: Great Park Corp.*