

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**CONTACT: MARYANN MALONEY**  
**AUGUST 2, 2007**  
**949-375-0856**

**Statement of Mary Ann Gaido**  
**Chair, Irvine Planning Commission**

Today's action by the Planning Commission marks a special milestone in the development of our City. In recognition of the importance of the decision we are asked to make tonight, I would like to read a brief prepared statement.

Three and a half years ago, the former Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro was formally annexed into the City of Irvine and became subject to our planning and zoning authority.

The base was subsequently purchased by Heritage Fields, which entered into a unique development agreement with our City. This agreement transferred approximately 1,347 acres to City ownership for the purpose of creating the first great metropolitan park of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

In order to realize this bold vision, the City took the extraordinary step of conducting an international design competition to select the Master Design team for the Orange County Great Park.

Ken Smith and his talented team of architects, landscape architects, engineers, artists, and designers won this honor and immediately set to work creating a master plan for the Great Park.

Our Great Park staff along with the Design Team began by meeting with – *and listening to* – the many constituencies that make up our diverse City: Veterans,

sports enthusiasts, arts organizations, multi-cultural groups, seniors, business leaders, environmentalists, and advocates for the disabled participated in dozens of planning meetings and conferences, bringing their ideas to the design process.

Residents of Orange County participated by the thousands, expressing their opinions at public design exhibitions, through online polling and through telephone surveys.

What has emerged from this process is a Master Plan based on an incredible amount of public input showing once again that Irvine truly believes in participatory democracy. We know that the Great Park will take many years to build but will continually provide new opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and education each and every year.

It is a plan that truly promises something for everyone: vast lawns and meadows, a lake and streams, palm trees and orange groves, venues for arts and culture, the county's largest sports park, and the nation's most innovative wildlife corridor connecting the Cleveland National Forest to the Laguna Coast Wilderness areas.

This plan weaves environmental stewardship and sustainability into every element of the Park design creating a major park for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It's impressive to note sustainability goals addressed in the park design such as biodiversity, and sustainability, air quality, water quality, reduction of fossil fuels and emissions of greenhouse gasses, instilling a sense of heritage of the Marines and their families, and transportation choices that are less polluting within the park.

Most importantly this Master Plan for the Orange County Great Park epitomizes Irvine's spirit of hospitality making sure that this Park is truly a place of relaxation, recreation and renewal of spirit for all.

At this time, I would urge adoption of Resolution 07-2885 so that we may continue the important work of building America's next great park.