



## Great Park planners preview their vision

BY SEAN EMERY STAFF WRITER

The iconic orange balloon will rise again, officials will unveil a taste of the Great Park, and Lennar Corp will showcase its vision of Main Street USA on Saturday, when the park's third anniversary is celebrated with a "Festival of Flight."

The centerpiece will be the opening of the first portion of a 27.5-acre preview park, showcasing the plans Great Park leaders hope to bring to the entire former El Toro air base. The preview park represents only a small portion of the planned 1,347-acre Great Park, but planners hope the new amenities will give people a taste of the planning and design work that has gone into the project.

"The idea is to give a sense of what the design, the programming and the activities of the greater park will be, but to do so at an early stage," said Councilman Larry Agran, chair of the Great Park board of directors.

Great Park leaders also hope the preview park will answer criticism about the pace of park development. Proponents say that years of effort have gone into innovative design work, but the only amenity available to the public during that time was the balloon ride, which was grounded in February after allegations of safety violations.

The balloon returns Saturday after an investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration. Park officials will begin offering night flights as well, Agran said, with the addition of white and orange-tinted lights to the iconic balloon.

The preview park is slated to host a series of summer events, with a variety of concerts and dances held next to a former El Toro hangar converted into a café and entertainment venue. It will also feature traditional park amenities such as shaded picnic areas and grassy fields, Agran said.

Designers hope to use the preview park to gauge the public's reaction to new ideas. Great Park leaders will test everything from furniture and umbrella designs to environmentally friendly programs such as permeable surfaces built underneath picnic tables that allow water to seep through, avoiding run-off.

"Everything out there is in one sense or another being tested," Agran said. "We're eager to see what people like, what they don't like and what they really, really like."

Developer Lennar Corp is also joining the festivities, turning its own nearby hangar into a preview of the planned Lifelong Learning District, a mix of educational buildings, commercial space and, eventually, homes, expected to break ground this fall. Shuttles will bring visitors back and forth between the preview park and Lennar's hangar, spokeswoman Carol Wold said.

Officials noted that the preview park is still a work in progress, with construction taking place in three phases over the next 18 to 24 months.

## **Preview park**

**27.5** Total acreage at build-out

**17** Acreage in the first phase

**1 8-24** Total months of construction

**\$4.2 million** Construction costs for Great Park balloon

**\$ 1.1 billion** Cost for 1,347-acre Great Park **IF YOU GO What:** Great Park leaders are hosting The Festival of Flight, celebrating the third anniversary of the city taking control of the former El Toro Marine Corps base, opening the first portion of a 27-acre preview park and marking the return of the Great Park balloon ride. There will be balloon flights, kite making, birds of prey and more. **When:** 1 1 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, July 1 2 **Where:** The Orange County Great Park. For directions or information, go to [www.ocgp.org](http://www.ocgp.org). **How much:** Admission and parking are free.

## **Calendar**

### **SATURDAY CONCERTS (8 p.m.)**

Aug. 2: **Honk** – an Orange County rock band from the '70s. Aug. 9:

**Jaipur Kawa Brass Band** – a Bollywood wedding band. Aug. 1 6:

**Vagabond Opera** – new sounds from Portland, cribbing from Marlene Dietrich, Edith Piaf, cabaret and Klezmer. Aug. 23: **Hapa** –

Contemporary Hawaiian sounds. Sept. 6: **Eileen Ivers & Immigrant**

**Soul** – Celtic fiddle in the new world. Sept. 1 3: **Quetzal** – Chicano

folk-rock. Sept. 20: **Yaelisa & Caminos Flamencos** – Spanish

flamenco music and dance. Sept. 27: **Edgar Meyer and Chris Thile** – Bluegrass and classical crossover.

### **FRIDAY DANCE PARTIES (8 p.m.)**

Aug. 8: **Derek Bordeaux** – R&B covers. Aug. 1 5: **Mike McCaffrey** –

Piano trio does Sinatra, Nat King Cole and others. Aug. 22: **Johnny**

**Polanco y Conjuncto Armistad** – L.A. salsa band. Aug. 29: **Big**

**Sandy and his Fly-Rite Boys** – rockabilly and western swing. Sept.

5: **Eve Selis** – Queen of roadhouse rockers. Sept. 1 2: **Los Pinguos** –

Contemporary pan-Latin band from Buenos Aires. Sept. 26: **Pete**

**Jacobs Wartime Radio Revue** – The sounds of WWII.

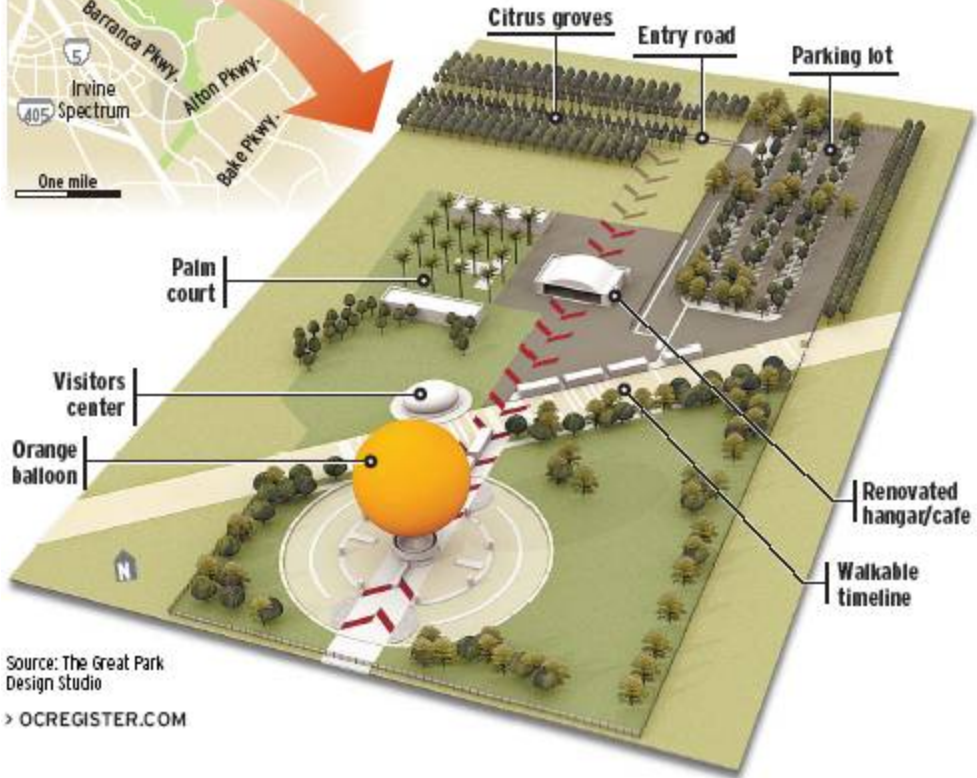


The Great Park Balloon will re-launch Saturday. BRUCE [CHAMBERS/OCREGISTER.COM](http://CHAMBERS/OCREGISTER.COM)



## Great Park preview

The first portion of a 27.5-acre preview park, part of the first phase of the planned 1,347-acre Great Park, opens Saturday. In addition to rides on the balloon, features include a visitors center, a cafe in a renovated hangar, a timeline along a former runway and picnic areas.



Source: The Great Park Design Studio  
> OCREGISTER.COM

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BY SEAN EMERY  
STAFF WRITER

The iconic orange balloon will rise again, officials will unveil a taste of the Great Park, and Learner Corp. will showcase its vision of Main Street USA on Saturday, when the park's third anniversary is celebrated with a "Festival of Flight."

The centerpiece will be the opening of the first portion of a 27.5-acre preview park, showcasing the plans Great Park leaders hope to bring to the entire former El Toro air base. The preview park represents only a small portion of the planned 1,247-acre Great Park, but planners hope the new initiative will give people a taste of the planning and design work that has gone into the project.

"The idea is to give a sense of what the design, the programming and the activities of the greater park will be, but to do so at an early stage," said Councilman Larry Agran, chair of the Great

Park board of directors.

Great Park leaders also hope the preview park will answer criticism about the pace of park development.

Proponents say that years of effort have gone into innovative design work, but the only amenity available to the public during that time was the balloon ride, which was grounded in February after allegations of safety violations.

The balloon returns Saturday after an investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration. Park officials will begin offering night flights as well, Agran said, with the addition of white and orange-tinted flights to the iconic balloon.

The preview park is slated to host a series of summer events, with a variety of concerts and dances held next to a former El Toro hangar converted into a cafe and entertainment venue. It will also feature traditional park amenities



The Great Park Balloon will relaunch Saturday. > SEAN EMERY/STAFF WRITER

such as shaded picnic areas and grassy fields, Agran said.

Designers hope to use the preview park to gauge the public's reaction to new ideas. Great Park leaders will test everything from fountains and umbrella designs to environmentally friendly programs such as permeable surfaces built underneath picnic tables that allow water to seep through, avoiding run-off.

"Everything out there is in one sense or another being tested," Agran said.

"We're eager to see what people like, what they don't like and what they really, really like."

Developer Learner Corp. is also joining the festivities, turning its own nearby large-scale project into a preview of the planned LifeLong Learning District, a mix of educational buildings, commercial space and, eventually, homes, expected to break ground this fall. Shuttles will bring visitors back and forth between the preview park and Learner's larger, spokeswoman Carol Wold said.

Officials noted that the preview park is still a work in progress, with construction taking place in three phases over the next 18 to 24 months.

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Great Park leaders are hosting The Festival of Flight, celebrating the third anniversary of the city taking control of the former El Toro Marine Corps base, opening the first portion of a 27.5-acre preview park and marking the return of the Great Park balloon ride. There will be balloon flights, kite making, birds of prey and more.

**When:** 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, July 12.

**Where:** The Orange County Great Park. For directions or information, go to [www.ocgpp.org](http://www.ocgpp.org).

**How much:** Admission and parking are free.

## Calendar

### SATURDAY CONCERTS (8 p.m.)

• Aug. 2: **Neek** - an Orange County rock band from the '70s.

• Aug. 9: **Jaeger Kane Brass Band** - a Hollywood wedding band.

• Aug. 16: **Waymond Opere** - new sounds from Parisian, cribbing from Marlene Dietrich, Edith Piaf, cabaret and Klezmer.

• Aug. 23: **Hapa** - Contemporary Hawaiian sounds.

• Sept. 6: **Blaze Burn & Immigrant Soul** - Celtic fiddle in the new world.

• Sept. 13: **Quetal** - Chicano folk-rock.

• Sept. 20: **Yaelita & Camilo Flamenco** - Spanish flamenco music and dance.

• Sept. 27: **Elder Meyer and Clark Thib** - Bluegrass and classical crossover.

### FRIDAY DANCE PARTIES (8 p.m.)

• Aug. 8: **Derck Bordeaux** - R&B covers.

• Aug. 15: **Mike McGeffer** - Piano trio does Sinatra, Nat King Cole and others.

• Aug. 22: **Johnny Pelonco y Conjunto Andaluz** - L.A. salsa band.

• Aug. 29: **Big Sandy and his Fly-Rite Boys** - rockabilly and western swing.

• Sept. 5: **Eve Sells** - Queen of road-house rockers.

• Sept. 12: **Les Fleques** - Contemporary jazz with bands from Buenos Aires.

• Sept. 26: **Pete Jacobs War Time Radio House** - The sounds of WWII.



ON THE COVER: The Great Park Balloon • FILE PHOTO BY MARILYN VANDERKELLEN/STAFF