

Tuesday, August 22, 2006

Great Park sparks visions

Great Park staff offers ground rules on selection process for sports-park proposals and will try to winnow the ideas.

By SONYA SMITH
The Orange County Register

IRVINE - About 25 groups and individuals have proposals for the sports park – some sketched by professional architects and others just a vision in someone's mind.

One of the simplest ideas comes from Warrick Leigh, an Irvine teenager who asked the Great Park Corp. in December to build a skateboard park.

On the other end of the spectrum are the complex, almost-finished proposals – such as the Community Sports Initiative. In that proposal, several sports organizations – including the Special Olympics of Southern California, California Youth Soccer Association and the YMCA of Orange County – have joined to make a pitch to lease the land, build the needed sports facilities, and operate and maintain the whole sports park.

The Great Park Corp. will review final drafts from groups and individuals after Aug. 31, and then along with its consultant, Griffin Structures Inc., will choose the most advanced candidates for a formal proposal process.

The gathering of ideas will also show the Great Park Corp. Board the array of what can be included in the sports park, how it can be built, and what groups are interested in using, owning or operating the park.

In the first part of the process to build the 165-acre sports park, Griffin Structures determined that such a park would cost about \$84 million to build today, and it would net about \$3.3 million in profit annually.

PEOPLE-POWERED SPEEDWAY

Who: Various bicycle organizations, Trails 4 All, and the National Center for Bicycling and Walking

Acres needed: 12.65

The idea: A ½-mile criterium race course, an in-line skate park, and a BMX bicycle race course.

Web site: www.mesothel.com/pps/pps_pag.htm

CALIFORNIA SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Who: Led by Christian Okoye, founder and president, who was a running back for the Kansas City Chiefs. The board includes Eric Dickerson, who played for the Los Angeles Rams; Tommy Lasorda, vice president and former manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers; Bruce Jenner, Olympic champion in track and field; and Reggie Jackson, who played for the Anaheim Angels and New York Yankees.

Acres needed: 20 to 30

The idea: A Hall of Fame for California athletes, a 2,000-seat theater for ceremonies, a 200-seat theater for short movies, banquet rooms, outdoor fields, a 200-room hotel and parking.

Web site: www.californiasportshalloffame.org/

COMMUNITY SPORTS INSTITUTE

Who: Includes: Special Olympics Southern California, AYSO Soccer, California Youth Soccer Association, Saddleback Volleyball Club, YMCA Orange County, the Irvine Youth Basketball League and Nova Aquatics.

Acres needed: All 165 acres plus whatever else can be allocated.

The idea: The collection of organizations would lease the land, and would build and operate the sports park. It would include an indoor sports center with badminton to Tae Kwon Do and an outdoor area from water sports to baseball.

Web site: www.csisports.org/

SPLASH CANYON WATERPARK

Who: Whitewater West Industries Ltd. based in British Columbia, Canada

Acres needed: about 1

The idea: An indoor water park with water play areas, water slides, spas, a river to float on and a wave pool.

Web site: www.whitewaterwest.com/

EQUIPLEX

Who: Equestrian Coalition of Orange County with Fisher Properties.

Acres needed: 125 to 200.

The idea: An equestrian facility – including stables, an events arena, shopping areas and a club with hotel.

CROSS-COUNTRY

A coaches group and a cross-country association are asking that the Great Park's trails be made so that large cross-country meets can be held.

BIG LEAGUE DREAMS

This company has past Los Angeles Dodger player and manager Bill Russell as a spokesman. The company is not clear about the Great Park proposal, but usually builds and operates a variety of recreational facilities – best known for creating replicas of famous fields for children and adults to play on like Chicago's Wrigley Field.

Information: www.bigleaguedreams.com/

FLY-FISHERS CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY

Two fly fishing organizations want access to a Great Park stream for fish lessons, a casting pond to teach fly fishing and to hold casting competitions, and a place to meet.

SPORTSPLEX USA

This company wants to help design, plan and build the sports park.

HANG GLIDING

Santa Ana resident Mike Meier wants to hang glide in the Great Park. He says the minimum required for hang gliding is either an open area in which people can be pulled into the air by ropes or a 25-foot or higher hill from which people can jump.

WOODBIDGE TENNIS CLUB

The tennis club from the Irvine Woodbridge village wants to build courts in the sports park.

FIELD OF DREAMS

A company wants to build baseball fields in the park.

PAINTBALL

Tombstone Paintball wants to open a paintball complex in the Great Park, the company has a location in Brea. Information: www.splatfactory.com

UC IRVINE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESEARCH CENTER

UCI professor Dan M. Cooper wants to open a center in the park to study children's exercise habits.

BIKE STATION

A company wants to provide bicycle lockers and other bicycle amenities for the park.

ORANGE COUNTY ICE ARENA

A company wants to build an ice rink at the park.

SKATE PARK

Warrick Leigh, an Irvine teenager, spoke at a previous Great Park meeting asking for a skate park to be included.

TIMELINE

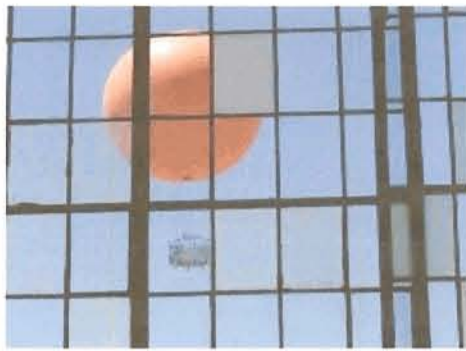
Aug. 31 All sports-park ideas are due to the Great Park Corp. The ideas will be reviewed by the Great Park staff and sports-park consultant, Griffin Structures Inc.

Sept. 11-14 The best candidates for the sports park might be interviewed about their proposals.

December or January Some of the sports-park groups will be asked to submit formal proposals for the sports park.

2007 The earliest that construction could begin on the sports park – if the money is available and if it is built separately from the rest of the Great Park.





OLD AND NEW: The Great Park Balloon can be seen through the windows of hanger No. 244, a built in the 40's the hanger is remnant of the former El Toro Marine Corp Air Station.

LEONARD ORTIZ, THE REGISTER

Some facts about the orange balloon so far

- More than 25,000 passengers have gone up on the balloon.
- 61.3 percent of the passengers live within 10 miles of the attraction.
- The balloon launched on July 14, but construction continued past the Aug. 10 deadline. Most construction was finished Oct. 19, but some of the contract funding is being withheld until the company – Cal-Pac Engineering Co. – finishes fixing all the small details as requested by Great Park staff and designers.

Great Park may start small and build

An overall view of the 1,347-acre Great Park plan.

Rendering courtesy of Great Park Design Studios

