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Infrastructure plans OK'd for Great Park project

Project includes drought-resistant plants on narrow roads called 'green streets.'

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IRVINE – Plans for the Great Park's roads, utilities and sewers were unanimously approved Thursday night by the Planning Commission.

The plans are a precursor to grading the former El Toro air base for the public Great Park project and the Lennar Corp.'s surrounding development. The map also includes narrow streets and drought-tolerant plant medians to slow down traffic and conserve water – a concept called "green streets."

Future decisions by the city commission could allow for other "green streets" concepts such as sidewalks and roads made with recycled concrete from the base, and ditches planted with grass and willows to catch water run-off and filter out pollutants.

The "green streets" plan had been pushed back from January because Irvine Co. officials were worried that Lennar had not sufficiently studied traffic impact in north Irvine and Lake Forest.

Lennar hired Austin Foust and Associates to study traffic expected in 2010. That report concluded that Lennar's plans for the park have not changed expected traffic (about 148,000 daily trips). The report also states that Lennar needs to widen nearby streets, extend roads such as Marine Way and widen freeway on- and off-ramps to accommodate future traffic. Lennar officials said they will study traffic before submitting more plans.

For more on the Great Park go to www.ocregister.com/greatpark.

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