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# Irvine leaders looking at closer oversight of the Great Park

Officials are also working on a deal to bring Cirque du Soleil to the central park.

By SEAN EMERY  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

IRVINE – Great Park leaders today will decide whether to have an oversight firm take a more active role in the park's development as well as a plan to bring Cirque du Soleil to Irvine.

The expanded agreement with Bovis Lend Lease, hired by the city to review the work done by the Great Park Design Studio, calls for the firm to take a more active role in the park's development. Bovis previously reviewed information submitted by the Design Studio, but under the proposed contract would provide "over the shoulder" review of projects as they are being crafted by designers.

Some park leaders backed Bovis' increased role following the recent release of a report the firm produced determining that the Great Park will cost \$377 million more to build than previously thought. The Bovis report also criticized park leaders for not spelling out who is responsible for infrastructure projects shared by the city and Lennar Corp., which owns the land surrounding the park. The situation, Bovis officials wrote, could have a "catastrophic" impact on the park's budget.

Other board members downplayed the report's significance, describing it as an internal document meant to spark discussion, and said they are working with Bovis to reconcile the conflicting Great Park price tags. They are also working with Lennar on several updated agreements to determine who is responsible for the infrastructure work.

If approved, the changes to the Bovis contract would cost the city up to \$1.9 million, according to staff reports.

Meanwhile, park officials are asking the board of directors to green-light negotiations with Cirque du Soleil, which recently contacted staff about the possibility of bringing bi-annual performances to the park.

Cirque du Soleil is looking for an Orange County site, according to staff reports, and would like to bring a performance to the area in early 2010. Staff estimated that each show could draw up to 2,600 spectators, with approximately 50 to 90 shows expected per location.

Great Park staff and Cirque du Soleil are still determining whether the park has the space and facilities to accommodate a performance. However, Cirque du Soleil has indicated that the Great Park is being considered a finalist for a traveling production, according to staff reports.

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cirque.p0119.att4.jpg  
Andy Templeton /  
Photo For Orange  
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04An act titled Triple  
Trapeze during a  
performance of Varekai  
by Cirque du Soleil at  
the Orange County  
Fairgrounds.

