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Sports park plan draws support

Firm envisions 20 soccer fields, 12 ball fields, 12 tennis courts and a BMX/skateboard park on 165 acres.

By SONYA SMITH
The Orange County Register

IRVINE – A consultant's working model for the Great Park sports park shows 165 acres that includes 20 soccer fields, 12 ball fields, 12 tennis courts and a BMX/skateboard park.

That preliminary plan by Griffin Structures Inc., was approved by the Great Park board Thursday. The board members next will decide whether there are enough fields, how sports organizations will work with the city, who will operate the park and what it ultimately will look like.

The board plans to have those questions answered by this fall to begin construction in 2007.

Here are the issues:

Q. What will the sports park include?

A. Consultant Griffin Structures Inc. created the 165-acre sports proposal – but it's a working model and the acreage could be doubled.

The consultant questioned Orange County residents about what they want in the sports park and evaluated the county's offerings for different sports.

Griffin vice president Chuck deGarmo said Thursday that to meet the county's soccer needs, for example, his research shows that 98 fields are needed. Because that would take up about 300 acres, deGarmo said his group could fit 20 fields in the 165 acres specified by the board. The consultant also drew up plans for fields and facilities for baseball, softball, basketball, football, tennis and track, among others. The board said it would remain flexible on acreage and could change these numbers and add or drop some sports.

Q. How much will it cost to build the sports park?

A. Construction would cost \$84 million if the park were built today, according to Griffin Structures. Money also will be needed to pay Ken Smith's team for designing the sports park, and a firm will need to be paid to oversee construction.

Great Park directors have said they want the sports park to be among the first projects built, adding that its revenue could help pay for other Great Park amenities.

Griffin said the sports park could be built in phases to spread out the construction costs.

Q. How will the sports park make money?

A. When fully built it would have a net income of \$3.3million per year after maintenance fees, according to the Griffin plan. Much of that money would come from field and facility fees, and parking and league fees.

Griffin said another revenue source could be naming rights - such as designating the basketball facility as the "Nike Courts."

Q. Will the Great Park board work with other organizations to build and operate the sports park?

A. A few nonprofit organizations such as the YMCA have already asked to be a part of the operation - in some cases offering to develop and operate the sports park.

Also, private, for-profit companies, such as Wild Rivers Water Park, are interested in operating a portion of the sports park. Inviting private sports groups would add other sources of income to help operate the park.

The board will decide in the fall whether to bring in these outside groups and how they would all work together.

The board is already working with the Lennar Corp.'s Heritage Fields, which is developing the private part of the Great Park, to decide issues such as where streets, sewers and parking will go.

Q. What are the next steps for the sports park?

A. Ken Smith's Great Park Design Studio will begin to design the sports park framework.

Nonprofit organizations and private companies will send their proposals for the board to evaluate.

Griffin Structures will work on options to present to the board on how the sports park is to be built and managed.

In the fall, the Great Park board will vote on final proposals, so construction can begin in 2007.

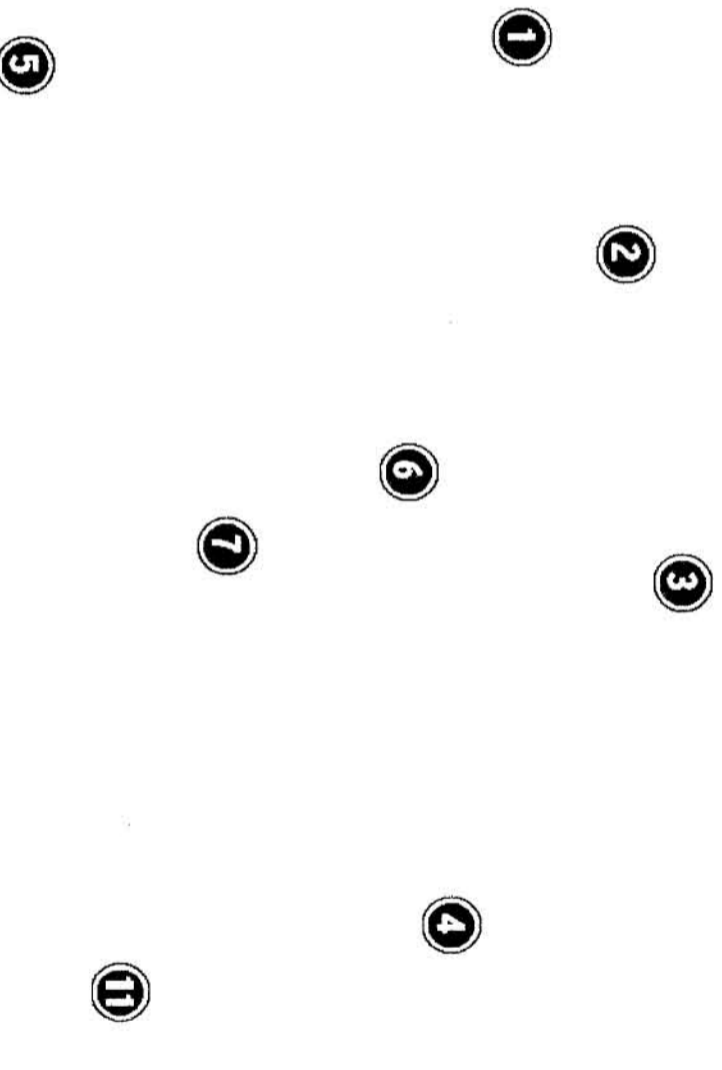
Griffin consultants say the sports park could be built in as little as two years, if the board has the money and if it is built separately from the rest of the Great Park.

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Great sports!

The Great Park Corp. Board is faced with deciding how many baseball fields, basketball courts and soccer fields will be in the Great Park sports complex. The proposal put together by the board's sports park consultant Griffin Structures, Inc., is 165 acres with an additional, optional 50-acre elite athlete training center (not shown).

- 1 Junior-size soccer fields:** Eight fields.
- 2 Little-league baseball fields:** Six fields with a 250 foot baseline.
- 3 Full-size baseball fields:** Two 360-foot senior baseball fields.
- 4 Softball fields:** One cluster of four softball fields, each 300 foot.
- 5 Regulation-size soccer fields:** Twelve fields that combined with the junior-size fields would attract large regional tournaments like the Pateadores Invitational in Orange County that draws 450 teams and hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- 6 Walking, jogging and bicycling track:** A road would allow for multiple uses.
- 7 Plaza:** An area of shops and support for the sports.
- 8 Open Fields:** For free-sport activities.



could also be used four to six times a year for festivals.

9 Skate Park and BMX: A 2.5 acre park for skateboarding and BMX bicycle riding; times would be set for different experience levels.

10 Indoor soccer and football stadium: Two indoor fields for indoor soccer or football with room for 400 spectators; also includes lockers and small shops.

11 Racquetball and tennis courts: Twelve hard (not grass) courts and one center court, a small pro shop and two frontenis courts.

12 Basketball and volleyball courts: Twelve basketball and volleyball courts where some handball courts could be added.

Entrance

13 Field House: A one or two-story building with rooms for sports such as basketball; also includes meeting and conference rooms for the public.

14 Football and track stadium: A high-school sized football stadium and track for 2,000 spectators.

The Register

Key Design Features of the Orange County Great Park, April McMillan, Fusco Engineering, Inc (ENST Program)

The Orange County Great Park Project is proposing to turn the former El Toro Marine Corps Air Station into one of America's largest metropolitan parks, and Fuscoe Engineering, Inc. has the good fortune of being involved in the original land planning of the property and since maintained the lead engineering role for the civil and environmental design of the project. The El Toro MCAS will be developed by two separate entities: the Great Park Corporation and the City of Irvine will be developing the central portion of the site known as The Great Park, and Lennar Corporation will be developing three separate districts surrounding the park for residential, commercial, and mixed use land uses. Specifically, the Great Park project is comprised of three distinct park districts encompassing 1,347 acres: the Great Park Canyon, the Habitat Park, and Memorial Park. During the design of the project, there are several key features that will require proper engineering and design to maintain conformance with the vision of the Great Park in creating a 21st century place to live, work, and play.



The Canyon. One of the key features in the Great Park will be the creation of a 2.2-mile long, 60-foot deep canyon through the center of the park. The canyon will feature a perennial stream, and will create a new microclimate with temperatures 15 degrees cooler within the canyon. Since the canyon will be designed in a relatively flat area, proper engineering and design features are required to maintain its stability for the future. Approximately 25 to 30-ft will be cut from the ground surface to form the canyon bottom and stream bed, and an additional 35-40-ft will be filled on the banks to create the average 60-ft depth. Overall, a balanced cut and fill design is intended for the canyon. Additionally, the slope of the canyon will be designed with the stream in mind to reduce excess sediment or high velocities contributing to scour and instability in the banks. Fuscoe Engineering, in coordination with IRWD and other agencies, are evaluating the opportunity for groundwater recharge at the terminus of the canyon.

Material Re-Use. Redevelopment of the former El Toro MCAS will require the removal of the existing runways. Currently, the runways contribute to approximately 196 acres of hardscape in the area. Approximately 14 acres of the existing runways are proposed to be preserved as part of the Memorial Park featuring historical aircraft and a museum. Portions of the runway will also be used in creating circulation routes throughout the park. A mobile batch grinding plant is proposed on-site to break down the remaining 180 acres of runways and re-use the ground up runway material for various locations around the project site. For example, the removed pieces can be used within the canyon berms to further stabilize the banks of the canyon and support proposed buildings surrounding the canyons, reducing the amount of waste being disposed of in landfills, etc. Ground up runway material is also being considered for underground storage reservoirs and to create alterations in the topography of the land.

Water and Habitat Creation/Restoration. Water is proposed as a key feature and reoccurring theme throughout the Great Park. The project will involve the removal of two existing concrete drainage ditches, the Bee Canyon and Agua Chinon. These channels will be re-designed as meandering, soft-bottom drainage corridors, providing not only flood control of the surrounding park, but also riparian habitat and water quality treatment of urban runoff. A series of water quality basins and reservoir lakes will also be designed into the site plan to allow for the treatment and re-use of urban runoff within the park boundary. Additionally, reclaimed and recycled water will be used throughout the park. A variety of different habitats will be formed throughout the park, including riverine, wetland, coastal sage scrub, woodland, grasslands and meadows, providing ecological diversity and restoring natural heritage.

Sustainability and Eco-Adaptive Design. In order to reduce the ecological impacts of the project and to ensure its viability for the future, numerous sustainable development features will be incorporated into the Great Park design. This includes creating a shuttle system that traverses the entire park, creating a network of trail systems and bicycle racks to reduce the number of vehicles throughout the park, and encouraging the use of more environmentally friendly transportation routes. Additional features include designing "green streets", reducing urban runoff by incorporating infiltration features such as permeable pavement and landscape design, energy efficiency, and proper waste management.

By creating a sustainable and eco-friendly environment through proper design and engineering, the Great Park will be a unique place for people to learn, relax, and enjoy for many generations to come.

GREAT PARK