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FREE

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## THE GREAT PLAN



GREAT PARK LEADERS APPROVE DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN HIGHLIGHTED BY A SPORTS PARK PAGE 3

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# Board provides road map for development

BY SEAN EMERY STAFF WRITER

Great Park leaders are focusing the first wave of construction on a sports park, bosque, entry gate and cultural terrace in the western portion of the former El Toro base.

With a detailed master plan expected by the end of the year, the Great Park board of directors' decision last week is meant to provide a road map for development.

The focus on the west side of the base also reflects changes in Lennar Corp. plans, which have shifted away from housing developments and toward the Lifelong Learning District, a mix of educational buildings and commercial space. Groundbreaking is expected in the fall.

The timeline and price tag for Great Park construction is still uncertain, with runway and building demolition, as well as mass grading, required before any construction can move forward. But, Great Park leaders say construction on some amenities could begin as early as next year.

The board asked the staff to fast track the opening of sports fields, hoping to have at least a portion of the complex open within 18 to 24 months.

The final layout of the sports park is in the works. Some advocates of the sports park are pushing for the inclusion of up to 22 soccer fields, hoping to turn it into a national venue. Others are backing a "sports village" approach, with a mix of fields, retail and lodging.

The board earmarked about \$1.8 million for further study of the sports park, aviation museum, visitor's center, fire museum, agriculture and food uses and art and culture programs. Great Park leaders also agreed to fund a new study of the cultural terrace, which will encompass several of the park's most prominent and costly projects, including an amphitheater, botanical garden, library, multicultural center and national archives building.

Great Park leaders are looking to private partners to fund further study of the cultural terrace projects, as well as a water science park, community organization center, demonstration garden and portions of the sports park.

“It is time for partners to step up, or we have to face the reality that these projects, while we may study them, have to be put on the shelf,” said Councilman Larry Agran, chairman of the board of directors.

Staff is expecting to deliver an indepth financial study of the Great Park plan in August.

In the meantime, Councilwoman Christina Shea, a Great Park board member, urged caution in projecting construction timelines, pointing to the amount of park infrastructure work still required.

“We need to look at all these designs and features with our business plans,” Shea said. “I want to make sure we are very sober in how we approach this.”

For more online, go to [www.ocregister.com/irvine](http://www.ocregister.com/irvine). **ON THE COVER** Great Park leaders have asked staff to fast-track sports fields construction.

**“ It is time for partners  
to step up ...  
Councilman Larry Agran,  
Great Park board chairman ”**



Home to some of the park's most high profile, and costly, proposed projects, the cultural terrace will serve as a nexus for community organizations. Among the projects proposed are an amphitheatre and a multicultural center.

GREAT PARK DESIGN STUDIO