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FREE

# OC POST IRVINE WORLD NEWS

## THE GREAT PREVIEW

A SOCCER FIELD, NIGHT FLIGHTS AND A POSSIBLE 'POD' ARE ALL INCLUDED IN PARK'S NEXT PHASES PAGE 3




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# The 'preview park' will come in phases

**CAMERON BIRD AND ELYSSE JAMES/STAFF WRITERS**

Driving around the old El Toro Marine base these days, there's not much to see. Abandoned buildings, dirt and piles of wood greet visitors to the one tangible piece of evidence of a Great Park – the big, orange balloon.

In the next 18 months, park planners intend to give Orange County residents something else to do besides ascending and descending 250 to 400 feet aboard the orange orb.

The 28-acre area surrounding the Great Park balloon is being called a "preview park," and will incorporate different aspects of what the park will be.

The balloon, which opened in July, will offer night flights starting this summer. White and orange-tinted lights will add illumination to the balloon as it rises. Lights and reflective striping have to be added along the road to the balloon before night flights open.

The preview park will be developed in three phases, concluding with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in July 2009, said Great Park Corp. spokeswoman Marsha Burgess. The Great Park Design Studio has until the end of the year to submit designs.

The first phase should be finished by July, Burgess said. This coincides with the third anniversary of the park dedication, said Michael Taylor, project manager at the Design Studio.

Lead architect Ken Smith, said the park will include a 3,000-square-foot egg-shaped building known as a "pod" that might replace the tented 2,500-square-foot visitor's center. The pod will house restrooms, ticketing booths for the balloon and possibly a food vendor, and will be the first in a series of multipurpose structures, Smith said.

The preview park will also include the beginning of what will eventually be a palm-tree-lined walkway with games such as chess, mini golf and lawn bowling.

In November, the Great Park board budgeted \$14 million for the preview park. The preview park is part of a multiyear budget and is not locked into a particular fiscal year, said Kurt Mowery, manager of finance for the Great Park Corp.

The budget for the next fiscal year, which starts July 1, has not been finalized, he said. A budget will be given to the Great Park board in May and to the Irvine City Council in June.

Lennar, the company building housing near the park, is working on the first phase of infrastructure and development plans, said spokeswoman Carol Wold. This includes roads, sewers and electricity that must be put in before the buildings. The housing downturn has slowed the process, she said.

### **Preview park costs**

**\$225,000** for timeline, educational banners and displays. **\$280,000**

for parking area, shuttle service. **\$325,000** for signs and lighting.

**\$375,000** for shaded areas, audio visual screens in Ramada.

**\$585,000** for benches, tables, shaded areas, trash cans, picnic areas, performance space. **\$ 1.1 million** for project requirements, nursery and agriculture, inspections, soil samples, an operation trailer and permits.

**\$ 1.2 million** for education, mock-ups, park studies, night balloon flights and lighting, airplane collection. **\$ 1.9 million** for tents and portable restrooms. **\$2.2 million** for landscaping, lawn area, cleaning hangar, fencing. **\$2.5 million** in reallocated funds **\$3.3**

**million** for design, engineering, construction, program costs **From staff reports**

### **El Toro base history**

**March 17, 1943:** Marine Corps Air Station El Toro commissioned.

**July 2, 1999:** El Toro base closes. **March 5, 2002:** Voters pass

Measure W, eliminating planned airport use. **March 6, 2002:** Navy

announces it will sell the base. **April 2002:** Navy adopts a nonaviation reuse plan for the base. **Dec. 5, 2003:** First Great Park Corp. board

meets. **Feb. 16, 2005:** Lennar Corp. buys base for \$649.5 million.

**Jan. 23, 2006:** Ken Smith's design team chosen. **July 14, 2007:**

Balloon opens to the public. **From Irvine World News reports**

For more information, go to [www.ocregister.com/](http://www.ocregister.com/) greatpark.

### **ONLINE EXTRAS**

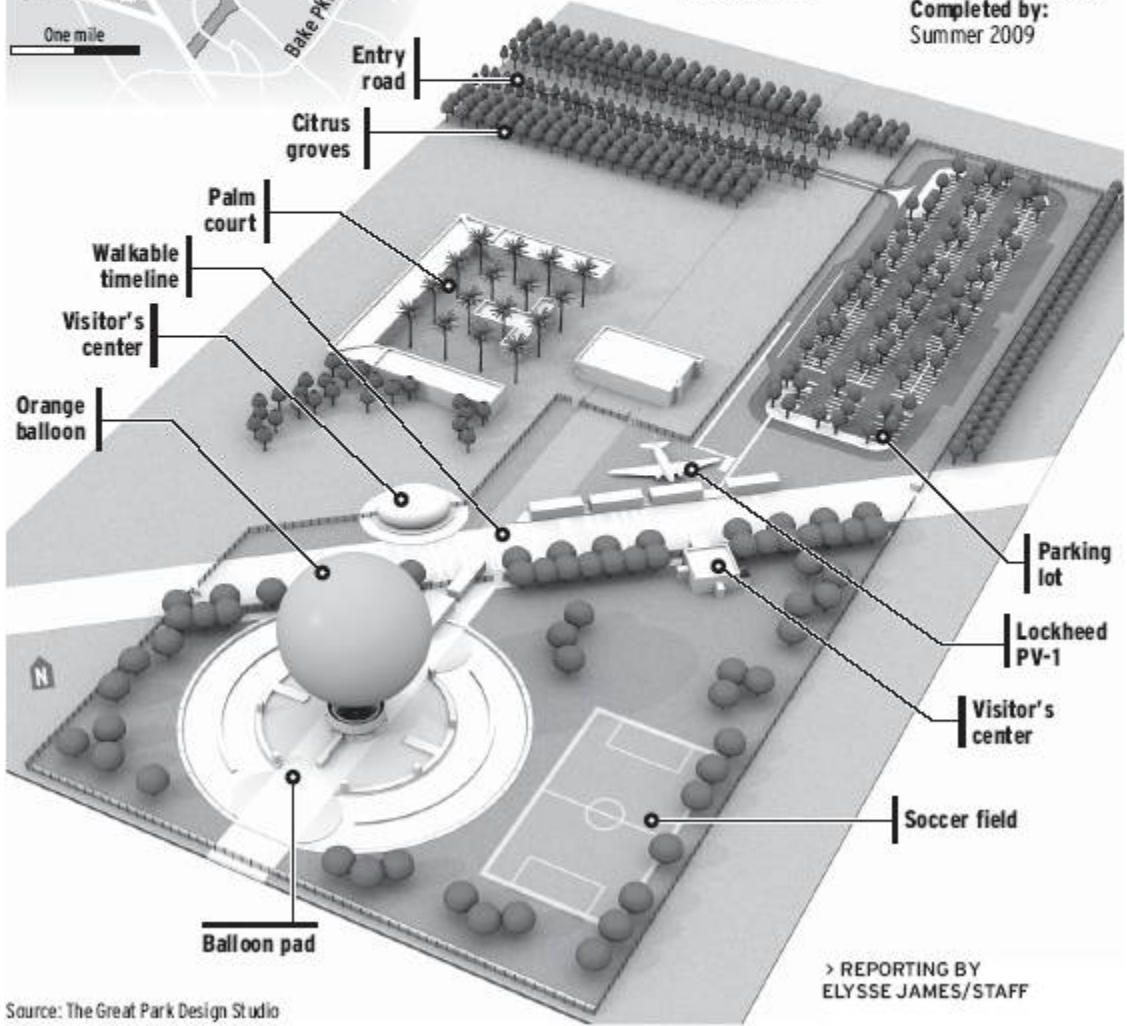
Happy with the progress of the park? Comment at [irvineworldnews.com](http://irvineworldnews.com).



# Great Park progress

The preview park will be built in three phases:

- ① Soccer field, picnic areas, drought-tolerant and water-efficient grass, restriping parking lot and adding signs. **Completed by:** Summer 2008
- ② Water, electricity, irrigation upgrades, adding plants, possible display of Lockheed PV-1 Ventura airplane. **Completed by:** December 2008
- ③ First part of walkable timeline that eventually will stretch diagonally across park, citrus groves to flank the entry road, 3,000-square-foot egg-shaped building to house park amenities. **Completed by:** Summer 2009



Source: The Great Park Design Studio

> REPORTING BY ELYSSE JAMES/STAFF

