

Orange County, California Measure W

March 5, 2002 Election

The People of the County of Orange do ordain and enact as follows:

Section One: Title.

This Initiative shall be known and may be cited as "The Orange County Central Park and Nature Preserve Initiative."

Section Two: Purpose and Findings.

The People of the County of Orange find and declare the following:

- A. Effect of Measure. This Initiative amends the Orange County General Plan to authorize the closed Marine Corps Air Station El Toro ("El Toro") to be used for non-aviation uses, including a multi-purpose central park, open space, nature preserve, universities and schools, cultural facilities, and other interim and long-term uses described herein.
- B. Purpose. This Initiative will allow for the creation of one of America's greatest parks, with open space, sports and recreation facilities, museums, libraries, arts and cultural attractions, and a home for major universities and research centers. It will also not generate the traffic, congestion, noise, and air pollution associated with the development of a commercial airport.
- C. A Better Plan for El Toro. Orange County residents deserve a better plan than an airport for El Toro. The Orange County Central Park and Nature Preserve Initiative will unify our communities and improve the quality of life for every County resident by allowing El Toro to be used as a central location for the County's civic life, including public recreation, open space, education, cultural facilities, and a nature preserve.
- D. No New Taxes. This Initiative does not raise taxes. In addition to seven square miles of land, the military housing and commercial buildings on the site can produce enough revenue to cover the cost of creating one of America's greatest parks.
- E. The Need for a Central Park in Orange County. Population growth in Orange County has caused the County to become increasingly dense and congested. As a result, there is wide recognition of the need to expand essential recreational, park, open space, and cultural facilities to create an oasis that will allow our residents to engage in healthy family activities. The establishment of a major central park in Orange County will help fulfill this need.
- F. Quality of Life is Important to the Economic Health of the County. The quality of life in Orange County is a significant asset to business and is a key element in attracting and keeping high paying jobs and a quality workforce in a competitive marketplace. This Initiative will greatly enhance our quality of life here in Orange County.

G. Need for Educational Facilities. Orange County needs additional educational facilities.

Designating land for educational institutions will help to relieve taxpayers of the burden of acquiring sites for school facilities. The California State University Fullerton has an identified need for a 300-acre campus in the central County area, and El Toro has room enough for that campus and a variety of other educational facilities.

H. Advantages of the El Toro Site for Use as a Central Park. The central location and accessibility of El Toro will provide Orange County's three million residents with an opportunity to enjoy a park on a par with Golden Gate Park and The Presidio in San Francisco, Griffith Park in Los Angeles, and Balboa Park in San Diego. The advantages of the site for use as a central park include the following:

1. Size. El Toro consists of seven square miles of publicly owned land in the heart of Orange County. The size of the El Toro property makes it ideal for a multi-purpose central park, including ample space for universities and schools, museums, botanical gardens, sports and recreational facilities, a memorial to Orange County veterans and other compatible uses.
2. Availability for Public Uses at No Cost. Under the federal base closure law, El Toro may be designated for public uses at no cost to Orange County taxpayers.
3. Accessibility. El Toro can be reached easily via the I-5, I-405 and S.R. 133 freeways, the Foothill and Eastern Transportation Corridors and the Irvine Transportation Center.

I. Balancing Regional Costs and Benefits. In a rapidly-growing area such as Southern California, it is inevitable that there is more than one important regional need that could be met through the availability of a large area of publicly-owned land. Any use is likely to have regional benefits and costs, either directly (through negative effects such as noise and pollution) or indirectly, by foreclosing other uses. In determining that a multi-purpose central park use on the El Toro site will provide greater regional benefits than a commercial airport, the following factors have been considered:

1. The creation of a multi-purpose central park is dependent on three key factors: location, price, and size. The El Toro site uniquely meets all of these requirements. The park will generate regional and state-wide economic benefits from tourism, education, and the attraction of businesses to the area. In addition, the park will also create less tangible but equally important quality of life benefits, while regional air transportation demand can be satisfied through alternatives to the establishment of an airport at El Toro.
2. A significant portion of the regional air transportation need will be met through better utilization of the existing six commercial airports in Southern California. In addition, new airports are proposed for the former March Air Force Base in Riverside County, the former Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino, and the former George Air Force Base in Victorville. Another airport exists at Palmdale, and the Ontario International Airport has recently been expanded and has significant unused capacity. These proposed airports and the Ontario International Airport are well located to serve the substantial projected population growth in Riverside, San Bernardino and northern Los Angeles Counties. In contrast, El Toro is poorly located to serve Riverside, San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties. An airport at El Toro is not needed to serve the limited population increase projected for Orange County.

3. A new airport at El Toro would also impose enormous regional costs far outweighing economic benefit, including safety hazards, noise, excess traffic, pollution, and a loss of the opportunity to establish a major new central park.
4. The Initiative provides for interim uses including housing, and allows for housing and related services as required by federal law.

J. Summary. This Initiative:

1. Amends the General Plan of the County of Orange by repealing the aviation reuse designation for El Toro and other provisions enacted by Measure A in 1994; and
2. Replaces the aviation use designation with non-aviation designations to ensure that the property will become a multi-use center for education, park, recreation, cultural and other public-oriented uses. These designations permit the development of El Toro over time, thus allowing future generations to determine specific uses consistent with this Initiative.

Section Three: Measure A Repealed.

The full text of the Orange County/El Toro Economic Stimulus Initiative (Measure A), adopted by the voters of Orange County on November 8, 1994, is hereby repealed.