

Military Bases Revitalization

SUCCESS STORY, May 2006

El Toro Marine Corps Air Station



Site boundaries

Site Facts

Site Name:

El Toro Marine Corps Air Station

Location:

Irvine, Orange County

Site Size:

4,712 Acres

Historical Uses:

Military jet station, fleet operation and combat readiness support

Contaminants of Concern:

Soil and groundwater contamination from aviation uses, waste storage, leaking above and underground storage tanks.

Redeveloped Use:

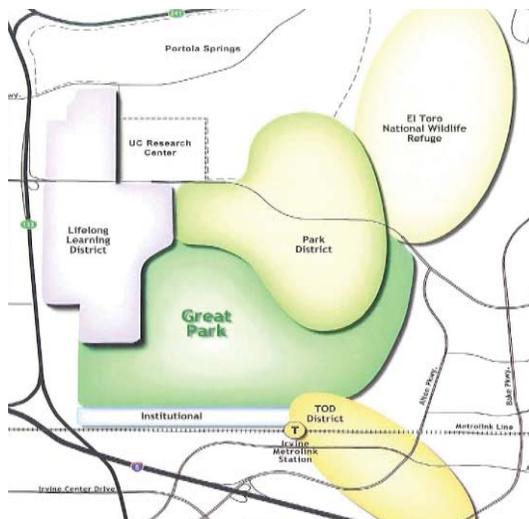
Mixed commercial and residential uses, Orange County Great Park

The former El Toro Marine Corps Air Station is situated in Irvine, California. The 4,712-acre base was commissioned in 1943 as a pilot training facility and later expanded into a permanent master jet station and aviation center. The base had runways, aircraft maintenance, training, housing, and other support facilities for the operation and combat readiness of Marine Corps personnel. Until its closure in 1999, El Toro was a key economic and community component of Orange County and home to thousands of military personnel and their families and other non-military support personnel.

Due to hazardous substances that were released into the environment by its operations, the base was placed on the federal superfund National Priorities List in 1990. The Department of the Navy's investigations identified over 1,000 locations of environmental concern, including 408 underground storage tanks, 39 above-ground storage tanks, 157 solid waste management and temporary accumulation areas, 124 aerial photo anomalies, 124 polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) transformer sites, and 24 significant hazardous substance release sites. The major contaminants found were volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, pesticides, metals, petroleum hydrocarbons, perchlorate, and PCB. A groundwater contaminant plume has impacted the shallow and principal aquifers, and extends three miles from the base's western boundary.

In 2004, the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency determined that 2,798 acres of property, which the Navy had investigated and cleaned, was suitable for transfer and redevelopment. This property was transferred in 2005 to Lennar Corporation, who is also leasing another 921 acres until the agencies determine that the land is suitable for transfer. Almost 1,000 acres will remain under federal ownership as national forest land. The Navy and Irvine Ranch Water District have jointly funded a groundwater treatment system that is expected to become operational in the summer of 2006 to remove contaminants from the regional aquifer.

The former base will be redeveloped into a mix of residential, commercial, educational, and recreational uses known as the Orange County Great Park. This project will consist of housing, offices, public golf courses, shopping centers, and open space uses that include a Meadows Park, Sports Park, Educational Campus, Exposition Center (with a museum and cultural activities), and a Wildlife Corridor.



Proposed development



State of California



Department of Toxic Substances Control

