



# Perris Press Release

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## Construction Begins on a New Park for Perris: Mercado Park

The City of Perris recently broke ground on a \$3.4 million park in an underserved area of the City, an oasis that includes tot lots, a water-play area and an amphitheatre and lies near a recently opened apartment complex home to many families of modest means. Work on the Mercado Park began before the Oct. 24 ground-breaking and construction is slated for completion in mid-2013.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, Mayor Pro-Tem Al Landers and City Council members Joanne Evans and Rita Rogers headed a list of dignitaries who attended the ground-breaking, along with senior City administrators, City Clerk Judy Haughney and Public Safety Commissioner Joseph Dapice.

City Manager Richard Belmudez said the development of the 2.6-acre Mercado Park creates "one more piece of the puzzle in our efforts to create a vibrant Downtown."

"It will serve as an anchor," he said.

The park is located at D and Tenth Street, adjacent to the Mercado Apartments, which has become a gem along D Street, home to hundreds of children and their parents and a project already being touted as an example of how to build low and moderate-income housing. At the other end of D Street, at San Jacinto Avenue, the new Perris Station senior apartment complex/commercial development is underway and will be completed next year.

In between, numerous businesses along D Street have received new facades as part of City program, the Bank of Perris has been restored and is now used a municipal archive and the art deco Perris Theatre awaits major renovations.

Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin, the point person on the project, said funding for Mercado Park came from the 2006 California Parks Bond Act, known as Prop. 84. Madkin said Mercado Park will be designed to blend in with commercial, residential and industrial in what is known as the Mercado District, which includes D Street south of Fourth Street.

The vision for Mercado Park grew out of a series of meetings in 2009 between Perris residents and City staff. At those gatherings, residents stressed the need for a park in the City's historic area south of D Street, where the nearest park is more than a mile away. Acting on citizen requests, Madkin said Perris applied for Prop. 84 funding, along with 500 other cities. Just 62 received money.

"We made the case that the need was present," Madkin said. "The state agreed with us. This will become a premiere park for Perris. The City deserve it."

Mayor Busch called the future Mercado Park a "tremendous addition to Downtown Perris." The City worked with the Riverside Transit Agency to obtain some land for the park at a cost of \$1. Perris received another chunk from the Riverside County Transportation Commission. The cost: \$0.

"I'd say we got a good return on our investment," he said. "A combination of many things has made this one thing happen."

Mayor Pro-Tem Landers, who has served on the parks and recreation committee for years, called Mercado Park another example of Perris as an "aggressive and progressive" City. The City has revitalized D Street from one end to the other, restored the Depot Building on Fourth Street, attracted new businesses to that corridor while a new interchange at Fourth Street and Interstate 215 was completed.

"We are committed to enhancing life for the residents of Perris," Landers said. "Projects like this make your heart feel good." Councilwoman Evans predicted Mercado Park will be a "phenomenal place to visit."

"It is really amazing what this City is able to do even in a difficult economy," she said. "It makes me proud to serve on this City Council."



Perris Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin and Mayor Daryl Busch review the program prior to the official ground-breaking at the \$3.4-million Mercado Park.



Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans addresses the audience while Mayor Pro-Tem Al Landers looks on. Evans and Landers are part of the City's Parks and Recreation Committee.



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and Mayor Daryl Busch stand at attention during the playing of the National Anthem at the Oct. 24 ground-breaking.



Work on the project began several weeks ago and is expected to be completed in mid-2013.



Cadets from the California Military Institute provided the Color and Honor Guards during the ground-breaking ceremony.

Councilwoman Rogers said Mercado Park is "long overdue" but once completed will become a haven for children and their parents.

"It's a really meaningful project right in the heart of Perris," Rogers said. "I am very glad to see it happening."