



Perris News

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Perris Wins a \$3.5 M. Grant for New Mercado Park

The City of Perris has been awarded a nearly \$3.5 million grant to build a park on the south end of D Street that will include a tower, amphitheatre, basketball and volleyball courts, picnic shelters and a tot lot.

The future Mercado Park, next to the planned three-story Mercado Apartments, continues the revitalization of historic D Street and heralds still another step in ongoing renovations throughout south Perris.

Other nearby projects on the drawing board or under construction include a new interchange at Interstate 215 and Fourth Street, the Perris Transit Center, a new Target store, the Rio Ranch Market grocery store, the Big League Dreams sports complex, a new Wyndham Hotel and exterior facades along many D Street businesses.

Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, a member of the Parks Committee, said the new recreational area will provide badly needed parkland and open spaces to residents between Fourth Street and Goetz Road.

The City received notification from the California Department of Parks and Recreation that it has been awarded a \$3.492-million grant to complete the project.

Construction on the 3.1-acre Mercado Park could begin in a year and be completed by mid-2012. The park and Mercado Apartments are situated on D Street between Eighth and Tenth Streets.

"I am tickled to death the state has approved our request for funding," Evans said. "It provides a tremendous upgrade to the whole area. A lot of people who are underserved will be able to access the park and get a place to enjoy outstanding recreational and family activities. Projects like this make me feel like we are doing the job that as a City Council we were elected to do."

Deputy Perris City Manager Darren Madkin said the Parks and Recreation Department received 475 applications from communities throughout the state for funding through Prop. 84, a water bond act approved in 2006. Eventually, the state approved funding for 62 projects, which will result in the creation of 50 new parks and the expansion of 12 existing parks.

Madkin said City officials held a series of community workshops in 2008 to ascertain what sort of amenities residents wanted in that part of the City. Residents said they wanted a park in what is otherwise a high-density, urban neighborhood.

"They wanted some open space, some green space," he said.

Drought-tolerant landscaping and a low-flow irrigation system will keep water usage to a minimum. That is in keeping with the City's ongoing commitment to reduce its carbon footprint while preserving scarce resources. Perris City Councilman Al Landers, who also serves on the Parks Committee, said residents who live in and near

Downtown badly need a park and open space for recreational purposes.

"It's about time," Landers said. "There have been no parks and recreational facilities for people who live Downtown. I am pleased the City is able to bring something for the enjoyment of the people who live Downtown. We can never have too many parks."

Landers said that while many surrounding communities are retrenching, construction is blossoming everywhere in Perris. The total cost of all the projects under way is nearly \$100 million. That's a nice figure, considering Perris will turn 100 years old next year.

"This City is moving ahead," he said.



Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez at the that the Mercado Apartments groundbreaking.