

## **Good planning earns Dover Park a prize**

*By Ben Antonius / Daily Republic / March 14, 2010 22:42*

FAIRFIELD - More than a year has passed since Dover Park re-opened, new and improved.

The park has yet to lose any of its luster for neighbor Mary Ann Steingass.

'It's really nice,' said Steingass, who lives across the street from the park and was involved in the process of crafting a design. 'We can't be more pleased.'

The city was recently announced as the winner of a planning award from the California Park and Recreation Society for the Dover Park project, which took place through 2007 and 2008.

In a statement posted on the city Web site, officials called the award a recognition of the planning process. For Dover Park, the process of getting to a finished park was longer and more laborious than expected.

The initial plan in mid-2007 called for one of the two signature ponds to be filled in and replaced with grass fields. Neighbors objected to that and other aspects of the design.

They held several meetings with planners and members of the Community Services Commission, eventually settling on a plan that kept both ponds. The park was closed for work through most of 2008 and reopened at the start of 2009.

'The community was critical to the success of this park rehabilitation project,' city officials wrote in a statement on the award. 'Residents have taken great pride and ownership of their new park, which is shown as they regularly help maintain and police the park.'

On a sunny Sunday, the park was getting plenty of use. Visitor Jay Huerta said the park got a seal of approval from his daughter, whom he was watching attempt cartwheels on the grass.

'She always wants to come here,' he said.

Neighbor Sandy Parroff, who was also involved in the design process, said the park has been more popular since the makeover. She said she sees more families than she used to and expects the crowds to grow during the spring and summer.

'This is exactly what I wanted when we went to City Hall and continued to fight over the plans they originally had,' she said. 'I wouldn't change a thing.'

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