

Hart, Limon present \$1 million check to Santa Maria city officials for sports complex

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Assemblymember Gregg Hart and Sen. Monique Limón presented a \$1 million check to city leaders for a Santa Maria Sports Complex project on Wednesday at Minami Park.

The sports complex was tapped as a top priority for Community Development Block Grant funding by the city in October, when the Recreation and Parks Department requested more than \$1.05 million to help close the funding gap to develop the 19.7-acre sports complex along the west side of Depot Street. The total cost is estimated at \$2 million to \$3 million but will likely end up being higher, as construction costs continue to escalate.



Assemblymember Gregg Hart, Rec and Parks Commissioner Rebecca Carey, Santa Maria Mayor Alice Patino, City Councilman Mike Cordero and Sen. Monique Limon at Wednesday's check presentation.

Hart championed the funding in the state budget in partnership with Limón.

"Parks and recreational spaces play a vital role in enhancing the overall quality of life in a community," Hart said during the presentation. "They provide residents and families with spaces to exercise, relax, connect with neighbors, and make life-long memories, positively impacting physical and mental well-being. I am very excited about the joy that this new sports complex will bring to local youth and all residents of the Santa Maria Valley."

"The Santa Maria Sports Complex will offer children a space where they can play their favorite sports, bring families together to build lasting memories, and provide a place where everyone can get outside safely," Limón said. "I am grateful I was able to support Assemblymember Hart in securing this funding in our state budget."

Santa Maria Mayor Alice Patino, who spoke at the presentation, said the sports complex has been a long time coming.

"We are excited about this additional step forward toward funding the new community sports complex," she said. "We have now secured more than \$10 million toward the needed \$15.5 million. The future sports fields will give our youth room to play and compete. We thank all of our partners who are committed to improving recreational opportunities here in Santa Maria."

Santa Maria Valley residents have advocated for additional soccer facilities for years, with thousands of Santa Maria's youth participating in local soccer leagues and school teams.

The funding will assist the City in developing the sports complex with four state-of-the-art soccer fields and four half-court basketball courts. It will also include a scenic walking and jogging trail with exercise stations, a playground, and a vibrant plaza adorned with an art wall.

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