

Turf Report

City of Santa Monica

Beach Greening Project At Ocean Park

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Save Paradise—Take Out a Parking Lot

Santa Monica "Un-Paves" Parking Lot and Replaces It with Natural Turf in Beach Greening Project

The City of Santa Monica reversed the famous Joni Mitchell lyric, "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot," by doing the opposite. During the fall of 2007, asphalt was torn out of Ocean Park's beach parking lot and replaced with 30,000 square feet of natural turf grass.

This new lawn will be used for recreation and overflow parking while serving as a "state-of-the-art" experiment in filtering urban runoff before it runs into the Santa Monica Bay. Financed with a grant of nearly \$700,000 from the California State Water Resources Control Board, the water cleaning park is likely the first of its kind. It has two wells

in different locations and depths that will catch water to test the effectiveness of the turf's natural cleansing properties.

"We believe in the multiple layers of both meaning and function in the designed landscape," said Josh Rosen, of Mark Tessier Landscape Architects, who worked on the project. "The layers found in the Beach Greening project—open space, mitigation of the urban heat island effect, parking, storm water filtration, and native plants—all contribute to a successful public landscape."

He continued, "Urban open space is a valuable asset in short supply. This means that opportunities must be maximized, and that is exactly what happened with the Beach Greening project."

Creating the Ideal Turf Surface

The Beach Greening project employs the Netlon Advanced Turf System (ATS) and West Coast Turf's

Sea Spray Seashore Paspalum at a Glance

Uses

Landscapes, Home Lawns, Parks, Sports Fields, Golf Course Greens, Tees and Fairways

Color

Bright Green

Mowing Height

1/4" to 1 1/2"

Growth Habit

Aggressive, spreading and low to the ground

Cushion

Excellent

Durability

Excellent

Disease Resistance

Very good. Especially in saline conditions.

Heat Tolerance

Excellent

Spring Green Up

Excellent

Recovery

Excellent

USDA Zones

7-11

Options

Regular rolls, thick cut, overseeded for winter color and seed available



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Sea Spray turf. This combination forms an ideal turf surface for many coastal locations.

Netlon ATS was installed in the sand base because the area will be used four or five times a year as overflow parking. Netlon ATS blends small interlocking mesh elements into the root zone. The result is a strong root system that creates a very stable surface with no visible structures, but high load-bearing capabilities. The system helps the turf to resist rutting, reduce compaction and drain freely.

"The turf area can withstand the weight of an 80,000 lb. fire truck," said agronomic consultant Steve Guise, of Guise & Associates.

West Coast Turf's Sea Spray seashore paspalum turf grass was chosen for its high salt and wear tolerance. It is ideal for areas irrigated with effluent water, or high saline conditions. Sea Spray thrives in low boggy, high water table environments, and can withstand periodic short-term inundation with water (even sea water).

"Seashore paspalum was the ideal turf option here with the salt exposure, blowing sands and traffic," Guise said.

The turf was installed by West Coast Turf in a few hours using 42" wide and 100' long Big Roll sod.

Not only will the new turf give beach goers



Seashore paspalum was the ideal turf option here with the salt exposure, blowing sands and traffic.

new options in recreation, it will also benefit the environment and help control pollution.

The turf traps dirt and dust from the air and cools the earth. Natural turf is 30 degrees cooler than asphalt and 14 degrees cooler than bare soil. It also absorbs carbon dioxide and reduces global warming by absorbing and sequestering greenhouse gases, and it produces oxygen (enough for 48 people to breathe).

The turf will also act as a natural water cleaning filter. The biology of turfgrass makes it the ideal medium for the biodegradation of all sorts of environmental contamination. Turfgrass purifies the water as it leaches through the root zone and down into the underground aquifers. Soil microbes help break down chemicals into harmless materials. This filtration system is so effective that rain water filtered through a good healthy lawn is often as much as 10 times less acidic than water running off a hard surface.

The First of Its Kind...But Not the Last

"After we see how this one works, we can do the same thing up and down the coast," said Guise.

He concluded, "It is the perfect situation—it brings more recreation area and more parking to the beach, and controls pollution at the same time. What more could you ask for?"