



# THREE-MONTH PILOT PROJECT: UNLEASHING PLAY YARD UPGRADES

**OC ANIMAL CARE IS INTRODUCING HIGH-QUALITY GROUND COVER, NEW AGILITY EQUIPMENT, AND NEW BENCHES IN SELECT PLAY YARDS.**

These upgrades are being implemented to enhance safety, comfort, and environmental sustainability for dogs, volunteers, and staff.

Thanks to our partners at OC Waste and Recycling, the ground cover being installed in the play yards is organic material derived from curbside residential green waste and produced at OC Waste and Recycling's local composting facilities. The material goes through an extensive 5-month composting process to ensure the product meets all state regulatory requirements, as well as the US Composting Council's Standard of Testing Assurance (STA) Program.

## PILOT PROJECT – 3 MONTHS

The pilot project will evaluate which blend of ground cover is best suited for the space and use by dogs. The large play yard areas will contain a medium blend, Play Yards 3 and 4 will have a finer blend, and Play Yards 1 and 2 will be filled with a mix of the two. During the pilot, volunteers and staff will be encouraged to share their feedback through a structured survey to ultimately select the best blend for use throughout all play yards.



## Benefits of Ground Cover

- Durable and low maintenance
- Natural, biodegradable, and eco-friendly
- Non-toxic to people and animals
- Cost effective
- Drains quickly and prevents muddy paws
- Replicates the sensory experience and cooling properties of natural ground
- Material is finely shredded and well-composted, so it has a soft, crumbly texture that's less likely to cling to fur or paws
- Properly screened to remove splinters or sharp twigs that could wedge between paw pads
- Similar products used industry-wide and locally in other shelters



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## FAQs

### Why are you replacing the grass?

The grass play yards are currently dead or struggling and OC Animal care has spent time and money on high maintenance costs like moving, reseeding, and watering, that often require the yards to be closed, and simply don't work.

### Why not turf?

Turf is high maintenance that requires frequent cleaning, disinfecting, and deodorizing. Turf can also reach high temperatures in the sun, which is why the current turf play yards require sun shades.

### Will it make the dogs sick?

No, the ground cover is not toxic to dogs and there are no chemical products used in the treatment process. It is made from clean, green yard waste (like branches, leaves, and trimmings). The material meets all state regulatory requirements, as well as the US Composting Council's Standard of Testing Assurance (STA) Program.

### How can it come from trash?

It does not come from trash. OC Waste & Recycling separates green waste, like tree branches, shrubs, and grass trimmings, from regular garbage. This green yard waste is then processed into organic material and ground compost. It's similar to store-bought ground cover, just made locally from landscaping material that would otherwise go to a landfill.

### Won't it absorb dog waste and become unsanitary?

Ground cover won't make the area more unsanitary than dirt or grass. Regular cleaning and good maintenance will help keep the ground cover safe and sanitary.

### Will it be replenished on a regular schedule?

The ground cover will be replenished as needed, depending on wear and weather as part of routine maintenance.

### Is it used anywhere else?

Yes, OC Waste & Recycling ground cover is used in public parks, trails, city landscaping, schools, and even some residential gardens across Orange County. In addition, similar ground cover is used industry-wide and locally in other animal shelters.

### Why are you adding new agility equipment and benches?

The new equipment and benches will allow more opportunities to enhance the dogs' mental and physical stimulation, while providing a comfortable space for staff and volunteers to interact with them.

### What is the purpose of the new agility equipment?

OC Animal Care continues to expand opportunities for dog enrichment and exercise. The new equipment helps fulfill the dogs' natural instincts to run and jump.