

Dear Project Playground supporters,

While what was reported in today's Chronicle was true as of Monday--that we appeared to be short in the necessary funds to purchase 100% ADA-compliant wood chips, which have gone up in price since we first started the project--we wanted with all our hearts and souls for this playground to open as soon as possible, and we scrambled for a solution.

One alternative was to ask the City Council to reallocate funds to cover the cost, but a) we didn't want to wait, and b) we preferred not to put them in that position. Another alternative was to start begging people for money. Also not really a pleasant thought at this point in the project.

**Then we had the elegant solution--***we figured out a way to make do with a smaller quantity of chips than was initially thought, which would cost a great deal less money, without compromising safety.*

The ADA-compliant chips, or, as they are commonly referred to in the industry, "engineered wood fiber," cost more than regular wood chips, but because they compact better, they create a better surface for wheelchairs to roll on. Improved accessibility has always been a goal of ours for the project, and a goal of the city's, so we knew we had to figure out a way to make this work.

*So, the bottom line is that we expect a vast pile of wood chips to be delivered on Tuesday, and once they are spread out, the park can open immediately!*

**As for the dirt issue**, the dirt required to make the berms outside the perimeter of the border is not critical to the safety of the park, only its aesthetics and accessibility, so there's no reason why the playground can't open next week! We will continue to seek donors to allow us to add the required amount of topsoil--75 cubic yards, minimum--to complete the project as soon as possible.

And so, as they say, nothing is easy!!

**If you'd like to help on Tuesday afternoon**, please stop by with your rake! We hope to have some tractors moving chips around, but we will still need good old-fashioned elbow grease to spread the chips. We'd thought about inviting kids to help, but since there will be machinery around, we're thinking it's not such a great idea. It will also be hard to keep them off the equipment until the surfacing material is properly in place!

With any luck, the concrete will have sufficiently set to put up the last element of the playground, the playnet, and once the chips are in place for safety, the tot swings and tire swing can be connected.

We're still plotting a date for the official ribbon-cutting ceremony, but the playground will be open as soon as it is humanly possible to do so.

Thanks again for all your support over the last two-and-a-half years!

The Moms of Project Playground

P.S. Stay tuned for lots more photos from Build Day on the website at <http://home.centurytel.net/playground!>