



Arleta Playground Makeover Project Proposal Simple, Natural and Engaging

Project Summary

Over the past few months, Arleta School Boosters and staff have been collaborating with the nonprofit organization Depave on a very exciting opportunity to give our playground a much needed makeover. Input from parents and staff have been used to develop a potential site plan which will remove portions of blacktop near the existing play structure. The intent of the plan is to populate these cleared spaces with trees, benches and other elements that will improve the appearance and functionality of the overall space. Arleta parents and staff have worked through many versions of a site plan over the past few months to arrive at a consensus that meets the following goals:

- Providing a fun and safe area for kids to play
- Maximizing functionality of the existing play area
- Adding educational elements
- Increasing shade and seating areas
- Reducing impervious surface area
- Establishing easy, long-term maintainability

Depave has applied for a grant on behalf of Arleta School from the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District which, if approved, will provide funding for the majority of the initial project costs. Depave and the Arleta Boosters are coordinating to seek additional funding through fundraising and donations from area businesses to pay for any initial costs not covered by grant funds, as well as ongoing site maintenance.

If the grant is funded and approval is granted by PPS, work could begin as early as June 2013. Volunteers will help with blacktop removal, and site preparation for tree planting and bench installation. Initially, the depaved areas will be filled with mulch, similar to that around the existing play structure. Tree and other approved plantings are planned for the fall of 2013.

Funding

Depave has secured funding for this project through a grant from the East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District. This grant will pay for physical asphalt removal and proposed improvements, and will be augmented with additional funds raised by the Green Team. MSANA has already committed \$250 to engagement and outreach materials and preliminary soil testing. The projected total budget for depaving, plants and improvements is \$10,000.

Site Plan and Plantings

The proposed playground makeover project includes pavement removal at two adjacent sections of the playground, and the addition of one tree well, equaling a total depaved area of 2039 ft² (see Appendix I). The proposed south area totals 1343 ft² and wraps around the existing play area in an “L” shape. The proposed north area totals 1041 ft² and is adjacent to the fence on the west side of the school property. The 4x4 ft. tree well would be located between the two main depaved areas.

This project is typical of many Depave-lead projects, in that the pavement would be cut into movable pieces and hauled away from the site. Pending project approval and grant funding initial pavement removal work will begin in late June. Following the pavement removal and early site preparation, the new areas will be filled with mulch for the summer. In the fall, the area will be planted with trees and benches and other elements will be installed.

The project calls for the installation of seven native trees and four columnar basalt benches. The trees will initially be enclosed in a protective fence to protect them from damage while they become established. The fences will be similar to those used to protect new trees at Duniway Elementary (see Figure 1). The basalt benches (see Figure 2) will be installed in depaved areas, away from existing pavement.



Figure 1. Protective tree fences at Duniway Elementary.



Figure 2. Columnar basalt columns to be used for benches.

The circular space shown in the north area will have a fine gravel ($\frac{1}{4}$ minus) base and will be topped with approximately 20-25 grey basalt “sit stones” (see Figure 3). This feature will be similar in appearance to one already installed in the Grout Elementary garden.

Educational Effect of Proposal



Figure 3. Grey-basalt stones (sit stones) at Grout Elementary.

The Arleta Depave project location and plan have undergone a number of revisions to account for and ensure that the voices of all stakeholders have been heard and incorporated into the plan you see today. During this process, feedback from the school, administration and teaching staff was vital to development of the final plan. This feedback ensured that the proposed plan upholds the mission of Arleta School and the education of its children. Direct feedback from teachers indicated that while the plan needed to improve our playground space and invite community ownership to Arleta School, it also needed to encourage academic activities. The planning committee and the staff at Arleta School believe the proposed plan does both effectively.

Currently, Arleta School is limited in the amount of space outside the building that lends itself well to classroom instruction. Soft green spaces, often damp by the fall and spring rains, are narrow and close to classroom windows, making it difficult for a classroom to find an instructional space without distracting others. Similarly, Arleta’s overly large black top space provides limited soft spaces for classrooms to experience outdoor learning environments. Theater settings, benches for reading, and areas for pair shared learning outside in the fall or spring are limited due to the lack of available seating. The proposed plan focuses on creating a classroom space that would allow for direct instruction in theater classroom seating, small group facilitated instruction, pair shared discussions or independent study, while maintaining close proximity to whole class.

Maintenance of the Playground Makeover

The plan for the Arleta Playground Makeover has been designed with an eye toward minimizing maintenance. Feedback from Arleta staff highlighted planning for heavy use, clear sight lines and durable plantings. Only native trees will be used in the makeover to ensure the best match with the Pacific Northwest climate. Also, all plants will be installed in the fall of 2013 so that they have time to become established before their first summer.

Because virtually all of the depaved area will be mulch, stones, trees or fine gravel, the primary maintenance tasks for the makeover areas will be watering and weeding. Required materials in the depaved areas may include replacement mulch, trees and fencing supplies.

In order to meet the labor and financial needs of maintaining the makeover improvements, the Arleta School Boosters and the Mt. Scott-Arleta Neighborhood Association have agreed to partner in order to ensure effective ongoing maintenance. The groups have enshrined the agreement in the Arleta Playground Makeover Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix II).

Timeline

2013

May Finalize Site Plan in conjunction with PPS

June Apply for necessary permits, test soil, cut asphalt

July 13 Volunteer depaving event

July - August Excavate compacted gravel; import new soil, mulch, rocks, chips; volunteer landscaping

October Volunteer planting event

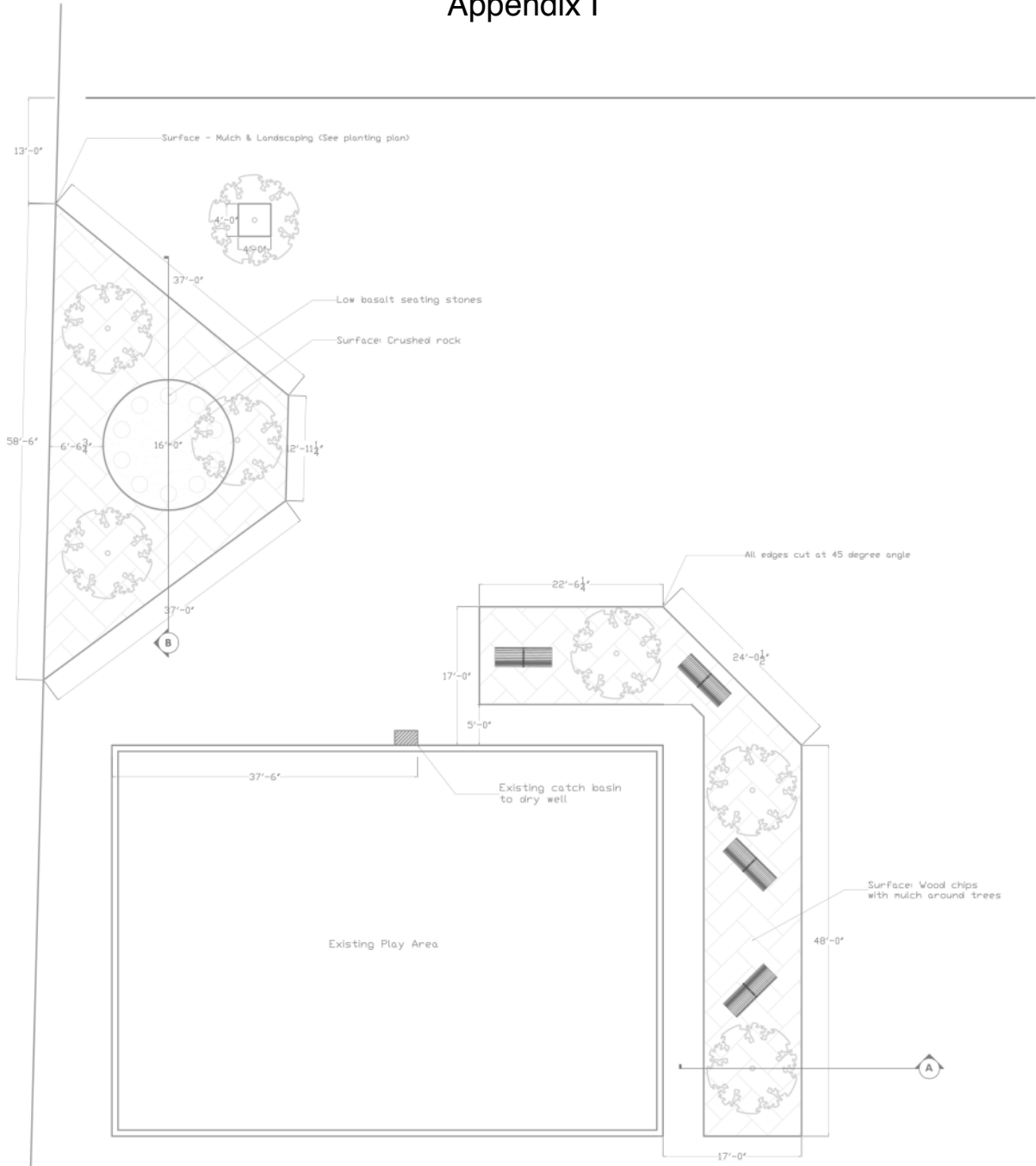
2014 Implement Maintenance/watering plan

Site Host: The Arleta School Boosters and MSANA are co-leading this project with, and acting as site host for, Depave.

Primary Site Host contact: Jonathan Brandt, 503-555-5555, portlandearthcare@email.com

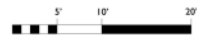
Primary Depave contact: Eric Rosewall, 503-555-5555, email@depave.org

Appendix I



Arleta Elementary Depave
1/4" = 1'

- Depave Area
- New Trees
- Seating
- Basalt Bench Stones



South Depave Area = 973 SQFT
North Depave Area = 1041 SQFT





BEFORE



Appendix II

Arleta Playground Makeover Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Whereas, Arleta School is a valuable institution in the Mt. Scott-Arleta neighborhood serving the educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community.

Whereas, the Sustainability Committee of Mt. Scott-Arleta Neighborhood Association (MSANA) is dedicated to promoting and preserving neighborhood resiliency including environmental, civic, and personal well-being of our residents.

Whereas, MSANA has heretofore successfully partnered with Arleta School Boosters to implement an edible garden at Arleta School and has committed funds for engagement to inform further enhancements to Arleta School grounds.

Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned below, hereby commit ourselves to ensure effective ongoing maintenance of Arleta School Playground Makeover Project, for a period of at least five years, through partnership in the Arleta Boosters enshrined and described in this MOU.

Mt Scott Arleta Neighborhood Association will actively participate as a partner the Arleta School Boosters to accept the following responsibilities. MSANA commits to mobilizing volunteers and support fund-raising efforts in partnership with Arleta School Boosters to:

1. Perform essential maintenance labor in the depaved playground areas.
2. Ensure new plantings receive adequate water in their first two summers of establishment.
3. Raise funds for replenishing mulch and for replacement of plantings as needed.

ARLETA SCHOOL BOOSTERS will actively lead and communicate with MSANA to coordinate events and fundraisers in order to:

1. Perform essential maintenance labor in the depaved playground areas.
2. Ensure new plantings receive adequate water in their first two summers of establishment.
3. Raise funds for replenishing mulch and for replacement of plantings as needed.

Signed,

_____ (date)
Arleta School Boosters

_____ (date)
Mt. Scott-Arleta Neighborhood Assoc.

Objective: The purpose of this depave project is to reclaim under-used playground space by converting unpleasant asphalt blacktop into a physically-engaging and naturally-stimulating play environment that provides shaded rest areas and opportunities for outdoor education.

Existing Conditions: The proposed depave area is situated in the far NW corner of a very large blacktop playground. This corner does not attract students for play during recess. There is a small 1' foot opening in the chain-link fencing at the NW corner which is used by the students and public alike to access the playground.

Proposed Improvement: The Arleta School Boosters, with leadership from the newly formed Garden Team and, through partnership with the Mt. Scott-Arleta Neighborhood Association (MSANA) and Depave, seek to depave 2,039 sq.ft. of asphalt in order to install shrubs, shade trees, a gathering spot with small boulders to sit on, basalt column benches, and a more pleasant and spacious access from the NW corner. These enhancements will dramatically improve the interactive play environment for students who currently have no such natural space in the main supervised play area. The density of plantings is consistent with PPS facilities guidelines for visibility and ease of maintenance. The maintenance will be performed by the Arleta Garden Team, which has formed a partnership with MSANA to increase community participation in the stewardship of new neighborhood natural amenities. Please refer to Maintenance MOU at the end of this document.