

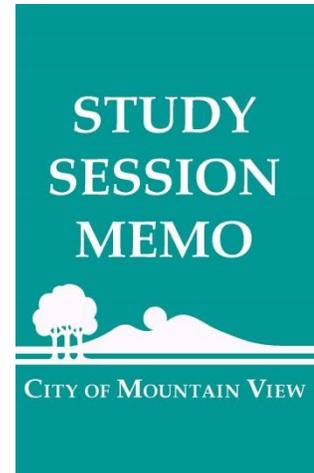
DATE: October 1, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Matthew VanOosten, Senior Planner
Aarti Shrivastava, Assistant City Manager/
Community Development Director

VIA: Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

TITLE: **Google Landings Development Project**



PURPOSE

The purpose of this Study Session is to provide Council with an update on the proposed Google Landings office and parking structure development proposal (commonly referred to as “Google Landings”) and receive Council direction on site access and community benefits.

BACKGROUND

Project Summary

The Google Landings proposal consists of the redevelopment of an approximately 28-acre project site with a new 799,482 square foot office building with one level of podium parking and a four-level, 536,500 square foot parking structure. The office site is located on Landings Drive south

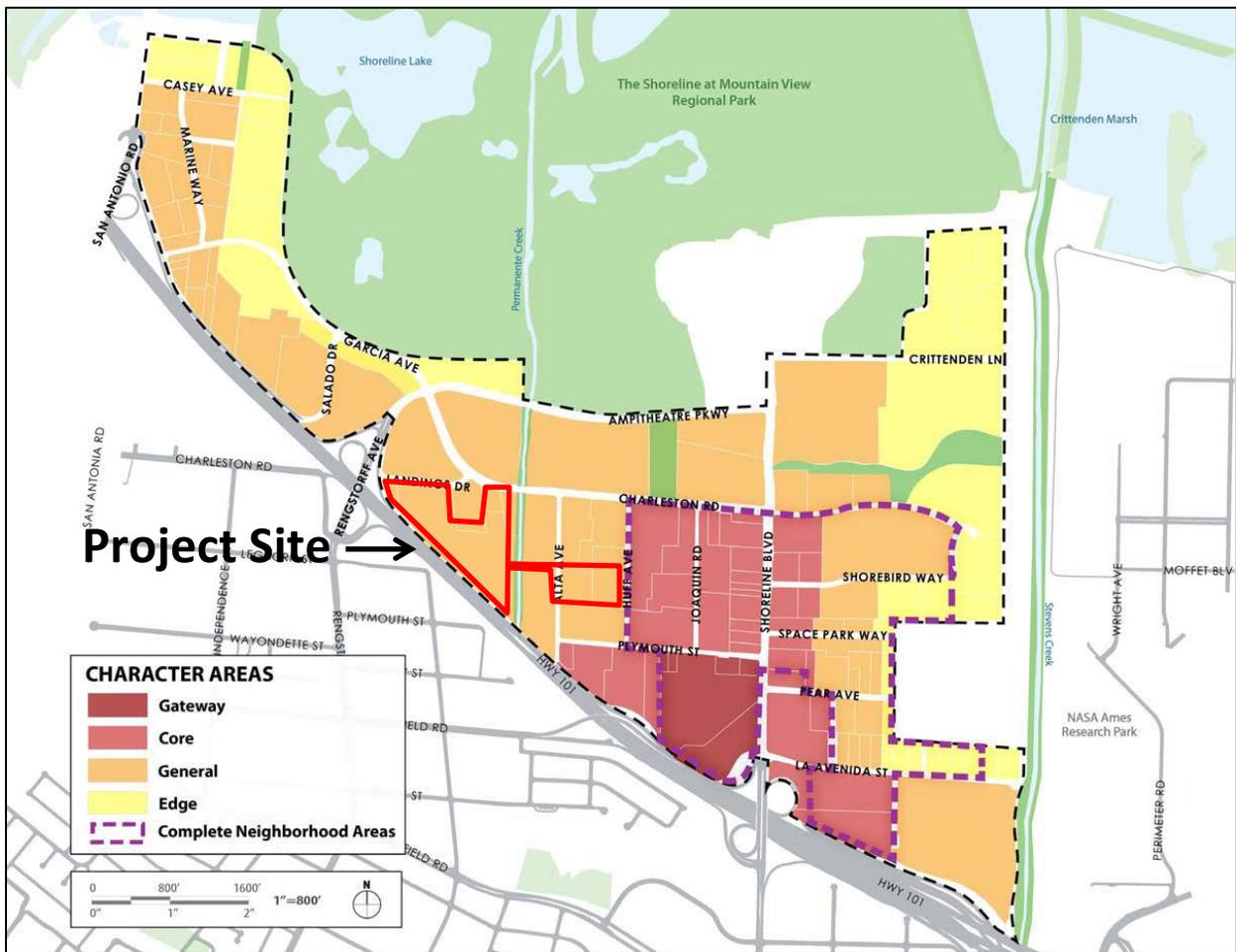


Aerial View of Project

of Charleston Road, west of Permanentente Creek, and north of Highway 101. The parking structure is in a separate location between Alta Avenue and Huff Avenue, midblock between Charleston Road and Plymouth Street (referred to as “Huff Avenue Garage”). A pedestrian and bicycle greenway path will connect the two sites bridging over Permanentente Creek (see Attachments 1 and 2 – Project Plans).

North Bayshore Precise Plan

The project site is located in the General Character Area of the North Bayshore Precise Plan (Precise Plan). The Precise Plan envisions the General Character Area as an office employment-focused area with a lower-density, more campus-like environment than the Core and Gateway Character Areas. The Precise Plan also allows for buildings and blocks to be larger in this location than in the other Precise Plan areas but specifies they should be connected by a network of internal campus quads, greenways, and walkways. The General Character Area allows development intensity up to a 1.0 floor area ratio (FAR) and building heights up to six stories.



North Bayshore Precise Plan



Location Map

Previous Meetings and Hearings

Bonus FAR Application Process

In 2015, Council allocated Google the necessary square footage in North Bayshore to reach 1.0 FAR on the site so long as bonus FAR criteria are met. The project site is allowed a base of 0.45 FAR. A Tier 1 bonus of 0.30 FAR is allowed if the applicant provides a LEED Platinum® building and transportation improvements. An additional Tier 2 bonus of 0.25 FAR would be allowed if the project achieves net-zero water and provides public benefits beyond the transportation improvements. The 2015 Bonus FAR application by Google proposed community benefits totaling an estimated \$35.55 million based on Google's calculations (see Attachment 3 – Bonus FAR Proposal).

City Council Study Session

Google Landings was previously presented to Council at a Study Session on December 11, 2018, for initial direction and feedback (see Attachment 4 – [December 11, 2018 Study Session Memo](#)). The following is the feedback and direction from that Study Session:

- Council generally supported the overall design direction of the office building and especially liked the environmental restoration features of the project;
- Council supported the off-site parking garage on Huff Avenue being shared between the Landings office project and Charleston East office project;
- Council was generally okay with the heights of both structures;
- Council was open to providing an exception to one of the office building's setbacks that does not meet the Build-to Area in the Precise Plan;
- Council sought additional conservation of Heritage trees on-site due to the amount of trees proposed to be removed and requested additional off-site tree planting in advance of the project entitlements for Google Landings to help reestablish tree canopy which would be lost by project construction; and
- Council requested north-south access through the office site in the form of a bicycle/pedestrian path to comply with the Precise Plan objective to break up the large block.

DISCUSSION

The following section provides an update of project milestones that have occurred since the December 2018 Study Session and requests Council feedback on two specific topic areas: (1) office site access; and (2) community benefits.

Project Updates

Since the December 2018 Study Session, Google has made several changes to the project, and the project has been reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC). Key topics discussed at the two DRC meetings relate to the projects' massing and engagement with the public realm, which includes the office site access.

Staff is working with the consultant David J. Powers on preparing a CEQA document for the project, which includes the necessary traffic, utility, and biology studies. These

studies are ongoing and will be completed prior to a final hearing. The traffic analysis is extensive given the project size and location within the North Bayshore Area. A complete traffic analysis will be reviewed by City staff to determine any project impacts to the transportation network and necessary improvements.

In the first Study Session, Council asked Google to pursue off-site planting of trees prior to entitlement to help mitigate the large number of trees to be removed on the property and establish tree canopy sooner. Google has been working closely with the Community Services, Public Works, and Community Development Departments to find suitable sites for this off-site tree planting in advance of the Google Landings entitlement public hearings. Initial site research has shown that improvements to landscaping infrastructure, such as irrigation, are required for the planting of many of the trees. Google has added costs of this infrastructure work (\$400,000) to their community benefits proposal. This amount is in addition to the total cost of the community benefit originally proposed.

Office Site Access

The North Bayshore Precise Plan envisions a street to run north-south through the office site to break up the large block. In the first Study Session, Council stated that this goal could be achieved by the project providing a public pedestrian/bicycle path through the site instead of a vehicular street. See below for the North Bayshore Precise Plan Conceptual Street Network:



**North Bayshore Precise Plan's Conceptual Streets
(with Google Landings Access Street through Site Circled)**



Left: North Bayshore Precise Plan's Conceptual Street through Site

Right: Current Design without Vehicular Access through Site

Google has worked with staff to provide public paths through the site consistent with Council's direction. However, due to heightened security concerns, Google's proposed path does not run through the office building site north-south as Council desired. Some security concerns are warranted, and the public access in the new proposal provides access across the site which is an improvement on the original plan. However, this public access provided through the site does not meet the Precise Plan objectives of breaking up the large blocks into smaller blocks for greater permeability, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists.

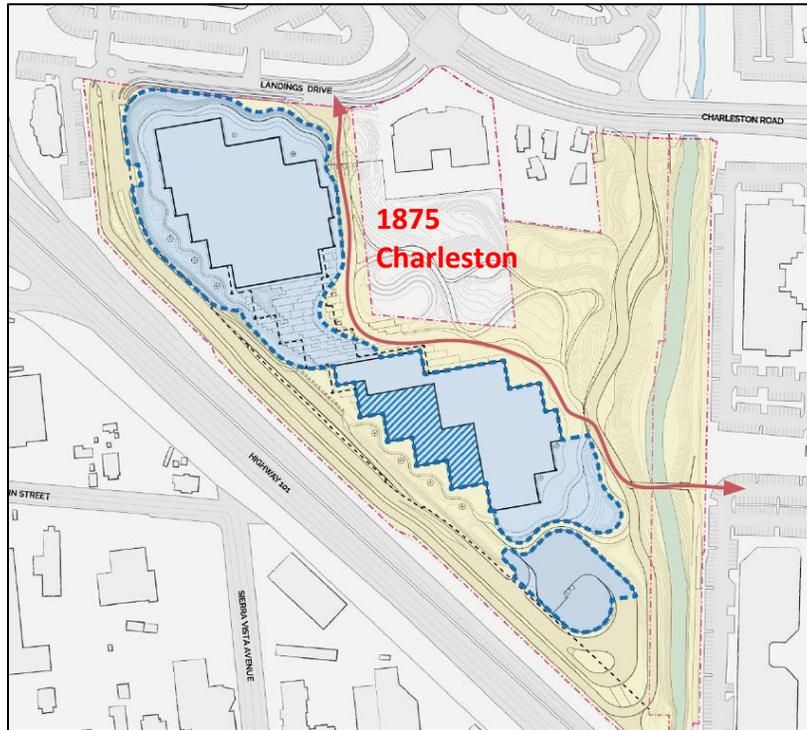
See below for Google's proposed public access through the site:



Proposed Public Access through the Site

The office project proposes a portion of its landscaped area over the 1875 Charleston Road property, a site Google leases but does not own. This property can be seen outlined in a dashed red line in the access plan maps. The current lease expires in 2057 with two 10-year extension options to 2077. While Google is not including this property in their landscape area and FAR requirements for the overall project, if Google is not able to renew this lease, 1.18 acres of landscaped area shown in the plans would no longer be part of the project. If Council is okay with that arrangement, staff can work with Google to craft conditions that would allow Google to provide additional landscaped area elsewhere to mitigate the loss of the 1.18 acres should it go away in the future. One area of concern is that the proposed public access path is located through this leased area and would need to be relocated inward towards the office building. If the leased area were to go away, Google has provided an alternate site plan showing how the public access path would shift towards the building to accommodate the loss of the leased property.

See below for a site plan showing that future scenario alternative proposed by Google:



Proposed Alternative Public Access through the Site

The alternative site plan would ensure there is still access through the site in a similar configuration as currently proposed. However, it is unknown at this time what the exact design of that alternate path would look like, what security measures would be necessary along this new path, or how the site around it would be affected by the loss of the landscaping on the leased property. Staff believes Google should incorporate this alternative into their current plan to ensure that an approved plan for public access will exist on the project site in perpetuity when the lease ends.

Question 1: Does Council support the proposed public access plan?

Question 2: Does Council support the proposed alternate access plan should Google's lease of 1875 Charleston Road not be extended?

Community Benefits

The project proposes a community benefits package that is updated from the one originally proposed in 2015 (see Attachment 5—Community Benefits Proposal). The original package proposed \$35.55 million in community benefits, and this amount adjusted to inflation is \$41.59 million. Google's updated proposal includes \$44.6 million

in community benefits and three new projects. Staff supports the total amount of community benefits proposed. Since completion of the Project's transportation analysis is required to determine what impact the Landings Project will have on surrounding transportation infrastructure, portions of proposed community benefit projects such as Transportation Infrastructure (\$17.5 million) and Rengstorff Avenue Signal Timing (\$1.2 million) may be considered project requirements rather than community benefits.

Staff would like to note two other community benefits proposed that may ultimately be considered project requirements rather than community benefits. These projects are detailed below. Should these projects (totaling \$8.1 million) or a portion of the projects be deemed project requirements, staff believes an equivalent amount of funds should be put towards other community benefit projects. The final set of proposed community benefit projects will be brought by staff to the Council based on Council comments and direction.

Net-Zero Water (\$5.8 million)

While the North Bayshore Precise Plan considers the provision of net-zero water a community benefit, Google specifically proposed this item as part of their project to receive bonus FAR in 2015. Therefore, staff believes it should not be a community benefit.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge over Permanente Creek (\$2.3 million)

Google's green loop pedestrian and bicycle path currently exists along the northern portion of the Huff Avenue parking structure site. Google proposes to continue the green loop across Permanente Creek, connecting it to publicly accessible paths on the office site. Google proposes that bridging over Permanente Creek is a community benefit valued at \$2.3 million. Staff believes that this connection should be a project requirement rather than a community benefit. This greenway connection across Permanente Creek is shown in this exact location in the North Bayshore Precise Plan conceptual street framework. It also serves as a key connection between the Huff Avenue garage and the Landings Drive office site. Given that so many employees and guests will be parking in the off-site Huff Avenue garage and walking or biking to the Landings Drive office site, this direct connection is a vital part of this project.

Question 3: Besides the two proposed community benefits in question, does Council support the other proposed community benefits and a total benefit value of at least \$42 million?

Question 4: Does Council agree with staff that the Net-Zero Water and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge projects should not be considered community benefits?

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council provide feedback and direction on the following questions posed in the Study Session memo:

- Question 1: Does Council support the proposed public access plan?
- Question 2: Does Council support the proposed alternate access plan should Google's lease of 1875 Charleston Road not be extended?
- Question 3: Besides the two proposed community benefits in question, does Council support the other proposed community benefits and a total benefit value of at least \$42 million?
- Question 4: Does Council agree with staff that the Net-Zero Water and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge projects should not be considered community benefits?

NEXT STEPS

Following feedback from the City Council at this Study Session, the applicant will submit a revised application, and the project will continue the development review and CEQA process. Environmental Planning Commission and City Council consideration are expected in spring 2020.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The Council's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website. All property owners and tenants within a 750' radius were notified of this meeting, as were NBS interested parties.

MVO-AS/5/CAM/835-10-01-19SS/190493

- Attachments:
1. Google Landings Office Project Plans
 2. Google Huff Avenue Garage and Greenway Connection Project Plans
 3. Google 2015 Bonus FAR Application
 4. December 11, 2018, City Council Study Session Memo
 5. Google Landings Community Benefits Proposal