



MEMORANDUM

Public Works Department

DATE: March 13, 2019

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Andy Chang, Senior Civil Engineer

SUBJECT: Charleston Park Improvements – Concept Plans, Project 16-59

RECOMMENDATION

1. Review and comment on the recommended Charleston Park Improvements Concept Plan and recommend approval of the Plan to the City Council.
2. Review the proposed Heritage tree mitigation for the Charleston Park Improvements Project and forward a recommendation to the City Council approving the staff-recommended mitigation of 2:1 tree replacements with 24" box trees for the removal of two Heritage trees.

BACKGROUND

Charleston Park is a five-acre public park bounded by Amphitheatre Parkway to the north, Charleston Road to the south, Charleston East campus at 2000 North Shoreline Boulevard (currently under construction) to the east, and the Googleplex campus at 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway to the west (see Figure 1). The park was developed in 1997 in conjunction with the adjoining 20-acre Silicon Graphics Inc. (SGI) Campus (now Googleplex). A unique feature in the park is the water terrace that integrates the two open spaces between the public park and the private courtyard extending into the Googleplex. In 1999, the park received the American Society of Landscape Architects Centennial Medallion, an award given to projects across the nation that represents the best of what landscape architecture has achieved. Besides the open space and the distinct water feature, the park has a restroom and is landscaped mainly with cherry and Chinese pistache trees.

As part of the transportation improvements surrounding the Charleston East development, in an October 4, 2016 Study Session, the City Council supported the draft Charleston Corridor Feasibility Study (Study) with consolidated transit stop pull-outs along Charleston Road. The Study included a transit stop along the park's frontage on Charleston Road. The proposed improvements adjacent to Charleston Park implement

the North Bayshore Precise Plan (NBPP) requirements for Charleston Road, promoting active transportation, including sidewalks, two-way cycle tracks, a transit area with bus pull-out, bicycle parking areas, and landscaping buffers between each one of these facilities.



Figure 1 – Existing Charleston Park

ANALYSIS

Because of the NBPP modifications to the park's frontage along Charleston Road, Google has submitted to the City conceptual plans to improve the southern half of Charleston Park, with the intent that Google will design and construct these improvements. A major goal for this improvement is to create a transition between the transit improvements and the park. Figure 2 shows the recommended concept for the park's southern half.

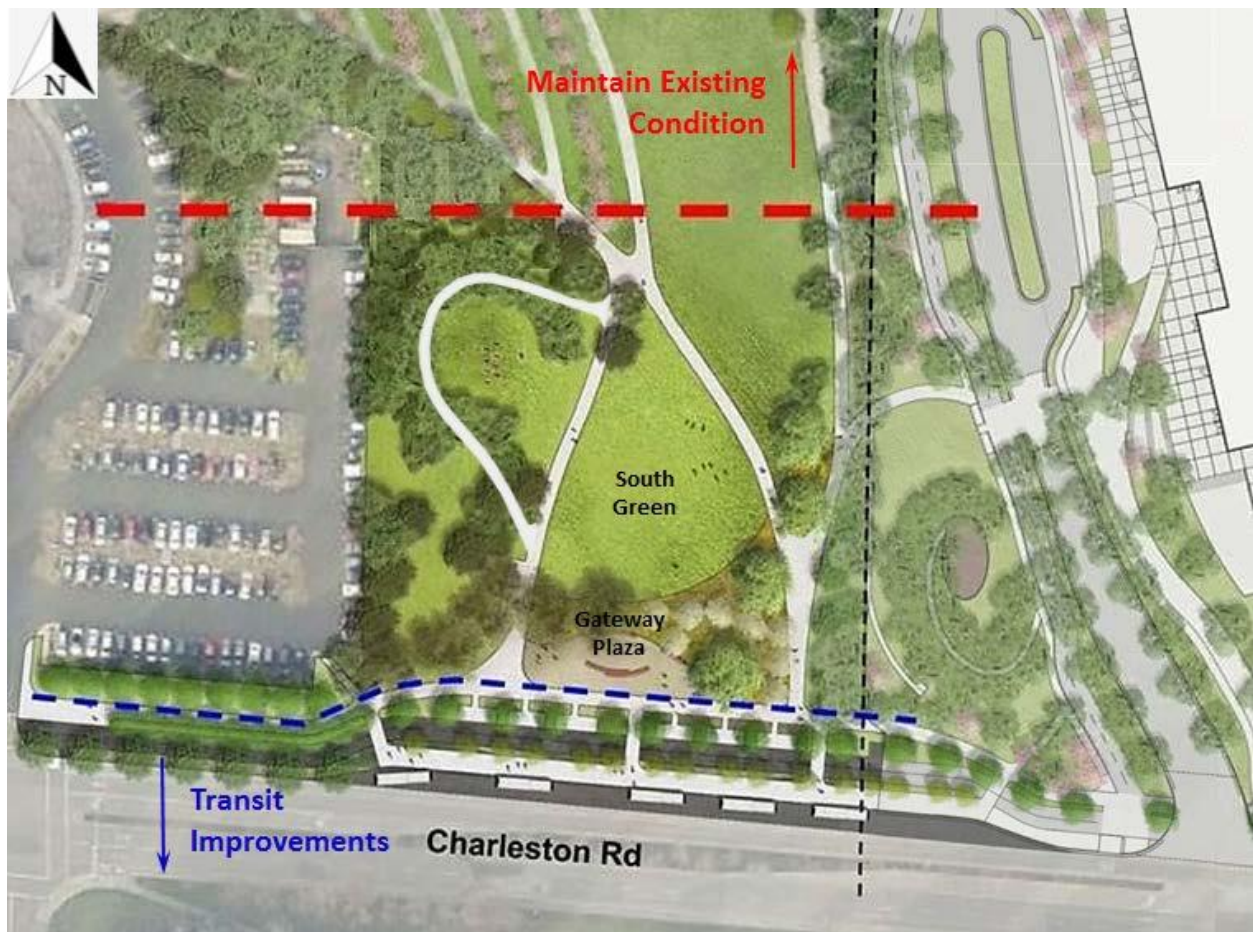


Figure 2 – Recommended Concept Plan A

The recommended concepts include:

Gateway Plaza

The new Gateway Plaza will be a focal spot that connects the park to the Charleston Road transit area. It will be located directly behind the public sidewalk, where it will be a gateway for both transit and park users. A rendering of the Gateway Plaza is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3 – Gateway Plaza

South Green

Park improvements seek to maintain the existing “Open Space” character of the park. The large green open space will provide ample room for relaxation, recreation, and a place to gather. A rendering of the South Green is shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4 – South Green

New Pathway

New pathways proposed in the park will be between 6' and 10' wide. The recommended Concept Plan A will have two paths in the north-south direction, serving as the arterial through the park. A third path on the west side of the park will meander under the tree canopy, providing park users a more naturalistic experience. The pathway layout in Concept Plan A is most similar in nature to the existing park by preserving large contiguous open space.

Two other pathway layouts were submitted by Google, and they are shown in Attachments 1 and 2 as Concept Plans B and C. These two other concepts are similar in that more paths are introduced into the park design, thus dividing the larger open space into several smaller areas of field. This reduces the effective use of the open space and will require additional effort to maintain separate areas of landscape.

Other Considerations

- Landscape material selection will come from the “Plant Palette for the North Bayshore Precise Plan.” This document was prepared in 2015 as a plant palette recommendation for the NBPP adopted by the City Council.

- Other amenities will include lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks.

Park’s Northern Half

- The northern half of Charleston Park encompassing the water terrace is not part of the scope of this project.
- The NBPP indicates the implementation of streetscape improvements on the north side of the park along Amphitheatre Parkway that include a landscape buffer and two-way cycle track. These improvements require a minimum of 26’ of the park’s Amphitheatre Parkway frontage. Attachment 3 shows the impact of the NBPP improvements. There are no near-term plans in place to develop the improvements along Amphitheatre Parkway per NBPP, but at a future date these improvements would be installed.

Heritage Trees

In January 2018, a certified arborist with HortScience, Inc. evaluated all trees on the site and prepared a Tree Inventory Report for Google. There are two Heritage trees within the site that are proposed to be removed. Table 1 shows the Heritage Tree Removal List.

No.	Tree ID	Tree Species	Trunk Diameter	Justification for Removal	Status
1	781	Canary Island Date Palm	21”	In Conflict with Construction	Proposed for Removal
2	214	Evergreen Ash	16”	Poor Health/ Mostly Dead	Proposed for Removal

Table 1 – Heritage Tree Removal List

Staff recommends mitigation of Heritage tree loss at a 2:1 ratio with 24” box trees for a total of four replacement trees. Tree selection will come from the NBPP Plant Palette and will mostly be native species. The final tree selection will be made with input from Community Services Department staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

The design and construction of the Charleston Park Improvements Project will be funded by Google. Fiscal impact to the City will involve staff time in plan review during the permitting process, and will be funded from the Charleston Road Improvements, Feasibility Study, Project 16-59.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The next step is to submit the Parks and Recreation Commission-recommended concept to Council for final approval this spring. Following Council approval, the design is scheduled to be completed by September 2019, followed immediately by construction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to agenda posting, notices were posted at the project site, and staff notified business and property owners within a 750' radius of the project site.

AC/2/PWK
913-03-13-19M

Attachments: 1. Concept Plan B
2. Concept Plan C
3. Existing Condition/Limit of Improvements

cc: CSD, ACSD, PWD, APWD – Solomon, POSM, PCE – Au, PCE – Arango,
SCE – Chang, File