

**INITIAL STUDY
FOR EAST WEDDELL RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS**

Prepared for
City of Sunnyvale

May 2013

Prepared by
Amy Skewes-Cox, AICP

In conjunction with
BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING
ENVIRONMENTAL COLLABORATIVE
ILLINGWORTH & RODKIN, INC.
LSA ASSOCIATES
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CHAPTER I PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Project Title:** East Weddell Residential Projects
2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:**
City of Sunnyvale Community Development Department
456 W. Olive Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:** Ms. Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer (408-730-7435)
4. **Project Location:** 520-592 E. Weddell Drive (Raintree) and 610-630 E. Weddell Drive (Sares Regis), Sunnyvale, CA
5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:**
Raintree Partners
28202 Cabot Road, Suite 300
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

Sares Regis Group of Northern California, LLC
901 Mariners Island Blvd., 7th Floor
San Mateo, CA 94404
6. **General Plan Designation:** Industrial for Sares Regis site and Parcel B of Raintree site; ITR (Industrial to Residential Medium to High Density) for Parcel A of Raintree site.
7. **Zoning:** M-S/PD (Industrial and Service/Planned Development) for Sares Regis site; M-S/ITR/R-3/PD (Industrial and Service/Industrial-to-Residential/Medium-Density Residential/Planned Development for Parcel A of Raintree site; M-S/POA (Industrial and Service/Place of Assembly) for Parcel B of Raintree site.
8. **Description of Project:**

PROJECT LOCATION, ACREAGE, AND EXISTING LAND USES

The "project" as defined by CEQA that is evaluated in this Initial Study consists of two separate residential development projects proposed by two separate developers. These two multi-family development projects are combined because of their proximity to each other and for the assessment of

cumulative impacts. They are both adjacent to North Fair Oaks Avenue, north of State Highway 101 (Highway 101) in the northern portion of the City of Sunnyvale and applications for new development have been filed at a similar time. One of the developments will occur on the "Sares Regis site," which is approximately 4.04 acres in size, and is located at 610 and 630 East Weddell Drive. The second development will occur on the "Raintree site," which consists of two parcels (Parcel A, which is the north parcel, and Parcel B, which is the south parcel) totaling approximately 12.04 acres. A 1.1-acre parcel that is owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) for the Hetch Hetchy right-of-way separates Parcel A from Parcel B. The Raintree site is located at 520-592 East Weddell Drive, which runs both parallel and perpendicular to North Fair Oaks Avenue (see **Figure 1**).

The Sares Regis site is currently developed with one 62,442-square-foot, one-story industrial building and ancillary facilities that were constructed in 1984. This building is now vacant and would be demolished for new construction. About 139 surface parking spaces and minimal landscaping are provided on the Sares Regis site. Access is provided at the terminus of East Weddell Drive. An emergency vehicle access easement exists connecting the Sares Regis site to Lakehaven Drive.

The Raintree site is currently developed with 15 single-story light manufacturing and office buildings that were constructed in 1976-1978 (about 183,000 square feet). The buildings are occupied by about 70 small businesses. All of these buildings would be demolished for the proposed new construction. About 600 surface parking spaces are provided on the Raintree site, along with hardscape improvements and landscaping. Three driveways on East Weddell Drive provide access to the Raintree site.

The assessor's parcel numbers (APNs) that apply to the project are shown below in **Table 1**.

Table 1 SUMMARY OF SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Project Sites	Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)	Net Lot Area
Sares Regis	110-28-001 and 110-28-007	4.04 acres
Raintree Parcel A* (north)	110-14-190	6.93 acres
Raintree Parcel B* (south)	110-14-191	5.11 acres

*A 1.1-acre parcel owned by the SFPUC for the Hetch Hetchy water pipeline right-of-way bisects Parcels A and B.

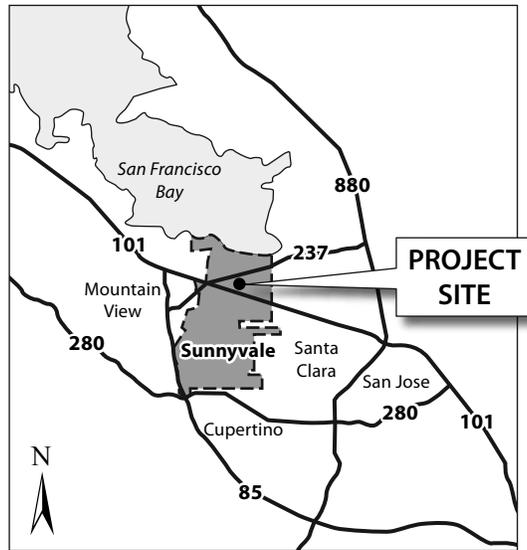
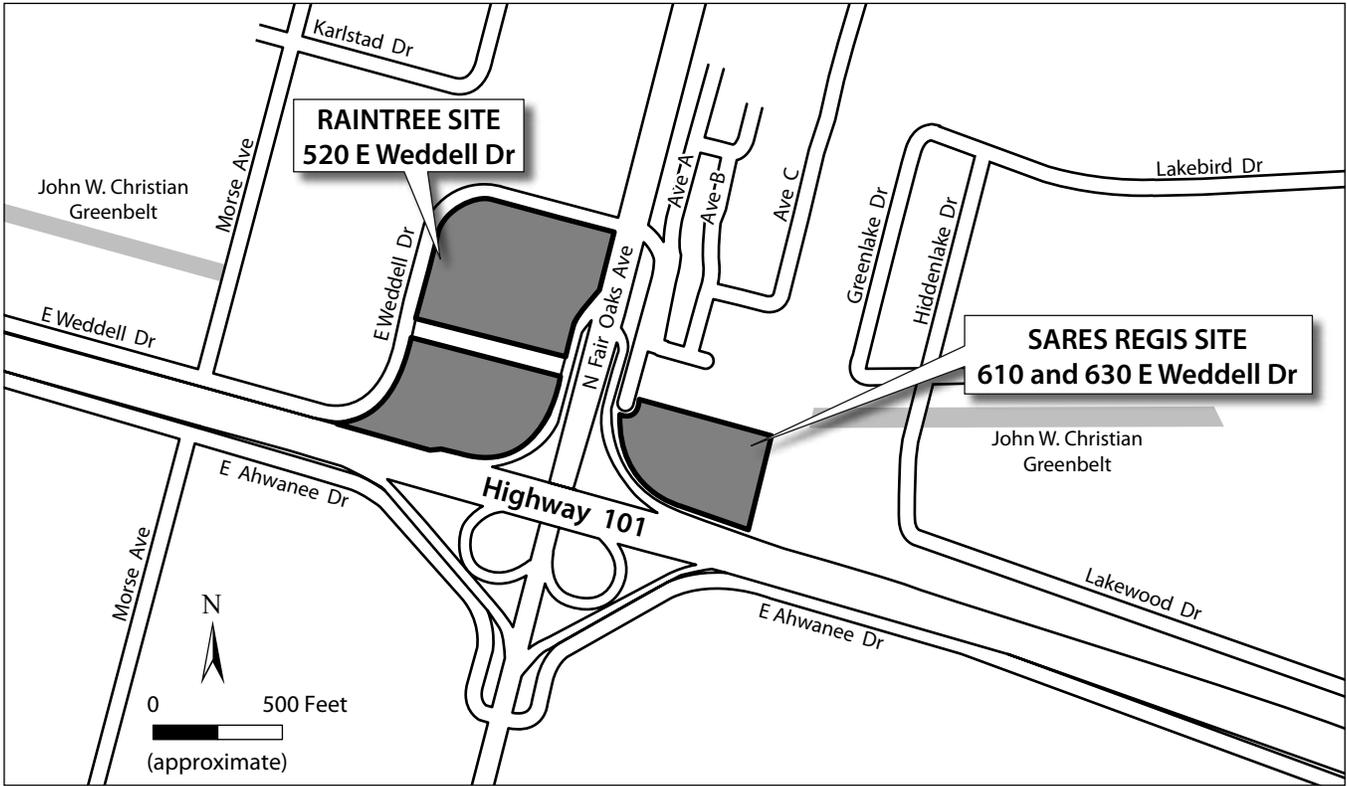


Figure 1

SOURCE: Google Maps, 2013

REGIONAL AND SITE LOCATION

PROPOSED PROJECT

Overview of Proposed Development, General Plan Amendments, and Rezonings

The overall project includes the following components:

- General Plan amendments for two sites
- Rezonings for two sites
- Special Development Permits
- Potential Vesting Tentative Maps
- Modifications to the Tasman/Fair Oaks Area Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Plan
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) approval of improvements to the John W. Christian Greenbelt

While the “project” is defined as the two development projects combined, separate development applications will be processed for each project and decisions on the General Plan amendments and rezonings could be independent of each other. The projects are located in a portion of Sunnyvale now occupied by residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. This area of Sunnyvale is undergoing a transition from industrial uses to residential uses. Several parcels have already transitioned to residential uses and only a few industrial parcels remain.

In 2012, the City Council authorized the study of a range of densities from Residential Medium up to Residential Very High Density for both project sites. This Initial Study examines two scenarios: the “Applicant Proposed Scenario” and a “Full Buildout Scenario.” The Applicant Proposed Scenario is the developers' proposals (i.e., the “project”), and the actual residential density would be no higher than what would be permitted within the R-4, Residential High Density zoning district (see **Tables 2A and 3**) including density bonuses for inclusion of affordable housing and additional green building features. The Full Buildout Scenario, for comparative purposes, is the maximum allowable development under the Residential Very High Density General Plan and R-5 zoning categories (Sares Regis site and Raintree Parcel B site) and the existing Residential Medium-High General Plan and R-4 zoning (Raintree Parcel A site) (see **Tables 2B and 4**).

The applicants have also requested Planned Development (PD) Combining District zoning for their sites. The purpose of the PD combining district, as stated in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 19.26.020, is to provide modifications, additions, and limitations to other zoning districts to meet special conditions and situations that cannot otherwise be handled satisfactorily. This district is also intended to provide opportunities for creative development approaches and standards that will achieve superior community design, environmental preservation, and public benefit, such as, but not limited to:

1. Facilitating development or redevelopment of a site to improve the neighborhood;
2. Allowing a proposed use that is compatible with the neighborhood but requires deviations from development standards for a successful project;
3. Facilitating desirable development of properties at significant intersections; or

4. Allowing development and creation of lots that are less than the minimum size required in the base zoning district.

The Applicant Proposed Scenario is addressed at a project level of detail (per CEQA Guidelines Section 15161) and the Full Buildout Scenario is addressed at a programmatic level of detail (per CEQA Guidelines Section 15168).

Surrounding Land Uses

Figure 2 shows the surrounding land uses for the two project sites. As can be seen in Figure 2, the surrounding neighborhood is largely a residential area served by highways and arterial and collector streets. Industrial uses front Highway 101. The Fair Oaks Light Rail Station is about 0.4 mile north of both sites at the intersection of North Fair Oaks Avenue and Tasman Drive. This light rail line provides access between Downtown Mountain View and Winchester Avenue in Campbell.

North of the Sares Regis site and between Parcels A and B of the Raintree site is the SFPUC right-of-way. The right-of-way contains a below-ground transmission pipeline that brings water from the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir to the City and County of San Francisco and its water customers. The John W. Christian Greenbelt is a Regional Trail managed by the City of Sunnyvale and is located on the SFPUC right-of-way from Orchard Gardens Park (to the west) to Manzano Way (to the east), passing through Lakewood Park. Improvements and public access to the greenbelt are currently discontinuous. No public access or greenbelt improvements are in the area between Raintree Parcels A and B. A public access pathway is provided in a portion of the right-of-way north of the Sares Regis site, but there are no other improvements to the greenbelt in this area.

Table 2A SUMMARY OF PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS AND REZONINGS FOR APPLICANT PROPOSED SCENARIOS

Project	Existing General Plan Designation	Studied General Plan Designation	Existing Zoning	Studied Zoning
Sares Regis	Industrial	RHI (Residential High Density) (27-45 du/ac)	M-S/PD (Industrial and Service/Planned Development)	R-4 High Density Residential
Raintree Parcel A (North)	ITR (Industrial to Residential Medium to High Density)	NO CHANGE	M-S/ITR/R-3/PD (Industrial and Service/Industrial-to-Residential/ Medium Density Residential/ Planned Development)	R-4 High Density Residential
Raintree Parcel B (South)	Industrial	RHI (Residential High Density) (27-45 du/ac)	M-S/POA (Industrial and Service/Place of Assembly)	R-4 High Density Residential

Note: du/ac = dwelling units per acre.

Table 2B SUMMARY OF PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS AND REZONINGS FOR FULL BUILDOUT SCENARIO

Project	Existing General Plan Designation	Studied General Plan Designation	Existing Zoning	Studied Zoning
Sares Regis	Industrial	RVH (Residential Very High Density) (45-65 du/ac)	M-S/PD (Industrial and Service/Planned Development)	R-5 Very High Density Residential
Raintree Parcel A (North)	ITR (Industrial to Residential Medium to High Density)	NO CHANGE	M-S/ITR/R-3/PD (Industrial and Service/Industrial-to-Residential/Medium Density Residential/Planned Development)	R-4 High Density Residential
Raintree Parcel B (South)	Industrial	RVH (Residential Very High Density)(45-65 du/ac)	M-S/POA (Industrial and Service/Place of Assembly)	R-5 Very High Density Residential

Note: du/ac = dwelling units per acre.

Table 3 APPLICANT PROPOSED SCENARIO SUMMARIES FOR SITES

Sites	Zoning	Du/Ac	Acres	Zoning Maximum Units	Up to 5% DB Green	Up to 35% DB Affordable	Total Allowable	Applicant Proposed
Raintree Parcel A (North)	R-4/PD	36.3	6.93	251	13	88	352	234
Raintree Parcel B (South)	R-4/PD	36.3	5.11	185	9	65	259	231
Sares Regis	R-4/PD	36.3	4.04	146	7	52	205	205
TOTAL			16.08	582	29	205	816	670

Note: du/ac = dwelling units per acre; DB = density bonus.

Table 4 FULL BUILDOUT SCENARIO SUMMARIES FOR SITES

Sites	GP Category	DU/Acre (GP)	Acres	Zoning	Du/Acre (Zoning)	Zoning Maximum Units	Up to 5% DB Green	Up to 35% DB Affordable	Total Units ^b
Raintree Parcel A (North)	Medium to High Density ^a	45	6.93	R-4	36.3	251	13	88	352
Raintree Parcel B (South)	Very High Density	65	5.11	R-5	45.85	234	11	82	327
Sares Regis	Very High Density	65	4.04	R-5	45.85	185	9	65	259
TOTAL			16.08			670	33	235	938

Note: GP = General Plan; du/ac = dwelling units per acre; DB = density bonus.

^a Existing GP designation, no change being studied.

^b Maximum units per zoning with density bonuses.



Figure 2

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITES AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

SOURCE: Steinberg Architects, 2013



Land Uses Surrounding Sares Regis Site

Highway 101 is just south of the Sares Regis site, with an off-ramp connecting to North Fair Oaks Avenue immediately west of East Weddell Drive. North Fair Oaks Avenue crosses Highway 101 via an overpass southwest of the project site. The Highway 101 off-ramp is just west of the site. The Raintree site is located across North Fair Oaks Avenue to the west.

The Fair Oaks substation, owned by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), is north of the greenbelt north of the Sares Regis site. North of the greenbelt and the Fair Oaks substation is El Dorado mobile home park.

The East Channel Trail, a planned multi-use trail right-of-way owned by Santa Clara Valley Water District and proposed by the City, is located east of the Fair Oaks substation and will connect the greenbelt to the Fair Oaks light rail train station. The Santa Clara Valley Water District operates the East Channel flood control system in this location, which continues north and south of the project site. Although there are no trail improvements, there is informal use of the channel maintenance road by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Also east of the Sares Regis site are the Lake Haven Townhomes community (15 townhomes) and the larger Lakewood residential neighborhood, the latter of which includes single-family homes, a park, a neighborhood shopping center and a school. PG&E maintains electrical transmission lines immediately to the east of the Sares Regis site on land owned by the Lake Haven Townhomes community. A pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Highway 101 has access from Lakehaven Drive east of the Lake Haven Townhomes and terminates on the south side of Highway 101 on Ahwanee Drive.

Land Uses Surrounding Raintree Site

Similar to the Sares Regis site, the Raintree site is bordered by Highway 101 to the south, with the highway overpass providing access for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists along Fair Oaks Avenue. A mobile home park and single-family and multi-family homes are located south of Highway 101. Columbia Middle School is set within this residential neighborhood to the south. The Sares Regis site is located across North Fair Oaks Avenue to the east.

West of the Raintree site, along Weddell Avenue, are institutional and office buildings with uses such as UPS Freight, New Hope International Church, Sunnyvale Health & Fitness, and other non-residential uses. The future Seven Seas Park farther west on Morse Avenue is currently under design as a 4.3-acre neighborhood park and is anticipated for completion in 2014. A recently completed three-story townhome development is immediately west and north of the Raintree site.

The area north and west of the Raintree site has been transitioning from one-story industrial uses to medium- and high-density residential uses. Other uses north of the site include a restaurant and office buildings and medium- to high-density residential development.

Residential Development and Proposed Site Plans (“Applicant Proposed Scenario”)

Sares Regis Site

The applicant for the Sares Regis project proposes to construct one four-story residential building. The majority of the building would be less than 55 feet tall with one tower element that may reach 55 feet. The project would contain 205 residential apartments, a four-story parking garage, and associated common area with landscaping and amenities (see **Figure 3**). Apartments would range in size from 575 square feet to 1,400 square feet and would include one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. The total gross square footage (gsf) of the residential building would be approximately 280,000 square feet and the gross square footage of the garage (Type I concrete construction) would be 135,000 square feet. The proposed base density would equate to 36.3 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). With an additional 35-percent density bonus allowed for affordable housing pursuant to the State density bonus law (Government Code Section 65915) and a 5-percent density bonus for green building pursuant to City regulations, the density would be 50.7 du/ac, or a total of 205 units for the 4.04-acre site (see **Table 3**).

Amenities would include a pool, spa, community room, fitness center, resident business center, bike repair room, bike storage, leasing office, resident storage, outdoor barbecue area, guest suites, and a pet wash area. The project may include improvements to extend and improve the John W. Christian Greenbelt over the portion of the SFPUC property immediately adjacent to the north of the site.

A sound wall may be required along portions of the south and west boundary of the property but this has not yet been determined.

A total of 331 parking spaces would be provided on the Sares Regis site for the 205 dwelling units proposed. The proposed parking is greater than the minimum required for State density bonus projects, but less than would be required per Sunnyvale Municipal Code if there were not affordable units. Fifty-two bicycle parking spaces and 205 storage areas would also be provided on the site.

Raintree Site

The development project on the Raintree site proposes the construction of 465 residential apartment units within eight buildings (see **Figure 4**). The units would be designed as stacked flats (single-story units with a common access hallway) in a variety of building types. The building types would include “wrap” buildings in which the units would surround one or more sides of a parking structure, “tuck-under” buildings in which units would be located above parking, and “on-grade” buildings in which residences would be located on the first floor with parking available in adjacent on-grade parking fields.

The eight buildings would range in height from three to four stories, using Type V (wood frame) construction for the residential units and Type I (concrete) construction for the structured parking. A mixture of studios, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units is planned, with an average unit size of approximately 1,000 square feet. Total gross building square footage would be 901,870 square feet (including garages).

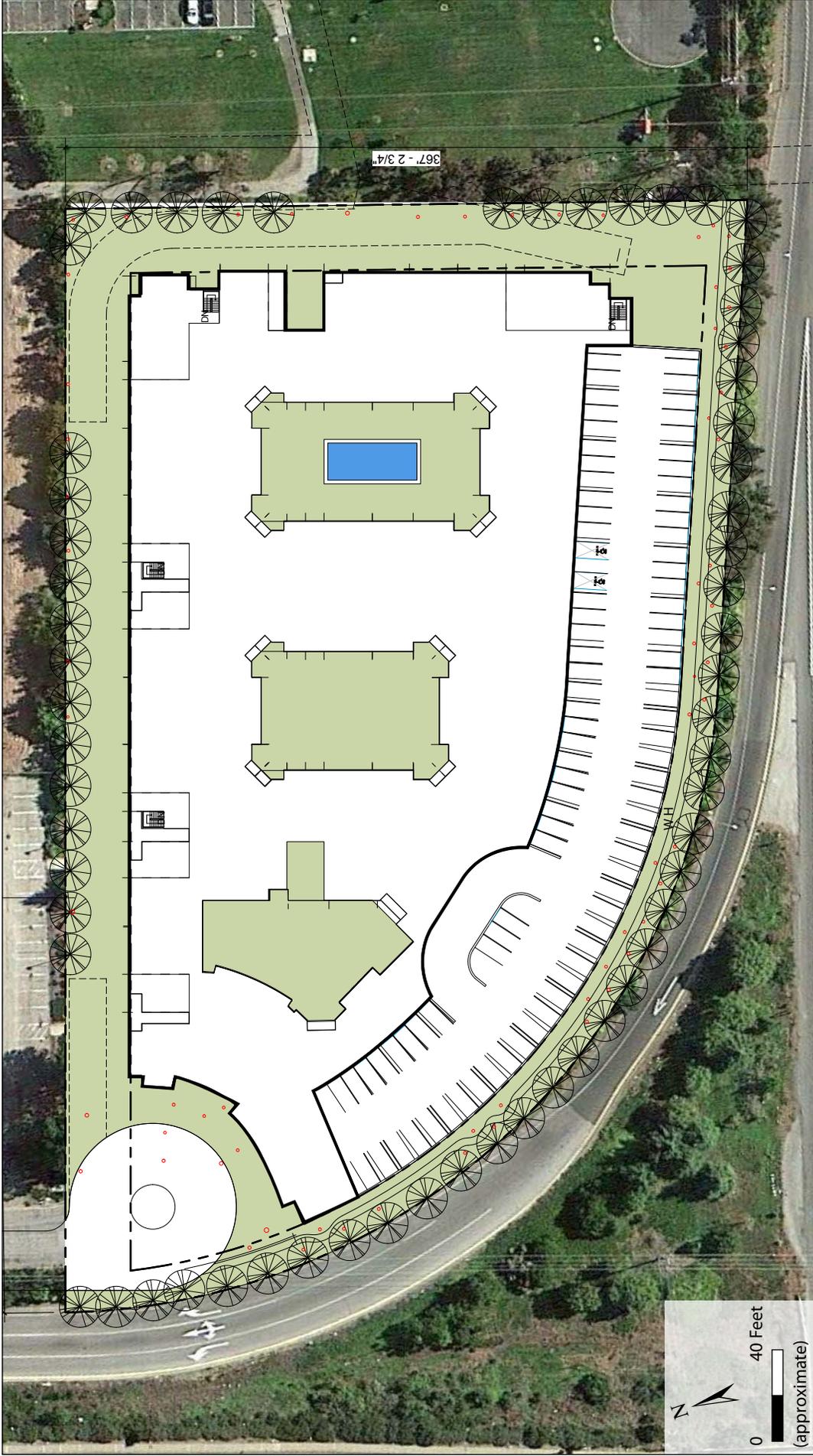


Figure 3

SARES REGIS SITE PLAN

SOURCE: Steinberg Architects, 2013





Figure 4

RAINTREE SITE PLAN

SOURCE: Steinberg Architects, 2013



Amenities would include swimming pools, outdoor seating and meditation areas, common cooking and dining areas, and community centers with gyms, indoor seating, and gathering areas. The SFPUC parcel is proposed to be converted from its current use as a paved parking area to a multi-use pathway for public use with landscaping and pedestrian-friendly features such as benches. No buildings are proposed within the SFPUC right-of-way.

A total of approximately 811 parking spaces would be provided on the Raintree site for the 465 units proposed. The proposed parking is greater than the minimum required for State density bonus projects but less than would be required per Sunnyvale Municipal Code if it were not an affordable project. The majority of these spaces would be in parking structures or garages. Bicycle parking and storage spaces would also be provided on the site.

Maximum Development Under Residential High and Very High Density General Plan Designations and Zoning (“Full Buildout Scenario”)

At the request of the applicants, the Sunnyvale City Council has initiated General Plan amendment studies for both sites. When the City Council authorized the initiation of the General Plan amendment studies, the City Council action was to study a range of densities up to 65 dwelling units per acre, which is considered very high density. The applicants are proposing high density General Plan designations. As indicated in **Table 2A**, Raintree Partners is proposing no change to the General Plan on Parcel A (currently Industrial to Residential Medium to High Density (14 to 45 du/ac); however, they are proposing to change the Parcel B designation to Residential High Density (27 to 45 du/ac). Sares Regis is proposing Residential High Density as the proposed General Plan designation.

Conservatively, the most intense level of development is analyzed in this Initial Study; therefore, a density of up to 65 du/ac for the two parcels (the Sares Regis site and Raintree Parcel B [south parcel]) is assessed herein at a programmatic level of evaluation.¹ Raintree Parcel A is not proposed for any General Plan amendment as this parcel is already designated for “Industrial to Residential Medium to High Density,” which would allow the proposed residential uses at a density of up to 45 du/ac.

Thus, pursuant to the City Council’s action, this Initial Study and the EIR will address a maximum buildout of 938 units for the two sites (259 units at the Sares Regis site and 679 units at the Raintree site).

Sares Regis Site

Under the Full Buildout Scenario, the Sares Regis site would be allowed to develop at a density of up to 65 du/ac. The R-5 zoning would allow a base density of 45.85 du/ac, with an additional 40-percent density bonus for both affordable housing and green building, resulting in a density of approximately 64 du/ac. Under the Full Buildout Scenario, a total of 259 dwelling units could be built on the site (see **Figure 5**), as compared to the 205 proposed by the applicant’s site plan. The increase in units could

¹ No detailed site plans have been provided for this level of development on the sites; however, conceptual site plans have been provided for the purposes of analysis in the Initial Study and EIR.

result in a development pattern that could include one five-story building about 65 feet tall in a similar location as proposed for the smaller Applicant Proposed Scenario. Assuming a similar mix of unit sizes, parking would need to increase by about 88 parking spaces as compared to the Applicant Proposed Scenario. This would result in an additional floor on the parking structure. Building gross square footage would likely be about 350,000 gsf and parking structure square footage would be approximately 162,000 square feet. Access and on-site amenities are assumed to be similar to the Applicant Proposed Scenario. Provision of utilities is also assumed to be similar to the Applicant Proposed Scenario.

Raintree Site

As directed by the City Council, the Raintree site would potentially include a General Plan amendment for Parcel B but not for Parcel A. Parcel A would remain with the current designation of Industrial to Residential Medium to High Density. For Parcel B, the City Council authorized the analysis of a range of General Plan designations up to Residential Very High Density, which would allow up to 65 units per acre. A rezoning to R-5, with allowable affordable housing and green building bonuses, would allow a similar density.

The R-5 zoning for Parcel B would allow a base density of 45.85 du/ac, with an additional 40-percent density bonus for both affordable housing and green building. The R-4 zoning for Parcel A would allow a base density of 36.3 du/ac, with the same 40-percent density bonus. Thus, with the Full Buildout Scenario, a total of 679 dwelling units could be built on the site as compared to the 465 units proposed by Raintree Partners. A total of 352 units would be developed on Parcel A and 327 units would be developed on Parcel B (see **Table 4**). The increased units allowed would likely result in a development pattern that would include taller buildings and parking structures, but similar footprints to what is proposed with the Applicant Proposed Scenario. As shown in **Figure 6**, the northern half of Parcel A of the Raintree site would have an addition of one story to each of the buildings proposed in the Applicant Proposed Scenario site plan. The southern portion of Parcel A would have a two-story addition to the buildings shown in the site plan. The SFPUC right-of-way would likely be given the same General Plan designation and zoning as the adjacent properties. Parcel B of the Raintree site would have two stories added to the parking structure and residential building in the southeast corner of the site, and one story added to the parking structure and residential building in the southeast corner of the site (see **Figure 6**). Thus, all on-site buildings would range in height from 4 to 6 stories as compared to the Applicant Proposed Scenario in which buildings would range in height from 3 to 4 stories. Building height for the Full Buildout Scenario would be 55 to 75 feet.

Assuming a similar unit size mix, parking would need to increase by 375 parking spaces as compared to the Applicant Proposed Scenario. Gross square footage would likely be about 1.32 million gross square feet (gsf). Access and on-site amenities are assumed to be similar to the Applicant Proposed Scenario. Provision of utilities is also assumed to be similar to the Applicant Proposed Scenario.