



Council Meeting: October 18, 2011

SUBJECT: 2011-7652: Application to Initiate a General Plan Amendment to study a change in the Land Use Designation of a property located at 620 Iris Avenue (Highlander Apartments) from Residential High Density to Residential Very High Density.

REPORT IN BRIEF

A proposal has been submitted to modify the General Plan designation of a 4.76 acre site, located at 620 Iris Avenue (See Attachment A, Vicinity Map). The site is occupied by the Highlander Apartments. The current General Plan designation is Residential High Density. In order to allow construction of 40 new market rate apartment units (total of 213 units), the Zoning and General Plan designation would need to be modified to a higher density (Residential Very Density). Prior to a formal development and rezone application, the City Council must initiate a General Plan Amendment study of the site. The project site is located a block north of El Camino Real near the major intersection with Fair Oaks Avenue. Surrounding land uses include a combination medium and high density residential uses along with commercial development to the south.

Staff recommends that the City Council initiate a General Plan Amendment to study an increased residential density for the site up to a Very High Density designation.

BACKGROUND

The applicant has submitted conceptual plans for a 40-unit expansion at the Highlander Apartments. The additional units would result in a total of 213 apartments. Although not under consideration at this time, a site plan has been provided for background. In addition to a new structure for the 40 units, several other modifications to the site are shown to accommodate the expansion, including reconfiguration of the parking, landscaping, and amenity facilities (pool and clubhouse).

The subject site contains three street frontages; Fair Oaks to the west, Iris Avenue to the north, and Foxtail Drive to the east. To the south is the Woodfin Suites condominium site, which was formerly a hotel property until its conversion to condominiums in 2004. Also to the south are two multi-tenant commercial properties on S. Fair Oaks Avenue, at the corner with El Camino

Real. Several multi-family residential uses surround the subject site to the north, east, and west across Fair Oaks Avenue. No single family homes are located within 400 feet of the project site. Under construction about a block to the north is the 124-unit senior apartment complex being developed by Mid-Pen Housing on the County medical clinic site.

EXISTING POLICY

Only the City Council is authorized to initiate proceedings to consider an amendment to the General Plan (SMC Section 19.92.020). The City Council must first review a General Plan Amendment Initiation request in order to determine if the request warrants further study.

The approval of an initiation request would allow a formal application to be submitted to further assess the merits of the proposed General Plan Amendment request. The approval of an initiation does not commit the City Council to approve the General Plan Amendment request, nor any specific project proposal. As part of the General Plan Amendment request, the applicant anticipates they will also submit architectural plans for concurrent review.

The following are the key General Plan goals, policies, and action statements relating to this General Plan Amendment Initiation request:

Land Use and Transportation Chapter

GOAL LT-3: Ensure ownership and rental housing options in terms of style, size and density that are appropriate and contribute positively to the surrounding area.

- **LT-1.7a:** Locate higher intensity land uses and developments so that they have easy access to transit services.
- **LT-3.1c:** Promote the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing.

Policy LT-3.4 Determine appropriate density for housing based on site planning opportunities and proximity to services.

- **LT-3.4a:** Locate higher-density housing with easy access to transportation corridors, rail transit stations, bus transit corridor stops, commercial services and jobs.

Housing and Community Revitalization Element

GOAL HE-1: Adequate Housing - Foster the expansion of the housing supply to provide greater opportunities for current and future residents within limits imposed by environmental, social, fiscal and land use constraints.

Policy HE-1.1: Encourage diversity in the type, size, price and tenure of residential development in Sunnyvale, including single-family homes, townhomes, apartments, mixed-use housing, transit-oriented development and live-work housing.

GOAL HE-2: Enhanced Housing Conditions and Affordability – Maintain and enhance the conditions and affordability of existing housing in Sunnyvale.

DISCUSSION

The Highlander Apartments is located near one of the City's major intersections, El Camino Real & N. Fair Oaks Avenue. The property is adjacent to commercial properties within the Precise Plan for El Camino Real area to the south, as well as similar density residential development.

The proposed development would increase density to a higher level than neighboring properties. Properties of a similar density as proposed are located at several locations within the City. These locations include the Avalon Apartments on Lakeside Drive near Lawrence Expressway, the Lawrence Station Apartment Homes (Luminaire) at Lawrence Expressway and Highway 237, and the Borregas Court Studios at W. Weddell Drive and Borregas Avenue near Highway 101. Although no formal application has been approved, the City Council recently approved a General Plan Initiation study to examine R-5 density at 620 E. Maude (Armory Site). Each has the characteristic of being located near a major corridor.

Density

With the formal application, the applicant proposes rezoning the site from R-4 to R-5 Zoning District to allow a density of up to 45 units per acre. Currently the site is built with 173 units which equates to 36 units to the acre, which is developed at its maximum capacity. With the addition of 40 market rate rental units, the site would be built at 45 units to the acre. Preliminarily, the applicant has demonstrated conceptually that the site can accommodate the increased density and can meet other development standards including landscaping and parking.

Along with the necessary zoning change, the General Plan designation would need to be changed to Residential Very High Density. Refer to Attachment C

General Plan Land Use Map and Attachment D Zoning Map. The following table indicates the number of allowed dwelling units based on General Plan Land Use Designation and Zoning for Medium, High and Very High Residential Densities.

Residential Density		
General Plan Designation and zoning	General Plan Density Range	Potential Zoning
	Units Per Acre	Maximum Units Per Acre without density bonus
Medium	14 – 27	24 (R-3)
High	27 – 42	36 (R-4)
Very High	42 – 65	46 (R-5)

Compatibility

The increased density would result in a higher density than neighboring development and would exceed the density of other residential developments along this corridor. Based on the modest increase in the number of units, staff does not anticipate a significant traffic impact as a result of the project, but this issue will be evaluated if the study is initiated. A preliminary design of the project anticipates a new rectangular four-story structure above podium parking that matches the 49-foot height of the existing four story main apartment building. The building would be located south of the main building (See Attachment E). The R-5 Zoning District allows up to five stories and 55-foot height. The design is intended to match the existing apartment complex which is currently undergoing renovation.

Staff has provided comments on a Preliminary Review application. If the study is initiated staff would continue to work with the applicant to refine details of the site plan and architectural proposal.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact for the task of preparing a General Plan Amendment study. The applicant will pay appropriate City fees for the study and associated architectural review.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action is not considered a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because initiation of a General Plan Amendment study has

no potential to create a significant environmental impact (California Resources Code Section 21065). If a General Plan Amendment study is initiated, staff has determined additional environmental analysis will be necessary for this site.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's Web site. Nearby property owners and tenants are not notified until a study has been initiated. If a study is initiated, the applicant would be required to submit subsequent discretionary applications for a General Plan Amendment, Rezoning, Special Development Permit and applicable application fees. These related applications would be subject to hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council. Staff would also conduct a public outreach meeting prior to public hearings.

ALTERNATIVES

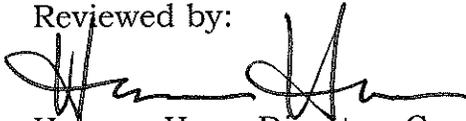
1. Initiate the GPA study as requested for 620 Iris Avenue to study a change from Residential High Density to Residential Very High Density.
2. Do not initiate a GPA study and retain the subject property as Residential High Density.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1 – Approve the request to initiate a GPA study to study changing the General Plan Land Use Designation to Industrial to Very High Density Residential for the site.

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the request to initiate a General Plan Amendment study for 620 Iris Avenue to consider Very High Density Residential for the site. The project is considered a modest increase in density to an established apartment complex and is appropriately located near one of the City's major corridors. Staff would further analyze possible impacts of the proposed expansion to the surrounding area as well as continue to work with the applicant to further improve conditions on the site.

Reviewed by:

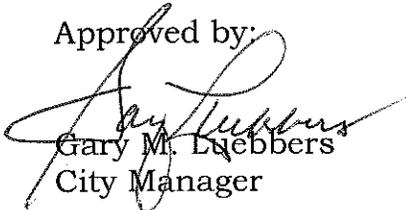


Hanson Hom, Director, Community Development

Prepared by: Ryan Kuchenig, Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer

Approved by:

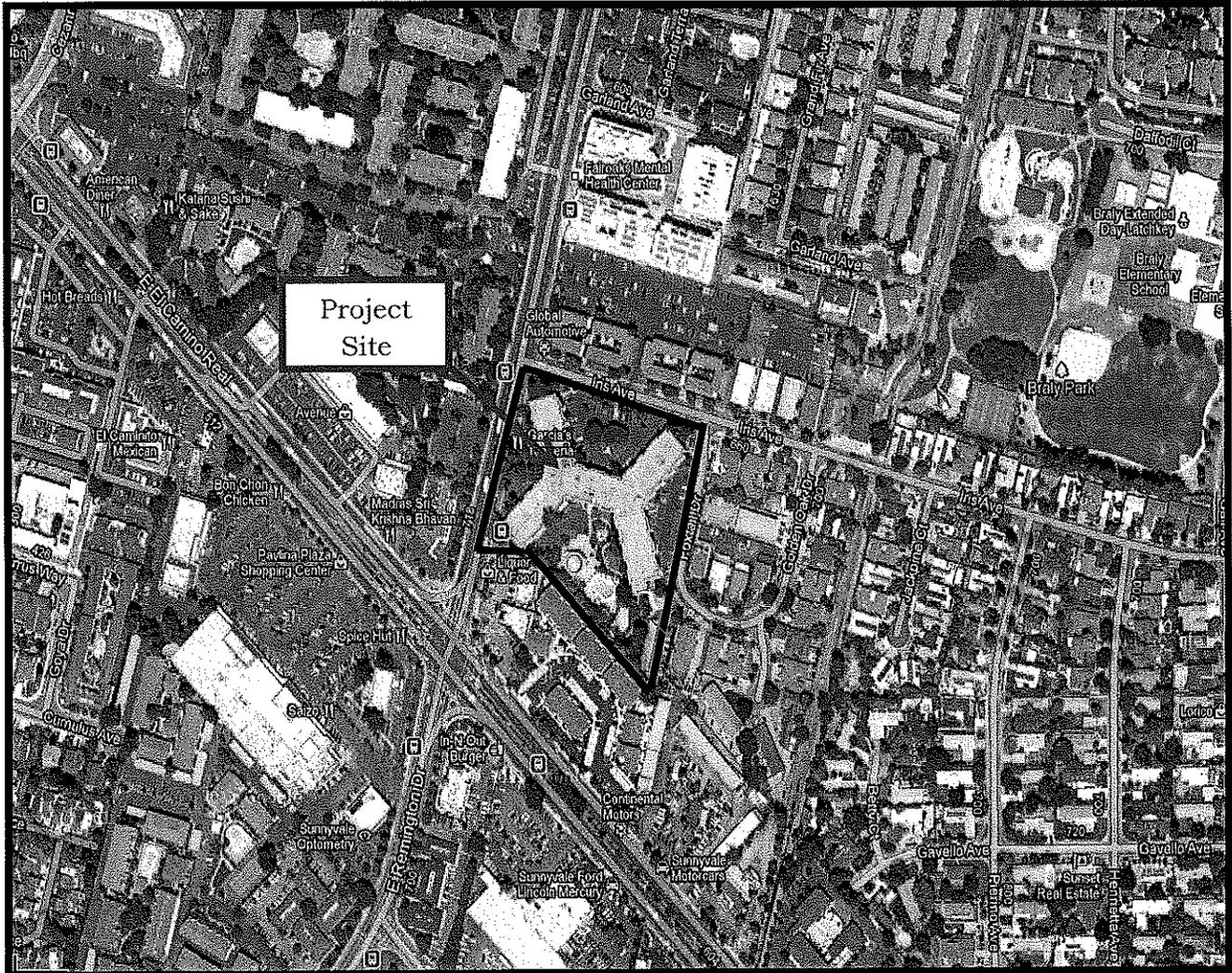


Gary M. Luebbers
City Manager

Attachments

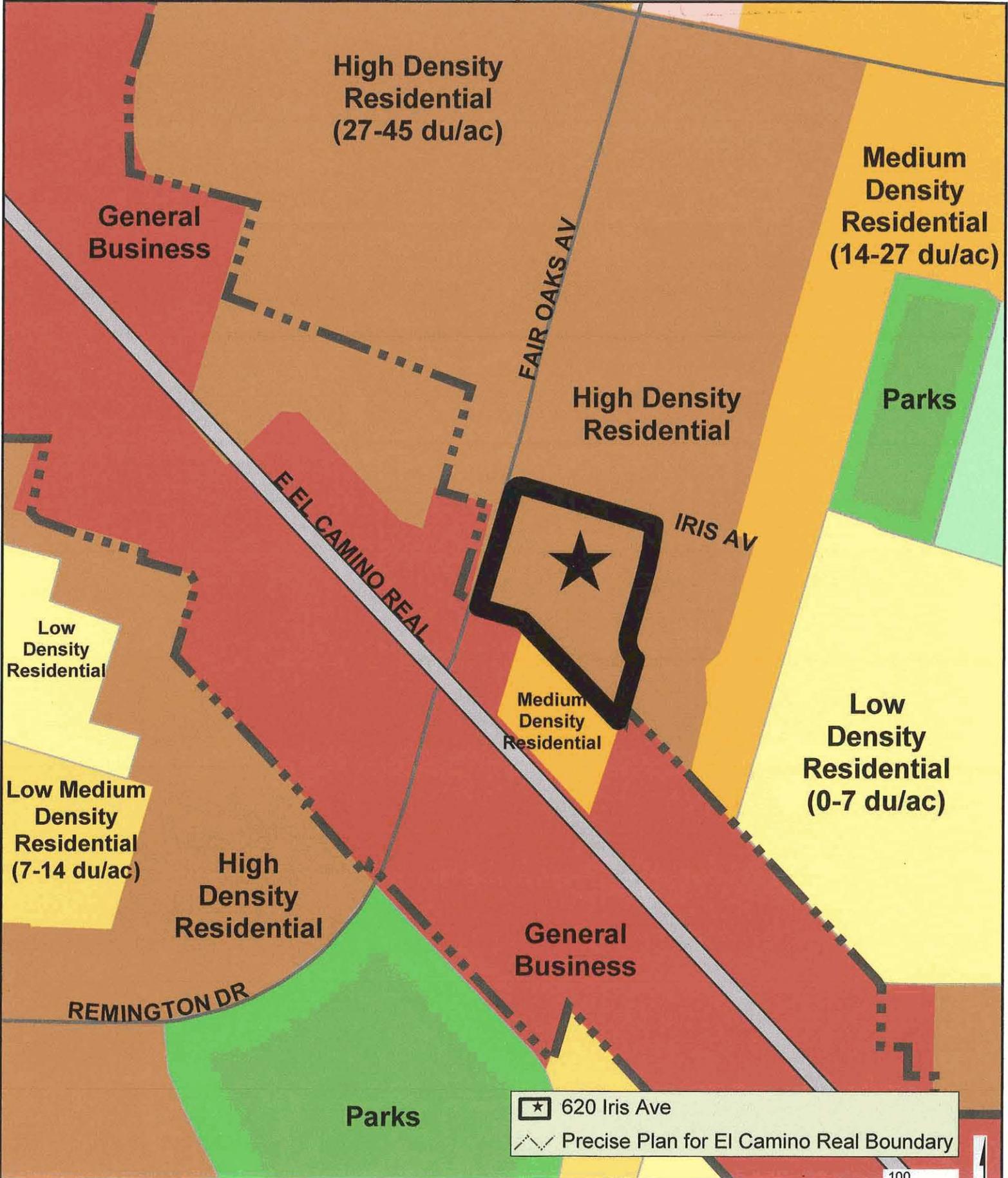
- A. Vicinity Map
- B. General Plan Land Use Map
- C. Zoning District Map
- D. Applicant's letter requesting initiation of a General Plan Amendment study.
- E. Conceptual Plans

Vicinity Map



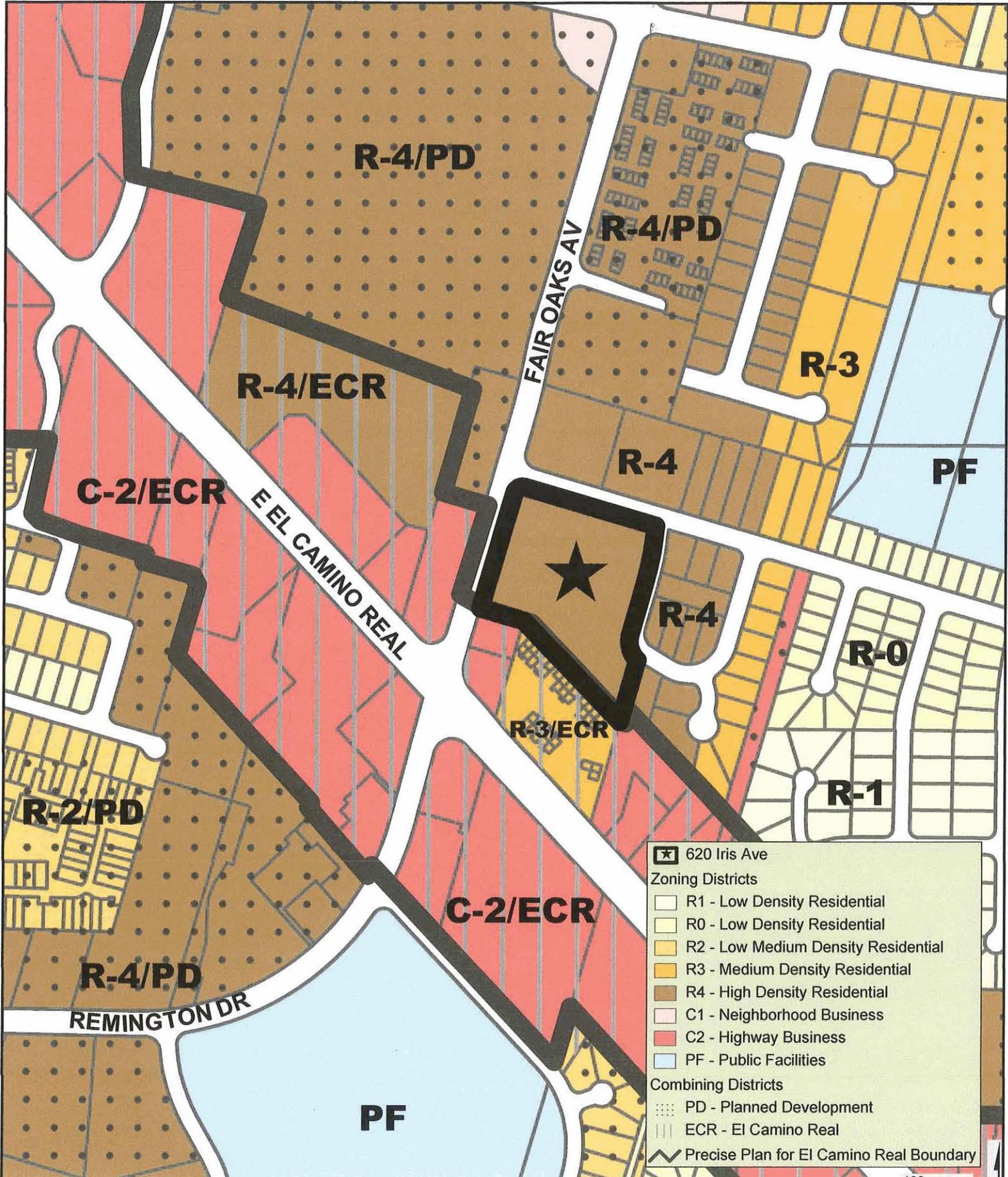


General Plan Land Use Designations - 620 Iris Avenue





City of Sunnyvale
Zoning - 620 Iris Avenue



★ 620 Iris Ave

Zoning Districts

- R1 - Low Density Residential
- R0 - Low Density Residential
- R2 - Low Medium Density Residential
- R3 - Medium Density Residential
- R4 - High Density Residential
- C1 - Neighborhood Business
- C2 - Highway Business
- PF - Public Facilities

Combining Districts

- PD - Planned Development
- ECR - El Camino Real
- Precise Plan for El Camino Real Boundary

7 September 2011
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Ryan Kuchenig, Associate Planner
Department of Community Development
City of Sunnyvale
P.O. Box 3707
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3707

Re: General Plan Amendment letter of Initiation;
Highlander Apartments Addition, 620 Iris Avenue

Dear Ryan:

In accordance with the City's policy of requesting Council to consider a General Plan Amendment for the expansion of the Highlander Apartments, I am writing this letter requesting such consideration.

The Highlander Apartments is an existing four-story building, planned in an "X" shape and constructed over a semi-depressed parking garage. The facility was built in the late 1960's and consists of 173 apartments, a detached Recreation Building, a swimming pool, surface parking lots and other site amenities. The site area is 4.76 acres making the existing density 36 du/ac.

The current zoning of the property is R4 and the General Plan is High-density Residential (27-45 du/ac). There is considerable open space on the existing site that is very underutilized by the current residents. The owner desires to add an additional forty apartment units to maximize the utilization of the site. At 213 units, the density would be 45 du/ac - already permitted by the General Plan.

Section 2.3 of the General Plan lists several goals for the provision of new housing in the City of Sunnyvale. Goal D is particularly relevant to this proposal, stating "Continue to direct new residential development into specific plan areas, near transit, and close to employment and activity centers." The site is adjacent to several others carrying the R4 zoning designation and backs up to the El Camino Real commercial development. The ECR Specific Plan encourages higher residential density at major cross streets, such as Fair Oaks Avenue that borders subject site on the north side. This residential development then is immediately adjacent to a high density node intended to be maximized by the ECR Specific Plan.

The proposed project, which has received Preliminary Review, is a detached 4 story building over parking in the same pattern as the existing development. Additional parking will be provided as required by City code. A new Recreation Room will be provided along with a relocated

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swimming pool and a new Tot Lot. The existing apartment building is currently undergoing exterior and interior renovation. The design of the new building will be compatible with it.

We are greatly encouraged to see that this project is already listed as a 'pending' project which will offer housing to the residents of the City of Sunnyvale (see attached: Housing Needs Allocation 2007-2014). According to the Santa Clara County Housing Needs Allocation, the City of Sunnyvale is behind in meeting the County's housing goals. The City of Sunnyvale is listed as the third leading city in Santa Clara County (following San Jose and Santa Clara) with insufficient numbers of housing units. Even if all the projects noted are to be built by 2014, the City of Sunnyvale will still not meet its housing goal.

Approval of this project will not only move the City of Sunnyvale forward in meeting their housing goals, but will also improve the common facilities for the existing Highlander apartment complex for all its tenants with the new swimming pool, tot lot and landscaping. This is a win-win for the City of Sunnyvale and the current tenants. The project is realistic and the addition will blend into an environment that is already part of the urban setting of this neighborhood.

We understand that both General Plan Amendment and Rezoning is required to allow this project to be constructed. Please give this matter your favorable consideration, so that complete formal applications for these entitlements can be submitted.

Very truly yours,

MBA ARCHITECTS



Marvin Bamberg, AIA, CSI, LEED-AP
President

Encl.

cc: Peninsula West

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Santa Clara County Housing Needs Allocation, 2007 to 2014

	Very Low, <50%	Low, <80%	Moderate, <120%	Above Moderate	Total
Campbell	199	122	158	413	892
Cupertino	341	229	243	357	1,170
Gilroy	319	217	271	808	1,615
Los Altos	98	66	79	74	317
Los Altos Hills	27	19	22	13	81
Los Gatos	154	100	122	186	562
Milpitas	689	421	441	936	2,487
Monte Sereno	13	9	11	8	41
Morgan Hill	317	249	246	500	1,312
Mountain View	571	388	488	1,152	2,599
Palo Alto	690	543	641	986	2,860
San Jose	7,751	5,322	6,198	15,450	34,721
Santa Clara	1,293	914	1,002	2,664	5,873
Saratoga	90	68	77	57	292
Sunnyvale	1,073	708	776	1,869	4,426
Unincorporated	253	192	232	413	1,090
Santa Clara Total	13,878	9,567	11,007	25,886	60,338

ATTACHMENT D
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TOWNHOMES COMPLETED IN SUNNYVALE
2007 - PRESENT

LOCATION	PROJECT NAME	NO. OF UNITS	YR COMPLETED	DEVELOPER
488 Tasman Dr	Kassell Terrace	43		2007 Pulte Homes
1156 Aster Ave	Sweetwood and Tan Oak Terraces	42		2007 John Travis
508 Tasman Dr	Danbury III Munich and Molucca Terraces	30		2007 Pulte Homes
430 Toyama Dr	Lyon and Timor Terraces	50		2007 430 Toyama LLC
624 E Evelyn Ave	Eucalyptus, Ficus, Fringe Tree and Ginkgo Terrace	47		2007 Classic Communities
391 S. Bernardo Ave	Eaton Terrace	6		2007 Fukui Construction
1141 N Fair Oaks Ave	Danbury I	168		2007 Pulte Homes
1047 N Fair Oaks Ave	Saco Terrace	36		2008 Pulte Homes
1035 N Fair Oaks Ave	Junction Oaks - Scotia Terrace	30		2009 Classic Communities
1049 Kiel Ct	Saginaw Terrace	4		2009 Classic Communities
545 E Weddell Ave	Classics at City Park	130		2009 Toll Brothers
1202-1204 Cortez Dr	Barranca Terrace	8		2009 Timothy Proschold
189-191 S Bernardo Ave	Arroyo Terrace	8		2009 Nathan Merlin
Ontario Dr		4		2009 Avi Meyers
832 Maria Ln		4		2009 Albert Mangini II
TOTAL		610		

CONDO UNITS COMPLETED IN SUNNYVALE
2007 - PRESENT

LOCATION	PROJECT NAME	NO. OF UNITS	YR COMPLETED	DEVELOPER	NOTES
635 E El Camino Real	Woodfin Suites	88		2007 Deborah Ungo-McCormick	hotel/condo conversion
1049 Kiel Ct	Saginaw Terrace	30		2009 Classic Communities	
1250 Lakeside Dr	Lakeside	250		2011 Rob Steinberg	combined hotel/condos
1168 Aster Ave	Tristania, Virginia Pine and Valley Oak Terraces	80		2011 KB Homes	
TOTAL		448			

APARTMENT UNITS COMPLETED IN SUNNYVALE
2007- PRESENT

LOCATION

PROJECT NAME

NO. OF UNITS

YR COMPLETED

SFR'S COMPLETED IN SUNNYVALE
2007- PRESENT

LOCATION	PROJECT NAME	NO. OF UNITS	YR COMPLETED	DEVELOPER
563 Alberta Ave			4	2007 Greg Mussallem
444 S. Taaffe Ave			4	2008 Justin Mozart
102 Cumulus Ave			3	2010 Fukui Construction
805 W Fremont Ave	Wilmington, Pistachio and Pumpkin Terraces	42		2011 Classic Communities
642 W Washington Ave			2	2011 Sanjeev Acharya
1244 Poplar Ave			3	2010 Bradley Planning Group
TOTAL			58	

PENDING RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN SUNNYVALE
AS OF JULY 2011

LOCATION	NO. OF UNITS	TYPE OF UNITS	DEVELOPER	STATUS	BLDG PERMIT STATUS
1050 Helen Ave	40	Mixed Use	FMA Development LLC	Approved	Not yet submitted
1287 Lawrence Station Rd	348	Mixed Use	BRE Properties	Approved	Under construction
2502 Town Center Ln	284	Mixed Use	Quatro Realty Group LLC	Approved	Under construction
311 Capella	280	Mixed Use	BRE Properties	Approved	Under review
615 Tasman Dr	290	Condo/Apts	Essex Property Trust	Approved	Under construction
660 S Fair Oaks Ave	124	Senior Housing	Mid Peninsula	Approved	Under construction
660 W El Camino Real	113	Mixed Use	Summerhill Homes	Pending Review	
704 Town & Country	127	Apts	Carmel Partners	Pending Review	
1044 E Duane Ave	132	Condo	Taylor Morrison	Approved	Under review
1060 Morse Ave	17	Townhomes	Classic Communities	Approved	
1170 Morse Ave	48	Townhomes	Classic Communities	Approved	Under construction
127 W California Ave	5	Townhomes	Dale Myers Associates	Approved	Not yet submitted
1330 Sunnyvale Saratoga	14	SFR	Classic Communities	Approved	Not yet submitted
199 N Sunnyvale Ave	3	SFR	D2 Design Associates	Approved	Not yet submitted
394 E Evelyn Ave	47	Condo	Ryan Inn LLC	Approved	Not yet submitted
408 Flora Vista Ave	8	SFR	Michael Kirkish	Approved	Under review
411 N Fair Oaks Ave	8	Townhomes	Sanjeev Achayra	Pending Review	
421 S Bayview	2	SFR	Peninsula Communities	Pending Review	
574 Bobolink Ave	3	SFR	Omid Shakeri	Approved	Under review
585 Old San Francisco Rd	6	Townhomes	M Design Group	Approved	Under review
620 Iris Ave	40	Apts	MBA Architects	Pending Review	
628 E Taylor	10	Townhomes	City Ventures	Pending Review	
650 E Taylor	24	Townhomes	City Ventures	Approved	Under construction
700 Timberpine Ave	51	SFR	Toll Brothers	Approved	Under review
955 Stewart Dr	161	Townhomes	Pulte Homes	Approved	Not yet submitted
962 E Duane Ave	242	Condo	O'Brien Homes	Approved	Under construction
963 S Wolfe Rd	6	Townhomes	Akbar Abdolihani	Approved	Under review
TOTAL	2433				

HOUSING NEEDS OF SUNNYVALE
2007-2014

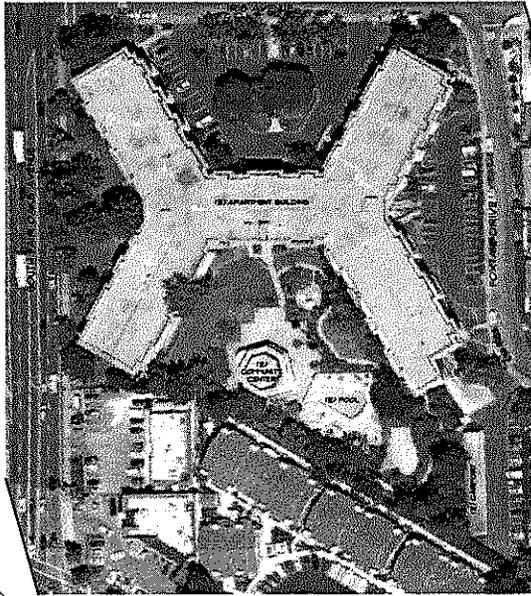
ATTACHMENT 1
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TOWNHOMES COMPLETED TO DATE	610
CONDOS COMPLETED TO DATE	448
APARTMENTS COMPLETED TO DATE	0
SFR'S COMPLETED TO DATE	58
PENDING PROJECTS	2433

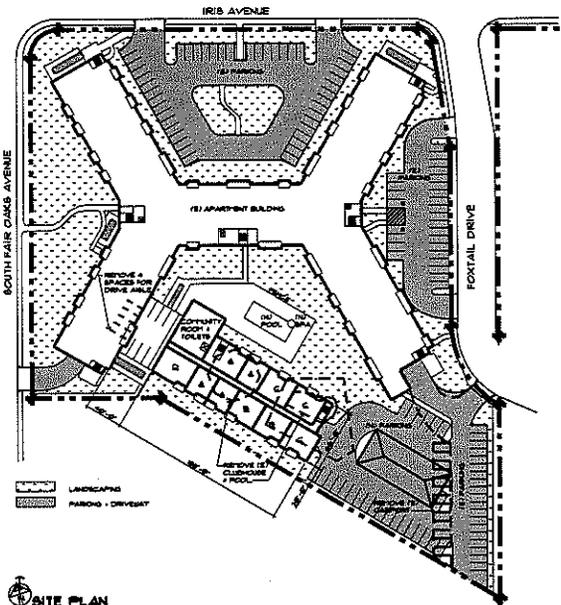
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HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION
2007-2014 4426

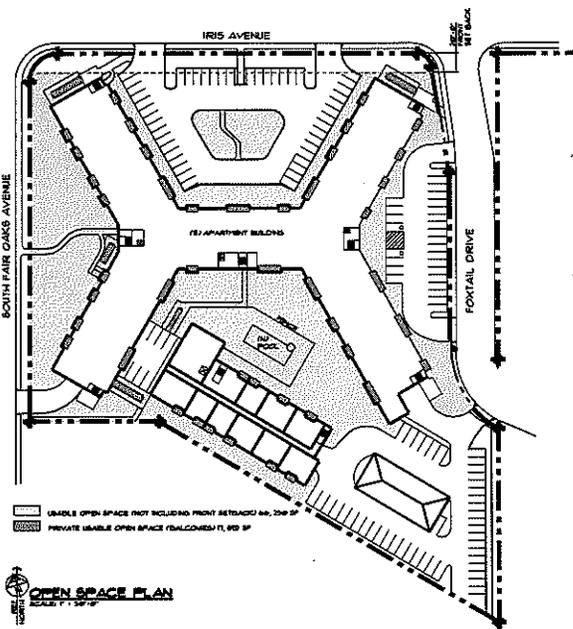
SHORT UNITS TO DATE	-877
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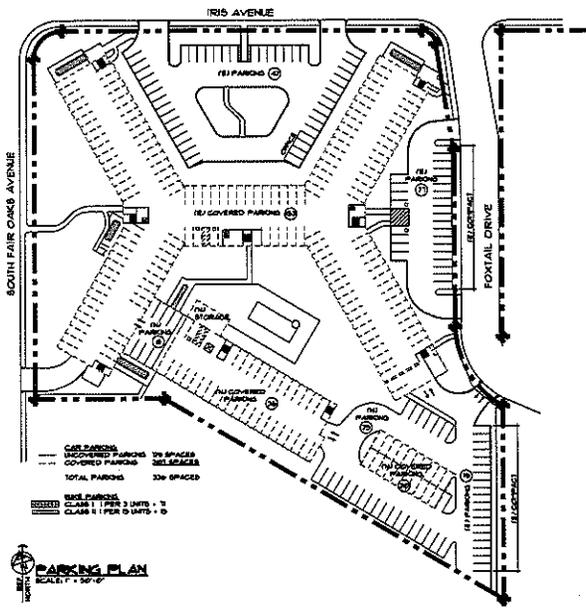
AERIAL PLAN-EXISTING CONDITIONS
SCALE: 1" = 50'-0"



SITE PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 50'-0"



OPEN SPACE PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 50'-0"



PARKING PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 50'-0"

DWELLING UNITS SUMMARY

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	SF.	PARKING UNITS	MB UNITS	TOTAL UNITS
A	1 BR / 1 BA	647 SF	37	16	73
B	2 BR / 1 BA	707 SF	20	9	29
C	2 BR / 2 BA	768 SF	66	17	83
D	3 BR / 2 BA	1044 SF	16	4	20
TOTAL			119	46	165

EXISTING PARKING:
 (1) COVERED SPACES 78 SPACES
 (2) OPEN SPACES 36 SPACES
 (3) COMPACT OPEN SPACES 26 SPACES
TOTAL 240 SPACES

PROJECT INFORMATION

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER: 31 - 08 - 009
 LOT AREA: 247,500 SF (4.76 ACRES)
 ZONING: RA
 GENERAL PLAN: HI-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL 21-16 DU/AC
 HEIGHT: 4 STORIES ON POORLY OVER PARKING DAMAGE
 LAND COVERAGE:
 (1) BUILDINGS 1,228 SF (APARTMENT) + 2,288 SF (ELECTRICAL) + 3,042 SF (NO BUILDINGS)
 (2) APARTMENT 1,228 SF (APARTMENT) + 1,266 SF (COMPANION ROOM) + 1,266 SF
 (3) TOTAL BUILDINGS 4,824 SF 33%
 (4) UNIMPAVED SPACES 10,874 SF 72%
 (5) LANDSCAPE 18,074 SF 26%
 (6) OTHER OPEN SPACE 1,266 SF 8%
TOTAL 27,038 SF 100%
 DENSITY:
 (1) TO UNITS 66 UNITS
 (2) TO SQUARE FEET 26 SQUARE FEET
TOTAL 73 UNITS

SPACING CALCULATIONS FOR UNIMPAVED SPACES REQUIRED

UNIT	DESCRIPTION	UNIMPAVED SPACES REQUIRED	UNIMPAVED SPACES PROVIDED
A	1 BR / 1 BA	1 UNITS - 1.8	2 UNITS - 1.8
B	2 BR / 1 BA	1 UNITS - 1.8	1 UNITS - 1.8
C	2 BR / 2 BA	1 UNITS - 1.8	1 UNITS - 1.8
D	3 BR / 2 BA	1 UNITS - 1.8	1 UNITS - 1.8
TOTAL		4 UNITS - 7.2	5 UNITS - 9.0

(1) UNITS PROVIDED DUE TO PROPOSED PROJECT:
 (1) COVERED PARKING 78 UNITS
 (2) UNIMPAVED PARKING 33 UNITS

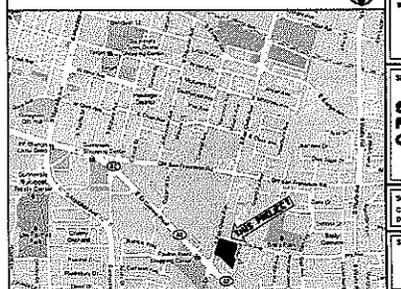
UNIMPAVED PARKING:
 (1) COVERED SPACES REQUIRED FOR PROPOSED PROJECT 33 UNITS
 (2) COVERED SPACES REQUIRED TO REPLACE REMOVED CARPORTS 33 UNITS
36 TOTAL COVERED SPACES REQUIRED
 (3) COVERED SPACES PROVIDED 78 UNITS

UNIMPAVED SPACES:
 (1) UNIMPAVED SPACES REQUIRED FOR PROPOSED PROJECT 33 UNITS
 (2) UNIMPAVED SPACES REQUIRED TO REPLACE REMOVED UNIMPAVED SPACES 33 UNITS
66 TOTAL UNIMPAVED SPACES REQUIRED
 (3) UNIMPAVED SPACES PROVIDED 10,874 UNITS
TOTAL (66) UNIMPAVED SPACES - 10,874 UNITS

USABLE OPEN SPACE CALCULATIONS FOR SITE:
 USABLE OPEN SPACE REQUIRED: 280 SF / UNIT
 (1) FOR EACH SF OF PLANT BE DESIGNATED AS PRIVATE USABLE OPEN SPACE (TERRACE, PATIO, ETC.)
280 SF

PROVIDED:
 (1) TO DU = 280 SF x 165 UNITS = 46,200 SF
 (2) TO DU BALCONIES = 280 SF x 165 UNITS = 46,200 SF
 (3) TO DU BALCONIES = 280 SF x 165 UNITS = 46,200 SF
TOTAL PROVIDED = 138,600 SF (770 SF / UNIT)

LOCATION MAP



JOB NO. 0842.1
 DATE AUGUST 2, 2001

DESCRIPTION	DATE	REV.

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION
 ISSUED ONLY FOR
 PLAN CHECK
 DATE:

HIGHLANDER APARTMENTS
 670 Iris Avenue
 Sunnyvale, California

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 ATTACHMENT E