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Santa Clara's newest neighborhood — the Clara District — is coming to life with 2,000 new homes opening this year

As many as 4,500 homes could sprout up on 45 acres of land near Levi's Stadium

By: Grace Hase | Bay Area News Group
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The new apartment "The Clara," center, stands among development projects near Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif., on Jan. 30, 2025. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

Just a short walk from Levi's Stadium, a formerly industrial pocket off of Tasman Drive is beginning to take shape as Santa Clara's newest urban neighborhood.

Branded the Clara District by local developers, the 45 acres of land bordered by the Guadalupe River to the east, Lafayette Street to the west and a former golf course to the north is set to become a high-density residential neighborhood that will have shops, restaurants and public parks all close to transit.

“We’ve really tried to make this not just a place where there’s a lot of housing” said Reena Brilliot, Santa Clara’s director of economic development and sustainability. “It’s really meant to be a complete neighborhood.”



The new apartment “The Clara” stands across the street from Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif. Photographed (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

The Clara District is located in the northern part of the city that Brilliot said has traditionally had a lot of jobs, but not a lot of housing.

As many as 4,500 units and 100,000 square-feet of retail will eventually sprout up in the neighborhood that the [city refers to as the Tasman East Specific Plan](#), making it denser than parts of San Francisco. Santa Clara is also looking to amend the plan to allow for the development of up to 1,500 additional homes.

Residents are already starting to move into the Clara District as 2,000 units across several new apartment buildings are expected to open this year — 1,342 of them in the first few months of 2025.

At the center of the neighborhood is [The Clara](#) — a 508-unit luxury apartment complex from Related California. At 22 stories, it’s Santa Clara’s tallest building and rivals other high-rise residential developments in downtown San Jose.



The new apartment “The Clara,” center, stands near Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif., on Jan. 30, 2025. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

Nicholas Vanderboom, the chief operating officer of Related California, said the Clara District “shows what’s possible” in Silicon Valley — an area shaped just as much by suburban sprawl as the computer chip. Related has pitched the neighborhood as “urban vibrancy meets suburban approachability.”

Designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, AvroKO and Surfacedesign, Inc., the details of The Clara — from its vibrantly colored playground to its cozy Redwood Den — evokes the region’s picturesque landscapes.

“It’s bringing what Related is more known for in San Francisco and big urban cities and bringing that quality of product into Santa Clara and creating something that’s very unique in the product with the new public parks that are being delivered by our projects and others,” Vanderboom said. “When one developer takes on multiple projects or multiple developers take on multiple projects, you’re able to create something greater than those individual parts.”



The playground area at the new apartment “The Clara” is seen on Jan. 30, 2025, in Santa Clara, Calif. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

Nick Witte, the vice president of development for Related California, said that the vision for the Clara District is already starting to come to life.

Clara’s Junction, an indoor-outdoor concept serving up American food and local brews, [opened up last September](#). The 18,000 square-foot space has become the newest spot for San Francisco 49ers fans to tailgate before heading to the game.

Witte said other retailers including more restaurants and coffee shops will eventually move into the neighborhood, as well.

“I think (it) will not only help activate the immediate area for our future residents in various apartment buildings, but also just activate the larger district as a whole and area that’s surrounding Levi’s Stadium,” he said.

The Clara District has been a decade in the making as developers started buying up land in the area around 2015, Vanderboom said. Santa Clara planning staff then led a rezoning effort to allow for housing development on the old industrial site, which received council approval in November 2018. Developers hit a snag in 2020 when the pandemic hit, but construction proceeded in the neighborhood the following year.

On top of The Clara’s 508 units, Related is also opening up a 176-unit senior living facility next door called Ellore. The Lafayette by SummerHill Apartment Communities already opened its 347-unit apartment complex and AVE Santa Clara — [a 311-unit development from Ensemble](#) — will begin moving residents in this month.

The Clara District will also have two affordable housing developments: the 196-unit St. Anton Apartments, which has been open for some time now, and Mainline North — 151-units that is set to open later this year.



The lounge space on the 22nd floor at the new apartment “The Clara” is seen on Jan. 30, 2025, in Santa Clara, Calif. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

Brilliot said the city worked quickly to expedite what can be an arduous approval process, leading to Santa Clara seeing a “tremendous amount of development come in in a short amount of time.” The new neighborhood will play a “critical role” in the city’s ability to meet its state-mandated housing goals, she said. Santa Clara is responsible for planning for 11,632 homes between 2023 and 2031.

“The city of Santa Clara has been very committed to wanting to support housing for the entire region to provide not just our city level of growth, but recognizing we need to absorb more housing and develop more,” Brilliot said.

Matthew Lewis, the director of communications at California YIMBY, said that a majority of land in most cities across the state doesn’t allow anything taller than a one or two-story single-family home. While not every neighborhood is going to start erecting 22-story residential developments, he believes that many cities will start to see three-to-seven-story buildings pop up all over the place in order to meet the housing demand.

“You have a lot of residents who thought, ‘Oh well, it will always be this low-slung, suburban-feeling, single-family city,’ and that’s just not possible,” Lewis said. “Cities have to grow up both metaphorically and literally. Santa Clara is starting to grow up, and that is a phenomenon that I think is going to get underway all over the place in California cities.”