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# Intel-backed tech startup grabs 36,000 square feet in East Bay office park

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[Roland Li](#)

Reporter- *San Francisco Business Times*

[Email](#) | [Twitter](#)

A technology startup backed by Intel Capital is nearly doubling its space with a move to an evolving office park in Pleasanton.

SmartZip Analytics, which [gives leads to residential real estate brokers on potential home sellers](#), has signed a 36,000-square-foot lease at Rosewood Commons.

The lease comes as the property's new owner is crafting plans to boost amenities to entice similar tech tenants, who are often more attracted to offices in San Francisco.

## See Also

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- [Whole Foods makes its Tri-Valley debut](#)
- [Real Estate Deals 2015 awards East Bay finalist: Rosewood Commons](#)

SmartZip is moving in June from Hines' [Pleasanton Corporate Commons](#), where it was founded in 2008. The company wanted to stay in Pleasanton because many of its 150 employees live near the East Bay.

"A big draw for the East Bay is its unbeatable trifecta of central location with easy commute to the city and South Bay, booming tech industry with a great talent pool and a balanced lifestyle with world-class amenities in close proximity," said [Avi Gupta](#), CEO of SmartZip. "Combine that with the classy buildings, on-site luxuries and campus-like atmosphere and Rosewood Commons is an easy and obvious first choice."

The lease is for six years, with extension options, said [Sushma Malhotra](#), CEO and founder of commercial brokerage S5 Advisory, who represented the tenant with [Nadira Akbari](#) and Yogi Chugh. [Jim Peterson](#), [Tom Maloney](#) and Kevin Mechelke of JLL represented landlord **Swift** Real Estate Partners in the lease.

San Francisco-based Swift [purchased the six-building property, formerly known as California Center, for \\$155 million](#) last year from RREEF, the real estate investment division of Deutsche Asset Management. (The acquisition was a [finalist for the Business Times' 2014 East Bay Office Sale of the Year](#).)

[Christopher Peatross](#), CEO of Swift, previously worked on the property when he was head of CarrAmerica Realty Corp., now a unit of the **Blackstone Group**, which sold the site to RREEF in 2005. The office complex on Rosewood Drive is close to Interstates 680 and 580 and the Dublin/[Pleasanton BART](#) station. It was the former western regional headquarters for **AT&T**.

Swift is adding features like barbecue pits and sports fields to draw new tenants, an improvement plan that it

expects to complete in the next three months.

Many startups and technology companies have shown a preference for urban offices in areas like San Francisco's South of Market area. But the landlord believes Rosewood Commons can offer more green space and similar retail and restaurant access. It has also hired [design firm Studio216](#) to create new video and renderings of the property as part of its marketing strategy.

"We're putting in basketball courts and putting greens. We've got ping pong tables. We're transforming this historic, AT&T, single-tenant property into a multi-tenant experience," said Peatross.

The landlord's additions have lured new tenants. Software maker [Ellie Mae leased 105,000 square feet](#) in the property last year. The building has improved from almost 90 percent vacant at the time of the sale in April 2014 to 52 percent leased.

And asking rents have risen to around \$33 per square foot, up from \$27 per square foot last year, said Peatross. "We've created this vision of what we want to do and people are buying into it," he said.

Swift has the option to build another 400,000 to 500,000 square feet of office space, but won't move forward unless it has tenant commitments, said Peatross. It also has entitlements for 305 units of housing on the site, but Swift is focusing on leasing the office space before it moves forward with any residential development, said Peatross.

Pleasanton and the rest of the East Bay are drawing more interest from tenants, particularly those seeking large blocks of contiguous space, as the San Francisco office market tightens, according to a report from JLL.

"Pleasanton has become the next 'go to' market just on the outskirts of Silicon Valley," said [Nadira Akbari](#), one of the S5 Advisory brokers who represented SmartZip in the lease. "With all the demand for space in San Francisco and San Jose, Pleasanton — which is only 35 to 45 minutes away from either city — still offers tenants flexibility and room for growth."

Roland Li covers real estate and economic development