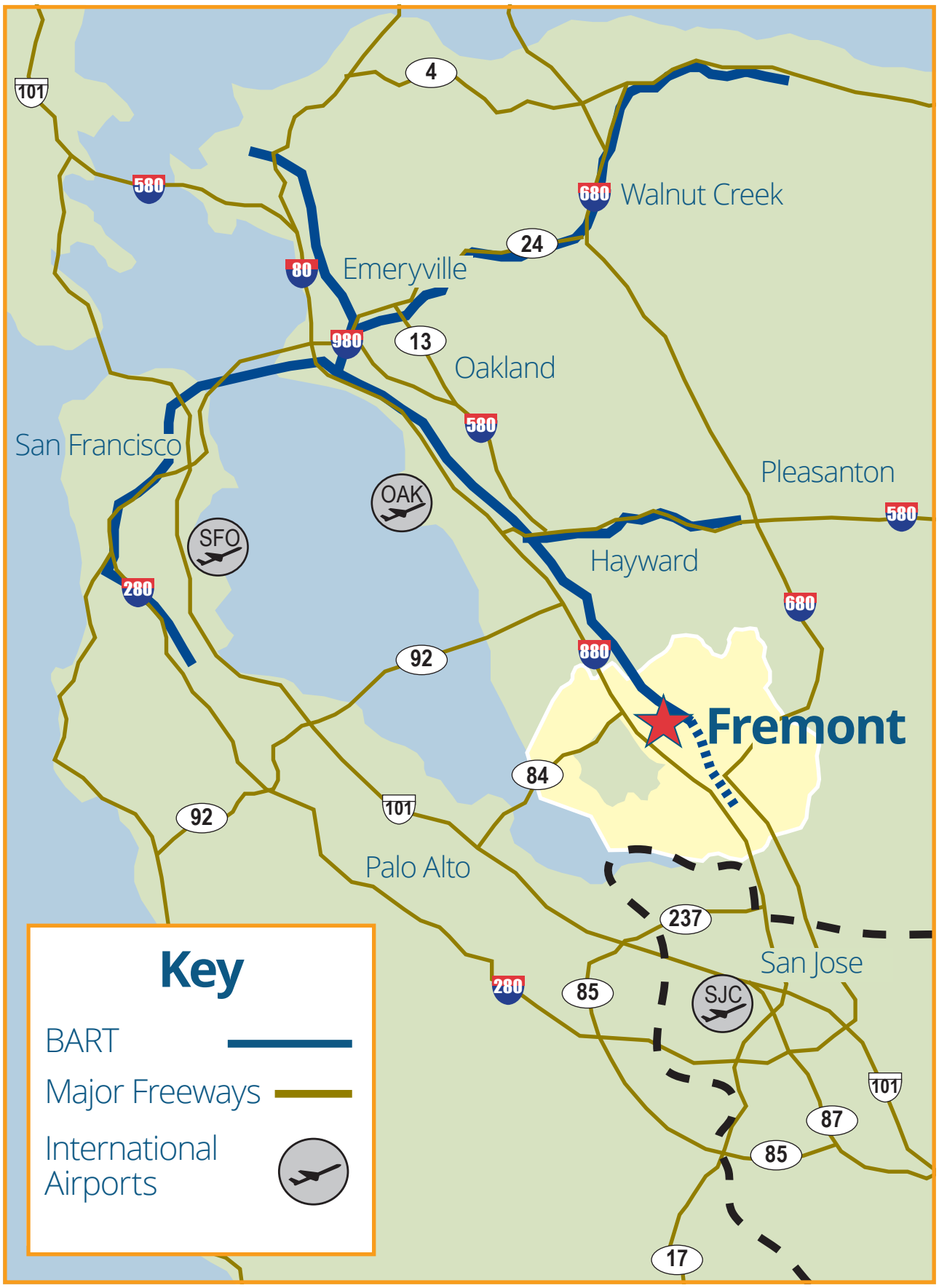
How to start your business in Fremont.

GET ONLINE

Connect with us and find all the resources mentioned in this booklet and more.

www.thinksiliconvalley.com

www.FREMONT.GOV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Major Freeways
International Airports

Starting a new business can be both exciting and challenging.

The City of Fremont actively supports the development of a strong, diverse, and vibrant business community.

This booklet is designed to guide you through the necessary steps and provide you with a helpful checklist to get you started.

HELPFUL HINT

Take advantage of the Free Business Workshops sponsored by the City of Fremont, Alameda County SBDC, Fremont Chamber of Commerce, and Fremont Main Library. Please visit www.acsbdc.org/events2 for workshop topics and details. Free business counseling is also available through the SBDC. Contact the Alameda County SBDC office at 510.208.0410 or www.acsbdc.org.

Step 1

DEVELOP A BUSINESS PLAN

A business plan is the first step to starting a successful business. This plan will help you evaluate your idea, estimate costs and determine the strengths and weaknesses of your proposal. A business plan may also serve as a tool to help raise money and is usually required to apply for a loan to attract financial capital.

WHO TO CONTACT

Alameda County SBDC
475 14th Street #100, Oakland, CA 94612
510.208.0410
www.acsbdc.org

City of Fremont Office of Economic Development
www.ThinkSiliconValley.com
This site includes information about the business climate in Fremont.

Alameda County Business Library - Fremont Main
2400 Stevenson Boulevard, Fremont, CA 94538
510.745.1444
www.aclibrary.org

Step 2

STRUCTURE YOUR BUSINESS

It is important to determine the structure of your business for operating and business reporting purposes. Will you operate your business as a sole proprietor, partnership (2 or more owners), or corporation (1 or more stockholders/officers)?

If you are a sole proprietor, no formation documents are required to be filed with the Secretary of State. It is optional for partnerships to file with the State.

If you are starting a corporation, a limited liability company (LLC), or a limited partnership (LP), you must contact the California Secretary of State's Office. They can supply you with all the information and forms you need.

Even if you believe you are an exempt business, you must register with the City. The Revenue Division can provide you with information to determine whether your business is exempt from City business taxes.

You may also want to consult an attorney or tax accountant for more guidance.

WHO TO CONTACT

California Secretary of State - Sacramento Office
1500 11th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
916.657.5448
www.sos.ca.gov/business/be

HELPFUL HINT

Check and Clear Zoning Regulations!

Before signing a building/property lease or purchase agreement, contact the City of Fremont's Development Services Center to determine the zoning of the site. Not all spaces are suitable or allowed for certain types of business uses. City zoning exists to protect you and your neighbors from incompatible uses. For example, it may not be safe for a childcare center to be located next door to a chemical manufacturing plant, and zoning restrictions help avoid this potential hazard.

Planning Division staff will determine if your business is a permitted use for the location and if any special approvals are needed. Be sure to call the Zoning Hotline at 510.494.4455 or do a preliminary check on zoning at www.ThinkFremont.com.

Step 3

LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

An online property search is available at www.siliconvalleyonline.org/business-tools/commercial-property-search/.

If you cannot find what you are looking for, staff in the Office of Economic Development is eager to help. Feel free to contact them at 510.284.4020 or via e-mail at econdev@fremont.gov.

WHO TO CONTACT

City of Fremont Office of Economic Development
3300 Capitol Avenue, Building A, Fremont, CA 94538
510.284.4020
www.ThinkSiliconValley.com

City of Fremont Planning Division
39550 Liberty Street, Fremont, CA 94538
510.494.4455
planinfo@fremont.gov
www.fremont.gov/Zoning

HELPFUL HINT

Deciding Your New Business Name

To make sure your business name doesn't conflict with other businesses, you can check to see if it is in use within Alameda County by checking the Fictitious Business Name Database at http://rechart1.acgov.org

Step 4

REGISTER A FICTITIOUS NAME

If you will be registering your business using a name that is different than your own legal name, such as doing business as (DBA), you need to register the business name with Alameda County. This step needs to be completed before obtaining a Business Tax (License) from the City of Fremont.

Also, public notices announcing your new business name must be posted for four weeks in the local newspaper to complete the registration process.

WHO TO CONTACT

Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office
1106 Madison Street, Oakland, CA 94607
888.280.7708
www.acgov.org/business/dbiac.htm

LOCAL NEWSPAPER PUBLICATIONS

The Argus
510.353.7027
www.insidebayarea.com

The Tri-City Voice
510.494.1999
www.tricityvoice.com

San Jose Mercury News
408.920.5111
www.mercurynews.com

Step 5

TAX REPORTING

All businesses are required to file both State and federal tax returns. Please contact the State Franchise Tax Board and the federal Internal Revenue Service to learn more about specific requirements.

Will you sell a product? The California Board of Equalization can assist you in determining whether you need a Seller's Permit. You may also be required to collect sales tax. To do so, the Board of Equalization will need to issue you a resale number in order to report that sales tax.

Whether self-employed or an employer with one or more employees, you must also pay Social Security taxes.

WHO TO CONTACT

Internal Revenue Service
Oakland Office
1301 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94612
510.637.2487
www.irs.gov

Franchise Tax Board
1515 Clay Street,, Suite 305, Oakland, CA 94612
800.852.5711
www.ftb.ca.gov

Board of Equalization
1515 Clay Street, Suite 303, Oakland, CA 94612
510.622.4100
www.boe.ca.gov

Social Security
800.772.1213
www.ssa.gov/employer

Step 6

APPLY FOR A FREMONT BUSINESS TAX (LICENSE)

The City of Fremont uses the term "business tax" rather than "business license." The application fee is $30 for most commercial businesses located in Fremont. The renewal fee in subsequent years is $30, plus a $1 State ADA Business fee, plus an amount based on the type of business.

Home-based businesses are also required to apply for a business tax (license) and a Home Occupation Permit. The Home Occupation Permit fee is $120 for five years (not pro-rated). In addition, businesses located outside of Fremont, but doing business in Fremont (such as vendors, consultants and contractors) are required to apply and pay for a Fremont business tax (license). Some businesses may be eligible for a business tax exemption - check www.fremont.gov/BusinessTaxExemptions.

If you receive a 1099, you need to register for a business tax account with the City.

If you need assistance in completing the necessary forms, please contact the Revenue Division at 510.494.4790 or revenue@fremont.gov. Once a business is registered, most businesses can renew online.

WHO TO CONTACT

California Secretary of State - Sacramento Office
1500 11th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
916.657.5448
www.sos.ca.gov/business/be

Step 7

FREMONT PERMITS AND LICENSES

Your business may require site inspections by the Fire and/or Police Department as part of your application approval, depending on your business type and/or if you are making improvements to a building.

Alarm Permits
If your business operates a burglar alarm system it must obtain an Alarm Permit from the Fremont Police Dept.

Bingo Permits
A Bingo Permit is required to conduct bingo games in the City. Bingo games for charity are allowed for certain non-profit, charitable, or senior citizens organization, or mobile home park associations. A permit application can be obtained from the Revenue Division office.

Building Permits
Building Permits are how the City of Fremont ensures construction is safe for occupancy and use. A Building Permit is needed for all new construction in Fremont. Your business must be located in a building constructed appropriately for your use. A permit is also required for most modifications, replacement construction, additions, or remodeling. Any changes to a building must comply with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Distribution Permits
A Distribution Permit is required to distribute or circulate any advertising material. A permit application can be obtained from the Revenue Division office.

Fire Code Permits
A Fire Code Permit from the Fremont Fire Department is required if you want to conduct specific activities and practices. Use of hazardous substances or materials may require additional review and/or permits.

Massage Permits
A Massage Permit is required for massage establishments and massage technicians (with certain exceptions for holders of State approved massage permits). A permit application can be obtained from the Revenue Division office. Information may be obtained regarding State permits from the California Massage Therapy Council at www.camtc.org.

Peddler Permits
A Peddler Permit is required for selling goods from a non-stationary site, including operating catering trucks, hot dog carts, and ice cream trucks within Fremont. A permit application can be obtained from the Revenue Division office.

Sign Permits
If your business would like to display a sign that is visible from outside a building, a sign permit is required from the Development Services Center. Permits are needed for both permanent and temporary signs such as building and window signs and banners.

Special Events Permits
A special event permit is required for certain special events. A permit application can be obtained from the Development Services Center.

Taxi Permits
A Taxi Permit is required for all taxi companies operating in the City. A permit application can be obtained from the Taxi Program Coordinator at the Fremont Police Department.

WHO TO CONTACT

Development Services Center
510.494.4460
www.fremont.gov/514/Community-Development

Police Department
510.790.6755
www.fremont.gov/BurglarAlarm

Fire Prevention Division
510.494.4280
fremontfire@fremont.gov

Revenue Division
39550 Liberty Street, Fremont, CA 94538
M – Th: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Fr: 8:00 am – 12:00 noon
510.494.4790
revenue@fremont.gov

Hazardous Materials Division
510.494.4282

Outside Agency Coordination List
www.fremont.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21482

Step 8
OTHER AGENCY PERMITS AND LICENSES

Depending on the type of business, you may be required to obtain permits or licenses from the following County, State, or federal agencies. Please contact these individual agencies directly if applicable.

Alchohol Beverage Control (ABC) License
No person may directly or indirectly, on any pretense, sell, barter, charge for possession or otherwise dispose of alcoholic beverages as part of a commercial transaction without having obtained the proper license or permit.

California Department of Consumer Affairs License
Many professional businesses such as accountants, engineers, doctors, and dentists require a State license from the California Department of Consumer Affairs. Businesses such as barbers, cosmetologist, security services, and auto repair shops are also required to obtain a State license. Please call to find out if you must register your business.

Import/Export Permit
If your business will involve the import or export of products with other countries, you may need to obtain an Import/Export Permit from the US Customs Service.

Restaurants, Mobile Food Vendors, Salons and Tattoo Parlors
A health inspection is required for restaurants and mobile food vendors, as well as salons and tattoo parlors. Contact the Alameda County Environmental Health Department to arrange for an inspection, or to request information and advice regarding health and environmental safety issues. Union Sanitary District (USD) approval is also needed for a restaurant.

Retail and Wholesale Business Permits
If your business will involve sales, you will need to obtain a Seller's Permit from the State Board of Equalization.

Other Permits & Licenses
To determine what other regional, State, and federal permits and licenses your business may need, call the State's "CalGOLD Business Permits Made Simple" office. in the City. A permit application can be obtained from the Taxi Program Coordinator at the Fremont Police Department.

Child Care Center or Family Child Care Home License
Licensing of all child care centers and family child care homes in California is required and can be obtained through the California Department of Social Services. In addition, large family day care homes with 9-14 children must also obtain from the City of Fremont a business license from the Revenue Division and a Zoning Administrator Permit from the Planning Division which allows this special use in a residence. Even if your business is determined to be exempt from other licensing and/or permitting requirements, you must still register for a business tax account.

Contractor's License
Construction is one of the largest industries in California's diverse economy. The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) receives and processes applications for new licenses, additional classifications, changes of license records, and license renewals. An Application for Original Contractor's License can be obtained from any CSLB office, by telephone, or online. All subcontractors must also register for a City business tax account. Failure to register may result in your permit being placed on hold.

WHO TO CONTACT

ABC Alameda County District Office
510.622.4970
www.abc.ca.gov

California Department of Consumer Affairs
800.952.5210
www.dca.ca.gov

United States Customs Service
415.782.9210
www.cbp.gov/trade

Alameda County Environmental Health Department
1131 Harbor Bay Parkway, Alameda, CA 94502
510.567.6700
www.acgov.org/aceh

Board of Equalization
510.622.4100
www.boe.ca.gov

CalGOLD Business Permits Made Simple
916.322.7394
www.calgold.ca.gov

Contractors State License Board (CSLB)
800.321.2752
www.cslb.ca.gov

HELPFUL HINT

Free Assistance

The Tri-Cities One-Stop Career Center can connect you with qualified employees, find out about business opportunities, research State and federal regulations, explore the State's economic development services, and much more.

Why not consider hiring local youth, veterans, and the disabled? It's good for the community and it can be good for your business!

Step 9

WILL YOU HAVE EMPLOYEES?

If you hire employees, be sure to register with the California Employment Development Department. They will provide you with the necessary forms and answer any questions you may have regarding your responsibilities. As an employer, the State requires you to do the following:

- o withhold State income tax
- o withhold State disability insurance
- o pay unemployment tax
- o pay for any employment training costs

If you have employees, you are required to be located in a commercial location.

You must also register with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to receive an Employer Identification Number. The IRS offers many services to new business owners and will provide a package of helpful information explaining the types of forms used and due dates for these forms.

As an employer, you are required to carry workers' compensation insurance. You may obtain this insurance through your own insurance agent or the State Compensation Insurance Fund of California (SCIF). The SCIF is a non-profit, public enterprise fund that operates like a mutual insurance carrier. Please contact their Bay Area - Pleasanton office for more details.

WHO TO CONTACT

Employment Development Dept. (EDD)
Oakland Employment Tax Office
7700 Edgewater Drive, Suite 100, Oakland, CA 94621
888.745.3886
www.edd.ca.gov

Internal Revenue Service
Oakland Office
1301 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94612
510.637.2487
www.irs.gov

State Compensation Insurance Fund (SCIF)
5880 Owens Drive, Pleasanton, CA 94588
888.782.8338
www.scif.com

Tri-Cities One-Stop Career Center
39155 Liberty Street, Suite B200, Fremont, CA 94538
510.768.4425
www.eastbayworks.com

Step 10

GOING GREEN

The Bay Area Green Business Program is a successful partnership of environmental agencies and utilities. It assists, recognizes, and certifies businesses and government agencies that voluntarily operate in a more environmentally responsible way, such as conserving resources, preventing pollution, and minimizing waste.

A Green Business is recognized as an environmental leader. Businesses strengthen their bottom line through operating efficiencies. A growing number of consumers and businesses look to purchase or work with certified green businesses, giving green businesses a marketing edge over the competition.

Bay Area Green Businesses receive recognition through:

- The Green Business Program website: www.greenbiz.ca.gov
- City and agency newsletters
- Press coverage, promotional events and a special recognition event at City Council meeting
- Window decals, certificates and promotional materials for your business
- Green Business logo to use in your advertising

BECOME A GREEN BUSINESS

You may already be doing enough to qualify. Staff will work with your business and local agencies to verify that you are complying with any applicable environmental regulations. This could include site visits from wastewater, storm water, hazardous waste, and air quality regulators, depending on your business type. We will provide technical assistance to ensure your business is in compliance.

Contact the Alameda County Coordinator for the Bay Area Green Business Program at 510.567.6770 and get recognized for being green!

WHO TO CONTACT

Bay Area Green Business Program
Alameda County Coordinator
Pamela Evans
510.567.6770
www.greenbiz.ca.gov

City of Fremont Environmental Services
510.494.4570
environment@fremont.gov

HELPFUL HINT

Need Guidance?

The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) "Counselors to America's Small Business" is an association of working and retired executives and business owners who volunteer as business counselors to provide confidential counseling and mentoring free of charge. Please visit www.eastbayscore.org or call the Fremont Chamber of Commerce at 510.795.2244 to schedule an appointment with a local counselor.

Incentives and Other Useful Programs

The City offers other programs and services to help your business succeed, including:

Local Business Purchasing Preference Policy

The City wants to support local businesses and provides a preference of 5% to Fremont firms that respond to City bid proposals. Register to be a vendor with the City by contacting the Purchasing Services Office at 510.494.4620 or visit www.fremont.gov/VendorGuideandForms.

Individual Development Accounts

In partnership with the Associated Community Action Program, the City's Family Resource Center (FRC) provides orientations on Individual Development Accounts. Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are savings accounts that can be used only for capitalizing a small business, purchasing a first home, or for educational or job training expenses. Accounts are held at local financial institutions. Contributions by lower income participants are matched using both private and public sources. All participants receive economic literacy training that includes money management workshops. Contact the Family Resource Center for more information at 510.574.2020.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)

Sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), VITA volunteers provide free tax preparation services to families that meet certain income requirements. The program begins in February and continues through April 15. Contact the VITA Coordinator for more information at 510.574.2020.

Other Resources

Here are additional things to keep in mind when doing business in Fremont and as your business grows:

Garbage & Recycling Services:

Be sure to arrange for garbage and recycling services with Fremont's contractor Republic Services. Fremont has some of the lowest commercial garbage rates in the county.

Fremont Recycling and Transfer Station is a local public disposal facility where you can bring extra trash and construction debris. Small businesses can drop off small quantities of hazardous material such as paints, fluorescent tubes, solvents, and auto fluids. Visit www.stopwaste.org for more information.

Utilities:

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E)

Gas and electric services in Fremont are provided by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E). For more information contact PG&E at 800.468.4743 or visit www.pge.com.

Alameda County Water District (ACWD)

The Alameda County Water District (ACWD) serves the cities of Fremont, Newark, and Union City. For more information contact ACWD at 510.659.1970 or visit www.acwd.org.

Union Sanitary District (USD)

The Union Sanitary District (USD) provides wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services. For more information contact USD at 510.477.7500 or visit www.unionsanitary.com.

Commuter Resources:

511 Rideshare is a free service to help commuters find other drivers to carpool or vanpool to work. Qualifying carpools can cross Bay Area toll bridges for free or reduced rates during commute hours and may qualify for additional financial incentives or subsidies. For more information visit www.511.org.

Join a local Business Association.
Get involved with the business community!

Centerville Business and Community Association
510.552.0221
www.cbcafremont.com

Fremont Chamber of Commerce
510.795.2244
www.fremontbusiness.com

Irvington Business Association
510.656.5375
www.irvingtonbusiness.com

Mission San Jose Chamber of Commerce
510.552.3155
www.msjchamber.org

Niles Main Street Association
510.742.9868
www.niles.org

Niles Merchants Association
510.792.8023

CITY OF
Fremont

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