CHAPTER 3

Project Description

The Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project (proposed project) proposes development of a vacant 6.07-acre industrial parcel with residential units, small-scale retail/restaurant space, and a community center. The project would require a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation from Service Industrial (Special Study Area) to Town Center and Medium Density Residential, a Rezoning of the existing parcel from I-S (Service Industrial) with an Historical Overlay District (HOD) to Planned District P-2014-338 (HOD), a Vesting Tentative Tract Map, and other related entitlements.

A very similar project was proposed in 2014 and approved by the City Council in March 2015. The project approval included a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation of the 6.07-acre site from Service Industrial (Special Study Area) to Town Center Commercial and Medium Density Residential, Rezoning from I-L (Light Industrial) with an Historical Overlay District (I-L) (HOD) to Preliminary and Precise Planned District with Historical Overlay District P-2014-338(HOD), Vesting Tentative Tract Map, Private Street, Tree Removal Permit, and Preliminary Grading Plan. A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared and adopted for that project. A local group called Protect Niles filed a timely lawsuit in the Alameda County Superior Court (Protect Niles v. City of Fremont, Case No. RG15-765052) challenging the MND and arguing that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should have been prepared. On March 15, 2017, the Alameda County Superior Court granted the petitioner's request for a writ of mandate and directed the City to invalidate its prior approval and prepare an EIR for any further discretionary review of a project at this site. The court found that the administrative record contained substantial evidence to support a fair argument that the project may cause a significant effect on the environment with respect to aesthetics and traffic impacts. The project applicant has appealed the decision to the Court of Appeal and has also submitted revised plans for review pending consideration of the appeal. The City has undertaken preparation of an EIR for the revised project in case the Court of Appeal upholds the decision of the Superior Court.

A. Project Location and Setting

The project site is located at 37899 Niles Boulevard (Assessor's Parcel No. 501-1700-010-03) in the northeastern portion of the City of Fremont (**Figure 3-1**). The parcel is generally triangular in shape and flat in topography. The frontage of the northeastern part of the site is on the west side of Niles Boulevard before it makes a 90-degree turn



SOURCE: ESRI Imagery; FirstCarbon Solutions

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-1 Location Map



3. Project Description

eastward towards Mission Boulevard. ¹ A dead-end 0.73-acre segment of Niles Boulevard continues southward from the 90-degree turn along the remainder of the site's eastern edge (**Figure 3-2**).

The project site contains remnants of the former Henkel/Schuckl Cannery and was used for a variety of industrial land use activities including a foundry, cannery, herbicide manufacturing, metal treatment, and chemical manufacturing between the early 1900s and 2002. All structures associated with the previous industrial uses were demolished in 2009² and remnants of the building foundations are all that remain. Debris piles containing soil, broken paving materials, and discarded items still remain throughout the site.

Vehicular access to the site is currently from Niles Boulevard. Curb, gutter, and sidewalk are located along the northern portion of the project frontage with Niles Boulevard. The project site south of the 90-degree turn of Niles Boulevard is accessed from the roadway that continues south from Niles Boulevard and dead-ends at the Alameda Creek Trail (**Figure 3-2**).

Vegetation on the site generally consists of ornamental trees and shrubs located around the perimeter and weedy vegetation within the center of the site.

The project site is designated Service Industrial (Special Study Area) in the Land Use Element of the General Plan, is zoned Limited Industrial (I-L) (HOD), and is located within the Niles Community Plan Area.

B. Surrounding Land Uses

As shown in **Figure 3-2**, the immediate surrounding area consists of existing single-family residences to the west and Alameda Creek (and the associated Alameda Creek Trail) to the south. The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks sit atop a raised embankment on the east side of Niles Boulevard. The area east of the UPRR tracks consists of single-family residences.

Niles Boulevard is oriented in a northwest-southeast direction, but will be referred to as a north-south street in this document. This convention will be used to describe the locations of other buildings and uses in relation to the project site. Along the project frontage, Niles Boulevard turns 90 degrees from north-south to east-west and continues east under the Union Pacific Railroad tracks towards Mission Boulevard. A dead-end segment of roadway continues south at the 90-degree curve and is also referred to as "Niles Boulevard."

The effects of demolishing the buildings were evaluated in an EIR (SCH# 200804249) in 2009.



SOURCE: Valley Oak Partners, LLC, 2017

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-2 Aerial View of Project Site



C. Project Objectives

CEQA Guidelines Section 15124(b) requires that the project description of an EIR include a statement of objectives for the proposed project. The objectives for the proposed project are to:

- Redevelop the former industrial site with a mixed-use project that would serve as a gateway into the Niles Community and would be consistent with the *Niles Design Guidelines and Regulations* (2002).
- Consistent with the vision outlined in the Niles Community Plan, convert the vacant, remnant industrial site to a productive use that includes a mix of commercial, residential and/or livework uses, amenities, and access to Alameda Creek.
- Enhance the character of the adjacent Niles Town Center with a project that is compatible in scale and design with existing development, continuing streetscape and signage improvements, enhancing gateways, and maintaining a comfortable environment for pedestrians.
- Provide a trail connection between the Niles Town Center, Alameda Creek, and the regional park system.
- Provide additional retail space in Niles, leveraging the District's historic character to retain existing businesses and encourage new retail uses for residents, and visitors.
- Develop high quality and well-designed housing at a density consistent with the housing inventory identified in the General Plan Housing Element, which estimates that the site can accommodate 75 residential units.
- Promote land use compatibility between the proposed mixed-use development and the adjoining neighborhood through the use of site planning techniques.
- Create a continuous and safe walking environment for pedestrians in conformance with the goals and policies of the Mobility Element of the General Plan.

D. Project Characteristics

The project applicant (Valley Oak Partners, LLC) is proposing to develop two types of buildings consisting of 95 dwelling units and 7,333 square feet of non-residential uses (**Figure 3-3**). The 95 dwelling units would consist of 82 townhomes and 13 "Creative-Retail-Artist-Flex-Tenancy" (CRAFT) units. The 7,333 square feet of non-residential uses would consist of 5,883 square feet of retail/restaurant uses and 1,450 square feet of community center space. In total, 187,773 square feet of buildings are proposed to be developed on the site. The proposed buildings would be constructed to exceed 2016 Title 24 building energy efficiency requirements by 25 percent. All buildings would install water saving features including low flow bathroom faucets, low flow kitchen faucets, low flow toilets, and low flow showers, as required by California Building Code Sections 4303.1.1 through 4303.1.4.4 (for residential use) and Sections 5.303.3.1 through 5.303.4 (for commercial uses). **Table 3-1** summarizes the project characteristics.



SOURCE: Vally Oak Partners, LLC, 2018

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-3
Proposed Site Plan



Table 3-1
NILES GATEWAY MIXED-USE PROJECT SUMMARY

Use	Concept Plan Type	Quantity	Square Feet
CRAFT Units	A1	1	775
	A2	1	709
	B1	2	2,098
	B1-1	2	2,372
	B2	1	1,318
	B3	2	2,338
	2B	4	8,228
	Subtotal	13	17,838
Townhomes	1	28	53,536
	2B	22	45,254
	3	15	31,530
	3X	11	22,616
	4	6	9,666
	Subtotal	82	162,602
Non-Residential	Retail/Restaurant	-	5,883
	Community Center	-	1,450
	Subtotal		7,333
	TOTAL	95 units	187,773
Parking	-	282 spaces	

SOURCE: Valley Oak Partners, LLC, 2017

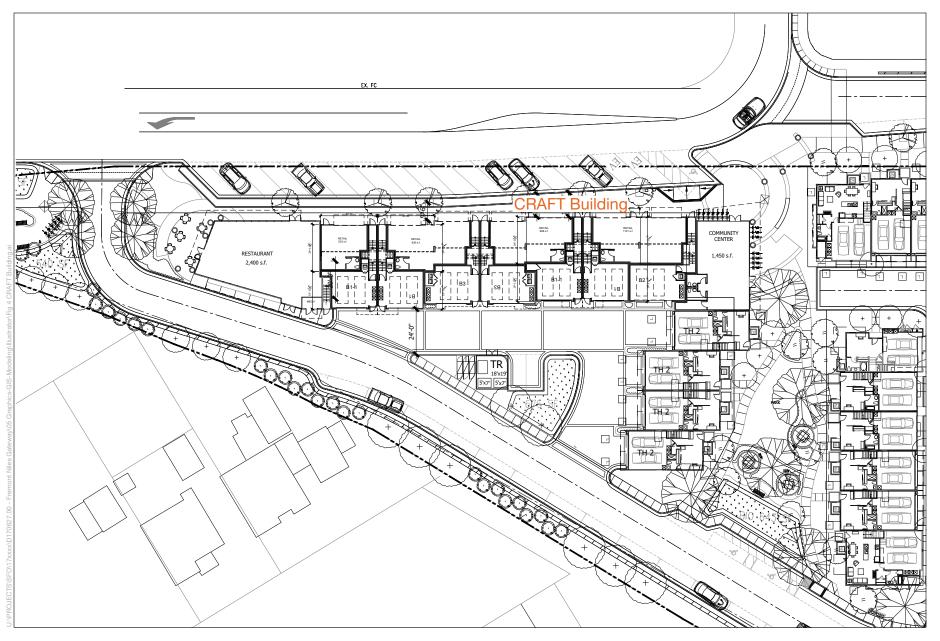
Non-Residential Uses and Creative-Retail-Artist-Flex-Tenancy (CRAFT) Units

An "L"-shaped building totaling approximately 25,171 square feet would be constructed on the northern portion of the site (**Figure 3-4**). This building would contain retail and restaurant space on the ground floor and residential units above. These units are referred to as Creative-Retail-Artist-Flex-Tenancy (CRAFT) units, and the building is referred to as the CRAFT building. Seven of the residential units in the CRAFT building would be located above the retail space and would have doorways facing Niles Boulevard. Four residential units would have doorways facing a landscaped area on the south side of the building, and the remaining two units, located above the restaurant space, would have access from the west side of the building, via a doorway behind the restaurant.³ The floor areas of the 13 CRAFT residential units would range between 775 to 2,057 square feet. The building would also contain 5,883 square feet of retail/restaurant and 1,450 square feet of community center space on the ground level along the Niles Boulevard frontage.

The fully separate residential access would be a change from the previously approved project in which the seven units facing Niles Boulevard were proposed as live-work units, with internal access between the residential and non-residential portions of each unit.

The CRAFT building would consist of two and 2.5-story elements with a maximum height of approximately 30 feet. Building sections and elevations of the CRAFT building are shown in **Figures 3-5** and **3-6**. As shown in **Figure 3-6**, the façade of the CRAFT building would generally feature stucco, brick, and metal. The roofs would consist of metal standing seam or corrugated metal. The retail/restaurant storefronts would generally feature roll-up doors, metal, and glass. A trellis/awning would extend over the sidewalk along the retail/restaurant frontage.

An approximately 340-square-foot, 10-foot-high stand-alone trash enclosure structure would be located west of the CRAFT building and adjacent to the internal roadway. The trash enclosure structure would feature metal and wood siding and a corrugated metal roof. A "Gateway Palm Court" entry feature would face westbound/northbound Niles Boulevard where it emerges from the railroad underpass and serves to divide the non-residential uses/CRAFT units from the townhome uses.

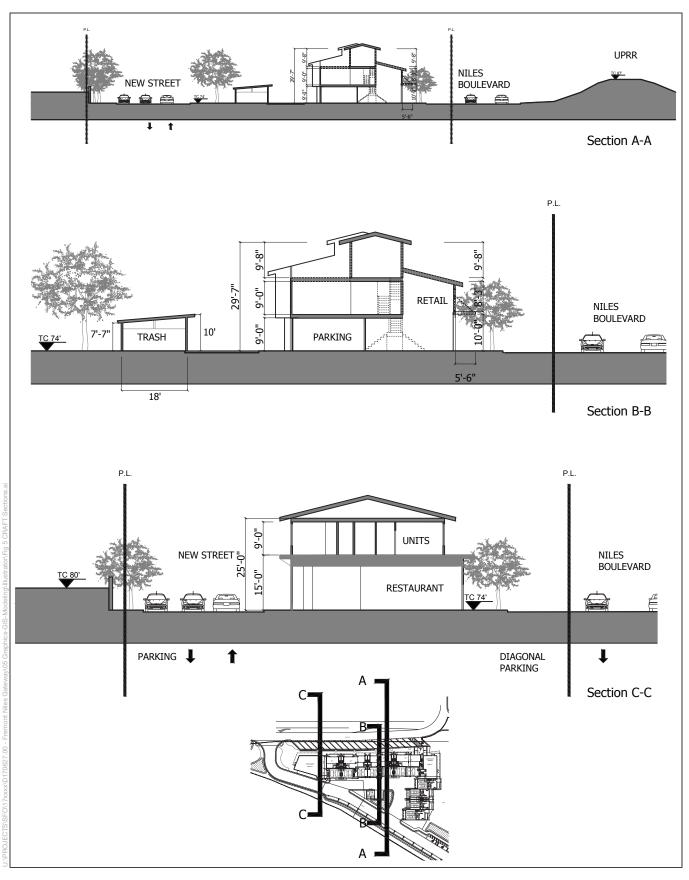


SOURCE: Vally Oak Partners, LLC, 2018

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-4 CRAFT Building





SOURCE: Valley Oak Partners, LLC, 2018

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-5 CRAFT Building Sections







East Elevation - Niles Boulevard

North Elevation - Restaurant/





West Elevation - New Street

South Elevation - Community Center





CRAFT Building with Retail

CRAFT Building with Retail / Restaurant Corner

SOURCE: Vally Oak Partners, LLC, 2017

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-6 CRAFT Building Elevations



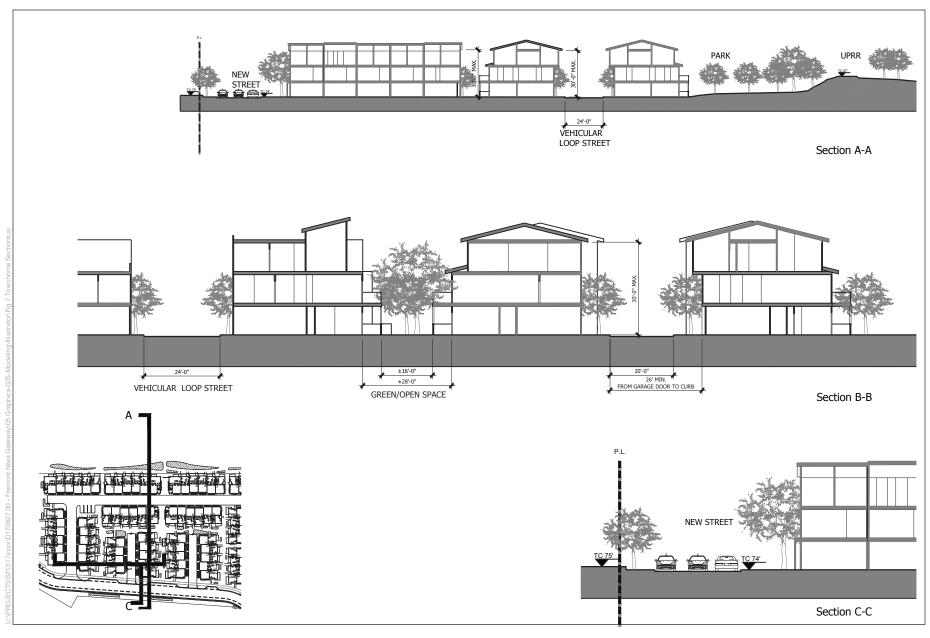
Townhomes

The proposed project would construct 82 townhomes in the southern portion of the site south of the 90-degree turn of Niles Boulevard towards Mission Boulevard (see **Figure 3-3**). The floor areas of the two and three-bedroom townhome units would range between 1,912 to 2,102 square feet. Maximum building height would be up to 30 feet. Typical townhome building sections and elevations of the townhomes are shown in **Figures 3-7 and 3-8**, respectively. As shown in **Figure 8**, the façade of the townhomes would generally feature stucco and both horizontal and vertical siding. The roofs would generally consist of asphalt shingles.

Access and Circulation

The project is currently accessible from Niles Boulevard. As part of the proposed project a new driveway with one inbound and one outbound lane would be constructed at the north end of the site on Niles Boulevard, which would connect to a private street (Street A) (see Figure 3-9). The 0.73-acre segment of Niles Boulevard that continues southward from the 90-degree turn along the site's eastern edge is proposed for a street vacation. This portion of Niles Boulevard would be vacated as public right-of-way and converted to a private street (Street A) completing the perimeter roadway around the project site. Northbound Niles Boulevard would be re-striped to accommodate a new left turn pocket lane at the new driveway. The left turn lane would provide approximately 160 feet of queuing space for vehicles making a left turn into the new driveway. Private street circulation accommodating two-way travel would encircle the project site (Street A), and also connect to other internal private streets (Streets B through E) to permit direct vehicle access to each planned residential unit. The new internal roadway system would be built consistent with California Fire Code. Street A would range in width between 24 and 39 feet depending on whether there are parking lanes. Streets B and C would be approximately 25 feet wide, and Streets D and E would be approximately 21 feet wide; these streets would not provide on-street parking.

As shown in **Figure 3-9**, a 12-foot-wide sidewalk would be provided along the frontage of the CRAFT building. A pedestrian access easement would be provided over the sidewalk to ensure a public connection from Niles Boulevard to the Alameda Creek trailhead. Sidewalks would also be provided along Streets A, B, and C, and would be approximately five feet wide. Pedestrian pathways (residential paseos) would be provided throughout the site such as from Niles Boulevard through the "Gateway Palm Court" and throughout the townhome area.



SOURCE: Vally Oak Partners, LLC, 2017

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-7 Townhome Building Sections



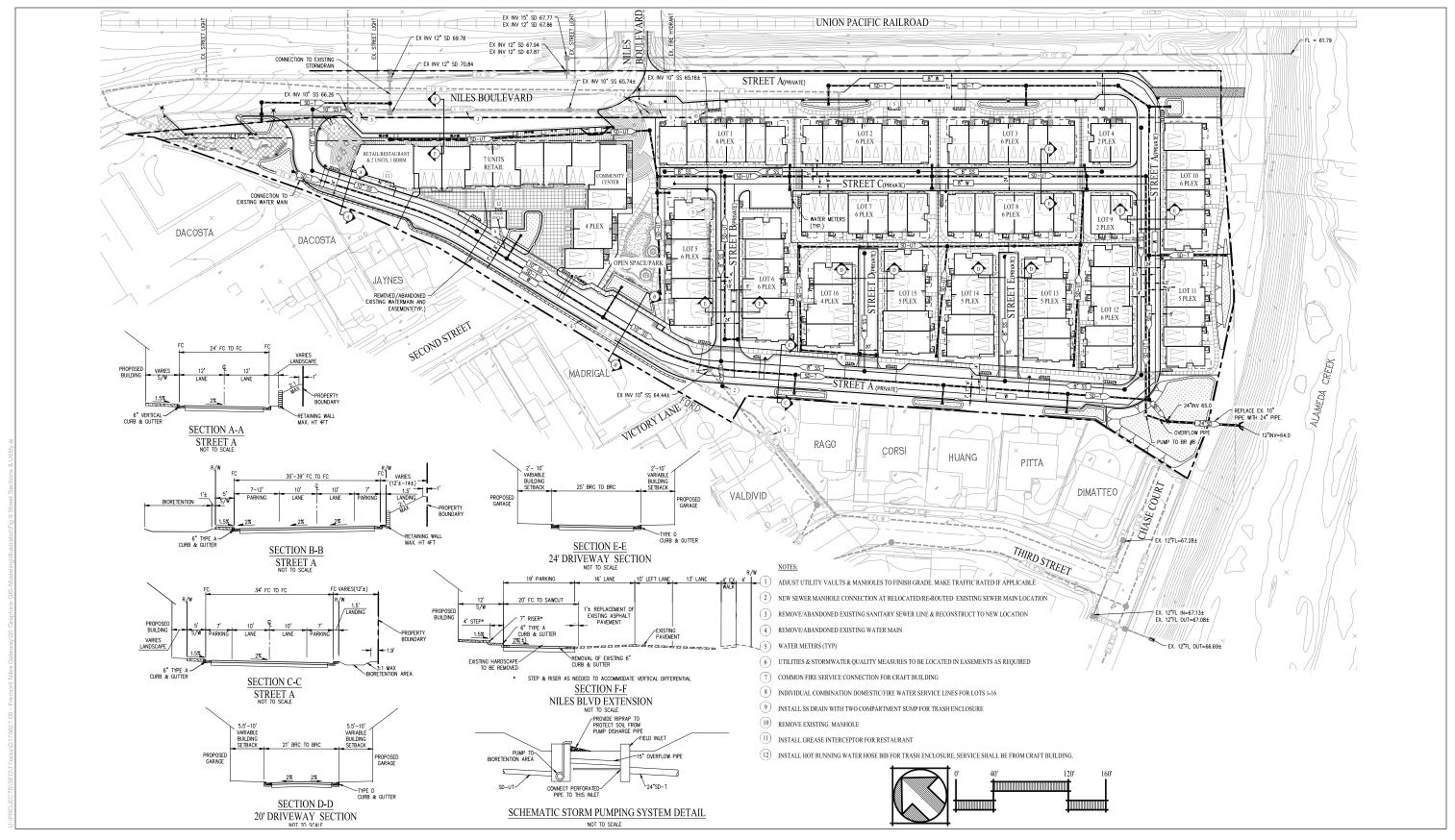


SOURCE: Vally Oak Partners, LLC, 2017

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-8 Townhome Building Elevations





SOURCE: Carlson, Barbee & Gibson, Inc. 2014, revised 2018

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

Figure 3-9
Street Cross Sections and Utility Plan



3. Project Description

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3-16

Parking

A total of 94 new surface parking spaces would be established, including 25 new diagonal parking spaces on Niles Boulevard along the frontage of the CRAFT building, 65 parallel parking spaces on the west and east side of the project site along Street A, and four off-street spaces in a parking lot in the townhome area (see **Figure 3-3**). Two of the CRAFT units would have one parking space in each unit's garage, while the remaining CRAFT units and townhomes would have two parking spaces each, totaling 188 parking spaces. Collectively, 282 new parking spaces would be provided throughout the project site and along Niles Boulevard (including the 94 spaces noted above).

The requirements for the number of off-street parking spaces are set forth in the City of Fremont Municipal Code, Chapter 18.183.030, Required Parking, with spaces necessary identified by type of use. Based on City's Municipal Code, the proposed project would be required to provide 221 off-street parking spaces. The 25 new diagonal parking spaces on Niles Boulevard are considered on-street parking spaces and would not count toward meeting the parking requirement. With a planned supply of 257 off-street parking spaces, the supply would meet the City's requirements and provide an excess of 29 spaces.

Bicycle parking requirements are set forth in the Fremont Municipal Code, Chapter 18.183.135. In accordance with the City's Municipal Code, the proposed project would provide 25 short-term and two long-term bicycle parking spaces.

Utilities and Infrastructure

The project area is currently served by water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, and other infrastructure. The proposed project would include connections to the existing storm drain and sewer in Niles Boulevard, and the existing water main at the north end of the site. Abandoned sanitary sewer and water lines in the project site would be removed and new sanitary sewer lines, water lines, and fire service water mains would be installed to accommodate the project's demand.

The proposed project would install an onsite stormwater drainage system consisting of a network of bioretention areas, inlets, and underground piping (see **Figure 3-10**). Runoff would be conveyed to the site of an existing outfall located near the southwest corner of the project site and downstream of the Alameda County Water District's Inflatable Rubber Dam #3, which spans Alameda Creek adjacent to the project site. To accommodate the project runoff, the existing 10-inch-diameter outfall pipe would be replaced with a 24-inch-diameter pipe. The proposed project would meet the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program, as well as other local, State, and federal requirements for stormwater quantity and quality. Approximately 12 bioretention areas would be located throughout the project site and are proposed to satisfy the stormwater treatment requirements, as described further below. The stormwater outfall would drain from the largest of these bioretention areas.

Landscaping and Other Improvements

There are approximately 44 trees on the project site including eucalyptus, Tree-of-Heaven, Italian stone pine, almond, and black walnut. As part of the project, approximately 40 would be

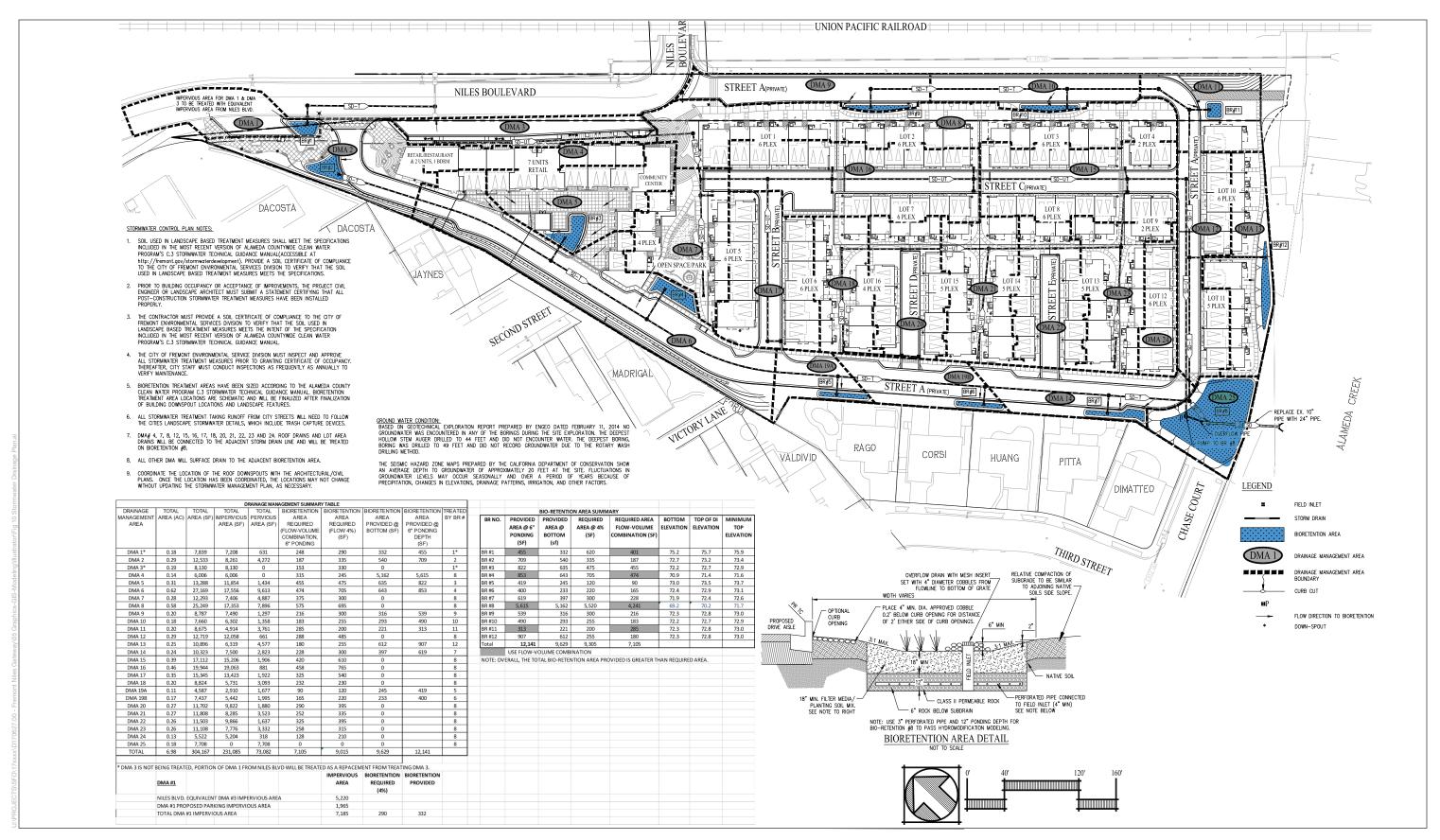
removed. Four of the trees located at the south end of the parcel would remain. Tree removal activities and mitigation for trees removed would be conducted in accordance with the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance and tree removal permit(s) would be obtained for removal of protected trees.

The proposed project would install landscaping throughout the site including new trees, shrubs, and ornamental landscaping along the Niles Boulevard and internal street frontages (**Figure 3-11**). Landscaping, hardscape treatments, and site furnishings would create passive park space at the north end of the site, outdoor space at the community center, and a resident's picnic park. The pedestrian walkways between the townhomes would include bollard lighting and landscaping to provide a buffer between pedestrians and townhome porches.

Bioretention Areas. The Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program oversees the implementation of the Municipal Regional Stormwater NPDES Permit (MRP) that was issued for urban stormwater discharges from Alameda County, including Fremont. The MRP outlines a number of regulatory goals and requirements for stormwater management for new development and redevelopment sites. The permit provisions require the implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) measures as described in Section C.3 of the MRP. These measures include source control, site design, and treatment requirements to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and improve the quality of the stormwater runoff.

The MRP identifies appropriate LID stormwater measures such as rainwater harvesting and reuse, infiltration, evapotranspiration, and biotreatment, while emphasizing that biotreatment systems are only to be used where it is practically infeasible to utilize the other cited measures.

The project applicant has determined that biotreatment would be the primary method of accomplishing stormwater treatment within the project site. As shown in **Figure 3-10**, bioretention areas would be located throughout the site. A total of 9,629 square feet of bioretention areas would be established. The upper layer of the bioretention areas would typically consist of 18 inches of filter media/planting soil mix underlain by permeable rock and a four-inch perforated pipe subdrain system.



SOURCE: Carlson, Barbee & Gibson, Inc. 2014, revised 2018

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project





SOURCE: vanderToolen Associates Landscape Architects, 2015

ESA

Niles Gateway Mixed-Use Project

E. Construction Activities and Schedule

General Construction Activities

Construction-related activities could include disruptions to the circulation system in and around the project site and surroundings. Heavy vehicles (i.e., haul [tractor-trailer] trucks, machinery) would access the project site and surroundings; equipment and materials would be staged for construction within established work areas that would be fenced off from surrounding uses. The proposed project would require approximately 3,810 cubic yards of cut and 3,060 cubic yards of fill. In total, approximately 750 cubic yards of excavated soils would be exported from the site throughout the entire construction period.

In addition to on-haul and off-haul trips, vehicular trips would be generated by an estimated maximum of 63 construction employees on the site at any one time. Parking for construction workers would be located onsite; there would be no staging of vehicles or equipment on or along existing roadways.

Construction Schedule and Phasing

Construction activities would typically occur during the work week, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. in accordance with the construction hour limitations established in the Fremont Municipal Code Section 18.160.010. If weekend work is necessary, construction would occur on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and, in most cases, construction would end by 4:00 p.m. There would likely be multiple destinations for off-haul materials. Construction workers would also be arriving from different directions.

Construction would include site preparation work, tree removal, excavation, grading, installation of access roads and utility infrastructure. The CRAFT building and townhomes would follow and overlap with some of the site work. Project construction is expected to last approximately 30 months, commencing in March 2019 with completion in August 2021. The project schedule is dependent on market conditions and regulatory approvals among several factors and, therefore, is subject to change.

F. Project Approvals

The project would require the following approvals and discretionary actions from the City:

- General Plan Amendment
- Preliminary and Precise Planned District Rezoning
- Vesting Tentative Tract Map
- Private Street
- General Plan Conformity Finding for a General Street Vacation
- Tree Removal Permit
- Preliminary Grading Plan

The project would require Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) and Planning Commission consideration and recommendation to the City Council for final approval.

Other approvals may be required from the following agencies:

- San Francisco Bay Area Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
- Alameda County Water District (ACWD)
- Alameda County Public Works Agency (ACPW)
- Union Sanitary District (USD)