Notice of Preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report
Additional Digester Facilities Upgrades Project

Introduction

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment; to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts; and to consider alternatives to the project.

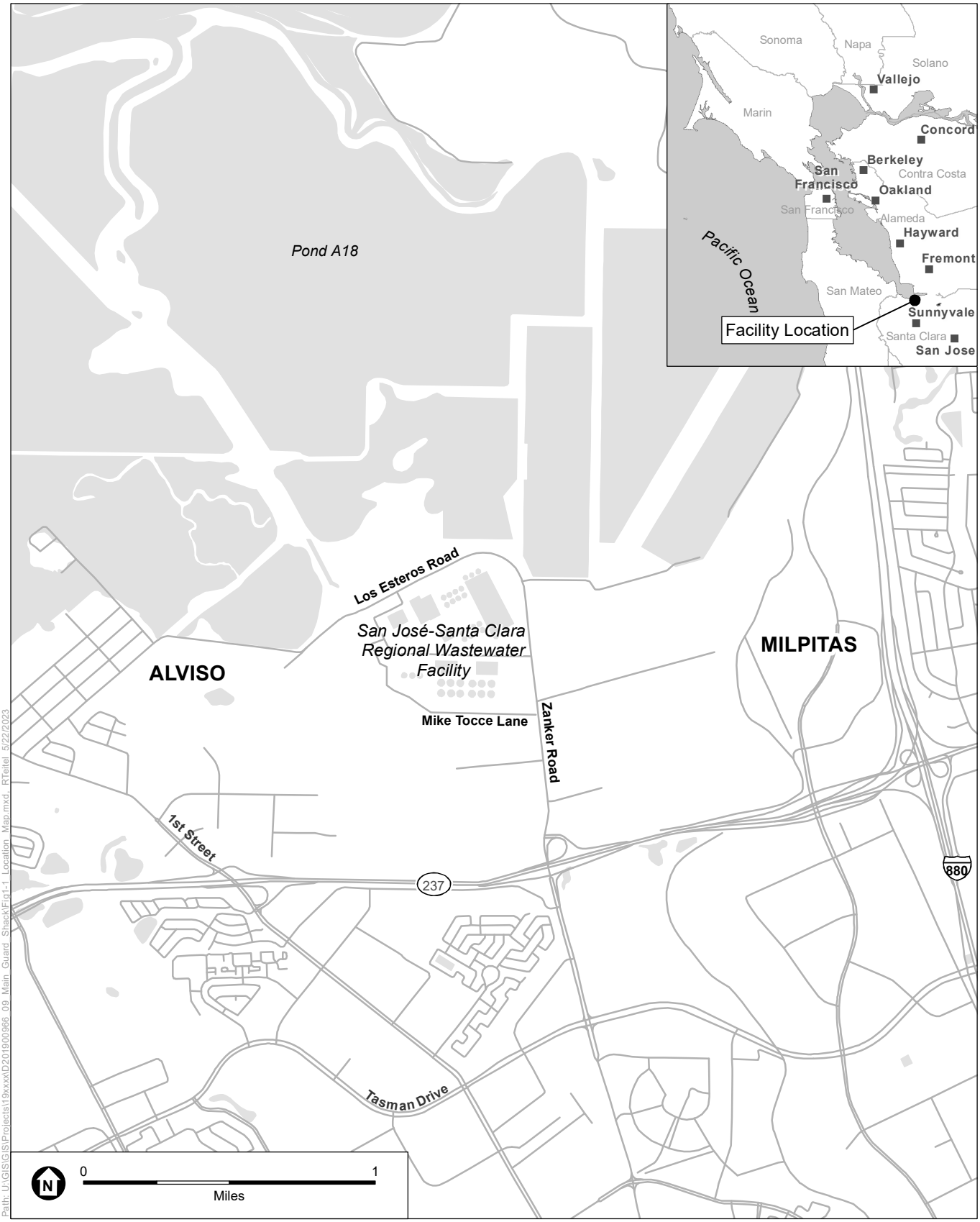
A Supplement to a previously published EIR (SEIR) is prepared when it is determined that under the conditions listed in Section 15162 of the implementing guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (CEQA), only minor additions or changes would be necessary to make the previous EIR adequate to the project in the changed situation. As the lead agency, the City of San José will prepare an SEIR to the San José/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant Master Plan (PMP) EIR (SCH #2011052074) to address the environmental impacts of the proposed Additional Digester Facilities Upgrades Project (Project), because the details of the Project were not available at the time the PMP EIR was prepared. Consistent with CEQA, the SEIR will contain only the information necessary to make the PMP EIR adequate for the Project as revised (considerations not affected by the Project change will not be reevaluated).

The City of San José Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department is the lead agency for the Project described herein. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the SEIR will include the following:

- A summary of the Project;
- A Project Description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures for the Project;
- Alternatives to the Project; and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the Project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; (c) the growth inducing impacts of the Project; and (d) cumulative impacts

Project Location

The Project is located in northern Santa Clara County, within the San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility (Facility) at 700 Los Esteros Road (Assessor Parcel Numbers 015-31-024 and 015-31-044) in the City of San José, as shown on **Figure 1**. The Project site is bound by Los Esteros Road to the north/west and Zanker Road to the east, and is located within the Facility's operational area, shown on **Figure 2**.

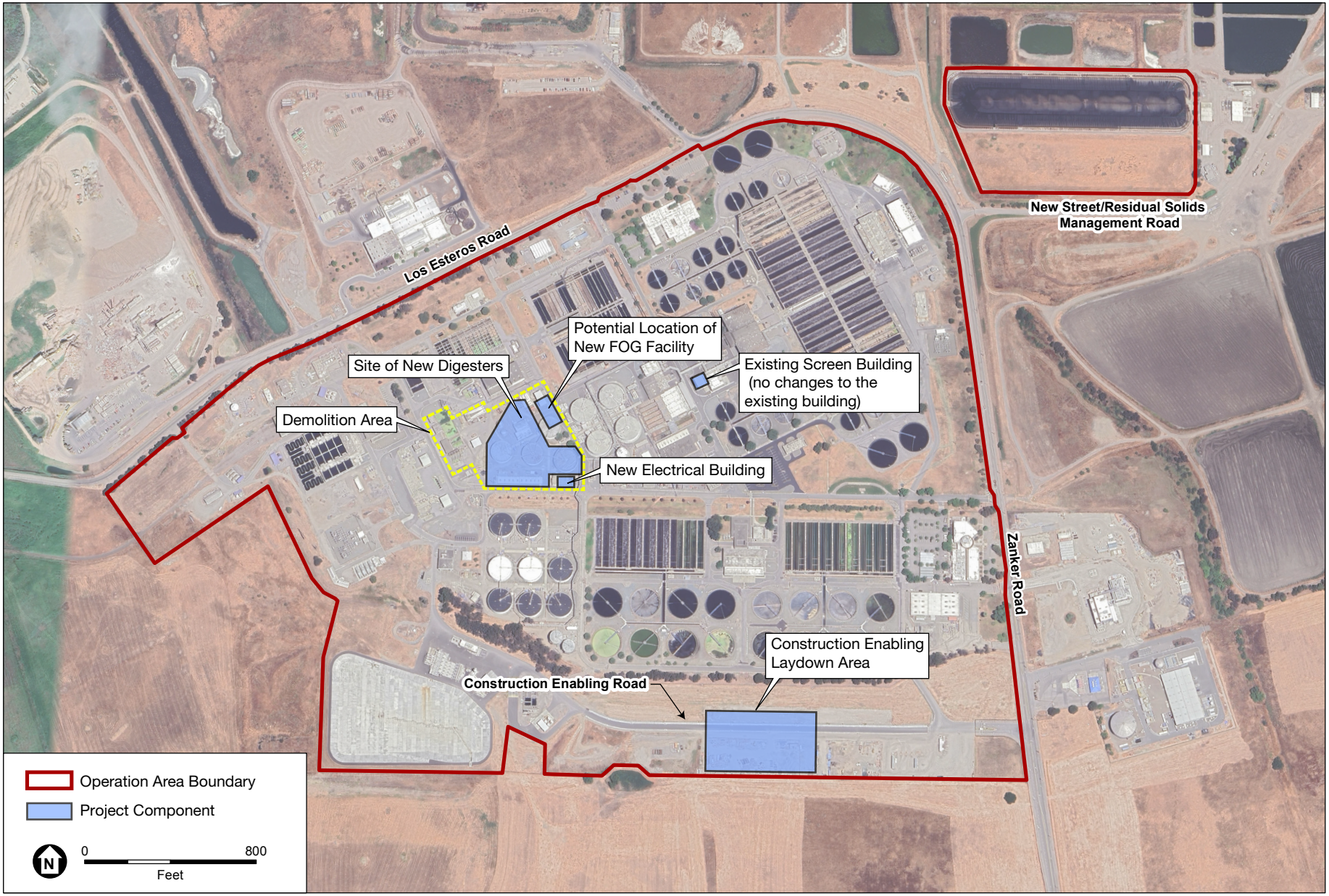


SOURCE: ESA, 2019

Additional Digester Facilities Upgrades

Figure 1
San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility Location

ESA



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SOURCE: ESA, 2025; Google Earth, 2025

Additional Digester Facilities Upgrades

Figure 2
Project Components

ESA

Description of the Project

The need for the Project is based on the essential service provided by the Facility: to protect public health and water quality through reliable, high quality, cost-effective wastewater treatment. The existing digesters at the Facility play a crucial role in the wastewater treatment process by breaking down settled solids, but require replacement to improve their efficiency and ensure compliance with current regulatory standards.

The Project would replace the existing digesters and improve the overall efficiency and sustainability of the Facility, as described below.

Digester Upgrades

The Project includes demolition of several existing structures within the Facility, including four existing digesters (refer to **Figure 3**), to allow for construction of six new upgraded digesters. The new digesters, shown in the rendering on **Figure 4**, would include digester covers, an upgraded gas mixing system, structural upgrades, and necessary piping and accessories (e.g., security lighting). Additional structures to be constructed as part of the Project include a new electrical building, two new digester overflow/stormwater pump stations, and associated overflow/stormwater pipelines.

Fats, Oils, and Grease Receiving Facility

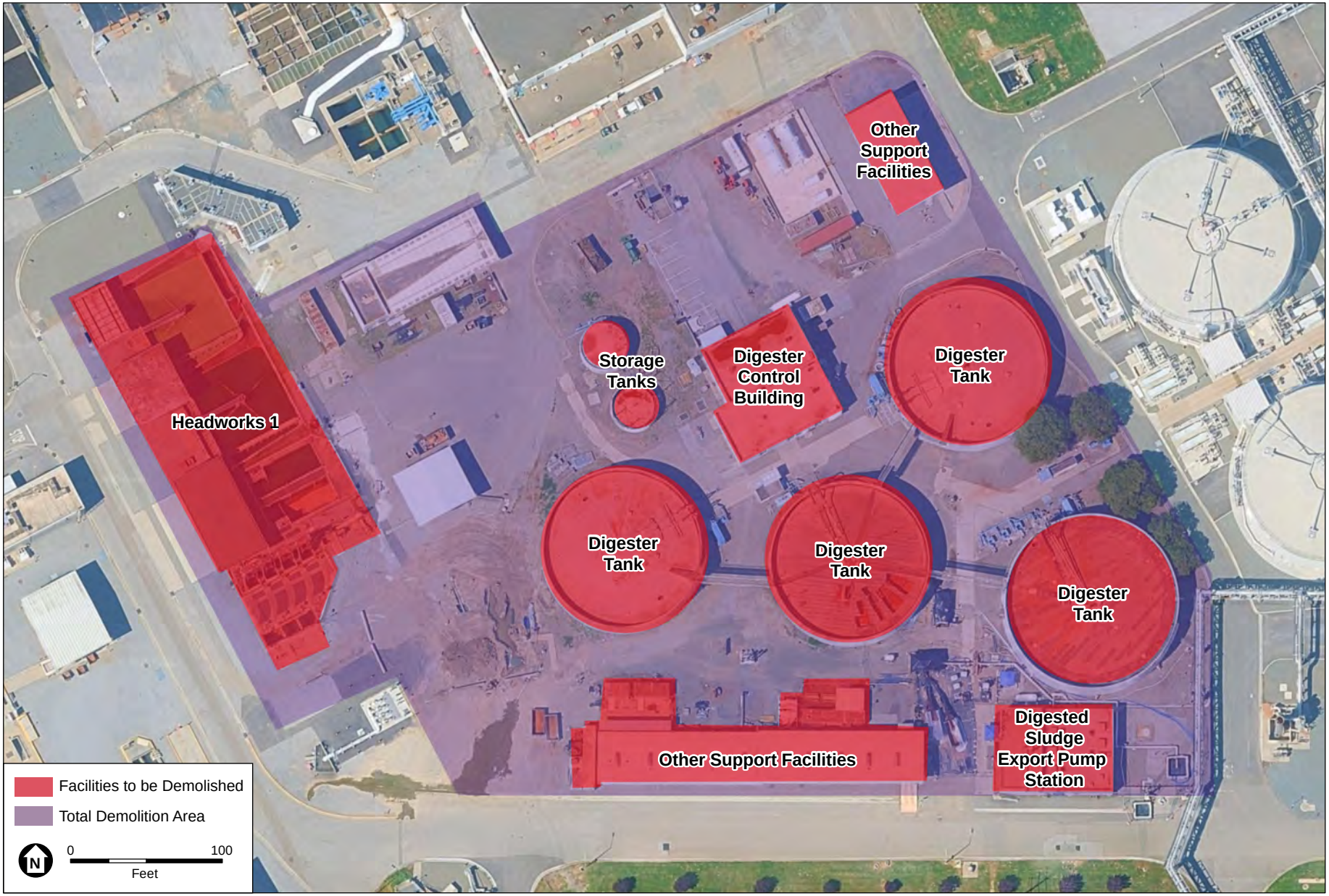
The Project would include a new medium-sized Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) receiving facility to receive and process FOG materials that are trucked to the Facility. Refer to Figures 2 and 4 for the potential location of the new facility.[1] The FOG receiving facility would improve overall Facility power efficiency. The FOG material would be blended with co-thickened sludge and then pumped to the digesters.

The FOG receiving facility would accommodate off-loading of tanker trucks within a concrete containment area. There would be two FOG tanks provided for temporary storage before FOG material is distributed. Security lighting would be installed at each FOG tank and odor treatment would be provided for potential odorous air from the FOG storage tanks using activated carbon treatment units or similar technology.

Site Improvements

Site improvements such as rock landscaping, paving and grading, signage, street lighting, and exterior lights on existing tanks and inside the existing polymer storage area would be included as part of the Project.

[1] While a potential location of the FOG receiving facility is shown on Figures 2 and 4, as design progresses, the structure may end up be constructed in an alternative location within the Facility.



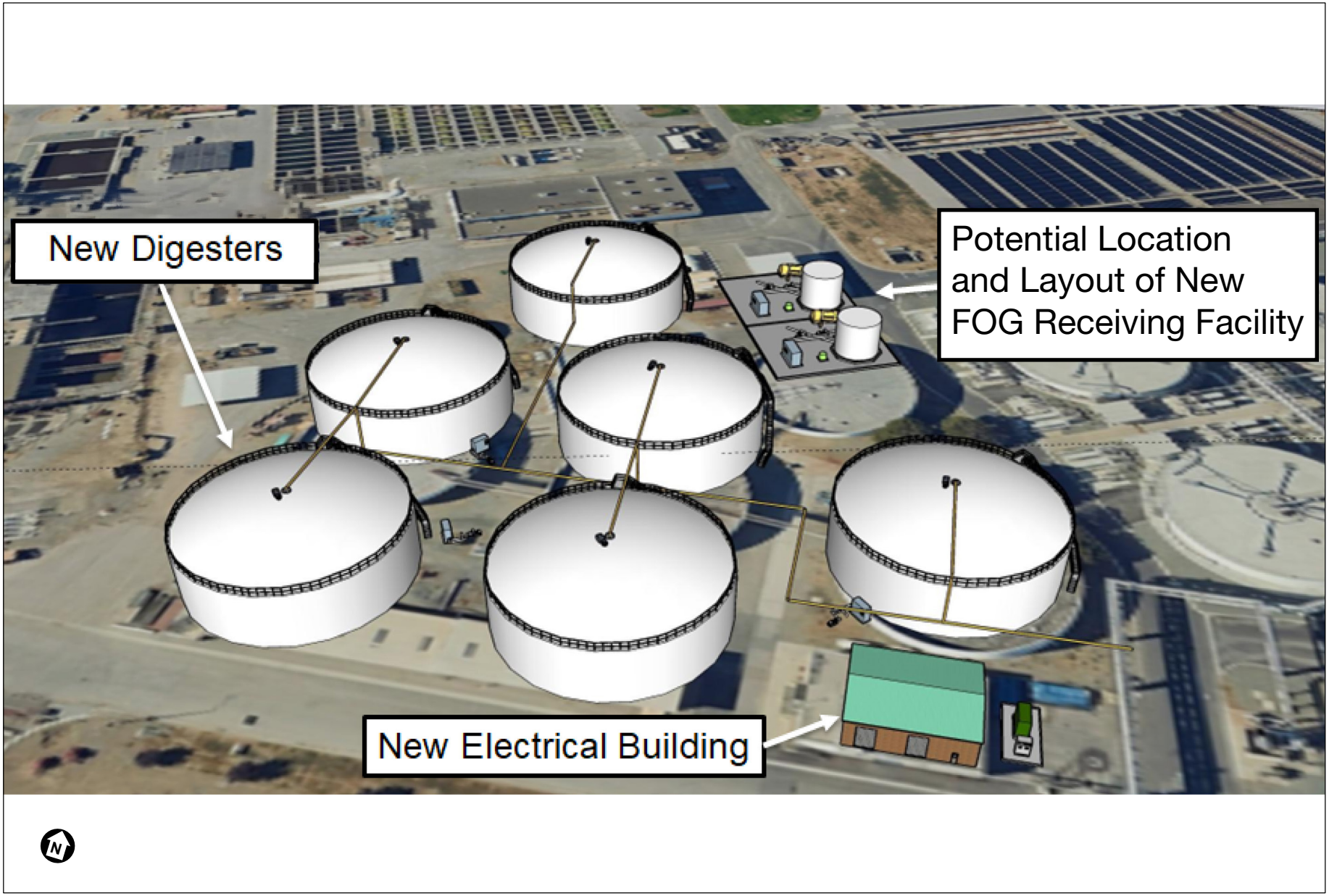
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SOURCE: City of San Jose, 2025

Additional Digester Facilities Upgrades

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Demolition Area



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SOURCE: City of San Jose, 2025

Additional Digester Facilities Upgrades

Figure 4
Renderings of New Digesters and FOG Receiving Facility

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Construction

Construction is expected to occur between mid-2027 and late-2034. **Table 1** shows the construction schedule including the approximate duration of construction activities to be completed for each Project component. Standard daytime shifts for construction activities would be 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

TABLE 1
ANTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Construction Phase	Anticipated Start	Anticipated Finish
Demolition	November 2027	July 2028
Site Preparation	November 2027	July 2028
Grading	August 2028	October 2028
Trenching	October 2028	January 2029
Building Construction	March 2029	September 2033
Architectural Coatings	September 2033	December 2033
Paving	April 2033	April 2033
Final Landscape/Hardscape	January 2034	February 2034
Final Inspections/Contingency	April 2034	October 2034

SOURCE: Personal communications between S. Brar (ESD) and A. Norcott (ESA) regarding Additional Digesters Facilities Upgrades Project Request for Information, June 6, 2025.

Anticipated Project Approvals

The Project is not anticipated to require any federal, state, or regional approvals, but may require the following local permits and approvals:

- Bay Area Air District (Air District): Authority to Construct, Permit to Operate, Off-road Construction Equipment Certification, Title V Permit Modification
- City of San José Public Works: grading permits, Stormwater Control Plan, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
- City of San José Planning, Building and Code Enforcement: certification of the SEIR.

Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project

The SEIR will identify the significant environmental effects anticipated to result from development of the Project as proposed. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted. The SEIR will include analysis of the following environmental resources as they relate to the Project:

1. Air Quality

The SEIR will include a discussion summarizing the PMP EIR baseline and changes to regulatory context and the location of sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project site since the PMP EIR. The air quality impact discussion will include an analysis of both construction and operational impacts based on significance thresholds and guidance from the Air District. The Project will also be evaluated for consistency with the Bay Area Clean Air Plan: Spare the Air, Cool the Climate, which provides regional strategies to improve air quality in the Bay Area and meet public health goals.

Construction emissions will be quantified using tools and methods consistent with the most recent version of California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod, version 2022.1.1.) and Project-specific data on construction schedule, phases, off-road construction equipment used and the number of construction vehicle trips under each phase. Estimated emissions will be compared to the Air District's significance thresholds for construction to determine impacts. Operational impacts are expected to be primarily maintenance-related and would be assessed qualitatively. The Air District and the Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment require that health risks be analyzed if sensitive receptors are located within a 1,000-foot radius of the construction site when construction activities are expected to last longer than 2 continuous months. In this case, due to the location of the Project site more than 4,000 feet from the nearest sensitive receptors, a quantitative health risk assessment will not be conducted. The analysis will include a qualitative discussion of health risk impacts from construction. Odor will be discussed pursuant to the odor control strategy for the Facility (adopted by City Council December 2, 2014) and based on an Odor Analysis Technical Report. Mitigation measures will be developed to address and reduce any significant impacts identified.

2. Cultural Resources

The SEIR will provide an analysis of cultural resources to meet CEQA and other federal, State, and City requirements. The cultural resources analysis will include a review of archival records and the archaeological sensitivity assessment of the Project site. Multiple structures proposed to be demolished are within the *San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility Streamline Moderne Industrial Historic District* (Historic District). The Facility was documented in 2016 and a portion of it (the Historic District*)* was recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources as a historic district.[2] The Historic District is not officially listed on the local, state, or national registers but is considered a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5), and will be analyzed as such in the SEIR.

3. Energy

The CEQA Guidelines recommend that projects be evaluated as to whether they would have the potential to result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction and operation, and whether they could conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Energy consumption (electricity, natural gas, and petroleum fuels) during construction and operation of the Project will be quantified and presented in the context of regional energy use. Energy conservation features included either as part of the design of the Project or required by regulations will be considered in the analysis. The SEIR will also evaluate whether the Project would obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency such as the City of San José General Glan policies and municipal code.

4. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The SEIR will address the Project's contribution to regional and global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Proposed measures, including the Air District's best management practices, that would reduce GHG emissions will be discussed. While construction and operational GHG emissions for the Project will be estimated and presented, the Project will also be assessed for consistency with the City of San José 2030

[2] ESA, *San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility Capital Improvement Program: Cultural Resources Survey Report,* prepared for the City of San José, 2016 (unpublished).

GHG Reduction Strategy[3] and other state and local plans developed for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions including the state's 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update, Envision San José General Plan, and Climate Smart San José. Mitigation measures will be developed if impacts are identified to be potentially significant.

5. Transportation

The transportation section of the SEIR will qualitatively discuss the potential for construction and operation of the Project to conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, traffic hazards due to geometric design features, and emergency access. As all work associated with the Project would be conducted outside of the public right-of-way, no impacts on transportation facilities are anticipated. No quantitative transportation analysis would be conducted due to the Project being within a "public service facility" and meeting the City's screening criteria under which projects are not required to submit detailed vehicle miles traveled transportation analyses.

6. Alternatives

The SEIR will examine alternatives to the Project including a "No Project" alternative and one or more alternative development scenarios depending on the impacts identified. Other alternatives that may be discussed could include reduced development alternatives (e.g., smaller project) and/or alternative locations within the Facility. Alternatives discussed will be chosen based on their ability to reduce or avoid identified significant impacts of the Project while achieving most of the identified basic objectives of the Project.

7. Other Environmental Resources Sections

The SEIR will address all other resource areas in accordance with the CEQA Checklist in Appendix G of the CEQA Statute and Guidelines in a section called "Project Consistency with PMP EIR". The SEIR will include brief impact analyses for the additional resource categories indicating how the Project relates to the PMP EIR, how/if impacts have changed, and providing substantial evidence for the determination not to review the resource area in a full section of the SEIR.

8. Other CEQA Considerations

In conformance with CEQA Guidelines, the SEIR will discuss other required CEQA considerations (such as cumulative impacts, unavoidable environmental impacts, irreversible environmental changes, and growth-inducing impacts), which will be provided by cross reference to the PMP EIR and updated only to the extent that revisions to the Project change prior determinations. The SEIR will also include references and organizations/persons consulted and SEIR authors.

[3] The City of San José's 2030 GHG Reduce Strategy was adopted by the City in October 2020 and serves as a Qualified Climate Action Plan for purposes of tiering and streamlining under CEQA.