

END OF 'BUMPY ROAD'

★ J 9/5/14

Alameda officials open up new Walgreens

By Peter Hegarty

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ALAMEDA — Mayor Marie Gilmore and other city officials formally welcomed the city's third Walgreens with a ribbon-cutting Thursday, just under a year after they donned hard hats, picked up shovels and ceremoniously broke ground for the building.

That might seem like a

quick timeline, but the developers were actually hoping to open the pharmacy as far back as May.

"It's been a bumpy road in construction, but, nonetheless, it worked out really well," said Christopher Seiwald of Foley Street Investments, the developers behind the project

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Alameda Mayor Marie Gilmore speaks at the grand opening of the new Walgreens pharmacy in the 1600 block of Park Street in Alameda on Thursday, just under a year after groundbreaking.

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at Park Street and Lincoln Avenue.

What helped slow the work, Seiwald said, was the environmental cleanup of the property, once the site of a Good Chevrolet showroom.

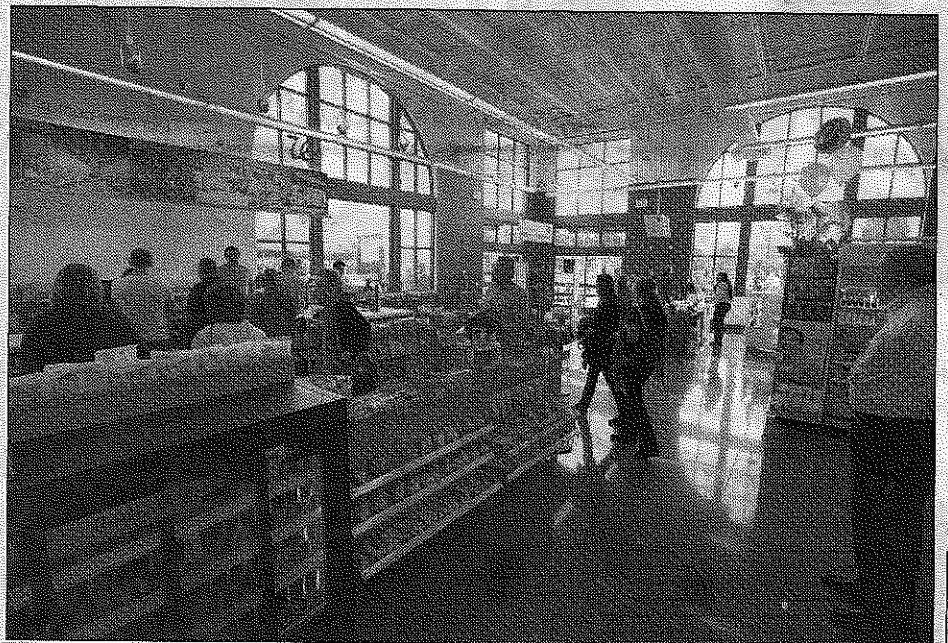
"It was a car dealership, and so you had gas and oil stored here," he said. "It also meant we had to work with both Alameda county and city officials."

While the 16,788-square-foot building that houses the Walgreens is now finished, construction continues on the developers' 7,788-square-foot building at the site. The goal is to have that building done within about a year, Seiwald said.

City officials consider the location a "gateway" for the island because of its proximity to Interstate 880 and the Fruitvale Avenue and Park Street bridges.

"This project continues the renaissance north of Park Street," said Robb Ratto of the Park Street Business Association.

Since a train station was located nearby during the 19th century, the develop-



D. ROSS CAMERON/STAFF

Customers explore the airy interior at the grand opening Thursday of the new Walgreens pharmacy in the 1600 block of Park Street in Alameda.

ers have named the project Alameda Station. As a tribute to the past, the pharmacy also has a display of old railroad photos on its Park Street side that were installed by Jerarde Gutierrez, a Vallejo-based artist and muralist who works with the Alameda County Arts Commission.

The project is on the same block as the Alameda Marketplace, which

houses Alameda Natural Grocery, Baron's Meat & Poultry and other businesses. Along with sharing its parking lot, the new pharmacy has a brick facade to match the Alameda Marketplace, itself a former Ford dealership that was built in 1930.

The building still under construction will have a Mediterranean style and will be modeled after the

one that houses Tucker's Ice Cream, the popular restaurant at 1349 Park St., Seiwald said. It will have between one and four tenants.

Along with its new location, Walgreens has stores at Alameda South Shore Center and at 1916 Webster St., in the city's West End.

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