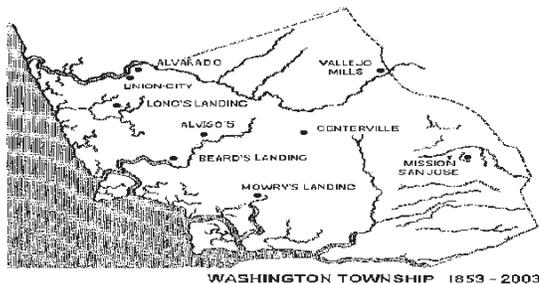


# Washington Township Historical Society



## SEPT - OCT 2021

VOL. 45

NO. 05

PRES.: JOHN WEED

(510) 651-2482

V.P.: PAUL SETHY

(510) 656-4075

REC. SEC.: TIM SWENSON

(510) 489-8944

TREAS.: DON BARSII

(510) 342-8355

**MEETING DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2021, 7:00 PM**  
**LIVE AT THE WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY**  
**AND VIRTUAL ON ZOOM, <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76473734687>**

Washington Township Historical Society Editor: Al Minard

## City of Fremont California Nursery Presentation on September 27, 2021

Contributed by Paul Sethy, WTHS Vice-President:

The next meeting of the Washington Township Historical Society will be on Monday, September 27, at 7:00 PM. Our guest speaker will be Rico Lardizabal, Associate Landscape Architect for the City of Fremont. This is the follow-up presentation to the one given in May by Dr. Joyce Blueford on the history of the California Nursery. Rico is coordinating the implementation of Fremont's master plan for the old nursery property. At our meeting he will provide an overview of the city's master plan and the scope and timelines for current construction projects. He will also highlight upcoming projects planned for the next one to three years. Lastly, he will offer insights into the interpretive sign program planned for the property.

As was alluded to at the May presentation, in which city staff participated, the contractor and maybe even the City has not always been sensitive enough to certain historical elements of the nursery. This is an important opportunity for all members of our historical community to communicate to the City that this is NOT your typical park construction project. It also serves as our chance to offer ideas and suggestions in a comfortable setting with city officials at a non-governmental meeting.

To provide some background, construction activities began in early spring 2021 on the California Nursery Historical Park Backbone Infrastructure and Site Work project in the Niles District. This project is part of the Phase 1 implementation of the park's master plan adopted by the Fremont City Council in December 2017. This first phase sets the framework for the future development of the park, and includes construction of underground utilities, irrigation, walkways, parking areas, and driveway. Also, the planting of 70+ new trees is planned, along with native meadow planting to replace lost trees throughout time to attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife, and complement the urban forest. It will also be the future location of a community garden.

Once complete, the enhanced park will include improvements such as accessible pathways and plaza areas. It will also be equipped with benches and seat walls, picnic tables, drinking fountains, bicycle parking racks, pathways, security lighting, and much more!

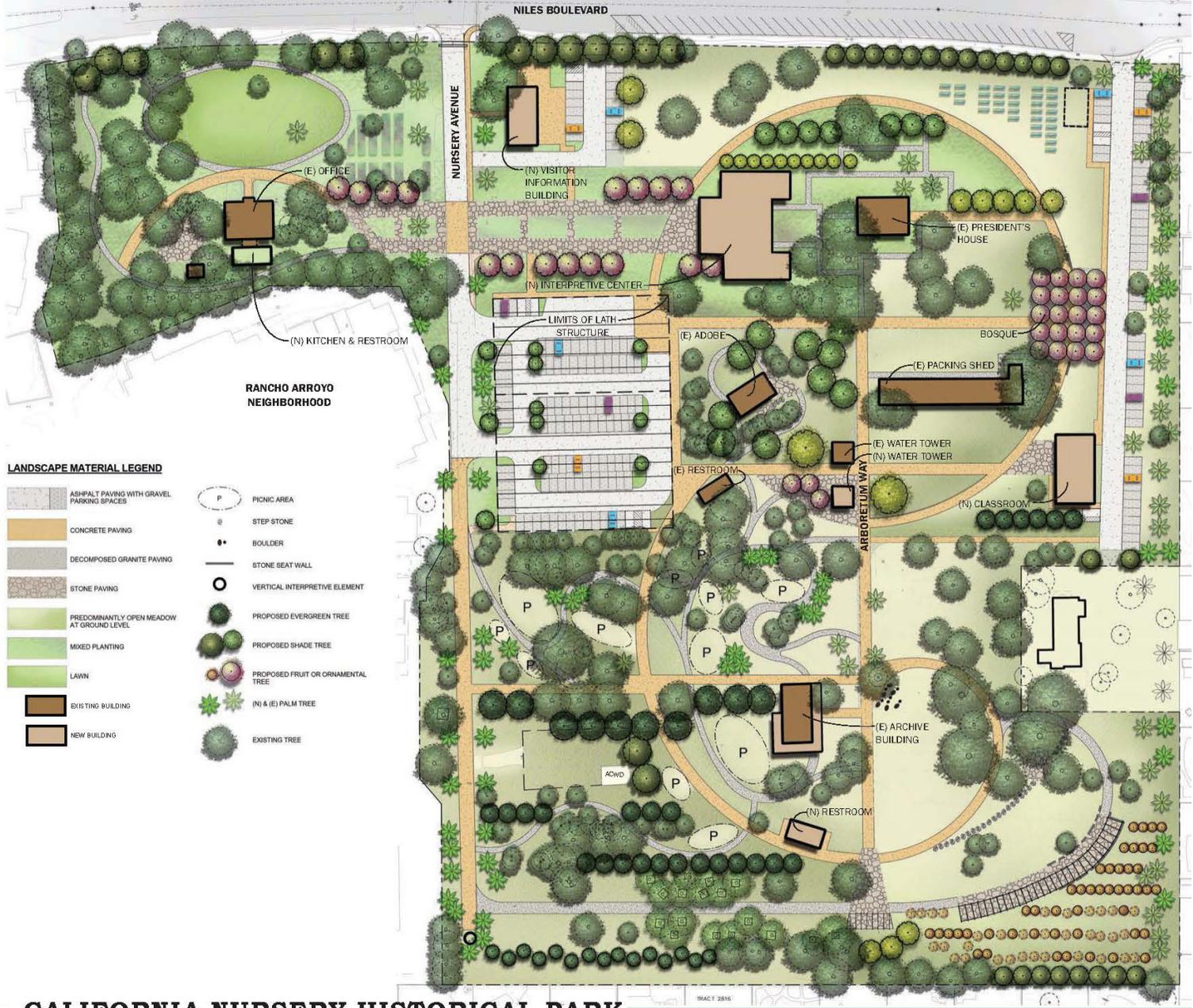
The project has been a joint effort led by the City's Community Services Department, including the Landscape Architecture, Recreation, and Parks Maintenance divisions, with inspiration from other City departments and community volunteers, including the California Nursery Garden Club, LEAF Community Garden and Math Science Nucleus. The construction efforts are being managed by the City's Public Works

Construction and Surveying divisions. Phase 1 of the project is scheduled to be completed in October 2021.

For more detailed information on this and other California Nursery Historical Park projects, please visit the California Nursery Project webpage at: <https://www.fremont.gov/3741/CA-Nursery-Project>. (Highly recommended.)

And, for more information on the City of Fremont General Parks and Recreation Master Plan see: <https://www.fremont.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1994>. To provide your input or comments on plans for the old California Nursery grounds, please visit: [InventFremontParks.com](http://InventFremontParks.com).

Join us at the WTHS meeting at 7:00 PM, on Monday, September 27, 2021 and learn about the future of our parks, recreation and historical preservation in Fremont!



**CALIFORNIA NURSERY HISTORICAL PARK**  
**MASTER PLAN** SITE LAYOUT & MATERIALS

SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

DESIGN TEAM  
 P&R: [unreadable] - Landscape Architect  
 Canby & Company - Historic Architect  
 BPC Engineers - Civil Engineer  
 Langbein+Gregory - Environmental Consultants  
 Park Engineering - Structural Engineer  
 H&A: [unreadable] - Arborist  
 Land Economics Consultants - Financial Advisor  
 Leventis & Associates - Cost Estimator  
 Mark Stonehewer - Historic Advisor



# CA Nursery Master Plan

In 1884 a German immigrant named John Rock purchased 463 acres on a site that is today known as the town of Niles in Fremont. He moved his start-up nursery from San Jose and named it “The California Nursery Company.” Rock set about to create the best known Nursery Company in the State of California and became the premier supplier of fruit and nut trees. He marketed and hybridized 100’s of plant varieties with the assistance of the famous botanist Luther Burbank of Santa Rosa. In addition to fruit trees, the California Nursery became known for ornamental shrubs and 100’s of varieties of roses. Rock is thought to be responsible for introducing more new plants into the State than any other nurseryman.

In 1917 another legend took over ownership of the California Nursery Company, named George Roeding. Combined with the Roeding operations in Fresno, the California Nursery Company dominated the fruit and nut tree national market at a pivotal time when private agriculture was emerging as large corporate businesses. By the 1940’s George Roeding Jr. had evolved the company into an enormous retail operation with nurseries and growing grounds from the State of Washington to South America. All of this was headquartered out of Niles California.

Over the years the grounds of California Nursery were frequented by famous people that were customers or were otherwise associated with the California Nursery. They include President Woodrow Wilson, Phoebe and Randolph Hearst, Leland Stanford, John McLaren (the first Superintendent of Golden Gate Park), Architect Johannes Reimers, and photographers Andrew Hill and Gabriel Moulin.

Palm trees from the California Nursery became the “Avenue of Palms” at the 1915 Panama Pacific

Exposition in San Francisco. Plants and Oak trees from the Nursery were used in the 1939/40 International Exposition at Treasure Island. Innovations in plant shipping were developed in the packing shed on the site. Peach pits from California Nursery were used in gas masks in World War I. These and many other stories are waiting to be told.

A few years ago, Dr. Joyce Blueford, of the local Math Science Nucleus, befriended the grandson (Bruce) of George Roeding Sr. Through that relationship, and with the assistance of the late Lila Bringham, she began a process of slowly uncovering what would later become an enormous collection of artifacts chronicling the history and operations of the once Grand California Nursery Company. With Dr. Blueford’s assistance, the City began to realize the important story that this site has to tell Fremont residents, the region, and world. Suddenly, what had been locally regarded as a lovely passive 20 acre site with majestic trees and old nursery buildings, became a historical treasure trove the likes of which are seldom discovered in today’s world.

The primary purpose of this Master Plan is to tell the story of the California Nursery Company to current and future generations through the sharing of the site’s remaining historic buildings, majestic arboricultural resources, and display of the carefully preserved artifacts and documents. This Plan seeks to blend this overarching historical theme with the many uses existing on the site today, including educational tours, community gardens, weddings and events, various volunteer efforts such as those that manage the rose garden, and possibly reinstituting a small retail nursery presence on the site. The plan proposes a thoughtful measured increase in activity to the site, promoting awareness of the stunning community resources present on the site, and to generate modest income to support on-going maintenance and operations for future generations.

# September 27, 2021, MEETING

Will be in person at the Washington Township Museum of Local History, 190 Anza Street, Fremont, OR on Zoom starting at 7:00 P.M.:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76473734687>

## NEW MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR SINGLE ADDRESS

ONE-YEAR \$10      FIVE-YEAR \$40      TEN-YEAR \$70      PATRON: \$50.00 for one year

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

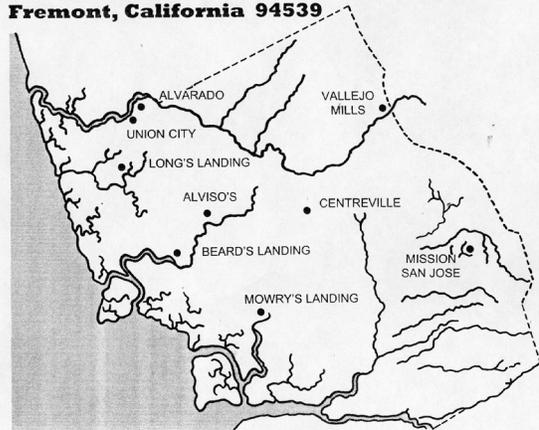
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL CHECK TO: Washington Township Historical Society      PO BOX 3045      FREMONT, CA 94539

**Washington Township Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 3045**  
**Fremont, California 94539**



WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP 1853 - 2003