

CARMICHAEL CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

FORMATION STATEMENT

Adopted September 23, 1986

Objective

To establish a Neighborhood Preservation Area (NPA), pursuant to the zoning code of Sacramento County, within the following borders

From the corner of California and Sutter Avenues, east on Sutter Avenue to its end; further east on an extension of the line of Sutter Avenue to San Juan Avenue; south to the American River; southwest along the west side of the American River to Stanley Avenue; west on Stanley Avenue to California Avenue; and north on California Avenue to Sutter Avenue

for the purpose of preserving present zoning within that area, and encouraging awareness of and adherence to the Carmichael Community Plan. Properties fronting upon or having access to either side of Sutter and Stanley Avenues, and properties fronting upon or having access to the east side of California and the west side of the American River would be included in the NPA.

Concerns Supporting Objective

1. Preservation of Open Space and Community Identity: The unique rural residential character of our community and the living and property values that have brought people to the Carmichael area over the years are well described in the following passage from the Carmichael Community Plan, adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in 1975:

"Carmichael's major asset as an attractive community are those portions of its residential areas which are sparsely populated and have substantial areas of private open space. These open areas, with horse pastures, large trees, natural creeks, and rolling terrain make Carmichael unique in Sacramento suburbia. Not only are these areas aesthetically pleasing and environmentally sensitive, the relatively low population density has meant fewer urban problems. Additionally, since this residential pattern has existed for a considerable amount of time, there are numerous

older homes in the area which provide housing for lower income families. It is of the greatest importance to insure the continuation of this type of open space in Carmichael." (p. 65) (Emphasis added.)

Yet, the high values of open space, embraced by farsighted community leaders only a decade ago, have been disregarded in individual development proposals and political decisions in recent years. Each such decision has represented another "bite" out of the Plan and the community it was intended to protect. Now decisions are coming with regard to remaining open space areas--one a past park site--which, with domino effect, could destroy the Plan altogether, leaving only a hollow statement of good intentions set aside in the race for quick profits.

2. Maintenance of Reasonable Traffic Flow and Safety: In recent years, a significant additional reason has appeared for preserving what is left of Carmichael's rural-residential area: traffic congestion. Our narrow, hilly streets simply cannot accommodate the influx of new traffic brought in by further high-density developments. As anyone living in the proposed Neighborhood Preservation Area can attest, those streets are already extremely hazardous to children waiting for school buses, pedestrians, joggers, cyclists, horseback riders, and the motorists themselves. Unless the County is willing to fund a major redesign and reconstruction of the Carmichael street system, a halt must be called somewhere to the continuing parade of zoning changes and building variances.
3. Community Voice in Future Development: People in our community and, we believe, in the Carmichael area generally are appalled at the manner in which planning and zoning restrictions, upheld at the Community Council and Planning Commission levels, are repeatedly overridden by the County Board of Supervisors under the impetus of development pressures. The results are apparent for all to see: drastic changes in neighborhood ambience and quality, traffic congestion and hazards, and many surplus, little-occupied shopping centers, office buildings, and dwellings. It is not too late to save the Carmichael community from these developmental excesses--if members of the community will step forward in an organized way and insist that the Carmichael Community Plan become a meaningful guide for decision making, with particular attention to provisions of the Plan such as the following:

"As a result of urban sprawl, and the fact that much of the development taking place in Carmichael is by businesses and corporations headquartered outside the community, Carmichael's community identity is eroding away. The open spaces are subdivided and important buildings are torn down. Consequently, the Carmichael many residents have known in the past is disappearing. A certain degree of such change is inevitable, even necessary, if Carmichael is to remain a vital, alive community. However, the new development which takes place should reflect the character and feeling of the best of Carmichael." (p. 9)  
(Emphasis added.)

"In Carmichael the most significant natural resource areas are the natural stream courses, rolling terrain and major tree groves. Unfortunately, much of these original, natural resources have either been channelized or piped, graded and filled, or cut down. It is most important to preserve what is left so that Carmichael does not become one monotonous, unidentifiable suburb of asphalt, channels, and buildings. Outside the obvious benefit of the aesthetically pleasing impact of such natural areas, the preservation of natural resources provides a necessary balance between man-made and natural elements in an urban area, which helps to prevent a deterioration of the quality of life." (p. 61) (Emphasis added.)

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In sum, we believe that the Carmichael Community Plan is being disregarded and subverted in the decisions made on development projects, to the severe detriment of the residents of this community, old and new. We are working to reverse this trend and bring renewed attention and dedication to the Plan. We do not want Carmichael to go the way of many once-beautiful and comfortable communities in California which are now overtaken by urban sprawl and notable mainly for congestion, pollution, people wishing to escape, and memories of what used to be.

We welcome the comments, ideas and participation of persons who share our concerns and are interested in examining the issues and taking a more active role in the future of this community.