

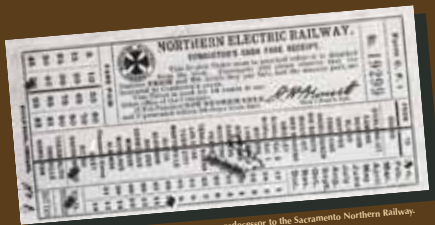
The Railroad History of Shepherd Canyon



A freight train rolls along the steep grade as it passes Havens Station in 1940. Note Shepherd Canyon Road to the right.



A two-car passenger train crosses over Mountain Boulevard. Note Montclair Park to the left, the old Montclair fire station above the train, and the bridge abutments all still here today.



Note: The Northern Electric Railway was a predecessor to the Sacramento Northern Railway.

It is silent now, but long ago, you would hear the shrill scraping of iron wheels along a track as a green interurban electric train would suddenly appear and pass along the very path on which you are standing. From 1912 to 1957, the popular Sacramento Northern carried passengers and freight between Chico and Oakland.

One hundred years ago, these trains were America's answer to rapid transit between major cities. They provided fast, clean, frequent, inexpensive and direct interurban service to weekday commuters and weekend picnickers. The development of many of our nearby Oakland neighborhoods were spawned by the proximity of the interurban lines.

If you would like to ride some of these original interurban trains, you still can at the Western Railway museum in Rio Vista, CA. Visit www.wrm.org for more information.



Combine 1004 emerges out of the Shepherd Canyon tunnel near current day Gunn Road heading towards Montclair in 1937.



The platform at Montclair Station is empty in a quiet moment between trains.



Today, instead of a trestle for trains, we have a bridge for people and bicycles to cross Snake Road.



Research, text, and installation by Daniel Levy, for an Eagle Scout Project.

Shepherd Canyon Highway that Almost Was

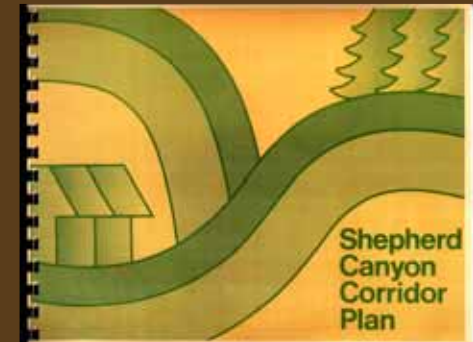


State Assemblyman Ken Meade

Standing here amidst this beautiful natural landscape it is hard to imagine that tranquil Shepherd Canyon came very close to vanishing under concrete. With the growing popularity of the automobile in the 1950s and the phasing out of the Sacramento Northern Railroad, CALTRANS saw Shepherd Canyon as a prime location for Route 77, which would have connected Contra Costa County to Oakland. Route 77 would have run through the canyon as an extension of Park Boulevard with an interchange at Highway 13.

Community activism played a key role in persuading government officials to protect the canyon. Residents were concerned that the new freeway was planned in spite of the fact that Highway 24 was just two miles north. They also wanted to protect the canyon and to encourage alternative modes of transportation. In 1972, Assembly Member Ken Meade officially protected the canyon from freeway development with the introduction of Assembly Bill 561.

With the downfall of the freeway plan, the Shepherd Canyon Corridor Plan was shaped by volunteers and is now the guiding document that is used in preserving the canyon.

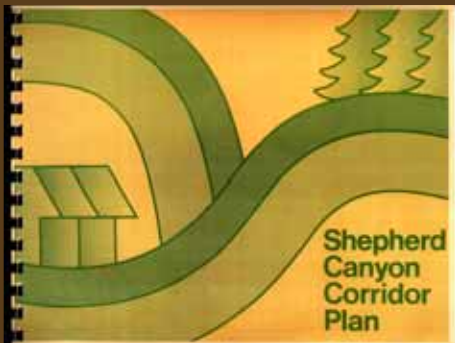


The Shepherd Canyon Corridor Plan provided a vision for Shepherd Canyon after the highway plan was cancelled.

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The Shepherd Canyon Corridor Plan



The Shepherd Corridor Plan provided a vision for Shepherd Canyon after the highway plan was cancelled.

The Shepherd Canyon Corridor Plan was created by the City of Oakland in 1975 to provide a vision for the development of the Canyon after CALTRANS dropped plans for Highway 77 along the former Sacramento Northern Railroad Right of Way. The Oakland City Council placed a development moratorium in 1974, until a plan for the Canyon's future could be created. The result was the Shepherd Canyon Corridor Plan.

The Plan provided for setting aside 34 acres of the canyon as open space and included trails to provide alternative modes of transportation in the Canyon. The "Rails to Trails" program provided the bridge over Snake Road and other trail improvements. Special design review guidelines for residential construction were adopted. Shepherd Canyon Road (then upper Park Boulevard) received its current name.



The last remaining stretch of Shepherd Creek from below the Fire Station to Scout Road was saved under the plan.



Adopted as the "Specific Plan" for Shepherd Canyon in 1975, the Plan is still used today by residents and the city.



Residents enjoy a leisurely walk along the former Sacramento Northern Right-of-Way. Several CALTRANS former highway parcels were acquired "at cost" provided they be used for alternative transportation as trails.

The Shepherd Canyon Scenic Route symbol to the right was envisioned as a part of the plan.



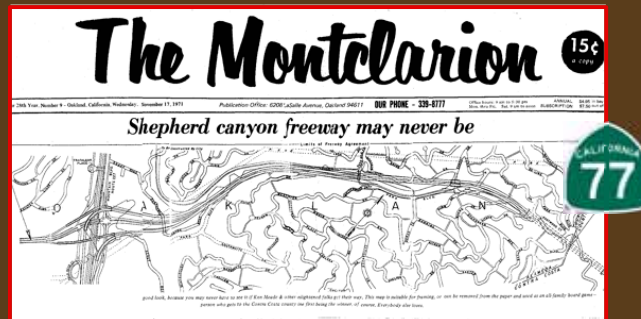
A Scenic Overview of Shepherd Canyon



To your left is the last remaining vestige of Shepherd Creek, free flowing from below Fire Station 24 to Scout Road. This picturesque setting was saved under the SCCP, and otherwise would have become the location of concrete footings in the shadow of a highway overpass.



Overall, 34 acres of open space were preserved under the SCCP.



In front of you was the proposed route of Highway 77, which CALTRANS envisioned connecting with Highway 13 at Park Boulevard and then leading to the former railroad right of way. Citizens rose up against this plan, working with State Assembly Member Meade who sponsored AB 561 to cancel Highway 77.

Then, citizens worked with the City of Oakland to create the Shepherd Canyon Corridor Plan ("SCCP") in 1975 to lay out a vision of what to do with this newly available land. The Plan included guidelines for open space, trails, as well as special design review standards for residential development to ensure that it complimented the surroundings.



To your right across the canyon is the historic route of the Sacramento Northern Railway, abandoned in 1957, and now converted to trail use under the "Rails to Trails" program.



Several CALTRANS former highway parcels in Shepherd Canyon were acquired "at cost" under Assembly Bill 431, provided they be used for alternative transportation as trails.

