

AUTO PLAZA - Scotts Valley

# SV auto center design approved

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SCOTTS VALLEY — Preliminary designs for a proposed auto center were unanimously approved by the Scotts Valley City Council Wednesday night.

Auto center consultant Michael D'Amico, will now begin work on construction drawings for the center. Construction could begin next spring, and the center could open by 1991.

Five Santa Cruz car dealerships offering nine makes of cars have agreed to move into the new center. Those dealerships include North Bay Ford, BMW/Mazda, Chevy/Geo, Nissan/Dodge and Toyota/Volkswagen.

Santa Cruz car dealer Steve Bergstrom, who owns several local dealerships, will not be moving into the new center, despite his initial interest in the project, according to Scotts Valley officials.

Bergstrom reportedly refused to abide by Scotts

Valley's strict design guidelines for building in the auto center project.

The city plans to build entrance roads, fountains, a plaza with a display area that will double as an outdoor amphitheater, and parking areas for the project. The plaza holds room for five separate car dealers who will build their own showrooms and repair facilities — as long as they conform to the city's guidelines. The building plans must also withstand design review by the city.

Among the city's requirements are: no flags, spinners, balloons or other advertising devices; no outdoor paging systems, unless one can be designed that can't be heard offsite; no asphalt on any area visible from a public right-of-way, including parking lots and roadways; outdoor lights must be engineered to direct light downward, away from neighboring homes; all buildings must be oriented toward the loop road at the center of the project; no flat roofs; no chain link

fences; employee parking will be allowed only in areas screened from public view; and no building more than 30 feet in height.

The entire 32-acre site will be screened by trees and landscaping, and the roadways will be built of granite paving stones and cobbles. Numerous pillars will serve as gateways and backdrops for showrooms and car displays.

No signs visible from Highway 17 will be allowed.

"This will be a first-class operation," said D'Amico, who said prohibition on signs and other advertising gimmicks would not hurt the dealers.

"All you need is the critical mass" of several car dealers in one location, he said. "If I want to go look at cars, there's only one place to go. It's obvious. It's like an elephant; everyone knows it's there."

Council members praised the design, and residents living near the site said they were convinced they could live with it, as long as the city managed to enforce the sound and lighting restrictions over the years.

"You've done an excellent job," Mayor Glennon Culwell told D'Amico. "We're looking forward to the finished project with keen anticipation."