

Auto row planned for 41st Avenue *Capitol*

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CAPITOLA — Three Santa Cruz auto dealerships are proposing to move to an "auto row" adjacent to Highway 1 near 41st Avenue.

The dealerships, representing nine makes of cars, are Marina Pontiac/Cadillac/Buick, Santa Cruz Porsche/Audi/Isuzu and Santa Cruz British Subaru/Jaguar/Triumph.

A 47-unit townhouse development is also proposed on a portion of the 9½-acre site. Applicant is DaPont Construction of Santa Cruz.

The City Council, sitting as the Capitola Redevelopment Agency, Tuesday night gave land-use approval for the combination car sales/residential development. The approval allows DaPont to file a formal application, which will now go through normal city planning procedures.

DaPont spokesman Gary Reece told The Sentinel he is hopeful approval can be obtained and ground broken on the project within four to six months.

Santa Cruz City Finance Director Bob

Sheperd estimated the move could cost the city \$100,000 a year in revenue losses.

The Redevelopment Agency got first crack at the proposal since it falls within the city's redevelopment plan boundaries. Tax increments from the project would go toward street and traffic improvements in the redevelopment area around 41st Avenue.

The parcel, located adjacent the freeway between 41st Avenue and Wharf Road, is one of the largest remaining vacant parcels in Capitola. Reece said the car dealerships would be located closest to 41st Avenue, with the townhouses planned for the Wharf Road side of the site.

Marina Pontiac/Cadillac/Buick would be the largest of the three dealerships, covering 113,634 square feet, according to Reece. Santa Cruz Porsche/Audi/Isuzu would be 84,375 square feet and Santa Cruz British Subaru/Jaguar/Triumph would be 66,137 square feet.

The dealerships would total 264,146 square feet of buildings on six acres. The 47 townhouses would cover the remaining

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3½ acres, totaling 156,208 square feet or 3,323 square feet per unit.

The car dealerships would be under separate ownership, Reece said. DaPont Construction would retain control over the townhouse development.

There was a warning from redevelopment Chairman Michael Routh, however. He said he would be staunchly against any "phased development" of the proposal — meaning he didn't want to see the townhouses built first and then the car dealership proposals falling through.

"If there are any stickers in this project I think it'll be in the housing aspect," he said.

Reece replied, "We are as concerned

with the development of that auto row as you are. The dealers are very anxious to finalize their projects. We're anxious to begin the planning process."

Other concerns from directors included sound buffering for freeway noise for the residential development, as well as the proposed 15-unit per acre density of the townhouses.

"I'm not crazy about putting residential units right next to the freeway," said director Stephanie Harlan. Added director Jerry Clarke, "I would like to see a lower density, say 35 units rather than 47."

Land-use approval for the project came on a 3-1 vote of directors. Harlan voted against because she said there was "not enough information," and director Dennis Beltram was absent.