

A-4—Santa Cruz Sentinel — Friday, Jan. 27, 1989

Scotts Valley auto center goes public

By MARIA GAURA
Sentinel staff writer

SCOTTS VALLEY — Nearly two dozen people turned out Thursday night to comment on plans to build an auto center in Scotts Valley.

Some people asked specific questions about the plans, and some criticized the entire concept. But most simply listened to the conversation without saying much.

The city of Scotts Valley wants to build an auto plaza near the abandoned Santa's Village amusement park, on land bordering Highway 17 in the north end of town. The city hopes to reap a bounty of sales taxes from the development, which they believe will have a lower impact on traffic and city services than other types of developments that have been proposed for the site in the past.

Two versions of the auto center plan were displayed Thursday, the smaller design encompassing 18.6 acres and the larger encompassing about 32 acres.

The entire site is divided into three parcels, the most northerly of which is the 11.3-acre front portion of the old Santa's Village park. The adjoining 5.7-acre parcel is the site of Aladdin's restaurant. The next adjoining parcel is the 14.8-acre Scotts Valley RV Park (formerly the Holiday Host).

Of the three parcels, only the RV park is now being used. However, even if the auto plaza proposal is scrapped, the park is destined for change. The park's owners plan to build a hotel, restaurant and office buildings on the site if the auto plan doesn't fly.

According to Michael D'Amico, the city's design consultant, the smaller of the two designs could be built on the Santa's Village and Aladdin's parcels, making somewhat-cramped room for five dealerships.

The larger option would be built on all three parcels, and provide roomy locations for up to seven car dealerships, D'Amico said.

At least five dealerships are needed to

provide the "critical mass" for a successful regional auto plaza, D'Amico said. And according to a preliminary survey, up to 10 local car dealers are ripe for a move out of their present Santa Cruz locations, into a place like Scotts Valley, he said.

Negotiations with local auto dealers could begin in two weeks, D'Amico said.

According to the preliminary plans provided Thursday, the dealerships would be clustered around a semi-circular promenade and several open malls, so potential buyers could walk from showroom to showroom. The entire complex would be surrounded by a wall to shield views and noise from adjoining areas. Lights would be "introverted" and designed to keep glare from nearby homes. The annoying loudspeaker paging systems used by most auto centers would be banned.

Several people at the meeting questioned planned access roads to the pro-

ject, and asked if dealers would take their customers for test drives on local neighborhood roads. One woman now living at the Scotts Valley RV Park asked what would become of herself and her neighbors if the park was razed.

"What will happen to the people who live here?" asked Donna Ridgeway. "Has anyone thought about that? This is the only low-income housing in Scotts Valley — you people have priced us out of here."

City Administrator August Caires took notes furiously as people commented, and vowed to look into every question brought up.

"This is just the first run-by," he told the group. "There's still a lot to be done. This project is by no means assured, there are still many hurdles before your city council can approve it."

A second public meeting on the project is planned for 9 a.m. Saturday at the Scotts Valley RV Park.