

✓ 5-8-87 Auto Plaza - S.C. Auto dealer's plaza proposed for River Street area — again

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SANTA CRUZ — Plans for a Santa Cruz City auto plaza near River Street died in 1978; nine years later, the proposal has been reincarnated.

Auto dealers within the city limits for years have been asking the city to provide them an area for new, bigger quarters. A variety of city councils, aware that car dealerships bring in huge revenue in the form of sales tax, nevertheless have been

unable to find a location anywhere in town for an auto plaza.

The latest proposal calls for car lots between Highway 1 and Josephine Street to the south, and River Street and the San Lorenzo River to the east, according to a report from the city's Auto Dealer Subcommittee released Thursday.

"The auto dealers have agreed to accept this designation and would relocate in the River Street area," City Manager Richard Wilson said.

In January, three auto dealers re-

quested an auto plaza in the city's "greenbelt" lands on a 60-acre property between Capitola Road and the Small Craft Harbor.

The land, however, is protected from development by Measure O, the city's growth control ordinance passed in 1979. Measure O extends to 1990.

The dealers (Lee Courtright, Charles Canfield and Bill Winterhalter) asked the City Council to put Measure O back on the ballot to get

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an exclusion for the property, known as the Kinzli property and owned by the Margaret Kinzli family.

Environmentalist responded quickly to the dealers' suggestion, vowing they would wage a strong fight against weakening Measure O.

The council wouldn't agree to a ballot measure but did agree that something had to be done to keep car dealers, and the \$600,000 in sales

taxes they generate inside the city.

The city has already lost several car dealers who grew tired of waiting; the city of Capitola welcomed them with open arms to a new auto plaza off 41st Avenue.

Courtright, speaking for the Santa Cruz dealers, said they are under pressure from their manufacturers to find larger lots.

In February, the council set up the

Auto Dealers Subcommittee to find an answer.

"The dealers met with the committee, and while I can't say they would never buy or want to use the Kinzli property, they have agreed to locate in the River Street and Highway 1 area if it's made available," Wilson said.

The council will be asked Tuesday to begin the process to amend the city's general plan to designate the Highway 1-River Street area as a

location where auto plazas are an acceptable use.

Wilson said zoning in that area now allows similar uses, so it will not be a major revision to the general plan.

The River Street auto plaza proposal in '70s was tied to a redevelopment proposal, but the city decided it couldn't legally proceed with such a process. When the council made that decision, the auto-plaza idea died.