TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council  
Attention: David J. Van Kirk, City Manager  
FROM: Scott D. Sexton, Community Development Director  
SUBJECT: RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VACAVILLE  
APPROVING THE AMENDMENT TO THE I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN AND  
TO ADOPT A PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM TO ALLOW A SINGLE  
FREEWAY PYLON SIGN FOR THE I-80/ALAMO POLICY PLAN  
COMMERCIAL AREA AND THE GOLDEN HILLS PLAZA SHOPPING  
CENTER COMMERCIAL AREA  

DISCUSSION:  

This is a request for a Planned Sign Program to allow for freeway signage for the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan commercial area, including a proposed nursery use which has previously been approved for a site at the western terminus of Butcher Road. The City Council reviewed this project at the hearing of August 12, 2008. The project received support from surrounding business properties. However, the City Council directed the project back to the Planning Commission for consideration of the potential to expand the Planned Sign Program to include the Golden Hills Shopping Center site on the east side of Alamo Drive.  

The Planning Commission held a hearing to consider the project revisions at their September 16, 2008 meeting. The applicants proposed a revised design that includes the Golden Hills Plaza Shopping Center. A representative of the shopping center owners attended the hearing and expressed support for the project.  

In order to provide for identification of these two areas, the applicants have proposed a revised sign that is taller than originally presented to City Council (70 feet high instead of 60 feet high), and larger in square footage of sign area (approximately 475 square feet of space instead of 290 square feet of area as originally proposed). The project includes a sign panel for the Golden Hills Shopping Center that will allow identification of the shopping center name and up to four main tenants (three in the main building on the site and the one drive-in business on the site). The sign also provides for panels for up to four businesses in the I-80 / Alamo Policy Plan along the east side of Alamo. Finally, the sign provides identification for the proposed Palm Island Nursery use.  

In addition to including the Golden Hills Plaza Shopping Center, the revised Planned Sign Program also addresses other items identified by the City Council at their hearing in August. The Planned Sign Program requires that the sign structure be constructed in a manner that will allow the unique palm tree logo to be removed in the event that the nursery use is discontinued. The program requires that a funding mechanism to accomplish this work be established prior to issuance of building permits for the sign in order to ensure available funding for such work in the event that the logo must be removed. The revised sign design has also addressed the unique shape of the support structure in response to the Planning Commission’s comments and the sign area has been reduced to balance the desire to identify two separate commercial areas within a reasonable amount of sign area. The sign will also provide space for “direction finding” wording. Finally, maintenance provisions are included in the Planned Sign Program to provide
a binding set of operating standards for the maintenance of the sign over time by the various
businesses, since there would be a number of different businesses identified on the sign.

Planning Commission Action:

September 16, 2008: The Planning Commission considered the revised sign concept to
include the Golden Hills Shopping Center. The applicants prepared a revised project design
exhibit to illustrate the revised sign concept. The Planning Commission provided comments
including a request to retain the curved palm tree sign support design, concurrence with the
increased height proposed, and a suggestion to include direction-finding signage on the
structure (i.e. such as “next exit”) in order to provide directions to motorists. The Planning
Commission voted 7-0 to recommend approval of the proposed revisions to the Planned
Sign Program.

The request for the Policy Plan Amendment would permit the establishment of a freeway-
oriented sign for certain areas of the Policy Plan and would extend the Policy Plan Sign
Program boundary to include the adjacent Golden Hills Shopping Center. Also, the Policy Plan
Amendment would allow a use (i.e. the nursery) that is not one of the uses currently listed in the
City’s Sign Ordinance (Section 14.09.139.070.D.) as a use that is allowed to be on a freeway-
oriented sign.

The City has previously approved multi-tenant freeway pylon signs for major commercial areas
throughout the City. When designed to accommodate multiple users, freeway-oriented signs
can be successful at helping businesses achieve improved exposure to commercial traffic, while
at the same time reducing the visual effect that would otherwise occur if several individual
freestanding freeway signs were permitted. Neither the Golden Hills Shopping Center nor any
of the existing commercial uses along the west side of Alamo Drive have direct freeway
visibility.

Environmental Review:
Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed
Planned Sign Program is exempt from the provisions of CEQA under Sections 15303 and
15305 which allow for the construction of small, new structures and for minor alterations in land
use limitations.

RECOMMENDATION:

By simple motion, to adopt the resolution approving the amendment to the I-80/Alamo Policy
Plan and to adopt a Planned Sign Program to allow a single freeway pylon sign for the
I-80/Alamo Policy Plan commercial area and the Golden Hills Plaza Shopping Center
commercial area.

Attachments:

Resolution
A. Location/Zoning Map
B. Proposed Sign Concept – Revised Proposal by Applicant
C. Proposed Planned Sign Program Text
D. Planning Commission Staff Report – September 16, 2008
E. Planning Commission Minutes – September 16, 2008
RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VACAVILLE APPROVING
THE AMENDMENT TO THE I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN AND TO ADOPT A
PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM TO ALLOW A SINGLE FREEWAY PYLON SIGN FOR THE
I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN COMMERCIAL AREA AND THE GOLDEN HILLS SHOPPING
CENTER COMMERCIAL AREA

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Vacaville conducted a duly noticed
public hearing on July 15, 2008 and on September 16, 2008, regarding the proposed Policy
Plan Amendment request, received testimony, and voted to recommend that the City Council
approve the requested development entitlements; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Vacaville conducted a duly noticed public
hearing on August 12, 2008 and on October 14, 2008 to consider a request for approval of a
Policy Plan Amendment to adopt a Planned Sign Program to allow a freeway pylon sign for
commercial uses within the I-80/ Alamo Policy Plan commercial area described as follows:

Sign location at 360 Butcher Road. (APN 0127-070-010)

WHEREAS, the City Council received testimony from City staff, the applicant, and all
interested parties regarding the proposed project; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed and considered the project in accordance
with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Division 14.03 of the Land Use and
Development Code and finds that the proposed Planned Sign Program is exempt from the
provisions of CEQA under Sections 15303 and 15305 because the project would involve the
construction of an accessory structure and would result in minor alterations to existing land use
limitations that will not result in any changes in land use or density; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the requested application for the I-80/Alamo
Policy Plan Amendment to adopt a Planned Sign Program to permit a multi-tenant freeway
pylon sign to be established for use by the commercial uses within the Policy Plan and for
commercial uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center commercial area and considered the
testimony at the public hearing, the staff report, and the whole of the record for File 08-059, and
makes the following findings for this action:

1. That the plan or amendment is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the
General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and the Development Code, in particular that the
Planned Sign Program would provide for a coordinated identification plan for commercial
uses that will benefit from the exposure to freeway traffic and will be supportive of the
effort to develop the commercial lands within the Policy Plan and adjacent commercial
areas;

2. That the plan or amendment would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or
welfare of the community, specifically that the project would be supportive of commercial
land uses that are permitted to identify themselves on freeway signs and would provide
for a single sign serving certain commercial areas of the Policy Plan and the adjacent
commercial areas;
3. That the plan or amendment includes provisions which ensure that adequate public facilities will be available to serve the range of development described in the plan, in particular that the project will not involve any changes in land uses or density within the project area;

4. That the plan or amendment would maintain an appropriate balance of land uses within the City, specifically that this Policy Plan Amendment will not result in any changes to land use or density within this commercial area;

5. That the anticipated land uses on the subject site are compatible with existing and future surrounding uses, since the project will not result in any changes to approved land uses allowed within the Policy Plan area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City Vacaville does hereby approve the Policy Plan Amendment for the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan, as specified in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, to adopt a Planned Sign Program to allow a single multi-tenant freeway pylon sign for the Policy Plan and for the adjacent Golden Hills Plaza Shopping Center commercial area in accordance with the appropriate findings.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was introduced and passed at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Vacaville, held on the 14th day of October, 2008 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

___________________________________
Michelle A. Thornbrugh, City Clerk
EXHIBIT A

PROPOSED I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT &
GOLDEN HILLS SHOPPING CENTER PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM

I. The Planned Sign Program will be incorporated into both the Golden Hills Shopping Center Conditional Use Permit and the I-80 / Alamo Policy Plan. The text below will be added inserted as an informational sheet in the Golden Hills Shopping Center Conditional Use Permit file and be added as Item N in the Special Conditions and Specific Performance Standards section of the I-80 / Alamo Drive Policy Plan.

PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM FOR FREEWAY SIGNS

Planned Sign Program Boundary – Freeway Sign Program: This Planned Sign Program is prepared in order to permit reasonable freeway signage visibility for specified commercial uses within the I-80 / Alamo Policy Plan land use areas I, II and V and for specified uses within the adjacent major commercial area on the east side of Alamo Drive (the Golden Hills Shopping Center project).

Purpose of the Planned Sign Program: The purpose of the Planned Sign Program is to provide for a single freeway pylon sign at the west end of Butcher Road to serve as the freeway sign location for the land use area identified above. The City adopts this program as a coordinated strategy to provide freeway visibility for and to encourage economic vitality for the existing commercial areas identified above, with the recognition that a coordinated sign program will result in less visual clutter along the freeway frontages of Vacaville and will provide for economic development for local commercial centers.

Freeway Sign Development Standards:

1. The freeway sign shall be placed on the commercial parcel at the west end of Butcher Road (Palm Island Nursery site). The sign shall be substantially in accordance with the proposed design approved with this Planned Sign Program and attached to this document (Attachment 1).

2. No other freestanding, freeway pylon sign shall be installed within the Policy Plan Area or on the adjacent commercial center identified above. This limitation does not prevent the use of freestanding signs oriented toward main street frontages for commercial uses, as allowed by the Land Use & Development Code and/or Policy Plan.

3. Multi-User Freeway Sign Design Standards:
   a. Qualifying uses for placement on the sign structure shall be those listed in Section 14.09.132.070.D.2 of the Land Use & Development Code (including drive-in businesses), commercial nursery uses located within Area V of the Policy Plan, and uses of a minimum of 15,000 square feet located within the main building of the Golden Hills Plaza project (former Food 4 Less building) or drive-in businesses on this site. The sign shall also identify the name “Golden Hills Shopping Center”.
   b. The pylon sign may be a maximum of 70 ft. high, subject to final determination by the Community Development Director for analysis of view obstructions.
c. The sign may contain a maximum amount of sign area of approximately 475 square feet, with a maximum of 325 square feet assigned to approved uses within the Policy Plan Area and approximately 150 square feet assigned to the Golden Hills Shopping Center approved uses, subject to Design Review approval by the City Planner.

d. The final design of a freeway pylon sign shall incorporate panels for multiple businesses and “direction-finding” identification, shall not incorporate a changeable copy message board, and shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Planner.

e. The final sign design shall provide for construction that will allow for the conversion of the proposed “Palm Island graphic” to another shape or to be removed, in the event that this use ceases operation. Changes of use on the site containing the sign shall require the developer to revise the sign, subject to a Design Review approval from the Planning Commission.

f. Construction of the sign shall include the recording of maintenance and access provisions, to be privately administered and enforced, that will ensure long term maintenance of the sign. The maintenance provisions shall provide a mechanism for the City to enforce, or cause to be enforced, sign maintenance requirements or to enforce provisions of this Planned Sign Program with regard to tenant identification and design of tenant panels.

Note: A more detailed set of criteria for the establishment, design, construction and on-going maintenance of the freeway oriented sign can be found in Item E, Performance Standards, sub-item 6e, Signs, of Area V in the I-80 / Alamo Drive Policy Plan.

II. The following sections of the I-80 / Alamo Drive Policy Plan shall be amended as noted:

Page 7, Area I, Item E, 11. Signs, add sub-item d:

d. Qualifying uses within Area I are permitted to locate on a multi-user freeway sign located within Policy Plan Land Use Area V, subject to the requirements contained in that Section (Area V, Signs, Section 6. e.).

Page 11, Area II, Item F, 11. Signs, add sub-item d:

d. Qualifying uses within Area I are permitted to locate on a multi-user freeway sign located within Policy Plan Land Use Area V, subject to the requirements contained in that Section (Area V, Signs, Section 6. e.).

Page 19, Area V, Item E, 6. Signs add sub-item e:

e. A Planned Sign Program is established to permit a single, multi-user freeway-oriented sign for qualified users within the Policy Plan area and the adjacent Golden Hills Plaza Shopping Center and includes the following provisions:

i. A single freeway-oriented pylon sign may be constructed on the westerly parcel within this development area (Area V) for the purpose of identifying certain qualifying businesses within Policy Plan Land Use Areas I, II, and /or V and qualifying uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center site, as noted in Special Conditions & Performance Standards, Item A of the Policy Plan.
1) In order to ensure proper access by the other businesses identified on freeway-oriented sign, as provided for below in Section vi, 6, the sign construction shall include a sign access easement be recorded on the parcel where the sign is constructed. The terms of this easement shall be submitted for approval by the City Planner prior to issuance of building permits for the sign.

ii. The multi-user sign shall provide space for a minimum of three (3) separate users within the Policy Plan and additional users as specified above for the Golden Hills Shopping Center. A single-use pylon sign is not permitted by this program.

iii. Qualifying uses for placement on the sign structure shall be those listed in Section 14.09.132.070.D.2. of the Land Use and Development Code, or commercial nursery uses located within Area V of the Policy Plan and qualifying uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center as noted in Item N, Special Conditions & Performance Standards, within the Policy Plan document.

iv. The pylon sign height and area shall be determined in accordance with Section 14.09.132.070.D. of the Land Use and Development Code. The maximum area of the sign shall not exceed 475 square feet. The businesses located within the Policy Plan may use up to 325 square feet of this area with the remaining 150 sq. ft. to be for the Golden Hills Shopping Center businesses. The site containing this pylon sign is not permitted any other freestanding sign.

v. The final design of the freeway pylon sign shall:

1) incorporate the panels for a minimum of three (3) multiple users at the time of construction within the Policy Plan area and shall identify and include the sign panels for the Golden Hills Shopping Center at the time of construction;

2) incorporate design provisions that allow the freeway-oriented sign to be adaptable for a variety of different users, for example if the initial design of the sign includes unique design elements that targets a specific user, such as the palm tree and sun features for the proposed Palm Island Nursery, then the sign shall be designed and constructed such that those design features can be removed from the sign in the event the specific user no longer occupies the site where the sign is located;

3) shall not incorporate a changeable copy message board; and

4) shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Planner prior to issuance of building permits.

vi. The Policy Plan Sign Program shall require owner of the freeway sign and/or the owner of the property on which the freeway sign is located to execute an agreement with the City regarding the right of future businesses to be identified on the freeway sign, consistent with the Planned Sign Program approval. The agreement shall be executed prior to issuance of building permits and shall include the following provisions:

1) identify qualifying businesses, as described above in Section iii, shall be allowed the right to install their name and/or logo on the freeway sign, up to the maximum number of sign panels permitted by Design Review approval;

2) allowing for access rights to all other businesses identified on the sign for purposes of maintenance of the sign, and to provide the City, at its sole discretion, the right to enter the property to maintain the sign or otherwise modify the sign to ensure conformance with the provisions of this resolution;
3) establish the total cost of maintaining the freeway sign, including power, cleaning, and other maintenance. The agreement shall require the owner of the sign to maintain the sign, and may establish a shared cost obligation for all businesses identified on the sign;

4) establish a funding mechanism that covers the cost of removing the unique design elements noted above in Section v.2;

5) issuance of sign permits for sign panels shall be subject to design review by City. City may require maintenance of the sign as a condition of any Design Review action to allow installation of sign panels on the sign; and

6) acknowledgement that though the sign owner may require each business with identification on the sign to pay their pro rata share of the cost of maintaining the sign, it shall be the responsibility of the owner to maintain the sign in the event maintenance is neglected by individual businesses.

7) establish an appropriate entity, such as an owners or business association, to maintain the long-term maintenance obligations for the sign, as well as conformance with the conditions and requirements of the City.
ATTACHMENT 1

MANUFACTURE AND INSTALL 1 DOUBLE FACED ILLUMINATED MULTI TENANT SIGN

THE STRUCTURAL DESIGN OF THE SIGN WILL BE ENGINEERED TO ALLOW THE FUTURE VERSATILITY OF TENANT ASSIGNMENTS AND SURFACE PLANTER SUPPORT. THIS MEANS GREAT REDUCED COST AND IMPROVED,longevity AND MINIMUM DISRUPTION TO DESIGN.

ANY FUTURE MODIFICATIONS TO THE SIGN STRUCTURE CANNOT EXCEED THE EXISTING OVERALL HEIGHT OR DECREASE FOOTING OF THE EXISTING SURFACE AND REPAINTED BY THE ORIGINAL ENGINEERING UNIT.

PLANTER BASE, WALL & LANDSCAPING TO BE PROVIDED BY CUSTOMER

Sacramento Brand

© COPYRIGHT 2009
ATTACHMENT D

CITY OF VACAVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

TITLE: I-80/ALAMO POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT
(PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM)

REQUEST: TO ADOPT A PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM
ALLOWING A FREEWAY PYLON SIGN FOR THE
I-80/ALAMO POLICY PLAN COMMERCIAL
AREA AND THE ADJACENT GOLDEN HILLS
SHOPPING CENTER

RECOMMENDED ACTION: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL
APPROVE THE POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT
FOR THE PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM FOR A
FREEWAY SIGN

APPLICATION INFORMATION

APPLICATION(S): Policy Plan Amendment
FILE NO.: 08-059
APPLICANT / PROPERTY OWNER: Dale Motiska, Palm Island Nursery

PROPERTY INFORMATION

LOCATION: 380 Butcher Road (proposed sign location)
ASSESSOR’S PARCEL NUMBER: 0127-070-010
SITE AREA: 1.10 acre site, plus adjacent commercial
areas
GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: CG – General Commercial
ZONE: CG – General Commercial
CURRENT LAND USE: Vacant Site
ADJACENT ZONING & USE: North: I-80
and Residential
South: RM – Residential
East: CG and RH – Vacant Commercial
West: CG – City-owned parking for City Trail
UTILITIES: Applicant is responsible for extension of
waterline down Butcher Road to project site.
### PROJECT SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGN HEIGHT:</th>
<th>70 feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIGN AREA:</td>
<td>Approximately 546 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGN LOCATION:</td>
<td>360 Butcher Road, west end of Butcher Road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM AREA:** Two commercial centers combined on one freeway sign, including: 1) I-80 / Alamo Policy Plan Area, Land Use Areas I, II & V, and also including the 2) Golden Hills Shopping Center, 9.55 acre shopping center on the east side of Alamo Drive, opposite the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan Area.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Policy Plan Amendment- Planned Sign Program:**

This project request is for a Planned Sign Program to allow freeway signage for the proposed Palm Island Nursery use and for the adjacent commercial areas within the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan, and to expand the Planned Sign Program area to incorporate the Golden Hills Shopping Center on the east side of Alamo Drive.

The project was considered by the City Council at the hearing on August 12, 2008. The original proposal presented to the City Council was to allow a 60 foot high freeway sign, approximately 290 square feet in area, with graphics depicting a palm tree along with sign area to identify commercial uses located along Alamo Drive within the Policy Plan Area. The City Council held a hearing on the project and directed the staff to return to the Planning Commission to review and consider a revised project concept that would expand the Planned Sign Program to incorporate the Golden Hills Plaza Shopping Center. That shopping center contains a large vacant former grocery store building of approximately 50,000 square feet in size. The store has been vacant for approximately seven (7) years. One of the City Council’s economic development priorities is the revitalization of vacant shopping center tenant spaces. The shopping center is not identified to freeway traffic. The provision of some method to identify the presence of the shopping center and its main tenants to motorists on I-80 would be supportive of the City Council’s intention to assist these shopping centers in improving their economic condition.

The City Council directed the staff and applicant’s to review the potential for expanding the sign program to include the Golden Hills Shopping Center (please see Attachment E, City Council staff report). The applicants have prepared a revised sign design (please see Attachment C) to conceptually identify how the Golden Hills center could be added to a sign structure that would be placed at the west end of Butcher Road. The proposed design concept would provide sign area for the Golden Hills Center (approximately 150 square feet of sign area for several tenants), the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan highway commercial uses along Alamo Drive (approximately 100 square feet of sign area for up to four tenants) and the upper area for the on-site use that would provide the location of the sign itself, the Palm Island Nursery (approximately 296 square feet of sign area at the top of the structure).
The sign design proposed is similar to the proposal originally considered by the Planning Commission, except that it includes an additional panel area for the Golden Hills Center. A number of speakers voiced their support for the concept of the shared use sign along Butcher Road. Staff has contacted representatives of the Golden Hills Center and they have also expressed support for the concept. The planned sign program, if approved by the City Council, would allow the site at the west end of Butcher Road to be the location for a shared use sign. The proposed sign program language recommends allowing this one sign to serve as the freeway sign for both the Policy Plan and the adjacent Golden Hills Center, thus accomplishing freeway identification for two distinct commercial centers on one sign.

In order to provide for identification of these two areas, the applicants have proposed a sign that is taller than originally presented to City Council (70 feet high instead of 60 feet high), and larger in square footage of sign area (approximately 546 square feet of space instead of 290 square feet of area as originally proposed).

The project requires an amendment to the Policy Plan because the sign is a freeway oriented sign for a use that is not included in the list of uses allowed to construct freeway signs as specified by the City’s Land Use & Development Code and because the proposed sign exceeds the allowable height and area for individual business freestanding signs. The Land Use & Development Code permits certain uses, not including nursery uses, to have a freeway oriented sign. These uses are restaurants, service stations, hotels / motels, new vehicle sales, bars and lounges, recreation centers and outdoor commercial recreation, and retail centers of more than 80,000 square feet with individual tenant identification for those businesses with a floor area of more than 20,000 square feet. The Policy Plan does allow for the potential of a freeway oriented sign if commercial parcels are integrated into a commercial center for purposes of signs. Also, the normal maximum height and size for individual businesses for this area would be 25 square feet and 10 feet high for parcels with less than 100 feet of street frontage and 40 square feet and 15 feet high for parcels with more than 100 feet of street frontage. This site has approximately 110 feet of street frontage on Butcher Road and thus would be permitted a freestanding sign of 40 square feet and 15 feet in height.

ANALYSIS

Planned Sign Program: The project site for the nursery is situated below the grade of the freeway and is screened by a number of trees growing in the freeway right-of-way and the adjacent Butcher Road right-of-way area. The combination of these factors reduces the visibility for this site which otherwise is located very close to the I-80 freeway travel lanes. This constraint is identified in the Policy Plan.

In addition, the existing Golden Hills Shopping Center is located in a manner that precludes easy visibility of the site from I-80. Staff have reviewed proposed sign heights for this center in the past and determined that even a sign of 80 feet in height was difficult to view from the I-80 travel lanes. The proposed sign location offers a uniquely suited location that may provide sign visibility for both the existing Policy Plan area and the adjacent shopping center in a manner that could allow highway traffic excellent visibility for the identification of each commercial area.
The proposed sign program does require consideration of the different types of uses that are proposed for identification on the sign. One specific use, a retail nursery, is not one of the uses listed in the City’s Sign Ordinance (14.09.139.070.D.) as permitted to construct freeway oriented pylon signs. The exception to these standards in the past has been for commercial centers that allow for a limited number of individual tenants to be identified on the sign, such as in the Nut Tree development where a single commercial complex was permitted to identify some retail tenants that are not otherwise permitted on freeway signs (i.e. some retail tenants with less than 20,000 square feet in floor area) and the Winco sign that includes identification of the downtown area.

Staff supports the identification of the nursery use on the sign, since this is the location for the proposed sign and thus provides the opportunity for the combined use of a single sign structure. Staff also supports the inclusion of the Golden Hills Shopping Center on this sign because the sign will assist and support attempts to improve the economic viability of that site and because the Golden Hills site is difficult to identify from the freeway.

The proposed sign program language identifies other uses allowed for the sign as being those uses within the Policy Plan that are allowed to be on freeway signs (in this case the service station and restaurants). For the Golden Hills Shopping Center, the proposed language would permit the identification of tenants within the long-vacant, 54,000 square foot former food store building. The current owners anticipate potentially dividing this building into up to three tenant spaces, each of at least 15,000 square feet. The proposed sign program would then allow identification of the main tenants of the center on a freeway oriented sign, in addition to the one drive-in business existing at the center (Jack in the Box restaurant). The sign program is expected to draw customers to the potentially higher traffic generating uses in the center and this added traffic will benefit the other uses in each area.

The City has approved combined use signs in the past for nearby commercial areas. However, these signs have typically been for single development sites, such as the Mason Plaza area or the Brendan Theater commercial areas. Past approval for shared use signs have included Mason Plaza at Mason Street and I-80 (60 feet high, 322 square feet in area, six potential tenant names & center identification), Davis Street Plaza - Winco (60 feet high, 325 square feet of name area, four tenant panels including identification of Downtown Vacaville) and Downtown Plaza - Brendan Theater (80 feet high, 325 square feet of name area on a larger background structure, five tenant names).

The proposed sign will combine two separate commercial developments, each of which could request a Planned Sign Program for freeway signage, into one program with one sign. The sign is proposed at 70 feet in height because of obstructions by landscaping and a freeway over-crossing and because of the elevation difference between the site and the freeway elevation. This latter difference has resulted in the sign designer attempting to keep the lower tenant names a minimum height off the ground in order to ensure that they are visible to freeway motorists. Also, with a more vertically linear design, the combined number of panels causes the sign height to increase when compared to the first proposal reviewed, which only identified uses within the Policy Plan area.

The applicants have proposed a revised design that separates the two distinct
commercial areas onto different sign panel areas. Staff supports the design concept shown, but would recommend the following design criteria for the final sign design:

- channel letters or other similar method of illumination;
- for the Golden Hills Center, only identifying the main tenants within the vacant grocery store building and the drive-in restaurant in the center, along with the name of the center (as shown in Attachment C);
- the height of the sign should be determined based on a final site obstruction analysis, to be no greater than 70 feet;
- final materials to be used should be subject to Design Review by the Community Development Department for review of the type and quality of exterior design materials;
- the combined square footage for all uses within the Policy Plan, including the nursery, should be no more than 325 square feet, which is the normal maximum square footage for freeway signs. In this case, this would require a reduction in the area devoted to these tenants by approximately 70 square feet when compared to the attachment to the staff report. When combined with the proposed area for the Golden Hills Center, the sign would have approximately 475 square feet of name identification area;
- a set of maintenance provisions must be developed to ensure adequate maintenance and operation of the sign and adherence to the terms of the sign program.

Therefore, staff believes that the revised plans to identify uses within the Policy Plan and also identify uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center will create an acceptable and attractive sign plan for this area. The plan will allow for improved visibility for some commercial properties that do not currently have good freeway visibility. The final height of the sign would be determined through an exact analysis of view obstructions, as anticipated by the Land Use & Development Code. The area of approximately 475 total square feet as recommended by the staff would assign the maximum typical sign area of 325 square feet to the Policy Plan area and would provide an additional approximately 150 square feet to the Golden Hills Center. This combined total for two projects on one sign would provide an adequate amount of sign area for the two commercial areas that currently have no exposure to freeway traffic. In addition, the plan will provide major assistance to a long-vacant commercial building and to a shopping center that has seen some additional vacancies in recent years. The sign plan would be supportive of a major City economic development priority.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve the I-80 / Alamo Policy Plan Amendment to incorporate a Planned Sign Program applicable to Land Use Areas I, II and V of the Policy Plan and approve the expansion of the Planned Sign Program to incorporate uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center, subject to the standards in the proposed Planned Sign Program document.

ATTACHMENTS: Exhibit A – Draft Policy Plan Amendment & Existing Policy Plan Language
Exhibit B - Location / Zoning Map & Policy Plan Land Use Areas
Exhibit C - Revised Sign Plan
Exhibit D – Original Proposed Sign Plans
Exhibit E – City Council Report, August 12, 200
ATTACHMENT A

PROPOSED I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT &
GOLDEN HILLS SHOPPING CENTER PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM

PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM – TO BE ADDED TO I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN,
SPECIAL CONDITIONS AND SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (Policy Plan
Page 26) AND ALSO TO BE ADDED TO GOLDEN HILLS SHOPPING CENTER
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT:

A. PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM FOR FREEWAY SIGNS WITHIN THE I-
80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN & GOLDEN HILLS SHOPPING
CENTER AREA (added to Policy Plan and to Golden Hills
Conditional Use Permit file)

Planned Sign Program Boundary – Freeway Sign Program: This Planned
Sign Program is prepared in order to permit reasonable freeway
signage visibility for specified commercial uses within the I-80 /
Alamo Policy Plan land use areas I, II and V and for specified
uses within the adjacent major commercial area on the east side
of Alamo Drive (the Golden Hills Shopping Center project).

Purpose of the Planned Sign Program: The purpose of the Planned Sign
Program is to provide for a single freeway pylon sign at the west
end of Butcher Road to serve as the freeway sign location for the
land use area identified above. The City adopts this program as a
coordinated strategy to provide freeway visibility for and to
encourage economic vitality for the existing commercial areas
identified above, with the recognition that a coordinated sign
program will result in less visual clutter along the freeway
frontages of Vacaville and will provide for economic development
for local commercial centers.

Freeway Sign Development Standards:

1. The freeway sign shall be placed on the commercial parcel at the
west end of Butcher Road (Palm Island Nursery site).

2. No other freestanding, freeway pylon sign shall be installed within
the Policy Plan Area or on the adjacent commercial center
identified above. This limitation does not prevent the use of
freestanding signs oriented toward main street frontages for
commercial uses, as allowed by the Land Use & Development
Code and/or Policy Plan.

3. Multi-User Freeway Sign Design Standards:
a. Qualifying uses for placement on the sign structure shall be those listed in Section 14.09.132.070.D.2 of the Land Use & Development Code (including drive-in businesses), commercial nursery uses located within Area V of the Policy Plan, and uses of a minimum of 15,000 square feet located within the main building of the Golden Hills Plaza project (former Food 4 Less building) or drive-in businesses on this site. The sign shall also identify the name “Golden Hills Shopping Center”.

b. The pylon sign may be a maximum of 70’ high, subject to final determination by the Community Development Director for analysis of view obstructions.

c. The sign may contain a maximum amount of sign area of approximately 475 square feet, with a maximum of 325 square feet assigned to approved uses within the Policy Plan Area and approximately 150 square feet assigned to the Golden Hills Shopping Center approved uses, subject to Design Review approval by the City Planner.

d. The final design of a freeway pylon sign shall incorporate panels for multiple businesses, shall not incorporate a changeable copy message board, and shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Planner.

e. The final sign design shall provide for construction that will allow for the conversion of the proposed “Palm Island graphic” to another shape or to be removed, in the event that this use ceases operation. Changes of use on the site containing the sign shall require the developer to revise the sign, subject to a Design Review approval from the Planning Commission.

f. Construction of the sign shall include the recording of maintenance and access provisions, to be privately administered and enforced, that will ensure long term maintenance of the sign. The maintenance provisions shall provide a mechanism for the City to enforce, or cause to be enforced, sign maintenance requirements or to enforce provisions of this Planned Sign Program with regard to tenant identification and design of tenant panels.

I-80/ALAMO POLICY PLAN, PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM APPROVAL – APPLICABLE TO QUALIFYING USES WITHIN LAND USE AREAS I, II & V

The following sections of the Policy Plan shall be amended to read as follows:

Page 7, Area I, Item E, 11. Signs, add sub-item d:

d. Qualifying uses within Area I are permitted to locate on a multi-user freeway sign located within Policy Plan Land Use Area V, subject to the requirements contained in that Section (Area V, Signs, Section 6. e.).
Page 11, Area II, Item F, 11. Signs, add sub-item d:

d. Qualifying uses within Area I are permitted to locate on a multi-user freeway sign located within Policy Plan Land Use Area V, subject to the requirements contained in that Section (Area V, Signs, Section 6. e.).

Page 19, Area V, Item E, 6. Signs add sub-item e:

e. A Planned Sign Program is established to permit a single, multi-user freeway-oriented sign for qualified users within the Policy Plan area and the adjacent Golden Hills Plaza Shopping Center and includes the following provisions:

i. A single freeway-oriented pylon sign may be constructed on the westerly parcel within this development area (Area V) for the purpose of identifying certain qualifying businesses within Policy Plan Land Use Areas I, II, and /or V and qualifying uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center site, as noted in Special Conditions & Performance Standards, Item A of the Policy Plan.

1) In order to ensure proper access by the other businesses identified on freeway-oriented sign, as provided for below in Section vi, 6, the sign construction shall include a sign access easement be recorded on the parcel where the sign is constructed. The terms of this easement shall be submitted for approval by the City Planner prior to issuance of building permits for the sign.

ii. The multi-user sign shall provide space for a minimum of three (3) separate users within the Policy Plan and additional users as specified above for the Golden Hills Shopping Center. A single-use pylon sign is not permitted by this program.

iii. Qualifying uses for placement on the sign structure shall be those listed in Section 14. 09.132.070.D.2. of the Land Use and Development Code, or commercial nursery uses located within Area V of the Policy Plan and qualifying uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center as noted in Special Conditions & Performance Standards within the Policy Plan document.

iv. The pylon sign height and area shall be determined in accordance with Section 14.09.132.070.D. of the Land Use and Development Code. The businesses located within the Policy Plan may use up to 325 square feet of this area. The site containing this pylon sign is not permitted any other freestanding sign.

v. The final design of the freeway pylon sign shall:

1) incorporate the panels for a minimum of three (3) multiple users at the time of construction within the Policy Plan area and shall identify and include the sign panels for the Golden Hills Shopping Center at the time of construction;

2) incorporate design provisions that allow the freeway-oriented sign to be adaptable for a variety of different users, for example if the initial design of the sign includes unique design elements that targets a specific user, such as the palm tree and sun features for the proposed Palm Island Nursery, then the sign shall be designed and constructed such that those design features can be removed from the sign in the event the specific user no longer occupies the site where the sign is located;

3) shall not incorporate a changeable copy message board; and
4) shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Planner prior to issuance of building permits.

vi. The Policy Plan Sign Program shall require owner of the freeway sign and/or the owner of the property on which the freeway sign is located to execute an agreement with the City regarding the right of future businesses to be identified on the freeway sign, consistent with the Planned Sign Program approval. The agreement shall be executed prior to issuance of building permits and shall include the following provisions:

1) identify qualifying businesses, as described above in Section iii, shall be allowed the right to install their name and/or logo on the freeway sign, up to the maximum number of sign panels permitted by Design Review approval;

2) allowing for access rights to all other businesses identified on the sign for purposes of maintenance of the sign, and to provide the City, at its sole discretion, the right to enter the property to maintain the sign or otherwise modify the sign to ensure conformance with the provisions of this resolution;

3) establish the total cost of maintaining the freeway sign, including power, cleaning, and other maintenance. The agreement shall require the owner of the sign to maintain the sign, and may establish a shared cost obligation for all businesses identified on the sign;

4) establish a funding mechanism that covers the cost of removing the unique design elements noted above in Section v.2;

5) issuance of sign permits for sign panels shall be subject to design review by City. City may require maintenance of the sign as a condition of any Design Review action to allow installation of sign panels on the sign; and

6) acknowledgement that though the sign owner may require each business with identification on the sign to pay their pro rata share of the cost of maintaining the sign, it shall be the responsibility of the owner to maintain the sign in the event maintenance is neglected by individual businesses.

7) establish an appropriate entity, such as an owners or business association, to maintain the long-term maintenance obligations for the sign, as well as conformance with the conditions and requirements of the City.
Policy Plan Areas
Policy Plan Area
EXHIBIT C

MANUFACTURE AND INSTALL 1 DOUBLE FACED ILLUMINATED MULTI TENANT SIGN

THE STRUCTURAL DESIGN OF THE SIGN WILL BE ENGINEERED TO ALLOW THE FUTURE VERSATILITY TO REMOVE AND REPLACE ANY OR ALL EXTERNAL ELEMENTS WITHOUT THE NEED TO REPLACE THE MAIN SIGN. STRUCTURAL CEMENT, STEEL, AND CONCRETE FOOTINGS FOR A PLANTER BASE WILL BE APPLIED.

ANY FUTURE MODIFICATIONS TO THE SIGN STRUCTURE CANNOT EXCEED THE EXISTING OVERALL HEIGHT OR SQUARE FOOTAGE OF THE EXISTING SURFACE AREA ESTABLISHED BY THE ORIGINAL ENGINEERING DRAWINGS.

PLANTER BASE, WALL & LANDSCAPING TO BE PROVIDED BY CUSTOMER

70' OAH
16' 0"
18' 6"
5' 0"
4' 0"
20' 0"
23' 0"

MAIN ID PORTION
16' 0" X 18' 6"
290 SQ FT

NURSERY OUTLET
PLANTS & GIFTS

Golden Hills
Plaza
Save Mart
JACK IN THE BOX
FUTURE TENANT
FUTURE TENANT

546 SQ FT TOTAL

TENANT CABINET
100 SQ FT

YESCO.
EXHIBIT E

Agenda Item No. 8a
August 12, 2008

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Attention: David J. Van Kirk, City Manager

FROM: Scott D. Sexton, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VACAVILLE
APPROVING THE AMENDMENT TO THE I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN AND
TO ADOPT A PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM TO ALLOW A FREeway PYLON
SIGN FOR THE I-80/ALAMO POLICY PLAN COMMERCIAL AREA

DISCUSSION:

This is a request for a Planned Sign Program to allow for freeway signage for the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan commercial area, including a proposed nursery use which has previously been approved for a site at the western terminus of Butcher Road. The original proposal was for a 65 foot high sign, approximately 400 square feet in area, including an electronic message board sign, graphics depicting palm trees, and exposed neon lighting to accent the colors used on the sign cabinet (see Attachment B, Project Proposal and Description by Applicant). A revised concept, more in line with the standards for freeway-oriented signs, was submitted by the applicant the night of the Planning Commission hearing in response to staff recommendations to the Commission. The revised concept lowered the height of the sign to 60 feet, reduced the sign area to 325 square feet, removed the electronic message board sign, and provided space for four other users. The design retains the ‘palm tree’ theme.

The City has previously approved multi-tenant freeway pylon signs for major commercial areas throughout the City. Only one, the Auto Mall sign, has been approved by the City Council to have an electronically changing message sign. When designed to accommodate multiple users, freeway-oriented signs can be successful at helping businesses achieve improved exposure to commercial traffic, while at the same time reducing the visual effect that would otherwise occur if several individual freestanding freeway signs were permitted.

The applicant has expressed their reasoning for requesting a larger freeway sign, including the electronic message sign. These reasons include: (1) their site is substantially below the freeway, (2) the site is obscured from freeway travelers by trees, and (3) the site is on a dead-end commercial street which serves to substantially limit pass-by traffic. These site constraints are identified in the description of “Area V” in the Policy Plan. The applicant did modify the proposal to address City concerns by redesigning the sign to accommodate multiple users, and by recognizing that the original size proposed for the sign exceeded the City’s normal sign ordinance limits. The applicant prepared revised exhibits for the Planning Commission illustrating how they could accommodate the multiple users on a single sign.

Planning Commission Action:

On July 15, 2008, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed project. The applicant addressed the Commission and advised Commissioners of the reasoning for requesting a large sign with an electronic changeable message center. Four members of the public addressed the Planning Commission to express their support of the sign and one expressed opposition to a nursery at this location. The Planning Commission recommended approval of a modified Sign Program proposal (see Exhibit A in resolution). The revised program would permit a single freeway pylon sign for multiple commercial uses within the Policy Plan area, to be constructed on the proposed nursery parcel. The Planning Commission recommends that no electronic changeable message center sign be permitted, consistent with the staff recommendation for the sign plan. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council approve the proposed Planned Sign Program as modified. The Commission also expressed support of the unique palm tree and sun design elements of the sign.

Environmental Review:

Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed Planned Sign Program is exempt from the provisions of CEQA under Sections 15303 and 15305 which allow for the construction of small, new structures and for minor alterations in land use.
The structural design of the sign will be engineered to allow the future versatility to remove and replace any or all external elements without the need to replace the main internal support column system. Concrete footing on rock planted base.

Any future modification to the sign structure cannot exceed the existing overall height or square footage of the existing surface area established by the original engineering limits.
ATTACHMENT C

PROPOSED I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT & GOLDEN HILLS SHOPPING CENTER PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM

I. The Planned Sign Program will be incorporated into both the Golden Hills Shopping Center Conditional Use Permit and the I-80 / Alamo Policy Plan. The text below will be added inserted as an informational sheet in the Golden Hills Shopping Center Conditional Use Permit file and be added as Item N in the Special Conditions and Specific Performance Standards section of the I-80 / Alamo Drive Policy Plan.

PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM FOR FREEWAY SIGNS

Planned Sign Program Boundary – Freeway Sign Program: This Planned Sign Program is prepared in order to permit reasonable freeway signage visibility for specified commercial uses within the I-80 / Alamo Policy Plan land use areas I, II and V and for specified uses within the adjacent major commercial area on the east side of Alamo Drive (the Golden Hills Shopping Center project).

Purpose of the Planned Sign Program: The purpose of the Planned Sign Program is to provide for a single freeway pylon sign at the west end of Butcher Road to serve as the freeway sign location for the land use area identified above. The City adopts this program as a coordinated strategy to provide freeway visibility for and to encourage economic vitality for the existing commercial areas identified above, with the recognition that a coordinated sign program will result in less visual clutter along the freeway frontages of Vacaville and will provide for economic development for local commercial centers.

Freeway Sign Development Standards:

1. The freeway sign shall be placed on the commercial parcel at the west end of Butcher Road (Palm Island Nursery site). The sign shall be substantially in accordance with the proposed design approved with this Planned Sign Program and attached to this document (Attachment 1).

2. No other freestanding, freeway pylon sign shall be installed within the Policy Plan Area or on the adjacent commercial center identified above. This limitation does not prevent the use of freestanding signs oriented toward main street frontages for commercial uses, as allowed by the Land Use & Development Code and/or Policy Plan.

3. Multi-User Freeway Sign Design Standards:
   a. Qualifying uses for placement on the sign structure shall be those listed in Section 14.09.132.070.D.2 of the Land Use & Development Code (including drive-in businesses), commercial nursery uses located within Area V of the Policy Plan, and uses of a minimum of 15,000 square feet located within the main building of the Golden Hills Plaza project (former Food 4 Less building) or drive-in businesses on this site. The sign shall also identify the name “Golden Hills Shopping Center”.
   b. The pylon sign may be a maximum of 70 ft. high, subject to final determination by the Community Development Director for analysis of view obstructions.
c. The sign may contain a maximum amount of sign area of approximately 475 square feet, with a maximum of 325 square feet assigned to approved uses within the Policy Plan Area and approximately 150 square feet assigned to the Golden Hills Shopping Center approved uses, subject to Design Review approval by the City Planner.

d. The final design of a freeway pylon sign shall incorporate panels for multiple businesses and “direction-finding” identification, shall not incorporate a changeable copy message board, and shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Planner.

e. The final sign design shall provide for construction that will allow for the conversion of the proposed “Palm Island graphic” to another shape or to be removed, in the event that this use ceases operation. Changes of use on the site containing the sign shall require the developer to revise the sign, subject to a Design Review approval from the Planning Commission.

f. Construction of the sign shall include the recording of maintenance and access provisions, to be privately administered and enforced, that will ensure long term maintenance of the sign. The maintenance provisions shall provide a mechanism for the City to enforce, or cause to be enforced, sign maintenance requirements or to enforce provisions of this Planned Sign Program with regard to tenant identification and design of tenant panels.

Note: A more detailed set of criteria for the establishment, design, construction and on-going maintenance of the freeway oriented sign can be found in Item E, Performance Standards, sub-item 6e, Signs, of Area V in the I-80 / Alamo Drive Policy Plan.

II. The following sections of the I-80 / Alamo Drive Policy Plan shall be amended as noted:

Page 7, Area I, Item E, 11. Signs, add sub-item d:

d. Qualifying uses within Area I are permitted to locate on a multi-user freeway sign located within Policy Plan Land Use Area V, subject to the requirements contained in that Section (Area V, Signs, Section 6. e.).

Page 11, Area II, Item F, 11. Signs, add sub-item d:

d. Qualifying uses within Area I are permitted to locate on a multi-user freeway sign located within Policy Plan Land Use Area V, subject to the requirements contained in that Section (Area V, Signs, Section 6. e.).

Page 19, Area V, Item E, 6. Signs add sub-item e:

e. A Planned Sign Program is established to permit a single, multi-user freeway-oriented sign for qualified users within the Policy Plan area and the adjacent Golden Hills Plaza Shopping Center and includes the following provisions:

i. A single freeway-oriented pylon sign may be constructed on the westerly parcel within this development area (Area V) for the purpose of identifying certain qualifying businesses within Policy Plan Land Use Areas I, II, and /or V and qualifying uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center site, as noted in Special Conditions & Performance Standards, Item A of the Policy Plan.
1) In order to ensure proper access by the other businesses identified on freeway-oriented sign, as provided for below in Section vi. 6, the sign construction shall include a sign access easement be recorded on the parcel where the sign is constructed. The terms of this easement shall be submitted for approval by the City Planner prior to issuance of building permits for the sign.

ii. The multi-user sign shall provide space for a minimum of three (3) separate users within the Policy Plan and additional users as specified above for the Golden Hills Shopping Center. A single-use pylon sign is not permitted by this program.

iii. Qualifying uses for placement on the sign structure shall be those listed in Section 14.09.132.070.D.2. of the Land Use and Development Code, or commercial nursery uses located within Area V of the Policy Plan and qualifying uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center as noted in Item N, Special Conditions & Performance Standards, within the Policy Plan document.

iv. The pylon sign height and area shall be determined in accordance with Section 14.09.132.070.D. of the Land Use and Development Code. The maximum area of the sign shall not exceed 475 square feet. The businesses located within the Policy Plan may use up to 325 square feet of this area with the remaining 150 sq. ft. to be for the Golden Hills Shopping Center businesses. The site containing this pylon sign is not permitted any other freestanding sign.

v. The final design of the freeway pylon sign shall:

1) incorporate the panels for a minimum of three (3) multiple users at the time of construction within the Policy Plan area and shall identify and include the sign panels for the Golden Hills Shopping Center at the time of construction;

2) incorporate design provisions that allow the freeway-oriented sign to be adaptable for a variety of different users, for example if the initial design of the sign includes unique design elements that targets a specific user, such as the palm tree and sun features for the proposed Palm Island Nursery, then the sign shall be designed and constructed such that those design features can be removed from the sign in the event the specific user no longer occupies the site where the sign is located;

3) shall not incorporate a changeable copy message board; and

4) shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Planner prior to issuance of building permits.

vi. The Policy Plan Sign Program shall require owner of the freeway sign and/or the owner of the property on which the freeway sign is located to execute an agreement with the City regarding the right of future businesses to be identified on the freeway sign, consistent with the Planned Sign Program approval. The agreement shall be executed prior to issuance of building permits and shall include the following provisions:

1) identify qualifying businesses, as described above in Section iii, shall be allowed the right to install their name and/or logo on the freeway sign, up to the maximum number of sign panels permitted by Design Review approval;

2) allowing for access rights to all other businesses identified on the sign for purposes of maintenance of the sign, and to provide the City, at its sole discretion, the right to enter the property to maintain the sign or otherwise modify the sign to ensure conformance with the provisions of this resolution;
3) establish the total cost of maintaining the freeway sign, including power, cleaning, and other maintenance. The agreement shall require the owner of the sign to maintain the sign, and may establish a shared cost obligation for all businesses identified on the sign;

4) establish a funding mechanism that covers the cost of removing the unique design elements noted above in Section v.2;

5) issuance of sign permits for sign panels shall be subject to design review by City. City may require maintenance of the sign as a condition of any Design Review action to allow installation of sign panels on the sign; and

6) acknowledgement that though the sign owner may require each business with identification on the sign to pay their pro rata share of the cost of maintaining the sign, it shall be the responsibility of the owner to maintain the sign in the event maintenance is neglected by individual businesses.

7) establish an appropriate entity, such as an owners or business association, to maintain the long-term maintenance obligations for the sign, as well as conformance with the conditions and requirements of the City.
limitations. The Policy Plan amendment would allow for a sign to be constructed in a location approved for development and would provide for the adoption of sign regulations as permitted by the existing Policy Plan. The Planned Sign Program would allow for an accessory structure to be built and will not result in any changes in land use or density.

Analysis:
The request for the Policy Plan amendment would permit the establishment of a freeway-oriented sign for certain areas of the Policy Plan. Also, the Policy Plan amendment would allow a use (i.e. the nursery) that is not one of the uses currently listed in the City’s Sign Ordinance (Section 14.09.139.070.D.) as a permitted use to be listed on a freeway-oriented sign. The City has allowed multi-tenant, freeway-oriented signs for other Policy Plan areas, including the display of retail tenants when they meet certain minimum size requirements or are part of a specialty retail center. Examples of this include the Nut Tree development where a single commercial complex was permitted to identify some retail tenants with less than 20,000 square feet in floor area, and the Winco sign that includes identification of the Downtown area.

There are two areas of concern regarding the proposed freeway sign: (1) its relatively unique design that is targeted towards a specific user, and (2) the ongoing operation and maintenance of the sign if the primary user (the nursery) should leave the site along Butcher Road.

Though there were several positive comments from the Planning Commissioners regarding the design of the sign, it is unlikely that the design will be easily adaptable for a different tenant. The final design of the freeway-oriented sign will need to incorporate design provisions for making it more adaptable for different users should the nursery business leave the site along Butcher Road. This would mean a redesign of the sign that eliminates the palm tree and large sun as design elements. The applicant has indicated that, instead of eliminating these design elements, the sign can be designed such that the palm tree and sun elements can be removed and another user’s sign can be added while maintaining the overall integrity of the sign. The proposed Policy Plan amendment wording has been revised to allow the applicant the option to pursue a sign design that allows the removal of the palm tree and sun elements and a different primary user’s sign to be added.

The second concern about the sign is its ongoing operation and maintenance. This sign differs from other multi-tenant, freeway-oriented signs in that, typically, the freeway signs are owned, operated, and maintained by the owner of the retail center via a property management firm or tenant association. However, the situation is different for the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan area in that the various parcels have not been assembled into an integrated commercial center. As such, there isn’t a single controlling entity for the area. The applicant has indicated that they would incorporate the necessary maintenance provisions to ensure proper maintenance and ongoing operation. The proposed wording for the Policy Plan amendment has been revised to incorporate provisions for an agreement that would address ongoing maintenance and operation of the sign, especially if the primary user (the nursery) leaves the Butcher Road site. Such provisions of the agreement would require the formation of a sign association, an easement to allow for access to maintain the sign, and financial provisions to ensure that there are adequate funds to maintain the sign into the future.

In order to address the above concerns, Exhibit A attached to the resolution includes specific requirements for the design, construction, and on-going maintenance of the sign. These provisions include the following provisions:

- Requires a minimum of three users on the sign at the time of construction;
- Prohibits the use of a changeable message sign;
- Requires the design elements related to the nursery use (i.e. palm tree and sun) to be removable at a later time in the event that use is no longer operating;
- Establishment of an easement for access to maintain the sign by users reflected on the sign;
- Require a shared cost obligation for maintenance of the sign and a funding mechanism to ensure that the palm tree and sun design elements can later be removed if needed.

A single multi-tenant, freeway-oriented sign for the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan area is consistent with other provisions in the Policy Plan covering areas adjoining the freeways. The sign would allow for improved visibility for some commercial properties that do not currently have good freeway visibility.
RECOMMENDATION:

By simple motion, to adopt the resolution approving the amendment to the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan and to adopt a Planned Sign Program to allow a freeway pylon sign for the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan commercial area.

Attachments:

A. Location/Zoning Map
B. Proposed Sign Concept – Original Proposal and Description by Applicant
C. Proposed Sign Concept – Revised Proposal by Applicant
D. Planning Commission Record (including)
RESOLUTION NO. 2008-

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VACAVILLE APPROVING THE AMENDMENT TO THE I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN AND TO ADOPT A PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM TO ALLOW A FREeways PYLON SIGN FOR THE I-80 / ALAMO POLICY PLAN COMMERCIAL AREA

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Vacaville conducted a duly noticed public hearing on July 15, 2008, regarding the proposed policy plan amendment request, received testimony, and voted to recommend that the City Council approve the requested development entitlements; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Vacaville conducted a duly noticed public hearing on August 12, 2008, to consider a request for approval of a Policy Plan amendment to adopt a Planned Sign Program to allow a freeway pylon sign for commercial uses within the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan commercial area described as follows:

Sign location at 360 Butcher Road. (AP N 0127-070-010)

WHEREAS, the City Council received testimony from City staff, the applicant, and all interested parties regarding the proposed project; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed and considered the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Division 14.03 of the Land Use and Development Code and finds that the proposed Planned Sign Program is exempt from the provisions of CEQA under Sections 15303 and 15305 because the project would involve the construction of an accessory structure and would result in minor alterations to existing land use limitations that will not result in any changes in land use or density; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the requested application for the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan amendment to adopt a Planned Sign Program to permit a multi-tenant freeway pylon sign to be established for use by the commercial uses within the Policy Plan and considered the testimony at the public hearing, the staff report, and the whole of the record for File 08-059, and makes the following findings for this action:

1. That the plan or amendment is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and the Development Code, in particular that the Planned Sign Program would provide for a coordinated identification plan for commercial uses that will benefit from the exposure to freeway traffic and will be supportive of the effort to develop the commercial lands within the Policy Plan;

2. That the plan or amendment would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of the community, specifically that the project would be supportive of commercial land uses that are permitted to identify themselves on freeway signs and would provide for a single sign within the commercial areas of the Policy Plan;

3. That the plan or amendment includes provisions which ensure that adequate public facilities will be available to serve the range of development described in the plan, in particular that the project will not involve any changes in land uses or density within the project area;

4. That the plan or amendment would maintain an appropriate balance of land uses within the City, specifically that this Policy Plan Amendment will not result in any changes to land use or density within this commercial area;

5. That the anticipated land uses on the subject site are compatible with existing and future surrounding uses, since the project will not result in any changes to approved land uses allowed within the Policy Plan area.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Vacaville does hereby approve the Policy Plan amendment for the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan, as specified in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, to adopt a Planned Sign Program to allow a single multi-tenant freeway pylon sign in accordance with the appropriate findings.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was introduced and passed at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Vacaville, held on the 12th day of August, 2008 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Michelle A. Thornbrugh, City Clerk
EXHIBIT A

POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT
I-80/ALAMO POLICY PLAN
PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM – LAND USE AREAS I, II & V

The following sections of the Policy Plan shall be amended to read as follows:

Page 7, Area I, Item E, 11. Signs, add sub-item d:

d. Qualifying uses within Area I are permitted to locate on a multi-user freeway sign located within Policy Plan Land Use Area V, subject to the requirements contained in that Section (Area V, Signs, Section 6. e.).

Page 11, Area II, Item F, 11. Signs, add sub-item d:

d. Qualifying uses within Area I are permitted to locate on a multi-user freeway sign located within Policy Plan Land Use Area V, subject to the requirements contained in that Section (Area V, Signs, Section 6. e.).

Page 19, Area V, Item E, 6. Signs add sub-item e:

   e. A Planned Sign Program is established to permit a single, multi-user freeway-oriented sign for qualified users within the Policy Plan area and includes the following provisions:

      i. A single freeway-oriented pylon sign may be constructed on the westerly parcel within this development area (Area V) for the purpose of identifying certain qualifying businesses within Policy Plan Land Use Areas I, II, and/or V.

      1) In order to ensure proper access by the other businesses identified on freeway-oriented sign, as provided for below in Section vi, 6, the Director of Community Development may require that a sign access easement be recorded on the parcel where the sign is constructed.

      ii. The multi-user sign shall provide space for a minimum of three (3) separate users. A single-use pylon sign is not permitted by this program.

      iii. Qualifying uses for placement on the sign structure shall be those listed in Section 14.09.132.070.D.2. of the Land Use and Development Code, or commercial nursery uses located within Area V of the Policy Plan.

      iv. The pylon sign height and area shall be determined in accordance with Section 14.09.132.070.D. of the Land Use and Development Code. The business located on the same site as the freeway-oriented sign may use up to 175 square feet of this area, with the remaining square footage to be available for qualifying uses as noted above. The site containing this pylon sign is not permitted any other freestanding sign.

      v. The final design of the freeway pylon sign shall:

         1) incorporate the panels for a minimum of three (3) multiple users at the time of construction;

         2) incorporate design provisions that allow the freeway-oriented sign to be adaptable for a variety of different users, for example if the initial design of the sign includes unique design elements that targets a specific user, such as the palm tree and sun features for the proposed Palm Island Nursery, then the sign shall be designed and constructed such that those design features can be removed from the sign in the event the specific user no longer occupies the site where the sign is located;

         3) shall not incorporate a changeable copy message board; and

         4) shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Planner prior to issuance of building permits.

      vi. The Policy Plan Sign Program shall require owner of the freeway sign and/or the owner of the property on which the freeway sign is located to execute an agreement with the City regarding the right of future businesses to be identified
on the freeway sign. The agreement shall be executed prior to issuance of building permits and shall include the following provisions:

1) identify qualifying businesses, as described above in Section iii, shall be allowed the right to install their name and/or logo on the freeway sign, up to the maximum number of sign panels permitted by Design Review approval;

2) allowing for access rights to all other businesses identified on the sign for purposes of maintenance of the sign, and to provide the City, at its sole discretion, the right to enter the property to maintain the sign or otherwise modify the sign to ensure conformance with the provisions of this resolution;

3) establish the total cost of maintaining the freeway sign, including power, cleaning, and other maintenance. The agreement shall require the owner of the sign to maintain the sign, and may establish a shared cost obligation for all businesses identified on the sign;

4) establish a funding mechanism that covers the cost of removing the unique design elements noted above in Section v.2;

5) issuance of sign permits for sign panels shall be subject to design review by City. City may require maintenance of the sign as a condition of any Design Review action to allow installation of sign panels on the sign; and

6) acknowledgement that though the sign owner may require each business with identification on the sign to pay their pro rata share of the cost of maintaining the sign, it shall be the responsibility of the owner to maintain the sign in the event maintenance is neglected by individual businesses.

7) establish an appropriate entity, such as an association, to retain the long-term maintenance of the sign, as well as conformance with the conditions and requirements of the City.
ATTACHMENT D

CITY OF VACAVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item No. G.2
July 15, 2008

Staff Contact:
Fred Buder
(707) 449-5307

TITLE:
I-80/ALAMO POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT (SIGN PROGRAM) AND BUTCHER ROAD NURSERY PLANNED DEVELOPMENT MODIFICATION

REQUEST:
TO ADOPT A PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM TO ALLOW A FREEWAY PYLON SIGN FOR THE I-80/ALAMO POLICY PLAN COMMERCIAL AREA AND TO REDUCE THE FRONT SETBACK AND MODIFY THE SITE PLAN & BUILDING DESIGN FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NURSERY FACILITY

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
TO REAFFIRM THE PREVIOUS MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND APPROVE THE POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT FOR A PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM FOR FREEWAY SIGNS AND APPROVE THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT MODIFICATION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The applicants for the proposed freeway pylon sign have prepared conceptual plans to illustrate a potential design of the sign, with the intent of meeting the recommended requirements for a shared use sign as recommended by the staff (please see attached exhibits, submitted to the City 7/10/08). In the attached exhibit, they have identified how the sign could be redesigned in order to meet the intent of the proposed Policy Plan Amendment language.

Staff has not fully reviewed the concept design. The images do reflect the general type of design concept that is envisioned by the proposed Policy Plan Amendment provisions. The proposed Policy Plan regulations however would require design review approval by the Planning Division for the final design, materials, method of illumination and other design factors, if the Policy Plan Amendment is approved. The applicant's intent in providing the attached images is to indicate to the Planning Commission how they might be able to respond to the proposed Policy Plan regulations.
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Planning Commission - Regular Meeting
City of Vacaville
7:00 p.m. - Council Chambers
September 16, 2008

CALL TO ORDER:
The regular meeting of the Vacaville Planning Commission was called to order by
Chairman Johnson at 7:00 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Present: Chairman Johnson, Vice-Chair Niccoli, Commissioner Broadwater,
Commissioner Crim, Commissioner Gallagher, Commissioner Kallios,
and Commissioner Nadasdy.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Community Development Director Sexton, City Planner Buderri,
Assistant Planner Corsello, Building Official Salazar, and Assistant
City Attorney Faber.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Communications: None

D. Approval of Agenda:
Commissioner Kallios moved, Commissioner Nadasdy seconded to
approve the agenda. Motion approved 7-0.

E. Approval of Minutes:
Commissioner Crim moved, Commissioner Nadasdy seconded to approve
the minutes of September 2, 2008. Motion approved 7-0.

F. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR: None

G. PUBLIC HEARING:

1. PALM ISLAND NURSERY - Dale Motiska, applicant
   Staff Contact: Fred Buderri
   File No. 08-059

   a. Policy Plan Amendment (Signage)
   The project proposal is to amend the Interstate 80-Alamo Drive
   Policy Plan for the purpose of allowing a multi-tenant freeway
   oriented sign on Butcher Road to identify the nursery use and
   potentially other uses within the Policy Plan area and within the
adjacent commercial area east of Alamo Drive. The project has been referred back to the Planning Commission by the City Council. The City Council requests that the project include an analysis of adding the commercial area on the east side of Alamo Drive (Golden Hills Shopping Center) into the Planned Sign Program. The Planned Sign Program is exempt from the provisions of CEQA under Sections 15303 and 15305.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED:

Nathan Buckaklian, Branch Manager for Young Electric Sign Company, reviewed the changes to the design of the sign which would include the Golden Hills Shopping Center. He stated that the increased height would allow better visibility for the additional tenants on the sign. He commented that solar panels could be incorporated in the base of the sign. He also clarified that the sign would be engineered so that the top panel could be removed if Palm Island Nursery were to leave this site.

Kenneth Woo, Kenneth Woo and Associates, stated that he was the architect for the remodel of the Golden Hills Shopping Center. He noted their support for inclusion of the center on this sign. He questioned if freeway exiting directional elements would be placed on the sign.

Dale Motiska, project applicant, stated that he was in favor of allowing additional businesses on the sign, adding that it will help attract people to the area.

Chairman Johnson suggested that some type of freeway exiting directions be added to the sign.

COMMISSION ACTION:

Commissioner Gallagher moved, Commissioner Broadwater seconded that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve the I-80/Alamo Policy Plan Amendment to incorporate a Planned Sign Program applicable to Land Use Areas I, II and V of the Policy Plan and approve the expansion of the Planned Sign Program to incorporate uses within the Golden Hills Shopping Center, subject to the standards in the proposed Planned Sign Program. Motion approved 7-0.

2. OPPORTUNITY HOUSE SPECIAL STANDARDS OVERLAY ZONE CHANGE - Vacaville Redevelopment Agency, applicant
Staff Contact: Fred Buder
File No. 08-088

   a. Environmental Assessment

   b. Zone Change
The project proposal is a request that the Planning Commission recommend approval of a zone change from RH, High Density Residential to RH-SS, High Density Residential - Special Standards Overlay, to adopt an overlay zone for the property located at 261-267 Bennett Hill Court. The proposed zone change will adopt special standards and uses for social service uses to allow the relocation of the Opportunity House facility to this site. The proposed zone change will allow the use within this zone and will establish special development standards for the proposed use including parking requirements, open space and other development standards, subject to approval of a conditional use permit. A Negative Declaration environmental analysis pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has been prepared for the project and indicates that the zone change will have a less than significant impact on the environment. The Negative Declaration is available for public review and comment from August 22, 2008 to September 10, 2008. Comments on the proposed environmental review may be submitted to the Planning Division at the address identified on this notice. The future plans for the homeless center will also be subject to additional review for a conditional use permit for the specific site improvements. The Planning Commission makes a recommendation to City Council regarding a proposed change to the zoning map, per Land Use & Development Code section 14.09.071.040.

Mr. Buderis noted that it had recently been brought to staff’s attention that in the future, for the City to be in compliance with the Housing Element, they may need to provide some zoning where uses such as emergency shelters and homeless shelters are a permitted use. He added that they would be looking more closely at this in the future to determine if this proposal would be a permitted or conditional use.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED:

Colleen Erdes, Interim Executive Director for Opportunity House, requested that the overlay be granted. She noted that they are proud of their existing facility and are looking forward to expanding to a larger facility. She felt that having their presence in the area would help improve the area.

COMMISSION ACTION:

Commissioner Broadwater moved, Commissioner Crim seconded that the Planning Commission recommend the zoning map amendment and the Negative Declaration for the Special
Standards Overlay zone for the property at 261-267 Bennett Hill Court to the City Council. Motion approved 7-0.

3. MASON WILSON (BANKS) OFFICE BUILDING - Rob Sesar, applicant  
   Staff Contact: Peyman Behvand  
   File No. 08-078
   
   a. Planned Development
   
   b. Design Review
   
   The project proposal is to construct a 3-story office and commercial building at the northeast corner of Mason Street and Wilson Street. The project site is within the area recently studied for the Opportunity Hill Master Plan Project, adopted by the City Council in early 2008. The structure will be a 3-story, 24,207 sq. ft. office building with retail on the 1st floor. The site plan includes 73 on-site parking spaces and access via driveways on Wilson Street and Catherine Street. The project proposal also includes a Planned Development request to allow reduced building and landscape setbacks and an increase in the allowable building height. Pursuant to Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act, the project is exempt from the provisions of CEQA. This item was continued to the Planning Commission meeting of October 7, 2008.

H. STUDY SESSIONS:

1. GREEN BUILDING CODES UPDATE  
   Staff Contact: Jay Salazar  
   A review of "green building codes and standards", including a description of various codes and standards and their relationship to building codes. A review of the purpose of green building codes will be provided and a description of procedures for local adoption of green building codes.

   Mr. Salazar answered questions from the Commission regarding the various construction requirements.

   PUBLIC COMMENT: None

2. INITIATE SS OVERLAY ZONE FOR SPECIAL SERVICES FACILITIES - CALLEN STREET AREA  
   Staff Contact: Fred Buder  
   This is a request for the Planning Commission to initiate the study of
adopting a Special Standards Overlay Zone district for the Callen Street area between E. Monte Vista Avenue and Bennett Hill Drive. The proposed zone change would adopt zoning standards to allow the placement of certain social services facilities within the RH, High Density Residential Zone District in this area and would also facilitate the relocation of the existing Opportunity House shelter facility from the downtown area to this general location. Specific sites and standards have not been developed at this time and upon initiation of the zone change request, the City would analyze the request to develop the specific zone change proposal. The initiation of the zone change request is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The zone change request would include the appropriate environmental analysis prior to an action being requested.

PUBLIC COMMENT: none

COMMISSION ACTION:

Vice-Chair Niccoli moved, Commissioner Broadwater seconded that the Planning Commission initiate a Zoning Map Amendment related to establishing a Special Standards Overlay District on Callen Street for the purpose of allowing a relocation of the Opportunity House social service facility on a temporary basis.

I. DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

1. Report on City Council Actions Pertaining to Planning Commission items.

2. Tentative Schedule of Future Planning Commission Items & Select Items Under Staff Review.

J. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Chairman Johnson requested that they review the sign ordinance pertaining to political signs and posters and the time frame for posting. Mr. Sexton noted that our ordinance has a 30 day limitation when the signs can be posted. California courts have struck down those limits in many instances in other cities. In effect, our 30 day policy is unenforceable, and current policy is to inform people about what Vacaville’s preference is and ask that they comply. He added that the Commission could request that an item be placed on the agenda to initiate looking at that section of the sign ordinance, then it could be incorporated into the miscellaneous ordinances that are reviewed in the future.

Chairman Johnson also requested that as part of the staff report to the City Council regarding the Nut Tree Policy Plan Amendment, that they be provided information on the number of tenants who have left the center.
K. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to discuss at the regular meeting of the Planning Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Page
Recording Secretary