

# Beach Flats hotel eyed

## Marriott would replace three existing motels

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SANTA CRUZ — Those far-flung relatives could have a new place to stay if a proposed 150-room Marriott Courtyard Hotel in Beach Flats gets the go-ahead next month.

If approved by the City Council on July 22, the Peter Pan, Super 8 and Big 6 motels on Riverside Avenue between Third Street and Leibrandt Avenue in Beach Flats will be torn down to make way for a new four-story, 59,000-square-foot Marriott Courtyard Hotel. Construction could begin this fall, and the project is estimated to cost about \$25 million.

"I think anyone who's had people come to town and tried to find places for them to stay has had concerns about the quantity and quality of our hotel stock," Mayor Ryan Coonerty said. "I'm excited by the prospect of having quality hotels in Santa Cruz."

Along with 150 rooms, the hotel would include a 3,000-square-foot restaurant and bar and meeting rooms for up to 242 people. The building would

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## Hotel

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stand 41 feet tall at its highest point, with four floors. Almost 200 parking spaces would rest underground. Rooms would go for about \$150 to \$200 per night, said Paresh Patel of San Jose, whose family is behind the project.

Their proposal was unanimously approved at the city's Planning Commission last week, with no one protesting the new hotel.

Councilman Ed Porter, who in 2005 voted against replacing the old Coast Hotel on West Cliff Drive with a new hotel and conference center, said that so far, he has been impressed with the plans for the Marriott.

"As a general first impression, I think it's a positive thing," Porter said. "I'm encouraged. I just think we need to improve our hospitality offerings."

If approved by the council, the Marriott would present a new face to tourists visiting the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. While locals might take side streets to the popular amusement park, almost everyone else drives down Pacific Avenue and over the San Lorenzo River to Riverside Avenue before reaching the seaside attraction, said Don Lauritson, the city's senior planner.

But that stretch is plagued by gang activity, according to Santa Cruz police reports, and a man was shot to death two summers ago at Riverside and Third Street. Over the past three years, officers have responded to fights, drug busts and car thefts at the Peter Pan, Big 6 and Super 8.

The Marriott plan is possible because the Patel family already owns the three motels that will be torn down, Lauritson said. Otherwise, it would be difficult to find land to build a hotel that size in Beach Flats, which has little space left to develop.

"Hopefully we can start a trend and revive this area," Patel said. "A majority of the tourists come through this area, and this is the main gateway. We want to bring in something."

The hotel is one of a few new lodgings proposed or being built in the city. A 100-room Holiday Inn Express hotel is under construction on Ocean Street, and San Jose-based Barry Swenson Builder is working on plans for a 120-room hotel on the site of La Bahia, across the street from the Boardwalk. The environmental review on that project still needs to wrap up, and the City Council and Coastal Commission both must approve plans before workers can break ground.

The architect for the project is Vitae Architecture of San Francisco, Patel said, and the building's design would be in the city-recommended Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Because the project is privately funded, Patel said his family is not committing to using union labor to build the hotel unless the union proposal is the lowest bid.