

✓ Mall developers want load lightened

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CAPITOLA — The developer of the proposed Capitola Mall expansion will be back before the city Thursday in an attempt to get some conditions of approval reduced.

The City Council tentatively approved the \$35-million mall expansion plan last month. Spokesmen for mall developer Cypress Properties of Menlo Park have since said the strict conditions that went along with that approval could place the expansion in jeopardy.

However, Cypress is now attempting to fulfill those conditions, as evidenced by the items that will come before the council.

"All things weighed, we decided it was more beneficial to proceed with

the project," Cypress spokesman John Gatto told The Sentinel. "We're taking a calculated risk that we are going to get some relief."

That relief centers on the most expensive single condition required by the council. It involves lowering existing parking-lot light standards from 40 to 30 feet. While Cypress is willing to put 30-foot light standards in new parking areas as part of expansion, Gatto said lowering existing standards could add at least \$300,000 to the project.

However, some council members have said privately that Cypress would not throw away a \$35-million plan over \$300,000 worth of lights.

Cypress is now asking the council to allow the existing 40-foot-high light standards to remain, "with modifications." Gatto said the exist-

ing lights would be modified and be "totally different," with less glare.

The big reason council members insisted on the light standards being reduced 10 feet was complaints by mall neighbors about glare.

Besides the projected \$300,000 in added costs, Gatto said lower light standards would require additional poles and "basically end up tearing up the entire parking lot" to get the additional poles in.

It will be up to council members now to change their minds or remain firm on the condition.

Other mall items coming before the council include the colors and material of exterior walls, and the detailed elevation of the new mall entrance and JC Penney store.

The expansion plan would nearly

double the only covered shopping mall in the county — adding 304,575 square feet to the existing 381,098-square-foot mall. The plan features two new anchor stores — a 91,805-square-foot Penney and a 54,000-square-foot Leask's.

Council members last week approved a development agreement between the city and Cypress that calls for the city to contribute \$500,000 toward the construction of the Clares Street Loop Road. That road will run behind the mall between 41st Avenue and Capitola Road. It is expected to take some of the traffic burden off those two streets.

The other mall items were postponed to a special meeting Thursday. It will begin at 7 p.m. in the council chamber at City Hall.