

Gottschalks expansion proposed

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CAPITOLA — Plans for a 93,214-square-foot Gottschalks department store at Capitola Mall will be unveiled Thursday.

Gottschalks Chairman Joe Levy said he hopes to break ground on the mall's fourth anchor store in September, with completion in March or April 1990.

The proposal is much larger than the 54,000-square-foot Leask's store once planned for the mall. The Fresno-based department store chain bought out Leask's last September. Included in the sale was Leask's rights to build a new store in Capitola Mall. A \$35-million mall expansion, which included a J.C. Penney store, opened last November.

Gottschalks officials will come before the City Council Thursday night. Council members — sitting on Capitola's Redevelopment Agency Board — will have a preliminary recommendation of approval from staff, saying the proposed expansion is consistent with the city's approved redevelopment plan.

Planning Director Susan Tupper said a "formal application" has not been completed. But a joint meeting with the City Council, Planning Commission and Architectural and Site Review Committee will be March 16, at which time the city's regular planning process would begin.

The proposed 93,214-square-foot addition is 2½ times larger than Gottschalks' existing downtown Santa Cruz store. By comparison, Penney's is 91,805 square feet and Mervyn's is 75,000 square feet.

Due to the increased size, Gottschalks plans to build a two-story parking garage adjacent its store. That second-story structure would house at least 466 parking spaces — the minimum needed, according to city parking regulations.

Levy said he anticipates "no problems" with the proposal.

Thursday's meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the council chamber at City Hall.