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Gateway Terrace project would include hotel, restaurants and shops



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By Laura Oleniacz loleniacz@heraldsun.com; 919-419-6636

DURHAM — A location of the restaurant PDQ, a hotel, office space and additional shops and eateries are proposed to be built on more than six acres off U.S. 15-501.

The businesses are planned as part of the Gateway Terrace project that's targeted for the intersection of U.S. 15-501 and Southwest Durham Drive.

The site is in front of the existing Patterson Place development, which includes a hotel, medical office space, and restaurants and shops such as Five Guys Burgers and Fries and Applebee's, and is across the boulevard from the New Hope Commons development.

Anuj Mittal, co-owner of the Raleigh-based lead project developer MJM Group, said Gateway Terrace has been on hold since 2008, but the retail and restaurant buildings are targeted to be done this year, and the hotel is hoped to be completed in 2014.

The total project cost is expected to be between \$20 and \$25 million, Mittal said. He said they have commitments from equity investors, but they also are in discussions with local banks as well.

Mittal said in total, the plan for the site includes four buildings, including a Home2Suites by Hilton and a standalone PDQ restaurant.

There are also plans for a sit-down restaurant that has not been released yet, and a separate mixed-use building that would include the Chipotle, a mattress store, medical office space and additional restaurants and shops.

Donnell Thompson, a partner in the Durham Zaxby's restaurant who plans to open a Denny's franchise in Durham at the intersection of N.C. 54 and N.C. 751, said he had a letter of intent to allow him to open a second Durham Denny's at Gateway Terrace. But Mittal said they have "kind of given up" on a Denny's franchise there.

"At one time, he was very interested, but we kind of lost him," Mittal said.

Mittal said he and his wife Vinita Mittal, who co-own MJM Group, worked on assembling the former farmland for development over five years.

They initially bought four of what at one time were five separate parcels, which now form the six acres, he said.

They got approval of their first rezoning for the four plots of land in 2008, and then in August 2011 got another

approval when the project included a fifth parcel and a different project proposal, said Scott Whiteman, planning supervisor for Durham City-County Planning, in an email.

Alysia Bailey Taylor, planning supervisor with Durham City-County Planning, said an amendment to a site plan that was already previously approved for the project is currently under review.

Bailey Taylor said the amendment includes changes such as a proposal to add parking beneath the hotel, modifications to the lobby area, and changes in the mix of retail, office and restaurant space.

“They’re currently under review, (I) can never predict how quickly (they) will go through the process, and get reviewed,” he said.

Michael Waldroup, a developer of the Patterson Place development, said he believes the Gateway Terrace project is moving forward.

“You can look at the fact that he’s got earth-moving equipment out there,” Waldroup said. “(He) should have something up and running inside of a year.”

But Waldroup also said he believes it’s “a tough world for development” right now.

“It certainly was back then; I think we face our challenges now,” he said. “You’re proposing to put supply on the market, and the only way that’s going to work (is that) demand is out there, and you get a reasonable match between the two.”

He said he believes Gateway Terrace may have no impact, or a positive impact, on Patterson Place.

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1530 N. Gregson St. Suite 2A
Durham, NC. 27701
[919-419-6500](tel:919-419-6500)

