

Downtown Fort Myers looks forward to a new Sheraton Hotel



CODY DULANEY, CDULANEY@NEWS-PRESS.COM 8:09 p.m. EDT June 17, 2015



A \$60 million hotel development slated for construction in downtown Fort Myers has city officials buzzing.

"This (project) has a very important impact to the city's development and overall economy," City Manager [Billy Mitchell](#) said.

The Fort Myers [Sheraton Hotel](#) will connect to the Harborside Convention Center, at 1375 Monroe St., and developers are on track to break ground early next year.

(Photo: Special to The News-Press)

"We are flogging the horses a bit now with the architect and engineers to get the drawings completed," said [Steve Goodman](#), developer of the project.



THE NEWS-PRESS

[Harborside takes shape: Sheraton hotel in works](#)

[\(http://www.news-press.com/story/news/local/fort-myers/2014/06/03/harborside-takes-shape-sheraton-hotel-works/9892271/\)](http://www.news-press.com/story/news/local/fort-myers/2014/06/03/harborside-takes-shape-sheraton-hotel-works/9892271/)

Harborside's current parking lot will be the location for the new hotel, which will have 225 rooms on nine floors, additional meeting space, a fourth-floor pool terrace and a restaurant accessible from outside.

The entrance will be on Edwards Drive and the hotel will follow the curvature of the water basin.



A concept view of the hotel, looking west down Bay Street. *(Photo: Special to The News-Press)*

A 2 ½ story garage will be under the hotel, and will also be used for public parking.

Construction is expected to last about 18 months, said Don Paight, director of the Community Redevelopment Agency.

While the hotel is being constructed, the city and county will split the cost of \$9 million in renovations to Harborside, which includes reroofing and replacing glass and doors for increased hurricane protection, as well as upgrading the kitchen and meeting hall.



THE NEWS-PRESS

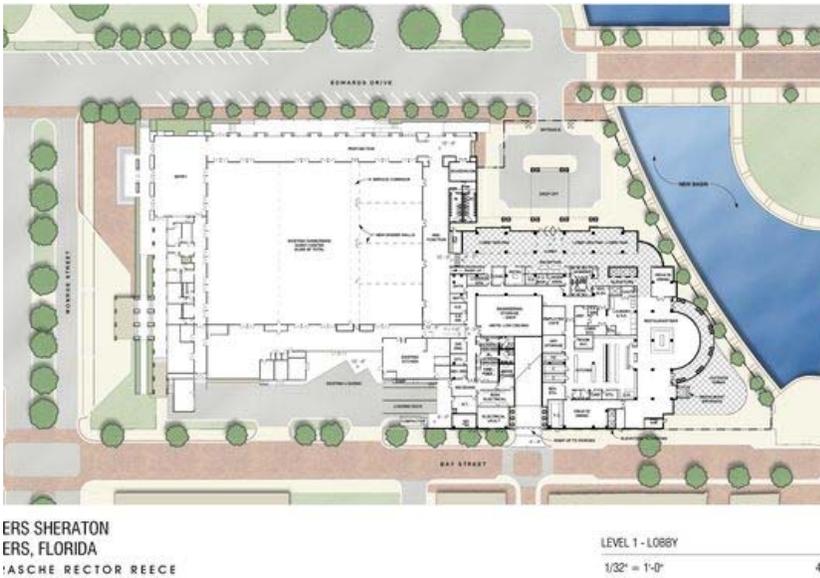


[Amtel Hotel in downtown Fort Myers sold for \\$13.5M](http://www.news-press.com/story/news/local/2015/01/29/amtel-hotel-sold/22526781/)

(<http://www.news-press.com/story/news/local/2015/01/29/amtel-hotel-sold/22526781/>)

Harborside will stay open during the initial construction of the hotel, but will be closed around April or May to start the renovations.

But the timing has to be perfect, Paight said, allowing both the convention center and the hotel to open at the same time.



A layout of the constructed hotel and its position next to the water basin. (Photo: Special to The News-Press)

For the renovations, the city will pay \$5 million and the county will pay \$4 million spread out over 10 years, Paight said.

The city will also be responsible for covering the cost of the garage, which will be roughly \$7 million.

But the city will be getting something in return.

The [Sheraton Hotel](#) will take over the management and operation of Harborside, which costs the city more to operate than the revenue it brings in.



THE NEWS-PRESS

[Lee County's old buildings find new life](http://www.news-press.com/story/money/2015/02/15/old-buildings-find-new-life-lee-county/23457009/)

(<http://www.news-press.com/story/money/2015/02/15/old-buildings-find-new-life-lee-county/23457009/>)

An \$850,000 subsidy from the general fund every year helps keep the center running.

With the relief from the general fund, plus the \$75,000 the hotel will pay each year in rent, the city will receive \$925,000 each year in benefits from the hotel.

Mitchell said a major portion of this will go back to paying for the financing of the garage.



A concept view of the hotel's restaurant, which would be accessible from the outside. (Photo: Special to The News-Press)

Ideas for the project started six years ago at the start of the recession, Paight said, but a recovering economy and tourism industry allowed officials to accelerate the project, and now everyone is looking forward to the benefits.

"We think we can be very competitive in attracting convention groups," Paight said. "The advantage we have is this is right in the middle of downtown. Just walk out the door and you're there."

Council member [Michael Flanders](#) said the city has needed a downtown hotel for many years, and this project is stirring interest for other developers to get their projects started.

Once the hotel is complete, it will attract more restaurants and retail businesses in the area.

"It's a big deal," Flanders said. "The cool thing is that it's solving a lot of issues."

Read or Share this story: <http://newspr.es/1MMDOjo>

CULTURAL PARK THEATRE COMPANY

CONCERT SEASON

THE REVEILLE REVUE

Neil Zirronia
as Neil Diamond