

Two hotels, 5 stories each, proposed

BY BREENA KERR
Daily Post Staff Writer

The boom in hotels in Palo Alto is continuing with Marriott submitting plans to build two new five-story hotels on San Antonio Road, according to plans submitted to the city.

One hotel will be a Courtyard Marriott. The other will be an AC by Marriott, a trendy branch of the Marriott brand that has locations in Italy, France, Portugal and Spain and has recently expanded across the Atlantic to open locations in Mexico City, Miami, New Orleans and Seattle.

The two hotels will be located at 744 to 748 San Antonio Road and face one

another, with a pool and driveway in between, the plans show.

The Courtyard by Marriott would have 145 rooms, while the AC by Marriott would have 156.

Parking

The hotels would have 42 ground-floor parking spaces and 210 spaces in a parking garage, according to the plans.

The hotel is the latest to be proposed in Palo Alto, despite the decision by voters in November to raise the city hotel tax from 12% to 14%.

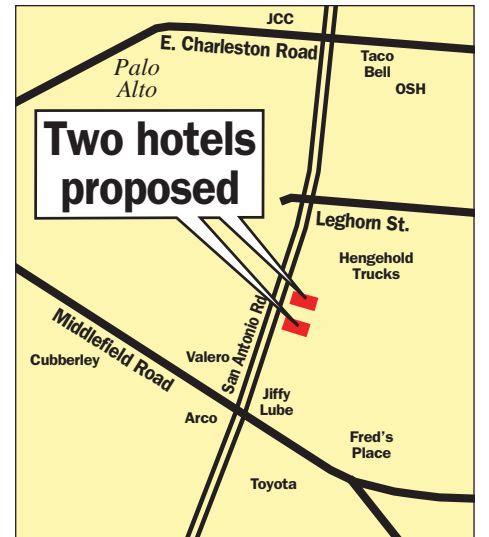
Last year the 86-room boutique Epiphany Hotel opened in the old Casa Olga building at 180 Hamilton Ave. A

138-room Homewood Suites by Hilton also opened at 4329 El Camino Real in south Palo Alto. Another hotel had been planned to replace Ming's Chinese restaurant at 1700 Embarcadero Road, but those plans were scrapped in favor of building a Mercedes-Benz dealership.

A source of city revenue

The city expects nearly \$19 million in revenue from the hotels in the coming year, according to the city budget.

Plans for the hotel will go before the city's Architectural Review Board on June 4, according to city planner Amy French.



ANTHRAX

said Steven Black, a Stanford professor and expert in biological warfare.

The anthrax was supposed to have been blasted with radiation to make sure that the spores, which are highly dangerous, were dead.

But "very small quantities" of the spores were still alive, Stanford said in the statement. The vial was received on July 22, last opened on July 29, and shipped back when the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) alerted Stanford about the danger on Tuesday, the university said.

The anthrax samples were shipped from an Army base in Dugway, Utah, to government and commercial labs in Texas, Maryland, Wisconsin, Delaware, New Jersey, Tennessee, New York, California and Virginia.

An unidentified U.S. official told the Associated Press that four people in three commercial labs had worked with the suspect anthrax samples and the CDC has recommended the four be provided "post-exposure prophylaxis," or preventive treatment. The official was not authorized to discuss the details because they involved non-government lab employees, and so spoke on condition of anonymity.

Stanford said there was no indication that anyone here had become sick or that there is a public health risk.

Stanford's anthrax research

The Stanford lab was using the spores to study immune system responses in work on preventative vaccines and treatments for biological threats, the statement said.

Dead or "inactive" spores are used in the work because although they can't grow, they still illicit the same immune system responses in living things, Block said.

Block said that he suspected that the actual danger posed by the live anthrax is small, but it depends on some factors that neither the university nor the CDC has commented on.

First, if the spores were mostly dead, as it seems, then there may have been only a few live anthrax spores in the vial shipped to Stanford. It would be kind of like drinking mostly pasteurized milk, he said. The danger might be small.

Then again, Block said, it only takes a few thousand inhaled anthrax spores to make someone very sick. And a few thousand spores could fit into a raindrop.

Expert not alarmed

Secondly, Block said, the lab workers were likely handling the anthrax using normal sterile procedures. Those procedures use far less caution than is warranted for live anthrax, which requires hazmat suits. But normal procedures still employ a great deal of care and sterilization as scientists try to ensure that other experiments aren't contaminated, he said.

"Chances are very good that normal, sterile procedure would have been adequate to deal with the danger," Block said. "So, if you asked me 'Are you very alarmed?' No."

But Block said he hoped that the anthrax hadn't

been used in one of the messier kinds of experiments that the military conducts to study the spread of infectious diseases.

"If the experiment was to put the spores in a sprayer and see how they spread around ... if they were doing those kinds of experiments, I'd be concerned — even with the weakened strain," he said.

Anthrax spores can come back to life after being stored for 100 years, Block said, and have long been used as biological weapon.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

MATH

around the issue of minorities in lower-level math classes. It found that many freshman "are being forced off the college-readiness path on the first day of high school," because they are being improperly placed into algebra, despite having passed the class in 8th grade or passed the state standardized test. The report states that these placement decisions impact minority students, and those responsible for math placement "also face legal liability."

Dana Isaac, an attorney with the committee, told the Post yesterday that the analysis the committee did on the Mountain View-Los Altos district involved standardized test scores and math class enrollment data. When asked if Isaac could provide the Post with this data that showed the disproportionate numbers, she said she would have to get back to the newspaper.

Lawsuit next?

Asked if the committee was considering a lawsuit against the school district, Isaac said she couldn't answer the question.

But school Superintendent Barry Groves told the Post yesterday that the way students are placed in

math classes is through a system called "open access," which means it's ultimately up to the student and their parents to decide which classes to take. If, for example, a child took algebra in the 8th grade and didn't do well, but still wanted to take geometry their freshman year of high school, they could. Groves said by comparison, some other districts might require a recommendation from a teacher to be placed into the next level of math.

Minority achievement gap shrinking

Groves acknowledged that there is a minority achievement gap in the district — a gap between high-performing kids and lower-performing minority students — but in the last decade, the gap has gotten smaller.

In a 10-year span from 2003 and 2013, Groves said that Hispanic students' test scores have greatly improved. In 2003 for example at Los Altos High, Hispanic student's Academic Performance Index scores was 541 (out of 1,000), but in 2013, the score grew to 713, according to district data.

In 2003, there were just 43 Hispanic students who enrolled in Advanced Placement classes at Los Altos High, but in 2013 that number was 189. The school has a population of about 1,900 students, 24% of which are Hispanic.

According to state data, Hispanic students districtwide scored 731 in 2013. Of the 40 black students who took the test districtwide, they scored a 791. White students scored 909, and Asian students in the district scored 939 that same year.

Groves said that in the 2013-14 school year, there weren't many freshman students that were taking lower-grade math anyway. Only 14% of students districtwide were enrolled in algebra, 55% were in geometry and 20% were in algebra 2 (typically a class for sophomores or higher).

"So from my perspective, I don't believe that it's true," Groves said, referring to the claim of disproportionality.

All Your Eggs in the Stock Market?

Diversify
Now to Gold
& Silver



Since 1964, the wisest advice
and best prices for gold & silver
are right here in Menlo Park.

MISH INTERNATIONAL MONETARY INC.

- Showroom of Precious Metals and Rare Coins -

1154 University Drive (at Oak Grove) • Menlo Park • (650) 324-9110

www.mishinternational.com