

Officials excited about new Trumbull hotel

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TRUMBULL -- A new hotel can't rise and shine too soon for local officials eager to boost the town's tax revenue.

Economic Development Director Deborah Cox said the 123-room Summerfield Suites extended-stay hotel planned in Trumbull Corporate Park is projected to bring in more than \$200,000 annually.

The hotel, which is to be built at 25-45 Commerce Drive, won the unanimous approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission last week and could be open sometime next year. It will be operated by the Briad Group, a New Jersey company that specializes in hotels and restaurants.

Officials said the plan for the four-story structure is the first example of the kinds of development allowed under new zoning regulations adopted this summer which grant more flexibility in building height depending on a structure's location and lot size. They also opened the door for a hotel in the corporate park.

Until now, buildings in the corporate park have been limited to two stories.

Economic development officials lobbied for changes in the regulations to accommodate such developments, as well as for this project, which they said will help other businesses in the vicinity.

"The business in the Trumbull park are happy because there are a lot of national and international travelers," said Cox. "Now they won't even need a car."

Briad also maintained that it can be hard for business travelers to find places to stay in the area.

But officials of the town's only other hotel contend the lodging market isn't quite that tight. In a letter to the commission, Paul R. McNeil, general manager of the Trumbull Marriott Merritt Parkway, wrote that his property has a weekday occupancy rate of 63 percent during the past two years, and that the overall occupancy rate in its competitive

class has been 66 percent during the past eight years.

"In Trumbull and the surrounding towns of Shelton, Bridgeport, Stratford and Milford, there are ample hotel rooms to accommodate current and projected demand for room nights," he said.

The Marriott has more than 300 rooms and pays more than \$500,000 in taxes annually, according to the town's assessor.

Although Briad's application was approved, all aspects of the hotel project have not been put to bed yet, officials said. The developers need to come back for final approval of signs and lighting.