



Two more franchise hotels on tap for U.S. 1 in St. Augustine

By Colleen Jones
March 12, 2019

Editor's note: The location of the Hilton Garden Inn has been corrected.

Construction for a Marriott SpringHill Suites and a Hilton Garden Inn will begin in the third quarter of the year on a busy commercial stretch of North Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

Both the franchises are being developed by Kanti Patel, well known for his many hotel projects around town, including three others that will be in close proximity to the new projects.

A Hilton Garden Inn is planned to be just off Ponce de Leon Boulevard at 185 Matanzas Ave. A little farther north, a Marriott SpringHill Suites will be constructed at 1850 North Ponce de Leon; a Powersports St. Augustine dealership currently sits at the corner property.

Both received the required approvals several years ago but have been in the hopper while Patel's Jalaram Hotels has worked on other projects in the St. Augustine and Jacksonville area. Each of the hotels will have between 80 to 100 rooms and are both in the final design stage.

Tom Manno, Jalaram's vice president for hotel operations, said that even as Patel has launched numerous hotels under franchise names, he works to make each complement the flavor of St. Augustine.

"They are never cookie-cutter. He's always wanting to integrate the look and feel of the area into the design," Manno said, citing as examples the Hilton Historic Bayfront and the soon-to-be constructed hotel in the former cigar factory at 88 Riberia St., which Patel wants to turn into a boutique hotel.

The area where the new Garden Inn and SpringHill Suites will be built is already a busy commercial corridor, with a number of other hotels near the historic district, including another Holiday Inn, Hampton Inn and Best Western, also developed by Jalaram.

“We continue to see tourists come to the city, both nationally and internationally,” Manno said, “so this is a great opportunity to build even more capacity.”

Richard Goldman, president and CEO of the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau, agrees.

“One of the things we think is very important is having a variety of lodging products, and for years those have been more budget or moderate,” Goldman said. “But as the market has improved, Patel and his Jalarem Hotels have invested a lot in modifying those properties or building new ones.”

Goldman added that more hotels with on-site parking means less on-street parking and traffic since all of the properties along North Ponce de Leon Boulevard are within walking distance of the sites of downtown St. Augustine as well as San Marco Avenue.

“And that helps merchants in what we refer to as the ‘North City,’” Goldman said.