

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY



From: City of St. Clairsville, Director of Public Services
Subject: Clarendon Hotel Building Reuse
Date: August 20, 2009
Reply Deadline: August 27, 2009 Postmarked

City Council and the administration are seeking additional public input through this random survey regarding the future development of the Clarendon Hotel Building on Main Street across from the County Courthouse. The City purchased this building in September, 2000, with two goals in mind:

1. To save this significant downtown building.
2. To reuse the building in a way that provides economic development spinoff to the rest of the downtown area.

The City has over a 20-year history of comprehensive work to improve the downtown, to beautify the community, to preserve the history of the city, and enhance its status on the National Road. All of this plays a part in the economic well being of the downtown and the larger St. Clairsville community.

We have a situation in the downtown now, where the cost of building improvements exceed their market value when completed. This is bad for the future of the downtown. The Clarendon Project is meant to help address this problem and be a step towards economic restructuring and mixed property use that will make a stronger downtown economy.

The City has not been able to find a developer, however we are considering acting through our community improvement corporation as the developer of last resort. If we do not act now, we will lose major funding (over \$1 million in "grant" funding) for this project, so we hope to open the building and operate it until a private sector investor can be found. The City could probably hire a management company much like the State of Ohio operates state park lodges, or we could hire a manager under the guidance of a hotel consultant.

We want you to help us to decide whether we should build this project as a hotel, or should we build it as an office building. Both options have varying levels of risk and reward.

There is no feasible future use that holds as much benefit for the downtown as a successful hotel and restaurant. Nothing we know of will produce as much vitality for the downtown, as much economic spinoff benefit, or as much income for the City as a successful hotel-restaurant.

We also believe that the opportunity for a hotel carries with it the greatest risk because of the operational costs involved and the uncertainty associated with hotel occupancy levels. Yet, if the hotel fails to work, it can quickly become a cash drain. We would have to operate the hotel for at least three years to give it adequate opportunity to become successful.

As an alternative to the hotel, we believe that reuse as an office building is possible. Operational costs are less than a hotel, and occupancy is less of but still an issue. The principal draw back to an office use is that it will not bring in outside money, provide as much vitality, income, and spinoff benefit as a successful hotel.

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With this condensed background in mind, please give the City your opinion as to whether we should redevelop the Clarendon as a hotel, or as an office building by returning the enclosed postage paid, pre-addressed questionnaire to us postmarked by August 27, 2009. Only replies that are signed will be considered. You may also e-mail your reply to stclair@stclairsville.com. If you want more information about the hotel proposal, please see the project website www.theclarendonhotel.com. You may also telephone us at (740) 695-0156 or contact your councilman.

Your opinion is important so please reply.

Thank you for your consideration.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESPONSE

I prefer this reuse scenario: (check one)

_____ Hotel-Restaurant

_____ Office-Restaurant

Comments (if any): _____

Signed

Date

Printed Name

Street Address

* Signature is required for validity only. There will be no follow-up contact to you unless you request the same. Thank you again.