

New study to continue old growth: Godfrey to update hotel feasibility study

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GODFREY - Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick and the rest of the **Godfrey Village Board** approved a motion to update the village's 2012 hotel feasibility study at the September Village Board Meeting.

Godfrey Economic Director William Catalano said a lot has changed since the original study was conducted by Wisconsin firm, **HMI**, in 2012. He said the economic climate of the village, as well as the entire country, had to rebound from the "Great

Recession" of 2008. He said the maturation of the I-255 corridor also had to occur before Godfrey could seriously consider the addition of a hotel.

"Obviously in 2012, we were coming more from a recession period, and it was unknown how we would rebound," Catalano said. "We've rebounded quite well actually."

As for the maturation of the **I-255 corridor**, which currently comes to its northern terminus in Godfrey, Catalano said the village is in a very good position.

"As it matures, people are seeing how it connects to the upper part of the St. Louis Metro region, giving us a unique asset to capture that marketplace, and fill that need," he said.

Another factor contributing to the push for an updated study is an 18 acre tract of land recently put onto the market adjacent to **Godfrey Road**. The plot of land, near the **Godfrey Wal-Mart**, could be used for a known hotel franchise, Catalano said.

"This 18 acres of land on the market is creating interest and competition between property owners," he said. "There's a willingness to sell, and it connects other assets such as **Lewis and Clark Community College**, and our larger employers like **International Mulch** and **Beverly Farms**."

That connection between new growth and established businesses is a very important variable in the study, Catalano said. He said any hotel coming to Godfrey would have to benefit the college, the people of Godfrey and businesses along Godfrey Road, the village's main commerce district.

"When the village looks at a hotel, it's not simply looking at a hotel, it's looking at the desires from the community, especially our businesses on Godfrey Road," Catalano said. "It will be a catalysts for bigger projects and development as they play out on the northern part of Godfrey Road. This is an initiative from the mayor and village board to bring in new development and support what is already in place."

Currently, Catalano said Godfrey has two hotels. He said they are too small and aging to properly hold enough people required to continue the development a large hotel franchise could. He said, while some owners have performed "refreshers" on the properties, the existing infrastructure could not be improved to take in enough people.

When asked about the need for such infrastructure in Godfrey, Catalano cited the annual **MS Bike Ride**, which brings 3,000 cyclists and their families to the area each year. He

said the hotel would also be the first of its kind existing along the I-255 corridor north of I-270. He said it could serve adjacent communities such as **Grafton, Alton** and **Jerseyville** as well.

The updated feasibility study comes at a cost of \$5,975. Catalano said if the village did not update its previous study and instead started from scratch, the cost would have been as high as \$10,000.