

Overhaul will convert downtown Holiday Inn into DoubleTree

Posted by [rroguski](#) June 09, 2008 18:08PM



The Hotel GroupA new workout facility was one the early steps in a \$15 million effort to turn downtown's Holiday Inn Select into a DoubleTree. Room renovations could be finished by Labor Day, and new signage will go up Jan. 1.

As new boutique and luxury hotel brands consider downtown, an old property is getting a \$15 million facelift -- and a more upscale name.

Renovations are under way to transform the [Holiday Inn Select](#) hotel into a [DoubleTree](#). Five floors of rooms -- out of 15 total -- have been stripped and remade, with new furniture, fixtures, bathrooms, air-conditioning and flat-panel televisions. Three more floors are under construction, and the rest could be finished by Labor Day.

"It's a total gut-and-go kind of deal," said Leonard Clifton, the hotel's general manager.

The Hotel Group, a major owner and operator based in Edmonds, Wash., bought the property a year ago with plans to overhaul it. Since then, the company decided to recreate the 180-room property as a higher-end DoubleTree, a Hilton Family brand that also has a site in Independence.

As changes - such as a new workout facility where the machines are equipped with televisions and iPod jacks -- took place, the rates started to climb.

About a year ago, the hotel's standard rate was about \$109 to \$129 a night. Months into the renovations, starting rates range from \$139 to \$159. And after Jan. 1, when the DoubleTree signs go up, standard rates could start between \$169 and \$179, Clifton said.

"It's definitely an upscale hotel," he said. "The city needs a product like this. With the upscale, high-rise living that's going in on 12th Street, the city is obviously trying to redevelop this side. And this is just going to be an added feature."

The Holiday Inn sits a short hop from new condos being built at East 12th and St. Clair Avenue by developer Nathan Zaremba. Workers at the nearby Galleria at Erieview are preparing for the arrival of a Dollar Bank branch. And across downtown, developers and public officials are pitching redevelopment plans, a new convention center and a high-traffic Medical Mart.

"All of our downtown hotels will be able to rely more heavily on the convention market as a foundation for stronger occupancies," said Kelly Brewer, vice president of sales for [Positively Cleveland](#), the area's convention and visitors bureau.

Last year, downtown hotel occupancy hovered around 61 percent -up slightly from 2006 and comparable to what hotels see in center cities throughout the region, Brewer said. Rising fuel prices and skyrocketing costs of air travel caused a dip in downtown hotel visits during the first quarter of this year. Clifton said the past few months haven't been easy.

"There's definitely not enough transient business right now for everybody to go around and be fat and happy with," he said.

Transforming the Holiday Inn should help it compete, he said -- an essential move as new luxury and boutique hotels announce plans to open downtown. A 140-room [Hotel Indigo](#) is planned on East Ninth Street, and a five-star [1 Hotel & Residences](#) is slated for the Flats.

"The downtown market doesn't look for a Holiday Inn flag," Clifton said.

As a DoubleTree, the hotel will boast a renovated swimming pool and hot tub, a revamped ballroom and meeting spaces, a new paint job and a slick new lobby with the main entrance shifted east. The Holiday Inn bar closed Monday, and the existing restaurant will shut down in August to make way for a replacement -- named Stadium 3's -- to open in late September. A full-service Starbucks will open downstairs Jan. 1.

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Comments

krazyk47 says...

Are they talking about that tiny little box across from the cathedral? Why bother renovating, it looks like it only cost a couple million to build in the first place... tear it down and build something that looks like an expensive hotel, nobody is going to pay \$200 a night to stay in that place.

or better yet add 30 stories of hotel rooms to jacobs new proposal for public square.

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