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## Councilman Sees End of I-40 as Key to Downtown Hotel

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City Councilman Ed McBrayer said today he believes the key to getting private developers interested in building a hotel in downtown Memphis is completion of Interstate 40.

"If you had I-40 and a tourist attraction," he said, "you would probably get a (privately financed) hotel downtown." The interstate is interrupted at Overton Park because of environmentalist objections.

McBrayer has vigorously opposed government financing of a hotel adjacent to

Cook Convention Center, as have several representatives of the business community.

"The real reason the Hyatt Regency (in East Memphis) is doing so well is because it's at the juncture of the interstates," McBrayer said.

"You just don't build hotels anymore that are not close to an expressway," he added. "People aren't going to get off an expressway and go wandering through side streets looking for a hotel."

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Community Resource Coalition — an ad hoc

group which proposed the government-financed convention center hotel — said the CRC will meet tomorrow with bank representatives to try to determine a way for Memphis banks to participate in the hotel plan.

Edgar Bailey said the CRC's proposal — calling for local banks to extend a \$5 million line of credit to protect the hotel against early operating losses — was not acceptable in its initial form. Bailey, board chairman of Leader Federal Savings & Loan, said it is hoped the CRC and the bank representatives can "figure out

some other way" to extend credit to the hotel development.

Sam Hollis, president of the Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce, said city-county financing of a convention center hotel "is not a dead issue yet" despite considerable opposition to the plan.

Hollis said, "We've got to do something pretty fast if it's going to be done."

McBrayer said if the issue, dropped by City Council this week, is revived, he will renew his push for a feasibility study before the Council commits itself to a \$12.5 million bond issue — the city's half of the development.

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