

Bowling for olives, anyone?

Combination alley-martini bar proposed for downtown

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Hold on to your bowling balls, Cleveland.

The sport that you know and love is about to get a hip makeover at a proposed new bowling alley in downtown Cleveland.

The developer that brought the House of Blues, Pickwick & Frolic and Hilarities comedy club to East Fourth Street plans to bring the Corner Alley, an upscale restaurant/bar/bowling alley, to the neighborhood.

Ari Maron, a partner in MRN Ltd., said his company is working with California-based Trifecta Management Group to turn the southeast corner of East Fourth Street and Euclid Avenue into a destination spot for bowlers and martini drinkers alike.

The idea is for a 16-lane bowling alley to share space with a martini bar and an indoor/outdoor restaurant called the East Fourth Street Bar & Grill.

The proposed site is the 20,000 square feet once occupied by a Wendy's and McCrory's drugstore, across from the Arcade on Euclid Avenue.

Maron used words such as "sleek" to describe the concept. Ron Lam, a partner with Trifecta, envisions Corner Alley as a hangout for young professionals.

Chris Ronayne, chief of staff for Mayor Jane Campbell, put the proposed twist on the traditional bowling experience into some historical perspective for Clevelanders.

"It's not your Lucy Perk bowling alley of yesteryear," Ronayne said. "It's more about the scene than the scores."

Perk, the wife of former Cleveland Mayor Ralph Perk, gained national attention when she turned down an invitation to the White House in 1972 because it was her bowling night.



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Corner Alley, which Maron said could be open for business next fall, would be the latest addition to the growing East Fourth Street Entertainment District.

Flannery's Pub, at East Fourth and Prospect, came first, followed by Pickwick & Frolic and then the House of Blues.

Maron said Corner Alley will not feature traditional leagues common at bowling alleys, although Lam said there might be leagues during happy hour.

Two other bowling alleys operate downtown: Ambassador Superior Lanes on Superior Avenue at East 15th Street and Twin Lanes at East 30th Street and Chester Avenue.

Tim Menge, manager of Twin Lanes, said business has been slow lately, so only 16 of the 40 lanes are open.

But Maron says his proposed bowling alley, marketed as a nighttime hot spot, will attract a good crowd.

Money for the estimated \$9 million project is still being sought and Maron will look to the city for support. Ronayne said the city could tap into money generated from sales of land in Chagrin Highlands.

The mayor wants to change how that money is spread around the city, which could free \$3 million for Corner Alley, she said. She needs council approval for the change.

Campbell said she supports the bowling alley idea, although she said she's not a bowler. "It's gonna be fun," she said of Corner Alley. "This is all part of the entertainment complex that East Fourth Street is really becoming."

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