



FedEx Office Design & Print Ce
Make it. Print it. Pack it. Ship

Sign in to cleveland.com »

Not a member? Register Now »

Site Search

Search Local Business Listings

Search by keyword, town name, Web ID and more...

Go

- Home
- News
- Business
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Interact
- Jobs
- Autos
- Real Estate
- CL
- News
- Metro
- Plain Dealer
- Weather
- Sun News
- Politics
- Crime
- Opinion
- Columns
- Local



PLAIN DEALER OPINION

Our Views and Yours: Editorials, Columns and Letters

ELEC

Polls
Rese
issue
ballo

- [Voi](#)
- [issi](#)
- [Voi](#)
- [Pla](#)
- [Lev](#)
- [Cu](#)
- [Fin](#)

MORE OPINION

with **THE PLAIN DEALER**

- [Opinion Home](#)
- [Columns](#)
- [Editorials](#)
- [Endorsements 2009](#)
- [Letters to the Editor](#)
- [Send a letter to the Editor](#)
- [Video letters to The Plain Dealer](#)
- [Monday Moaning | Contribute](#)
- [Thankful Thursday | Contribute](#)
- [Reader Representative](#)
- [The Plain Dealer](#)
- [Contact The Plain Dealer](#)

[Opinion »](#)

Community, cooperation building Cleveland's Gordon Square Arts District

By [Plain Dealer guest columnist](#)

September 18, 2009, 5:37PM

By Lawrence N. Schultz

Cleveland's Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood is an aging, historic working-class enclave that for many reasons should suffer from every urban ill. Instead, a team of nonprofit organizations has created a unique economic dynamo, the Gordon Square Arts District, that is rewriting the way the arts can rapidly shape neighborhood redevelopment.

Ultimately, \$30 million in projects is predicted to cash in at \$500 million in commercial and residential real estate development, thousands of construction jobs and hundreds of permanent jobs. How is this happening?

The executive directors and boards of three participating nonprofits -- Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, Cleveland Public Theatre and Near West Theatre -- displayed courage and vision to break the mold and create the Gordon Square Arts District. In doing so, they agreed to limit independent fund raising and make raising funds for the arts district a priority, delegate considerable governance to a board with a majority of independent directors and promote the betterment of the whole through other collaborations.

Other cities have employed the arts as a tool for development. But the Gordon Square Arts District is believed to be the first instance where existing nonprofits, already owners of established theaters and programming, have coalesced to do planning, fund raising, renovation, new construction and infrastructure improvements. Sixty percent of the \$30 million goal has already been raised from public and private donors.

The three participating nonprofits also have a common mission of social justice and working with underserved populations -- demonstrated in part by a \$1 million neighborhood responsibility fund. It will be used to provide current residents and businesses advantages such as low- or no-interest loans, abated increases in property-tax or business-improvement district assessments,

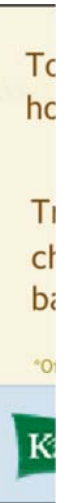
LATEST OPINION HEADLINES

- [A recap of Plain Dealer endorsements for the general election](#)
- [Randy Lerner's vote: Editorial cartoon for Nov. 3](#)
- [The three envelopes](#)

[MORE OPINION HEADLINES »](#)

LETTERS UNLIMITED

Letters to the editor from the print edition and longer, online-only letters from readers



- [No proof carbon dioxide emissions are destroying the planet](#)
- [Local funding is needed to aid renters at risk of eviction](#)
- [City's decline is alarmingly evident when schoolkids become targets of crime](#)

[MORE LETTERS »](#)

[EDITORIAL BOARD »](#)

OPINION ARCHIVES

Browse by month:

GO ▶

Opinion Forum

ADVERTISEMENT

- [Personalized photo gifts](#)
- [Bryant And Stratton Enroll TODAY!](#)
- [Doubletree's Newest Hotel in Downtown Cleveland](#)
- [Enroll now preschool - grade 12](#)

Enter for a chance to win 2 tickets to "Holiday in Toyland"!

Enter for a chance to win 2 tickets to see Guy Fieri at the Fabulous Food Show! Travel Connections

Enter for your chance to meet the Radio City Christmas Spectacular cast!

50% off restaurant gift certificates, [Click Here!](#)

Enter for your chance to win two days of unlimited golf in Butler County, PA!

transportation and human services such as day care and job placement.

Only 2 years old, the Gordon Square Arts District has more than 25 new shops, restaurants, artists' studios and other new businesses, resulting in a commercial vacancy rate of just 3 percent to 4 percent. A \$3 million streetscape redesign will be dedicated Saturday, dressing up Detroit Avenue from West 58th to West 73rd streets with a variety of new sidewalks, lighting and buried utility wires, public art, benches, trees, pavers and wider sidewalks to encourage pedestrian traffic and outdoor dining.

The Capitol Theatre, a one-time vaudeville and silent film theater at West 65th Street and Detroit Avenue, is in the final stages of a \$7.5 million renovation and will open Oct. 2 as an independent and specialty film house, also showing quality Hollywood features.

With those projects near completion, plans are already being finalized for a new \$7 million performance center for Near West Theatre and for a \$9.4 million renovation of Cleveland Public Theatre, the oldest standing theater in Cleveland and one of the nation's leading experimental performance venues. Scores of parking spaces, including valet parking, have been added, with more planned every year for the next few years.

The Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, aided by enlightened public officials, including Councilman Matt Zone and Mayor Frank Jackson, has been working on reviving the aging neighborhood since 1973. The community group has helped generate significant redevelopment, including a revived housing market that includes Vintage Development Group's Battery Park, a \$100 million project of 328 condominiums.

Meanwhile, three of Cleveland's civic giants -- Richard Pogue (of Jones Day), Albert Ratner (Forest City Enterprises) and Thomas Sullivan (RPM International) -- saw a novel, if unconventional, prospect for reinvestment in Cleveland, and started recruiting believers, including myself.

The Gordon Square Arts District is taking concrete steps, through independent governance, the creation of a Business Improvement District and the \$1 million neighborhood responsibility fund, to ensure the long-term sustainability of neighborhood improvements so that residents and longtime stakeholders in the neighborhood participate in the benefits of its success.

This is more than a studio in someone's garage trying to become an arts district. The Gordon Square Arts District is establishing the infrastructure for an empowered organization that will position Detroit-Shoreway, a neighborhood with more than 17,000 residents, for sustainable long-term impact and development. It is setting new standards for community development and neighborhood responsibility.

Schultz is chairman of the Gordon Square Arts District and a partner with Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP.

Low Airfares To Cleveland

Find Low Airfares To Cleveland. Book Flights For Cheap From Tripmama.
www.tripmama.com



AARP Auto Insurance

Over 50? You Could Save Up To \$402 On AARP Auto Ins From The Hartford.
aarp.thehartford.com

2009 New Car Pricing

Buying a New Car, SUV or Hybrid? Find Discount Prices in Your Area!
www.WhyPaySticker.com

Recommend (0)

Inappropriate post? [Alert us.](#)

[Print this](#)

[Email this](#)

[Share this:](#)

Previous story: Ohio anti-discrimination bill gets a little GOP help

Next story: Prisons are punitive for Ohio taxpayers

Comments (0 total)

[RSS](#)

[Post a comment](#)

You must sign in to post a comment.

Sign in to cleveland.com

Username

Password

Sign In

Don't have an account?

[Register Now!](#)

We've upgraded our community features on cleveland.com

[Learn more! >>](#)

Site Search

Search Local Business Listings

Go

[Site Map](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact us](#)

[▶ Make us your home page](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Weather](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Interact](#) | [Living](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Autos](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Classifieds](#)

- [Your Photos](#)
- [Your Videos](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Forums](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Music](#)

- [Post a Job](#)
- [Post a free classified ad](#)
- [Sell your car](#)
- [Sell/Rent your Home](#)
- [Apartments & Rentals](#)
- [Claim your Business Listing for Free](#)

- [Friday! Magazine](#)
- [High School Sports](#)
- [Arts](#)
- [Taste](#)
- [Going Out Guides](#)
- [Style](#)



Special home delivery offers!

[The Plain Dealer](#)
[Sun News](#)

© 2009 Cleveland Live, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#). [Community Rules](#) apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site. [Contact interact](#)