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Team NEO study projects economic boost from Ingenuityfest, Gordon Square Arts District

By [Julie Washington, The Plain Dealer](#)
March 26, 2010, 2:56PM



Lisa DeJong/The Plain Dealer

Gordon Square Arts District is pumping millions of dollars and new jobs into the regional economy by attracting patrons to its restaurants, galleries and theaters, according to a report by Team NEO.

The ripple effects of **Ingenuityfest** and the **Gordon Square Arts District** pour millions of dollars into the region's economy, according to two new Team NEO studies.

Team NEO, a nonprofit organization that works to attract business to the region, looked at visitors from outside the area, job growth, construction and other factors, said Team NEO vice president for research Jim Robey.

The arts district will have generated \$317 million in sales and transactions in Cleveland, and \$436 million in Ohio, by 2013, the research shows.

Gordon Square aims to be a destination neighborhood on Cleveland's West Side. It offers shopping, dining and live theater. It's the home of art galleries, **Cleveland Public Theatre** and the Capitol Theatre -- a renovated movie theater that reopened in 2009 after 24 years.

Two of Gordon Square's five Phase One capital projects -- the theater renovation and streetscape improvements along Detroit Avenue -- were finished in 2009. Still to come are the renovation of Cleveland Public Theatre, construction of a new home for the **Near West Theatre** and creation of additional parking.

Team NEO's look at Gordon Square forecasts into 2013, when the arts district's Phase One construction projects are scheduled for completion.

According to projections, in 2013, Gordon Square will have created nearly 800 jobs in Cleveland, and nearly 200 jobs in Ohio, and provided \$2.3 million in combined city, county and state tax revenues for that year.

"We have always said this is a project of regional importance," said Joy Roller, the district's executive director. "We are creating the kind of place that attracts and retains Clevelanders."

Gordon Square Arts District is a collaboration of Cleveland Public Theatre, **Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization** and Near West Theatre.

Ingenuityfest -- a three-day music, arts and technology festival -- helped the local economy by bringing 30,000 to 35,000 participants downtown last year, according to organizers. Team NEO found visitors from outside Northeast Ohio accounted for \$2.7 million for Cleveland. \$1.3 million for

TheGenius101

received 510 accounts for \$27 million for Cleveland, \$12 million for Cuyahoga County and about \$4.5 million for Ohio.

The studies reflect the power of arts organizations to import dollars into a community, said Tom Schorgl, president of the **Community Partnership for Arts and Culture**.

"It gives you a good picture of how an organization or event fits into an economic system," Schorgl said. "It's a snapshot in time, that of course can change as we go into the future."

What gives Team NEO the power to crunch numbers and gaze into the future? The organization uses software developed by the Amherst, Mass.-based company Regional Economic Models Inc.

Customized for Northeast Ohio, the software is able to measure job creation, taxes, transportation, lodging and consumer and business-to-business sales for Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, the region and state, Robey said.

A sampling of participants at last year's Ingenuityfest were surveyed, and that data was used for the study, he said.

The software looks at direct, indirect and induced spending. It works like this: Let's say that the Green family goes to dinner in the Gordon Square neighborhood. When Mr. Green pays the check, that's direct spending, said Ziona Austrian, director of the Center for Economic Development at Cleveland State University's **Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs**.

The restaurant buys lettuce and poultry from Ohio farmers, an example of indirect spending, Austrian said. The restaurant's waitstaff uses their paychecks for housing and recreation -- that's induced spending.

"It's all about the quality of the researcher and the assumptions they make," Austrian said. "In general, they (Team NEO) do good work."

Ingenuityfest moves from **Playhouse Square** to the subway level of the Detroit-Superior Bridge for this year's event in September.

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Posted by **artemusward**
March 26, 2010, 3:05PM

" Lies , damn lies , and statistics".

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Posted by **ricefarmer**
March 26, 2010, 4:31PM

I had a great time in Gordon Square two weeks ago. A great place! Good job Joy and crew!

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Posted by [ipodguy](#)
March 26, 2010, 3:13PM

I love that area now. It still is a little rough around the edges but I can see it being really nice in the future. I would actually consider moving there if the in-laws were not living with us. They would be a little scared.

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Posted by [scrivo](#)
March 26, 2010, 9:50PM

Capitol Theater (but really only theater 1) is wonderful and rivals that of Cinemark Valleyview. In fact it's better because they don't serve smelly jalapeno nachos like they do at Cinemark.

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Posted by [lakewood216](#)
March 27, 2010, 1:08PM

Hopefully the movie selection improves there. While it's nice to have a non-suburban alternative to Crocker Park as far as some of the more popular semi-artsy/indie moves go, it's no substitute (yet) for the Cedar Lee.

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Posted by [sec516](#)
March 26, 2010, 3:16PM

Does the model predict how much MORE growth would be generated if we reduced social services and returned the money to hardworking NE Ohioans in the form of tax cuts? I think the results would be positive.

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Posted by [TheGenius101](#)
March 26, 2010, 3:31PM

Reduce social services and engage in more tax cuts? So you want an influx of homeless people and more money for the rich to buy yachts and 2nd vacation homes?

I can guarantee you that the upper middle class folks aren't investing in Cleveland...they are investing out of state buying property

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Posted by [TheGenius101](#)
March 26, 2010, 3:16PM

I need to check this out. I was really excited for this and hope it succeeds. The area sounds like it has a lot of potential! Isn't the area by

success. The area sounds like it has a lot of potential. Isn't the area by Battery Park?

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Posted by **sensiblemind**
March 26, 2010, 3:34PM

If you haven't been to Gordon Square area you need to see for yourself what can be done when we re-invest in existing infrastructure. This stands in contrast to the endless and wasteful exurban sprawl model. Genius - Battery Park is just north of Gordon Square - an interesting community of houses that are like a welcome urban enclave.

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Posted by **miguel**
March 26, 2010, 3:59PM

So, you're claiming it's better to keep taxes higher on those who might invest? What economics class did you learn that one in Skippy? And how is your idea going to solve Cleveland's problems? You think the welfare class is going to rise up and create high wage jobs for everyone?

Perhaps if we stopped spending all our government's waking hours and resources on the plight of the depressed and instead focused some of their energy on getting the governmental machine out of the way of those who can and will invest in themselves, their businesses and their communities, we might actually create more jobs for those depressed people. Just a thought.

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Posted by **eoak**
March 26, 2010, 4:05PM

Most of the money funding the projects outlined in this article came from private sources not government money. In fact, there is huge private capital campaign fueling most of the Gordon Square work....

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Posted by **ohcitykat**
March 26, 2010, 4:12PM

I bought my home just blocks away from Gordon Square 2 1/2 years ago. Since this project has been completed, we've seen several condemned homes on our street be completely renovated (rather than torn down, which we were initially hoping for), more businesses popping up and just an overall more positive vibe in the neighborhood. I love being able to walk to a movie, great restaurants and some of the coolest shops in Cleveland. If you haven't been to Gordon Square yet, please stop by - it's a real gem.

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Posted by **vernalhills**

Posted by **youngkma**
March 26, 2010, 4:18PM

"Tell the tough guys we're tougher than tough times" ... what recession?!?!?! lol

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Posted by **Rumpo**
March 26, 2010, 4:19PM

Ohio slashed its business and income taxes in recent years. Know what else? Ohio's had damage caps on medical malpractice for several years too. Contrary to predictions on the right, doctors' insurance rates went up not down.

Conservatives never admit when they've won... because that would require admitting that after they won, their ideas failed to work. These things can be measured. Instead they just wait a couple years and then demand that we pass the thing we already passed when they demanded it the last time. This suggests that they don't do a lot of research.

Oh, and Gordon Square is a success story for both the public and private sectors. And in response to Genius101, Battery Park is a couple blocks north of Gordon Square and up to the edge of the bluff.

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Posted by **vortix**
March 26, 2010, 4:19PM

This is all great news. Though it would be better to see a non-biased group release results like this. Cleveland truly rocks regardless though!

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Posted by **Peet**
March 27, 2010, 10:32AM

Ingenuity Fest is a bigger key to the growth of the whole city than most people realize. It's new location inside the Detroit-Superior Bridge makes it unique in the world. If you invited someone from New York, Los Angeles, D.C. or even Japan to come see it, they would leave amazed and tell their friends about how crazy awesome Cleveland is.

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