

# **Analyzing a Proposal to Reconstruct Cleveland's Public Square:**

A Contingent Valuation Study

By

William Benish  
Philip Niles  
Joshua Shaw

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## **1. Introduction**

Public Square lies in the heart of Cleveland. Like the city, the Square's prestige may be antiquated, but it is capable of being revived to reflect Clevelanders' hope and desire for a more attractive and engaging downtown. In this paper, we evaluate a proposal designed to realize these hopes. ParkWorks, a non-profit organization, and their partners drafted the Public Square reconstruction proposal to change the Square's image from a traffic thoroughfare to a vibrant civic park. Our paper analyzes the monetary value of Cuyahoga County's benefit from the reconstruction project and evaluates its potential impact on the downtown area.

Through our contingent valuation study, we found that 76.02% of Cuyahoga County approves of the project proposal, and that people would visit Public Square 3.9 million more times per year if it were implemented. Increased visits to Public Square would probably have a large, positive impact on the downtown area's economy. We argue that Public Square should be reconstructed and that it would work well with other downtown improvement projects. The community's estimated value for Public Square is \$29.85 million per year. Despite Public Square's high value, our data led us to conclude that only \$5.6 million per year could be raised toward its reconstruction through public financing measures like a levy or flat tax. However, public policy makers could finance the project with public money from a tax tied to income or with private money from downtown businesses. We project that Public Square's reconstruction would have a significant positive economic impact, and that downtown business owners may also be willing to finance the project.

## **2. Project Overview**

Public Square currently serves as an important downtown traffic hub. As a result, it is considered neither pedestrian-friendly nor park-like. The square's four disjointed quadrangles are divided by the six lane roads Ontario Street and Superior Avenue. Although these roads decrease commute time, they make the area unwelcoming for pedestrians. The square's present

construction also makes it uninviting to pedestrians. Public Square's isolated quadrants, walled in by tall shrubs, brick, and concrete, make visitors feel vulnerable and unsafe. Figure 1 depicts Public Square's present state:



Figure 1: Aerial photo of Public Square (courtesy of Jose Beltran and You Zhang, 2006)

The Public Square reconstruction would make the square a more pedestrian-friendly destination. The reconstruction would narrow Ontario Street and Superior Avenue by two lanes and would resurface the roads with an elegant brick design to create a more unified public space<sup>1</sup>. Ontario and Superior would be closed during non-rush hour times. Traffic would still be allowed to move around the square's perimeter, and the square would also feature a public transit station. The street curbs would be lowered and the square rebuilt to make the area more open and inviting. A farmer's market would be held on weekends during the year's warmer months and an ice rink would be maintained in the colder months. An amphitheater would also be constructed to provide space for seasonal festivals. Benches and other spaces for small public gatherings would be added to the park, and the square would also feature an indoor and outdoor restaurant. Since the Public Square reconstruction project reconfigures the square's traffic flow,

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<sup>1</sup> "Design Plan Memo." Christopher Thomas, 2006.

the project's implementation may increase people's downtown commuting time and traffic congestion.

It is reasonable to expect that many people across Cuyahoga County would experience either some cost or some benefit from the project. People living downtown or in the suburbs would gain benefits from using or having the opportunity to use Public Square. Given Public Square's uniqueness and long history, we anticipate that many people across the county might appreciate the improvement to the city of Cleveland, despite not actually using the park.

Likewise, it is reasonable to assume that some people across the county would experience costs from the project. The project's public costs mainly derive from how the project would change the traffic flow through downtown. Other people might derive costs from the change because they simply like Public Square the way it is. Finally, people may be against the project is that they would rather see the money allocated for Public Square used to improve other aspects of Cleveland.

### **3. Contingent Valuation Method.**

Much of the proposal's costs may be tallied by adding its construction and maintenance costs, but the public's costs and benefits that we mentioned above are harder to quantify. We used the contingent valuation method to estimate them and to overcome this difficulty.

The contingent valuation method operates on the principle that the best way to find out how much people value a public good or service is to ask them. The contingent valuation method uses individual survey data collection to ask people this question. People may either be willing to pay something for the project's implementation or be willing to pay to prevent the project from occurring. The former can be considered a net benefit and the latter a net cost. The contingent valuation method is useful for evaluating public projects because it helps derive the many dimensions of how people value the projects they support. For example, people gain a use value from directly using a public project and an option value from just having the option to use

or to participate in the project. People may even gain a non-use value from merely knowing about a public park's existence. Similarly, if individuals reject the public project, for any reason, we can obtain their willingness to pay to keep the project from occurring.

Today, the contingent valuation method is a commonly accepted and positively regarded approach to valuing public goods. Since the contingent valuation's inception as a tool to determine Maine's hunting laws' benefits in 1963<sup>2</sup>, its use has become commonplace. Most notably, the 1988 Exxon Valdez oil spill's cost to the public good was estimated using the contingent valuation method<sup>3</sup>. Since that time, courts have upheld the validity of contingent valuation results in environmental damage assessment cases. Recently, the contingent valuation method has been used by the British government to determine the public benefits of a government sponsored film initiative which organizes and funds film production within the country<sup>4</sup>. Contingent Valuation has also been used to value the burden of caring for severe brain trauma victims and to evaluate how much home-owners value curbside recycling<sup>5,6</sup>.

#### **4. Population and Sampling Strategy**

The survey population should be composed of people who experience the Public Square reconstruction's costs and benefits. Since Cuyahoga County's households would experience much of these costs and benefits, we chose them as our survey population.

To sample Cuyahoga County as accurately as possible, we used the county phonebook to gather potential survey respondents' contact information. Each of the class's students was given a portion of the phonebook and was responsible for generating random numbers by starting at a previously determined length and then measuring 15.8 centimeters down columns and pages

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<sup>2</sup> Stevens, Thomas H. 2005. Can Stated Preference Valuations Help Improve Environmental Decision Making? *Choices: The Magazine of Food, Farm & Resource Issues* 20, no. 3:189.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Steele. 2004. Developing the evidence base for UK film strategy: the research process at the UK Film Council. *Cultural Trends* 13, no. 4:5.

<sup>5</sup> Hashimoto, Keiji. (2006). HOW GREAT IS WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR RECOVERY FROM SEQUELAE AFTER SEVERE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY IN JAPAN? *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*, 38(2), 141.

<sup>6</sup> Blaine, Thomas W. 2005. An assessment of household willingness to pay for curbside recycling: A comparison of payment card and referendum approaches. *Journal of Environmental Management* 76, no. 1:15.

continuously from the start value. This technique effectively generated a list of random phone numbers, but its drawback was that it excluded people with unlisted numbers or those without a landline. To correct for an unrepresentative sample, we recorded the respondents' demographic information.

We used the phone-mail-phone method to implement the survey. This method involves two rounds of phone calls and a mail component. In the first phone call round, respondents are called and asked if they would like to participate in the study. During this round, we gave potential survey respondents very few details about the project to reduce a survey sample biased by people with strong feelings for or against the project. If a respondent agreed to participate in our study, we scheduled a time to call the survey respondents for the second round and mailed survey information packets to them<sup>7</sup>. In the second round of our phone-mail-phone survey, we asked the respondents our survey questions.

The phone-mail-phone survey method has several advantages. One advantage is that it is relatively cheap and fast. Another advantage is that unlike simple phone surveys, respondents can use the mailed information packet's visuals and textual descriptions to understand the project better. Moreover, the interviewer can explain the survey's questions over the phone if respondents have difficulty with them.

A drawback of the phone-mail-phone method is that it requires contacting respondents on two occasions. This can lower response rates significantly. Lower response rates can create a biased survey sample because the survey may be sampling only the people with strong feelings for or against the project. Also, this survey method might not gather information from those who are frequently unavailable by phone. To reduce these problems during the first round, we called potential survey respondents five times or until they answered their phone. In the second round of calling, we repeatedly tried to contact survey respondents until we either spoke with them or

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix E

until the survey period ended. Of the 5,370 households called in our survey sample, we spoke with 3,960. Of this group, 1,041 people agreed to take the survey, and 567 people actually completed the survey. This is a response rate of 10.56% of the initial list of numbers, and 14.32% of the numbers we talked to. Our survey's relatively low response adds some uncertainty to our results because our sample may be unrepresentative of the county's population. We used the respondents' demographic information to correct for this potential bias in our data's results.

## **5. Survey Questionnaire Design and Implementation**

Our survey design and implementation took numerous measures to reduce the biases that could have distorted our study's data and results. The survey information packet used textual and graphical descriptions to illustrate the project proposal<sup>8</sup>. We worded the questionnaire to be informative, clear, and succinct. The information packet's construction ensured that our respondents did not perceive or value the Public Square proposal differently than we intended<sup>9</sup>. This also reduced the information bias, where respondents make poor valuation decisions because they are inadequately informed about the project.

At the end of the information packet, we asked the respondents to consider whether they were for the proposed reconstruction or for keeping Public Square the same, given that they did not have to pay for the project. This question let us know if we should ask for the respondent's willingness to pay for the project or willingness to pay to keep the Square the same. We took several measures to make sure that the vote question accurately represented people's opinions of the Public Square proposal. First, we framed the question to make the respondents give thoughtful consideration by explicitly stating the question's importance. Framing the question as a vote gave the respondents a familiar context, reducing the hypothetical bias, where respondents

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix E

<sup>9</sup> Bateman, Ian, Richard T. Carson, Brett Day, et al. *Economic Valuation with Stated Preference Techniques: A Manual*. Great Britain: Edward Elgar, 2002. Pg. 303.

provide poorly conceived answers due to a question's theoretical nature<sup>10</sup>. We also provided the respondent with reasons for supporting the proposal and reasons for keeping Public Square the same. This reduced the information bias and the interviewer bias, where survey respondents tailor their survey responses to please the interviewer<sup>11</sup>. Providing reasons for and against the project proposal detached the interviewers from any particular viewpoint. It also reduced the warm-glow bias where respondents could support the project proposal just to obtain a positive feeling, forgetting about Cleveland's other public amenities. Moreover, framing the vote question as "for the proposal" or "for keeping Public Square the same" rather than "for the proposal" or "against the proposal" gives equal weight to either alternative. We did not allow the vote question to suggest that we did or did not support the Public Square project proposal.

Based on the respondent's answer to the vote question, we asked the respondents one of two elicitation questions: how much they were willing to pay to implement the proposal or how much they were willing to pay to keep Public Square the same. Our survey took precaution to ensure that the respondents accurately reported their willingness to pay values for or against the Public Square proposal. We reduced the hypothetical bias by emphasizing that the respondents should carefully consider their budgets and that the question was important to our study. We also compensated for the warm-glow bias by informing the respondents of the diverse range of alternatives for supporting or not supporting Public Square.

Our study used the payment card elicitation mechanism to determine the respondents' willingness to pay values. Attached to the information packet the payment card listed a range of numbers, from 0 to 1000, that represented the anticipated range of alternatives respondents might report for their willingness to pay values<sup>12</sup>. When we asked the respondents how much they were willing to pay for or against the project, they chose a number from this list. One advantage

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<sup>10</sup> Bateman 439

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 302

<sup>12</sup> Appendix E

of this method was that letting the respondents choose a value gave them a frame of reference for determining their willingness to pay<sup>13</sup>. To reduce the bias that may be derived from the range of given values, the payment card used a wide variety of numbers. This method avoids the starting bias inherent in bidding game elicitation formats where the interviewer successively asks a respondent if he or she is willing to pay a certain amount for the valued good<sup>14</sup>. By letting respondents choose their willingness to pay values from a list, the payment card also avoids the yea-saying bias where respondents overstate their willingness to pay values, successively saying yes because they are uncomfortable saying no<sup>15</sup>. Finally, the payment card method is a simple, effective way to gather data. Some researchers prefer the dichotomous choice method, where survey respondents are asked if they are willing to pay a specific amount for or against a project proposal, but since this question must be varied across the survey sample, this method complicates data analysis and limits the study's results by the statistical assumptions that must be made to understand the data<sup>16</sup>. Given these considerations, the payment card method is the most robust choice for gathering elicitation data.

The rest of our survey gathered information on the respondents' use of Public Square and their demographic information. Following the elicitation question, we asked the respondents about their present use of downtown Cleveland and Public Square and how their use would change if the project was implemented. We also asked the respondents about what they considered to be the proposal's most important feature and about why they supported changing Public Square or keeping it how it is today. The final part of the survey was the demographic questions. These questions measured how representative our survey sample was of Cuyahoga County. We facilitated the respondents' openness by keeping the survey results anonymous and suggesting a variety of answers for the personal questions about education, income, and race.

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<sup>13</sup> Bateman 138

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 138

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 138

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 139

## 6. Results and Data Analysis

Our study's results describe people's support for the Public Square proposal; identify why people liked the proposal as well as what parts they liked about it; estimate how Public Square's use would change after the reconstruction and would impact downtown Cleveland's economy; and offer insight into how much people value the proposal.

### *6 a. Vote and Support for the Project*

Our respondents voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Public Square proposal by 76.02%. Among respondents who had one or more household members working downtown, 86.96% approved of the proposal.

Figure 2 shows the percentage values for the reasons why the respondents supported the Public Square proposal. The respondents primarily voted for the project because they thought it was important that Cleveland beautify and revitalize the downtown area. Figure 3 shows the percentage values for the reasons why the respondents supported the Public Square proposal. Those voting against the proposal cited their top concern as the money put toward Public Square's development could be put to better use. Though we anticipated that traffic would be a major concern for the respondents, people who commute through the square show strong support for the proposal at 78.67%. This compares favorably to the general population's support for the project.

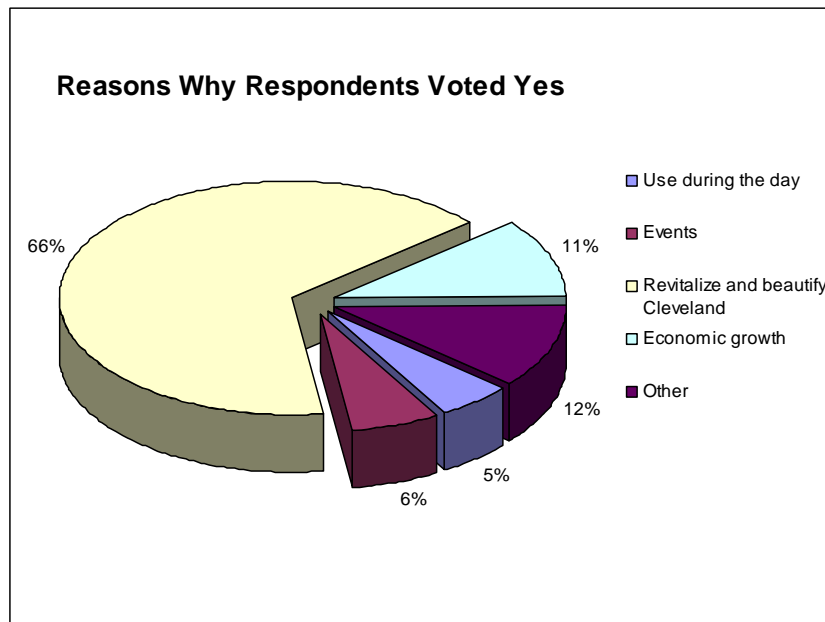


Figure 2: Reasons Why Respondents Voted Yes

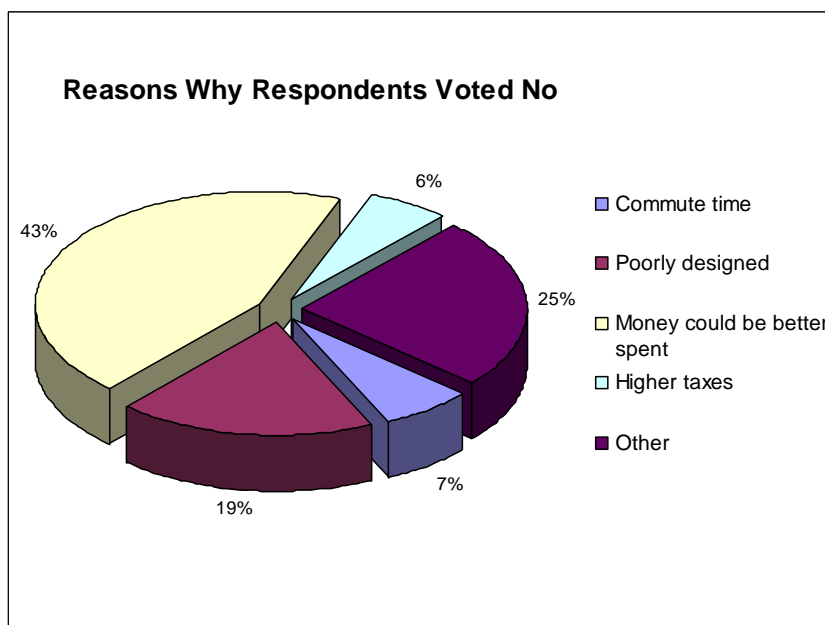


Figure 3: Reasons Why Respondents Voted No

The survey asked the respondents their favorite element of the proposal. Figure 4 shows the respondents’ support for the proposals’ various elements. The respondents generally expressed similar levels of support for these elements. The top two favorite elements of people voting for or against the proposal were “outdoor concerts and festivals” and “more inviting open space.”

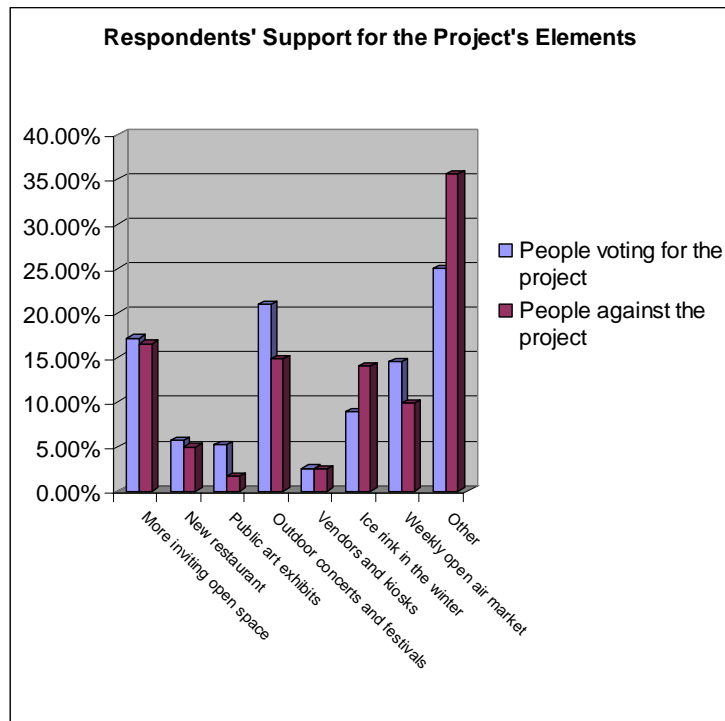


Figure 4: Respondents' Support for the Project's Elements

#### 6 b. Usage

Our survey data shows that reconstructing Public Square would significantly increase its usage. The average respondent indicated that members of his or her household spend time within Public Square an average of 14.5 times per year<sup>17</sup>. This means that Public Square has over eight million visits per year and that on average, 22,000 people spend time within the square daily. According to our data, the average household in Cuyahoga County would make seven additional visits to Public Square per year. Thus, the square could expect an increase of almost 3.9 million more visits per year or an average increase of 10,700 more visits per day. This is approximately a 50% increase in usage.

A closer look at the usage data reveals who currently visits Public Square and who will visit the square after the reconstruction. Figure 5 shows Public's Square change in usage, broken into the categories of people who work downtown and people who do not work downtown.

<sup>17</sup> For simplicity's sake, we count these visits as being done by one person.

Figure 5 also shows the estimated number of new visitors to Public Square<sup>18</sup>. The data predicts that if Public Square was reconstructed, it would have an average of 1,548 more visits per day, or 565,020 more visits per year, of people who previously never visited Public Square. People who work downtown and currently visit Public Square would increase their visits an average of 2,940 more times per day, or 1,073,100 more times per year. The group of people who do not work downtown and currently visit Public Square will increase their visits an average of 6,228 more times per day, or 2,273,220 more times per year.

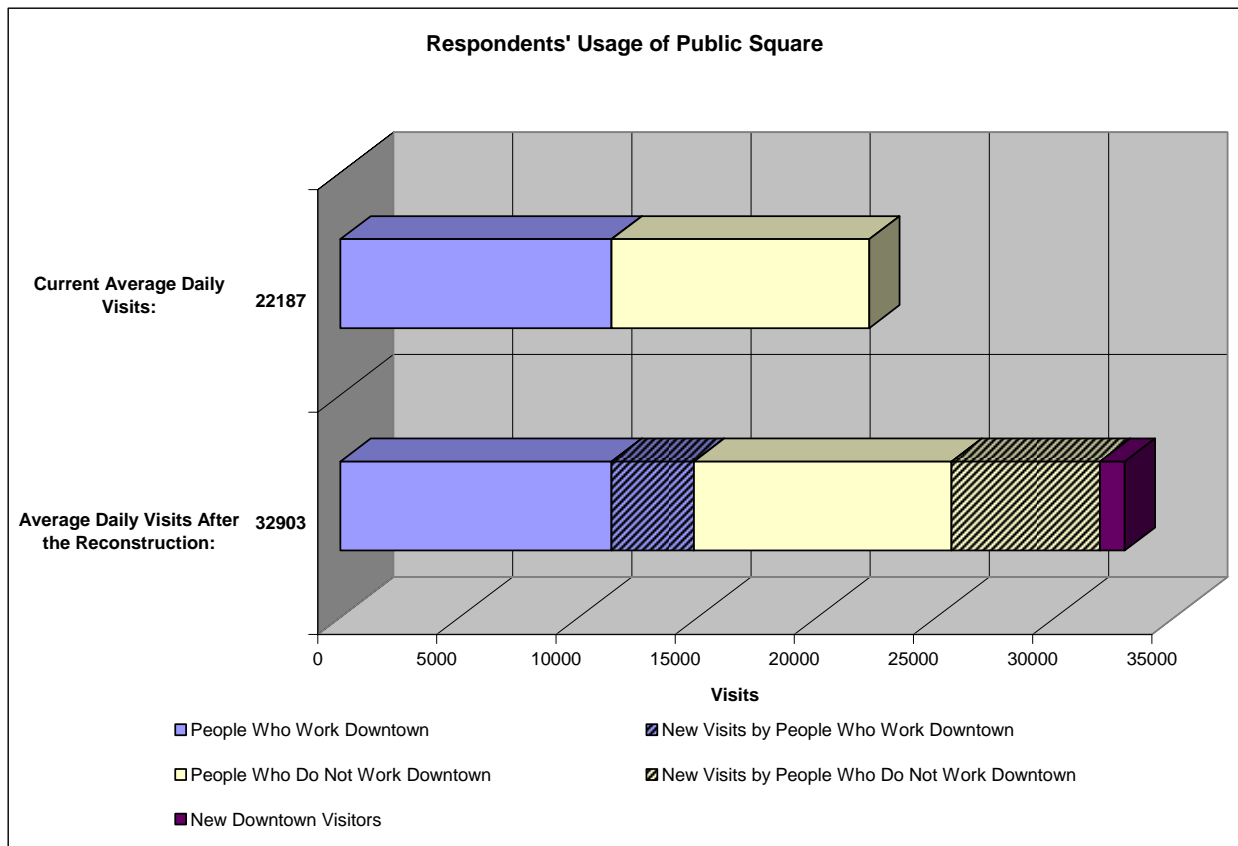


Figure 5: Respondents' Usage of Public Square

<sup>18</sup> People who do not currently visit Public Square

*6 c. Estimating the Economic Impact of Increased Usage*

We predict that increased visits to Public Square would contribute to downtown Cleveland's economy. Similar projects in other major cities, most notably Millennium Park in Chicago, have resulted in significant downtown economic growth<sup>19</sup>. Visitors to the reconstructed Public Square would spend money either in the square or in the area's surrounding businesses. Figure 6 shows the annual economic impact of increased visits to Public Square, based on our estimation of 3.9 million more visits to Public Square per year and on various estimations for the average amount spent per visit. If every household spent just \$5 a visit, the economic contribution of new visits alone would total \$19.5 million. The downtown economy would reap an extra \$100 million a year if people spent an average of \$25.64 during their visits<sup>20</sup>.

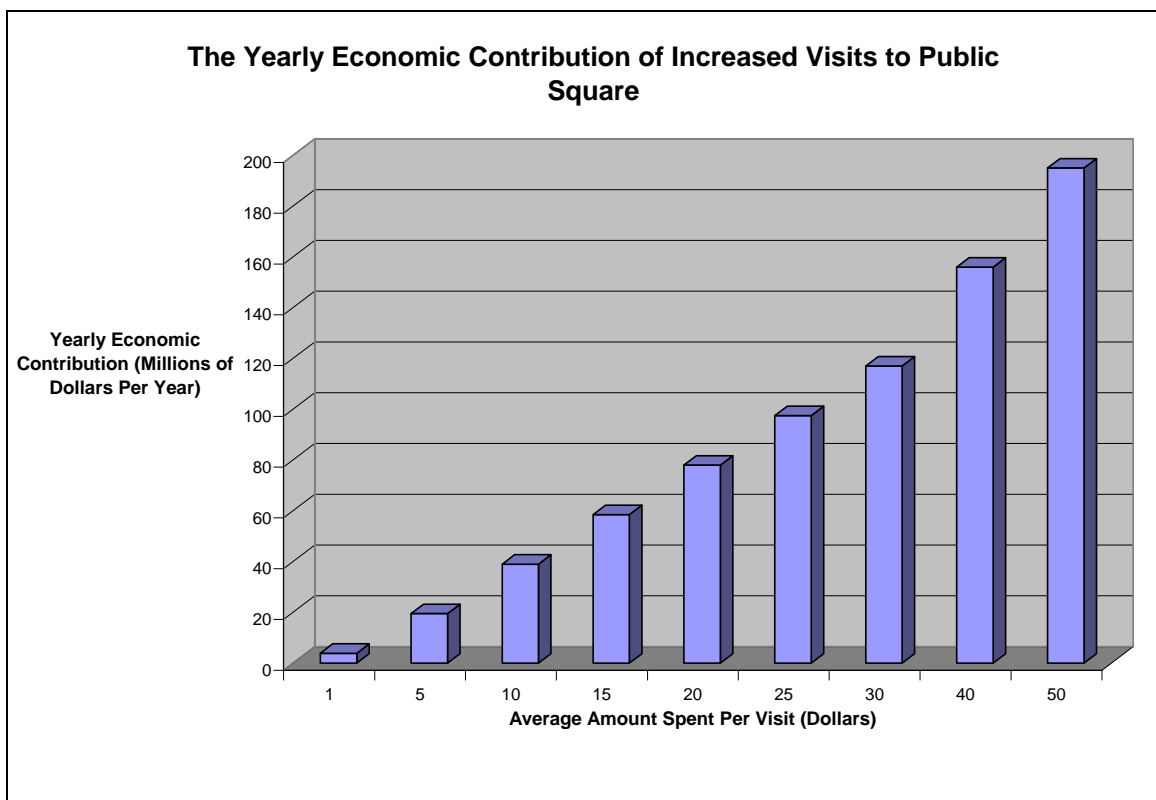


Figure 6: The Economic Contribution of Increased Visits to Public Square

<sup>19</sup> Uhlir, Edwark K.. "The Millenium Park Effect." *Greater Philadelphia Regional Review*. Winter 2006.

<sup>20</sup> These are reasonable estimates for local downtown visitors' average spending. According to the Downtown Cleveland Partnership's Fact Book, out-of-town visitors' typical daily spending is \$104.40 after subtracting the average downtown hotel room rate. Local visitors would probably spend less than this amount, and that is why we chose the range of \$1 to \$50 for local visitors' average amount spent per visit.

It is important to consider that this table only measures the economic impact of increased visits to Public Square. The downtown economic contribution of people who currently visit Public Square will also increase as people spend more time downtown and in the square's area. Therefore, this table probably understates people's economic contribution to downtown Cleveland after Public Square's reconstruction. It is outside our study's scope to estimate people's contribution to the downtown economy in detail. Nevertheless, this table is a useful approximation of the downtown economic contribution of increased visits to Public Square.

#### *6 d. Who is Willing to Pay*

We estimated what factors affect household willingness to pay using quantitative statistical analysis<sup>21</sup>. The only influential demographic factors affecting willingness to pay were income and whether or not a member of the household works within walking distance of Public Square. Households with higher incomes tend to be willing to pay more for the project, and the same is true for households with family members who work downtown. It is significant that households' willingness to pay for the reconstruction is positively correlated with income because this shows that the respondents were reporting realistic values. This finding supports our study's validity because it allows us to make more accurate estimates of the public's value for the reconstruction proposal. Other factors such as race, age, education, living in the city of Cleveland, and size of the household did not have statistically significant effects on willingness to pay<sup>22</sup>.

#### *6 e. Valuing Public Square*

The average household willingness to pay estimates the public benefit from the project proposal. After adjusting for demographic differences between our survey population and Cuyahoga County, we determined that the average household's willingness to pay is \$53.50 per

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<sup>21</sup> We used the ordinary least squares regression model. Please see Appendix B.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix A

year<sup>23</sup>. By multiplying the average household willingness to pay by the county's number of households, we determined that Cuyahoga County's households are willing to pay \$29.85 million a year for the project. Nevertheless, this number does not wholly reflect how much Cuyahoga County values reconstructing Public Square, as people will value Public Square in the future as well as in the present. We included this future worth in our estimation of the project's total present value by adding the discounted project's value discounted from future years. Using a 5.75% yearly discount rate, the present value of ten years of payments is \$235 million<sup>24</sup>.

It is important to emphasize that our estimate for the county's household average willingness to pay is only the mean value. The median household willingness to pay value also yields valuable insight. The median willingness to pay for the Public Square Reconstruction was only \$10, implying that less than half of the county would pay more than \$10 for the reconstruction. The mean and median willingness to pay values differ substantially because a minority of respondents is willing to pay a substantial amount for the proposal. Table 1 shows the cumulative frequency of households' willingness to pay for Public Square's reconstruction.

<b>Percent of Respondents Willing to Pay a Certain Amount for Public Square's Reconstruction</b>	
>\$0	56.95%
>\$10	49.81%
>\$25	41.70%
>\$49	39.19%
>\$74	28.57%
>\$99	26.83%

Table 1: Cumulative Frequency of Households' Willingness to Pay

<sup>23</sup> We corrected for the fact that willingness to pay is positively correlated with household income. The willingness to pay was not statistically correlated other demographic factors like race, education, and geographic location. Please see Appendices A and B.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix C

## 7. Policy Implications

### *7 a. Financing and Economic Impact*

We estimated Public Square's value to Cuyahoga County households to be \$235 million, discounted for ten years of future payments, or \$29.85 million a year. Our estimates for Cuyahoga County households' benefits from the Public Square proposal give policy makers clear budgetary guidelines for anticipating Public Square's reconstruction costs, especially if they plan to finance the reconstruction with public money.

Policy makers should be cautious about financing the project with either a flat tax or a levy. The median willingness to pay value for the reconstruction project is only \$10. If a county flat tax or a levy for more than \$10 per year was put on the ballot to finance Public Square, voters would likely reject it since less than half of them would be willing to pay more than \$10. A \$10 a year levy or tax equates to only \$47,629,109, discounted for ten years of payments<sup>25</sup>. If public policy makers want to finance the square's reconstruction with public money, they should use financial instruments that tie households' contributions with their income, since the willingness to pay for Public Square is positively correlated with income.

Public policy makers should encourage local businesses to help finance Public Square's reconstruction. We have shown that rebuilding Public Square has a potentially significant economic impact on the downtown Cleveland area. People would probably contribute tens of millions of dollars to the downtown economy, only counting the additional visits to Public Square after its reconstruction. Our analysis is limited to estimating how additional visits to the downtown area would contribute to the local economy, and policy makers should further investigate Public Square's total economic effects. Given the Public Square reconstruction's potential economic impact, downtown business owners have a profit incentive to invest in the project. Local business owners have already shown their commitment to revitalizing downtown

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<sup>25</sup> Appendix D

by forming the Downtown Cleveland Alliance and the Downtown Cleveland Improvement Corporation (DCIC) to make voluntary contributions toward improving the area. Public policy makers should pursue a similar strategy to secure funds for Public Square's reconstruction.

*7 b. Use*

Our use estimates for Public Square, before and after the proposal, suggest that the square's reconstruction would draw more people to the square. If the proposal was implemented, we estimate that roughly 10,700 more people would visit Public Square per day, a 50% increase over the square's present usage. Fifteen-hundred of these people currently do not visit the square. The increase in visitors is a direct result of the proposed reconstruction, so we conclude that more people are coming to spend time in the square, rather than merely passing through it. While visits to Public Square would increase by approximately 50%, our conclusion also suggests that the number of people actually spending time in the square would increase by a higher amount. Not only will more people visit the square, but also a larger portion of them will be active participants in the downtown area.

Public Square's reconstruction would work well with the Euclid Corridor Project. As the Euclid Corridor is currently planned, the Silver Line transit route will run between University Circle and Public Square, facilitating transportation to the downtown area. This increased accessibility could increase the number of visitors to the square. Likewise, having a reconstructed Public Square would likely increase use of the Euclid Corridor Silver Line. Public policy makers should integrate Public Square's design with the Euclid Corridor Project to enhance this synergy.

*7 c. Safety*

The president of the Greater Cleveland Partnership, Joe Roman, identifies that Public Square's number one problem is safety. Implementing the Public Square reconstruction would make the square safer and assuage this concern over the area. One of the most popular features among respondents for and against the project was making Public Square a "more inviting and open space." People's concerns over this issue probably relate to the perception that Public Square is not a safe place. Public Square's reconstruction would rebuild the square to be more open and more accessible to pedestrians. These changes would make the area safer because people would be less isolated walking through the square. Our data also suggests that visits to Public Square would increase by 50% if it were reconstructed. Again, people would be less isolated in Public Square because a higher amount of foot traffic would create a more secure atmosphere in the area. New York City's experience with Bryant Park, a former haven for drug dealers, supports our predictions for Public Square. Bryant Park's reconstruction into a venue featuring outdoor activities, festivals, and a café made the area more appealing. The park attracted many new visitors, and Bryant Park is now a safe and desirable area<sup>26</sup>.

*7 d. Vote*

The respondents' vote for the Public Square proposal indicates that they would strongly support its reconstruction. The vote's consistency across demographic groups indicates that the reconstruction proposal has a broad appeal throughout Cuyahoga County, especially among those who work downtown. People voting for and against the project agree that its two most important elements are "outdoor concerts and festivals" and "more inviting and open space." Due to these findings, policy makers should propose a reconstruction proposal similar to the one presented by our study.

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<sup>26</sup> Sherer, Paul M. "Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space" Pg 17

In addition to Bryant Park's improvements, the park's desirability is evidenced by the fact that commercial and residential property values surrounding the park increased at a much higher rate and to a much higher level than surrounding submarkets.

## 8. Conclusions

According to our contingent valuation study, Cuyahoga County has shown clear support of the Public Square reconstruction project and its households are willing to pay a significant amount of money, \$29.85 million per year, to see the proposal accomplished. Public Square's reconstruction could increase visits to the square by 50% and contribute a significant amount of money to the downtown economy. Integrating Public Square's reconstruction with the Euclid Corridor Project would further enhance the square's role in downtown Cleveland's rejuvenation. Our survey data suggests that public policy makers should focus on developing Public Square into a more inviting, open space as well as a venue for outdoor concerts and festivals. Despite Public Square's popularity, we urge public policy makers to take care choosing their public financing options. No more than half of our respondents were willing to pay more than \$10 a year for the project proposal, meaning it would be difficult to finance Public Square's reconstruction with a levy or flat tax. Instead, an income tax may be more effective at obtaining the necessary funding. Local businesses may also be willing to contribute to the reconstruction. With these considerations in mind, pursuing Public Square's reconstruction is a feasible endeavor, well-supported by the public, and has the potential to greatly enhance the Cleveland area.