NEWSLETTER

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OPINION: CALL HASLAMS' BLUFF

Jimmy and Dee Haslam have been involved in a high-stakes game of Stadium Poker that they started a year ago. They want either a $1 billion renovation of the existing lakefront stadium that is only 25 years old, or a new $3.6 billion dollar domed stadium and sports village in Brookpark next to the airport. And they do not want to pay their fair share in either case.

The Browns say they want to be "bold and innovative." What they are not is smart. They are being morally reprehensible - not just as citizens of Greater Cleveland. Their proposed abandonment of downtown Cleveland and its inevitable effects on the urban core exposes that **they have no sense of their role in our community except as a selfishmerchant extracting the maximum revenue from the community for their product.**

Haslams hired HKS Inc., the architects for the $5.5 billion SoFi Stadium in LA that **team owner Stan Kroenke paid for all by himself** to do preliminary renderings for the Brookpark facility. SoFi was built for both the LA Rams and LA Chargers and includes a 6,000-seat event venue.

SoFi was supposed to be one of the new breed of stadiums with an integrated mixed-use sports village of food and beverage, hotel, entertainment, retail, hospitality and housing occupancies. Five years after completion, the only thing surrounding SoFi stadium are surface parking lots and the teams' administrative offices.

The preliminary HKS design that Haslams have trotted out shows an irresponsible 140-acre surface parking lot for 20,000 cars which Haslams intend to use to pick the pockets of fans for $94 million over 30 years. The roads leading to Brookpark – I-90, I-71 – are not sized or shaped to accommodate surges of 20,000 cars to and from a game day event. The single exits from each mean

Above: SoFi Stadium; Inglewood, CA; HKS., Inc.
Below: Proposed Browns Brookpark Stadium & Sports Village; HKS, Inc.

disaster for fans. Think Blossom – with twice the cars! - where for over 50 years, fans have suffered from an unaddressed traffic nightmare.

Haslams should pay for all infrastructure upgrades required to manage the stormwater runoff from 140 aces of asphalt which represents an ecological nightmare and what the EPA calls a "threat to clean water." A 4.5" rainfall which happens every two years here will dump over 17 million gallons of water – 2.3 million cubic yards – on Haslams' asphalt. Jimmy and Dee need more land for a retention lake to hold the volume of water they will be required to provide.

And 20,000 spaces are not enough. The lakefront stadium is served by GCRTA that saves thousands of fans the need to drive and park downtown. Can Haslams afford a spur off of the airport rapid to give fans the same benefit in Brookpark?

SoFi's 'village' is nowhere to be seen after five years. They have been able to draw good crowds for events, but with a city nine times that of Cleveland with 12.5 million people and a facility hosting two NFL teams, their development called Hollywood Park which is supposed to include 900,000 square feet of retail, 800,000 square feet of office space, 2,500 new residential units, a luxury hotel with over 300 rooms, 25 acres of public parks, playgrounds, open space, a lake, and pedestrian, bicycle, and mass-transit access for future services sounds far less ridiculous that Haslams'. **But five years later, in one of the best markets in the US - with two NFL teams, it is still nowhere.**

The Haslams have not shown any renderings apparently on what spending $1 billion to 'renovate' the lakefront stadium would possibly look like. The Haslams claim that they have spent $154 million

Continued next page

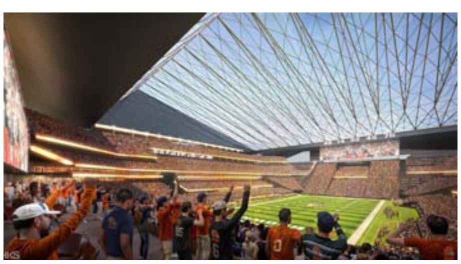
on the lakefront facility since they bought the team in 2012.

Of the original construction cost of $289 million (over $500M today), the city was on the hook for $165 million with the team, the NFL and the State of Ohio picking up $112 million. Cleveland has paid $281 million in principal and interest through 2021 according to *Signal Cleveland's* audit, plus $52 million in repairs and $21 million on property taxes, insurance and professional services, plus $28M since 2016 on additional repairs for a total of $378 million.

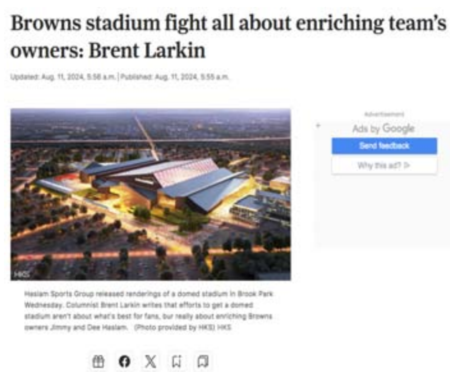
Cleveland Mayor Bibb put together a $461M incentive package to keep the team on the lakefront and Haslams then released even more renderings of Brookpark and told everyone that they were concerned only with their fans' experience and wanted to be "bold and innovative," and have decide to move Brookpark.

There is no infrastructure in Brookpark to handle the vehicle traffic and stormwater runoff their project would deliver, nor is there a market for additional mixed-use real estate in that part of the community which is still suffering from a massive overbuild of commercial space that began over two decades ago. **Great Northern Mall, only five miles away, is on life support** with owners praying for a public/ private partnership to add six hotels, apartments, condos and a medical hub. And Moen just announced the closing of their HQ and the elimination of 400 jobs.

Haslams only have 176 acres to work with. They do not have enough land to waste 140 acres on surface parking lots, build the stadium and a sports "village" and still have enough room for the stormwater retention lake they will require.



Above & Below: Proposed Browns Brookpark Stadium & Sports Village; HKS, Inc.



Browns stadium fight all about enriching team's owners: Brent Larkin

Updated: Aug. 11, 2024, 5:56 a.m. | Published: Aug. 11, 2024, 5:55 a.m.

Haslam Sports Group released renderings of a domed stadium in Brook Park Wednesday. Columnist Brent Larkin writes that efforts to get a domed stadium aren't about what's best for fans, bur really about enriching Browns owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam. (Photo provided by HKS) HKS

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Below: Haslam's Proposed 2021 lakefront development

And Haslams' Brookpark venture has magically crept from $2.1 billion to $3.6 billion with the mixed-use facilities and infrastructure upgrades Haslams don't think they should pay for.

The Haslams say that they are only willing to put up $1.2 billion for half of the stadium and expect public bonds to fund the balance which would be paid back using tax revenues from the development. Yet they are talking about seeking tax abatement from Brookpark. Published reports list Haslams' worth at $14.4 billion.

This is simple. Just say 'No.' Let's not give them ANY public money, abatement or subsidy for this development that will be so damaging to our fragile urban center. Then we can all focus on what any legitimate needs are for the lakefront stadium.

Ken Silliman, former chair of the Gateway Economic Development Co. who recently published a 600-page memoir-stadium expose on Cleveland's chaotic history with sports stadiums, participated in a panel discussion on June 26 at the Cleveland Public Library on the Browns Stadium issue along with stadium economists.

Silliman suggests that the city and fans encourage the Haslams to reframe the Browns' lakefront stadium in the historical vein of Boston's Fenway Park or Chicago's Wrigley Field. Silliman noted that the sin tax used for stadium maintenance has never been adjusted for inflation since 1990, which he suggested upping.

Silliman also observed that **the lakefront stadium does not need $1 billion** – or anything close to it - it is in good repair for its age. Its predecessor lasted 66 years with virtually zero maintenance.

The recent panel discussion at the Library with two other visiting stadium economics experts Brad Humphreys and Victor Matheson offered opinions and facts with a single conclusion: Erecting a multi-billion Brookpark dome and surrounding village would not make Cleveland a wealthier city as some have been touting.

Humphreys, an economics professor at the University of Alberta, stated, **"There's zero evidence in 30 years of peer-reviewed academic research that a professional sports team in a city generates any substantial jobs, raises wages, raises income, raises property taxes**… What professional sports are good at is moving economic activity around to different parts of the city."

Browns' revenue in 2022 was $545 million with a profit of $106 million. The Haslams paid $987 million for the Browns in 2012. As of August 2023, the Browns are worth $4.62 billion. According to *Forbes*, Haslams are worth $14.4 billion today, live in Knoxville, TN and own the Columbus Crew and part of the Milwaukee Bucks.

Haslams' Bluff:

Haslams' rent for the lakefront stadium has been a shameful $250k/ year, while the city pays $600k/ year in property taxes because the Browns are a for-profit business. **The lakefront stadium does not need a $1B makeover.** It is something the Haslams ***want*** and expect us to pay half when the **average** Browns ticket is already **$247.**

A significant issue that the Haslams seem to have not properly considered is that even if they get over half the money from public sources and spend $3.5 billion, and put together a new domed stadium in Brookpark with adequate access and parking with scores of restaurants, hotels, sports bars, housing and retail spaces, **they will create a destination for only ten football games and 2-4 concerts a year.** To survive, such a development requires a larger population with above-average household incomes than Cleveland has.

Haslams' Brookpark development will siphon off revenue and jobs from downtown's food and beverage establishments that are already challenged in winter months. This will play out over years with the city core's lifeblood dripping away more and more each year.

People from the east side will not drive to the far west side for such assets except on game/ concert days. We have had only 20 stadium non-sport events **in the past 20 years. Indianapolis with its domed stadium has had only 31- Detroit only 21 – in 20 years! Haslams' consultants reported that falsely.** It is not the facility that is the limiting factor – it is the size and demographic of our small market.

What downtown provides Browns fans with that Brookpark will not are the ability to park in a number of different locations at variable price points, and the quality **authentic** urban experiences of East 4th Street, the Warehouse District, Playhouse Square, the lakefront, and the Flats.

And anything that Haslams do in Brookpark will injure downtown's assets. Within a certain period of time, establishments in those neighborhoods will begin to turn over, jobs will decrease and if Haslams' development is at all well done and successful, unless Greater Cleveland finally begins to add significant jobs and population, downtown businesses will thin out and go away and we will have even more ground floor vacancy downtown.

The Haslams want to play real estate developer – at our expense. Their previous attempt to propose a ridiculous urban development around the stadium demonstrated that they have no idea how to plan, design and stage development based on our market's needs and our ability to absorb space. The mistakes they will make will prove fatal to their development *and* downtown. It is only a question of time. **Call their bluff.**

St. Vincent Charity Hospital to Disappear:

The former St. Vincent Medical Center will soon be demolished according to the Sisters of Charity Health System.

The hospital closed in November 2022. In September 2022, the Sisters of Charity Health System announced that it would be eliminating inpatient, surgical and emergency room care. The Sisters of Charity Health System said it is too costly to renovate the building and filed paperwork with the city to have it demolished. The charity plans to construct a health hub in the area to provide a variety of healthcare services to the Central neighborhood.

St. Vincent at the time said that although it was eliminating all its overnight hospital beds, it would continue to provide outpatient mental health services; addiction medicine services through Rosary Hall; primary care, and internal medicine and specialty clinics.

"The seismic shifts in health care over the last decade have created a challenging environment for St. Vincent Charity Medical Center to continue as a traditional acute care hospital. The rise in demand for outpatient care, declining inpatient volume and the growth of telehealth, all of which were accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, have placed additional financial pressure on the hospital," St. Vincent said in statement. When the hospital closed in November 2022, the facility was renamed the St. Vincent Charity Community Health Center.

St. Vincent Charity Hospital opened in 1865 at Cleveland's first permanent general hospital. Bishop Amadeus Rappe from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cleveland acquired the first site and the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine staffed and managed the facility which served both poor and private paying clients.

The city's first surgical pavilion and amphitheater was built at St. Vincent's in 1872 and a free medical dispensary for the poor opened in 1894. The city's first Catholic diploma school of nursing was begun in 1894. Rosary Hall, on of the first US hospitals to offer special services and a program for alcoholics opened in 1952. The first open-heart surgery in the Midwest was performed at St. Vincent's in 1956, and St. Vincent developed the first heart-lung machine in the world.

In November 2024, a permit application was made for demolition. Outpatient care by St. Vincent Charity continues at two nearby facilities — a medical office building at 2475 E. 22nd plus Joseph & Mary's Home at 2302 Community College Ave. The latter offers medical care for the homeless.

So in just three years, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center went from planning a major expansion to requesting the demolition of nearly its entire

Above: St. Vincent Charity Hospital; 1965

main campus to the southeast of Downtown Cleveland. The charity has requested permission to demolish all but the 18,000 square feet HCC Building of the 449,338-square-foot campus. A $13 million archives building is to be constructed to preserve the history of the Sister's on East 22nd Street, south of the campus.

On the ground floor of the West Building is the Spanish-designed, 300-seat Holy Trinity Chapel which was dedicated by Bishop Joseph Schrembs of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese on March 7, 1931. "The chapel itself was part of the expansion of St. Vincent Charity in the late 1920s and early 1930s." noted a 2021 posting in the hospital's blog. "The expansion came about as part of a massive citywide, nine-day fundraising campaign in the spring of 1926, which raised over $1.5 million."

The lone structure to be saved from the wrecking ball in the coming weeks and months is a mostly windowless brick building on East 22nd called the HCC Building, an ambulatory care center. HCC refers to a risk assessment called Hierarchical Condition Category. It's a payment coding system used at emergency departments and mandated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The 18,000-square-foot HCC Building and another across East 22nd, connected by an enclosed walkway over the street, were built in 1984. While the HCC Building will be mothballed for an unidentified future use, the building at the other end of the enclosed walkway has purchased by The Centers for Families and Children (CFC), who paid $1.9M for the 58,286 square foot office building, which is intended to provide integrated health care to people with behavioral health issues.

The St. Vincent Hospital 4+ acre site and the adjacent closed Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center's 8-acre site are contemplated to replace the 1937 Olde Cedar public housing project, the oldest in the country. Combined with Olde Center, the 30-acre site is eyed by CMHA for 900 units.

EDITORIAL: THE HASLAMS LACK DESIGN & CIVIC AWARENESS

The Billionaire Haslams Ask for Another Huge Handout:

In the July 2024 issue of *Architectural Record*, Pansy Schulman examined the various proposals for sports mega developments, their financing and their civic and economic outcomes.

Browns owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam plan to move the Browns to Brookpark next to Hopkins Airport to a new domed stadium even if Cleveland plays ball with them downtown. The Haslams also own the Columbus Crew soccer team and a share of the Milwaukee Bucks NBA team. *Forbes* reports their net worth at $14.4 Billion.

SoFi Stadium by HKS in Inglewood, CA delivered a privately funded 70,000-seat year-round stadium for the LA Rams and the San Diego Chargers for a whopping $5.5 billion. The stadium is *supposed* to anchor a 298-acre neighborhood being developed with offices, retail and thousands of apartments adjacent to a 25-acre public park.

SoFi owner Stan Kroenke who made his money developing shopping centers is estimated by *Bloomberg* to be worth $19.6 billion. SoFi hosted the Super Bowl in February 2022 and the College Football National Championship in January 2023. Across the street, Steve Ballmer has privately funded a new $2B Intuit Dome arena for the LA Clippers basketball team which opened in 2024.

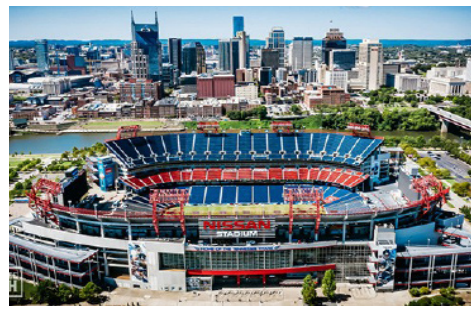
A dozen other stadium complexes are currently in play throughout the US. This new exploded model is built upon the perceived success of the original interurban sports complex, Camden Yards in Baltimore. The building standard moved beyond the old model as a fortress surrounded by parking lots by attempting to achieve a design compatibility and quality to integrate with and revitalize the surrounding neighborhoods. There is no surrounding neighborhood in Brookpark.

With upscale designs and promises of jobs and increased revenue, team owners are attempting to bargain for massive public subsidies and support for increasingly large urban districts. Political subdivisions are afraid to resist out of fear that their teams will 'steal away into the night' like a Benny Mardones song as Art Model did with the Browns before the 1996 NFL season.

The Las Vegas $1.2 billion baseball stadium by Bjarke Ingels Group to lure the Oakland Athletics is part of a master plan that includes an on-site hotel and casino. The project's planned construction commencement in 2026 and its $380 million taxpayer assistance is being challenged to stop the financing deal by a teacher and union-backed group, Schools Over Stadiums.

Top: SoFi Stadium; Inglewood, CA; HKS, Inc.; 2020
Second: Intuit Dome; Inglewood, CA; AECOM; 2024
Third: Camden Yards; Baltimore; RTKL/ HOK Sport/ Janet Marie Smith; 1992
Fourth: Allegiant Stadium; Las Vegas; Manica; 2020
Fifth: Las Vegas Baseball Stadium for Oakland A's; BIG; 2028

Top: St. Petersburg's Tampa Bay Devil Rays Stadium; Populous; 2028
Below: Nashville's Nissan Stadium; Populous; TBD



The $1.9B Vegas Allegiant Stadium by Manica was subsidized with $750 million in public spending. The population of Las Vegas is 656,274. Cleveland's is 361,607. The greater Las Vegas area's population is 2,953,000 and has been growing at 2% per year. The population of Cleveland's metropolitan area is 1,771,000 with very little change year-to-year.

St. Petersburg's $1.3B Populous-designed stadium for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays includes the development of surrounding 86 acres to include hotel, restaurants, affordable housing and a new African American History Museum. The city council is currently undecided since the developers have asked the city and county to pay half the cost.

Nashville's new 60,000-seat Nissan Stadium for the Tennessee Titans is conceived as the hub of a 338-acre riverfront "stadium village" that will include affordable housing and a multi-modal boulevard.

The largest subsidy in US history is a $1.2 billion public contribution to the $2.1 billion Kansas City Stadium – also by Manica. The population of the greater Kansas City areas is 2.2 million.

Since the 1980s, team owners and government officials have argued that revenue generated from the sports venues will 'spill over' into the surrounding community. **But research of decades of investments has indicated that public investment in such initiatives far exceeds the returns to local communities.**

EDITORIAL: THE HASLAMS LACK DESIGN & CIVIC AWARENESS

And while Camden Yards has even trademarked itself as "The Ballpark That Forever Changed Baseball," the 1996 study by Johns Hopkins University's economists Bruce Hamilton and Peter Kohn found that while the Orioles received an average 40% increase in ticket sales that made the team one of the most profitable in all of baseball, Maryland netted only $3 million per year in tax revenue and job creation in exchange for an annual taxpayer expense of $14 million. **The area around Camden Yards today has fewer jobs than it did in 1998.**

Prominent economists in 2022 surveyed 30 years of data and the purported link between stadium construction and urban renewal and concluded that the "near-universal consensus evidence that sports venues do not generate large positive effects in local economies." Further, they found that the negative externalities of large sports facilities – traffic, crowds, noise, litter and crime – mitigate any positive effects.

While the $5.5 billion SoFi Stadium was privately financed by Rams owner Stan Kroenke, the promises of reviving the surrounding Inglewood community after five years have yet to 'trickle down,' particularly to residents who have been pushed out by rampant speculation.

Between 2016 and 2022 in Inglewood, average rents spiked by 59% vs. 17% across the region. The median price of Inglewood homes climbed 90% from $345k to $655k.

Schulman observes, "In moving their sights from pleasure domes to entire districts, bundling infrastructure upgrades and community spaces into the deal, developers have found a clever way to ask for more."

The San Diego Chargers moved to L.A. in 2017 when residents voted against funding a new stadium.

Some communities have pushed back.

Alexandria, VA said 'no' to a bill looking for $2 billion in public funds and $100 million in direct public subsidies for a 'visionary sports and entertainment development' for the Washington Wizards and Washington Capitals as part of the Potomac Yards development.

In Chicago, the Bears are not having an easy time getting $1.4 billion in public funding towards their $4.7 billion stadium and a surrounding development of restaurants, retail and more on prime lakefront land. While Mayor Johnson has been encouraging, community leaders and Governor Jay Prtizker are not game.

In the May 13 issue of *Crain's Cleveland Business*, Joe Scalzo noted cities that are pushing back on stadium funding. In April, Missouri voters rejected 58% - 42% a 3/8-cent sales tax hike to provide $2 billion for renovations to Arrowhead Stadium for the Kansas City Chiefs and a new stadium for the Kansas City Royals.

In May 2023, Tempe, AZ voters vetoed a proposed entertainment district that would include a $2.1 billion Phoenix Coyotes arena and entertainment complex for the NHL. A nonpartisan think tank's analysis found that for every $2.71 invested in the district, Tempe would receive only $1 in tax revenue.

Also in May, *Pro Football Talk* ran a story with the headline, "The Ship Might Be Sailing on Taxpayer Funding For NFL Stadiums," adding, "It's becoming more clear that elected officials are becoming less inclined to burn political capital by giving public funds to privately-owned football teams."

J. C. Bradbury, professor of economics, finance and quantitative analysis at Kennesaw State University and economists Dennis Cook and Brad Humphreys were quoted in the May *Crain's* article after a comprehensive review of over 130 stadiums on the economic impact of sports teams and stadiums; "**Stadiums don't pay off.** The home cities aren't any wealthier. **They don't have more jobs. They don't have higher income. They don't earn higher wages than cities without them. Most of the spending at these stadiums is reallocated money."**

And Bradbury found that a major event like the Super Bowl or Final Four "doesn't even come close to covering the public price tag… Economists aren't skeptical. The debate is over."

Remember we were told that the 2016 RNC would leave behind an economic benefit of $300 million? The expenses per the CSU Economics Department were over $100M and the income received locally was $40M.

The Associated Press reports that from 1990-2023 on 57 votes on US stadium and arena proposals, 35 were approved and 22 were rejected.

Editor of the website *Field of Schemes* Neil DeMause observes, "This (opposition) is not completely new, but there's definitely a bit more awareness of the fact that … there are unanimous studies saying that **there's no possible way taxpayers will ever get their money back**."

Both Nashville and Buffalo kicked in public funds – but without a public referendum. Buffalo is kicking in an unprecedented $850 million for the $1.7 billion new stadium for the Buffalo Bills – the largest public subsidy in the history of the NFL. The average household income of an African American in Buffalo is only $28,000.

Above: Chicago Bears Stadium & Development Proposal; Manica
Below: Kansas City Arrowhead Stadium/ Neighborhood Proposal; Manica

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December 05, 2024 12:57 PM | UPDATED 23 HOURS AGO

Browns say Brook Park dome would have $1.2 billion economic impact, 1.5 million more visitors

KIM PALMER

EMAIL SHARE TWEET SHARE REPRINTS

Above: Browns BS Claims
Below: *The American Prospect* Headline

THE AMERICAN PROSPECT IDEAS, POLITICS & POWER

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Public Subsidies to Sports Stadiums Aren't Going Away

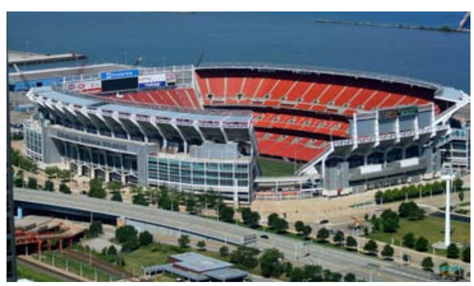
A Tempe, Arizona, vote showed cities can decline to fund millionaires' arenas—but some municipalities still shower wealthy teams with taxpayer dollars.

BY ELIZABETH MEISENZAHL JULY 7, 2023

Continued next page

EDITORIAL: THE HASLAMS LACK DESIGN & CIVIC AWARENESS

Top: Proposed New Buffalo Bills Stadium; Populous; 2026
Second: Jacobs Field/ Progressive Field; HOK Sports; 1994
Third: Gund Arena/ Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse; Ellerbe Becket Architects; 1994
Bottom: Browns Stadium; HOK Sports/ Populous; 1999



Local and state taxpayers are now in the deal to build a new stadium 10,000 seats smaller than the existing 72,000 seat Highmark Stadium with no roof which will not support ancillary development 11 miles from the heart of town in one of the smallest NFL markets. Team owner Terry Pegula is worth $8 billion and paid $1.4B for the team in 2014 which is now worth $3.4B. Pegula wanted the new stadium to be 100% funded by the public, and he threatened to take the team to Austin, Portland or London.

With a NY governor from Buffalo, she announced the deal with Erie County kicking in $250 million, New York State putting up $600M and the NFL and the Bills paying only $550M. Governor Hochul served up the BS that the project will create 10,000 jobs (over a two-year period only), and "New Yorkers can rest assured that their investment will be recouped by the economic activity the team generates."

That is a very large lie. The next day, Hochul admitted that $418M of the $600M will come from disputed tax revenue yet to be collected from the Seneca Nation, the casino-driven Native American nation.

Haslams are pressing the city, county and state to pay for half of the cost of either a $1 billion renovation of the existing Browns stadium – How is that even remotely possible?! – or $2.4 billion for a new roofed stadium and the associated infrastructure and mixed-use improvements at a Brookpark site next to Hopkins Airport.

Cleveland Municipal Stadium was completed in 1931 and its demolition was completed in the spring of 1997 – a life span of 66 years. The new Browns Stadium opened in 1999 at a cost of $283 million and was renovated in 2014 and 2015 for **another** $120 million.

Critical Thinking NOT from the City, County, GCP or DCI:

In a unicorn-level rare example of critical thinking, *Cleveland.com* and *The Plain Dealer* have worked together to propose an unprecedented concept of **regionalism** to pay for not only replacement sports facilities for **all** of our teams AND a replacement airport, but the renovation of those new facilities for the next 40 years.

In a July 7 article by Zachary Smith and Lucas Daprile, the pair proposed a quarter-percent sales tax to be managed by a special commission which would generate $20.1 billion over 40 years that would also relieve minor league teams here of their debt. For a community to even forge a conversation about regionalism that has for seven decades seen its leaders fail to even acknowledge the idea, the proposal brings into focus the opportunities lost to think and act in unison for the betterment of all in NEOH.

Smith and Daprile's sales tax would grow with inflation which, per the Ohio Department of Taxation, would have generated $165.5 million in 2023. State legislation will be required to create the district which would incorporate the core counties of the Cleveland-Akron sports and airport market – Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, Stark and Summit counties. And if the Legislature requires a vote of the new district's residents, it would be a simple yes or no, not county by county. Cleveland is the smallest city in the US supporting teams in three major sports, and Smith and Daprile point out that with our "stagnant" population growth, we risk losing one of our teams without a vehicle to develop and maintain state-of-the-art facilities.

The pair assumed a 5% interest rate on bonds to finance the projects based on the recommendation of the Ohio Association of Public Treasurers and as evidenced by rates on current and recent public projects and their bond sales. The pair assumed a 2.5% rate of inflation, our 10-year average. The pair budgeted for a new facility and one major renovation in the 40 years except for a new 12,500-seat stadium for the proposed women's professional soccer team at $150 million because the team does not yet exist. This *should* compel the National Women's Soccer League to establish a team here.

The pair assumed that the Haslams' proposed $2.4 billion dome was a valid cost and with all of these sports facilities, assume a 50-50 split with the facility commission and the team owners.

The Browns stadium cost $284 million in 1999 and its last major renovation cost $120 million. So based on a $2.4 billion new stadium, the pair budgeted just over $1 billion for a major renovation down the road, and they followed the same metrics for the Cavaliers and Guardians.

They budgeted $1.3 billion for the Guardians' new facility. Tampa Bay is planing a $1.3 billion facility; Oakland is planning a $1.5 million stadium in Las Vegas and Utah proposed $900 million to get a MLB stadium and team. One hitch is that the Guardians now have a lease until 2036, and construction will be more expensive in the future so the pair budgeted 2.5% inflation annually to have $1.9 billion ready for the 2040 ballpark. The pair set aside $2.2 billion – the public's share at $1.1 billion – to later upgrade the Guardians' future home.

For the Cavaliers, they projected $1.5 billion for a 2040 facility, based on the Detroit arena that opened in 2017 for $863 million for the Pistons and Red Wings. In total, the three sports facilities are projected to cost $11 billion for initial construction and mid-life renovations. For taxpayers paying half the bill, the commission would pay $9.3 billion to cover bond payments over 40 years for 50% of the initial constructions and the 50% renovations.

Smith and Daprile assumed that the sports facility commission would assume the full cost of running, improving and paying the debt of Canal Park (Akron Rubber Ducks), Classic Auto Group Park (Lake County Captains) and Crushers Stadium (Lake Erie Crushers). The pair identified the current cost of operating the stadiums and adjusted their budget for inflation going forward.

Taking Care of Hopkins Too

AWARENESS, cont'd

Currently, Cleveland has to convince the airlines to shoulder the financial burden for improvements at Hopkins. **Considering the 63% drop in passenger traffic in the last 17 years**, it is unlikely that the airlines will do much more than contribute to the city's proposed first phase of improvements at $138 million as they agreed.

Smith and Daprine propose to make Hopkins a more competitive and attractive place for the airlines to do business and at the same time, gain the region a voice in how its major air transport hub is managed. Hopkins' current annual operating budget is $130 million.

It is owned by the City of Cleveland and managed by a city enterprise fund, relying on $35 million annually from the airlines for aviation-related costs for passenger flights, including landing fees, arrival fees, rent, utilities, federal inspection fees, terminal area apron charges and tiedowns.

The airport also relies on income from concessions, parking and federal money. The city is not entitled to profit on the airport and airport revenue cannot be co-mingled with the city's general fund.

While the city views the airport as a significant asset, under the facilities commission plan, the city must give up control of the airport, which while a potential political dogfight, relieves the city of the headaches of running the facility and negotiating with the airlines to fund projects.

It also takes away from city hall the awarding of huge contracts to architects, engineers and contractors who in the past have been major contributors – legal and otherwise – to politicians.

Cleveland.com reported in November that the city thinks that the terminal rebuild will cost $2.9 billion, with the first phase costing $1.1 billion. Under Smith and Daprine's plan, the cost of airport construction and maintenance would be paid for by the new sales tax and the airport's non-aviation revenue sources. The facility commission would also absorb the $1 million annually that the Akron-Canton Airport now charges airlines, adjusted for inflation.

Sin tax money was not factored into the pair's projects, except to fund the demolition of the existing facilities or help team owners fund maintenance obligations for the existing facilities. It is interesting that the first genuine example of Critical Thinking on community needs and regionalism comes not from the public or NGO sectors, but even outside the excessive number of NGO's here who have been asleep at the wheel for so long. **Bravo to Smith and Daprine!**

OPINION: Haslams' PR Hogwash:

William T. Eberhard AIA, CAF President

The Haslams' attempts to sway public opinion in favor of their discredited move of the Browns' stadium to Brookpark have taken on multiple forms.

They first found a consultant to prepare what was charitably termed an 'economic impact study' on the relocation which was anything but.

They have commissioned an online public opinion poll which will be meaningless, given the unreliable nature of the Internet. Then Dee Haslam audaciously pitched the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) to back their move to Brookpark.

Dee Haslam's Letter to GCP:

On December 11, 2024, Mayor Justin Bibb, County Executive Chris Ronayne, Cleveland City Council President Blaine Griffin and Cuyahoga County Council President Parnell Jones Jr. attended the monthly meeting of the Greater Cleveland Partnership. (GCP). In a private meeting, they asked the 70-member board of NEOH's CEO's and presidents to agree with them that the Browns should play their home games either at our lakefront stadium after their lease expires in 2028 or in a new domes stadium to be built on the Burke Lakefront Airport site.

The four were unaware that the day before, Dee Haslam, a **GCP board member**, had sent an email letter to GCP board members urging them to support the proposed move of the Browns to the Brookpark site for a new domed stadium next to Hopkins Airport.

The four reminded GCP that **parking, transit, hotels and restaurants are already in place downtown – in a mix that works**. They also noted that a Brookpark site would compete with the Huntington Convention Center, Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse and every other downtown events venue.

The four reminded the GCP board that **massive taxpayers and public monies have been lavished on that infrastructure** and that more is coming in the form of a recent $60 million DOT grant plus $20 million from Ohio for a land bridge from Mall A to the lakefront – something originally requested by the Haslams which the Haslams grossly overstated by alleging it would cost $200 million. If we build a 100- wide bridge instead of a huge public park over the railroads and Shoreway, the bridge's cost is will be $50M - $60M. Realigning the Shoreway is another matter.

NEOTrans got their hands on a copy of Dee Haslam's email to the GCP board, which summarized three attachments that reflected previous **Haslam assertions that are either flagrantly false or simply unverified**, including:

Above: HKS Brookpark Stadium Aerial Rendering
Below: US Bank Stadium, Minneapolis; HKS
Row Three: US Bank Stadium, Minneapolis, HKS

1. It Will Cost $1 Billion to Renovate the Lakefront Stadium:

This is serious baloney. The Haslams have not presented ANY renderings or ANY breakdown of costs to substantiate this outrageous claim.

That is because the community would react with appropriate outrage and indignation at Haslams' concepts and proposed costs. In our prior newsletter, we addressed the ridiculous proposed scope of what Haslams think needs to be done to the lakefront stadium to justify the extension of their lease. Let's not forget that the city still owes $40 million in debt service for the cost to erect the stadium, which will finally be paid off in 2028 when the Browns' lease expires.

A. **Excavate out the lower level of the east and south sides of the stadium for service vehicles access:** This preposterous idea has never previously been on the radar screen. At no point

Continued next page

in the 29-year history of the stadium – designed by HOK Sports/ Populous – the firm that has designed more NFL stadiums than any other firm – has there ever been any suggestion that deliveries and trash removal are any kind of an issue.

And even if there were an issue, the outrageous cost of excavating out the south and east side of the stadium – where the majority of fans approach the facility – would strike that one off the list. It is conspicuous that the Haslams have never offered one shred of evidence or any facts that support or justify such a work scope. Because they cannot.

B. Construct a full-height glass curtainwall on the south and north sides of the stadium: Why? The lower half of the exterior is already glass. What is the sanity of putting a glass wall above in front of the rear and underside of the concrete upper deck? This idea is absurd for it serves no purpose other than Haslams inflating their unsubstantiated projections that attempt to make the existing stadium appear to be a cost liability to retain.

2. Renovations to Lakefront Stadium Will Only Last 20-25 Years:

Normal concrete repairs and steel painting like those contained in Haslam's engineer's 'assessment' report will be minor in cost and will be ongoing. The facility's structure and infrastructure will not deteriorate within another 25 years. This claim is unsubstantiated nonsense from the Haslams. The Haslams' engineers state that the $117M in repairs has been adjusted for inflation and is recommended to be done over the next ten years.

3. A Renovated Lakefront Stadium Will Require $350M - $500M More for Repairs:

This previous unsubstantiated assertion from Haslams was previously guess-timated at $250M - $350M – and it was nonsense then, and now they have increased it even more. As a matter of facts, the previous 'renovation and repair' expenses at the lakefront stadium have largely been cosmetic or at the whim of the Browns – taking out 6,000 seats, adding new scoreboards, adding more scoreboards, new AV system, more TV's, etc.

Haslams own engineers have prepared a 225-page 'assessment' of the lakefront stadium and concluded conservatively that the 1996 structure could use $117M in repairs over the next ten years. The Haslams' quadrupling of that number going forward after a proposed $1 billion makeover is simply nonsense. **It is time our leaders and media called out Haslams for their fabrications and attempts at deception.**

Above: Browns/ HKS Sept. 2024 Aerial Rendering of Brookpark Domed Stadium
Below: Cleveland Lakefront Stadium with Existing Significant Glass Facade at Fan Areas
Row Three: Rosales Land Bridge Design; 2014
Row Four: Great Lakes Exhibition Land Bridge, 1937-38
Row Five: Green Ribbon Land Coalition Land bridge, 2019

4. The Burke Lakefront Site is Too Uncertain and Expensive to be a Valid Site for the Browns:

The Haslam team stated **without substantiation** that it would cost $3.3 billion to erect a domes stadium on the Burke site. Given the Haslam team's propensity for disinformation and opacity, their guesstimate cannot be taken seriously.

It is doubtful that the subsurface conditions at Burke are *significantly* different that those at the current lakefront stadium. Absent professional soil borings, assertions about the sub-grade bearing capacity at Burke are simply irresponsible. And the live loads of a Stadium – even a domed one – pale in comparison to the high-rises nearby. If there is a delta for foundation costs at Burke, in the context of this project, it will not be a large one, and trying to make a mountain out of a molehill is unbecoming of the Haslams, but it has not stopped them previously.
And if we are comparing apples and oranges, **what is the additional cost of infrastructure in Brookpark necessary to realize Haslams' pipedream there?** New roads, widening existing roads, additional exit ramps, a rail connect from the Hopkins Rapid, new/ more traffic signals, parking facilities, the mixed-use development to support the fans - who is paying for that?

There has been no responsible professional assessment of what a domed stadium at Burke would entail – only a pretty rendering showing that there is more than enough land – 440 acres - something that cannot be said about Haslams' Brookpark site – 176 acres - for a stadium, parking, extensive mixed-use and public recreation uses. It is past the time our leaders and media called out Haslams for their fabrications and attempts at deception.

5. Because Burke was Constructed on Landfill, a Domed Stadium Requires a Larger Footprint to Spread the Weight:

Haslams' architect for the Brookpark project talks about pulling the fans as close to the field as possible – to provide an elevated fan experience. He even is raking the Dawg Pound at a steep 34-degree angle – **with no seats!** - standing only – so the 6500 DP fans have what he labels an exemplary experience.

The primary design criteria for a stadium is the fan experience and optimum sight lines to provide such. The structural design and its foundation are developed accordingly to achieve that criteria.

This notion that the 'tail wags the dog' at Burke

is completely contrary to reality and the hype the Haslams themselves have been spitting out in their attempts to change public opinion about their Brookpark project. It is time our leaders and media called out Haslams for their fabrications and attempts at deception.

The Browns' Phony Economic Impact Study:

In October 2024, Jimmy Haslam issued a self-serving statement about their process and their proposed move to Brookpark. He also **claimed to be open and honest with local officials**: "Again, **our work with Mayor Bibb and city officials has been transparent and collaborative** throughout. We will continue to work in earnest with city, county, and state officials to work together on these transformational opportunities."

But when Haslams released what they charitably referred to as an economic impact study on the team's relocation to Brookpark, **they refused to actually produce the study or its work product.** So much for the transparency Haslam claims.

You can imagine why they have refused to release it. We called and asked for it. No response. The remarkable assertions that have been accompanied with no facts, statistics or justifications include the following:

The 'study' asserted without substantiation that the Brookpark stadium and mixed-use development will 1). Bring an additional 1.5 million visitors a year to NEOH, citing 2). Major concerts that are 'passing us by and 3). Pumping $1.2 billion a year into Cuyahoga County's economy.'

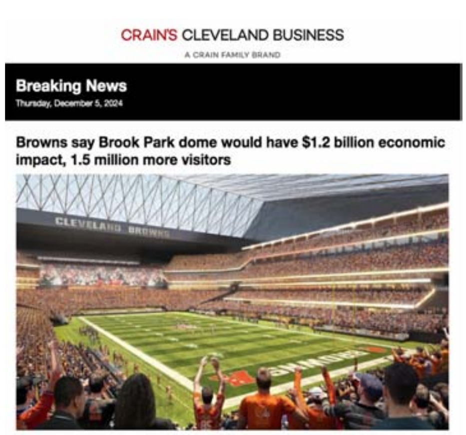
Attracting 1,500,000 additional visitors a year to NEOH is a bold projection. That is 29,000 NEW visitors every week! What is the draw?

As noted elsewhere, **the YEARLY AVERAGE at the 10 other domed stadiums in the US over the last ten years is THREE major concerts a year.** The Browns spokesman states that they are counting on ten major events annually to each bring 50,000 people to town. So out of nowhere, with a hotel with only 400 rooms, Brookpark is going to draw over three times the average of all other domes stadiums in the county? Not bloody likely.

The fact that there are not ten 50k+ concerts a year on tour in the US each year apparently escaped the attention of the Browns and RCLCO.

The Consultants who prepared the 'report,' RCLCO attempted to characterize the Brookpark development as a "transformative economic impact for NEOH and the state." **RCLCO's claims dramatically conflict with the study commissioned by Cleveland that indicates a**

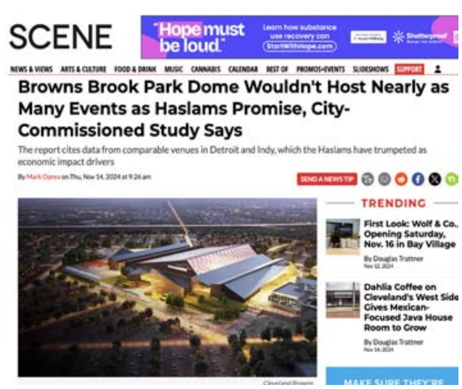
Above: CLE Officials Want Haslams to Seriously Consider Burke for a Domed Stadium
Below: Rendering of Domed Stadium at Burke Lakefront Airport


CRAIN'S CLEVELAND BUSINESS
A CRAIN FAMILY BRAND

Breaking News
Thursday, December 5, 2024

Browns say Brook Park dome would have $1.2 billion economic impact, 1.5 million more visitors

Above: Crain's Repeated Haslams' Bogus Economic Impact Assertions
Bottom: City Commissioned Study Found Haslams' Event Hopes Unlikely


SCENE

Browns Brook Park Dome Wouldn't Host Nearly as Many Events as Haslams Promise, City-Commissioned Study Says

The report cites data from comparable venues in Detroit and Indy, which the Haslams have trumpeted as economic impact drivers

TRENDING

First Look: Wolf & Co. Opening Saturday, Nov. 16 in Bay Village

Dahlia Coffee on Cleveland's West Side Gives Mexican-Focused Java House Room to Grow

$30 million loss annually. And as reported in *SignalCleveland*, that figure does not include the revenue loss to Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, the Convention Center or other downtown events spaces for any activity that ends up in Brookpark.

RCLCO claimed – naturally without any substantiation – that the Brookpark development delivers "net growth." It is utter nonsense. Try and prove it. If they could have, they would have released the report.

The RCLCO report assumes that 40% of people who attended non-NFL events at the lakefront stadium came from out of state. Out of town - not out-of-state - might be true for the Rolling Stones. And RCLCO believes that those visitors will somehow spend $260 million here annually. **Cleveland's tourism NGO's have routinely significantly exaggerated the volume of people that are a 'visitor' to Cleveland - to disturbing degrees.** Our last newsletter caught Downtown Cleveland Inc.'s absurd assertions in their retail 'study.' **They count EVERY fan – EVERY seat - including Clevelanders - that attends a football, baseball of basketball game as a tourist**, which is nonsense.

But the hard numbers from the hotel and restaurant revenue indicate that Cleveland visitors spend an average of $158 per day. At that rate, we will need 1.65 million days of visitors to generate $260 million. **These claims from the Browns and RCLCO are utter nonsense.**

Haslams' Bogus Jobs Claims:

RCLCO predicts that the Brookpark project will produce 5,400 full-time jobs. Two-thirds of those jobs would be on-site, largely fueled by the mixed-use development wrapped around the stadium. The rest of the jobs – 1,980 – would be at other businesses in the region.

The mixed-use development is proposed to include 300,000 square feet of retail, two hotels totaling 400 rooms, 500,000 square feet of office space (over multiple phases) and 1100 apartments. While that mix and amount of space will never be built within the next 20 years, if it were, that would involve the following job production:

Interestingly, when the Browns selected Lincoln Property Company as their mixed-use developer, Lincoln alleged that the development would allegedly create 3,300 jobs, **one-third less that RCLCO's claim**.

Retail Jobs: Accordingly to the US BLS, the

Continued next page

OPINION: Haslams’ PR Hogwash, cont’d:

country’s 6.5 billion square feet of retail space provides employment for 15.5 million

people in what are classified as low-wage jobs. That works out to one employee for every 419 square feet, so the Browns first phase of 137,000 square feet of retail can be expected to deliver a whopping 327 jobs. If and when they get to 300,000 square feet, we can expect 716 employees with low-wage jobs.

Construction Jobs: The first phase of construction would take three to four years and include the 67,500-seat stadium and about 1 million square feet of development, including 400 hotel rooms, more than 400 apartments, retail and 12,000 to 14,000 parking spaces.

Lincoln claimed that the project could generate more than 6,000 construction jobs a year at its peak. The Association of General Contractors of America states that a three-year $100M construction project produces 358 jobs per year or a total of 1,073 jobs over those four years.

If we believe that Haslams’ domed stadium and the $1.2 billion mixed-use project (once it is eventually completed) will really cost $3.4 billion and take four years to complete, at $850M per year, that equates to **3,043 jobs per year**, **half of Lincoln’s claim** of 6,000 construction jobs each year.

Hotel: A 400-room hotel can be expected to have **75-115 employees**.

Office: Assuming that RCLCO is not dishonest enough to count any employees housed in the office portion of the development as jobs created by Lincoln’s construction of the building, 300,000 square feet of office space, depending on how it is put in place at what size, could account for **25-40 jobs**.

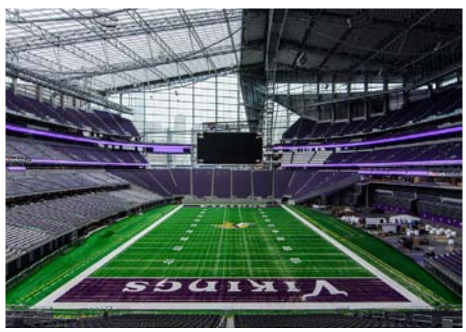
Apartments: The 400 apartments planned for Lincoln’s Phase I would require a staff of 12-24. For 1100 units, that translates to **36-48 jobs**.

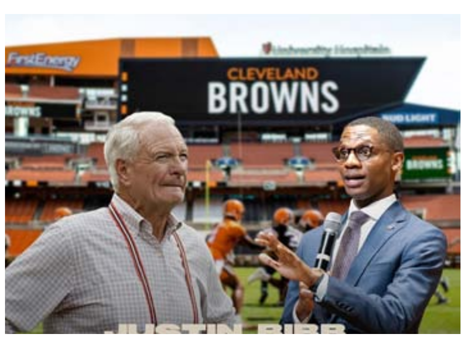
919 Jobs vs. 3,300 - 5,400 Claimed:

So **Phase I jobs would reliably total 439 - 530 low-wage jobs. When completed, the jobs created would total 919 jobs, quite a bit below the claim of 3,300 - 5,400 from Haslams/ RCLCO/ Lincoln. And given the state of office leasing in Greater Cleveland, with the city giving up 50% of its office space in the past ten years, it is doubtful that there is ANY market demand for office space - particularly in Brookpark in the foreseeable future.**

Tax Revenue: Tax revenues from those jobs will not pay for much when it comes to the bonds the Haslams want to cover the other half of the

Above: Lance Evans, HKS design principal on Brookpark Stadium
Below: US Bank Stadium, Minneapolis; HKS
Row Three: US Bank Stadium Interior; HKS
Row Four: US Bank Stadium Exterior; HKS
Row Five: *Architect Newsletter* Critique of HKS Design





money it will cost to build their stadium so they can keep their $13.2 billion in their bank.

Summary:

It appears that every assertion from the Haslam team on costs or jobs is irresponsibly exaggerated or a complete fabrication. It is interesting and **disappointing that none of our region’s media sources or NGO’s have done any work to analyze or challenge the Haslam team’s many claims for their intentional misrepresentations.**

Having not seen the unreleased report, County Executive Chris Ronayne’s statement read, ““We don’t want to engage in a game of political football, but a biased report attempting to justify an unprecedented sum of taxpayer money for a new stadium does not change our position, and we’re going to have to throw a flag on the play. Economic impact studies commissioned by organizations with a vested interest often present overly optimistic projections that do not reflect the financial realities faced by local governments and taxpayers... Our residents remain our top priority, and we want to ensure that any public participation benefits them, our communities and the investment the public and private sector have already made.”

Browns PR Hubris:

In December, the Browns arranged for their Brookpark stadium venue Design Director, Lance Evans, to be interviewed which was then posted on You Tube. Evans put forth a series of typical PR statements to attempt to paint a much more positive picture of the proposed project, despite the fact that local media has not been terribly critical or inquisitive of the project’s details.

And Evans was unable to resist a number of assertions that were just plain hogwash. One of Evans’ assertions was that the **Haslams wanted the stadium “to be the first of its kind.**” But other than the fact that the facility is pushed eight stories into the ground to comply with FAA height restrictions for Hopkins Airport next door, the **design bears more than a striking resemblance to the US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis which HKS completed in 2016.**

That stadium also features a series of flat planes for its walls and roofs and a partial sloping glass roof. While the renderings for the Brookpark stadium show a glass roof with no support, the Minneapolis stadium has only a partial glass roof and reflects considerable structure to carry the weight of the glass and snow which the slope will hopefully shed.

OPINION: Haslams' PR Hogwash, cont'd:

Evans said that the Haslams "want to be the first of the next" generation of stadiums. But **pushing the beast eight stories into the ground is a serious inconvenience for fans, and there is little else in the design that reflects a generational transformation.**

The unidentified interviewer listed Evans' stadium projects, but did so with a misleading attribution. In addition to the Vikings' stadium, SoFi in LA and the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis (2008), Evens claimed he got his start on stadium design with the AT&T Stadium in Dallas.

However multiple sources all list HKS' Bryan Trubey as the lead design architect for that project. Claiming credit for a project design which you did not author is a violation of the ethics rules of the American Institute of Architects and is grounds for disbarment.

The interviewer also attempted to imply that HKS has designed more stadiums than any other architect, which is simply not true. Of the 30 NFL stadiums in the US, HKS has done four. Populous, formerly known as HOK Sports, has designed 15, including the Browns' lakefront stadium. Only 10 of the 30 NFL stadiums are enclosed.

One of Evans' more interesting assertions was that the Brookpark design is "familiar and unique." That borders on doubletalk, but one of his later comments was that **HKS is "not trying to replicate anything with this stadium design."**

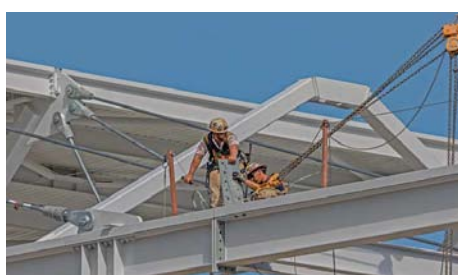
Yet the similarities to the Minneapolis dome are obvious and he spent five minutes in the interview describing his re-interpretation of the Dawg Pound. Evans added, a local feature "is our vibe…Our design process involves an authentic version of a large-scale entertainment for NEOH that drives every decision we make."

Evans acknowledges that the Dawg Pound is a "celebrated item," so he feels that they have "created a vertical wall for fans for the Dawg Pound. We have brought them as close as we can to the players and the end zone (nothing new there)… It's gonna be a wall of electricity." **Evans' 'wall' is a space with no seats- standing room only for 6500 Dawg Pound fans who will be stacked in a steep slope.** Personal injury attorneys are rubbing their hands with excitement.

Evans twice claimed that the Brookpark design brings the fans as close to the playing field as any stadium. Yet their renderings that attempt to show alternative uses for the facility show a soccer match. Football fields are 360' long and 160' wide. Soccer fields are 330' - 360' long and 210' - 240' wide. Both need space at their edges for players and coaches.

Above: Retail Jobs
Second: Hotel Jobs
Third: Office Jobs

Above: Apartment Jobs
Below: Construction Jobs



Evans makes statements in the interview that have no genuine meaning:

"The whole seating bowl is such an adventure for the team." He stated that (because the seating bowl is pushed 80' into the ground), he has pulled upper deck seats down to be closer to the field. That simply means that the hole in the ground basically minimizes an upper deck, necessitating more seats in the lower bowl. As a result, Evans claims that this burying of the facility results in more "atmosphere and energy." Doubtful.

Evans claims that his design was influenced by the Cleveland Museum of Art, presumably referring to the CMA atrium and he then calls the Brookpark stadium "NEOH's next great room." At $2.4 billion, it had better be.

Evans asserts that the "vibe of being outside" will amplify the sound of the fans which will be "magical."

Despite the many renderings showing fans climbing steps to enter the facility, Evans claims that "embedding the stadium in the ground" will still have fans entering at grade – to then have to walk down up to eight floors to get to their seats. Try to not imagine the casualties if there is a need for an emergency evacuation.

Evans stated that the design has a "Grand Concourse" which is continuous and will be a "new experience for concessions and food," with "a great restaurant connected to a concourse." Most will wait to believe that until they see it.

Evans stated that his relationship with the Haslams has been collaborative and that their directive to him "has to be representative of the future." What exactly does that mean?

Evans mentioned "taking out the pain points." But the design will fail to address the real pain points which are the cost of parking, poor food quality, rip-off prices for food and beverage and merchandize and poor team play.

Evans design for the Minneapolis project resulted in a facility that was markedly different from the renderings. Like the Cleveland Museum of Art Expansion which featured transparent glass with its conceptual renderings to sell the project and stimulate fundraising, the Minneapolis and Cleveland Museum projects as delivered reflects black glass and is much heavier than promised.

Matt Johnson of *The Daily Reporter* observed that the $1.3 billion Evans design for

Continued next page

OPINION: Haslams' PR Hogwash, cont'd:

Minneapolis presents **"a vast expanse of dark grey zinc panels that are darker than the conceptual drawings shown when the design was pitched."**

He states that **the original design featured "originally portrayed as highly transparent (like Brookpark), but "the finished stadium … appears black."** The Minneapolis fan base has criticized the HKS design as a spaceship, an ice shard and a Viking longboat.

Evans promised large video boards at either end of the field – nothing forward-thinking there. But then he tried to describe a long low video board opposite the Dawg Pound "right below the main plaza" which "is gonna immerse that seating bowl with sound and energy and light and technology."

While Evans promised that all media will be the next generation, none of the renderings, including those prepared to intend to illustrate potential entertainment uses for concerts, basketball and soccer, show how media and lighting will be introduced.

Evans referenced SoFi stadium's economic impact, implying it was somehow relevant to Cleveland. It is not. The Browns hired a consultant who prepared what was labeled an 'economic impact study' that was simply lacking in credibility.

SoFi serves **two** NFL teams and a population of 12-15 million (compared to our 1.3 million) and includes a 6000-seat concert venue – **and was paid for entirely by the owner** - which is not part of Haslams' Brookpark agenda.

SoFi is also not enclosed. It is covered with open ends which were intended to ventilate the facility naturally, which has not been entirely successful.

Evans labeled Cleveland as an "older style, blue collar city." Really?

Evans tried to claim that the form and shape of his design is environmentally responsible because the roof slopes to shed snow "so we could put the investment back into the fans."

Wait for the cheap metal siding. Evans stated that the ETF and glass roof will save 20%-30% on energy. Compared to what? The ventilation and heating costs will be significant and the glass roof if anything increases energy consumption. More hubris and blarney.


Some cities see pushback on stadium funding

As pro sports teams seek larger subsidies, voters and politicians say there's no benefit for taxpayers

Tech entrepreneur turns to energy-efficient homes

FORUM

ON THE BRINK

Any unexpected expense — a medical bill, a car repair, a driver's license suspension — can lead to long-lasting devastation for the working poor. PAGE 10

Above: Crains Story on Stadium Funding Pushback
Below: Published Report on Most Expensive Stadiums in US

Most expensive sports stadiums in modern history, in U.S. dollars

	Location	Completion date	Construction cost in 2024 dollars	Original/proposed construction cost	Public share	Private share
SoFi Stadium	Los Angeles	2020	\$6.7 billion	\$5.5 billion	\$0 (0%)	\$5.5 billion (100%)
Olympic Stadium	Montreal, Canada	1976	\$3.03 billion	\$539 million	\$270 million (50%)	\$269 million (50%)
New Cleveland Browns stadium	Brook Park, Ohio	2029*	\$2.4 billion*	\$2.4 billion*	\$1.2 billion* (50%)	\$1.2 billion* (50%)
Allegiant Stadium	Las Vegas	2020	\$2.37 billion	\$1.97 billion	\$750 million (38%)	\$1.2 billion (62%)
MetLife Stadium	East Rutherford, New Jersey	2010	\$2.26 billion	\$1.57 billion	\$0 (0%)	\$1.57 billion (100%)

** - estimated or proposed figures*

Source: Bradbury, John, Coates, Dennis, and Humphreys, Brad. US Major-League Sports Stadium and Arena Construction Costs (1909-

Quote:

"Inconsistency itself breeds vitality."

Kenzo Tange
1913 - 2005

Tourism:

Cleveland's cheerleaders are so far out of bounds with their alleged statements of our region's tourism volume, it is truly beyond pathetic.

In 2023, Downtown Cleveland Inc. and Destination Cleveland claimed that we drew 17 million visitors a year. That is 327,000 each week. That is truly preposterous.

In 2024, they ventured further onto the thin ice in late spring by upping their assertion to over 18 million. That is 346,000 visitors each week!!

There are just over 5,000 hotel rooms in downtown Cleveland. Occupancy rates inched up to 62% last year. That's just over 3,000 rooms per night, or 21,000 per week, or **6.5% of the cheerleader's BS from DCI, DC and GCP.**

Credible visitor and tourism organizations in the US list the top five cities with their annual visitor totals as follows:

1. New York City: 9 million
2. Miami: 4.3 million
3. Los Angeles: 5 million
4. Orlando: 3.5 million
5. San Francisco: 2.2 million

So our local tourism people claim that we draw twice as many visitors each year as New York City. This is completely absurd and is without any shred of credibility.

It is passed the time when **we need to require our tourism 'professionals' to adopt the same standards and metrics of the nation's tourism professionals** so we are not claiming we draw over 500% MORE than Orlando with their year-round weather, Disney World, Sea World and Universal Studios.

Below: Times Square. New York City

Steven Litt Leaves the Plain Dealer

Above: Steven Litt

Above: DLR Renwick Gallery Renovation; Washington, DC; 2015

Above: Frank Gehry's Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University

Art and Architecture Critic Steven Litt has called a '30' – the old newsroom expression used when a story is completely edited and ready for typesetting. After 44 years of deadlines – 33 of those years in Cleveland, Litt has retired but says that he is "available for coffee, conversations about art, architecture and city planning."

A native of New York, Litt joined *The Plain Dealer* in 1991 and moved to *Cleveland.com* in 2020. Prior to his stint at the *PD*, Litt wrote for *The News and Observer* in Raleigh, NC after graduating with a BA in Studio Art from Brown University in 1978, a Masters degree in Journalism from Columbia in 1980, and a Masters in city planning, urban design and development from Cleveland State University in 2014.

Litt has generally attempted to be gracious in his critiques. But he fairly called out local architects and owners in his 2006 piece in which he stated that the Cleveland community needed to improve its "weak design culture" if it was going to survive and prosper. He also stated then that the Westlake Reed Leskosky firm - now named the DLR Group - was the only firm of consequence locally. To date, Cleveland's design culture has gotten only weaker, despite Litt's warning.

DLR's national award-winning Renwick Gallery project appeared to have prompted him to elevate further his opinion of the firm's capabilities and stature. After all, Litt did routinely ignore AIA Ohio's annual design awards where a strong jury evaluates submissions from all over the state to select the top six or ten projects in a given year. The jurors for the Ohio AIA Design Awards program are consistently top tier practitioners themselves.

Steven Litt also observed that Cleveland has had a legendary case of low self-esteem due to a half-century of economic decline and jokes about the Cuyahoga River catching fire. He pointed to the multiple significant architectural opportunities that were on the horizon back in 2006 – projects by the Cleveland Clinic and Cleveland Public Schools, the Euclid Corridor and redo of the Innerbelt – for the city to redefine its image, strengthen our economy and make the city a better place to live.

But Litt noted that "the transformation can't occur without a strong performance from architects, engineers and planners, and from the clients, patrons and elected officials who hire them. **The problem is that Cleveland's slide in vitality, population and status since World War II has been accompanied by an equally long slide in design standards and achievement."**

While it can safely be argued that none of those projects have redefined Cleveland's image in any positive way, strengthened our economy or made the city a better place, none of that is Litt's fault. **It simply underscores his point about our diminished standards that have produced our long slide in design standards and excellence as our design culture has deteriorated significantly in the last three decades.**

Litt did not agree with assertions here that local talented architects were routinely overlooked for important commissions, though they were and continue to be. Instead, Litt explained his perceived dearth of talented architects in NEOH is attributable to the fact that Cleveland is "a blue-collar, budget-minded, no-frills myopia dates to the 19th-century industrial era."

"Innovative design is rarely embraced. Regard for architecture and civic design is generally low, apart from areas such as University Circle and the downtown Mall," which was and is true. Litt: "For evidence, look around. In the 1970s and '80s, the city countenanced demolition of half of the Warehouse District to make way for parking lots that serve the Cleveland Justice Center and other mediocre government buildings. Bland postwar office towers and brain-dead parking garages mar East Ninth Street and Superior Avenue. The lakefront is scarred by railroads and highways."

Litt: "Architects alone are not to blame. Environmental design is never a solo act, like painting or a sculpture. It's a product of the relationship between a designer and a client. Cleveland's design culture has been weak on both sides of the relationship."

But Litt has fairly characterized the local profession's evolution downward from its stature 50 years ago. In the 1970s Piet van Dijk had moved here from the great Eero Saarinen's Michigan office to head design at the Schaeffer Flynn office, and van Dijk successfully encouraged his Saarinen co-worker Norm Perttula to come to town to head up design for Dalton Dalton & Newport.

Don Hisaka opened his practice in Cleveland in 1960 and was designing award-winning projects of varying scales and types and always doing so under budget. Hisaka's work garnered over 50 design awards and was published over 70 times in national architectural magazines.

Litt says, "Local architecture firms tend to emphasize "service," which is a way of saying they give clients what they want and are not propelling design in new directions." True, for some, even most - but certainly not all. There are medium- and small boutique firms in NEOH that are serious design firms. But if Litt was implying that is not at the same critical mass as it was in the 1970s and even 1980s, he was regrettably correct.

"Local clients, on the other hand, have not been visionary. Too often, they've imitated successes from other places and hired prominent out-of-town firms. The results often have been mediocre." More than often.

Continued next page

Steven Litt Leaves the Plain Dealer

Above: Cleveland Museum of Art original Main Entry

Above: Cleveland Museum of Art; Conservative Traditional Portraits

In the same 2006 article that called for the City to raise its design standards, Steven Litt observed, “Case Western Reserve University had a huge opportunity in 1997 when it hired Frank Gehry to design the shiny metal Peter B. Lewis Building for the Weatherhead School of Management. But the university gave the architect a less-than-prominent site at Ford Drive and Bellflower Road.”

“Halfway through the design, former university president Agnar Pytte subtracted a substantial amount of land from the project, forcing midstream corrections that added cost and squeezed the project’s bulk into a smaller footprint. Rather than illustrate the pitfalls of hiring a star, the project demonstrates what happens when the client-architect relationship isn’t as strong as it should be.”

Litt occasionally penned well-reasoned essays. One of his finer efforts was titled, “Utility Versus Innovation; A Polemic on Art, Architecture and Cultural Conservatism in Cleveland” in 2012. Litt politely unwrapped the city’s historical foundation for its conservatism in art and architecture:

“Today, public and private philanthropic support for the arts in Cleveland is stronger than ever, and the arts are being called upon to perform a truly big job: to help revive the city’s struggling economy and to make it a more attractive place to live. The question arts supporters and audience members should be asking is whether success in the arts should be evaluated primarily in quantitative economic terms, or according to the more subjective, qualitative benchmarks such as quality, originality, and critical and scholarly esteem.”

“Put in a different way, if economic impact is the primary measure of artistic success and importance, we can all be proud of Archibald Willard and his Spirit of ’76. If, on the other hand, artistic quality is the truer measure of the impact of a city’s cultural contributions, it should be cause for at least mild concern that the author of the most famous artistic image in the city’s history is an obscure 19th-century painter whose work borders on kitsch and whose name is all but forgotten outside Cleveland.”

“Such concerns are worth discussing, now that the arts are being asked to play a bigger role than ever in the city’s economy. Cleveland’s urban predicament as a shrinking industrial city in a troubled region is widely known. Its population is hovering just over 400,000, roughly sixty percent lower than it was in 1950.” It is now 361,000.

“The old industrial base is fading rapidly, but new industries, such as health care and biotechnology, are not growing fast enough to reverse decline. “Decades-old tensions over race and poverty have caused an exodus of middle-class residents, both black and white. Meanwhile, low-density residential subdivisions in the suburbs consume more and more open land every year, creating a pattern of sprawl without growth.”

THE PERILS OF A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE ARTS

“What’s problematic here is that arts funding is based primarily on a utilitarian view of cultural activity as a lifestyle amenity and as a generator of economic activity, **not as an expression of the city’s ability to foster original creative thinking of global significance.** Artists and architects in Cleveland rarely attract much notice outside the city.”

“In architecture, local firms rarely win the biggest and most prestigious assignments. Instead, clients prefer to hire prestigious out-of-town firms, which often do less than their best in Cleveland. In painting and sculpture, most of the most famous artists associated with the city have left to pursue their ambitions elsewhere, a telling example of a creative brain drain.”

“In this context, it’s haunting to consider that Cleveland’s conservative views on the arts have at least until now paralleled the city’s economic decline. This doesn’t necessarily mean that, if Cleveland had been a hotbed of artistic radicalism throughout the past century, it would be in far better economic shape today.”

“But it is true that throughout history, artistic breakthroughs have occurred most often in vibrant and growing cities where innovation and originality in the arts are related to breakthroughs in business, science, and technology. This makes it worth considering whether new and different approaches to the arts could help reverse Cleveland’s decline by making it a place more open to fresh and innovative ideas it has traditionally disregarded or even shunned.”

THE ROOTS OF CONSERVATISM

“Before considering the city’s future, it’s important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of its legacy in the visual arts. Cleveland has certainly played a role in the history of modern and contemporary art and architecture, but not a big one, and it’s important to understand why. The 20th century unleashed a concatenation of new ideas, movements, and artistic breakthroughs across Europe, but emanating primarily in the early decades from Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and other cities.”

“These ideas, ranging from a plethora of art movements such as Cubism and Fauvism, to modernist architecture and design, were introduced to America first in the New York Armory Show of 1913, and the Museum of Modern Art’s first exhibition on modern architecture, in 1932.”

“Following the Depression and World War II, New York replaced Paris as the global center of the art world. Modernist architecture spread across the country, producing vibrant results, especially in Los Angeles and Chicago, but also in New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities. The same was not as true in Cleveland.”

“While it’s obvious that Cleveland has had a fairly conservative artistic climate for decades, scholarly work on local art history is fairly thin, which indicates a lack of interest among art historians—a negative comment in and of itself. There exists no large, single-volume historical survey providing a broad overview of local developments in the visual arts in Cleveland and relating them to political, social, and economic trends. Nor does there exist any large study relating the city’s creative output with that of other cities in America and Europe. Such a study would create a clearer understanding of the place Cleveland truly occupies as an artistic and cultural center."

"Mostly, the city's art history is revealed through narrowly focused monographic books on individual artists. The Cleveland Artists Foundation, a small non-profit organization devoted to the visual arts of Northeast Ohio, has published many of these studies. Though valuable, they don't provide the bigger picture."

"The Cleveland Museum of Art attempted a larger overview in 1996 with its exhibition *Transformations in Cleveland Art, 1796–1946*. Valuable as it was, the exhibition only covered the first 150 years of the city's artistic history, leaving the rest of the story for a future show. Organized by curators David Steinberg and William H. Robinson, the 1996 exhibition was accompanied by a catalog with an essay that said, "Almost nothing has been written about how economic, social, and political events affected the character of Cleveland art."

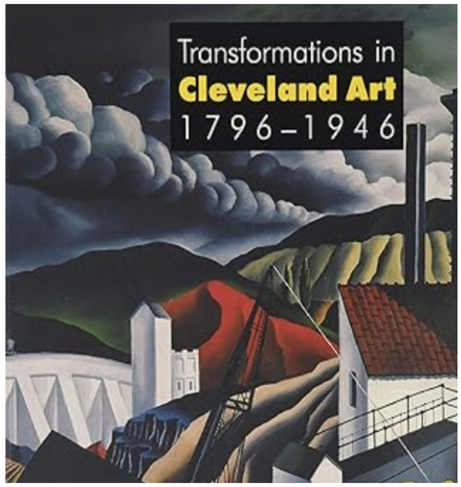
"Nevertheless, historical and anecdotal information suggests strongly that the city's cultural conservatism has several roots. One is ethnic heritage. After its initial settlement in the early 19th century, Cleveland's population grew quickly as waves of immigrants arrived from New England and, later, from countries across Europe. Often, immigrant communities wanted to preserve traditions from their homelands."

"Whatever was brought over in the late 19th century stayed that way," scholar Holly Rarick Witchey, author of *The Fine Arts in Cleveland* told *The Plain Dealer* in an interview in 1996."When Greeks look for historical folk dances, they come to the U.S., where you are not allowed to innovate. You are preserving the homeland tradition."

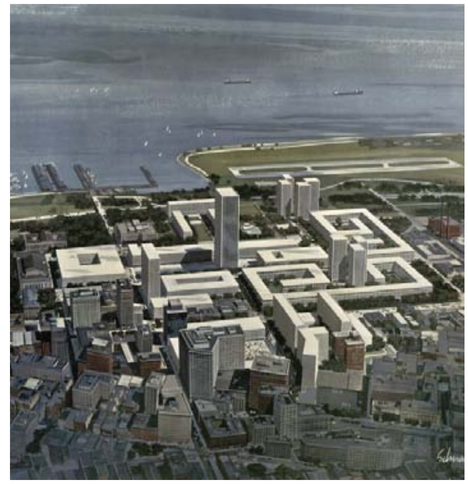
"Elite taste also remained conservative throughout the city's rise to industrial prominence, from 1890 to 1930, and in the decades following. For much of the city's history, powerful backers of the arts were primarily members of the city's wealthy and white Anglo-Saxon families. Members of this group included the Severances, the Hannas, and the Mathers."

"They and others were extremely interested in art and culture, and were extremely generous. Through donations and bequests, they built a large collection of cultural institutions in the early 20th century, starting with the Music School Settlement in 1912, Karamu and the Cleveland Play House in 1915, the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1916, the Cleveland Orchestra in 1918, and the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1920."

"The cultural largesse of the city's leading industrial families was motivated by noblesse oblige, a desire to acculturate immigrants newly



Above: CMA Transformations Exhibit; 1976 - 1946



Above: Erieview Urban Renewal Plan

arrived from poor countries in central and Eastern Europe, and the impulse to compete in terms of prestige with other growing cities. Unlike arts patrons across the industrial Midwest, Cleveland's wealthy appointed professional managers to guide major institutions, especially the museum and orchestra, to ensure high standards of performance and achievement."

"Even so, the museum, for example, largely pursued a conservative approach to art history, thereby honoring the tastes and preferences of trustees, who actively discouraged directors and curators from investing in modern and contemporary art."

Litt's criticism of the city's attempt at urban renewal in what became the Erieview district was on point. "The district is a legacy of 1960s Urban Renewal, the federal program that helped cities demolish and replace large areas of so-called blight with modernist housing and office blocks."

"It was also inspired by the now widely discredited scrape-it-flat-and-rebuild theories of the Swiss-born modernist architect Le Corbusier, who once recommended bulldozing the heart of Paris and replacing it with cross-shaped concrete towers. Other inspirations were rooted in the architecture of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the German emigre who coined the phrase "less is more," and whose best buildings are lean poems in glass and steel."

Litt was keen to chronicle what he called the "Sins of the modernists:" "From the distant perspective of the city's skyline, Erieview looks like a collection of middling efforts by architects and firms that followed "Corbu" and Mies, such as Wallace Harrison, Emery Roth & Sons, and Skidmore Owings & Merrill, aka SOM… At sidewalk level, it looks bleak, lifeless and surreal, even a bit scary."

"The guide for reconstruction came from architect I.M. Pei's 1961 Erieview Plan, but the echoes of Corbusier and Mies are easy to see, as is the problem that while those designers created beautiful individual buildings, they never mastered the art of creating lively streetscapes. Nor did their followers. But Erieview's doozies still poke at the eye. They include the mix-master spiral garage ramp on the Chester Avenue side of the 1973 Reserve Square apartments, a pair of massive Corbusian slab towers at 1701 East 12th St."

"Garages also dominate 330 feet of frontage along Superior and Chestnut avenues between Emery Roth's 1959 East Ohio Gas Building at 1717 East Ninth St. and the black glass and steel 1972 Diamond Shamrock building at 1100 Superior Ave., designed by SOM, and both influenced by Mies… As a stroll around Erieview shows, the mistakes of the 1960s don't deserve an encore."

And yet, that is precisely what we allowed Playhouse Square to do with its Lumen garage right on Euclid venue. **As Litt noted, one of Cleveland's serious problems are the poor judgments of its clients and patrons.**

Litt's efforts have earned him recognition: Fellowships: Whitney Museum of Art, 1979; University of Michigan Journalism Fellowship, 1988-1989; Cleveland Arts Prize, 2010; Cleveland Press Club Hall of Fame, 2016; Centennial Award, Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Association, 2019; Rabkin Prize for visual arts in journalism, 2020.

Litt's perspective and voice will be sorely missed for both its tone and tenor. And for our region to lose its singular legible voice on art and architecture is another painful example of our eroding design culture.

Why Cleveland Is Going Nowhere

In 1920, Cleveland was the fifth largest city in the United States.

It is now the 34th largest metro area – the country's 54th largest city, while Columbus has been named the fastest growing city in the nation.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the root cause of Cleveland's decline in population was the death of manufacturing, as the steel and auto industries set up shop in the rural non-union south or Mexico. This decline continued as smaller, more specialized manufacturing moved to the south and to Asia.

Things stabilized a bit in the '90s as service industries created more jobs in the city and its suburbs, but population growth has been flat or in slight decline metro area for a time, while the national population continues to grow. Why?

With low real estate costs, access to an abundant supply of water, century old cultural institutions of quality – the Orchestra, Art Museum, Playhouse Square - that punch above their weights, outstanding parks and an infrastructure large enough to support a population twice its size, Cleveland should be a magnet for people and business, but we are not.

The four principal reasons Cleveland is going nowhere are **1). Entrenched poverty** in the City of Cleveland, **2). A dysfunctional and often corrupt local and municipal government** systems, **3). The lack of a major university acting as seed bank, incubator and economic development engine for new businesses**, and **4). An absence of leadership in private and public sectors to forge a regional coalition to address major issues with effective dogma** like the Allegheny Conference has in Pittsburgh.

The Cleveland Foundation does not deliver critical thinking as it should and it gives out less than half of what other foundations its size do nationally. Case Western Reserve does not have as much of an impact on new business creation in Cleveland as Carnegie Mellon does in Pittsburgh or as Ohio State does in Columbus or Penn in Philadelphia.

Cleveland's efforts at containing and reducing inner city decay are limited to Ohio City, which has been damaged by Frank Jackson's 16-year tenure as mayor where every greedy developer's proposal for over-scaled and incompatible apartments in historic neighborhoods was approved. **The city's suburban growth and sprawl and accompanying decline of the urban core has made Cleveland an example of social and economic failure.**

The maker of the film "Cleveland: Confronting Decline in an American City," Producer Bestor Cram explains, "We selected Cleveland to some extent as a counterpoint to Phoenix. They are about the same size, but have had diametrically opposed experiences – in Phoenix outrageous growth, and **in Cleveland, persistent decline.** We looked at demographic change, economic change, and policy change, which all play a part, but our real interest is change from the standpoint of where people are choosing to live, and the manner in which a city is transformed by those choices."

The Cram film's candid and journalistic approach examines urban neighborhoods, booming suburban areas, and downtown Cleveland – home to the popular Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Jacobs/ Progressive Field baseball stadium and Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, but **still falling short of a full and legitimate revitalization.**

ade in 2006, the film does not include the subsequent excessive public spending on sports facilities and the disastrous waste of $800 million on the Medical Mart/ Convention Center, which further magnifies our lack of true leadership and its costs. The film characterized Cleveland as a "city at risk."

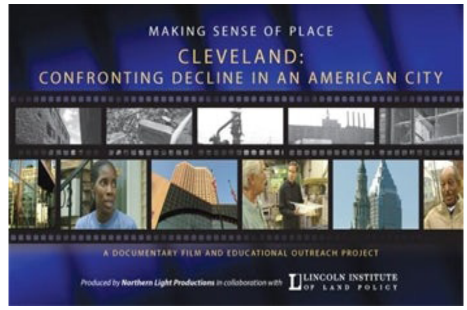
The Flats had 18,000 employees in the 1950s. By 2006, it was down to 1,800. I**n 1960, Cleveland's population was housed in 80 square miles. Today, the same population is housed in 600 square miles.** Over 120 acres in downtown are now underutilized parking lots.

Jacobs Field, the Arena/ Fieldhouse, Browns Stadium, the Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame, Medical Mart, Convention Center, Downtown Hilton, Public Square Renovation and the Health Line/ Euclid Corridor **have done nothing to address stagnant population, underlying poverty, the deterioration of public schools, de-industrialization and the disappearance of jobs with the corresponding decline of municipal income.**

The collapse of East High School's roof in 2000 exemplified the failure of the School District to maintain its facilities. The quarter century since has simply seen poorly designed schools at a cost of over $2 billion replace the old ones we were too inept to maintain and equip. **Cleveland has the sixth worst crime in the entire country and the police department has refused to comply with the US Justice Department's consent decree to clean up the city's safety forces.**

Cleveland State and Cuyahoga Community College are second-rate academic institutions with excessive, underutilized facilities without signature programs of stature and enrollment in both is shrinking accordingly.

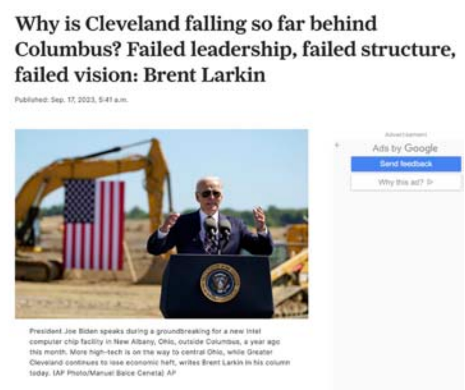
Our intended catalytic projects have been costly and have not yielded the results intended. Employment downtown has fallen dramatically and hybrid work indicates it will not be rebounding.



Above: "Cleveland Confronting Decline" Video
Below: J. D. Power in October 2024 Ranks Hopkins Last
Row Three: Cleveland No. 1 in Poverty Among US Large Cities
Row Four: Cleveland Is Falling Behind Columbus Because of Failed Leadership, Failed Vision

Poorest Large Cities in the United States

Overall Poverty Rate, 2019		
Rank	**City**	**Rate**
1	**Cleveland, Ohio**	**30.8%**
2	Detroit, Michigan	30.6%
3	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	23.3%
4	New Orleans, Louisiana	23.2%
5	Fresno, California	23.2%
6	Cincinnati, Ohio	23.1%
7	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	22.4%
8	Memphis, Tennessee	21.7%
9	Miami, Florida	20.3%
10	Atlanta, Georgia	20.2%



Why is Cleveland falling so far behind Columbus? Failed leadership, failed structure, failed vision: Brent Larkin

Published: Sep. 17, 2023, 5:41 a.m.

President Joe Biden speaks during a groundbreaking for a new Intel computer chip facility in New Albany, Ohio, outside Columbus, a year ago this month. More high-tech is on the way to central Ohio, while Greater Cleveland continues to lose economic heft, writes Brent Larkin in his column today. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta) AP

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Why Cleveland Is Going Nowhere

Important institutions – Greater Cleveland Partnership and Downtown Cleveland Inc. – routinely publish outrageously false statements and disinformation that make it nearly impossible to deal with the realities of our challenges.

Major institutions that are stable and growing – Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals have only now begun to take the smallest of baby steps to behave as partners in their neighborhoods that link their campus settings to their community.

One hesitates to observe that the best NEOH urban environment may be the contrived one in Westlake with Crocker Park where one can work, shop and live in a crime-free setting. The six added suburban malls built from 1996 – 2006 contain 10,000 stores with 50,000,000 square feet, employ 60,000 people and generate nearly $15 billion in sales annually. And going, gone or repurposed are Severance Center, Euclid Square Mall, Randall Park Mall, Rolling Aces Mall, Tower City Center, Richmond Town Square, Parmatown and Westgate.

Attorney Jon Pinney woke up the media and the city in June 2018 with an address he gave at the City Club, pointing out how the established 'leaders' of the community have failed us all and that our economic indicators have fallen far behind – very far behind.

The April 2018 edition of *Business Insider* had surveyed the top 40 US economies based on unemployment rate, average weekly rates, job growth, GDP per capita and GDP growth rate. Pinney observed, **"We came in dead last. We had the highest unemployment rate and the second slowest rate of job growth, according to their rankings."** Not much has changed since.

Greater Cleveland Partnership President/ CEO Baju Shah Is Out of Touch with Cleveland:

In the December 9 issue of *Crain's Cleveland Business,* Greater Cleveland Partnership President and CEO Baju Shah published a puff piece saying, "We are on the rise."

No, Mr. Shah, we are not. Not as long as we continue to lead the nation in child poverty with 50% of our children being economically distressed, versus the national average of 16%.

Not as long as we are the second worst poor city among cities with 300,000 or more people.

Not as long as we have the sixth worst crime in the country.

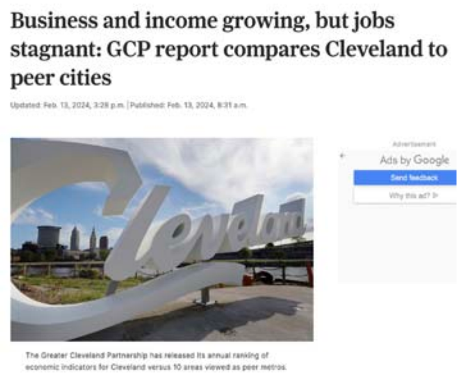
Not as long as J. D. Power ranks our airport last in the country.


CLEVELAND

Cleveland is the worst city in America to raise a family, new WalletHub study reveals

WalletHub's data revealed that among the 182 largest cities in America, Cleveland is the worst city to raise a family.

Above & Below: Cleveland Headlines Reveal Problems
Bottom: Baiju Shah, Pres./ CEO Greater Cleveland Partnership


Business and income growing, but jobs stagnant: GCP report compares Cleveland to peer cities

Updated: Feb. 13, 2024, 3:28 p.m. | Published: Feb. 13, 2024, 8:31 a.m.

The Greater Cleveland Partnership has released its annual ranking of economic indicators for Cleveland versus 10 areas viewed as peer metros.


Cleveland tops list of most miserable U.S. cities

Forbes: Cleveland takes the top spot in our third annual ranking of America's Most Miserable Cities. Cleveland won the position thanks partly to its high unemployment and lousy weather.

Not as long as the Washington, DC bipartisan public policy organization The Economic Innovation Group calls Cleveland the most distressed city in the US.

Not as long as Cleveland's downtown real estate market continues its hemorrhaging having lost 50% of its office space since 2010.

Not as long as Class A Downtown multi-tenant office buildings are selling for 25% of their previous sale price – if they sell at all.

Not as long as *Forbes Magazine's* study ranks Cleveland dead last nationally in job growth.

Not as long as Cleveland ranks among the worst nationally with regard to lead poisoning.

Not as long as the 2023 WalletHub survey of 182 of the largest cities in the US concluded that Cleveland is the worst city in the US to raise a family.

Not as long as the same WalletHub study found that Cleveland ranks 39th nationally in job opportunities, 76th in employment growth, 119th in starting salary and 176th in unemployment.

Not as long as we rank next-to-last in the survey of 182 cities of the Happiest Cities in America.

Shah's essay suggests that we simply shift our mindset and ignore the reality of our circumstances, lest we identify their causes and potential remedies – something Shah and his organization are paid handsomely to address, but are apparently avoiding. Psychiatrists tell us that denial is the most primitive of all defenses. Shah wants us to shift our mindset from "scarcity and loss to abundance and growth."

But the facts indicate that our population and our jobs and our economy are NOT growing. Shah says that we have a new momentum here with the lakefront. Shah predicts, "In the next few years, dynamic riverfront projects will rise while the downtown lakefront becomes better commented via road changes and bridges."

So far there is no timetable for any specific improvements. There is only a $60 million grant from the Department of Transportation to throw at addressing the Shoreway near the stadium. That amount would pay for finally building a bridge over the railroad and Shoreway from Mall A to the lakefront, and little else. **The city's myopic Lakefront Master Plan pathetically involves only the 1200' sliver in front of the lakefront stadium whose future is cloudy.**

Shah previously stated our population was increasing when it was/ is not. He now states that

Continued next page

21,000 people live downtown, which is an exaggeration. He states that the Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood has experienced more than $3 billion in investment - another exaggeration.

With the lakefront, the riverfront, the idea – finally - of redeveloping a closed Burke Lakefront Airport site and a proposed $2 billion Hopkins Airport renovation on the radar screen, to say nothing of a new facility and mixed use development for the Browns, Shah says foolishly, “We can do all of this…”

No, we cannot possibly do all this. Not even with our TIFF give-aways. We have a new county jail and a new county justice center to do which together will exceed $1.5 billion. **Both are far more important than letting the Haslams keep $13.2 billion of their $14.4 billion because they want taxpayers to let them keep their money.**

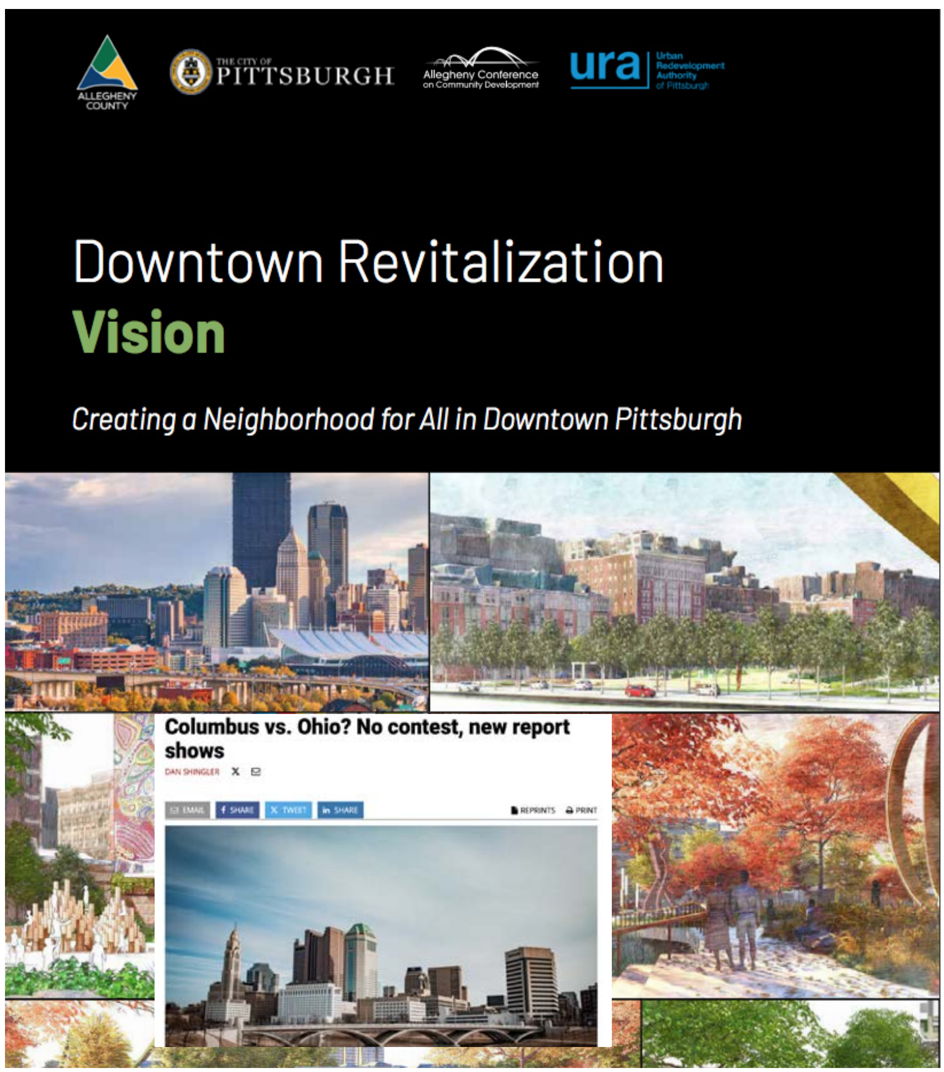
We have roads and bridges that have been ignored for decades thanks to our leaders' willingness to saddle taxpayers with obscene perpetual subsidies for sports facilities construction, their perpetual renovation, an $850 million Medical Mart failure and a taxpayer-owned 600-room hotel – with no parking - that taxpayers not only paid to build but now have to subsidize Hilton's operation as well.

Shah criticizes any recognition of NEOH's reality as a mindset that represents self-imposed limits instead of approaching opportunities with commitment and creativity. **Neither Shah's GCP** – who had to change its former name from the Greater Cleveland Growth Association because there was/ is no growth – **nor the Cleveland Foundation are performing at a level comparable to their counterparts in other comparable cities.**

Cleveland is going nowhere because, contrary to Shah's blind assertion, there is no individual or group – organized or otherwise – doing any critical thinking on how we should address our disindustrialization, poverty, stagnant population and wasteful spending on sports facilities at the expense of our aging infrastructure, and our flagrant need for justice and cultural facilities.

Our region continues to waste billions on constructing and maintaining redundant municipal facilities because **we cannot perceive the benefits of regionalization** as other Rust Belt communities have. Yet **the template for collaboration and critical thinking is 160 miles away in Pittsburgh** in the form of the Allegheny Conference. **It is past the time when we should demand that GCP and the Cleveland Foundation – and their boards - make a two-week field trip to Pittsburgh to get schooled in what to do and how to do it. There are no longer any justifiable excuses for their failures.**

Above: All4egeny Conference History
Below: Allegheny Conference 2024 Downtown Pittsburgh Revitalization Vision & Strategy; Columbus Wins *Crains* Headline



OUR TAX $:

RTA has purchased 48 vehicles at $5.2 million each, with potential for 12 more rail cars under its contract with Siemens. That's $249.6 million.

In a classic case of the "tail wagging the dog," the cars GCRTA is acquiring have dimensions that do not work with our platforms. This requires that the Red Lines station platforms must be extended by about 10 inches to accommodate the narrower cars. The estimate for that added expense has not been publicized.

GCRTA will also need to modify train maintenance equipment at its Central Rail Facility near East 55th Street to incorporate a train lifting mechanism to account for the narrower trains.

The justification for the move is that the current heavy rail (Red Line) and light rail (Blue and Green Lines) cars are 40 years old and passed their expected life. The new vehicles are expected to be delivered in 2026 and 2027. This attempt at a new standard car means that in the future, any train can run on any of RTAs three lines, the byproduct of GCRTA taking over separate lines - the Shaker Heights Rapid Transit and Cleveland Transit System lines in 1975. This would allow trains from Shaker Heights to run through downtown to Hopkins Airport - or from Windemere to the Waterfront Line for Browns' games.

The new trains provide less seating than the current cars and therefore provide more standing space. Each car will have 52 passenger seats, four wheelchair areas, and two vertical bicycle racks. They will come equipped with heated windshields and an ice cutter pantograph, which clears ice that collects on the Rapid's overhead catenary wires. The cars will have a hydraulic braking system instead of the pneumatic brakes currently used. In the operator's compartment, the driver's seat will be centrally located for better visibility.

GCRTA has $189.4 million in hand – or pledges, but needs another $111 million for 36 cars to replace the 1980s Breda cars on the Blue/ Green Lines. Siemens builds the cars in Sacramento, CA.

Below: Siemens Rail Cars Purchased by RTA.

SPOTLIGHT:

Pearl St. Savings & Trust = Cleveland Trust = Ameritrust = U. S. Bank = Ariel Ventures Events Center

Above: Johnson House Hotel; 1890 - 1923
Below: Pearl St. Savings & Loan, Ariel Ventures Events Center

This location at the northeast corner of Broadview and Pearl Roads in our Old Brooklyn neighborhood on Cleveland's near west side was originally the site of the Johnson House Hotel. Constructed in 1890 and it originally housed a branch office of the Pearl Street Savings and Trust. The hotel was demolished to make way for the limestone bank which was completed in 1924.

Its design is work of the venerable Cleveland architectural firm of Walker & Weeks. However, the Historical Society of Old Brooklyn attributes the design to the firm of Hubbell & Benes, specifically, the hand of designer Antonio DiNardo. Hubbell & Benes is best know for the Cleveland Museum of Art, West Side Market, Wade Memorial Chapel and the 750 Huron Ohio Bell Building.

The Pear Street Bank was acquired by Cleveland Trust Company, which became Ameritrust. Most recently, it functioned as a U.S. Bank Branch until 2011. After years of vacancy, the building was purchased by Ariel Ventures which has a mixed-use development plan that will restore the building. It is currently in use with the ground floor available as an events center.

When originally completed, the bank building was named " Best Small Commercial Building Erected in Cleveland" that year. The building is a designated Cleveland City Landmark.

MM HQ SELLS CHEAP

In keeping with the trend for downtown Cleveland office buildings to transfer at remarkably low prices, the sale price of the former Medical Mutual HQ at East 9th St. and Prospect has been disclosed: $10,956,667.

That includes not only the historic Rose Building, but also the attached six-story Sloan Building. The 10-story Rose Building and six-story Sloan annex are reported to include 380,000 square feet, which translates to a paltry sale price of $29/ square foot with the land thrown in for free.

Directly across the street, Cuyahoga County is reportedly paying over $24/ square foot **per year** for its offices.

The new owner, Spark GHC doing business' here as East Ninth Scarlet LLC, plans to convert the office building into a hotel and apartments with a Marriott flag. Local Newmark broker Terry Coyne understatedly called the price a "great deal for the buyer."

In 2000, California-based Bentley/ Forbes paid $47.7 million for the property - $125/ square foot. Twenty-five years later, **Spark GHC paid less that one fourth of that amount to acquire the properties.**

In 2017, Medical Mutual of Ohio took title to the building it had occupied since 1947, paying $37.9 million.

Spark claims that the project – now named Project Scarlet – will cost $120 million. That amounts to $316/ square foot – likely a padded number. The team received a $5 million Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit in early December.

Medical Mutual previously spent $35 million to modernize the Rose/ Sloan Buildings but then decided it did not need so much space and relocated its 1,300 HQ workers in late 2022 to the former American Greetings bunker in Brooklyn as a tenant paying rent.

Below: Rose & Sloan Buildings, East 9th & Prospect Ave.

Greyhound Update:

It had appeared that Greyhound's arrivals and departures would move from its moderne station on Chester Avenue to the Tubbs jones Multi-Modal Transit center to East 21st and Carnegie Avenue. But in pairing operations with Barons Bus which operates in partnership with Greyhound, the inability to provide adequate customer facilities at the Tubbs Jones site has caused the team to now relocate 12 miles west to a new station that will be constructed on the parking lot at the Brookpark Rapid Station.

Cleveland State also threw a penalty flag in the ring, opposing the move to bring what they viewed as unsavory bus patrons in closer proximity to their campus.

Earlier last year, the Playhouse Square Foundation purchased the Greyhound landmark with the intention to develop it into a mixed-use development. The sleek Streamline Moderne station opened in 1948 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.

Cleveland City Councilman Kerry McCormack said he liked the Tubbs Jones Transit Center location, at E. 22nd St., better. "I think it would be a great amenity for students," he said. "Ideally, you want these things in the central city, connected to the population base and employment center," said McCormack, who represents downtown on city council.

Fleig said officials are looking for a way to keep some intercity bus service downtown. "Ensuring public transit access to downtown remains an important focus for the City of Cleveland and RTA," he said. "We are actively pursuing opportunities with partners to provide curbside stops downtown."

The Brookpark rapid station is the last stop on the Red Line rapid before Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. In addition, it's a stop on three bus routes, including the 54 (Brookpark to Rockside), the 78 (W. 117th to Puritas) and the 86 (Rocky River Drive.

SPOTLIGHT: Rockefeller Building

Situated at 614 Superior Ave. a block west of Public Square, the Rockefeller Building was constructed between 1903 and 1905. Designed by Knox and Elliot, it was the first large building in Cleveland to employ a structural steel skeleton, inspired by Louis Sullivan's 1895 Guaranty Building in Buffalo.

The first steel frame building in the US was the 10-story Home Insurance Building in Chicago, completed in 1885 and designed by William Le Baron Jenny. Two additional floors were added in 1891. The Home Insurance Building was one of six demolished in 1929 to make room for the Field Building, later known as the Marshal Field Building.

Wilm Knox met John Elliot while working at Burnham and Root's office in Chicago. They formed a partnership in 1988 and opened an office in Toronto. In 1892 they were invited to work with Henry Ives Cobb on the 1893 Columbian Exposition. They opened an office in Cleveland in 1893 and worked here until 1929. They designed a substantial addition to the west of the Rockefeller which was completed in 1910. John D. Rockefeller financed the construction of the building and addition and subsequently transferred title to his son for $1.00.

In 1920, Josiah Kirby acquired the building and changed the name to the Kirby Building. John D. Rockefeller was incensed and purchased the building back for $2,972,000 in 1923 ($11.65/sf) and placed his name back on it. The building was originally occupied by businesses in the coal, iron and shipping businesses which was the case for decades.

The building's original highly decorative mosaic tile lobby floor was replaced with terrazzo in 1947 when the decorative wrought iron elevators were replaced with semi-automatic models. The Rockefeller Building is located on the site of the former Weddell House which was built in 1847. The Weddell House was Cleveland's leading hotel until the erection of the Hollenden Hotel in 1885.

A bronze commemorative plaque affixed to the red granite facing of the Rockefeller Building at the Superior Avenue-West 6th Street corner takes note of the fact that President-elect Abraham Lincoln addressed the citizens of Cleveland from the corner balcony of the Weddell House on February 15, l86l, while en route to Washington for his inauguration.

The Rockefeller Building is one of the early large buildings where the exterior walls are "curtains" rather than load-bearing masonry. The skeletal steel frame enabled large exterior windows so that 50 per cent or more of the perimeter walls are light-transmitting glass. Aside from the Sullivan-inspired cast-iron relief facing applied to the

Above: The Rockefeller Building; Knox & Elliot; 1895, 1910

bay and floor divisions of the first three floors, the Rockefeller Building is simple and straightforward and is functional design. This minimization of ornament is noted at the capping where the outward curving cornice gracefully meets the sky.

The 17-story building is 200' tall with 15,000 square foot floor plates with 1,395 windows that are 3' wide and 5'-8" tall. Public corridors are lined in white marble up to door casement heights with stationary windows above to bring daylight to the interior. In the original building, doors and frames were wood, which were changed to steel in the 1910 addition. All door and window hardware were solid bronze with a decorative design recalling the exterior cast iron. Original plaster ceilings provided heights of 10'-2" before air conditioning.

The Rockefeller Building and Fred Toguchi's State Office Building to the south together form a gateway to downtown when approaching from the west across the Detroit-Superior Bridge.

In 2010, the announcement of the adjacent Sherwin Williams HQ motivated the proposed redevelopment of the Rockefeller Building to 436 units of small market-rate apartments with some smaller than 300 square feet. There were to be four floors of offices, some ground-floor retail and structured parking off Frankfort Avenue. The partnership of Realty Dynamics Equity Partners, LLC of Akron and Wolfe Investments, LLC of Plano, TX acquired the property and announced its redevelopment. The micro-units were intended to serve Sherwin-Williams' employees who were relocating to Cleveland to work in the headquarters. But in 2024, the developers pulled the plug and listed the building for sale with no stated asking price.

TRANSITION: CSU/ Wolstein Center Update:

Cleveland State University's dire financial condition due to falling enrollment has caused the university to face reality regarding its 2022 over-reaching $650 million Campus Master Plan which called for the demolition of Wolstein Center and the construction of a new 5,000-seat arena and indoor tennis facility north of campus.

In November 2022, CSU said it intended to demolish Wolstein Center due to its age and size. It turned out that the university never could fill the building's 13,610 seats and thought somehow that the state would fund their irresponsible master plan to enable them to trash the Wolstein facility and in its place construct an 800,000 sf building for which there was no need or demand whatsoever as a "Partnership District" on 85 acres in a downtown with over 2.5 million square feet of vacant office space and over 500,000 sf of vacant retail space.

Unlike the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, CSU has no meaningful traction with the business or institutional communities in NEOH. Penn's activities generate over $2 billion annually in economic development in Philadelphia.

At the time of the release of the CSU Master Plan, the vacant lots around WC had been untouched for 20 years, and they still are. CSU has claimed that it cannot attract events to WC because its HVAC system has not been maintained. Shame on CSU!

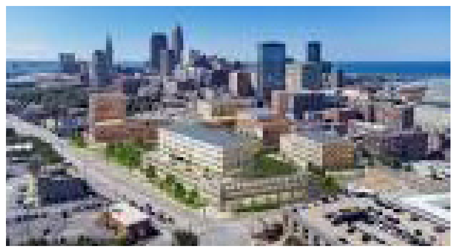
In June, the Cleveland Charge – the Cavaliers' G League team, abandoned CSU and the Wolstein Center for their games and signed a six-year agreement to play their games at Public Auditorium. The Charge committed to pay for $3 million of improvements to Public Auditorium. CSU missed that one too!

In 2023, with a $40 million deficit looming and enrollment having dropped from 17k students to under 14k, CSU invited developers to propose construction of the replacement arena. Those discussions are now on an ice cold back burner.

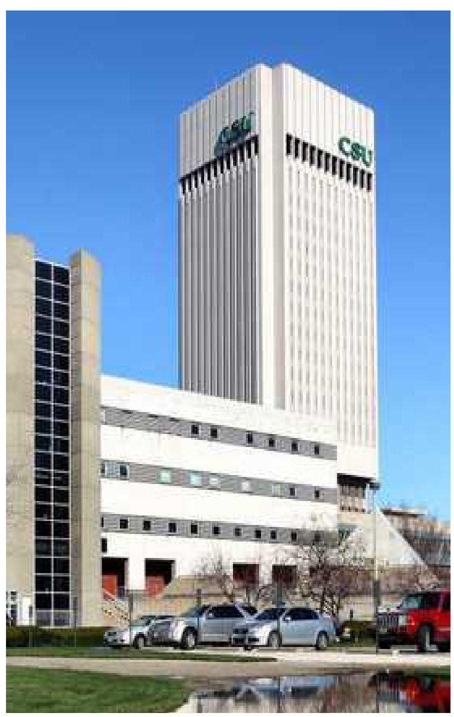
The CSU Master Plan also calls for 'remodeling' Rhodes Tower, the campus 1971 vertical stasis point, to be converted to 500 dorm rooms along with a completely new exterior - an expense that will never pay for itself. Rhodes Tower currently houses the campus library, classrooms and offices. CSU reports problems with the building's elevator service and rest rooms. The university won a Brownfield grant to abate asbestos fireproofing in the building.

CSU has transferred ownership of Rhodes Tower to Euclid Ave. Development Corp., the university's real estate arm, which is intended to make the school eligible for historic tax credits. The university has Ernst & Young assessing if the commuter school actually has any demand for

Above: Wolstein Center
Below: CSU's proposed "Partnership District"



Above: CSU's imagined new "Gateway" 5,000-seat fieldhouse
Below: Rhodes Tower in 1971
Right: Proposed Rhodes Tower "Renovation"



additional student housing on campus. With a 20% enrollment drop and a college with few - if any - signature programs to draw students from outside the area, it is doubtful.

What also does not make sense is CSU's proposed conversion of Rhodes' classroom, library and office space to dorms to be followed by the proposed construction of two new buildings west of Rhodes Tower for classrooms, labs and collaborative spaces for students **without any evidence that there is demand for any and all of this student housing for a commuter school with declining enrollment.**

The demolition of instructional space for dorms followed by construction of new instructional space **effectively doubles the taxpayers' cost** for CSU's occupancy for these elements of their program and uses.

CSU's Fenn Tower, a 400-room freshman dormitory facility, was assessed over spring break and found to be in need of structural repairs. CSU has responded by closing the building. The university invested $20 million to renovate the building in the 1990's for dormitory use. It was originally a hotel and social club.

It appears that CSU's management and maintenance of its campus and its ability to plan realistically for its future are significantly impaired. CSU officials told Signal Cleveland that they have $350 million in deferred maintenance needs. The State has budgeted $16 million for CSU in this biennium budget. That is a loud slap on the wrist.

In late 2024, CSU was awarded a $5 million historic tax credit from the State for the proposed $91 million renovation of Rhodes Tower. But CSU' declining enrollment, no means for the university to pay for he balance of the project and Moody's subsequent downgrade of CSU's bond rating to just above junk bond status keeps this project on hold. In January, CSU announced that it was eliminating its wrestling,

Continued next page

CSU, cont'd:

softball and women's golf programs.

There can be no question that higher education in NEOH, Ohio and nationally is experiencing great pressure. South Euclid's Notre Dame College closed in May 2024 after as 102-year run. Lakeland Community College is on thin ice. CSU announced staff buyouts in an attempt to address a growing operational deficit.

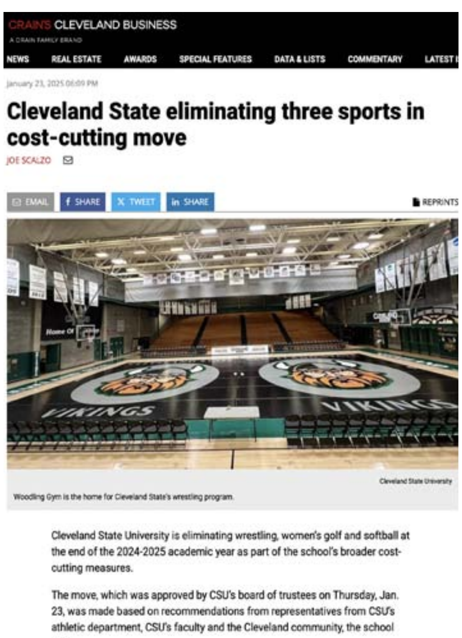
Baldwin Wallace instituted a hiring freeze, cut $17 million from its existing programs and is looking for new president. Across the State, from fall 2019 to fall 2023, enrollment in public colleges dropped by 60,000 students.

Locally, double-digit declines in enrollment have been experienced by Cleveland State Universit, Lakeland Community College, Ursuline College, the University of Akron, Hiram College, Lorain Community College, John Carroll University and Cuyahoga Community College.

Lower birthrates caught expanded college programs and over-staffed faculties have caused tuition increases above the rate of inflation which made 'customers' question the value of higher education. Colleges are attempting to respond with staff cuts and on-line courses to lower costs.

CSU cut wrestling, softball and women's golf from its sports programs "to offset budget woes." That could not have saved terribly much.

The university had previously cut 22 academic programs.



CRAIN'S CLEVELAND BUSINESS

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Cleveland State eliminating three sports in cost-cutting move

JOE SCALZO

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Cleveland State University

Woodling Gym is the home for Cleveland State's wrestling program.

Cleveland State University is eliminating wrestling, women's golf and softball at the end of the 2024-2025 academic year as part of the school's broader cost-cutting measures.

The move, which was approved by CSU's board of trustees on Thursday, Jan. 23, was made based on recommendations from representatives from CSU's athletic department, CSU's faculty and the Cleveland community, the school said.

REMEMBER ROLDO?

Roldo Bartimole was a muckraking journalist in Cleveland for decades who wrote for the Wall Street Journal and The Cleveland Plain Dealer before founding his own newsletter Point of View which he began in 1968 after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Bartimole was often the only investigative reported looking deeper into the city's chaotic and dishonest conduct with its major expenditures and facilities.

Roldo retired in September 2021. But he still posts thoughts online:

August 8, 2024:

"Now is the time for big changes at Cleveland city hall.

It is time for a reformed mayor.

It is time for a reformed city council, too.

The balance of power has gotten too, too far out of whack.

We have too much "going along" with no real questions asked.

Giving $1 billion to one billionaire for his desires on the Cuyahoga River and not saying NO to another billionaire angling for a $1 billion for a new sports stadium yells to Clevelanders that its elected officials are working for somebody else.

You can smell it in the closeted information that is getting to the general public about the city's most expensive sports stadium maneuvering with the Haslams, who laughably talk about concern for the fans.

Please!"

"Mayor Justin Bibb's "shore to core to shore" program gimmick shifts more than a billion dollars in property taxes from their scheduled path to support what now seems a 45-year development by billionaire Cavs owner Dan Gilbert. Meanwhile, the city wants the Browns to stay in a renovated lakefront stadium while the Haslams telegraph that they are bound for Brook Park.

The Plain Dealer, which should critically be examining these historic moves, peddles a sales tax in expanded county area to finance even MORE sports stadiums instead of telling us about the crime taking place.

The sales tax, now at 8 percent, hits hardest the less family income you have.

If you haven't picked up what's going on you might wonder why the public sector gets the bill while the private sector gets the goodies.

Above: Roldo Bartimole

We have a city full of problems, bursting with needs.

But the attention of Mayor Bibb and Council President Blaine Griffin seems to concentrate on downtown Cleveland, not where most of their constitutes live. Not, certainly, where those with needs reside.

The TIF apparently will subsidize a practice facility for the Cavs and a medical spot for the Cleveland Clinic and more.

In other words, just what needy Clevelanders really need.

Every generation or two, public outrage over the lack of balance between people needs and private desires gains attention.

It's been a long time since that has happened here.

But the imbalance between public poverty and private riches has become glaring again."

"I'm reminded of the title of former *Plain Dealer* editor Phil Porter's 1970s book, *"Cleveland – Confused City on a Seesaw."* Porter was critical of 1960s urban renewal investment downtown. He saw it as pouring public investment into one area of downtown to the disinvestment that took place elsewhere downtown. Shifting, not really creating new.

Why is subsidizing sports facilities more important or valuable than subsidizing grocery stores in neighborhoods suffering needy food deserts?

Why is subsidizing hotels, restaurants and luxury apartments on the river or lakefront more important than providing housing in neighborhoods where housing is needed?

The Bibb administration is deciding way into the future by pushing a massive subsidy of 45 years duration and a shift of property taxes worth more than $1 billion for the Bedrock project at Tower City and behind to the Cuyahoga River.

The plan is proposed by Cavaliers owner Dan Gilbert, billionaire owner of Bedrock and Rocket Mortgage.

It comes with the usual promises of neighborhood help.

"We'll give $25 million now for your city needs," Council is told by administration officials. But the deal calls for a $1 billion in taxes to go to the developers over 45 years. What a deal! Council tried to sound critical.

Mike Polensek noted in a warning that the Gateway deal promised 28,000 jobs but still hasn't delivered. But he noted that a businessman told at the time it was merely a selling point, not real. He left it there.

I listen to several hours of council questioning Bibb administrators and Bedrock spokespersons. I hadn't been to a council committee hearing for at least 20 years. But nothing seems to have changed.

I heard the usual claptrap about insuring jobs for blacks as a reason for bestowing a billion tax dollars for a private investment.

August 15, 2024:

"Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne told the Browns it wants no part of financing a Brook Park dome. This dog won't hunt.

This dog doesn't really have to hunt. Or bark. Or bite.

Because top Democratic pols – County Executive Chris Roynane, Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb and City Council President Blaine Griffin - will end up giving the Haslams, Gilberts and Dolans just what they want.

Haven't they always?"

"In the end, they will fold. Like a cheap tent in a wind storm."

"This dog has to learn to share the cost of doing business.

The last time the Cleveland baseball team paid rent for a stadium was in in 1989 when the then "Indians" rented the old Cleveland Stadium, run by Art Modell. The annual payment was $737,448, with a rebate. Final cost: $569,048."

"That's where the city and county need to start in any new dealing with any of the three owners: Redressing the past errors, all favoring the owners.

And that's where Roynane and Bibb are dealing from the bottom.

They know this better than the public does. But they are still dealing as if everything is even and fair.

The deck was stacked from the beginning."

"The truth is that the team owners with their staffs are well ahead of the city and county officials, who often rely on private Cleveland lawyers that seem to represent private interests more than the public agents that hire them.

The first step would be to hire high-powered lawyers from outside Cleveland or Ohio to represent the public."

Very little of consequence, however, breaks through. **Why don't things change? Probably because the deck is stacked.**

Phil Porter's 1970 book **"Cleveland – Confused City on a Seesaw,"** has lessons for today.

Porter, former executive editor of the *Plain Dealer*, was retired when he wrote a warning good for today – a big failed downtown promotion called Erieview. Porter called it "…one of the city's biggest mistakes."

Porter wrote:

"When completed, Erieview would shift the center of commercial gravity in downtown Cleveland away from Euclid Avenue toward the lakefront. The office workers in Erieview would be compelled to walk, or find special transportation, a half mile or more to the stores on Euclid and the good restaurants near them. This would be difficult and uncomfortable in winter."

Wonder how many riverfront strollers Bedrock will get in Cleveland's winter.

Porter says Erieview destroyed Euclid Avenue from East 14th to Public Square, as the main, fashionable, nationally famous shopping center of Cleveland.

Bibb and Griffin are attaching their stars to the riverfront and lakefront developments. They will both be gone long before the results are in. Both will divert property taxes and who knows what other subsidies to these downtown-related private efforts.

We are taxing fewer people more heavily for richer string-pullers.

It can only mean future troubles."

August 27, 2024:

"Funded in part by sin taxes, the stadium is another example of decisions made by Cleveland's wealthy. It has become too easy for politicians and the string-pullers who guide public decision making here to add taxes on products everyone buys.

And leave the more wealthy to enjoy the benefits.

The sales tax, paid by anyone buying things, falls on most people. Rich or poor."

It is highly unfair for that reason. And more costly as prices rise.

What would be fairer? **An income tax. Highly graduated so those with high incomes would pay the greater share.**

Sales taxes are being used to build and upkeep sports facilities, a convention center and the arts.

It is highly unfair.

But our leaders seem to go there first, often and fairly exclusively.

No matter how low your income, you pay the full cost of the sales tax.

It can hurt. So it's become very easy to use sales taxes, even when voted upon.

County Executive Chris Roynane and the County Council recently voted to extend a 0.25 percent increase in the general sales tax. It now stands at 8 percent total in the county, highest in Ohio." This increase extends the tax through 2063. It is said to raise some $3.4 billion.

The tax originally was also passed without a vote.

Remember the hip hip hooray about the Medical Mart, one of its recipients.

That's when former County Tim Hagan helped bring MMPI of Chicago and its owner, a Boston Kennedy family friend of his, to town for a pie-in-the-sky plan. The Med Mart was supposed to lure big profits from medical-related businesses to Cleveland. Cuyahoga County ended up paying MMPI $32,854,730. But the County, after building the "Med Mart" for $46 million had to redo it. The refix recently cost the County another $56 million.

Hagan allowed no public vote for the sales tax for the med mart. This is an incredible filtering of small cashflow that may not hurt those with high paying jobs but becomes an almost daily drain on those with low incomes.

It is easy for the politician. Especially when you have a docile news media.

CRITIQUE: HASLAMS' Poker Game and Their Design Errors:

Jimmy and Dee Haslam have been involved in a high-stakes game of Stadium Poker that they started a year ago. They want either a $1 billion renovation of the existing lakefront stadium that is only 25 years old, or a new $3.6 billion dollar domed stadium in Brookpark next to the airport. And they don't want to pay for but a fraction of the cost of either option.

Haslams' Design Errors:

Jimmy and Dee Haslam appear to be poor managers of design.

The Brookpark site they chose to examine is too close to Hopkins Airport.

For their Brookpark Stadium, the Haslams must excavate a massive hole down **eight stories below grade** so the roof is compliant with the FAA's requirements for takeoffs and landings at Hopkins next door. **That is a bad choice for a stadium site.**

Their renderings show massive stairs up to enter the facility which implies that vertical movement requirements will be far more substantial than at the lakefront. **Climbing up to go down is hardly fun or 'best for the fans.'**

The renderings feature sloping flat roofs that present the appearance of an inexpensive industrial building- - an inappropriate brand identity. Stadium design has been elevated in recent years not just in the US but around the world thanks to the increasing popularity of world cup soccer.

When our lakefront stadium was built, HOK – now called Populous, was the recognized world leader in the design of such facilities. The field is now a bit more crowded. And virtually **every other stadium reflects more creative, organic forms that reflect the motion of action on the playing field.**

The Browns' assertion that the Brookpark facility would enable the community to bid on college playoffs, Big Ten Championships, Final Four and other major events is wishful thinking. With ten of the Big 10 schools' stadiums seating more than Haslams' planned 65,000 seats, hosting a Big 10 Championship game is beyond unlikely. Even Iowa seats over 69,000. And with the exception of Penn Stare's Beaver Stadium, **every one was constructed before 1929.** And by the way, Cleveland has no skin in the Big Ten game.

The Haslams want someone else to pay $1 - $1.4B for the mixed-use development, $40 million for infrastructure and half of the $2.4B for the dome. While Jimmy and Dee are worth $14.4 Billion themselves, they are only willing to put up $1.2 billion - 8% of their bankroll.

Above: SoFi Stadium; Inglewood, CA; HKS
Below: SoFi Stadium surrounded by parking lots

Above: Proposed Browns' Brookpark Entry Steps
Below *Architect Newspaper* Critique of Brookpark Design

A new stadium proposal by HKS Architects and Jimmy Haslam in Cleveland is an architectural and cultural failure

By Ryan Scavnicky • November 27, 2024 • Architecture, Midwest, Op-Ed, Urbanism

Neither the state, County or City should be funding such a dome facility OR commercial mixed-use developments, let alone those of such a magnitude.

This kind of commercial real estate development is far beyond the kind of public-private partnerships being advocated elsewhere. Who is the landlord? The developer pays to build the project, collects the rent, pays the debt service and maintains the property. **Haslams want the benefits of such a development with none of the responsibilities to fund and maintain it that accompany it.**

The County's foray with the Downtown Hilton Hotel has been a failure as the County has been forced to not only pay for the construction but to also pay their tenant Hilton the difference between their actual revenue and their pro-forma! And taxpayers have never been told if Hilton's rent even covers the construction costs and debt service. Given the community's history with these deals, it is unlikely.

Though they have been free releasing multiple renderings of the proposed Brookpark stadium, the Haslams have not revealed renderings of the proposed "renovation" of the lakefront stadium. It appears that they never will. They must know that more outrage can be anticipated.

The Haslams found a local engineer to assert that even with a massive renovation, the lakefront stadium would not last beyond 15 years. Municipal Stadium lasted 66 years with virtually no maintenance whatsoever.

The Browns' lakefront stadium is only 25 years old and received a $120 million renovation ten years ago. Haslams claim that they have spent over $154 million of their own money since acquiring the team in 2012. The City of Cleveland has spent $28 million just since 2016 on repairs – ramps, lighting, fire alarms, and security.

But the Haslams have conjured up a remarkable and irresponsible Wish List for the lakefront stadium with Biblical proportions:

1. They want to completely dig out the south and east ends of the stadium to create a 360-degree service level. That is the tail wagging the dog. The stadium's original architects, HOK, had designed 14 stadiums and renovated four others at the time our stadium was planned.

HOK spun off their sports practice in 2009 and re-branded that new firm Populous which has now completed 235 such facilities around the world. If the Haslams are attempting to allege a planning deficiency in the layout of service facilities of our lakefront stadium, the attorneys for Populous would probably like to hear about it.

And to suggest such a massive and costly undertaking for deliveries and support personnel is simply not rational - particularly at the level and position that conflicts with largest volume of pedestrian traffic - unless one is simply trying to inflate a project budget without justification.

2. The Haslams want to demolish second level decks on both the east and west ends (!) and in their place locate even more massive video boards and 'gathering spaces.' The Haslams already have their fingerprints on the 2014 renovations that substantially enlarged the video boards. **Reducing fan capacity and revenue-generating seating further for more revenue-generating advertising assets is not in the best interests of the fans.**

3. The Haslams want to connect the north and south ends of the stadium with new walkways. Why? The 2014 renovations expanded food and beverage offerings substantially on both sides that make this unnecessary.

4. The Haslams want to renovate existing suites and club spaces. Fine.

5. The Haslams want to build massive glass curtainwalls on the north and south sides of the stadium from the ground up to the roof canopy, thus creating a new facade. This is more absurd than the full-height glass curtainwall added to the north face of the Fieldhouse that was then obscured by the horizontal lattice elements right behind them on the interior.

There is nothing to see behind the glass except the existing structure and there is no fan occupancy on the inside at that point of the facility that will benefit from a view out through a 90' high glass curtainwall. The stadium does not need a new dress. And a tenant paying only $250,000 a year in rent does not get to pick out an expensive new one simply because he/ she wants a new dress. It will not put more "W's" in the Win column.

6. The assertion that a land bridge from Mall C to the lakefront will cost $250 million is simply nonsense. It is 500 feet from Mall C to the Jim Brown statue at the southeast corner of the stadium. A 100' wide bridge of 500 feet will cost between $150 - $700/ square foot, depending on the materials used. So a 50,000 square foot bridge will cost between $7.5 million and $35 million.

With budget corrections for eliminating the absurd proposed excavation of the east and south lower levels of lakefront stadium, correction of the land bridge budget from $250 million to $35 million and the elimination of Haslams' new glass facade dress, it appears that the actual true and legitimate needs for the full renovation the lakefront stadium for the next 40+ years is more like $250 million instead of $1 billion. Surprise. Bibb has already

Above: Haslam's Brookpark dome's industrial shed design
Below, Top: Chicago Bears proposed Stadium, Manica
Below, Middle: Intuit Domed Stadium, Los Angeles, AECOM
Below, Bottom: Santiago Real Madrid Stadium Renovation; GMP Architecten

Above: Allegiant Stadium; Los Vegas; Manica, HNTB
Below: Intuit Stadium; Inglewood, CA for LA Clippers; AECOM

covered the city's half. **How is it that we tolerate such important matters being polluted with specious concepts and irresponsible cost projections? Where is the media?** We should not.

Why Not Dome the Lakefront Stadium?

What the Browns are **NOT** discussing is adding a dome to the lakefront stadium. There is no question that it is an intriguing design and engineering challenge. But the Hamburg, Germany firm GMP Architekten won an international design competition in 2017 to add a dome to the historic amphitheater in Verona, Italy.

GMP devised a retractable fan-shaped membrane structure with an elliptical compression ring since the requirements dictated that the solution involve minimal impact on the 2000-year old building, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Shortly after the competition awarded GMP the first prize, a change in the city's administration saw enthusiasm for the project diminished, and it is yet incomplete. GMP has designed numerous stadium projects around the world.

If Haslams will not call GMP Architekten, Bibb should make the call and come up with his own list of appropriate improvements, After all, the City of Cleveland owns the facility and is Haslams' landlord.

Below: Verona Arena Roof Competition Winner; GMP Architekten