

Plan would give boost to city's urban areas

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Many of the opponents of Issue 1 are people who pride themselves on their commitment to social justice.

Yet, as they argue against the merits of a Downtown stadium and arena, they continually avoid discussing the social value of investing in Downtown.

They concentrate instead on the effect of the project on the gentrified Victorian Village area or focusing on a mythical financier who magnanimously will contribute his own wealth.

Seldom, if ever, have those concerned citizens addressed the issues of white flight or urban blight.

Experience shows that cities, such as Indianapolis, that have invested heavily in sports venues in the central city, have experienced less outward migration than comparable cities.

That means the population of the city has remained stable, while the population of the suburbs has not risen dramatically.

Cleveland is experiencing revitalization in a long-neglected urban core that had reflected severe racial polarization, with predominantly poor blacks in the city and middle-class whites in the suburbs.

The social and economic benefits of the Family Entertainment and Sports District were certainly considered by the Call and Post, which describes itself as "Ohio's Black Newspaper," when it endorsed Issue 1 in its April 10 edition.

The Dispatch itself realized, "The vibrancy of the city's neighborhoods and suburbs is linked inseparably to the viability of Downtown."

In the words of Crain's Cleveland Business, "We who have allowed, condoned, supported and enjoyed suburban sprawl should feel the responsibility to remedy the problems caused by our exodus."

Franklin County residents are being asked to endorse a small and temporary increase in the sales tax that will cost each area family approximately \$70 a year.

Senior citizens and less advantaged families will pay less.

The challenge to all of central Ohio is to do the right thing, even if it is not the easy thing.

In this case, the right thing to do is to invest in Downtown's future, for the good of all Franklin County residents.

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