

Ronn Richard Talking Points
Public Square Grant Announcement

Tuesday, July 15, 2014

Thank you, Dan *[Walsh]*. Good morning County Executive FitzGerald, Councilman Cimperman, other honorable public officials, and citizens of Greater Cleveland

For 100 years, the Cleveland Foundation has pursued a mission of enhancing the lives of Greater Clevelanders through place-based philanthropy. For example: in Playhouse Square, where we played a leading role in saving those historic theaters; In Greater University Circle, where we catalyzed development of the thriving Uptown District; And in historic residential neighborhoods from Glenville to Gordon Square

Public Square's pending transformation is the ultimate expression of this concept of "places for people." This meeting place was part of the original 1796 plan for our city: the centerpiece, the common area where citizens gathered and democracy flourished. It evolved as the beating heart of Cleveland – but that beat has faltered over the years. Now, thanks to the efforts of a dedicated team, Public Square will get a heart transplant. This space will pulse with life again, a point of pride for all Clevelanders. Its rebirth will have both an economic and a cultural impact.

That's why I am delighted to announce that the Cleveland Foundation has committed 8 million dollars to revitalize Public Square. This grant to LAND Studio is the latest in a series of legacy gifts our board has authorized in celebration of the foundation's centennial this year. As the world's first community foundation – created by the community, for the community – how could we fail to get behind this momentous project? It builds on our long history of support for place-making... a history we owe to

Cleveland Foundation donors, residents of this great city who are true heroes in the unfolding story of a resurgent Cleveland. Because if this gift is for the community, it is also from the community. The generosity of our fellow citizens gives wings to dreams like the makeover of Public Square.

Appropriately, everyone will be invited in to celebrate the renaissance of this urban square and the city that surrounds it. Upon completion, exciting programming to bring this space to life will draw residents and visitors alike. Speaking of visitors ... We could be hosting 50,000 of them in 2016, when the Republican National Convention comes to town. What a thrill it will be to show the nation our redesigned Public Square, just completed in May 2016!

We hope the grant I am announcing today will spur additional donors, including corporations and other foundations, to support the mayor's leadership and pledge their own investments in this catalytic project. This gift is an investment in people as well as in place. In transforming Public Square, we transform our relationships with this historic civic asset, with our entire city and with one another.

The project team that has brought us to this point should be congratulated for making "no little plans." And I think architect Daniel Burnham, who uttered that famous statement and served on Cleveland's original Group Plan Commission, would be as excited by this visionary plan as we are.

So now, it is my honor to invite Councilman Cimperman to join me as I turn the podium over to Dan Walsh, who will unveil the name by which the south plaza of the new Public Square will be known. Thank you.