

## **The Proposed Ticket Fee Helps All of Columbus and Franklin County. Key Points for Advocates, Policy Makers, and Citizens (Sept. 2018)**

1. Columbus and Franklin County have rapidly gained stature as Ohio's most successful community, the heart of a premier Midwestern and national region. The presence of non-profit arts and culture and professional sports and entertainment attractions here is a major reason. These dynamic sectors of our economy and community are responsible for thousands of jobs, billions in economic benefits, endless opportunities for children and youth, and critical energy for our quality of life.
2. But these two sectors, vibrant as they are, need help. Our nonprofit arts and cultural organizations need additional public investment to prevent the erosion of quality offerings and facilities. A respected, locally-based financial expert found that \$15 million in additional funds are needed annually for nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Columbus. Nationwide Arena needs \$4 million in capital improvement funds annually to be up to date, well maintained, and competitive as a major attraction for residents and visitors.
3. That's why Columbus City Council is considering a fee on ticketed arts, cultural, entertainment, and professional sporting events (college and K-12 athletic events are exempt). Sixty-three other Ohio cities have ticket fees for entertainment and sporting events. This fee, paid by the ticket purchaser, will help keep the jobs, income, educational value, and civic vitality flowing to our community.
4. At 7%, we estimate the ticket fee would generate approximately \$14 million annually for two purposes: 1) support critical programs, renovations, and improvements in our arts and cultural organizations (via the Greater Columbus Arts Council) – a need proven in dozens of well-documented studies; and 2) fund up to \$4 million annually in efficient, essential renovations to Nationwide Arena, to maintain the facility and attract the major concerts, shows, and sporting events that add so much to our economy and quality of life.
5. Per public capita spending on arts and culture in Columbus is below cities like Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Our arts and cultural organizations receive far less public funding than their counterparts across the country. Needs include major facilities repairs, operational funding, special program support, and neighborhood arts investments.
6. Nationwide Arena is a similar story. Nationwide ranks last in capital improvements among all major league arenas. Of the 19 National Hockey League arenas built within five years of Nationwide, 12 are in the middle of or have completed renovations of \$10 to over \$60 million. Our Arena is still in good condition, but upcoming roof repairs and scoreboard upgrades (at \$5 million each) are among the significant, and unfunded, investments needed.
7. The stakes are high. Our nonprofit arts and culture sector generates \$412 million in economic activity, supports nearly 15,000 jobs, and produces \$373 million in local household income every year. In fact, nonprofit arts and cultural organizations are central Ohio's biggest attraction, with attendance of more than six million every year—two million of which come from outside the county. Greater Columbus Arts Council grantee organizations provide 750,000 educational opportunities a year for children and invest nearly \$3 million annually in programs for local underserved communities. Free arts and culture events, like festivals and concerts, are enjoyed by more than a million people annually.
8. Nationwide Arena's impact is also significant. Since opening in 2000, more than \$750 million in additional private investment has been made in the surrounding neighborhood – generating \$7.5 million in taxes annually for Columbus City Schools. The Arena District supports more than 10,000 jobs and last year the arena hosted more than 700,000 Columbus Blue Jackets fans as well as numerous concerts and shows. In 2017 nearly 45% of the arena's ticketed attendance came from outside the Columbus metropolitan area. Under this proposal the arena is a net contributor to the nonprofit arts and cultural sector.
9. Without the 7% ticket fee, our arts, culture, sports, and entertainment options, will likely decline or disappear. That's too much for Columbus to risk. The 7% ticket fee is a smart solution and will help keep these vital components of our community and economy working for Columbus and Franklin County.