

A QUICK OVERVIEW

SET IN STONE

BUILDING AMERICA'S NEW GENERATION OF ARTS FACILITIES, 1994-2008

THIS STUDY WAS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:

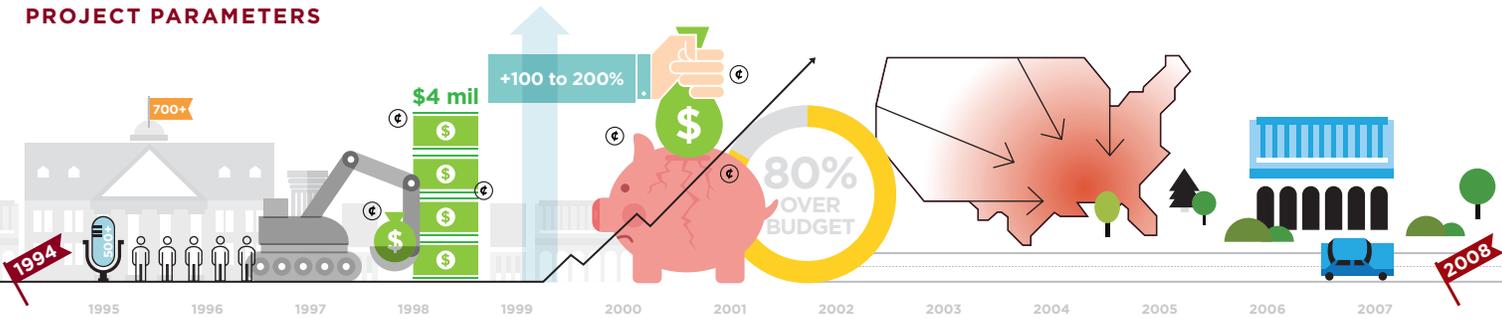
- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- The Kresge Foundation
- The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- The Rockefeller Brothers Fund

The University of Chicago's Cultural Policy Center, a joint initiative of the Harris School of Public Policy and the research organization NORC, launched in 2007 a major study of cultural building projects in the United States—looking at a building boom between 1994 and 2008 that included museums, performing arts centers (PACs), and theaters. The primary goal of the study was to **establish research that would serve as a basic and essential resource for any cultural group in the country involved in planning the construction, renovation, or expansion of their facilities.**

The results of the study provide **evidence-based** guidance to groups and benefactors considering new arts-related construction projects and will be broadly disseminated. These findings will promote a more effective decision-making process for institutional leaders, trustees, donors and foundations, local and state government officials, and arts organizations.

Through this we hope that the actual needs of the cultural organizations and the communities they serve can be better aligned, thus **maximizing the chances of producing suitable and sustainable arts facilities in the future.**

PROJECT PARAMETERS



We studied more than **700 building projects** and conducted interviews with more than **500 organizations**. These included museums, theaters, and performing arts centers; new facilities, expansions and renovations; **costing at least \$4 million between 1994 and 2008.**

The research we conducted does indeed point to substantial evidence that there was **overinvestment** during the building boom—especially when coupled with the number of organizations we studied that experienced financial difficulties post-building. **Eighty percent of the projects we studied ran over budget, some by as much as 200 percent.**

Larger cities weren't the only ones investing in cultural infrastructure. Smaller cities located in areas not typically known for sizeable cultural institutions were building as well—many for the first time.

THE LANDSCAPE OF CULTURAL BUILDING

There was a **substantial increase** in cultural facilities building, particularly between 1998 and 2001, the "building boom."



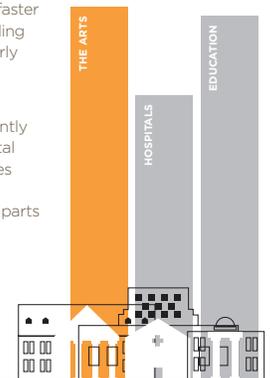
Performing arts centers (PACs) were the dominant form of new facilities.



Building in the arts grew faster than, or on par with, building in other sectors, particularly hospitals and education.

The South saw a significantly greater increase in the total number of cultural facilities during the period studied when compared to other parts of the country.

Small cities (fewer than 500,000 people) were also building, many for the first time.

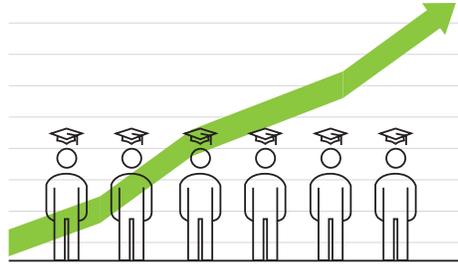


THE INVESTMENT DETERMINANTS OF CULTURAL BUILDING

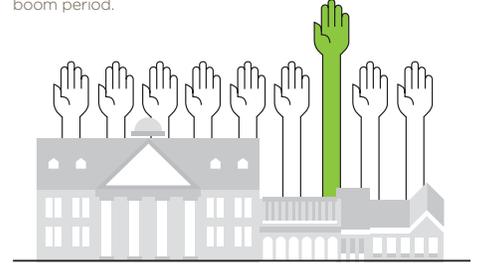
The more existing cultural facilities a city has, the more it must invest in renovating and replacing those facilities.



Rising populations and higher average levels of education and income help explain why some cities built more than others.



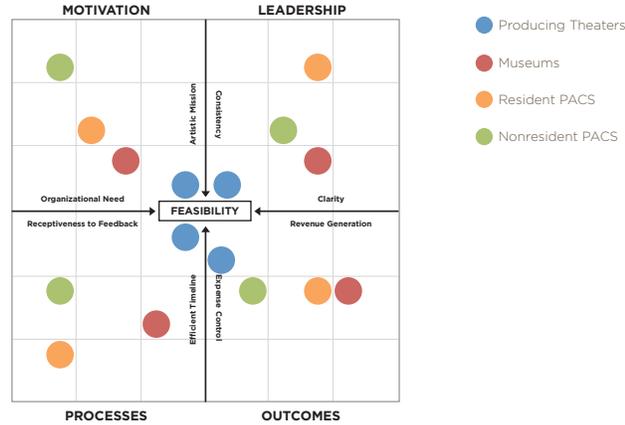
The supply of cultural facilities may have exceeded the demand for them, particularly during the building boom period.



THE FEASIBILITY OF CULTURAL BUILDING PROJECTS

Based on the observations of projects, we identified important characteristics that led to more or less successful projects within the following four dimensions:

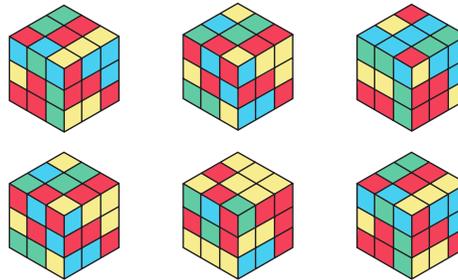
- The project's **motivation**, driven by both the organization's artistic mission and by organizational need, was the primary purpose for building.
- Project **leadership** that was clear and consistent throughout the planning and building process improved the chance of positive outcomes.
- Efficient project timelines and the effectiveness of the project leadership helped determine a project's success in **implementation**.
- Project **outcomes** were influenced by how flexible the organization was in generating revenue post-project completion, and how effective the project leaders were at controlling expenses.



CASE STUDIES

Planning and designing a building requires attention to a number of key elements:

- How a new facility will fit into and enhance an organization's ability to deliver on its mission
- The organization's actual capacity (additional staff, technical support, marketing expertise) to operate effectively in an enhanced and expanded space
- Engaging the surrounding community in ways that will support the longer term health of the organization and its infrastructure
- Identifying and strengthening funding streams for the near and longer term



These challenges are examined in four in-depth case studies and will be valuable for those tasked with determining how best to plan, design and manage future building projects in the cultural sector.

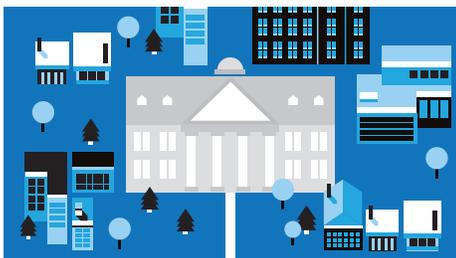
- Art Institute of Chicago
- AT&T Performing Arts Center
- Long Center for the Performing Arts
- Taubman Museum of Art

Find them all at <http://culturalpolicy.uchicago.edu/setinstone/casestudies>

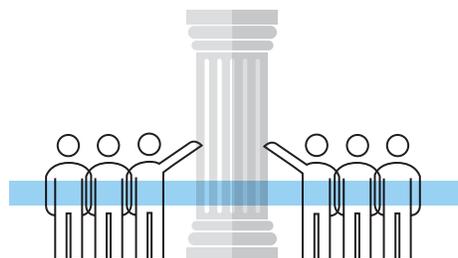
Careful thought and planning in each of these areas will increase the project's visibility and sustainability.

THE EFFECTS ON COMMUNITIES

There is no clear pattern of spillover effects (negative or positive) of specific cultural building projects on non-building local cultural organizations and the greater community.



Few organizations viewed themselves as competitors of the organization that was expanding its facility.



There was only limited evidence that cultural building has significant effects on the overall changes in the number of arts organizations, their employment, or payrolls.

