



Conference Center Market & Financial Feasibility Study

Ithaca, New York

Hunden worked with the Ithaca Downtown Alliance to conduct a market demand, financial feasibility and economic impact analysis for a potential conference center in downtown Ithaca. The primary goal of the potential project is to improve the quality of life, increase hotel stays (especially during mid-week), generate new ongoing jobs, and generate economic impact by attracting conference, meetings, banquets, and other events to downtown Ithaca from outside the area.

Ithaca is a unique setting for a conference facility because it is an exemplary college town. It is a small city, whose culture and economy are dominated by university life, complimented by scenic beauty and natural attractions and resources, as well as wineries and distilleries. Adults enjoy college towns in large part because they tend to offer a wide variety of the arts, restaurants, nightlife, live theater and music, architecture, and other cultural amenities of a large city, yet in an easy to navigate smaller city setting.

Analysis of the market appeal, demographics, and competitive local and regional supply of event facilities, as well as conversations with local stakeholders, hoteliers, industry experts, and potential demand generators, indicated that there is an opportunity for a conference center development in downtown Ithaca.

In 2019, Hunden worked with Convergence Design to complete Phase Two of the study, which included a deep dive into the project financial projections, developer proposal analyses, and construction budget estimates and layouts.

The project is currently under construction and set for completion in 2024. The \$34 million project will be a two-story, 15,000-square foot conference center featuring a 12,300-square foot ballroom, a junior ballroom, and breakout rooms, pre-function and trade show space.

Client: Ithaca Downtown Alliance

Time Period: 2016 – 2017, 2019