



Northlight Theatre Relocation, Market & Impact Analysis

Evanston, Illinois

Hunden Partners was approached by Northlight Theatre to conduct an economic, employment and fiscal impact analysis for the Theatre's current Skokie location and a proposed new location in Evanston, Illinois. The company was exploring the option of moving to downtown Evanston in hopes to increase their attendees and their overall success and expansion as a theatre.

The Northlight Theatre has been located in the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie home since 1997. Annually, it mounts more than 200 productions and has grown into one of the largest nonprofit theatres in the Chicago area, with nearly 6,000 subscribers. Northlight Theatre's performance space is a 318-seat theatre with a three-quarter thrust stage.

Hunden analyzed the company's historical performance and the location of subscribers and single-ticket buyers to understand how this would change in a new location. Hunden also interviewed theater companies across the U.S. that had made a similar move to learn lessons about performance and impact. Given that the new site is much more urban and difficult to access for suburbanites, yet much easier for those in Chicago and the North Shore due to multiple train lines (CTA and Metra), the audience would adjust in many ways. Hunden estimated the future demand and financial performance of the company in each location, then conducted an economic, fiscal and employment impact analysis to determine the direct, indirect and induced impacts, including the tax revenues generated by the company in each location.

In 2019, Hunden conducted an update to the original impact study as the theatre prepared to enter into Phase One of the Evanston relocation development.

Client: Northlight Theatre

Time Period:

2015, 2019