

The Contribution of Office, Industrial and Retail Development and Construction to North Carolina's Economy*

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The value of commercial buildings is much more than the sum of pre-construction (soft costs) and construction outlays (site development, building construction and tenant improvements). Commercial buildings generate continuing post-construction value within the local and state economies as a result of the spending associated with their operations and the value of output generated by the workers and businesses they house. This report measures the contribution of office, industrial and retail building development, construction and operations to North Carolina's economy in the form of annual direct spending for new development, construction and annual expenditures to operate existing buildings.

The analyses presented in this report define the economic impacts of commercial buildings on North Carolina's economy, highlighting the economic impacts from office, industrial, warehouse and retail buildings, during the three life stages: development, construction and maintenance.

The Three Stages in the Life of a Commercial Building



Soft Costs/Site Development/Tenant Improvements

Architects, engineers, developers and marketing/design professionals working during the development phase begin the life span of a commercial building.



Hard Costs

During the construction phase, new commercial projects employ workers who spend their paychecks in the local economy and contribute to the tax base.



Operating Costs

After new commercial buildings are completed and occupied, they add to the productive capacity of their host economies. The outlays that support the new buildings' operations add ongoing annual sources of economic impact that accumulates over the life span of commercial buildings.

* This report, prepared for the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties Research Foundation with 2007 construction data provided by McGraw-Hill Construction, is part of the larger report issued in October 2008 by Stephen S. Fuller, PhD entitled, The Contribution of Office, Industrial and Retail Development and Construction to the U.S. Economy, 2008 Edition.

The following table provides the soft costs, site development, tenant improvements and construction (hard) costs for the state of North Carolina.

**The Impacts of Construction Spending for Soft Costs, Site Development,
Tenant Improvements and Construction (Hard) Costs on the Economy of North Carolina,
2007**

(in billions of 2007 dollars)

Sources	Direct Spending	Total Output ¹	Personal Income ²	Jobs Supported ³
Office Buildings				
Soft Costs	\$0.556	\$1.044	\$0.399	10,562
Site Development*	0.483	1.111	0.332	11,244
Construction Costs	1.596	3.675	1.098	37,192
Tenant Improvement**	0.582	1.341	0.401	13,567
Totals	\$3.217	\$7.171	\$2.229	72,566
Industrial Buildings				
Soft Costs	\$0.052	\$0.098	\$0.037	990
Site Development*	0.075	0.172	0.051	1,743
Construction Costs	0.214	0.492	0.147	4,981
Tenant Improvement**	0.054	0.125	0.037	1,262
Totals	\$0.395	\$0.887	\$0.273	8,975
Warehouse Buildings				
Soft Costs	\$0.091	\$0.171	\$0.065	1,726
Site Development*	0.113	0.261	0.078	2,643
Construction Costs	0.348	0.802	0.240	8,113
Tenant Improvement**	0.089	0.205	0.061	2,077
Totals	\$0.642	\$1.439	\$0.444	14,559
Retail Buildings				
Soft Costs	\$0.260	\$0.489	\$0.187	4,942
Site Development*	0.286	0.660	0.197	6,675
Construction Costs	0.772	1.777	0.531	17,988
Tenant Improvement**	0.235	0.541	0.162	5,474
Totals	\$1.554	\$3.466	\$1.076	35,078
Totals Buildings				
Soft Costs	\$0.959	\$1.801	\$0.688	18,220
Site Development*	0.957	2.204	0.659	22,305
Construction Costs	2.930	6.746	2.016	68,274
Tenant Improvement**	0.961	2.211	0.661	22,380
Totals	\$5.808	\$12.963	\$4.023	131,179

Source: *The Contribution of Office, Industrial and Retail Development and Construction to the U. S. Economy*, 2008 Edition, NAIOP Research Foundation, October 2008, pp. 27-63.

Notes: ¹ the total value of goods and services generated directly and indirectly as a result of the initial construction spending within the state; ² the additional earnings generated within the state from direct spending during the construction phase; ³ the additional new jobs supported by the spending and re-spending of direct spending associated with the spending for new construction. *Site development includes grading, infrastructure, parking and landscaping. **Tenant improvements exclude furniture and equipment.

On a state level, North Carolina accounted for \$5.808 billion in direct spending for new office, industrial, warehouse and retail buildings as follows (in billions of 2007 dollars):

Office Buildings	\$3.217
Industrial Buildings	0.395
Warehouse Buildings	0.642
Retail Buildings	1.554
Totals Buildings	\$5.808

On a state level, commercial buildings supported 131,179 full-time-equivalent, year-round jobs.

The Contribution of Operating Costs on the Economy of North Carolina

The following table provides the state spending values for the existing buildings (spending for maintenance and repair, cleaning, utilities, security and administrative expenses) that will recur annually following the completion of a commercial building.

Annual Impacts of Existing Buildings on the Economy of North Carolina, 2007 (in millions of 2007 dollars)

Sources	Direct Spending	Total Output ¹	Personal Income ²	Jobs Supported ³
Office Buildings	\$60,673.43	\$126,504.11	\$40,762.43	1,537
Industrial Buildings	2,068.87	4,313.59	1,389.93	52
Warehouse Buildings	4,016.29	8,373.97	2,698.28	102
Retail Buildings	17,125.16	35,705.95	11,505.25	434
Totals Buildings	\$83,883.75	\$174,897.62	\$56,355.89	2125

Source: The Contribution of Office, Industrial and Retail Development and Construction to the U. S. Economy, 2008 Edition, NAIOP Research Foundation, October 2008, p. 65-69.

Notes: ¹ the total value of goods and services generated directly and indirectly as a result of building operating spending within the state; ² the additional earnings generated within the state from spending for building operations; ³ the additional new jobs supported by the spending and re-spending of spending associated with building operations. Operations impacts include maintenance and repair, cleaning, utilities, roads and grounds, security and administrative expenses.

Commercial Construction Counterbalances Residential

Another important contribution of commercial buildings is that the long-term pattern of commercial real estate development, construction and operations spending lags residential spending, helping to cushion the negative economic impact of slower residential construction outlays in 2007 and 2008.

The magnitude and significance of commercial buildings is clear. Changes in construction activity during the business cycle are directly reflected in GDP growth rates. The combined impact of development, commercial construction and building operations spending is a major source and closely watched barometer of economic vitality at the national and local levels.

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