

Excerpted Draft Findings of the Madison Cultural with regard to the Overture Center

I. Introduction

Below, draft information from the Madison Cultural plan's three surveys (Artists and Creative Workers, Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations, and Consumers) addressing the Overture Center are aggregated. Subsequently, summary opinions expressed in completed roundtables, interviews, and focus groups is presented. This information is being assembled to assist the City of Madison in making decisions regarding its participation in owning and/or managing the facility and its programs.

As can be seen from the comments below, citizen opinion ranges widely, but overall themes of concern about accessibility to audiences and local users are common to artists, creative workers, cultural organizations, interview subjects, philanthropists, and consumers alike.

Readers should be aware that these excerpts from the draft findings are only those closely related to the very narrow subject of the Overture Center. Many, many other issues and ideas concerning the arts and cultural community and its consumers were put forward. This document is not intended to provide a sense of the whole series of issues and needs discovered. The reader should realize that while Overture emerged as a theme, it was less prominent than, for example, other expressed facility needs for studio, small performance, production and rehearsal spaces in the community and a whole set of needs related to communication, shared services, networking mechanisms and information.

II. Brief Summary

A. Consumer Perspective

- ✓ The Overture Center and art museums as a group were the most frequently mentioned destinations for all consumers and the second most frequent destination of suburban dwelling consumers.
- ✓ Cost is a often or sometimes a barrier for just over 80% of Madison's consumers.

B. Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organization Perspective

- ✓ Overture is the fourth most frequently used venue used by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in engaging with the public.

- ✓ Overture is the sixth most frequently chosen venue when these organizations are asked to choose the “most important” venues or locations.
- ✓ Some organizations identified the Overture Center as a strength of the local arts scene.
- ✓ Many organizations identified absence of affordable facilities as a primary deficit of local arts infrastructure.
- ✓ Some organizations identified the need for fiscal stability and independence of the Overture Center as key deficits of the local arts infrastructure.
- ✓ Some organizations identified the opportunity to do more with Overture Center resident companies, in terms of collaboration, as an important opportunity.

C. Artists and Creative Workers’ Perspective

- ✓ High percentages of artists and creative workers bemoan shortages in affordable spaces (studios, shared studios for emerging artists, art galleries, public art, public display spaces, and production, rehearsal, and construction spaces).
- ✓ Overture is the second most frequently chosen facility artists and creative workers rely on for the exhibition, sale, or utilization of their work and also the second most frequently chosen as “most important” for these uses.
- ✓ Public and quasi public facilities (including Overture) as a group are the third most frequently named cluster of facilities artists and creative workers rely on for the exhibition, sale, or utilization of their work.
- ✓ Seven organizations named the Overture Center when asked to identify one aspect of Madison’s cultural scene that should be preserved.
- ✓ Fourteen identified one or another aspect of the Overture Center (affordability, penetration into various community groups, access to artists and arts organizations, community involvement, fiscal policies, etc) as the one most important thing that needed to be changed in Madison’s art scene.
- ✓ Overture could better support and participate in retaining artists and creative workers locally, especially by offering more affordable spaces, including artists in its decision-making, offering more creative ticket discounting programs, and working to both increase public awareness and bringing local groups together.

Leadership Perspective

- ✓ Many people in Madison including members of communities of color and young people do not feel welcome at the Overture Center.
- ✓ Cost to both local user groups and to individual patrons is a barrier to accessibility.

- ✓ The funding stream for access activities has not been well established, even though there is interest in the philanthropic community in supporting access.
- ✓ Instability of the Overture center is a problem for its resident companies and they have been excluded from both information and participation in deliberations surrounding its fate, undermining confidence.
- ✓ Overture has not articulated its case statement well and community buy in is low.
- ✓ The community of local philanthropists engaged in arts giving has not grown much in recent years.
- ✓ The unresolved debt situation at Overture is a “black cloud” hanging over philanthropic decision making; it effects every one.
- ✓ Consideration should be given to increased partnership between Overture and higher education institutions.
- ✓ Overture is a great asset to the business community, but is also a whipping boy for the lack of an effective arts and cultural focal point, such as an arts council, in Madison.

III. Consumer Perspective

One hundred and ninety-three (193) consumers responded to a survey exploring their arts and cultural preferences and experiences. Respondents ranged in age from 15 to 81 years, came from all parts of the community, and from many racial and ethnic groups, though Latinos and Asians were under-represented. Households with and without children were represented in approximately the ratio they exist in the community at large.

A. Where Consumers Go

Respondents were asked where they/their families go for arts and cultural activities, and were encouraged to select all sites that applied. The percentage of respondents choosing each type of the top ten locations are charted below, from most frequently to least frequently chosen. The Overture Center and art museums were the most frequently selected locations. There is a likelihood of overlap in these two responses, owing to the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art's being located at the Overture Center.

Top Ten Locations Where Consumers Go for Arts and Cultural Activities

Location or Location Type	Percentage of All Respondents Attending	Percentage of Suburb Dwelling Respondents Attending*
Art Museums	81.4%	69.6%
Overture Center	81.4%	76.1%
University of Wisconsin Facilities	80.8%	63%
Farmers' Markets	71.9%	65.2%
Movie Theatres	70.7%	69.6%
Olbrich Gardens	67.7%	54.3%
Outdoor Downtown Venues	65.3%	56.5%
Art Galleries	64.1%	54.3%
Bookstores	61.7%	58.7%
Citywide Parks including festivals and events	59.3%	45.7%

*Suburb dwelling is defined as those respondents who indicated they live in the Far West, West, Southwest, East, and North parts of Madison. Not included in this group are those living in the Near West, South Central, Isthmus, and Near East parts of Madison.

B. Consumer Context Issues

Also of interest regarding the Overture Center are two other indirectly related findings:

- ✓ **Cost** is “often” a barrier to attending arts and cultural events for 19.9% of respondents; “sometimes” a barrier for 60.8% of respondents; and “never” for only 19.3% of respondents.
- ✓ **Consumers in the Isthmus and Central areas of Madison give the highest scores for availability of neighborhood arts and cultural experiences**; those in the South West, South Central, and North areas are the least satisfied with availability of neighborhood-based arts and cultural programs.
- ✓ **Quality is an issue for many consumers, with 63.1% “often” or “sometimes” disappointed** regarding the quality of local arts experiences. One consumer wrote, “You have to look hard for the really good events. I find most Overture events mediocre, but small venues for music and theatre are sometimes great.”

IV. Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations Perspective

Seventy-nine nonprofit arts and cultural organizations responded to a survey. These organizations represent a wide range of disciplines, missions, and sizes. They include organizations working in crafts, dance, design arts, folk life and traditional arts, history, media arts, multidisciplinary work, music, opera/music theatre, photography, science and nature, theatre, visual arts, the written word, grant making and technical assistance, culturally specific heritage, dance/movement therapy, event production, mural making, and specialized painting crafts. Among these, music and theatre are the most frequently represented, followed by multidisciplinary and visual arts organizations.

A. Facilities Used by Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations for Engagement with the Public

Respondents were asked about their use of **facilities for exhibition, sale, performance, teaching, leading community participation processes, residencies, outreach programs or other forms of engagement with the public**. They were asked to indicate where these public events had occurred in the last three years. Respondents (N=50) were free to choose as many choices as applied.

Looking at the last three years, respondents most frequently used locations engagement with the public in descending order were:

1. The respondent’s own programming location/s (16)
2. Neighborhood or community centers (15)
3. Faith community facilities (14)

4. Overture Center (13)

5. Residential facilities for the elderly (13)
6. University of Wisconsin facilities (13)
7. Elementary schools (9)
8. Other performing arts venues –not Barrymore, Overture, Bartell, Orpheum (9)
9. High schools (8)
10. Middle schools (7)
11. Bartell Theatre (7)
12. Nightclubs or Bars (7)
13. Branch libraries (7)

The **venues/locations most frequently identified as “most important”** in descending order of frequency are shown below. Respondents (N=50) were able to choose four “most important” venues or locations. The pattern shows some variance from the most frequently used responses. In particular, Overture was the fourth most frequently used venue, but rated the sixth most frequently regarded as “most important.”

1. The respondent’s own programming location/s (15)
2. Residential facilities for the elderly (9)
3. University of Wisconsin facilities (9)
4. Other performing arts venues –not Barrymore, Overture, Bartell, Orpheum (9)
5. Elementary Schools (8)
- 6. Overture Center (8)**
7. Bartell Theatre (6)
8. Faith Community Facilities (6)
9. Neighborhood or community centers (5)
10. Major Lakefront beaches or parks (5)

B. Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organization's Views on Strengths of the Local Cultural Scene

Respondents were asked to identify one precious things about Madison's arts and cultural scene that should remain the same. Certain specific programs and venues were mentioned as strengths of the local scene including the Bartell Theatre, the Madison Symphony Orchestra, **the Overture Center**, and the Film Festival. Many additional strengths were, of course, noted as well.

C. Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organization's Views on Deficits of the Local Cultural Scene

Among a wider variety of deficits, notably including affordable facilities deficits, respondents addressed particular issues of fiscal policy identifying the absence of fiscal incentives for retaining the character of historically significant places, lack of sufficient public core funding for major institutions, and **need for fiscal stability and independence of the Overture Center** as key barriers.

D. Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organization's Views on Opportunities

Asked to identify current opportunities for arts and cultural development in Madison that should be captured to advance creativity and innovation, "Building on institutional and facilities assets, **for example by doing more with Overture resident companies,**" was identified as one opportunity among many.

V. Artists and Creative Worker Perspective

Two hundred and forty(240) individuals responded to this survey including artists from twelve broadly defined disciplines and creative workers with 23 occupational groups or roles. Among artists, the most frequently represented disciplines were visual arts, music, and theatre. Among creative workers, the most frequently represented occupations were arts, cultural, and creative sector administrators; agents, promoters, presenters and marketing and communications related; and arts, cultural, or science education related.

A. Artists and Creative Workers' Views on Availability of Affordable Space

Artists and creative workers were asked to rank the availability of various creative resources in Madison. Over half (55.6 %) ranked "Affordable space" as "poor" or "weak" and **affordable space was the lowest ranked resource in terms of availability**. Other resources considered included "Material/Virtual Production Resources;" "Sales Outlets;" "Peer Dialogue, Mutual Support, and Criticism;" "Local Marketing Opportunities;" "Community Recognition;" and "Information."

In open ended questions, artists and creative workers repeatedly call for **more and affordable studio spaces for individuals; shared studios for emerging artists; more and affordable small performance venues; more art galleries, public art, and public display spaces; and affordable rehearsal and constructions spaces**. The frequency of these comments suggests widespread and urgent needs.

B. Facilities Used by Artists and Creative Workers for Exhibition, Sale, or Utilization of Work

Respondents identified the facilities or facility types they rely upon for the sale, exhibition, or utilization of their work. The most frequently selected option was "University of Wisconsin facilities" (N=98) followed by the "**Overture Center**" (N=75) and "Neighborhood or Community Centers" (N=63). Other frequently utilized facilities were coffee houses, art galleries, nightclubs/bars, and high schools. Of 1139 choices reported by respondents, the Overture Center was selected 75 times.

C. Facilities Used by Artists and Creative Workers for Exhibition, Sale, or Utilization of Work by Sector Cluster

Another important way to look at this data is by cluster, to get a sense of which societal sectors are providing the greatest shares of the facilities relied upon by artists and creative workers. Below, these clusters are charted. This clustering reveals that commercial facilities, from art galleries to garden supply centers, is the most heavily relied upon cluster of facilities for the exhibition, sale, or utilization of creative work in Madison. Education facilities, ranging from early education and care providers to higher education, rank next. **Public and quasi public venues are third in order of frequency**, followed in descending order by arts and cultural organizations' own facilities, commercial facilities, neighborhood and community facilities, and treatment and care facilities (many of which are also public, but are listed separately here).

Facilities Clustered by Sector and Used by Artists and Creative Workers for Exhibition, Sale, or Utilization of Work

Facility Clusters	No. of Uses
Commercial Facilities (art galleries, nightclubs/bars, private studios, commercial firms, movie theatres, arts supply stores, bookstores, garden supply/greenhouse/landscaping, coffee houses, Orpheum, malls)	307
Education Facilities (Arboretum, MATC facilities, Edgewood facilities, UW facilities, public schools, early education and care facilities)	251
Public and Quasi Public Facilities* (libraries, parks, outdoor downtown venues, prisons/jails, Vilas Zoo, history museums, Overture Center)	224
Arts and Cultural Organizations' Facilities (Barrymore and Bartell Theatres, small rental performing arts venues, science museums, Children's Museum, art museums, studio and activity spaces)	149
Neighborhood and Community Facilities (neighborhood and community centers, faith community facilities, farmer's markets, neighborhood art centers)	134
Treatment and Care Facilities (treatment centers for special populations, adults, and juveniles; residential facilities for juveniles and elderly; hospitals)	60
Other	14
Total reported facility uses	1139

*(excluding public schools, higher education and treatment and care facilities which are listed separately)

D. Most Important Facilities for the Consumption of Creative Work

Yet another way to explore the relationship of artists and creative workers to facilities is to explore not just which facilities they have used, but also which they consider most important. Here, respondents were asked to identify the four most important venues to the consumption of their work.

In this case, the most frequently chosen as most important venues were University of Wisconsin facilities (N=61), **the Overture Center (N=47)**, art galleries (N=42), coffee houses

(N=38), neighborhood or community centers (N=34), and nightclubs or bars (N=32). Of 609 reported choices for “most important venue” the Overture Center was selected 47 times.

For comparison, it is possible to look at these “most important venues” via the same clusters used above. Though not all facilities or facility types listed in the first question were selected for inclusion in the “most important” choices, the hierarchy of facility clusters remains the same.

Most Important Venues for Exhibition, Sale, or Utilization of Own Work Ranked by Artists and Creative Workers and Clustered by Sector

Facilities Cluster	# Most Important Selections
Commercial Facilities (art galleries, nightclubs/bars, private studios, commercial firms, movie theatres, arts supply stores, bookstores, garden supply/greenhouse/landscaping, coffee houses, Orpheum, malls)	190
Education Facilities (Arboretum, MATC facilities, Edgewood facilities, UW facilities, public schools, early education and care facilities)	122
Public and Quasi Public Facilities* (libraries, parks, outdoor downtown venues, prisons/jails, Vilas Zoo, history museums, Overture Center)	111
Arts and Cultural Organizations’ Facilities (Barrymore and Bartell Theatres, small rental performing arts venues, science museums, Children’s Museum, art museums, studio and activity spaces)	89
Neighborhood and Community Facilities (neighborhood and community centers, faith community facilities, farmer’s markets, neighborhood art centers)	61
Treatment and Care Facilities (treatment centers for special populations, adults, and juveniles; residential facilities for juveniles and elderly; hospitals)	22
Other	14
Total reported “Most Important” Choices	609

E. One Thing to Preserve

Artists and creative workers were asked to identify the one aspect of Madison’s arts, culture, and creative scene that should be preserved. Generally speaking, their answers clustered around the broad topics of diversity, events and programs, funding and funding policy, and public attitudes and behaviors. Below, comments related to the Overture Center are reported.

- ✓ **International Festival at the Overture Center.** I’ve never been involved in it aside from being an audience member, but I think it’s the most comprehensive showing of multicultural art this community has and the fact that it is free to the public also makes it most valuable
- ✓ UW Madison Art Department, Tandem Press, Commonwealth Gallery, the Chazen and the MMoCA/**Overture Center** must stay!
- ✓ Preserve the **Overture Center**
- ✓ State Street, i.e. Chazen & Union to the **Overture** and MMOCA
- ✓ **Overture Center**
- ✓ **Overture Center**
- ✓ **Keeping Overture accessible and affordable** for local arts projects

F. One Thing to Change

Artists and creative workers were asked to identify one change to Madison’s arts, culture, and creative scene they would make if they could. Their responses fell into clusters around the issues of collectivism and connections, facilities, events and programs, diversity, fiscal matters, and media. Below, comments relating to desired changes concerning the Overture Center are quoted.

- ✓ What **Overture** calls its “community galleries.” They’re in terrible locations— basically where the bathrooms are, unsecured, poorly lit, narrow-only good for “wall art.” It’s insulting.
- ✓ **Overture use inaccessible** for the most part for some of the smaller arts organizations. Ticket sales make it cumbersome to administer and generally create a loss for those who would wish to have this as an alternative venue for special events.
- ✓ I would like to see **stronger community and governmental support for Overture** and all that it provides to Madison.
- ✓ I would change the legal/fiscal relationship of the **Overture Center and make it more accessible to the public and to less wealthy artists.**
- ✓ **The negative impact that Overture has had** on locally produced art.

- ✓ More affordable access to top venues
- ✓ Fully accessible venues. **Overture is a good example of inaccessibility** – parking too far, too much walking inside the building, even to get to an elevator.
- ✓ I would create more affordable small performing spaces (i.e. 50-100 seat theatres). We are woefully lacking in small spaces. **Overture hall (2,255 seats) sits empty** when ten 100 seat venues would probably be full all the time.
- ✓ I would **start over with the Overture Center and involving the community** in building it as something designed in a way that comforts the citizen.
- ✓ More local artists/musicians involved in bigger venue productions (**Overture, Barrymore**).
- ✓ Availability of work for non-union designers and technicians needs to increase, and the unionized stagehands need to be hired on basis of experience, not because they pay union dues. There are several untrained City of Madison-employed union stagehands unqualified for the specific jobs they are assigned, and yet they are the ones who obtain all the work that comes into **Overture**. ...
- ✓ **Cost of Civic Center [Overture] offerings**, so that the non-elite could afford to make fuller use.
- ✓ **Put some real city muscle behind the Overture and make it financially accessible to the kajillions of arts groups in town.** Since the city's going to get stuck with it anyhow, we might as well let the groups use it.
- ✓ Snobbiness. Jewelers like me who are creative but do not work in forging the metals, are not looked upon as artists and that sucks. **We are not invited to high end art fairs like at the Overture Center.** Even though I probably sell more than most who are invited

G. Supporting and Retaining Artists and Creative Workers

Respondents were asked what Madison as a community could do to better support its artists and creative workers as a group and also to identify things that would support each respondent's own creative work. Below, comments related to the Overture Center are quoted.

- ✓ **The Overture center could be a more affordable venue that could offer programs and shows to local artists.** Rather than bringing in some non-artistic shows that are geared towards upper-class customers (Liza Minnelli for instance is someone I would consider not cutting edge and not artistic)
- ✓ Madison is a difficult place in which to survive as an artist. While it isn't as competitive as large city, there are also fewer venues and smaller audiences. **The Overture Center for the Arts is so close, yet so far.** It should provide more affordable performance spaces. It is impossible to put on a show there (even in the

- smaller rooms) and turn any profit whatsoever. Small performing arts groups struggle just to break even.
- ✓ **Including artists in the conversation regarding funding, city planning, events scheduling at Overture, etc.**
 - ✓ Support local arts financially, and offer scholarships. This would include offering low-cost admission tickets for plays, concerts, etc. to artists and creative workers who need them. **Offer a discount ticket booth for same-day events at the Overture and other venues; offer rush tickets to everyone, not just students.**
 - ✓ Increase young people's awareness of places like the Chazen museum thru programs similar to the **Overture Center**.
 - ✓ More recognition to local talent, not just groups that can afford the Overture Center. **Arts does NOT equal Overture Center**
 - ✓ I'd love a subsidy or rent reduction for creative non-profits in commercial space. **Thanks to Overture for free use of the Rotunda space for free community performances--we utilize this regularly**
 - ✓ **Add more spaces like the Overture Galleries** where people are truly there to appreciate art
 - ✓ **Continue to invest in local initiatives with Overture Center to bring local groups to the greater community** (Funding/promotion/etc.)
 - ✓ **Find a way to lower the costs to use the Overture Center Playhouse** so it can be used for more concerts. Find a place/office and structure for a Madison Arts Collective that could share resources, office supplies, administrative and strategic marketing help.

VI. From the Key Informant Interviews and Select Focus Groups

Below, information is extracted from over 45 key informant interviews. These ideas do not all agree, and should be understood to represent the range of opinions expressed. The items listed below are aggregations.

A. Access and Inclusion

- ✓ **Most people of color and economically marginalized people feel unwelcome at Overture. There is also an age divide at Overture; the young do not feel welcome.** In fact, some interviewees feel that only a small minority of privileged residents feel welcome there.

- ✓ **Overture seen as pretty, ‘do not touch’ place;** no groups can afford to use it beyond the resident groups. It’s elitist.
- ✓ The cultural plan must find a way to bridge the gap between the elitist arts community and Madison’s funky arts scene and **promote access for both groups to the Overture Center.**
- ✓ **Overture tickets are expensive and not accessible to a majority of the population.**
- ✓ **Volunteer opportunities at the Overture Center should include not only the seniors present now, but also young people.**
- ✓ **The funding stream to support broader public access to Overture has not been historically well developed.**
- ✓ **Long rental stays at Overture are expensive, and prohibit some local companies from extending their runs.**
- ✓ **Overture’s audience base is slowly becoming more diverse, but the center needs more appealing exhibits.**
- ✓ **Madison public school students are less likely to experience field trips to the Overture Center** than students in many surrounding jurisdictions.

B. Resident Companies and Tenants

- ✓ **The instability of the Overture center is a concern for the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art.** This instability has not, however, appeared to negatively impact the museum’s ability to raise funds.
- ✓ **Resident companies at the Overture Center have not been regularly included in discussion of the center’s future,** and are not considered important entities to keep informed. This dynamic angers some of the resident companies’ board members.
- ✓ While daily operations at the Overture Center seem to go along well, **the handling of the debt situation and operating structure question is not confidence inspiring.**
- ✓ **There is little or no collaboration among Overture’s resident companies.** The community would support such collaborations.

C. Revenue Streams, Fundraising, and Philanthropy

- ✓ **Overture has not articulated its case statement to the community well,** resulting in a diminished public understanding of and commitment to the facility.
- ✓ **It is unlikely, given the current economy, that the City will experience the immediate availability of hotel/motel tax revenues to apply to Overture when the Convention Center debt retires,** since that revenue stream has experienced such a

strong downturn. More likely, a positive cumulative room tax will not begin to be available until at least 2015.

- ✓ **The Overture center needs to be supported by a dedicated public revenue stream.** The concept of an exposition district supported by rental car taxes was frequently mentioned.
- ✓ **A high proportion of philanthropists interviewed expressed extreme frustration with the attenuated debate over Overture's fate.** A commonly used phrase to describe the Overture dilemma was "a black cloud hanging over the entire sector." In particular, these philanthropists felt that it was difficult to move ahead with their own philanthropic decision making, absent a clear understanding of what would happen with the Overture Center.
- ✓ **There are leaders in the philanthropic community very concerned with, and willing to support, creating greater access to the arts.**
- ✓ **The community of local arts philanthropists hasn't grown much in recent years.** It has proven difficult to recruit interest from medical community, law firms, and new tech/biotech firms.
- ✓ Public/Private doesn't work well in Madison. Convention Center and Alliant Energy Center are the only positive examples; No one has made the case for arts as an economic driver. **No one desires to pay debt reduction for Overture; community buy in was never achieved. There is no community ownership of Overture.**
- ✓ Development directors from a variety of local arts and cultural organizations agree that **the unresolved Overture financing issue "effects everyone."**
- ✓ **Overture and the Great Performance Fund raised the baseline for arts support way up;** the stronger local arts organizations are getting stronger.
- ✓ **Designation and promotion of a downtown arts district, reaching from the UW Lofts to the campus, up State Street and around the Square could boost marketing efforts for included locations.** Some informants alternatively see this district extending from a beginning point near Edgewood College, through the downtown area, out the Williamson-East Wash strip and over Atwood to Olbrich Gardens.

D. Partnerships

- ✓ **Consideration should be given to making the Overture Center an asset used by the University of Wisconsin and Madison College [MATC] as a long term performance and exhibition venue.**
- ✓ **The Wisconsin Union directorate is interested in increasing collaborations with the Overture Center,** especially since the center has expressed a desire to be more "student friendly."

- ✓ **The University's arts outreach programs do not see themselves as likely increased users of the Overture Center.** From there point of view, logistic barriers and cost make increased use unlike

E. Role in Community

- ✓ **The absence of an organizational voice for arts advocacy in Madison, such as an arts council, has hindered resolution of Overture's fate.**
- ✓ **Corporate recruitment info sets, in the cases that they address quality of life, usually mention the Overture Center and Monona Terrace, but none identified has a comprehensive picture that includes other local resources.**
- ✓ **Overture Center is a great asset for the business community.**
- ✓ **The Overture Center is sometimes a whipping boy for the lack of a focal point for arts issues and activity, such as an effective arts council, in the city.**