

More than \$20B in developments dead or at risk of never seeing light of day

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Fulton St. transit hub \$1.2B: Soaring costs may force a reduction to the 'gateway to lower Manhattan,' which was to feature an above ground pavilion.



Atlantic Yards \$4B: Developer Bruce Ratner has conceded that the construction of many of architect Frank Gehry's buildings, including the 'Miss Brooklyn' tower, will be delayed because of financing.



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Moynihan Station \$14B: Madison Square Garden's stunning decision last week to renovate the existing arena, rather than relocate to the Farley Post Office, jeopardizes the entire project.

The boom is going bust.

More than \$20 billion worth of high-profile developments across the city - many designed by world-renowned architects and touted by top officials - are dead or at risk of never getting off the drawing board.

The crumbling economy has forced developers to scale back their grand visions and has endangered projects that range from architectural marvels like [Frank Gehry's Atlantic Yards](#) towers in [Brooklyn](#) to crucial pieces of the city's infrastructure, like [Manhattan's](#) Moynihan rail hub in midtown.

"It really was an amazing run for cities and particularly for [New York](#)," said [Elliott Sclar](#), an urban planning professor at [Columbia University](#). "But it appears that it may be over now."

"The obvious fear now is that these projects won't materialize and the revenues the city expected to get from them won't materialize, either."

With the economy slowing and fears of a recession growing, the future of a slew of high-profile projects has dramatically shifted in recent weeks.

The largest - and perhaps most ambitious - of the developments is the revitalization of the area around [Penn Station](#) on Manhattan's West Side.

The \$14 billion project centers on the conversion of the Farley Post Office into a soaring train station and new home of [Madison Square Garden](#).

The gigantic project, which was to feature 7 million square feet of office space along W. 33rd St., long has been slowed by political squabbles. It may have been dealt a fatal blow last week when the Garden's owners announced they would renovate the 40-year-old arena rather than move across Eighth Ave.

"The arena is a dump and it would be disingenuous of me or any other architect to suggest that renovating it would be the answer," said [Rick Bell](#), head of the New York chapter of the [American Institute of Architects](#).

[Moynihan Station](#) is designed to feature a glass wall separating the train station from the arena. Office towers would rise on the current site of the Garden.

Although several urban planners believe Garden owners are threatening to stay put only as a bargaining maneuver, others believe the Moynihan plan has a better chance of being salvaged if the new arena is excluded.

"Moynihan Station is absolutely necessary, and it would be a travesty if it is forestalled," Bell said. "People need to take off their Knick caps and put on their thinking caps."

A basketball arena for the [Nets](#) remains the centerpiece of Brooklyn's Atlantic Yards project, which has been delayed because of skyrocketing costs and legal fights. Developer [Bruce Ratner](#) recently conceded that several of Gehry's dynamic towers, including the signature "Miss Brooklyn" building, would be delayed.

Although he said the [Barclays Center](#) arena would be built, its estimated price has jumped to \$950 million from \$435 million.

'Dead in the water' at Coney

In [Coney Island](#), the luster is off a \$1.5 billion dream to bring [Las Vegas](#) glitz to the beach area. Developer Joe Sitt's plan included luxury condos, shops and housing.

A city official has called Sitt's project "dead in the water" because the developer, who has had a contentious relationship with City Hall, wanted to build 350 residential time-shares at planned hotels.

[Mayor Bloomberg](#) attempted to lure others to the area by announcing sweeping rezoning in November, but the city has struggled to find developers.

Just down the Boardwalk, a proposal to redesign the [New York Aquarium](#) into a building evoking an undulating whale has been scuttled after costs rose to \$200 million.

"We're not going to throw in the towel on any of these projects, but less dramatic and less expensive designs may be needed," said [Robert Yaro](#), president of the [Regional Plan Association](#), an urban policy group. "The last time we put major projects on hold - like

the Second Ave. subway or East Side access - it took a generation to get them moving again. We can't let that happen."

The slowing economy also has jeopardized the rebuilding of perhaps the city's most sacred site, Ground Zero.

When [JPMorgan Chase](#) took over [Bear Stearns](#), Chase announced it would move its investment banking unit into the busted company's headquarters.

Chase had planned to build a 42-story tower on Liberty St. The building, designed with a bulging middle to accommodate new trading floors, won't be constructed. But Chase said it would still build something at the site.

A few blocks away, the [Metropolitan Transportation Authority](#)'s Fulton St. transit hub has been drastically scaled back. It was supposed to include a glass-domed building soaring 10 stories above Broadway.

When projected costs rose to \$1.2 billion from \$750 million, the aboveground portion of the project was scrapped.

Some urban planners say projects like Moynihan Station, Atlantic Yards and another mega-proposal to redevelop [Willets Point](#), [Queens](#), are struggling to get off the ground because plans have grown too bloated.

"All of these projects have been driven by a form of planning called fiscal planning, where the city is not concerned with the physical structure of spaces but only maximizing real estate values or tax revenues," Sclar said. "That's not the right way to promote healthy development."

Still, several experts argued that an economic slowdown is the time to build, citing the aggressive construction program triggered by [President Franklin Roosevelt](#)'s New Deal during the Great Depression.

"Now is the time to accelerate those projects and help prop up a weak economy," said [Mitchell Moss](#), professor of urban policy and planning at [New York University](#), before sounding an optimistic note.

"This city is still a very powerful economy, and we're able to absorb these shocks," he said. "This is a resilient city - nothing stops New York."

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