

**Sample Abstracts from Previous Classes**

-----  
Stadium-Financing

This paper examines stadium-financing by analyzing the stadium sagas of Seattle, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh. In particular the paper looks at the various forms of financing used to pay for their stadiums. The financing methods are then tested against the benefit-cost principle to see if the stadiums are economically sound structures. These three cities were chosen because they each constructed a multi-purpose stadium in the 1970's, and have recently replaced all these venues with single-purpose stadiums. For the most part, the financing packages abide by the principle as those who receive the benefits generated by a stadium pay for the majority of its construction costs

-----  
Mexico City, Then and Now: A Case Study in Urban Development

Mexico City presents numerous challenges to the study of urban economics. The mere location of the city seems to evade the theory of firm location. Furthermore, the modern-day city is very different from the colonial city. The colonial city was monocentric; Mexico City today is an urban leviathan, with a multi-ring structure, numerous urban centers, and a high degree of suburbanization. This paper seeks to examine the development of Mexico City through a lense of urban economic theory. My findings are two-fold: First, Mexico City developed where it did because of the strength of scale economies relative to initial location decisions. Second, initial location decisions are not irrelevant because many of the problems the city faces today are a direct result of the decision to rebuild the city in 1521.

---

## Urban Housing and Transportation Problems in Metro Manila

This paper describes the state of urban housing and transportation problems in Metro Manila and investigates its causes. It further analyzes how the two urban problems interact. The paper will also discuss the various urban development projects that Metro Manila's governing body and the national administration are currently involved in as well as recommend various policies and projects to improve urban housing and transportation.

---

## Affordable Housing Minus the Subsidies

Modular or manufactured housing, despite high expectations, has never provided an answer to the nation's need for affordable housing. The failure of modular construction is largely due to low demand for the product--a taxing condition for an industry with high capital costs. Local building regulations and zoning laws outlawing modular design are the primary reason for low demand. But the entry of new, modular products targeting middle and upper-income consumers has the potential to change the stifling regulatory environment. This paper critically analyses three modular housing manufacturers attempting to get a foothold in this new market.

---

## Escaping the "City Without Limits": Urban Sprawl in Atlanta

Atlanta, Georgia has been called the fastest growing community in the world. Its history has been characterized by choices that favor rapid development over sustainable development; this pattern has manifested itself in the massive suburban sprawl that typifies the Atlanta countryside. This paper seeks to examine the geographic and political conditions that have allowed sprawl to occur, and personal accounts that detail why the suburban lifestyle is desirable. The paper then examines reactions to Atlanta's sprawl. The paper then performs a qualitative analysis of current proposals to limit sprawl. Finally, the paper explains some of the environmental consequences that sprawl has had on Atlanta, and offers suggestions for measures that would slow the pattern of urban sprawl.

---

## The Impact of Charter Schools on Racial Segregation in Public Education

Charter schools are a highly contested topic in the realm of public education. The objective of charter schools is to expand school choice for parents and increase the quality of education supplied to the least advantaged students. Opponents of this method of school choice argue that charter schools exacerbate the racial segregation already plaguing this nation's public school system. This paper examines how expanding school choice has not alleviated the problem of racial segregation, which leads to detrimental educational outcomes such as low student achievement. Through data collection and an analysis of previous empirical studies, it is evident that charter schools serve a disproportionately minority population in comparison to the racial composition of relative school districts. Moreover, it is apparent that the segregated housing market is the most influential determinant of the racial composition of schools – a fact that is not altered by providing the least advantaged students with the option of school choice.

---

## Seattle's Traffic Crisis

In the last few decades, introduction of light rail transit (LRT) has sparked enormous public, media, policy, and academic controversy, due to the enormous apparent costs of LRT and the disagreement over benefits. Seattle's Sound Transit is no exception; since its beginning in 1996, it has had to adjust the price, scope, and start date of its Link LRT system. This paper seeks to better understand the Central Link part of the Link LRT plan, set to be completed in 2009, by completing a rough cost-benefit analysis. Even with generous valuations for health and traffic savings, this paper finds that the benefit/cost ratio is very low for the Link LRT system. However, the end of the paper questions some of the assumptions motivating current ways of thinking about light rail.

---

## Bike-Sharing Programs: Demand, Infrastructure Development and Urban Sprawl

One of the most pressing problems facing urban populations today is that of transportation. We live in a society in which we are increasingly aware that we need to find sustainable solutions to the problems posed by urban growth. The streets of most major cities are overwhelmed with traffic that burdens the city's infrastructure, drains its resources, and creates growing levels of congestion and pollution. London initiated a congestion tax in specific zones of its central business district in order to dissuade drivers from using cars to travel, encouraging them to utilize public transportation options. Another initiative, Zipcar, encourages car-sharing over private car use to lessen the number of vehicles on the road and their overall environmental impact.

In this paper, I will examine bike-sharing programs and assess their potential to effectively address the problems of congestion and in cities. I will look at what potential there is for greater demand for bicycles, and discuss policies that can be used to encourage greater bicycle use. Ultimately, I find that given a proper set of policy instruments intended to increase infrastructure for bicycles and increase high-density development, the bicycle-sharing program has great potential to shift the mode share of bicycle use.