



# THE LOCAL IMPACTS OF URBAN STADIUMS

A LITERATURE REVIEW BY THE  
PHILADELPHIA CHINATOWN  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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## BACKGROUND:

Since its inception in 1966, the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) has represented the Chinatown neighborhood in matters of urban renewal and physical development. PCDC's mission is to protect, preserve, and promote Chinatown as a viable ethnic, business, and residential community. In the wake of the 76ers arena proposal in July of 2022, PCDC conducted a literature review of academic research conducted on the impacts of urban stadiums in cities around the United States.

The purpose of the literature review is to take a more informed and research-based approach to advocating for Chinatown in the face of the 76ers arena proposal. It is important to note that the studies cited in the literature review do not differentiate between indoor venues versus outdoor venues and stadiums that host primarily sports events versus those that host a wider variety of events. Feel free to contact Caroline Aung ([caung@chinatown-pcdc.org](mailto:caung@chinatown-pcdc.org)) for any questions about this report.

## AT A GLANCE:

- Urban stadiums generally have a negative to little appreciable effect on the local economy.
- Urban stadiums generally cause gentrification and displacement of surrounding low-income communities.
- Urban stadiums create unhealthy microenvironments through the production of air, light and noise pollution.
- Urban stadiums have worsened crime levels in surrounding areas and led to delays in emergency services.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Stadiums generally do not have any appreciable effect on income, employment, tax revenue, or tourist spending at the municipal scale.
- Attendees usually spend money inside stadium walls rather than outside.
- Traffic congestion can crowd out other economic activity.
- Revenue generated gets concentrated in a few hands with already massive salaries (e.g. players, coaches, front office).
- Substitution effect: money spent on sports would be spent on other entertainment in the city.

## HOUSING AND DISPLACEMENT

- Stadiums exhibit clear indicators of gentrification: areas near stadiums have above average increases in income and higher rates of displacement of racial and ethnic minorities.
- Areas near stadiums experience significant commercial and residential development with heightened real estate prices.
- Examples of stadium-led gentrification: SoFi stadium in LA; Nationals Stadium and Capital One Arena in Washington DC; Barclays Center in NYC; Mercedes-Benz stadium in Atlanta

## PUBLIC HEALTH

- Stadium visitors who commute by car produce CO2 emissions that impact health of local community.
- One study shows that infants in counties with new sports venues had lower birth weights due to air pollution.
- Advertising planes and news helicopters create noise pollution.
- Stadiums can contribute to heat island effect.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Stadiums have heightened crime levels in surrounding areas.
- Arrival of National MLB teams in Washington DC led to an increase in reported assaults by 7-7.5% annually.
- Wembley Stadium in London contributed to heightened crime levels in surrounding areas.
- Dead zones created by stadiums on non-event days can be conducive to criminal activity.
- Events at Golden 1 Center in Sacramento added ~33 seconds to police response times.

# SELECT SOURCES

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