

Displacement Diagnosis Overview

Understanding the community story around your venue — and why it is a business risk

A GIS-based analysis of 472 stadiums across 169 American cities found that census tracts near stadiums gentrify at higher rates than other urban tracts, with above-average displacement among racial and ethnic minority groups. The displacement story is documented, public, and showing up in subsidy negotiations. (Source: Lauermann, Taylor & Francis, 2022)

Since 2000, state and local governments have spent over \$43 billion subsidizing professional sports stadiums. That capital depends on public goodwill that community neglect erodes.

The Five Data Points That Define Your Community Story

Data Point	What It Reveals
1. Neighborhood demographics	Who lives in the adjacent census tracts — and how has that changed since the venue opened? Near Nationals Park in D.C., the Black resident population declined from 95% in 2000 to 24% in 2018. That is a documented displacement story. (Source: Viorst / Clark University, citing Census data and Golash-Boza, 2021)
2. Land ownership	Who owns the parcels within a half-mile of the venue? What percentage is investor-owned versus owner-occupied? The ownership map tells you who is positioned to benefit from the franchise's economic activity — and whether it is the community.
3. Rental burden	What percentage of renters in adjacent neighborhoods spend more than 30% of income on housing? Rising rental burden is the most direct measure of displacement pressure on existing residents.
4. Displacement velocity	How fast is displacement happening? Are there specific development projects underway that will accelerate it? Expiring affordable housing restrictions? Velocity determines how much time remains to get ahead of it.
5. Political risk	Who represents the venue-adjacent neighborhoods on the city council? Are there active community organizations publicly critical of the franchise's community relationship? Political risk is the factor most ownership groups underestimate until it shows up in a subsidy renegotiation.
6. Workforce Instability	The people being displaced from venue-adjacent neighborhoods are the same people employed inside them — custodians, food service workers, concession staff, groundskeepers. A typical stadium employee holds two or three jobs. When displacement drives up commute times and costs for these workers, it directly affects the venue's staffing pipeline and operational reliability. The new luxury condo owner replacing them is not seeking employee inside your venue.

What Gets Ownership Groups Into Trouble

- Treating community relations as a PR function — performative investment does not address structural displacement. Remember your workforce is at risk.
- Waiting until the story is public — by then you are managing a crisis, not shaping a narrative
- Assuming the municipality is aligned — they have their own priorities, obligations, and political pressures.

Schedule a conversation at zelyx.org

