

# On-Line Short Course: Re-Writing Development Rules for Prosperity, Sustainability & Equity

George Washington University



Environmental & Energy Management Institute  
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING & APPLIED SCIENCE

## Re-Writing Development Rules for Prosperity, Sustainability & Equity

Six Hours, Live Online

January 12, 2021

10 am to 4 PM EST

Registration is open: <https://eemi.seas.gwu.edu/prosperity-sustainability-equity>

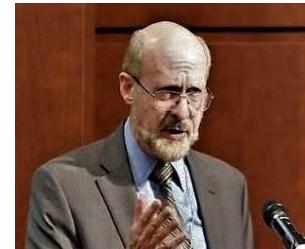
## Overview

More **jobs**, **affordable housing** plus less **urban sprawl** are top social goals. Yet, economic incentives embedded in our taxes and other development rules thwart attainment of these objectives.

This short course examines the detrimental role of common economic incentives that inadvertently promote sprawl, economic decline (unemployment), inflated housing prices, and involuntary **displacement** (both **gentrification** and **demolition by neglect**).

Surprisingly, public infrastructure intended to facilitate development can motivate sprawl and decline. This "**infrastructure conundrum**" happens because well-designed and well-executed infrastructure inflates the price of well-served (prime) sites. High land prices chase development away to cheaper, but more remote sites (sprawl). Likewise, policies and programs intended to assist distressed communities can lead to higher land prices (rents) and the displacement of the intended beneficiaries.

In rust-belt cities, housing tends to be cheap by national standards. Yet, because of closed factories, many people in these cities are unemployed.



**Meet the Instructor:** [Rick Rybeck, Esq.](#), an attorney and real estate & urban development professional, was the former Deputy Administrator for Transportation Policy & Planning in the District of Columbia. He directs Just Economics, LLC, which helps communities harmonize economic incentives with public policy objectives for job creation, affordable housing, transportation efficiency and sustainable

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For the unemployed, even a cheap house can be unaffordable. In Silicon Valley, the economy has been booming. Yet there, households earning six-figure incomes have difficulty finding decent affordable housing. It appears that we are on a “**jobs-housing hamster wheel**” where improvements in employment and income are offset by increases in housing prices.

Finally, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, local economies are suffering and government revenues are drying up. The need to generate **economic recovery** without additional spending (or additional revenue losses) is paramount to community wellbeing.

This course addresses the market forces responsible for the “infrastructure conundrum,” and the “jobs-housing hamster wheel”. Participants will learn innovative and effective policy solutions that can promote economic recovery without additional public spending or loss of revenue. Attendees will learn that **HOW** we collect public revenue is just as important as **HOW MUCH** revenue we collect.

## ***Who will benefit?***

- **Business leaders** will identify public policies that needlessly thwart the economic vitality of their community along with proven solutions implemented successfully in the USA and around the world.
- **Sustainability professionals** are often confronted by trade-offs. Policies that help meet one policy objective might create setbacks for others. (E.g., urban growth boundaries can inflate housing prices and rents.) Instead of pitting one objective against another, this course will illuminate opportunities to harmonize economic incentives with multiple public policy objectives simultaneously.
- **Academics** will recognize often-overlooked public funding and finance principles reinforcing the concept that **HOW** we collect public revenue is just as important as **HOW MUCH** revenue we collect. New research opportunities will be illuminated.
- **Government officials** will learn proven techniques for simultaneously increasing employment, enhancing housing affordability and integrating land use with infrastructure investments to reduce sprawl and greenhouse gas emissions. Most importantly, these objectives can be attained without increased spending or revenue losses.

## **Module 1**

- The Impact of Land Use on
  - Energy and Resource Consumption?
  - Pollution?
  - Economic Productivity?

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- Affordable Housing
- Job Creation
- Fiscal Sustainability?

## ***Module 2***

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- Fundamental Economic Principles That Explain Sprawl, Waste and Poverty
  - User Fees
  - Access Fees
- Examples of Harmonizing Economic Incentives with Public Policy Objectives To
  - Reduce Sprawl & Traffic Congestion
  - Enhance Job Creation
  - Enhance Housing Affordability
  - Promote Environmental and Economic Sustainability and Resilience

## ***Module 3***

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- Opportunities and Challenges for Implementation
  - Legal Issues
  - Administrative Issues
  - Political Issues

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## ***Specific Learning Objectives***

### ***Business Leaders***

- Understand factors that impede affordable business access to infrastructure amenities
  - Public policies detrimental to a vast majority of business tenant
  - Public policies that can advantage business tenants
- Differentiate taxes & fees that increase costs (and reduce profits) from those that promote efficiency and productivity

### ***Corporate Sustainability Professionals***

- Understand economic rules that thwart efficiency and affordable access to infrastructure amenities
- Identify policies that can harmonize economic incentives with policy objectives for sustainability

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## ***Academics and Educators***

- Re-grounding economic problems in overlooked fundamental economic principles
- Establish awareness of missing data (National Land Price Index)
- Identify user fees, access fees (including land value return & recycling) and zoning as techniques for integrating infrastructure and land use to enhance economic efficiency and productivity by internalizing externalities.
- Research opportunities to calibrate interactions between user fees, access fees and zoning.

## ***Government Decision Makers***

- Enhance job creation and housing affordability by internalizing externalities
- Understand Economic Rules that promote sprawl, inefficiency, pollution, and inequality -- HOW we raise revenues is just as important as HOW MUCH revenue we raise.
- Understand the differences between “taxes” and “fees.”
- Comprehend relationships between user fees, access fees and zoning.
- Learn successful examples of user fees and access fees (including land value return & recycling) as techniques for integrating infrastructure and land use to enhance economic prosperity, sustainability & equity.

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