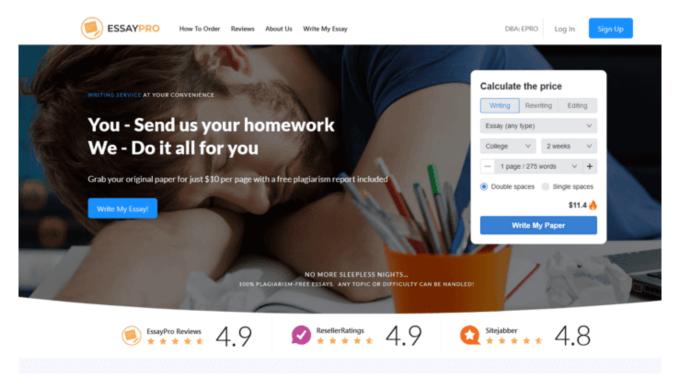
Marketplace Madness



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Marketplace Madness

On a Friday afternoon I traveled with two others from my English class to a rather ordinary patch of farmland next to Highway 101 and adjacent to the Promenade. From out of the car window we looked at a seemingly endless field of cabbages, bordered at least an acre thick with black <u>dirt</u>. It looked strange that the busy Promenade abruptly ended at this sea of dirt. To the left we could see cars streaking by on the highway. The field had a tilled appearance, yet it looked as if nobody had been working on it for a while. Weeds grew sporadically on the black dirt. The sight of it told of half hearted farming efforts and neglect. We decided that one pass of this field would <u>yield</u> all that it had to give visually. However, the controversy surrounding it takes much research to understand. This field is the proposed site of the San Luis Marketplace, a shopping center bigger than any single building project in the history of San Luis Obispo.

Spurred on by curiosity, I researched the field in the hopes that I could learn more about it than what I saw at first <u>glance</u>. The field contains Salinas Soils, the most productive kind of soil found in the county. Salinas Soils are alluvial, containing nutrients and minerals washed down from the hillsides by rainwater. The fertility of the soil makes it a very

productive field for growing, yielding crops many times a year. The dark black color of the soil indicates how fertile it is. This made me think of something that my girlfriend's mom said. She works at the El Dorado County Agricultural Department, and she came down here a few weeks ago. When she passed by the Dalidio field she exclaimed "Wow! Look how black the dirt is!"

The owner of the property, a farmer named Ernie Dalidio, struck a deal in 1992 with developer Bill Bird to build a forty-acre shopping centre on the property. Proponents of the marketplace argue that the shopping centre will generate an enormous amount of sales tax that the city can use to support the community.

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