To the Teacher

Major Theme
Building the suburbs, decentralizing cities

Subtheme
Cities versus suburbs

Preparation
Make 4 copies of the image cards and the oral histories (cut apart), the Clues sheet, and the Mapping the Big Idea sheet.

Activity One: Image Cards
Grade Level: All
1. Match the Memories
Divide the class into 4 groups. Give each group a photocopy of the 6 image and oral history cards. Direct students to match the image with the oral history card. (20 minutes)

2. Using Secondary Sources
Pass out the Clues sheet to each group. Ask students to read the additional information about their images to each other (perhaps in a round-robin format), then adjust their group hypotheses. Each group should share their conclusions with the class. (15 minutes)

Activity Two: Mapping the Big Idea
Grade Level: Elementary and Middle School
Each group should review the map and synthesize the information by answering the questions. (20 minutes)

Activity Three: Taking a Deeper Look
Push and Pull of Cities and Suburbs
Grade Level: Middle and High School
Primary-source documents: telegram, protest poster
1. Review the documents and divide students into small groups to discuss the statements. Direct them to decide if they agree or disagree with each statement. Hang up 4 signs: “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree.” Read each statement and ask students to stand near signs for their opinions. Let each group discuss, then a group’s spokesperson should share with the class. Read the next statement and repeat.

2. Have students chose one statement and write a letter (dated in the 1950s or 1960s) to an elected official expressing their feelings on demolition and construction during that time period.

Activity Four: What about Your Neighborhood?
Grade Level: Elementary and Middle School
Students research the region they live in and learn more about the cities and suburbs in their immediate communities.

National History Standards: ERA 9 1945–Early 1970s Postwar United States
1A/B growth of the middle class, impact of the GI Bill, movement out of the cities, segregation of communities, impact of expressway-building on cities