

SECTION-TOPIC	URBAN EXPANSION 1950s-1970s – INTERSTATE 95
SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD	Standard 7: <i>Understand the rise and continuing international influence of the United States as a world leader and the impact of contemporary social and political movements on American life.</i> SS.912.A.7.17: <i>Examine key events and key people in Florida history as they relate to United States history.</i>
VOCABULARY	Suburbs, Suburbanization, Downtown, Central Business District (CBD), Interstate Highway
REQUIRED MATERIALS	Vocabulary Words, Interstate 95 Reading, Suburbanization Diagram
DURATION	1 – 50 minute Period

DO NOW OR PRE-READING –

- Teacher will spend 10-15 minutes leading a brainstorming vocabulary activity.
- Teacher will post the vocabulary words from above on the whiteboard.
- Students will break into groups of 3 and try to come up with definitions to the words.
- Teacher will write the group responses on the board until the students can agree on 1 definition.
- Teacher will intervene if students do not know the proper definition.
 - **Suburbs** – an urban area surrounding and connected to the central city.
 - **Suburbanization** – movement of upper and middle class people from urban core areas to surrounding outskirts, creating emerging, competing business districts
 - **Downtown** – the heart of the central city, place of economic, business, and commercial concentration and the clustering of tallest buildings.
 - **Central Business District (CBD)** - downtown
 - **Interstate Highway** – a high speed road for longer distance uninterrupted travel with various exits and entrances.

LESSON –

- Teacher will make copies of the following reading, *Interstate 95*.
- Students will remain in their groups of 3 to complete the reading
- Following completion of the reading, students will remain in their groups to complete the assessment assignment.

Interstate 95

In 1966 Perini completed the first section of Interstate 95 in Palm Beach County, 3.6 miles from Okeechobee Boulevard to 45th Street. These two roads greatly changed West Palm Beach.

Hardrives of Delray Inc. completed about half of I-95 from Boca Raton to West Palm Beach. The interstate highway was opened in sections in south Florida over three decades: from Okeechobee Boulevard to 45th Street, West Palm Beach, in 1966; from 45th Street to Palm Beach Gardens in 1969; parts between Boynton Beach and Miami and between Lake Worth and Hypoluxo in 1975; from Palm Beach Gardens to Miami in 1976, and the long-awaited “missing link” of 29.7 miles from State Road 714 to Palm Beach Gardens in 1987. Although I-95 originally followed the Sunshine State Parkway (today's Florida's Turnpike) from Miami to near Fort Pierce, the final path bypassed the turnpike between North Palm Beach and Fort Pierce.¹

The Downtown Exodus

George Greenberg (1915-2007), known as the “Mayor of Clematis Street,” took his family’s Pioneer Linens through half a century of downtown changes, beginning in 1957: “It was a very thriving area at that time. We had a J.C. Penney’s store, we had a Montgomery Ward’s, we had Sears, and the first sign of erosion was when Sears built a store out on South Dixie [Highway].” Sears moved into Palm Coast Plaza, Palm Beach County’s first shopping center, built in 1959. Dixie Highway was impacted along with downtown by development west of the city. As new hotels were erected near the Interstate 95 exits, motels along Dixie Highway rapidly went out of business. Sears moved again to the Palm Beach Mall, as did the anchor stores from downtown, including F. W. Woolworth’s, J. C. Penney’s, and Burdines, which had been there for almost 40 years.

George Greenberg said, “The retail exodus took several years, but the mall affected it immediately.” In 1967 Greenberg helped found the Downtown Development Authority to formulate long-range plans for its facilities, and especially to retain and attract businesses:

The need seemed to be that to really turn things around downtown, we needed to raise some money. So I was able to prevail upon five or six of our downtown principals. ... I had heard about this development authority being authorized in the state of Florida, so we went around and got over 50% of the property owners in the downtown to agree to pay a one-mil tax on ourselves, and we developed the DDA. We got the head of First Federal [Savings and Loan], George Preston at that time, to become the chairman.

As the storefronts emptied, the residential areas surrounding downtown retail fell into disrepair. Homeowners moved to the suburbs, and absentee landlords divided once-

¹ Chuck McGinness, “It’s A Celebration for I-95,” *Palm Beach Post* 6-13-2006; “Interstate 95,” Interstate-Guide at <http://www.interstate-guide.com/i-095.html>.

grand homes into low-income multi-family housing. Drug dealers and prostitutes frequented the area.² The Downtown Development Authority had a lot of work to do.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION -

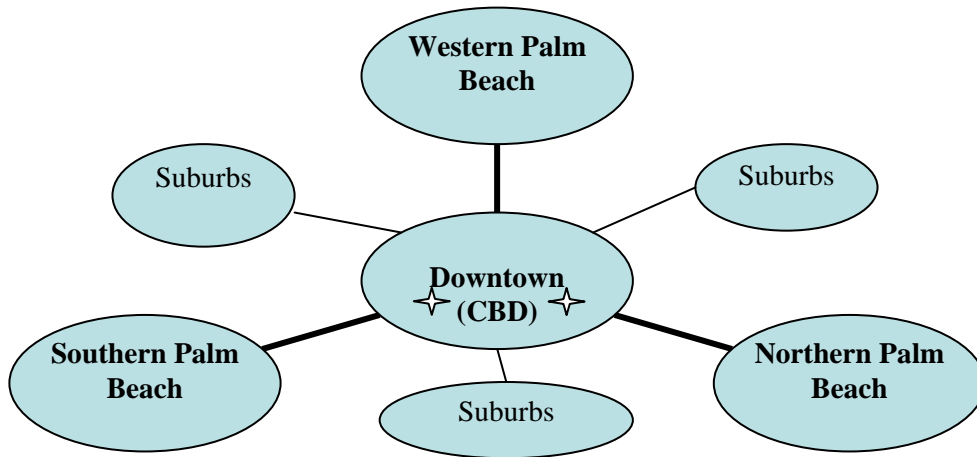
- Teacher will project on the whiteboard or make copies of the **Suburbanization Diagram (see attached)**.
 - In groups of 3, students will evaluate the **Suburbanization Diagram** of Palm Beach County in the 1950s and 1960s prior to I-95 construction and Palm Beach County today.
 - Students will use their knowledge acquired from the reading and their evaluation of the diagram to answer the following questions.
 - All work is due by the end of the period.
1. How many, and where are the malls located in 1950s/1960s Palm Beach? In 2000s Palm Beach?
 2. All roads in 1950s/1960s Palm Beach led where?
 3. How did I-95 change people's ability to purchase consumer goods? How did that change affect the landscape of the county?
 4. Compare the suburbs from 1950s/1960s Palm Beach and 2000s Palm Beach. What is the difference in where they purchase goods?
 5. What is the increase in competing CBDs doing to the original Downtown CBD?

² Linda Cullen, "History of West Palm Beach," at <http://www.floridahistorichomes.com/genericservice/WPB.html>.

SUBURBANIZATION DIAGRAM

✦ = Mall

WEST PALM BEACH AND SURROUNDING AREA 1950s/1960s



Historical Society of Palm Beach County

www.pbhistoryonline.org

Lesson plan by Clint Kovach, Lake Worth High School

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WEST PALM BEACH AND SURROUNDING AREA 2000s

