

Northwest History Consortium

Solving the Housing Needs of a Growing City

Lynnette Setmire
10th Grade

National Standard

Era 9: Postwar United States (1945-1970s) / Standard 1

Standard 1: The economic boom and social transformation of postwar United States

Washington State Standards

Content Standard 4: History - The student understands and applies knowledge of historical thinking, chronology, eras, turning points, major ideas, individuals, and themes in local, Washington State, tribal, United States, and world history in order to evaluate how history shapes the present and future.

4.2: The student understands and analyzes causal factors that have shaped major events in history.

4.4: The student uses history to understand the present and plan for the future.

BACKGROUND

By 1946 about 10 million men and women had been released from the armed forces. Returning veterans, along with many other Americans, were forced to live in cramped apartments or move in with relatives as they began to rebuild their lives. The prosperity of the 1950s, and the challenges faced by city governments as they tried to deal with the burgeoning cities, frequently resulted in urban growth with little or no thought to the impact of unregulated suburban sprawl.

One exception to the unregulated and unplanned housing crisis was the suburb designed by the developer William Levitt. His Long Island, New York community was planned around rigid conformity, strict zoning laws, and look-a-like one story homes that were quick to construct, as well as affordable.

The postwar boom offers a different challenge to help students understand not only how Americans coped with the pressures to conform to the American Dream, but also the continued struggle involving the expansion of civil rights.

PROBLEM

How does the City Council of Anacortes meet the housing needs of the expanding refinery and the additional workers that are needed?

SCENARIO

It is 1950, and Anacortes, Washington is faced with the challenge of providing single-family housing to meet the needs of the expanding petroleum refinery. The council is reviewing two plans that have been submitted by the Anacortes Planning Commission.

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Plan # 1:

It provides fifty pre-fabricated homes to be constructed by the East Coast developer, William Levitt, along the shoreline north of R Avenue between 17th Street and 23rd Street. The Anacortes Planning Commission's plan includes a covenant that limits people of color to the east corner of the development near 23rd Street.

Plan #2:

It provides for shoreline development on the north side of R Avenue and allows for the homes to be constructed on an individual basis by individual contractors without restrictive covenants.

The Anacortes City Council is very aware of the urgent needs of the expanding refinery, and it worries that the failure to meet the refinery's needs would result in the loss of prospective jobs and ultimately an increased tax base for the growing community. Both proposals will ultimately meet the needs of the refinery; however, Plan #1 would result in the fastest turnaround of completed homes, but it would require the city to ultimately deal with issues associated with segregated housing. Plan #2 would meet the needs of the refinery, but at a slower pace.

TASKS

1. The Anacortes City Council aggressively seeks input from the citizens. One of the methods frequently used by the council members is to take the pulse of the residents via the editorial section of the local paper, the *Anacortes American*.
2. Write a letter to the editor of the *Anacortes American* in which you suggest to the city council which plan should be pursued to meet the needs requested by the refinery. In your letter select one of the two proposals and support your choice as to why you believe that plan should be implemented.

Procedures:

1. View the photo of Levittown, New York
2. Read an excerpt from Pete Seeger's song: "Little Boxes," pg. 848, The Americans
3. Read the interview by William Levitt: "Levittown 30 Year Later"
4. Read: "Levittown at 40, Once a Solution Now a Problem"

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RESOURCES

Internet

"A Brief History of Levittown, New York." Levittown Historical Society. 2011. Levittown, New York. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.levittownhistoricalsociety.org/history.htm>>.

"Aerial View of Levittown." WordPress.com (Blog: The Scoop on History). March 2010. [location unknown]. 22 March 2011 <<http://historyscoop.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/levittownny2.jpg>>.

Gutis, Philip S. "Levittown, L.I., At 40: Once a Solution, Now a Problem" 21 September 1987 from *The New York Times*. NYTimes.com. ©2011 New York Times. New York, NY. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/21/nyregion/levittown-li-at-40-once-a-solution-now-a-problem.html?pagewanted=print&src=pm>>.

"Levittown Images." Google.com. Mountain View, CA. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.google.com/images?hl=en&source=hp&biw=1020&bih=567&q=levittown+ny&gbv=2&aq=1&aqi=g10&aql=&oq=levittown>>.

Molotsky, Irvin. "Levittown 30 Years Later" 2 October 1977 from *The New York Times*. SCDS.org. ©2011 Google. Mountain View, CA. 24 March 2011 <http://1.scds.org/resources/USHistory/1977_Levittown%2030%20Years%20Later.pdf>.

"Planning Committee Agendas." City of Anacortes.org. 2011. Anacortes, WA. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.cityofanacortes.org/Planning/Agendas/index.asp>>.

"RCW 36.70A110: Comprehensive Plans - Urban Growth Areas." Washington State Legislature (leg.wa.gov). 2011. Olympia, WA. 24 March 2011 <<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A.110>>.

Seeger, Pete. "'Little Boxes' Lyrics." LyricsMode.com. ©2011 LyricsMode. [location unknown]. 24 March 2011 <http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/p/pete_seeger/little_boxes.html>.

"Smart Growth." Department of Commerce (commerce.wa.gov). ©2009 Washington State Department of Commerce. Olympia, WA. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/376/default.aspx>>.

"Social Studies: The Assessments: High School" 2011. OSPI (Office of the Superintendent of Instruction). Olympia, WA. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/Assessments/HighSchool.aspx>>.

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"Urban Growth Boundary." 12 May 2006. Oregonmetro.gov. ©2011 Metro Regional Government. Salem, OR. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=277>>.

"Urban Sprawl: The Big Picture." 5 April 2010. NASA.gov. 2011. Washington, DC. 24 March 2011 <http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2002/11oct_sprawl/>.

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ASSESSMENT

Letter-Writing : Letter to the Editor

Student Name: _____ Period: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Ideas	Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the letter was about.	Ideas were expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could have been better.	Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what the letter was about.	The letter seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about.
Content Accuracy	The letter contains at least 4 accurate facts about the topic.	The letter contains 3 accurate facts about the topic.	The letter contains 2 accurate facts about the topic.	The letter contains 1 accurate fact the topic.
Historical Background	Provides background on the historical question from three or more social science back perspectives.	Provides background on the historical question from two of the social science perspectives.	Provides background on the historical question from one of the social science perspectives.	Provides background on the historical question without using any specific perspectives.
Position	Provides one or more reasons that, taken together, logically lead to the position. And provides at least one counter-reason to the position.	Provides one or more reason that, taken together, logically leads to the position.	Provides one or more logical reason for the position.	Provides one reason that are relevant to the position.
Format	Complies with all 5 of the requirements for a friendly letter.	Complies with 4 of the 5 requirements for a friendly letter.	Complies with 3 of the 5 requirements for a friendly letter.	Complies with 2 of the 5 requirements for a friendly letter.

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REFERENCES/CITATIONS

"Historical Thinking and Knowledge Rubric for Classroom-Based Assessments Evaluation and Plan Tools" from the Northwest History Consortium. July 2010. Northwest Educational Service District 189. Anacortes, WA.

"History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States." UCLA National Center for History in the Schools. 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 24 March 2011 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5>>.

O'Mara, Margaret, PhD. "Lecture at Northwest History Consortium Conference." 19 July 2010. Northwest Educational Service District 189. Anacortes, WA.

OSPI. "Social Studies Essential Learning Requirements: Recommended Grade-by-Grade Sequence for Grade Level Expectations – K-12." Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 2011. Olympia, WA. 24 March 2011 <<http://standards.ospi.k12.wa.us/ComponentListByGrade.aspx?subject=6,GLE&gl=8>>.

Setmire, Lynnette. "Solving the Housing Needs of a Growing City." NWESD Organization. 2008. Anacortes, WA. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/9.1Returning.WWII.Servicemen.Setmire.10.pdf>>.