# OUR SHARED STORY:
## *LATINE COMMUNITY AND BELONGING IN INDIANAPOLIS*

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF INDIANAPOLIS

**Secondary Grades Lesson Plan**




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# Latine Civic Participation in Indianapolis

## Lesson Plan by Dr. Mariah Pol

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# Contents

**Introduction** ..... **5**

Indiana Academic Standards ..... 6

**Development in Indianapolis & Community Impacts** ..... **7**

Lesson Overview ..... 7

Lesson Sequence ..... 9

Community Norms & Expectations: ..... 15

Deliberation ..... 15

Deliberation Activities ..... 16

Our position ..... 17

My personal position ..... 19

**Further Resources** ..... **20**

**Appendix** ..... **21**

**Notes** ..... **23**

# Introduction

This lesson is designed for a high school Indiana Studies classroom and examines the history of highway development and urban renewal in Indianapolis through the experiences of communities affected by these initiatives. The lesson invites students to consider how decisions intended to improve cities can create both opportunities and significant costs for existing communities. Using Indianapolis as a case study, students investigate the historical rationale for highway and redevelopment projects alongside evidence documenting their effects on neighborhoods such as El Barrio and other Indianapolis communities.

# Indiana Academic Standards

**Based on the 2023 Indiana Academic Standards for Social Studies*

*Indiana Social Studies*:

**IS.1.25** Summarize key economic and social developments and changes in post-WWII life in Indiana.

**IS.1.26** Summarize and assess the various actions which characterized the early struggle for civil rights and racial equality in Indiana.

**IS.1.37** Formulate and present a position or course of action on an issue by examining the underlying factors contributing to that issue.

**IS.3.8** Read and interpret texts (written, graphs, maps, imagery, timelines) to answer geographic questions about Indiana in the past and present and to plan for Indiana's future.

**IS.4.4** Analyze the economic, social, and environmental impact of technologies on the state.

**IS.4.12** Identify and explain the significance of federal programs, policies, and legal rulings designed to improve the lives of Americans during the 1960s and the impact on Indiana residents.

# Development in Indianapolis & Community Impacts

## Lesson Overview

| Estimated Time: | Materials: |
| --- | --- |
| 75 Minutes | Pencil/pen, Chromebook/tablet |

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

Who benefits – and who bears the costs – when cities pursue development and progress?

**Staging the essential question:** When class begins, display modern images of the East Side of Indianapolis and IUPUI's campus. Have students Think-Pair-Share their noticings and wonderings.

The lesson begins by connecting students' lived experiences with modern highways, university campuses, and other large-scale developments to the historical question of what existed before these spaces were created. Students then participate in a Structured Academic Controversy (SAC), examining competing perspectives on Indianapolis's development. Working with historical sources—including a promotional film

for the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, the Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission Annual Report, and historical accounts of El Barrio and other displaced Indianapolis communities—students investigate why development initiatives were pursued, what benefits they were intended to create, and how they affected existing communities. Students are intentionally assigned competing perspectives before engaging in deliberation, requiring them to consider historical evidence and accurately represent perspectives different from their own.

The lesson culminates in an individual performance task in which students develop their own position on whether Indianapolis's highway and urban renewal initiatives were worth the costs to affected communities. Students must support their position with historical evidence, acknowledge an opposing perspective, and propose a lesson or recommendation for future development. In doing so, students move beyond evaluating the past to consider how historical experiences should inform contemporary decisions about development, community voice, displacement, and the meaning of progress.

# Lesson Sequence

**Step 1—Launch the Inquiry (10 minutes)**

As students enter, display photographs of (see appendix):

- A major Indianapolis highway/interchange
- A modern university campus/building

Ask students to individually brainstorm: *Think about a time you have traveled on a highway or visited a university, downtown area, shopping district, or other large development. What do you notice about these places?*

Then have students consider: *What do these places make possible?*

Students might identify:

- Transportation
- Access
- Jobs
- Education
- Businesses
- Housing
- Entertainment
- Connection between communities
- Economic growth

Then ask: *What might have to change or be removed to create these spaces?*

Students might identify:

- Houses
- Businesses
- Roads
- Neighborhoods
- Parks
- Historic buildings
- Existing communities

Then pose: *When we see a highway or a modern university campus today, how often do we think about what was here before it?*

Then introduce: *Cities are constantly changing. Governments, businesses, universities, and residents make decisions about how land should be used and how communities should develop. These decisions can create new opportunities, but they can also disrupt communities that already exist.*

*Today's Essential Question*: ***Who benefits—and who bears the costs—when cities pursue development and progress?***

*Today you will investigate this question through the history of Indianapolis. You will be assigned one perspective, examine historical evidence, and participate in a Structured Academic Controversy before developing your own position.*

**Step 2—Establish Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) Groups and Perspectives (5 minutes)**

Have students immediately form their **groups of four**. Within each group, divide students into *two pairs*.

**Pair A: The Case for Urban Development**
Pair investigates: *Why did Indianapolis leaders believe highways and urban redevelopment would improve the city?*

**Pair B: The Case for Community Protection**
Pair investigates: *What were the consequences of these development decisions for existing Indianapolis communities?*

Give students this crucial instruction: *You are not necessarily arguing what you personally believe. Your task is to develop the strongest argument supported by historical evidence for your assigned perspective.*

Additionally, as a class, have students review the Community Norms and Expectations for participating in a deliberation.

**Step 3—Evidence Investigation (15 minutes)**

Inform students' of today's SAC Question: *Were Indianapolis's highway and urban renewal initiatives worth the costs to affected communities?*

Distribute to students the Deliberation Activities Handout.

**Pair A: The Case for Development**

- Source A: National Interstate and Defense Highways Act Promotional Video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPHe8ET33Hg
- Source B: Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission Annual Report, 1952 (pgs. 3-10) - https://images.indianahistory.org/digital/collection/dc018/id/6884/rec/3

Their graphic organizer asks:

- What problem were leaders trying to solve?
- What did they believe development would accomplish?
- Who did they believe would benefit?
- What evidence supports the argument that development was necessary or beneficial?

**Pair B: The Case for Community Protection**

- Source A: Indiana Historical Society, "Under the Expressway: Lost Barrio of Indianapolis, Part II" - https://indianahistory.org/blog/under-the-expressway-lost-barrio-of-indianapolis-part-ii/
- Source B: WRTV Indianapolis, "'Under the highway': How interstates divided Indianapolis neighborhoods and displaced 17,000 people" - https://www.wrtv.com/news/under-the-highway-how-interstates-divided-indianapolis-neighborhoods-and-displaced-17-000-people/

Their graphic organizer asks:

- What communities existed before development?
- What did these communities contribute to Indianapolis?
- How were they affected by development?
- What evidence supports the argument that development created significant costs?

**Step 4—Prepare the SAC Argument (5 minutes)**

Now each pair must identify its **three strongest arguments**. Distribute the Our Position Handout.

**Step 5—Structured Academic Controversy (15 minutes)**

Now the four students come together.

**Round 1: Present Your Perspective (2–3 minutes per pair)**

- Pair A presents.
- Pair B listens and takes notes in the Deliberation Activities Handout.
- Then Pair B presents.
- Pair A listens and takes notes in the Deliberation Activities Handout.

**No rebuttals during this process.**

**Round 2: Reverse Perspectives (3–4 minutes)**

Explain that, to demonstrate that each side understands the opposing arguments, each team will select the other team's most compelling reasons.

- Team B will explain to Team A what Team A's most compelling reasons were for supporting the Deliberation Question.
- Team A will explain to Team B what Team B's most compelling reasons were for opposing the Deliberation Question.

**Step 6—Deliberate (15 minutes)**

Put the SAC question back up: **Were Indianapolis's highway and urban renewal initiatives worth the costs to affected communities?**

Explain that students will now drop their roles and deliberate the question as a group. Remind the class of the question. In deliberating, students can:

1. use what they have learned about the issue and
2. offer their personal experiences as they formulate opinions regarding the issue.

After deliberating, have students find areas of agreement in their group. Then ask students, as individuals, to express to the group their personal position on the issue and write it down (see My Personal Position on Handout 2).

Note: Individual students do NOT have to agree with the group.

**Step 7— Individual Performance Task (5 minutes)**

Now students independently answer: **Who benefits—and who bears the costs when cities pursue development and progress?**

*Based on the evidence you examined, was Indianapolis's highway and urban renewal development worth the costs to affected communities? Develop a position and support it with evidence. Then identify one lesson or recommendation that Indianapolis should consider when undertaking future development projects.*

Require:
- Clear position
- At least two pieces of evidence
- Acknowledgment of an opposing perspective
- One recommendation/course of action

**Step 8—Closing Reflection (5 minutes)**

Put the initial images/question back on the board: *When you drive on a highway or walk through a modern university campus, what might you be missing if you only look at what exists today?*

Then ask students: *What is one question you will now ask when you encounter a major development project?*

Potential responses:
- Who benefits?
- Who pays?
- Who gets displaced?
- Who made the decision?
- Who had a voice?
- What existed before?
- What alternatives were considered?

NAME _____ PERIOD _____ DATE _____

# Community Norms & Expectations: Deliberation

**SAC Question:** *Were Indianapolis's highway and urban renewal initiatives worth the costs to affected communities?*

**What Is Deliberation?**
Deliberation (meaningful discussion) is the focused exchange of ideas and the analysis of arguments with the aim of making a decision.

**Why Are We Deliberating?**
Citizens must be able and willing to express and exchange ideas among themselves, with community leaders, and with their representatives in government. Citizens and public officials in a democracy need skills and opportunities to engage in civil public discussion of controversial issues in order to make informed policy decisions. Deliberation requires keeping an open mind, as this skill enables citizens to reconsider a decision based on new information or changing circumstances.

**What Are the Rules for Deliberation?**
- Read the material carefully.
- Focus on the deliberation question.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying.
- Check for understanding.
- Analyze what others say.
- Speak and encourage others to speak.
- Refer to the reading to support your ideas.
- Use relevant background knowledge, including life experiences, in a logical way.
- Use your heart and mind to express ideas and opinions.
- Remain engaged and respectful when controversy arises.
- Focus on ideas, not personalities.

***Modified from: Constitutional Rights Foundation, Chicago. https://did.deliberatingdemocracy.org/index.html***

NAME _____ PERIOD _____ DATE _____

# Community Norms & Expectations: Deliberation Activities

**SAC Question:** *Were Indianapolis's highway and urban renewal initiatives worth the costs to affected communities?*

**Directions:** As you navigate your collection of sources, take notes on your respective column using the guiding questions below.

| **Pair A: The Case for Development** | **Pair B: The Case for Community Protection** |
|---|---|
| *Why did Indianapolis leaders believe highways and urban redevelopment would improve the city?* | *What were the consequences of these development decisions for existing Indianapolis communities?* |
| Source A: National Interstate and Defense Highways Act Promotional Video *(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPHe8ET33Hg)*<br><br>Source B: Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission Annual Report, 1952 (pgs. 3-10) *(https://images.indianahistory.org/digital/collection/dc018/id/6884/rec/3)* | Source A: Indiana Historical Society, "Under the Expressway: Lost Barrio of Indianapolis, Part II" *(https://indianahistory.org/blog/under-the-expressway-lost-barrio-of-indianapolis-part-ii/)*<br><br>Source B: WRTV Indianapolis, "'Under the highway': How interstates divided Indianapolis neighborhoods and displaced 17,000 people" *(https://www.wrtv.com/news/under-the-highway-how-interstates-divided-indianapolis-neighborhoods-and-displaced-17-000-people/)* |
| • *What problem were leaders trying to solve?*<br>• *What did they believe development would accomplish?*<br>• *Who did they believe would benefit?*<br>• *What evidence supports the argument that development was necessary or beneficial?* | • *What communities existed before development?*<br>• *What did these communities contribute to Indianapolis?*<br>• *How were they affected by development?*<br>• *What evidence supports the argument that development created significant costs?* |

NAME _____ PERIOD _____ DATE _____

# Community Norms & Expectations:
# Our position

**Position:**

_____

**Strongest Reason #1**

_____

_____

_____

**Evidence**

_____

_____

_____

**Strongest Reason #2**

_____

_____

_____

**Evidence**

_____

_____

_____

**Strongest Reason #3**

**Evidence**

**What is the strongest piece of evidence supporting our perspective? Why?**

NAME _____ PERIOD _____ DATE _____

# Community Norms & Expectations: My personal position

**SAC Question:** *Who benefits—and who bears the costs when cities pursue development and progress?*

**Directions:** Based on the evidence you examined, was Indianapolis's highway and urban renewal development worth the costs to affected communities? Develop a position and support it with evidence. Then identify one lesson or recommendation that Indianapolis should consider when undertaking future development projects.

Include:

- Clear position
- At least two pieces of evidence
- Acknowledgment of an opposing perspective
- One recommendation/course of action

# Further Resources

**Encyclopedia of Indianapolis**

Latine Community Entries
https://indyencyclopedia.org/tag/latino-community/

Tracing a Hidden Presence:
The Story of Mexican and Mexican American Indianapolis, 1850–2020
https://indyencyclopedia.org/features/mexicancommunity/

**Other**

Hoosier Latino Resources
https://indianahistory.org/hoosier-latino-resources/

Expanding Our Story: Exploring Indianapolis Hispanic and Latino History
https://indypl.bibliocommons.com/v2/list/display/1304039738/2903807497

# Appendix




View of downtown Indianapolis from I-70

**Credit:** Garkino at English Wikipedia, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_downtown_Indianapolis_from_I-70.jpg



University Library on the IUPUI, now IUI Campus in Indianapolis

**Credit:** Indiana University Indianapolis, https://indyencyclopedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/indiana-university-purdue-university-indianapolis-iupui-0-full.jpg

# Notes