

How Suburbs Work: The Region, Burnaby, and Surrey

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6 Sat, Jan-Feb

00:00–00:00 am

SCFC000 | Room 0000

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Everywhere we turn old neighbourhoods are being torn down to be replaced by new developments, and, more than ever, these new developments are coming in the form of large multi-family multi-storey buildings. Say the word “density,” and you’ll get several reactions, typically strong ones on either side of the debate. After the Second World War and until recently most development has come in the form of single-family housing, with a mythical white picket fence, front and back yards, and quiet streets. Why the sudden change?

Using your personal experiences, we will explore how the region’s built environment has shifted focus over the past few years, and together we’ll examine recent regional history to glean where we’ve come from and consider where we seem to be heading.

Our final class will include a brief field trip to the Surrey City Centre precinct.

Week 1: Modern Urban Planning: A Brief History

Urban planning has a rich history, but we will hone in on key modern milestones. From Sir Ebenezer Howard (1850–1928) to Jane Jacobs (1916–2006) and others, we will discover a practice as informed by perceptions of social desire and need as by aesthetics and form.

Week 2: Planning Legislation

In Western democracies, the business of development can be a tricky vortex. We will examine legislation from the rezoning process to public hearings, making sense of the sometimes quite complex story of how individual buildings and whole neighbourhoods come into being.

Week 3: How Regional Planning Works

We will explore the canonical texts of regional planning, from the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board to the Metro Vancouver Regional District. We will see how each has attempted to influence society through city and transportation planning.

Week 4: Regionalism: A Federation of Cities

In the mid-1940s, people in the Lower Mainland demanded a regional response not to gangs but to Mother Nature. But what began as a response to a massive flood spawned a

grander discourse about the future, taking a uniquely Cold War fear to address a foreseen environmental crisis.

Week 5: Case Study: The City of Burnaby

We will explore how the City of Burnaby took influences from regional plans to customize a blueprint for its development – for better or worse – and learn more about the Metrotown and Town Centre concepts.

Week 6: Case Study: The City of Surrey

Surrey demonstrates a contrasting tale of development to the Burnaby model: sprawling sub-divisions in the south and east and a challenge to Vancouver's grandiosity in the revitalized Whalley/City Centre District. We'll look at what this means for the region's future as the Fraser Valley grows in prominence.

Suggested reading:

Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988.