



Corridor Communities and the Case of the Sea-to-Sky

LARC-505 Optional Studio Regional
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Introduction

The Sea-to-Sky, Kootenays, Okanagan, Vancouver Island Corridor, are considered 'corridor communities'. Our province's almost entirely mountainous and forested terrain has driven this north-south pattern of inhabitation, trade, and territory since the First Peoples. This regional studio will look at the Sea-to-Sky Region as a case study to address the challenges and vulnerabilities rooted in this linear settlement pattern. We will explore its incongruous history of adventure, extraction, exploitation, and profound and ongoing connection to landscape. Is connectivity and speed always the answer? Or should we slow down to rewire and reshape our relationships to one another and to our environments?

The Sea-to-Sky is distinct in its proximity to Vancouver and the sheer volume of visitors - 9.5 million people use the highway each year, 60% of them for sightseeing. Reconciliation, wildfire, industry pressure, transit, growing populations, natural disasters, human-animal conflicts, food and water security, ongoing biodiversity crises, are among the many challenges that intersect the pressures of mass tourism in the region. How can we evolve our relationship with the corridor so that a powerful economic driver like tourism can become regenerative? What would redundancy and resilience look like here?

Approach

In this studio, the students will have a real client. On behalf of Squamish, Whistler, and Pemberton, and the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, four representatives from these governing bodies will speak for the stakeholders and communities in and around their jurisdictions, including their First Nation partners. Students will approach their regional designs systemically and collaboratively, receiving client feedback as they develop their designs.

They will begin with sketching to understand and communicate regional patterns generally. They will then be introduced to the case study region. Individually they will inventory and analyse the whole region from the perspective of one of the issues identified by the client.

The design will then be addressed at three scales – regional, subregional, and site level. Students will learn design strategies appropriate to each scale and become comfortable with iterating through scales and concepts. Each scale and problem will lend itself best to certain modes of representation. Within the parameters outlined, students will be encouraged to choose how to best communicate their design intent. Mapping (traditional/alternative, AI, or other), 3D visualizations, axonometrics, and multi-media will all be viable representational techniques.



Studio Structure

Students will begin individually, but work in small groups over the course of the design. Roles will be established within each group to facilitate effective teamwork. The instructor, Alex, will be there in person most Tuesdays and Fridays, with the occasional remote session. There will be field trips, lectures, discussions, and desk crits during studio time.

Field Trips

There will be three group daytrips up the Corridor:

1. Fieldtrip to Whistler to introduce the project and the clients – will include a Welcome Ceremony at the Squamish-Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC), as well as a guided forest walk, and other talks. Cost: \$30 for gas and \$23 for the SLCC.
2. Midterm review in Squamish so that clients and students meet halfway. Cost: \$25 for gas
3. Final review likely in Squamish as well. Cost: \$25 for gas

Costs for the studio are primarily for transportation, adding up to about \$100. Packed lunches are assumed, so the cost of food is excluded. Students are highly encouraged to visit their site independently once as well, so the total cost will likely range from \$100 to \$200. Students will be responsible for carpooling. If cost is an issue, the instructor will address potential barriers on a case-by-case basis so that these barriers don't prevent students from participating meaningfully in the studio.

