At the beginning of the 1960s, residential neighbourhood planning played a key role in the larger urban planning schemes of Ljubljana. In 1965, the General Urban Plan of Ljubljana established neighbourhoods as the central organizing principle underlying Ljubljana’s spatial planning policy, and became the reference tool according to which further major enlargements of the city were organized.

The residential neighbourhood model emerged as an answer to the first big housing estates built after World War II. These estates were criticized alongside factors and were characterized by the repetition of a single type of long and low apartment block, which made them uniform in appearance and unappealing to the residents. The residential neighbourhood planning method came to Slovenia via Sweden. It was based on the work of Clarence Perry, an American who in his 1920s Regional Plan for New York proposed building neighbourhoods for 5,000 residents, and included of these like a pedestrian walkway and an elementary school at the centre of each. Following World War II, this model was adopted in England and the Nordic countries, from where it was then introduced to Slovenia.

The first residential neighbourhood studies for Ljubljana were produced in the 1950s in the studio of Professor Edward Ravnikar at Ljubljana University’s Faculty of Architecture. These studies encompassed the technical and sociological sides of housing developments, from construction, materials and industrial construction methods and technology to planning and design of open public space. Urban planners paid considerable attention to the distances between schools and apartment buildings, and even maintained that school grids serve as the framework around which neighbourhoods were to be structured.

One particular project proved key for the further development of Ljubljana’s neighbourhoods – one developed in Ravnikar’s studio by Majda Dobravec, Janez Lajovic, Janja Lap and Mitja Jernejec. They designed a residential neighbourhood for 5,000 residents divided into residential blocks for 300 to 1,000 residents and organized around a central area. Central areas included shops and service establishments, schools, day care centres and sport playgrounds. Residential blocks were further divided into communities with children’s playgrounds as their central points. A neighbourhood includes different types of housing, from apartment buildings to terrace houses, and has extensive green areas. Its central area is functionally emphasized by high-rise apartment buildings and is split along a major arterial route with a slow stop nearby.

The Bežigradsko naselje (BS 6) neighbourhood, between Dunajska, Šarhova, Počorje and Hubadova Streets was the first real-life onsite test of this theoretical model, followed by all the other residential neighbourhoods developed in Ljubljana up until the 1980s.
The Bežigravska soseska 7 (BS 7) neighbourhood was designed as a megastructure along two streets. The two streets serve as a spine for the development, with the first floor of all apartment buildings intended to accommodate retail shops and catering facilities. The Ruski car neighbourhood (as it was nicknamed) was designed in the spirit of a functionalist city looking to apply larger, universal solutions that would shape the form and development of the settlement as a whole while allowing room for diverse design projects within this framework. Once it was completed, the neighbourhood was the park with its carefully designed relief and groups of trees.

The Bežigravska soseska 3 (BS 3) neighbourhood covers an area 800 metres long and 250 metres wide and is one of the most representative residential areas in Ljubljana. The Bežigravska street forms the main axis of the urban layout, with tower blocks positioned in two clusters along Vojkova Street, while the interior core of the neighbourhood evolves into long rows of mixed-use residential buildings, which were built in respecting the traditional layout of yards and courtyards, which was maintained in the outer enclosure of the blocks.

The Savska naselje is a residential area on the south side of Ljubljana, which was divided into two smaller housing areas, with Savska naselje 7 (SNS 7) and Savska naselje 6 (SNS 6) on either side of the future green belt. The Savska naselje 6 (SNS 6) was designed by Edvard Ravnikar in the spirit of the functionalist architecture, while Savska naselje 7 (SNS 7) was designed by the Ljubljana Regulation Office in a more diverse manner.