Perth 2040 Vision

Perth city centre as a living urban design laboratory
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# Contents

4  Foreword
5  Acknowledgments
7  Integrated 2040 Vision
8  Introduction
12  Process
13  Description & Research (Survey)
14  What is Perth?
15  Triangle of Uses
16  Perth Finger Plan
18  Historic Context
19  Socio & Economic Context
21  Environmental Context
23  Optimising Perth’s Public Space
27  Supporting Policies
28  Analytical & Evaluative (Analysis)
29  Statutory Planning Strategies
37  Goals
52  Vision Themes
54  Creative & Inventive (Plan)
55  Individual Projects
81  Stages & Delivery
82  Implementation
83  Conclusion

*Relationship across waterfront gapsites.*
*Illustration by Liam Cox & Kirsty Watt*
Foreword

Perth city centre as a living urban design laboratory

Perth city centre has been used as a creative ‘urban laboratory’ in which to explore and test ideas by Architecture and Urban Planning students at the University of Dundee. During 2019/20 students across both the architecture and urban planning pathways have undertaken work to support Perth & Kinross Council’s ambition to modernise the core of this historic Scottish city.

In pursuing the Council’s vision through the development of an integrated urban design strategy, the students devised a series of connected interventions aimed at changing perceptions, use and animation of Perth. Ideas ranged from pop-up temporary interventions, to rediscovering historic layers and exploiting riverside views and connections.

The urban lab initiative is part of a civic urbanism that Husam AlWaer, Kirsty Macari, and Helen O’Connor, and leading planning practitioner Kevin Murray have applied in recent years in Dundee and elsewhere. The idea is that the studies of students contribute to the research, planning and design capability of a city, producing creative content that can help solve real problems.

Students were tasked to Rethink (Re-purpose) Perth City Centre as a place to ‘live, work, prosper, visit and enjoy’ but also how to envision Perth as a dynamic, vital, and sustainable place. In short, the brief was to develop a role for Perth City in the 21st century - that builds on the opportunities offered by its location to improve the quality of life for its ‘people, its businesses and its communities’.

Student’s constructed thematic based visions which culminated in a group-wide 2040 Vision for Perth plus individual student projects based on their own specialisms in architecture or urban design. The projects evolved within a structured, supported approach of participatory co-creation, very much hands-on ‘learning by doing’, with reflective learning techniques and tools such as scenario planning. This encouraged students to critically and spatially explore place themes related to health and wellbeing, connectivity, local economy, cultural and perceptional aspects, public realm, waterfront and street design.

The development of a strategic partnership between Perth and Kinross Council, represented by David Littlejohn and John McCrone, and the students ensures their challenge is authentic, and not hypothetical. This relationship is augmented by mentoring and critique from international practitioners such as Pedro Baganha from Porto City Council, Scottish Government’s Chief Architect Ian Gilzean, Helena Huws from Scottish Canals, Robert Huxford from Urban Design Group, Fergus Purdie from Fergus Purdie Architects, and Stephen Willacy from Aarhus City Council.

Twitter: @uodarchup
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Acknowledgements

Our thanks go to all those who helped make this project possible. In particular, to Perth and Kinross Council for providing us the opportunity to learn critical skills in a ‘live project’. We also gratefully acknowledge the support, guidance and encouragement received from Perth and Kinross Council and Place Development Manager John McCrone during multiple reviews and walks throughout the city.

We also have immense gratitude for the constructive feedback from professionals in the review process. Through these reviews, students were encouraged to test and critically evaluate alternative urban design strategies and interventions. We thank Pedro Baganha, Ian Gilzean, Helena Huws, Robert Huxford, Kevin Murray, Fergus Purdie and Stephen Willacy, among others, who offered advice at different points along our journey. Their feedback was critical for students to refine their ideas and enhance verbal and visual communication skills. Lastly we thank our university tutors, Dr. Husam AlWaer, Kirsty Macari and Helen O’Connor who provided their knowledge and experience to advance the students’ professional skills and development.

We hope this research project provides a source of inspiration for the Perth community as we plan into the future to 2040 and beyond.
“A good city is like a good party – people stay longer than really necessary, because they are enjoying themselves.” Jan Gehl
INTEGRATED 2040 VISION

Reconnecting communities for living, culture and nature at the crossroads of Scotland.
Introduction

Our vision for Perth in 2040 is a city that is ‘reconnecting communities for living, culture and nature at the crossroads of Scotland’. Our integrated vision for this live project includes 20 individual projects that cross along and beyond the city centre. As Architecture and Spatial Planning students our projects are united by shared principles (see right).

The interventions are varied drawing from the strengths and backgrounds of the students, as well as where their interests lie. The students understand that cities are complex, and that interventions must take into consideration social, economic, environmental as well as spatial issues to solve often interconnected challenges.

Our project focuses on the city centre, but we recognize Perth is part of a larger system. We cannot ignore this broader context as this greatly impacts the core, socially, physically, spatially, environmentally and economically and effects where people choose to live, work, play and spend their time.

While we worked on this vision for many months, we recognise our plans do not exist in a vacuum. The current pandemic is shaping our social relationships. We already see during the pandemic people are yearning to be connected through social media. We believe coming out of this challenge, there will be a renewed longing for community. The current reality facing our cities reinforce our belief that reconnecting communities, culture and nature is just as important now as it was before the world was faced with the current crisis.
The Planning Students’ collective vision was to create a central core which connects the range of assets of Perth.

Developing a network of programmes and events that tie the different areas of the City Centre together, making it a vibrant place to live, work, play and enjoy.

The interventions therefore form threads through the city which link and connect to one another together.

The Architecture Students’ collective vision was to reimagine Perth as ‘The Liveable City’.

This aims to create small acupuncture urbanism interventions which stimulate and develop the city centre of Perth focusing on urban living, social interaction, resilience and adaptability.

The interventions therefore form a network of physical and intangible connections which tie the projects to the vision.
Sarah McKenzie
Does re-prioritising the street hierarchy encourage social interaction, play and reduce loneliness within the city?
How can wayfinding, materiality, and identity contribute to the nature of social spaces?

Jodie Walker
How can historic street structure influence legibility, permeability and public space within an urban block?

Cheyenne Laviniere
How will a shift in the focus of health and wellbeing effect urban and architectural design?
How may a redundant infrastructure (multi-storey carpark) be repurposed to encourage healthy life choices for citizens?

Alistair Battles
How can ‘typical’ 1960s council multi-stores be reintegrated into the city fabric, creating livable, legible neighbourhoods?

Hannah Nathan
Can we re-imagine the physical character of the university campus? Do we need specific buildings? and if so why, and what for?

Jordan Burne
How do we re-integrate ecological systems into an existing urban setting to create sustainable, ecological and people friendly neighbourhoods within the city?

Kirsty Watt
Constructing Community; Re-inhabiting the Urban Block

Mohammed Lawal
How to connect place and reinforce identity through landscape

Liam Cox
Can we stimulate the growth of quality, inclusive neighbourhoods by embedding high quality, high density, housing in ‘unusable’ sites?

Callum O’Connor
How to enable innovation and inspire organic growth and resilience?
Perth as a Project

MSc Spatial Planning with Sustainable Urban Design

Individual Interventions

Community Corridors

Story Belt

Street Enhancement

Bridge Connection

Activating Riverfront

Green Network

Highline

Art Attraction

Welcoming Gate

Pocket Parks

Street Enhancement

Activating Riverfront

Green Network

Highline

Art Attraction

Welcoming Gate

Pocket Parks
Process

Our vision process utilised various techniques over three stages: survey, analysis & plan. We began with a scoping of issues, researching Perth’s history, economy, transportation network etc. We also gained insight about Perth’s present and future needs learning from members of Perth and Kinross Council. Under direction from Kevin Murray from Kevin Murray Associates, Husam AlWaer and Helen O’Connor, students from both architecture and spatial planning courses outlined a vision for Perth in 2040. We defined our shared principles and identified potential goals and themes that our individual projects could address/reside in. Throughout an iterative process, we refined our vision getting input from the council and international leaders in the field of architecture and urban planning. We continued to research how our shared vision and individual projects could match our principles while planning for an undefined future for Perth in 2040.
DESCRIPTION & RESEARCH (SURVEY)
What is Perth?

While other Scottish cities have developed strong identities, Perth has struggled despite its unique history and location. While Edinburgh and Glasgow conjure up specific images for both local and international tourists, Perth does not necessarily have that strong identity. Does Perth feel like a city or a town? Is the main draw the historic core? Or is the main appeal the proximity to the Highlands? We suggest Perth is all of these things—a historic capital of Scotland, a meeting point for the nation and blessed with beautiful nearby landscapes. Our vision seeks to capitalise on these existing strengths.

Functionally, the city services surrounding communities, and is an economic engine for the region. With these connections there is an opportunity to cultivate stronger social and economic linkages between Perth and its surrounding communities. These strengthened ties would have positive implications for where people live, enhancing access to everyday necessities.

While our strategy focuses on the city centre, greater connectivity through public transit and sustainable transportation options between central Perth and outside communities, would also provide additional benefits. These include but are not limited to: a reduction in traffic congestion and CO2 emissions within the city centre and wider health benefits through the promotion of active transportation options.
Triangle of Uses

In building our vision we believe creating a great city is always dependent on the triangle of uses (software), the built environment (hardware) and coalitions (orgware). For changes to be sustainable, our individual projects seek to address all three.

During our analysis and our interventions we looked beyond simply physical challenges, but identify programming and events that may enhance an area’s sense of place. In our analysis we also try to address intangibles in Perth, things that enhance quality of life but are not necessarily measurable.

In our vision for Perth, we look to find a balance between hard and soft interventions, making Perth a ‘softer’ city, with attention to the human scale. We want to foster connections between residents and soften the connection between nature and the ‘hardness’ of the city.

Illustration from Soft City Book, portraying how small urban interventions focused at the human scale accumulate to developing a vibrant, soft urban landscape.

Opportunity:

Cultivate stronger social, natural and economic connections between Perth City Centre and outer communities.
Historic Context

Perth has strong historical assets throughout the city centre and beyond including a wealth of castles and historically significant sites. The town's lade once wrapped around the historical core and was pivotal in the city's development as an industrial centre. This lade is now largely covered, however, some remnants remain uncovered with lots of potential for the city’s cultural heritage.

Perth also has largely retained its medieval street layout, although the purpose and their function has changed drastically over time. We believe the compact street layout could be the greatest historical asset towards a more human scale Perth. There is an opportunity to reconnect Perth’s pedestrian and cycling network and provide sustainable transportation options as people travel from home to work.

Our interventions seek to activate areas of the city, through both tactical urbanism and long term changes. This means making places where people want to meet, play, and enjoy their city even closer to their homes. Creating a buzz of activity within the centre will attract and sustain further development opportunities, therefore it is important to nurture the connectivity throughout the city.
Social & Economic Context

Population growth has slowed in recent years, with a population of just under 47,000 in 2018. With lower average costs of housing and rent, this growth is projected to continue. A large proportion of the population, however, is over 60 years old as the city struggles to retain people aged 20-30. We need to consider what type of housing options may this demographic need or be able to afford in the future. How can we create a more inviting, and attractive Perth to work, live and play not just for this missing demographic but also the wider population?

Overall, Perth is an attractive place for business. There is a high number of small rural businesses, and the Perth and Kinross region has a higher density of economic growth than the Scottish average with strong private-public partnerships aided by the city development board. We seek to build on this growth, and think holistically about what will attract businesses to central Perth such as livability, walkability and transportation options.

The key drivers of the economy are tied to tourism with a high proportion of small businesses. Yet, while tourism is a key factor of the economy, international tourism has not seen an increase in recent years as the majority of overnight visitors are from Scotland. With the long term effects of the recent pandemic not yet known, Perth will need to be even more competitive to attract international and local tourists to the city centre.

Retail, tourism, food and drink, financial and business services as well as education, health & social work play important role in the employment performance in Perth & Kinross.

Source: ONS Business Register & Employment Survey 2017
In response to the current and projected population increase, the local development plan identifies shortages in affordable housing. We suggest this demand can be partially met by repopulating the city centre and developing existing brownfield sites.

Perth can capitalize on the strengths of being an affordable place to rent and work, and become a more attractive city for young adults such as those graduating from Perth College & The University of the Highlands & Islands. Recent trends of remote working may continue to become even more prevalent after the pandemic as companies seek alternative methods of work styles.
Environmental Context

Perth aspires to be one of Europe’s greatest small sustainable cities. Places such as Freiburg, Germany can act as inspiration as they contain clear urban principles which focus on sustainable development in all its forms. Freiburg’s development is concentrated beyond the city centre along integrated transportation corridors. This then allows green corridors to penetrate into the centre of the city.

But we can also learn from places closer to home, like Exeter, Nottingham, and the greening of Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow. This is because currently in Perth, there are few trees and little usable green space with building facades that are often barren lacking any vitality. Absent of much planting throughout, this can make the city centre seem ‘hard’ and ‘grey’.

Other cities in Europe like Aarhus, Denmark have aggressive plans to make green spaces accessible to 90% of their residents within just 500 metres of their homes. In the UK, York has also identified access to nature is critical to the future development of the city.

While there are the North Inch and South Inch parks we can enhance access to nature throughout the city centre. The recent pandemic has only affirmed our belief that access to greenspace will be even more crucial for the social, mental and physical wellbeing of residents.
Our vision seeks to ensure the natural environment is seen as an asset. This includes identifying areas with greater sun exposure but also means acknowledging Perth is a city with persistent flooding issues. How can we ensure water is seen not just as a threat, but as an asset to improve quality of life?

Our interventions also do not settle for simply ‘good’ air quality. We build on progress already made in Perth such as along Mill Street, to reprioritize pedestrians but not necessarily eliminate car traffic. We believe Perth can have great air quality and less air pollution in the city centre.

In the winter, the daytime is short with less sunshine. This means the places that could get sunshine should be efficiently utilised. In the summer, daylight is very long, so how can the city manage the micro climate? (e.g. provide shading for pedestrians and comfortable seating).
Optimising Perth’s Public Space

While the waterfront is attractive, it lacks a reason to stay and linger. This is a shame because the vibrancy and movement of the water could be reflected in the movement and vibrancy of the public realm. Our vision sees the riverfront as a crucial part of Perth’s identity, that could be enhanced through physical and social interventions to create a place for residents and visitors on either side of the river to live, exercise, and enjoy one of the best views in Scotland.

There is an over subscription of car parking in central Perth. Does Perth need or will continue to need this level of car parking in 2040? To meet its sustainability goals, likely not. We seek a Perth that provides transportation options, that the quickest way to get from A to B will not necessarily mean taking the car.

Accessibility is also a key issue for Perth. Areas in Perth city centre have lower car ownership than Perth and Kinross as a whole. How can we reprioritize walking and biking not only in the city centre, but beyond central Perth to enhance connectivity to the core?

If Perth wants to make places where people of all ages feel safe it needs to consider options to not necessarily eliminate car traffic, but reprioritize more space for nature and pedestrians.

1018

Car parking spaces in city centre

*not including Kinnoull Street Multi (Private)
*not including Mill Street W. lot
*not including on street parking

1136

Car parking spaces outside city centre within a 5 minute walk

*not including Glasgow Rd.
*not including on street parking

66% say Perth would be a better place to live and work if more people cycled.

69% of people would like to see more money spent on cycling.

69% of residents support building more protected roadside cycle lanes, even when this could mean less space for other road traffic.

Source: Sustrans, 2018
We look to key cities like Copenhagen, Denmark and how it was able to gradually remove car traffic from areas of the city centre. Copenhagen paid close attention to the pedestrian experience and removed barriers such as curbs and sidewalks.

The incremental nature of change gave people time to adjust, with a resulting 400 times more stopping and staying activities between 1968 and 1996.

“The successful pedestrianization of streets in Copenhagen can be attributed, in part, to the incremental nature of change, giving people the time to change their patterns of driving and parking into patterns of cycling and using collective transport to access key destinations in the city”

Global Designing Cities Initiative
“Cyclists don’t want detours. They want full access to the city like everyone else.”

Map of the on-street cycling infrastructure network in Perth

Source: Copenhagenize, 2018, p.73

Source: Perth City Cycling & Walking Map 2015
To do so, we recognize the power of incremental change. Buchanan Street in Glasgow gradually squeezed out traffic, shaking up the psychology of the space through temporary interventions leading to long-term change. In our interventions, we understand it is important to make small changes, test and track progress, and make new changes to reflect the results.

With an aging demographic, Perth can learn from York and St. Albans and in some cases even Glasgow, among others to meet its goal of becoming a more accessible, inviting, and livable city for people of any age. Expanding opportunities for people to comfortably travel and stop in public spaces by biking or walking, can increase the distance older adults and children can travel.

With improvements along Mill Street and the High Street in Perth, we can see the city is moving in many ways in the right direction, but has the opportunity to become a world class small livable city with key interventions.
Supporting Policies

We strive to propose interventions that will improve quality of life and make Perth the first choice where people choose to live, work, study, visit and invest in. Our integrated vision seeks to build better quality places that invite nature into the city, and connect the city centre to wider Perth through quality usable green spaces.

We too aim, as the local development intends, to propose an integrated vision that ensures Perth is a successful, sustainable, low-carbon, resilient, and connected place, both within central Perth, but also beyond the city centre.

We recognize as the LDP and town centre first principle suggest, the town centre needs to be at the heart of decision making. We seek solutions that improve connectivity to the city centre, both from within Perth, but also from also beyond. Many individual projects also identify opportunities for housing drawing from the local development plan.

“By 2036, the TAY plan area will be sustainable, more attractive, competitive and vibrant without creating an unacceptable burden on our planet. The quality of life will make it a place of first choice where more people choose to live, work, study and visit and where businesses choose to invest and create jobs.”

TAYplan, Strategic Development Plan, 2016-2036, Page 4

“Promotion of a strong cultural character through arts, cultural, community sport and recreational facilities offering opportunities for social interaction and local identity.”

LDP2, 2019, Page 14

“...make connections where possible to blue and green networks.”

LDP2, 2019, Page 21

The population of Perth is expected to increase by about 25% in the next 20 years with a requirement for around 7,000 new homes. Demand will be met in part by repopulating the city centre and developing existing brownfield sites, but it will also the expansion of the city to create new neighbourhoods”

Perth City Plan, 2015-2035, p.24
ANALYTICAL & EVALUATIVE (ANALYSIS)
Before developing individual interventions the students created Statutory Planning Strategies which focus on integrating planning policies with strategic planning. Led by Kirsty Macari & Helen O’Connor the students learned about planning frameworks and processes before interpreting this knowledge into forming well developed and researched strategies. These strategies took an integrated approach to understanding the analysis of a city, their policy framework, their broader influences as well as the social, economic, environmental context.

In small groups the students used these strategies to tackle a ‘problem’ they found in Perth. The strategies range in topic with some looking at specific areas within the centre, and others looking at the whole City Centre. Some strategies do not focus primarily on a specific place but instead look at demographics within the city.

The strategies took into account the existing policy framework, in particular, the Perth & Kinross Local Development Plan. However, the objective was not to implement a plan which solely followed these policies but one which challenged and generated new policy proposals.

The Statutory Planning Strategies formed a base of knowledge and analysis where the key moves and objectives could form the goals for the collective vision. The following pages provide an insight to the diverse range of strategies created prior to the individual intervention design development.
Liveable, Legible Neighbourhoods

Proposed by: Alistair Battles, Liam Cox, Lucas Lee, George Sariak & Alex Scott

This strategy addresses the poor issues of the Leonard and Pomarium Street area which creates a detachment from the rest of Perth City Centre. The weak street edge condition, car dominance and lack of clarity in spatial ownership add to the lack of legibility of the area. The area’s fragmented planning inhibits the growth of a fully sustained community, however there is a drive to begin to build one.

The proposed strategy is broken down into four key elements: the relocation of the bus station to a transport interchange; the introduction of key wayfinding devices within the streetscape; a contextual reinterpretation of the historical street layout; combined with new building typologies and regeneration of existing tower blocks to revitalise the Pomarium Neighbourhood.

Although this is a place-led strategy, it has wider reaching benefits of creating greater legibility and connectivity throughout the city both in terms of its streetscape and transportation systems. It is hoped that this strategy and its policies can act as a catalyst for future developments.
This report recognises the Vennels as a historic asset and key element of Perth City Centre. An analysis of the Vennels within the wider context of historic development, socio-economics and urban design presented a series of challenges.

Through addressing these issues, including but not limited to maintenance, environment and legibility, a holistic strategy was formed. There was a focus on efficient management to create a sustainable environment for the community and tourist economy.

The strategy concludes with a ‘Tool-Kit’ - a flexible framework that can be adapted to each Vennel depending on its character, position and surrounding land use.

From an understanding of the existing statutory planning guidance a further policy document has been produced that will assist Perth in achieving its ambitions. This requires future alterations within the Vennels to follow a set of procedures ensuring quality public spaces are at the priority of development.
Young and the City

Proposed by:
Surayya Balarabe Ahmad, Yuxi Jia, Cheyenne Laviniere, Mohammed Lawal & Xiaotian Xu

Perth currently sits at a crossroad. Standing as a central town with excellent connectivity, great historic and architectural value in the general context of Scotland, its youth demographic is in decline however the city encompasses multiple opportunities of social and economic development.

This proposal is set out to identify the need to invite and retain the missing youth demographic within the city through long-term physical, social, economic and environmental development strategies. These strategies were proposed while keeping in mind the impact the implementation of such will have on other demographics and the overall development of Perth. Centred within the city centre, the proposal makes use of the University of Highlands and Islands & Perth College to create a link between the campus and the Perth’s centre. Through the generation of student housing within derelict buildings; creation of a youth friendly street that serves a student hub and key driver of youth economy; constraining the use of cars and implementation of more sustainable transport links and pedestrian friendly streets, the link is made. These outlined propositions range in scale, cost and feasibility.

In summary, through the implementation of the 3 phased strategy, a better city for youths to live, work and play will successfully be achieved in the long run.
Young Creative Entrepreneurs

Proposed by: Jordan Burne, Sarah McKenzie, Callum O’Connor, Josh Speedie & Gareth Wang

This report aimed to develop a strategy to entice young creative entrepreneurs to live, work, stay and play in Perth. Through a wider context analysis of Perth City Centre, the strategy in the Lower East Side posits that the area has the potential to become a “creative entrepreneurial hub”.

First, by identifying the affordances of Mill Street as an existing cultural hub in Perth, the strategy suggests temporary use as a catalyst of creative activity in the area.

The subsequent phases identify key sites of opportunity in South East Perth with the goal of creating places for young creative entrepreneurs to live, work and play.

Throughout the strategy, we take a holistic view of what young creative entrepreneurs need to thrive, therefore a number of key policy recommendations are geared to enhance community and quality of life.

From increasing connectivity, retaining buildings that enhance the character of the area, and incentivising reinvestment into the creative entrepreneurial sector, among others, this strategy is a sustainable step to ensuring Perth is an inviting city for young creatives.
‘At Risk’ Buildings

Proposed by:
Holly Brown, Sarah Crowe, Chenhao Gao, Meiqi Liu & Liwen Yao

The historic built environment of Perth City Centre is integral to the significance of the city and its wider region. The tangible, historical evidence of the city’s development is evident by the traditional buildings and street layout which creates an identity of Perth embedded in cultural heritage. Such an identity helps to enhance the unique character of the area which consequently encourages economic growth through the cultural and creative sectors.

The proposals within this strategy enrich the built and historic environment and boost opportunities in the cultural and creative sectors. This will have a positive impact on Perth and the wider region and will contribute to meeting the ambitions set out in a number of national, regional and local strategies. Our shared 2040 Vision of Perth is demonstrated throughout this report is as follows:

“The creative sector will directly contribute to the regeneration of two buildings on the ‘at risk’ register, making use of empty spaces, promoting creative collaboration, providing employment and training opportunities and providing much-needed housing”.

Proposed by:
Holly Brown, Sarah Crowe, Chenhao Gao, Meiqi Liu & Liwen Yao
“For physical regeneration to be successful it needs to have real, tangible benefits for existing residents and the wider community.”

Levitt Bernstein
Goals

1. Activate the natural, cultural and historic resources along the River Tay.
2. Reconnect with unique history.
3. Create an age-friendly walkable city centre.
4. Enhance access to nature and usable green space.
5. An attractive city to work, live and play.
7. Utilise existing assets (gap sites).
Activate the natural, cultural and historic resources along the River Tay.
The River Tay is a natural asset for Perth running past the city generating beautiful waterfront views. However, there is more untapped potential as people rarely engage with the natural setting. Through a series of interventions we can connect this key destination to the city centre and beyond enhancing resident’s social and physical wellbeing. Interventions can bring footfall and economic opportunity to a prime location in the city centre.

**Activate**
Create small intervention spots at key nodal points which form a variety of activities along the waterfront edge.

**Accessible**
Restablishing the connection over to Bridgend begins to link the City Centre to its surrounding communities. A safe boardwalk will be inclusive to all users.

**Ecological**
Establish a green belt along Tay Street connecting the North Inch and South Inch parks. Link over to Kinnoull Hill to bring more green ecology to the city.
2 Reconnect with unique history.
Perth has many historical assets from buildings, to the lade and the street hierarchy of the vennels. By reimagining their role within the city today these elements can begin to create a cultural identity for the city. The Town’s Lade will signify the historical core whilst bring blue ecology through the city liking back to the river, meanwhile the vennels can provide opportunities for social and economic connections throughout the city’s urban grain.

**Economy**

Utilise the historical elements within the city to attract tourism, whilst generating new potential for local business along the lade route.

**Environment**

The lade brings blue ecology back into the heart of the city centre, and offers the opportunity to bring more green ecology to create a blue-green corridor.

**Engagement**

Providing diverse, active places for enjoyment and social interaction. Linking different interventions and key nodes within the city together.
Create an age-friendly walkable city centre.
While Perth has an aging population, our interventions aim to connect the city centre through physical changes and socially through temporary and sustained programming. We consider how introducing green elements and traffic calming measures positively impact air quality and mental wellbeing for all. We also look beyond physical changes to the built environment to consider how our interventions contribute to a sense of safety for all citizens.

Blocks

The corridors will be defined connecting the areas with increased pedestrian movement through the city centre between key points.

Environment

The corridor space is transformed to guide residents and tourists to the riverfront, greenspaces and core.

A Social Channel

Programmed activities encourage social interaction, increasing the vitality and public life of the neighbourhood.
Enhance access to nature and usable green space.
While there may be a lack of nature in the city centre, it also has many gap sites, parking lots and barren facades that could be utilised to infuse nature into the city. Perth could create a green space within a 5-minute walk to every part of the city centre with targeted interventions as spaces to exercise and relax. The corridors between green spaces can be highlighted with planting and trees to lead residents through the green network.

Green areas

Utilising vacant and under-utilised spaces throughout the city to create new green spaces and public parks for the residents.

Link

Green streets will connect the newly established parks so the urban grain will have a green thread throughout.

People in Green

Access to green spaces will be easy for residents and workers, which will have a positive effect on their health.
An attractive city to work, live and play.
Our individual projects consider how Perth can become a more attractive city to work, live and play. We consider the economic benefit of tactical urbanism enhancements, and increase connectivity to surrounding communities through sustainable transportation options. We aim to create a city where there are destinations throughout the city, giving residents and visitors ample reasons to linger and enjoy Perth.

Work
Building a vibrant core reinforcing economic activity and growth.

Live
Offering a liveable and healthy environment for all residents.

Play
Enriching diverse activities for residents and tourists of all ages.
Support business, community and deliver economic growth.
The Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact the business community with the ultimate costs still unknown. Now is the time for immediate changes that can support local businesses but also create an attractive city centre that people will come back for frequent return visits. In the short term international tourism will be low, meaning we must act to provide reasons for local visitors to stay, linger and shop.

Residential Properties

Noticing gaps within neighbourhoods will allow us to strategically infill to enhance and build upon existing communities.

Public Destinations

Highlighting existing and potential public areas will show where new commercial and economic interventions will succeed most.

Urban Quality

Businesses not only exist within a building but also within spaces. Understanding and building on the public realm will enhance the quality of these areas.
7 Utilise existing assets (gap sites).
We consider how we can utilise gap sites and vacant buildings to provide new units for local businesses where possible. We look to how these gap sites can connect spatially and socially, weaving the city centre together. Short term economically viable interventions will need to be the catalyst for long term changes as the city emerges from the current challenges.

**Vacant/Under Utilised Sites**

There are many brownfield and vacant sites throughout the city which can be regenerated bringing life and density to the centre.

**Vacant Buildings**

Some buildings within the city remain vacant and are now at risk. These provide unique opportunities to bring character to the centre.

**Limit Green Belt Expansion**

By focusing on brownfield, urban sites we will prevent the need to expand in green belt locations, limiting urban sprawl.
Vision Themes

As part of the process we generated Vision Themes which are generated from our principles and goals into urban settings to which we can develop interventions. Although each intervention may lean towards a certain theme they may relate to the other themes also. The three themes are: Inner City Living, Social Spaces and Resilience & Adaptability.

The theme of Inner City Living focuses on generating neighbourhoods. Looking at promoting urban living as an affordable, inclusive and diverse opportunity.

The theme of Social Spaces explores connectivity of people through social interaction. Health and Wellbeing of people is at the centre of this theme.

The theme of Resilience & Adaptability focuses on the longevity of the city. Creating a new identity for the city, whilst also promoting a local circular economy.
“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

Jane Jacobs
CREATIVE & INVENTIVE (PLAN)
An Integrated 2040 Vision

We propose an integrated vision for Perth in 2040 by reconnecting communities for living, culture and nature at the crossroads of Scotland.

Our vision includes 20 sub-projects (10 Architecture MArch + Urban Planning & 10 MSc Spatial Planning with Sustainable Urban Design). While there are diverse interventions, some projects overlap providing alternative options for sites.

These projects are united by shared principles. We seek a Perth that supports sustainability, fosters a local circular economy, prioritises public space - pedestrian bias, encourage healthier lifestyles, is inclusive, inviting, accessible, sustains and develops culture and identity, and is flexible and resilient.
City Campus

Proposed by Hannah Nathan

The significance of universities in urban and social development is undeniable. The configuration of a university campus has a direct impact on its relationship with a city: either linking or isolating it from the wider urban environment. With changing approaches to the way education is delivered, the physical character of the campus and the need for specific buildings can be questioned. Using the City of Perth as a case study, this project explores the possibility of diffusing Perth College UHI across the historic city centre by occupying vacant buildings and underutilised sites. The research discusses the various roles of the university, the benefits of an integrated institution and how the changing form of the campus may contribute to urban regeneration. The proposal aims to strengthen Perth as a place to study, work and socialise by dissolving social barriers between students and residents and the physical distinction between the campus and the community.
The integration of Perth College UHI across the city centre is supported through cooperation with peer projects in the group masterplan.

1. Introducing ecosystem services throughout the city beginning at Mill Street. (Jordan Burne)
2. A community centre for youth development. (Kirsty Watt)
3. Re-prioritising the street hierarchy around Murray Square, creation of a formal space outside the conference centre, cycle park and cycle network. (Sarah McKenzie)
4. Re-instating Meal Vennel and St. John’s Square. (Jodie Walker)
5. Proposed pedestrian bridge connecting Perth city centre with Bridgend and Kinnoull Hill. (Mohammed Lawal)
6. Re-purposing an existing multi-storey to create a Centre of Health & Wellbeing. (Cheyanne Laviere)
7. Area for economic development and live/work units. (Callum O'Connor)
8. Combining Perth train and bus station to form a transportation hub and a rail high line. (Callum O'Connor)
Community Corridor

Proposed by Joshua Speedie

This project proposes a pedestrian prioritised corridor through the city centre. A safe, clear and convenient path from the train station towards the city centre is made possible through an incremental conversion of car parking and select streets into usable green and blue public spaces. Increased lighting, public art and a infusion of green elements soften the urban landscape to invite residents and visitors to enjoy the city.
Pomarium Neighbourhood

Proposed by Alistair Battles

Perth’s Pomarium Street flats are an example of a post war estate which has fallen into disrepair, with the surrounding context emphasising their isolation and detachment from the city centre. The Pomarium Estate is to be used as a case study to explore the key elements of estate regeneration, looking not only at the buildings themselves to solve the issue, but the context which they reside in.

This project explores how ‘typical’ 1960’s council multi-storeys can be reintegrated into the city’s fabric, to create a liveable, legible neighbourhood. Utilising a variety of contextual elements this design aims to create a new vibrant neighbourhood which is distinctively local to Perth.
Contemporary Community

*Proposed by Kirsty Watt*

How can physical space support social interaction? How can this be integrated within modern cities in order for them to evolve into safe and inviting community spaces? There are a series of gap sites and backlands within Perth, providing a real opportunity for these secondary spaces to be utilised in a way that provides a community infrastructure, whilst enhancing the existing spatial quality. Some of these backlands contain a lot of vacant and underused buildings, which can be used or replaced to encourage the “eyes on the street” (Jane Jacobs) to create more safe and inclusive environments. The subsequent intervention proposal will compliment the utilisation of existing spaces to form a contemporary community within the urban block.
Inclusive Embedded Neighbourhoods

Proposed by Liam Cox

This project uses the Perth as a case study to investigate how we can create quality, inclusive urban neighborhoods by challenging the use of ‘unusable’ brownfield sites. Focusing on the Watergate area, the project has been designed to explore the way in which two small interventions of high quality housing and flexible communal spaces can help to grow new and existing communities, as well as the knock on effects this could have to the city of Perth as whole.
Challenging the use of 'unusable' brownfield sites
Illustration by Liam Cox MArch + Urban Planning
Historic Core

Proposed by Jodie Walker

The themes of legibility and permeability, urban form and public space are explored through the removal of the existing shopping centre in Perth. Alongside this, the application of the historic street structure and urban form within the same space sets new parameters to create a more walkable, pedestrian orientated city block. The proposal investigates ideas relating to both private, public and civic space with the aim being to strengthen the relationship with the surrounding context and to revitalise public space within the historic core.
Lade Echo

Proposed by Zhenrong Zhu

This project proposes a reintroduction of water elements along the route of the old town lade. The project will deliver an all-season attractive route which creates a buzz of activity through the city all day & night.

By reintroducing the lade this allows blue and green ecology to form a corridor through the city. This allows visitors and residents access to public green spaces.
eCo-living

Proposed by Jordan Burne

Using Perth as the backdrop for this investigation, I aim to demonstrate how the quality of both the public realm and inner-city life can be improved with the integration of ecological systems into the existing urban context. In doing so, the study will develop a framework to create self-sustaining neighbourhoods, utilising local resources to develop a symbiotic relationship between the new and existing to create a scalable model.

The proposal is located on Mill Street at the heart of the cultural centre of the city. The water course flowing beneath the street and the excess of car parks at the back ends of the buildings provide the opportunity for careful intervention to create a lively community that knits into the urban context. By re-opening the Town’s Lade and greening the street, the cultural elements of Perth are linked by a bio-diverse corridor that entices people to visit and remain in the space.

Green and blue infrastructure improves the quality of space and is known to benefit the health and well-being of residents, increase footfall and improve the community’s resilience in this time of climate emergency. The project includes a mixed-use project as well as a green community that promotes an “eCo-living” lifestyle. These include green planted roofs, urban farms, renewable energy sources and water recycling to minimise their environmental impact. The goal is to set an example for environmentally conscious architectural and urban planning practice moving forward.
Waterfront

Proposed by Xinghua Huang

This project proposes activating the vitality of the waterfront. A soft green belt could increase the attraction and hygroscopicity of landscape, which helps to adsorb surface water, easing the risk of flooding.

Meanwhile the vibrant activities centered along the river’s edge will highlight this key natural asset. Making this key route accessible and distinctive will help reaffirm Perth’s identity on the River Tay’s edge. This aims to stimulate and connect with the projects and main artery streets, so that the lively atmosphere penetrates into the city centre.
Infrastructure & Landscape

Proposed by Mohammed Lawal

As we are in the midst of a pandemic, the importance of health and well-being is amplified. This project explores how nature, community and active travel benefits the health and wellbeing of people. The project is applied to the context of Perth. Perth is synonymous with the term landscape. However, the city is one of fragmented places and dwindling communities. This project looks at addressing these issues through the development of infrastructure and landscape proposals to create a more unified place. Along with this, reinforcing the city’s connection to its wider landscape context.
Pocketparks

Proposed by Keyu Chen

This project proposes a pocketparks throughout the city centre to enhance the quality of the public realm. This proposal suggests introducing green elements and seating in underutilised locations throughout the city centre.
Murray Square

Proposed by Sarah McKenzie

Murray Square is a place which encourages social interaction and “play” for people of all ages, interests, and abilities. Having such a vibrant and flexible space within Perth gives a sense of ownership, pride, and identity to the city. This is done by creating three unique pavilions which connect to an exciting, inviting, and accessible square. Each pavilion links back to Murray Square and creates a connection to the wider city. All three of the pavilions have their own identity but are still clearly connected through their materials. These have been carefully selected to show off Perth’s unique identity of being surrounded by natural landscaping and to show off traditional building methods. Murray Square shows how a successful public space in Scotland should be and how we can encourage social connections through design.
Welcome Gate

Proposed by Yi Cao

The Welcome Gate reimagines the entrance to Perth from the train station. Enhancing the public realm by providing a well-structured green door mat to the City Centre. The current situation is a let down from the vista received while crossing the bridge as car parking dominates the space. Utilising green elements creates a more friendly and inviting space whilst promoting ecology and public space within the urban centre.
Creative Commons

Proposed by Callum O’Connor

The proposal focuses on the redevelopment of one of Perth’s disused railway lines into a new urban corridor. This will be followed by the development of several sites along the new route, establishing a diverse creative community. This will be achieved through a vision-driven strategy that enables ‘collaborators’ to contribute through a self-build framework. The project plans to attract young professionals and entrepreneurs from across multiple disciplines, from traditional arts to tech and engineering. The Perth Creative Commons proposal is presented in the form of a website that acts as a development tool as well as a hub for the community. The website allows the user to explore the neighborhood and zoom in on areas of interest.

You can view the full presentation at: callumoc.com/perthcreativecommons
Street Enhancement

Proposed by Tak Tin Lee

This project proposes street enhancements throughout central Perth and strategically connecting the city centre to outer communities. The proposal suggests the creation of sub-centres outside the city centre to ease traffic burden on the city centre, while also creating a more pedestrian friendly historic core. Non-motorised transport is prioritised in order to create a pedestrian bias centre.
Pedestrian Network

Proposed by Xiaotian Xu

This project focuses on creating a network of routes throughout the city centre which prioritises the pedestrian. Altering selected roads to become more inviting and bike friendly. The new cycle routes become a safe alternative to individual, private car transport. Green elements are introduced to offset the hard landscaping of the city core.
Art Attraction

Proposed by Yunge Zhang

This project proposes utilizing temporary and permanent art installations to enhance the public realm. Street art is used as a device to improve the quality of the streets and spaces, which is a technique used to encourage people to walk more throughout the city. The network of art will relate to the existing interventions by the local authority.
Canal Street

Proposed by Cheyenne Laviniere

Canal Street is a repurposed multi-storey car park aimed to support wellbeing for all demographics. This project is set to express the radical side of what is possible requiring huge investment with a return which is not easily measured. The project is not a one size fits all but with its utopian nature will explore the potential of the most unpromising redundant structures. Canal Street will offer a new framework for city experience stimulating emotional awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing prioritised over the health and growth of the city’s economy. Through the success of this project, it is hoped for policies of future structures to ensure the infrastructure can serve a second life providing local sustainability, flexibility, comfort, togetherness, intimate warmth and mental clarity.
Unscaled section through Perth as an indication of the ‘liveable city’ vision.

MArch + UP Unit.
Unscaled section through Perth as an indication of the 'Liveable City' vision.

MArch+UP Unit.
“You have to design your streets for everyone. The cities that have safe streets, that are easy to get around, are the ones that will grow and thrive in the 21st century.”

Janette Sadik-Khan
Stages & Delivery

Working together, council, charities, local community associations and artists in the ‘Perthshire Creates’ network need to be a catalyst for the physical, economic and social healing that Perth will need to become a healthy and prosperous city. Quick, affordable, and flexible interventions by a collection of groups need to help drive change to support local businesses as Perth begins to recover in uncertain economic times.

When possible, some of the proposals suggested temporary measures to generate ‘quick wins’ and demonstrate new ways to use the urban space.

Temporary Vennel Installation showing how easy small urban spaces can be easily transformed by Cheyenne Laviniere (MArch + UP)
# Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2020 - 2025</th>
<th>2026 - 2030</th>
<th>2031 - 2040</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1 (year 1 - 5)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Road painting with colourful art.</td>
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<td>Temporary event programming.</td>
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<td>Establishment of parklets and temporary green.</td>
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<td>Temporary street furniture.</td>
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<td>Improve cycling infrastructure (temporary &amp; permanent).</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 2 (year 6 - 10)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laying permanent floor tiles to prioritise pedestrians.</td>
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<td>Reintroducing water elements on Mill Street.</td>
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<td>Planting of new trees in strategic locations.</td>
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<td>Depaving of bus station car park.</td>
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<td>Pedestrianisation of Hospital Street.</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 3 (year 11 - 15)</strong></td>
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<td>Water plaza in front of Perth Concert Hall.</td>
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<td>Housing expo for potential housing development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tay Street transformed into pedestrian zone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continued street enhancements in city centre.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programming of vacant sites.</td>
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Conclusion

In the culmination of the courses, the students aimed to deliver well-justified proposals and interventions that contextualized their projects within an urban planning framework. Each project drew on, and learned from, international examples and spatial practices, detailed analysis of local conditions, and in-depth appreciation of the specific context and opportunities of the local site details.

The various interventions included considering the re-use of existing buildings, parking facilities, cultural assets, streets and public spaces to deliver housing, creative industry, businesses and services - all mutually connected to build up a cumulative impact upon the wider city of Perth. The final design-led proposals illustrated interventions on site but also took into account how the design proposal would have implications for areas beyond the site understanding the ‘short, medium and long term’.

This project challenged the group of students to simultaneously think about both the shared 2040 Vision for Perth, but critically how their individual project fits within both the shared vision and other individual projects. Students overcame disciplinary silos to successfully articulate a vision for a sustainable Perth.

The transdisciplinary approach to learning and working in partnership has led to a wide range of intervention ideas to support aspirational conversations with the council and the community for this pivotal, historic city centre. The journey for Perth will continue into 20/21 with existing and new students building on this vision with Perth and Kinross Council.
Perth city centre as a living urban design laboratory

Twitter: @uodarchup
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