

Cowgate Street Design Project



Street Design & Community Links

Background

Between 2014 - 2016 Sustrans Scotland and East Dunbartonshire Council worked with local people, businesses and representative groups to develop concept designs for the Cowgate, Kirkintilloch.

The project was delivered in 2017 with financial support from Sustrans' Community Links programme.

Masterplan

A masterplan process undertaken by the council in 2011 identified opportunities to improve the economic performance, create a more distinct identity for the town and improve accessibility.

Objectives

Create an inclusive space that is easy to walk and cycle through and spend time in.

Rebalance the street by giving greater priority to walking and cycling and social uses over vehicles.

Deliver a high quality streetscape that enables Kirkintilloch town centre to thrive.

Engagement

Activities and events were held to gather information, develop and showcase the designs and champion the project. This included:

- Drop in events held in a vacant retail unit on the Cowgate.
- Attending local events to showcase design proposals.
- Running workshops with local primary schools.
- Set up of a 'Champions Group' with representatives from local businesses, special interest groups and elected members.



Above: Drop in event, December 2015

Designing for inclusivity

Three 'Equality Design Forum' events were held with representatives of groups for people with sensory and/or physical impairments. These events were an opportunity to review the detailing of the scheme, including:

- Paving materials
- Kerb heights
- Pedestrian crossing types
- Tactile and tonal contrast of materials
- Street furniture
- Signage



Above: Equality Design Forum, June 2015

Shared Space debate

The project was linked to a wider debate on the concept of 'shared space'; appearing regularly in the local paper and featuring on national press, tv and radio.

Initial campaigns focussed on the plan to remove pedestrian crossings at the junction of Catherine Street/Cowgate.

It was argued that these proposals would disadvantage people with disabilities. Two crossings were retained in the final design.

Campaigns against the scheme led to the submission of a petition for a 'Moratorium on Shared Space' to the Scottish Government in January 2016.

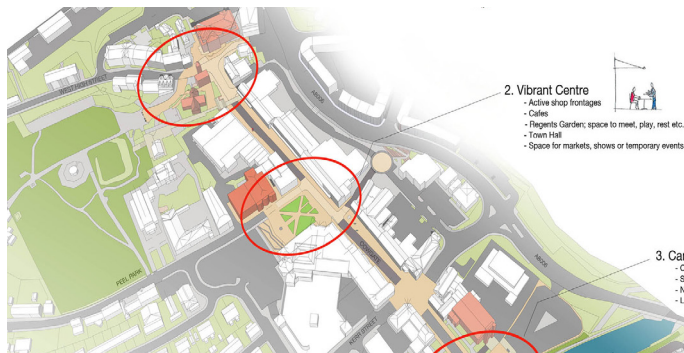
Street trial

Designs for the Catherine Street junction were trialed in August 2014. The aim was to show that greater pedestrian priority and slower vehicle speeds could be achieved by reducing barriers and creating driver uncertainty.

The trial had a lot of attention featuring heavily in the local press.



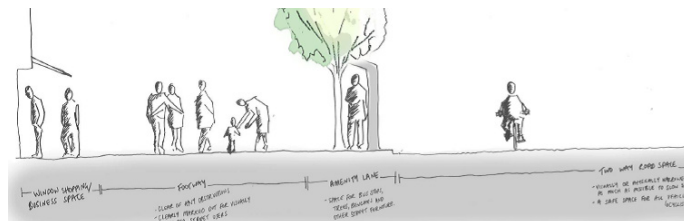
Design process & outcomes



1. Initial concept proposals



After: Main carriageway narrowed, street clutter rationalised & new lighting.



2. Plan for dividing up the street



After: Footway repaved & divided into a pedestrian zone and a clutter/utility zone.



3. Catherine Street jnct visualisation



After: Catherine Street jnct narrowed and two pedestrian crossings removed.



4. Auld Kirk area visualisation

Project outcomes

Analysis of baseline & post works data by Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit highlights some significant positive changes following the projects completion:



Changes in travel mode (retail survey respondents)

7% decrease in travel to the area by car/van. 6% increase in people cycling, 5% increase in people taking the bus to Cowgate. Bases: Pre n=123, post n=119



Pedestrian priority (video analysis of Catherine Street)

33% reduction in the number of pedestrians who waited before crossing the road after the development (63% dropping to 27%). Total pedestrians: before 2950, after 4269



Vehicle yielding (video analysis of Catherine Street)

71% of vehicles interacting with pedestrians slowed down or stopped to allow them to cross at the Catherine St junction. 29% of vehicles do not yield to pedestrians looking to cross the junction. Base: n=1024



Retail vitality (survey with retailers)

6% more shopping trips were made to Cowgate after development. Average number of monthly visits increased from nine to ten; however customer expenditure decreased. Bases: Pre n=123, Post n=169



Vehicle speeds and volumes (automatic counters)

Significant reduction in vehicle flow and speed, mean and 85th percentile speeds decreasing by 28% and 23% respectively after the development, vehicle flow decreasing by 33%.

Funding

Total project costs was £3.2 million. The project was jointly funded by East Dunbartonshire Council and Sustrans Scotland with support from Strathclyde Passenger Transport.

Sustrans is a leading UK charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. If you would like to know more about Street Design & Community Links or any other aspect of our work please get in touch.

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