A new vision for Glasgow Golden Z Youth Event Report

February 2023

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1   Introduction

In November 2022, Glasgow City Council appointed a Glasgow-based consultant team comprising Stantec, Threesixty Architecture and Kevin Murray Associates (KMA), to work with a range of stakeholders in the production of a new Vision and Plan for Glasgow City Centre's retail core of Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street and Argyle Street - currently defined as the 'Golden Z'.

As a part of engaging with the community, Kevin Murray Associates hosted a youth workshop day on the 18th of January 2023, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm at The Lighthouse. The students were from the Enhanced Vocational Inclusion Programme (EVIP), a programme through Glasgow Clyde College that offers young people an alternative to mainstream secondary school education. Glasgow City Council and youth group leaders were also present during this session. This collaboration with EVIP students allowed for a wider scope of understanding about how youth perceive and use the retail core and the wider city centre area.

A certificate of participation was prepared for the student and will be distributed during their event in June.

2   Tasks

Presentation & Feedback

Kevin Murray, Director of KMA, facilitated the event by beginning with a briefing presentation (full presentation in Appendix 1) to give the students background on Glasgow City Centre Golden Z and what our brief entailed. During the presentation, Kevin asked the students *"If Glasgow's Golden Z was a colour, what colour would it be and why?"*

The colours stated were:
- Grey
- Black
- Brown

With their justification being that Glasgow is:
- Dull
- Grungy
- Uncared for
- Dirty

3   Group Session

Similar to the other Golden Z workshops, the students were organised into three groups to discuss their perceptions of Glasgow City Centre, its challenges, and their ideas for the future. From the discussions emerged key themes and suggestions that can be applied to the Golden Z Vision. During the event, students used maps to denote places of arrival (blue), positive places (green), negative places (red), and places for what they would like to see (yellow) in the city centre.

Group 1
Facilitator: Emma Churchyard

Group 1 identified a number of locations for each key theme, which can be seen on their map above. However, in their headline feedback, they stated the following places as the major ones within each theme.

Key arrival sites (blue):
- Sauchiehall Street
- 4 Corners/Argyle Street
- East End/Trongate

Key positive places (green):
- Primark
- Zara
- Bus station
- George Square
- Cineworld
- Princes Square

Key negative places (red):
- Sauchiehall Street
- Clydeside and Clyde bridges
- The GOMA
- Alleyways near Queen Street Station
- Union Street

Group 2
Facilitator: Iain MacPherson

Group 2 identified a number of locations for each key theme, which can be seen on their map above. However, in their feedback, they stated the following places as the major ones within each theme.

Key arrival sites (blue):
- Central Station
- St Enoch bus stops
- Buchanan Bus Station

Key positive places (green):
- St Enoch
- Princes Square
- GOMA
- Ingram Street
- Cinema
- Snooker Hall

Key negative places (red):
- Clydeside and Clyde bridges
- St Enoch
- GOMA
- Trongate
- Glasgow Green
- High Street
- Sauchiehall Street

Group 3
Facilitator: Rim Chouaib

Group 3 identified a number of locations for each key theme, which can be seen on their map above. However, in their feedback, they stated the following places as the major ones within each theme.

Key arrival sites (blue):
- St Enoch Subway Station
- Queen Street Station
- Barras

Key positive places (green):
- Buchanan Street Subway
- University Garden
- Merchant City
- Mural on the stairs

Key negative places (red):
- GOMA
- Car parks
- Barras
- Trongate
- Primark Sauchiehall
- Argyle Street
- Four Corners
- Union Street

4   Group Session Feedback

Following explaining their key place identifiers, the groups were asked to provide their top 5 ideas for Glasgow's future.

Group 1:
- More soft play space
- More accessible transport
- Some interactive leisure & activities (such as Madame Tussaud's, etc.)
- Sheltered spaces from the weather
- Improved and safer streets

Group 2:
- Youth festival in George Square
- Comedy places
- Water park
- Youth sports bar
- Better places that aren't fast food

Group 3:
- Safe place for intro-venous drug use
- More accessible city
- More greenspace
- Safe space for kids to chill
- Free bike rental for longer time

With these ideas presented, Kevin then asked the students to consider the future ideas, and *"if the proposed ideas came to fruition, what colour would Glasgow be?"*

- Turquoise and Magenta
- Green, White, and Blue
- Green, Yellow, and Pink

The colours brought up a discussion around creating a vibrant, young, and inclusive city. One where there is a wide variety of affordable activities for kids and young people, a plethora of street art and murals, consistent events and entertainment, and a safer, cleaner, more beautiful streetscape. The difference in the grey, black, and brown colours associated with the current version of Glasgow at the beginning of the Youth Session and the bright colours associated with the potential future of Glasgow demonstrate that the students are part of a group that want a significant change in not only the physical aspect of the city, but also a change in attitude and perception.

5   Conclusion

The feedback from the students highlights the need for a future Vision of the Golden Z as it is currently seen as an unwelcoming, unsafe, unclean place with little for young people to do and few ways for them to get around the city easily. Much of their complaints surrounded their perception of the city, as many said they avoid coming into the centre altogether and prefer going to Silverburn or Braehead shopping centres as it is easier to get to and has shelter from poor weather.

The students made it clear through the presentation of their ideas that Glasgow's vision should include more affordable and accessible activities and events for people of all ages to partake in. Their biggest desire to bring out-of-town youth into the city was to create more leisure that can is fun, affordable, and available no matter the weather/climate. However, it was also made clear throughout discussions with them that there are too many vacant areas prone to antisocial behaviour and there could be improvements made in the beautification of the city, including art, murals, a use of better street materials, and greenspace.

The priority of spaces to change include better public realm design around:
- Clydeside – particularly around the bridges and in the amphitheatre space, creating a stronger link to the river as a whole and making it a safe place to be at night
- GOMA – improvements with greening and making the space feel greener and more welcoming, as it is viewed as a key spot for antisocial behaviour
- Sauchiehall Street – Improvements on streetscape and safety at night
- Queen Street Station and George Square – particularly the alleys and lanes surrounding the area, which are dark and are places for drug and alcohol abuse during the day and at night

Lastly, the students had a desire for transport to be better, more frequent, and completely accessible. As many of them don't live within the city, the current state of public transport limited their ability to get in and out of the city, only making trips to the centre for essentials.
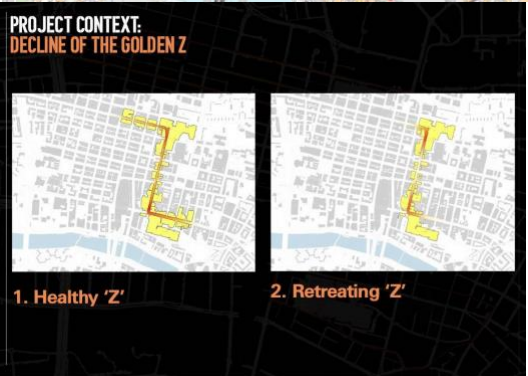
Appendix 1 – Presentation

GLASGOW CITY CENTRE:
COMPETING RETAIL AND LEISURE OFFERS

Braehead

Glasgow Fort

Glasgow City Centre

Silverburn

Online Retail

GLASGOW CITY CENTRE:
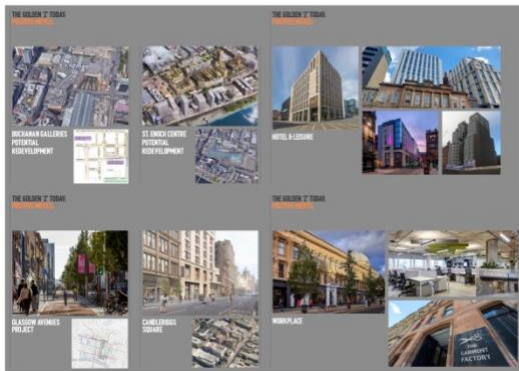MORE THAN RETAIL

An International City
- Organisations, investors and visitors
- Scotland's largest city

A Metropolitan City
- 7 surrounding local authority areas

An Everyday City
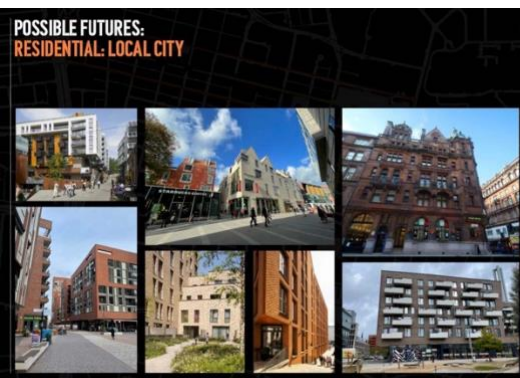- Residents, workers, businesses, visitors
- Our lived experience

PEOPLE
make
PLACES

QUESTIONS?

Stantec   Threesixty Architecture

Current use of City Centre Golden Z

1. Where do you **arrive** into the centre?

2. What are the **positive** places?
   Where you like to visit

3. What are the **negative** places?
   Where you avoid, unsafe, etc

POSSIBLE FUTURES:
DIVERSE / RETAIL: SHOPPING CITY

POSSIBLE FUTURES:
CULTURAL, LEISURE, TOURISM: INTERNATIONAL CITY

POSSIBLE FUTURES:
RESIDENTIAL: LOCAL CITY

POSSIBLE FUTURES:
WORKING AND LEARNING: PRODUCTIVE CITY

POSSIBLE FUTURES:
PLACE, IDENTITY AND HERITAGE: DISTINCTIVE CITY

POSSIBLE FUTURES:
SUSTAINABILITY AND NET ZERO: GREEN CITY

POSSIBLE FUTURES:
INCLUSIVE – AGE / DISABILITY / FAMILY: PEOPLE CITY

POSSIBLE FUTURES:
NIGHTTIME, 24 HOURS CITY, ECONOMY: BUZZING CITY, LIVELY CITY

Future Use of City Centre Golden Z

4. What's missing? What would you like to see added to the city centre? Where?

5. How do you make it a place for:
- Families
- Older people
- Disabled people
- Young people

In your future vision, what **colour** would Glasgow's Golden Z be?

Thank you