

Amman Southern Gate Multi-Use Project (C40 Students Reinventing Cities 2024/25)

From Movement to Belonging — A Path for All
Haru's Group



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Amman Southern Gate Multi-Use Project

1. Introduction & Site Context

The Amman Southern Gate Multi-Use Project reimagines the Kherbet Al-Souk District as a sustainable, inclusive, and climate-adaptive urban neighborhood at the threshold between historic Amman and its southern urban expansion. Located on the city's fringe, this site acts as a gateway—both geographically and socially—between long-established urban zones and newer, developing districts. Kherbet Al-Souk today faces the pressures of rapid urbanization, spatial fragmentation, and a lack of accessible public spaces.

Despite its strategic location, the site is characterized by poor pedestrian infrastructure, disconnected land uses, and vehicular dominance, which hinder social interaction and environmental performance. Kherbet Al-Souk presents wide asphalted roads, underutilized parcels, and minimal greenery. This makes it both a challenge and an opportunity: a space ready to be reclaimed as a thriving urban corridor that bridges movement, identity, and climate action.

Our project vision, “From Movement to Belonging — A Path for All,” positions this transformation around a central green spine that prioritizes car-free circulation, biodiversity, and inclusive social spaces. The spine connects key public, commercial, and residential functions while acting as a climate and community infrastructure. By stitching fragmented urban fabric into a cohesive, accessible, and resilient neighborhood, the project offers a replicable model for climate-forward development at the edges of rapidly growing cities like Amman.

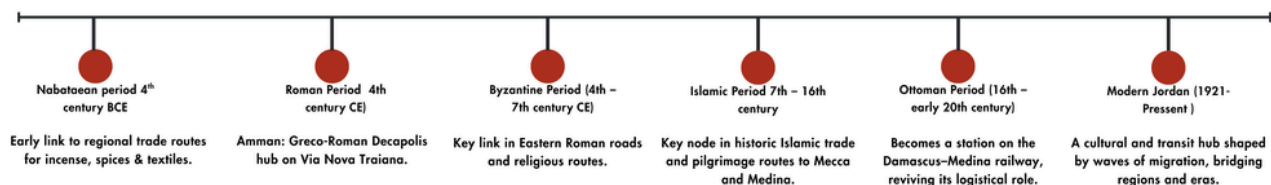
This document presents the urban design approach, sustainability strategies, and social benefits envisioned for the Amman Southern Gate. Grounded in the local context and aligned with C40's 10 Principles for a Green and Thriving Neighbourhood, the proposal illustrates how a once transitional edge can become a resilient, people-centered node for southern Amman.

This transformation seeks to not only redefine the space but also reconnect it with its historical roots and future potential.

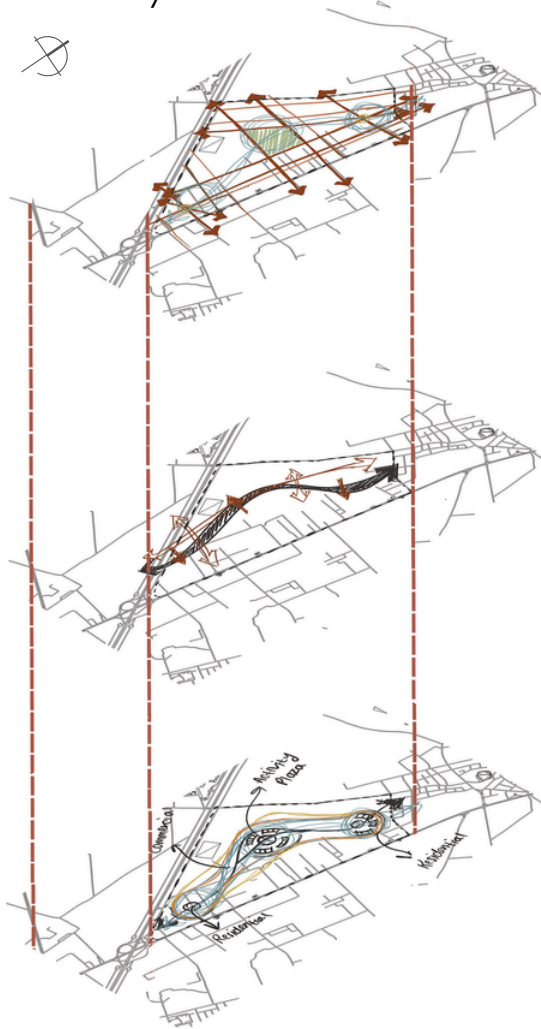
2. Site Challenges & Design Strategy

The site of Kherbet Al-Souk, though well-located along Amman's southern edge, suffers from fragmented road networks, a lack of public green spaces, and urban sprawl pressures. The rapid expansion of the city has left areas like this disconnected from surrounding infrastructure and lacking a clear identity. Most movement within the site depends on vehicles, with little to no provision for safe pedestrian circulation.

In response, our design proposes a human-centered redevelopment that restructures the neighborhood around a central green spine. Inspired by the historical 'Darb Al-Hajj' route — once a vital cultural and economic corridor —



Our plan transforms the area into a new form of urban pilgrimage: a path of life, connectivity, and sustainability.



Integrating Existing Streets into the Site

The first diagram illustrates how the design process began by extending existing street networks from the surrounding urban fabric into the project site. These external roads, which had previously bypassed the area, were continued inward to establish a new internal grid. This approach ensured that the project would remain connected to its broader urban context and transportation infrastructure. It also laid the groundwork for defining circulation hierarchies and framing new spatial relationships between built and open areas.

Formation of the Main Spine

In the second diagram, the design transitions from a grid to a more fluid central spine. This primary path emerged as a direct response to the site's elongated shape and the alignment of key access points. It serves as the organizing axis of the proposal—prioritizing pedestrian and non-motorized movement. The spine is designed to unify the site through continuity and to encourage activity along its edges. This gesture transforms the spine into both a circulation corridor and a civic space.

Establishment of Critical Nodes

The final diagram demonstrates how intersections along the spine were developed into critical urban nodes. These nodes act as key moments of interaction, each with a distinct identity and function. Three primary nodes were formed: a cultural amphitheater in the north, a recreational central park in the middle, and a water-focused cultural area in the south. Together, they support diverse programs while activating the linear space. Their placement and scale were directly informed by the spatial logic of the spine and the directional flows established earlier in the design process.

This spine forms the heart of the proposal, guiding land use, circulation, and activity along its route while forming intersections that generate three distinct urban nodes:

a northern amphitheater zone for public gatherings, a central green park as a recreational core, and a southern cultural and water-based zone where rainwater is harvested and stored as a feature lake.



Master plan



3. Mobility & Access

Our approach to mobility eliminates internal vehicular traffic in the green spine and redistributes movement through edge vehicular routes, creating a walkable and breathable urban core. Four main pedestrian entries are anchored at existing bus stops and public transit nodes. These entrances are designed as open-air commercial gateways — not walled or gated — encouraging public flow and activity.



Accessibility Plan

The tram line is 4,296 meters long and includes four main stations located at each entrance of the site. Bicycle and electric mobility hubs are placed beside each gate to support active and sustainable transportation.

This approach encourages active transportation and contributes to reduced emissions and a more vibrant street life.

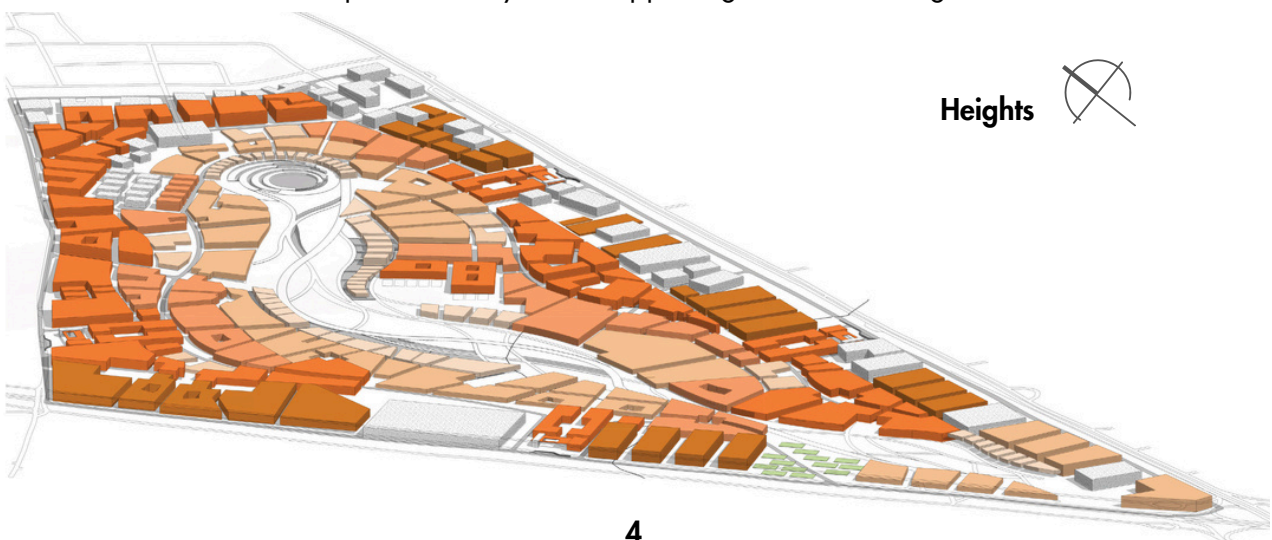
4. Land Use & Built Form

The land use strategy divides the site into mixed-function clusters that support residential life, commercial activity, and cultural experiences. The tallest buildings (up to 18 meters) frame the external edges of the site along Airport Road and Madaba Street, hosting retail, offices, and services. Toward the center, residential buildings and service nodes are arranged around the green spine.



Building heights transition gradually from outer to inner zones, providing privacy and enhanced views to the park. Green rooftops and shaded corridors further support environmental goals.

These decisions reinforce spatial identity while supporting flexible urban growth.

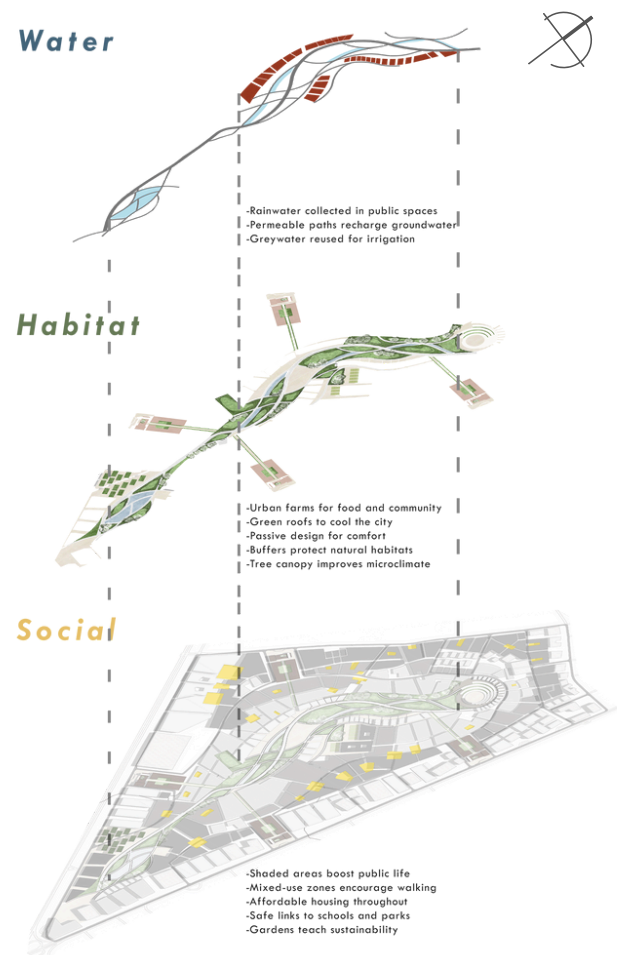


5. Sustainability Strategies

The project integrates layered environmental strategies to respond to climate challenges while creating resilient public spaces. Local plant species requiring minimal irrigation will be selected to reduce water consumption and support native biodiversity. The central green spine extends over approximately 255,275 m² and includes shaded walkways, eco-zones, and public gardens.

Urban agriculture plots are placed in the southern cultural node, allowing residents to engage in food production and community-based farming. Green roofs are used both to reduce urban heat island effect and to enhance visual appeal and privacy for residents. Passive design measures and natural ventilation strategies were considered in the form, orientation, and envelope of buildings to reduce energy demands.

Collectively, these measures ensure a high-performing, climate-conscious environment.



Community & Social Integration

Social sustainability is central to the design. The project creates diverse, inclusive spaces that foster community interaction and well-being. The amphitheater in the north serves as a cultural platform for events and local gatherings. The central park encourages everyday recreation, while the southern cultural node hosts museums, libraries, and creative studios around the lake.

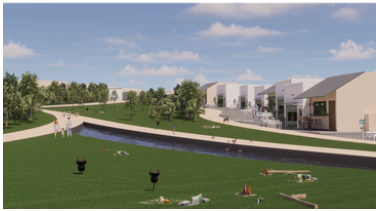
Additionally, the residential lands are organized so that each group of housing units forms a neighborhood cluster with shared plazas. These open spaces are designed to foster daily interaction, enhance community ties, and support a sense of belonging among residents. In addition to Key facilities along the neighborhoods that include mosques, clinics, and daily shops dispersed to ensure walkable access across the district.

All public areas are designed to be wheelchair accessible, with ramps and even ground levels implemented throughout the site. Although the area is currently uninhabited, community needs were projected through extensive research into similar demographics and regional planning trends.

Community well-being is central to every aspect of the spatial configuration.

Public Realm & Landscape Design

The landscape design emphasizes visual continuity, layered views, and functional diversity. Each node within the green spine has its unique spatial character, but remains visually and physically connected to the broader park system.



Key landscape elements include: shaded plazas, seating terraces, play areas, community gardens, and event spaces. Locally sourced materials, such as natural Jordanian stone and permeable pavement, are used throughout the site. These selections promote water infiltration and reduce the heat island effect while preserving local architectural identity.

Public space is treated not as residual land but as primary civic infrastructure.

Environmental & Social Impact

The project's environmental impact is significant. A permanent artificial lake in the cultural zone retains rainwater collected from bioswales across the site, contributing to long-term water resilience. Greywater reuse systems are implemented in residential buildings for irrigation purposes, reducing freshwater consumption.

Socially, the project redefines urban edges as inclusive spaces. It fosters safe, accessible, and engaging environments that restore public life, connect fragmented communities, and promote healthy lifestyles. Its spatial and functional diversity offers a replicable framework for equitable urban development. By embedding both environmental and social logic, the project stands as a holistic urban model.

6. Replicability & Innovation

The Amman Southern Gate project offers a replicable model for transforming peri-urban zones in fast-growing cities. By combining culturally rooted design with modern sustainability practices, the project bridges tradition and innovation. Its linear park typology, decentralized nodes, and car-free core can be adapted across diverse geographic and social contexts.

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Its systems are not only sustainable but also culturally adaptive and context-aware.

7. Conclusion

Kherbet Al-Souk's transformation into the Amman Southern Gate represents a bold step toward a greener, more inclusive urban future. It respects history, prioritizes people, and reimagines infrastructure through the lens of sustainability. As cities around the world seek to realign with climate goals and community needs, this project offers a powerful narrative and practical roadmap for positive change.

It offers a direction for sustainable regeneration grounded in equity, ecology, and excellence.

