

Week 10 – Urban Conditions, Mobility Strategies, and Degrees of Intervention

Category: Uncategorized

written by s2814160 | 31 March 2026



This week, I began to test the viewing structure developed in previous weeks against real urban conditions. An exhibition strategy in public space cannot rely on a single route alone. It has to respond to differences in density, management, and circulation pressure across specific sites. What needed revision here was not the theme of the project, but the conditions under which the exhibition could actually operate in different parts of the city.

On that basis, I reworked the mobility strategy. Princes Street, the Royal Mile, and Waverley Bridge are all high-density sites, so these three points are now approached on foot only. This is because they are already shaped by heavy flows, high visibility, and strong commercial pressure. To insert the project back into the logic of public transport in these areas would place extra pressure on the bus system and, at the same time, weaken the project's critical position on spatial congestion. By contrast, lower-density areas such as Holyrood, Leith Walk, and Ocean Terminal can still retain Bus 35 as a linking method during off-peak hours. Data published by Lothian Buses in 2026 shows that annual passenger journeys reached 119 million, which makes it clear that the transport system is already carrying an extremely high level of everyday

movement. For that reason, limiting the project to the 10am–4pm off-peak period is not just a practical arrangement. It is also a methodological decision, intended to avoid reproducing the very pressure that the project is trying to expose.



Street view of the Royal Mile, documenting the high-density pedestrian environment of the city centre during route testing. Photograph by Hazel Ren, March 2026.



Street and tramline view of Leith Walk, documenting a lower-density urban condition and transport-linked route connection. Photograph by Hazel Ren, March 2026.



Bus 35 digital stop display, documenting route timing and off-peak public transport conditions during fieldwork. Photograph by Hazel Ren, March 2026.

This adjustment also made the role of mobility within the project more precise. It is no longer simply a matter of transporting viewers between sites. Different modes of movement become part of how urban difference is understood. Through this graded approach, walking in the city centre exposes the overlap between crowding, commercial frontages, and tourist circulation. In areas with slower rhythms and lower density, bus connections make it easier to recognize that urban space is not used as a uniform whole. In that sense, this strategy has something in common with the idea of the *manoeuvre* developed at Le Lieu in Quebec, where action is used to alter an existing relationship between publics and the site.

I also made the question of permission more specific. Earlier ideas about “guerrilla” intervention and formal application needed to be translated into a more workable model. According to the City of Edinburgh Council’s current *Public Space Guidance for Event Organizers* and the *Use of Public Spaces for Events and Filming Policy* approved in 2023, activities in public spaces are assessed in relation to crowd size, impact on movement, and pressure on site management. For my project, this means that intervention cannot be treated as one fixed method. Its visibility and intensity have to change depending on the conditions of each site. Lower-pressure locations such as Holyrood, Leith Walk, and Ocean Terminal can still support lighter, temporary interventions that remain close to ordinary use. That continues the low-intensity, guerrilla-style thinking I explored earlier. By contrast, high-density and tightly managed sites such as Princes Street, the Royal Mile, and Waverley Bridge require a more cautious strategy, based on walking, limited guidance, or, where necessary, preparation for formal permission.

Local precedents also support this reasoning. Since 2017, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society’s *Fringe Days Out* programme has offered free tickets and bus passes to local charities and

community groups, showing that transport support can widen access to the public. *Traveling Treasures*, meanwhile, suggests that the travel route itself can carry cultural narrative. For my project, the value of these examples lies in confirming that links between transport and cultural activity already exist in Edinburgh. Even so, whether transport should be used, and how, still has to be decided in relation to the conditions of each site.

References

City of Edinburgh Council. "Use of Public Spaces for Events and Filming Policy." October 5, 2023. <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s61901/Item%207.3%20-%20Use%20of%20Public%20Spaces%20for%20Events%20and%20Filming.pdf>.

City of Edinburgh Council. "Use of Public Spaces for Events and Filming: Final Report." May 11, 2023. https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s57266/8.3%20-%20Use%20of%20Public%20Spaces%20for%20Events%20and%20Filming_Final.pdf.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. "Fringe Days Out." Accessed April 16, 2026. <https://www.edfringe.com/experience/school-and-community-engagement/school-and-community-projects/fringe-days-out/>.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. "Fringe Days Out Returns in 2024 to Help Edinburgh Communities Engage with the Fringe." April 30, 2024. <https://www.edfringe.com/about-us/news-and-blog/fringe-days-out-returns-in-2024-to-help-edinburgh-communities-engage-with-the-fringe/>.

Le Lieu, centre en art actuel. *Manœuvres – Le Lieu, centre en*

art actuel. Edited by Richard Martel. Dijon: Les presses du réel, 1992. Accessed April 16, 2026. <https://www.lespressesdureel.com/EN/ouvrage.php?id=2298&menu=0>.

Lothian Buses. "Public Transport Use in the Capital Continues to Grow." January 9, 2026. <https://www.lothianbuses.com/news/2026/01/public-transport-use-in-the-capital-continues-to-grow/>.

Lothian Buses. "Lothian City Buses: Service 35." Accessed April 16, 2026. <https://www.lothianbuses.com/our-services/lothian-city-buses/>.