

Environmental Report

2025



Helsinki

Table of Contents

4	Address by the Deputy Mayor
6	Helsinki in a Nutshell
8	Introduction
10	Climate
11	Mitigating climate change
14	Traffic
19	Energy
26	Construction
28	Adaptation to climate change
34	Nature and habitats
35	Safeguarding biodiversity
39	Water protection
44	Soil protection
46	Air protection
50	Noise abatement
56	Resources and management
57	Circular economy
62	Responsible procurement
66	Environmental awareness and responsibility
70	Environmental management
76	Environmental economy

Address by the Deputy Mayor

My first year as Deputy Mayor for Urban Environment has been busy and full of learning. However, there is one thing that has become increasingly clear: Helsinki is committed to its responsibility to combat climate change and biodiversity loss.

In our new City Strategy, we have raised our emissions reduction target so that we are now aiming for an 85 per cent reduction in emissions from the 1990 level by 2030. We will achieve net zero emissions by 2040.

The greatest change and climate action we took last year was the conversion of the coal-fired Salmisaari heating plant into a pellet-fired heating plant and the completion of an electric boiler plant in the Salmisaari production area. These investments made it possible to phase out coal entirely.

The year 2025 was also important from the perspective of nature conservation. In Helsinki, we approved a new nature conservation programme, for which we selected 120 sites. The programme aims to increase the proportion accounted for by protected areas of the City's total land and marine areas to around ten per cent. The total area of the protected marine areas will increase up to tenfold.

In addition to major undertakings, we take actions that have a positive impact on the daily lives of Helsinki residents and that also help us prepare for and combat climate change. The City Strategy highlights preparedness for the impacts of climate change, and we are currently working hard on this at the City level.

As a children's rights lawyer, I believe that it is of the utmost importance that we pay even more attention to the restoration of the yards of daycare centres, schools and educational institutions closer to their natural state. Increasing the greenery and biodiversity of yards simultaneously supports children's physical activity and play, contact with nature, overall wellbeing, comfort, biodiversity and climate change adaptation. Today, new yards at daycare centres and schools and those to be renovated are designed so that they create a favourable microclimate and provide sufficient shade on hot summer days.

In healthcare and social welfare services, we take temperature conditions into account when designing new premises and we systematically install additional cooling systems in existing premises to safeguard the wellbeing of our most vulnerable clients in all weather conditions.

In the city centre area, we are once again working to improve our preparedness for heavy rainfall and potential flooding in order to prevent such situations from disrupting daily life.

In Helsinki, we are going to great efforts to protect our shared natural environment, and this is something that we can all be proud of and contribute to.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has participated in environmental work in Helsinki and reporting on it.

Johanna Laisaari

Deputy Mayor for Urban Environment



Helsinki in a Nutshell

Helsinki is the centre of a rapidly growing large metropolitan city area. Helsinki, together with the municipalities of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (Espoo, Vantaa, and Kauniainen) and ten neighbouring municipalities, forms an area with a population of over 1.6 million residents, which is referred to as the Helsinki region. As of 31 December 2025, Helsinki had a population of 694,392.

As of the end of 2025 the population density was 3,236.1 residents per land area square kilometre. The city of Helsinki's surface area is 715.47 km², of which 214.58 km² (30.0 %) is land, 0.84 km² is inland waters, and 500.05 km² sea waters.

From an environmental impact's perspective, the City of Helsinki is one of the most significant actors at a national scale. For instance, Helsinki serves as the largest public procurer in the country, with an annual procurement volume of around five billion euros. Helsinki accounts for approximately 3 percent of Finland's overall greenhouse gas emissions. The Viikinmäki wastewater treatment plant processes wastewater from approximately 900,000 people. Additionally, as Finland's largest employer, the City's activities carry significant environmental implications.

The Helsinki City Group comprises the following entities:

- The City of Helsinki as a parent entity (4 divisions, City Executive Office, Audit Department and 5 municipal enterprises).
- Subsidiary entities, i.e. organisations which are owned directly by the City (86 subsidiary organisations and 13 foundations).
- Associated entities, i.e. companies, foundations and joint municipal authorities in which the City has a 20–50 per cent ownership stake (3 holding companies, 35 associated companies and 3 joint municipal authorities).

At the end of 2025, the City employed 39,218 people.



Helsinki

Population: 694,392

Population density: 3,236.1 / km²

Surface area: 715.47 km²



Introduction

[The Helsinki City Strategy](#) and [the City of Helsinki's Environmental Protection Targets 2040](#) are paving the way towards a more ecologically sustainable Helsinki. The Environmental Protection Targets establish the vision for environmental protection and set medium-term targets that are essential for the consistent implementation of environmental protection.

The annually published Environmental Report recounts the progress made towards the Environmental Protection Targets and presents an account of the impact of the City's activities on the environment. The report also examines the indicators for the Environmental Protection Targets and trends in them. The Environmental Report is presented to the City Board and the City Council. This Environmental Report for 2025 is the 25th of its kind.

[The City of Helsinki's Environmental Watch](#) (in Finnish only), which was published in August, provides up-to-date information on the progress of measures taken under the environmental protection sub-programmes. [Helsinki Environmental Statistics](#) (in Finnish only) compile a wide range of information on the state of the city's natural environment. The Environmental Report and Environmental Statistics data are published as open data, and the Environmental Watch is a website open to everyone.



Mitigating climate change



A global reduction in emissions is necessary to ensure that the Earth remains habitable and to also guarantee people's wellbeing in the future. Helsinki is committed to reducing emissions by 85 per cent from the 1990 level by 2030, and the aim is to reach net zero (i.e. a balance of carbon sources and sinks) by 2040. Energy generation is moving towards non-combustion-based solutions. In the reduction of indirect emissions, Helsinki is focused on reducing emissions from building and infrastructure construction and public procurement.

Total greenhouse gas emissions decreased significantly

According to the Copernicus Climate Change Service of the EU, 2025 was the third warmest year on record globally since measurements began in 1850. Only 2024 and 2023 have been warmer. Human activity has already warmed Earth by 1.4 °C. In Helsinki, 2025 was the second warmest year on record after 2020.

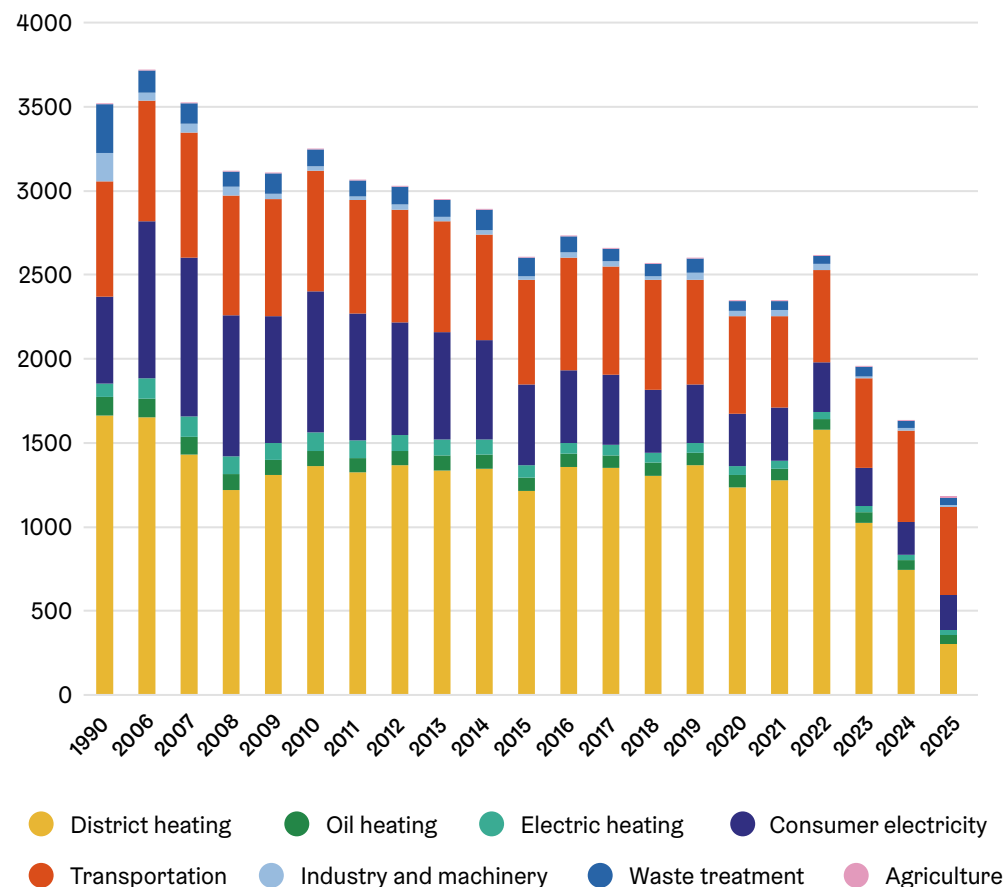
In 2025, greenhouse gas emissions from Helsinki's residents, services and industry amounted to 1,172 kt CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) in total, decreasing by 29 per cent from the previous year. Compared to previous years, emissions have decreased more sharply for the last three consecutive years, which can be attributed to the cessation of coal burning at the Hanasaari power plant in April 2023 and at the Salmisaari power plant in April 2025. This and other emission-reducing

district heating solutions, such as heat pumps and biofuels, reduced district heating emissions by 60 per cent from the previous year.

Emissions from electricity consumption increased by four per cent, which is explained by the increase in electricity consumption. Most of this growth was due to the significant increase in the use of the electric boilers introduced for heat generation. Nevertheless, the emission factor for electricity has continued to decrease as electricity generation has become cleaner, which has kept the growth in emissions at a moderate level. Traffic emissions decreased by five per cent from the previous year. This decrease can be mainly attributed to the lower fuel consumption and lower emissions from rail traffic as a result of electricity generation becoming cleaner and the emission factor decreasing.

Total greenhouse gas emissions in Helsinki (Scope 1 and 2)

Total emissions in Helsinki (1,000 t CO₂-ekv.)



Helsinki's total emissions have decreased by 67 per cent compared to 1990. Emissions per capita were 1.7 t CO₂e, down by 30 per cent from the previous year and 76 per cent lower than in 1990.

Renewable energy accounted for 51 per cent of the energy produced by Helen Ltd in 2025. All in all, 84 per cent of the energy generated by Helen was generated without using fossil fuels.

The Climate Programme was updated

In its City Strategy (2025–2029), Helsinki abandoned its carbon neutrality objective because it would have required the purchase of a significant number of carbon credits from outside the city. If

implemented to a high standard, it would have been extremely costly for taxpayers, while the use of low-cost carbon credits to achieve the objective would have posed the risk of the efforts having little impact and lacking credibility. Instead, the City introduced a stricter emissions reduction target and is focusing resources on reducing emissions in the Helsinki area. Consequently, the Carbon-neutral Helsinki programme was updated and renamed the Climate Programme, which also incorporates preparedness for and adaptation to climate change.

The Climate Programme outlines the sets of measures on which the City will focus during the current strategy period.

Annual measures will be prepared as part of normal operational planning, thereby ensuring that the preparation process can utilise the latest information, take account of regulatory and technological developments, and respond swiftly to changing circumstances. The climate programme was discussed by the City Board in August 2026. The measures to be taken under the Climate Programme are also touched upon in other chapters of this report, as several of the City's environmental protection sub-programmes also contribute to the achievement of the climate objectives.

Helsinki's carbon balance was calculated

The carbon balance and the carbon stock for the cities in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area has been estimated for the year 2024. The aim of this study was to determine the carbon balance and carbon stocks in the land use sector, as well as their distribution within the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, and to develop a repeatable process for regular monitoring. The estimations were carried out in accordance with the IPCC Guidelines and the estimation principles for the national greenhouse gas inventory for land use. Helsinki's carbon balance for 2024 was approximately 42 kt CO₂, taking land use change into account. Due to the use of more specific data and methods, as well as the specific scope of the analysis, this estimation is not comparable with previous estimations; however, future estimations will be carried out in a consistent manner.

Helen continued to invest in low-emission energy

In 2025, the coal-fired Salmisaari heating plant was converted into a pellet-fired heating plant, and a 100-megawatt electric boiler plant was completed in the Salmisaari production area. These investments made it possible to phase out coal entirely. The Niinimäki wind farm was also completed in 2025, increasing

Helen's wind power capacity to over 900 megawatts. Additionally, electricity storage facilities were completed in Nurmijärvi and at the Lohja solar park. The Nurmijärvi storage facility is one of the first large-scale electricity storage systems in Finland.

Helen continued to implement its nuclear energy programme. The programme aims to utilise nuclear energy in Helsinki's heat production. Helen is also planning to increase the utilisation of waste heat generated by data centres in the district heating network by providing energy services to large-scale data centres. The aim is to rapidly increase the utilisation of waste heat while reducing combustion.

A carbon footprint was calculated for the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division

A carbon footprint was calculated for the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division based on 2024 statistics. The calculation was carried out in accordance with the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol for organisations, and it included both direct and indirect emissions (Scopes 1, 2 and 3). This calculation was the first GHG Protocol compliant calculation for a division of the City of Helsinki, and, at the national level, the first for municipal social welfare and healthcare services or emergency services. The calculation provides a good knowledge base for planning and monitoring efforts to reduce emissions generated by the division, as well as for communications about climate impacts. Based on the results of the calculation, scenario analyses were also undertaken, covering the period up to 2040. They involved assessing current commitments, general trends in emissions, and the division's own means and opportunities to significantly reduce climate emissions. The plan is to carry out a new calculation approximately every three years.

Traffic



In line with the City Strategy for 2025–2029, Helsinki seeks to reduce emissions from traffic by focusing on making sustainable modes of transport more attractive and on the electrification of car fleets. From 2025 onwards, traffic will be the most significant source of direct carbon dioxide emissions in Helsinki, which is why the need to reduce emissions will focus on the transport sector in particular. As the proportion of sustainable modes of transport increases and the electrification of transport progresses, there will also be a decrease in air pollution and noise harmful to health.

Street renovations improved the conditions for sustainable mobility

The year 2025 saw the completion of a number of significant street construction projects, which improved the conditions for sustainable modes of transport.

The renovation of Mannerheimintie was completed in September. It involved building one-way cycle routes separated from pedestrian and car traffic on Mannerheimintie to make cycling smoother and improve safety for all modes of transport. The renovation of Aleksis Kiven katu was completed towards the end of the year, bringing improvements to the flow of public transport, and pedestrian and bicycle traffic alike. The street works for the Crown Bridges Light Rail project in Hakaniemi were also completed in the autumn, and the tram services in the inner city were able to return to their normal routes.

Merihaansilta Bridge opened to pedestrians and cyclists in June. The new bridge is part of the Crown Bridges Light Rail project, which will connect Laajasalo, Korkeasaari and Kalasatama to Hakaniemi. The project will also create a new seaside route for cyclists and pedestrians.

Helsinki's cycling network was extended

in the Eastern Baana section as a result of the completion of the stretch between Tupasaarentie and Hiihtäjätie in the summer. Of the roughly 148-kilometre target for the Baana cycling network, roughly 35 kilometres had been completed or was under construction in 2025. Similarly, of the roughly 140-kilometre target for the network in the inner city, roughly 79 kilometres had been completed or was under construction.

The Kallio summer streets improved the area's pedestrian environment

The Kallio summer streets were built for the first time in the summer of 2025. Implemented along Porthaninkatu, Fleminginkatu and Vaasankatu, the summer streets will also bring temporary improvements to the pedestrian environment and comfort of the area in 2026.

Measures to encourage walking support the City Strategy's strategic priority regarding pleasant neighbourhoods with a strong sense of community. According to the monitoring results, the sense of comfort experienced by users of the summer streets has improved, and the number of pedestrians and people



spending time in the area also increased between the summers of 2025 and 2024. Work has begun on finding permanent solutions based on the summer streets project.

More than half of all bus journeys were powered by electricity

In 2025, Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) reduced carbon dioxide emissions from public transport operations by 83 per cent compared to the 2010 level. However, this emissions reduction fell short of the 90 per cent target set, due to a lower-than-expected volume of biofuel. Local emissions from public transport (particulate matter and nitrogen oxides) were 99 per cent lower compared to 2010, which means that HSL achieved its target in this area.

In 2025, HSL adopted a new strategy that aims to reduce total emissions from HSL operations by 50 per cent by 2029, compared to the 2024 baseline. Emissions from public transport play a significant role in this.

Over the course of 2025, HSL commissioned roughly 53 new electric buses, bringing their total number to 600. The electric buses accounted for roughly 52 per cent of the total number of kilometres driven by the bus fleet in 2025.

The number of passengers using public

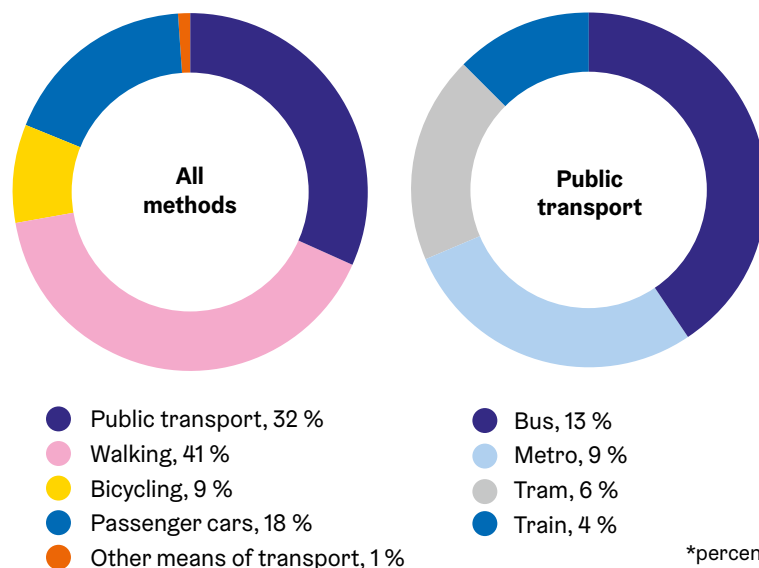
transport increased in 2025 from the previous year, but these numbers have yet to return to the level preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to 2024, the number of passengers in the HSL area increased by five per cent on the metro, two per cent on trams, nine per cent on commuter trains and seven per cent on buses. However, HSL's passenger numbers were roughly four per cent lower in 2025 than in 2019. City bikes were used for roughly 2.5 million journeys in Helsinki in 2025. The average distance of these journeys was 3.6 kilometres.

The operating costs of HSL have risen due to increases in vehicle operating and infrastructure costs. In 2025, the decision was made to increase the prices of all types of travel tickets across all zones.

However, the residents of Helsinki are satisfied with the functioning of the public transport system. In 2025, the Helsinki region ranked third in the international BEST (Benchmarking in European Service of Public Transport) survey, which measures passenger satisfaction with public transport. The two cities that ranked above the Helsinki region were Turku and Tampere. HSL performed particularly well in the areas of travel comfort, reliability and the provision of information.

Distribution of modes of transport

Helsinki residents' primary mode of transport within the city, per cent of journeys in a day *



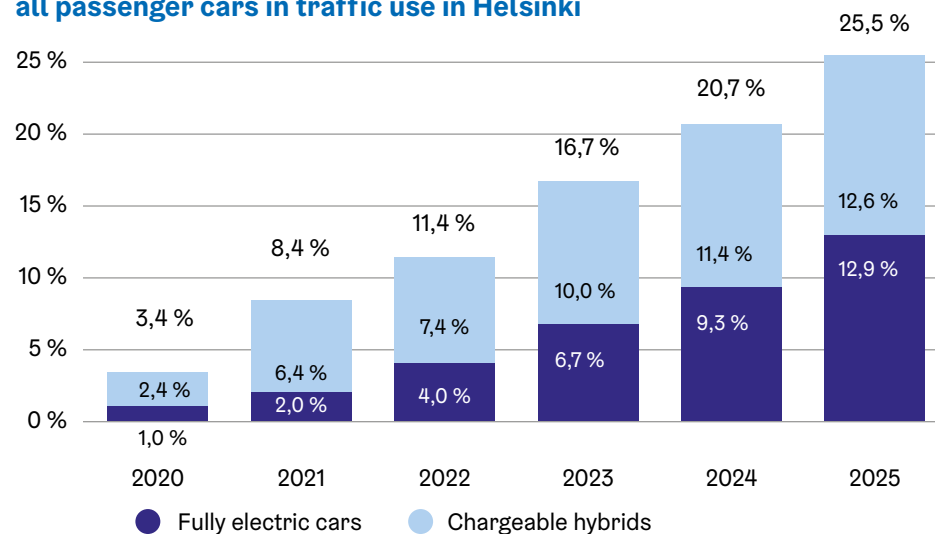
The number of fully electric cars on the road overtook the number of plug-in hybrids

In 2025, the number of electric cars on the road continued to increase, and the number of fully electric cars overtook that of plug-in hybrids in Helsinki. At the end of

the year, there were 27,600 fully electric cars and 26,900 plug-in hybrids in traffic use in Helsinki, meaning over 54,000 plug-in passenger cars in total.

Of the vehicles registered to the City of Helsinki, 30 per cent of passenger cars and 13 per cent of vans were fully electric at the end of 2025.

Proportion of chargeable cars among all passenger cars in traffic use in Helsinki



Efforts to reduce emissions from urban logistics progressed through projects

As the electrification of the passenger car fleet progresses, the contribution of trucks and vans to traffic emissions is becoming more highlighted. In 2025, Helsinki launched the EU-funded [MADLESS project](#) to identify the best ways to reduce emissions. Based on research findings and collaboration with stakeholders, the project will produce recommendations for the City on measures to reduce CO₂ emissions from logistics.

The wider adoption of electric vans and trucks was encouraged through the [eCargo project](#), coordinated by Forum Virium Helsinki. In particular, the project focused on developing the electric vehicle charging network to meet the needs of the logistics sector. The project assessed and tested the usability of the existing public charging points in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area with five different types of electric trucks and vans. Additionally, the project collected data on potential locations for new charging points based on needs.

Passenger numbers increased in passenger transport

On an average weekday in June, a total of 29,900 cyclists crossed the border of the Helsinki peninsula, which is 12 per cent

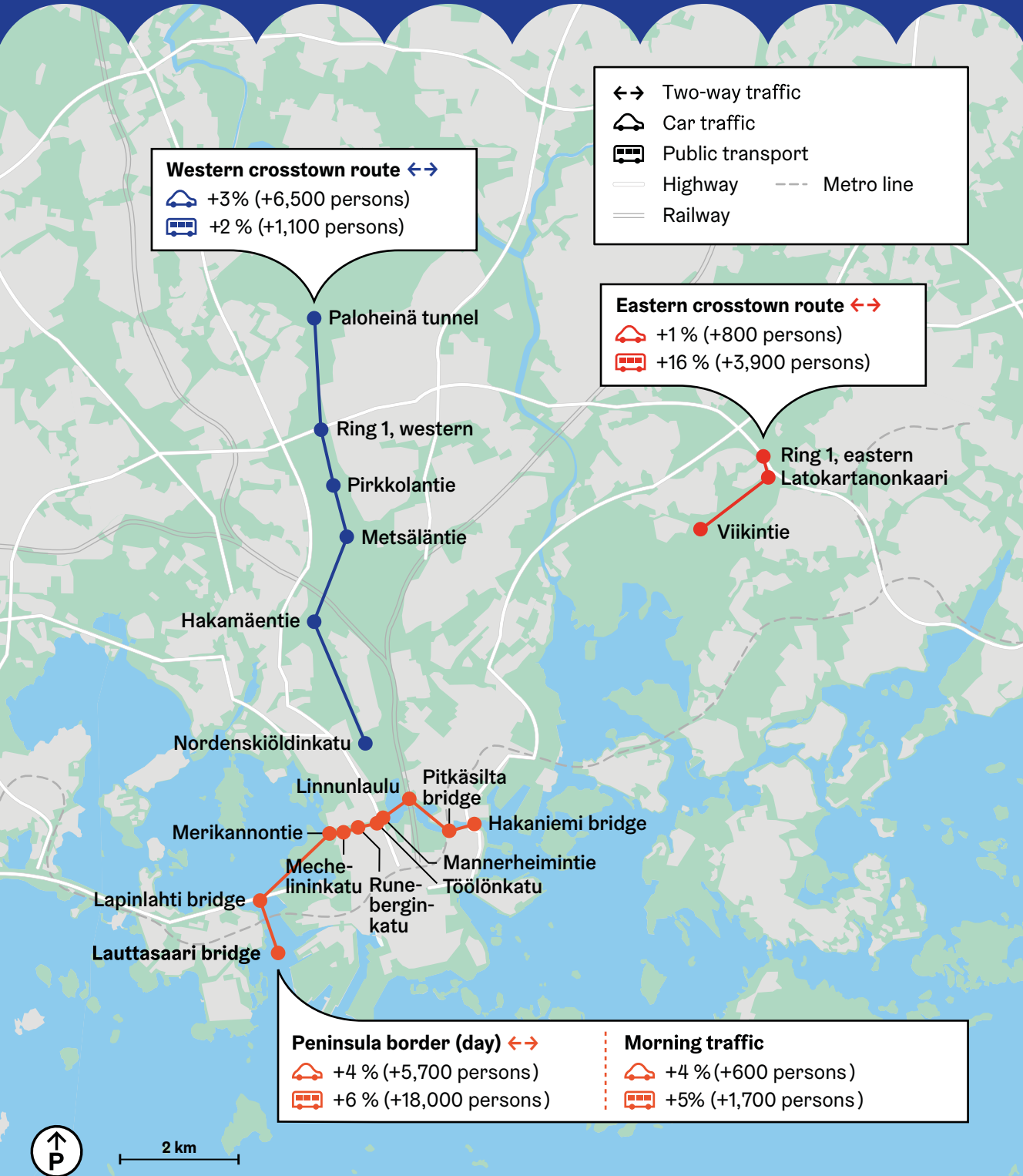
more than in 2024. The volume of motor vehicle traffic (cars, vans, lorries, trucks, buses and trams) increased by 3 per cent in total across the four calculation lines. Passenger numbers have remained below their pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. Since the pandemic, the share of remote work has settled at a higher level, and mobility needs and habits have changed as a result. The urban structure of Helsinki has also become more multi-centred, and the improvement of transverse public transport links has reduced through traffic through the city centre. However, there was an increase in passenger traffic in 2025. One reason for this increase in mobility may have been the improvement in the construction site situation. The decrease in fuel prices towards the autumn may also have contributed to the increase in vehicle kilometres driven by cars.

In 2025, there were 216,800 registered passenger cars in traffic use in Helsinki. There were 312 passenger cars in traffic use per 1,000 residents, which was 2.5 per cent fewer than in the previous year. Thanks to the efficient public transport system, many Helsinki residents are able to manage without owning a car. The prolonged economic downturn is also likely to have contributed to this trend in the vehicle fleet.

Passenger numbers

Helsinki

Changes in the number of passengers using cars and public transport on Helsinki's calculation lines on an autumn weekday in 2025 compared to the previous year.



Energy



The generation and use of energy continue to play a relatively significant role in the achievement of the City of Helsinki's emissions reduction target. A total of 25 per cent of CO₂ emissions in the urban area of Helsinki are generated from district heating consumption and 18 per cent from the electricity consumption of real estate properties. The CO₂ emissions of the Helsinki City Group account for 13 per cent of the emissions of the entire urban area. Of this proportion, roughly 90 per cent is caused by the energy consumption of buildings.

Helsinki's energy conservation work is based on national energy efficiency agreements. Additionally, Helsinki has been involved in the energy efficiency agreements between municipalities and the Finnish government, which are used to implement the measures required by the national energy and climate strategy at the municipal level.

Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from energy use

The Helsinki City Group accounted for nine per cent of the consumption of electricity, 17 per cent of the consumption of district heating and roughly three per cent of the consumption of district cooling in the entire Helsinki urban area.

The energy consumption and CO₂ emissions of the Helsinki City Group in 2024 and 2025 are presented in the table provided. The Helsinki City Group's total energy consumption decreased by six per cent from 2024, while its CO₂ emissions decreased by half during the same period.

The fact that the decrease in CO₂ emissions was greater than the decrease in total energy consumption is explained by the fact that Helen's emission factor for district heating was 60 per cent lower and

the emission factor for the basic electricity product 30 per cent lower in 2025 than in 2024 due to a decrease in the use of fossil fuels. The reduction in emissions from electricity consumption is also partly explained by the fact that more than half of the electricity purchased by the Helsinki City Group is made up of renewable electricity or certified nuclear electricity, for which the calculated CO₂ emissions are zero.

The electricity consumption of the Helsinki City Group's real estate properties decreased by two per cent and the consumption of district heating by six per cent from 2024. The energy consumption of the properties varies annually due to changes in the number and types of properties owned by the Helsinki City Group, changes in the occupancy rate and equipment level of the buildings, and changing weather conditions.

The district cooling consumption of the real estate properties increased by 20 per cent from 2024. This is explained by both the introduction of new locations of use and the increased need for cooling.

Electricity consumption in public areas increased by 10 per cent, whereas the consumption of district heating decreased

Energy consumption and CO₂ emissions of the Helsinki Group in 2024 and 2025

PROPERTY owned by the city*	GWh, 2024	GWh, 2025	GWh Change in %, 2024–2025	CO ₂ kilo- tonnes, 2024	CO ₂ kilo- tonnes, 2025	CO ₂ , Change in %, 2024–2025
Electricity	193	184	-5 %	107	72	-33 %
District cooling	3.48	3.1	-11 %	0,00	0	
District heating	374	333	-11 %	51.2	19	-63 %
Total	571	520	-9 %	158	91	-43 %
Properties, others and subsidiary communities						
Electricity	187	189	1 %	14.8	11,2	-25 %
District cooling	3.67	5.25	43 %	0,00	0	
District heating	720	696	-3 %	99	40	-60 %
Total	910	890	-2 %	113	51	-55 %
Outdoor lighting, traffic lights						
Outdoor lighting, electricity	31.5	28.3	-10 %	17.47	11.1	-37 %
Traffic lights, electricity	1.21	1.19	-2 %	0.67	0.46	-31 %
Total	32.7	29.5	-10 %	18.14	11.5	-37 %
Public areas						
Electricity	2.91	3.21	10 %	1.61	1.25	-22 %
District heating	2.62	2.32	-12 %	0.36	0.13	-63 %
Total	5.53	5.52	0 %	1.97	1.39	-30 %
Traffic						
Metro service, electricity (nuclear electricity)	49.1	44.1	-10 %	0,00	0	
Tram service, electricity (nuclear electricity)	38.6	36.7	-5 %	0,00	0	
Ferry traffic, fuel energy	7.65	9.87	29 %	1.50	1.54	2 %
Total	95.3	90.7	-5 %	1.50	1.54	2 %
Vehicles and machinery						
Fuels	21.3	9.48	-56 %	2.91	0.93	-68 %
Electricity**	0.26	1.1		0.14	0.43	
Total	21.6	10.6	-51 %	3.05	1.36	-55 %
Total	1.636	1.546	-6 %	296	158	-47 %

*Service buildings directly owned by the City, where consumption is monitored by the hour (in the Nuuka system with about 750 properties).

**Reporting coverage improved in 2025

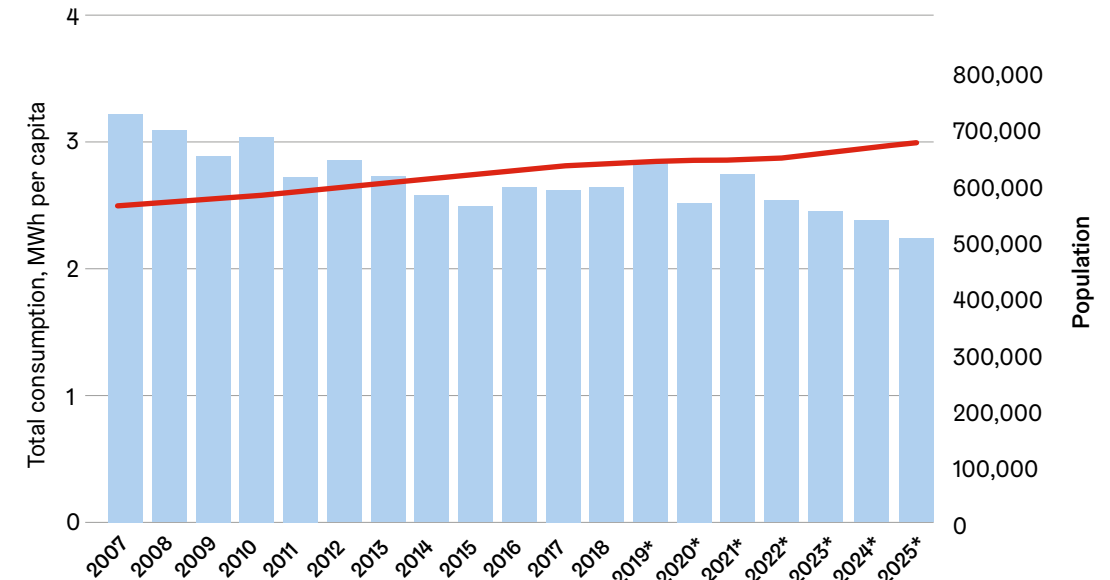
The CO₂ emissions for 2025 have been calculated by using the product-specific emission factors of Helen Ltd, which are the following:

- For district heating: 57 g/kWh
- For electricity: 391 g/kWh (data from 2024; the factor for 2025 is not available)
- For cooling: 0 g/kWh

The CO₂ emissions for 2024 have been calculated by using the product-specific emission factors of Helen Ltd, which are the following:

- For district heating: 137 g/kWh
- For electricity: 555 g/kWh (data from 2023; the factor for 2024 is not available)
- For cooling: 0 g/kWh.

Per capita energy consumption in the City of Helsinki's own activities and the number of residents



*Reporting principle changed due to improved comprehensiveness of energy consumption data

● Total consumption, MWh per capita ● Population

by 12 per cent from 2024. The increase in electricity consumption can be attributed to the introduction of new locations of use and the increase in the need to heat stairs and outdoor surfaces. Annual weather conditions affect heat consumption. The electricity consumption of outdoor lighting was reduced by 10 per cent by replacing existing lighting with LED lighting.

The electricity consumption of metro traffic decreased by 10 per cent, while the electricity consumption of tram traffic decreased by five per cent from 2024. This is partly explained by improvements in the energy efficiency of public transport, but there is as yet no absolute certainty as to the reasons for the changes in consumption. Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd is in the process of setting up an energy management group that will be tasked with monitoring and analysing changes in consumption more closely in the future.

The fuel consumption of ferry transport

services increased by almost 30 per cent as a result of an increase in the number of vehicle kilometres travelled and changes to the fleet. However, CO₂ emissions from fuel consumption remained at the 2024 level due to ferries switching to lower-emission fuels.

District heating accounted for 66.7 per cent (1,031 GWh) of the City's total energy consumption, while electricity accounted for 31.6 per cent (488 GWh), district cooling for 0.5 per cent (8.35 GWh) and fuels for 1.3 per cent (19.4 GWh).

Per capita energy consumption continues to decrease

The image shows the trends in the per capita energy consumption of the City's own operations for the last 20 years. Thanks to long-term work on energy efficiency, per capita energy consumption decreased by 34 per cent during the period in question. Since 2019, energy

consumption data has become more comprehensive, which is why the reduction achieved in per capita energy consumption during the period examined is greater in reality than presented here.

Construction to a higher energy efficiency standard than the national requirements

The standards and requirements regarding energy efficiency remained unchanged in 2025, i.e. the City's own new building and renovation projects had to be planned and implemented to a higher energy efficiency standard than the national requirements. The energy class of a building is based on its calculated energy performance reference value, or E-value (kWh/m²/a). For service buildings, the average E-value was 65 kWhE/m²/a for new permanent buildings commissioned in 2025 and 64 kWhE/m²/a for new building projects, as calculated in the building permit phase, while the requirement was 100 kWhE/m²/a.

For housing production, the average E-value was 69 kWhE/m²/a (target ≤ 75 kWhE/m²/a) for block of flats construction projects completed in 2025 (18 projects), 72 kWhE/m²/a for block of flats construction projects in the building permit phase (11 projects) and 109 kWhE/m²/a (target ≤ 112 kWhE/m²/a) for service homes (three projects).

Of all service buildings commissioned in 2025 (permanent buildings only), 78 per cent (based on the surface area) had a heat pump as the primary form of heating. In projects for which a building permit was applied for in 2025, the corresponding number was 94 per cent. Geothermal heating was used as the heating solution in 79 per cent of housing projects in the building permit phase and 44 per cent of completed projects, while the rest used district heating.

The energy efficiency of Helsingin kaupungin asunnot Oy's (Heka) building stock will be improved, especially as a result of extensive renovations and new

development. In 2025, ten renovation projects and nine new buildings were completed for Heka, with all of them implemented to a higher energy efficiency standard than the national requirements. A solar power station was installed at all 19 sites, and a geothermal heating system was installed at nine of them. Additionally, all of the renovation sites introduced a mechanical supply and exhaust ventilation system with heat recovery, which significantly reduces energy losses.

Investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation

In addition to new buildings and renovation sites, the City is installing solar power stations on existing properties as separate investments. The total power rating of the solar power systems installed in service buildings has already exceeded 2.5 MWp. In addition to this, the Helsinki City Group's subsidiaries have been investing in solar power in recent years.

The Helsinki LED project, which involves the City transitioning to the use of LED lighting in public outdoor lighting, is progressing. In 2025, a total of 14,199 new LED lights were installed. There are a total of 100,196 street and park lights in Helsinki, of which LED lights already account for almost 60 per cent.

The transition to LED lighting has also progressed rapidly in the City's buildings. These changes yielded at least 370 MWh in calculated energy savings through investments made in 2025.

For the past few years, three service buildings of the Facilities Service have been testing an AI-based application that simultaneously optimises ventilation, heating and cooling. According to the preliminary results, these sites have achieved annual energy savings of around 15 per cent. Based on these experiences, the City has started preparations to further utilise artificial intelligence in its real estate properties.



The energy conservation targets for 2017–2025 were achieved

Helsinki was committed to an energy conservation target of 61 GWh under the Energy Efficiency Agreement for the Municipal Sector (KETS), while subsidiaries of the City that own rental apartments were committed to an energy conservation target of 55.7 GWh under the Action Plan for Rental Housing Companies under the Energy Efficiency Agreement for the Property Sector (VAETS) during the 2017–2025 agreement period.

The targets set for both types of agreements were achieved.

New energy efficiency agreements were signed

The City of Helsinki is participating in the new energy efficiency agreement period extending from 2026 to 2035. The energy conservation target for participants for the new agreement period is 10 per cent of

their 2024 energy consumption. Progress towards this target will be monitored annually through reports of the calculated cumulative energy conservation impact of the energy conservation measures taken.

At the end of 2025, the City signed the Energy Efficiency Agreement for the Public Sector (JETS) and the Action Plan for Rental Housing Companies under the Energy Efficiency Agreement for the Property Sector (VAETS). Additionally, Helen Ltd signed the Energy Efficiency Agreement for the Energy Sector.

The City entities that joined JETS included service buildings directly owned by the City, as well as subsidiaries with significant real estate properties in terms of energy consumption that are not covered by any other energy efficiency agreement. The cumulative energy conservation target set for the agreement period is 89 GWh in total.

Heka Oy, Haso and Auroranlinna joined

VAETS. Heka's energy conservation target is roughly 62 GWh. This same target has also been adopted for the energy management system in line with the ISO 50001 standard, the preparation of which progressed as expected in 2025. The certification process for the energy management system is due to begin during 2026. More information on Heka Oy's sustainability efforts is available on the Heka website.

Preparations began for the Port of Helsinki to join the Energy Efficiency Agreement for Industries.

Energy efficiency is also a priority in externally funded projects

The three-year Energy as a Service in Urban District Areas project, launched at the end of 2023, progressed according to plan. The challenges and opportunities involved in implementing the energy service model were examined with the help of pilot areas. Throughout the project, there has been extensive collaboration with service providers, consultants, and various services and units of the City. The project will publish a guide on the procurement and implementation of the energy service model. The project partners include Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo and Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. The project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund. The project is part of a joint innovation programme of the Cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa (HEVi). You can read more about the project here: <https://hevinnovations.fi/portfolio/>.

In the two-year Systemic Heat Shift (SHS) project, which started in September 2024, Helen and the City of Helsinki are implementing demand response for the heating of service buildings and Heka residential buildings through AI technology. The aim is to reduce peak loads in district heating networks to manage emissions and costs. Helen has already begun to sell demand response based district heating connections to housing companies and,

during the 2025–2026 heating season, the plan is to have roughly 30 service buildings join the price-based demand response scheme. The project has also engaged in customer-facing communications to increase awareness of energy efficiency and district heating. Systemic Heat Shift (SHS) is funded by the EU's Net Zero Cities project, which has a hundred European cities striving towards carbon neutrality taking part. You can read more about the project here: <https://ilmasto.hel.fi/raportit-ja-hankkeet/hankkeet/systematic-heat-shift-kohti-paastotonta-kaukolampoa/> (in Finnish only).

Heka started preparing to pilot the procurement of an energy service model based on the results of the innovation programme of the HELENA project, which concluded in 2024. To promote service model procurements, the project prepared a procurement plan and contract document templates. The actual pilot procurements, including market dialogue, will take place in 2026.

Helen's investments in the green transition improved energy efficiency

Helen's most significant measures to improve energy efficiency in production in 2025 included investments in an electric boiler, air-to-water heat pump and flue gas heat recovery at Salmisaari, which delivered 650 GWh in primary energy savings. More information on Helen Ltd's sustainability efforts is provided in Helen's [sustainability report](#).



Construction



In accordance with the 2016 city plan, the measures carried out in city planning aim at defragmenting and supplementing the urban structure by relying on public transport. Construction activities will increasingly concentrate in the suburban light rail zone, rather than in the central zone. Reconciling construction activities with both nature conservation and a smaller carbon footprint is a major challenge that the City is determined to address.

Detailed planning guided housing construction towards a lower carbon footprint

The year 2025 saw the completion of the city plan implementation programme, which further established the development of a network city as a key strategic priority. Supplementing the 2016 city plan, the City approved the Viikinkaari-Lahdenväylä component master plan and completed the drafting phase of the Östersundom component master plan.

In 2025, approximately 983,000 square metres of floor area were zoned in Helsinki, of which approximately 715,000 square metres were for housing construction. A key factor in the development of the inner city area was the confirmation of the local detailed plan for the large Hernesaari area.

The construction of apartment buildings is being guided towards a lower carbon footprint with the help of the limit value for the lifecycle carbon footprint, which is used in detailed planning. More extensive calculation of lifecycle climate emissions is being carried out as part of the impact assessment of detailed planning by using a

carbon footprint calculator. In 2025, the average lifecycle climate emissions for the plans were 29 kg CO₂e/year/m² of floor area. Lifecycle emissions are increasingly concentrated in the construction phase, whereas emission sources during energy generation and transport are decreasing.

Progress in reducing emissions from construction

The carbon footprint of the City's new office buildings has been calculated for several years now. All projects fell well below the carbon footprint limit value that came into force at the start of 2026. The means used to reduce the carbon footprint have included good energy efficiency and the use of low-carbon concrete and wooden materials. Projects have also looked into the most cost-effective measures for reducing carbon emissions and piloted the use of a 'carbon budget'.

The City adopted the Low-carbon Guide for Designers and Those Undertaking Construction Projects for all of its new housing production projects. The first projects subject to the City's carbon footprint limit value were launched in 2025. In housing production, 79 per cent of projects in the building permit phase and 44 per cent of completed projects used geothermal heating as the heating

solution. All new building projects implemented a solar panel system. All renovation projects achieved an improvement of at least 32 per cent in the E value and implemented renewable energy solutions wherever technically and financially feasible.

Municipality Finance Plc (MuniFin) updated its criteria for green finance to include the carbon footprint of the building alongside energy efficiency in new building projects. In future housing production projects, most projects will be subject to both the City of Helsinki's carbon footprint limit value, which is stricter than the national limit value, and the carbon footprint limit value set out in MuniFin's updated criteria for green finance.

Instructions on emissions calculation were added to the user guide for the Infrastructure Cost Management System (Ihku) for infrastructure projects. Instructions on how to apply the carbon footprint assessment method in infrastructure construction were completed for projects of the City of Helsinki. Environmental management in street and park planning was strengthened by introducing an initial assessment form to facilitate the use of the environmental checklist and the preparation of environmental documents for construction sites. This update process reconciled the records kept about environmental matters with construction contracting documentation.

For the City's infrastructure construction projects, the use of low-carbon concrete is a requirement in tendering processes.

A biochar vision was drafted in Helsinki, with the process involving calculations to assess the potential of the use of biochar. Biochar was used in green structures in parks and along streets, such as load-bearing substrates to regulate moisture levels. Monitoring of the applications of biochar provided data for biochar recommendations for landscaping.

Stronger management of the emissions and environmental risks arising from the construction of Malminkenttä

The efforts to halve emissions from the ground preparation work in Malminkenttä progressed as planned. The City will monitor emissions from the ground preparation work between 2020 and 2030 and compare them with the preliminary ground preparation plan. Actual emissions from

the ground preparation work will be compared with the carbon budgets for each planning area and the benchmark for the entire area.

Malminkenttä is situated in an environmentally sensitive area, and environmental risks have been identified in relation to the planning and construction of the site. The role of the environmental risk monitoring group is to identify risks, make use of best practices from previous construction projects and decide on risk management measures. In 2025, the group addressed issues such as acid sulphate soils, worksite water management, perched water, natural values and biota, as well as guidelines related to these topics. The impacts of construction in the Malminkenttä area are also being monitored and environmental risks are being managed through extensive environmental monitoring and worksite-specific observation.

Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd promoted the use of low-carbon concrete

Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd set emissions reduction targets and carried out lifecycle or emissions calculations for all of its construction projects to guide the selection of low-carbon design solutions. In 2025, almost 80 per cent of all castings in the Koskela depot project used low-carbon concrete. The project also saw one of Finland's largest castings to date using GWP.55 concrete, which generates 45 per cent fewer emissions than traditional concrete. Track maintenance projects primarily used GWP.85 concrete.

As a general rule, Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd uses geothermal heating as the heating solution in all of its new properties. Geothermal heating systems are in use at the Ruskeasuoni depot and the Kivikko Mechanical Workshop, and in 2025, drilling for geothermal wells began at the Koskela depot construction site. A geothermal heating system is also being planned for the Vaarala depot. In 2025, Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd assessed the potential for renewable energy generation at all of its properties, and the results of this survey will be used in the planning of future renovation projects.

Adaptation to climate change



Helsinki's approach to adaptation to climate change is risk-based. The provisions of the City Strategy (2025–2029) guide adaptation efforts. Helsinki is preparing for potential extreme weather events caused by climate change proactively, with the aim of minimising risks. The measures are compiled in a separate preparedness plan. The City is preparing for the effects of climate change by taking into account the need to adapt to heavy rainfall, flooding and heatwaves in the design of its infrastructure and facilities. By means of planning and construction, Helsinki seeks to mitigate urban heat islands in both indoor and outdoor spaces across the city. The City is also taking steps to ensure that its preparedness for stormwater, seawater and inland flooding is at an adequate level and to increase the amount of green structures in the urban fabric.

The knowledge base on climate risks and vulnerabilities was strengthened

Work on updating the list of identified climate risks began in 2025, and the results came out in early 2026. The project compiled researchers' assessments of all risk factors and changes in their occurrence and intensity in the future as climate change progresses.

Preparations for heavy rain, particularly in the city centre, are underway. In 2025, the City decided to proactively and systematically prepare to manage flooding caused by the kind of torrential rainfall that is statistically expected to occur in the city centre once every hundred years under future climate conditions. The work

began, and the flood risk sites requiring corrective measures were identified and prioritised. The results of the modelling of heavy rainfall were made available to the City's planners. A contour map was also added to the geographic data to allow planners to assess whether a building site is safe and protected from rising sea levels.

The knowledge base regarding increasingly intense and frequent heatwaves was strengthened. The Finnish Meteorological Institute finished modelling the city's hotspots and urban heat islands during heatwaves, and the resulting geographic data was made available to planners in summer 2026.



A pervasive priority in preparedness for heatwaves is vulnerable groups, such as older people and children. The University of Helsinki launched a study on social vulnerability to flooding and heatwaves in 2025 and completed it in early 2026. A project was started to add greenery to the yards of schools and daycare centres and to restore them closer to their natural state. The first results of this project are expected during 2026.

In the City of Helsinki's housing production, studies were carried out to assess the risks posed by climate change to three new Heka building projects on the basis of the EU Taxonomy framework. According to the results, the projects addressed the risks posed by future climate conditions well, but the plans were also further developed using the information provided by the studies.

The design solutions for new service buildings take into account future climate conditions, which are modelled by using the Finnish Meteorological Institute's test weather data for the year 2050. Based on this, it is necessary to install a centralised cooling system in most service buildings.

The regional green area factor tool was completed

The 'VALUE – Valuation and strengthening of urban green spaces in landscape planning in cities' project, partly funded by the European Regional Development Fund and launched in 2023, came to an end. The project produced a regional green area factor tool and publicised it widely. Going forward, the tool will be piloted in the City's planning work and further developed to make it as easy as possible for planners to use. Work on updating the plot-specific green factor tool to focus more on climate change adaptation and biodiversity continued.

Climate change poses a significant risk to the Helsinki City Group

In 2025, the City identified the significant risks posed to the Helsinki City Group, the management of which requires special attention. One of the identified risks is that the City will fail to meet its climate objectives and its preparedness for extreme weather events is inadequate.

The Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division has recognised that the risks associated with extreme

weather events are significant. The Rescue Department is in charge of saving or protecting people's lives or health, property or the environment under all circumstances. Moreover, the Rescue Department supports the independent preparedness of Helsinki residents and coordinates the City's preparedness for serious disruptions from the perspective of rescue services. In social welfare and healthcare services, the temperature conditions are taken into account in the design of new spaces, and cooling is being systematically added to existing spaces. Furthermore, portable cooling equipment is provided for service homes for the duration of the summer months.

New yards at daycare centres and schools and those to be renovated are designed so that they create a favourable microclimate and provide sufficient shade.

The drainage of stormwater is also taken into account. Cooling systems are being installed as part of renovation and new building projects, and the need for cooling solutions is being assessed in units that operate around the clock. In the Education Division, adaptation to climate change is also reflected in the development of sustainability skills and the strengthening of learners' resilience.

At Stara, factors such as spring droughts and storm preparedness have required new arrangements. Changes have been made to the sowing and planting dates and watering methods. The need for watering and dust control has also increased in infrastructure maintenance work. In public areas, efforts are being made to ensure the preservation of sufficient canopy cover. The maintenance and development of stormwater management systems are also becoming increasingly important.



Indicators for City of Helsinki's Environmental Protection Targets

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Total greenhouse gas emissions in the Helsinki area (Scope 1 and 2)	1,632 kt CO ₂ -ekv.	1,172 kt CO ₂ -ekv.	The indicator has improved
Total greenhouse gas emissions in the Helsinki area (Scope 1 and 2)	2.4 t CO ₂ -ekv.	1.7 t CO ₂ -ekv.	The indicator has improved
Carbon balance	42 kt CO ₂	-	Calculation method changed, data for 2024 are not comparable with previous calculations.

Indicators for traffic

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Proportion of sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport, others)	78 %	82 %	The indicator has improved
Greenhouse gas emissions from transport in Helsinki	551 kt CO ₂ -ekv.	522 kt CO ₂ -ekv.	The indicator has improved
Share of fully electric cars in the passenger car stock	9.3 %	12.9 %	The indicator has improved

Energy consumption indicators

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Energy consumption per capita in Helsinki	21,429 kWh	22,133 kWh	The indicator has deteriorated
Energy savings in the City's own operations (public buildings, vehicles, streetlights), GWh and savings in proportion to target (KETS 2017–2025)	55.1 GWh, 90 % of the objective	61 GWh, 100 % of the target	Target achieved.
Energy savings of City-owned residential buildings, GWh and savings in proportion to target (VAETS 2017–2025)	43.4 GWh, 78 % of the objective	55.7 GWh, 100 % of the target	Target achieved.



Eyes on the future: Climate

- The 2030 emissions reduction target is achievable, provided that all existing and previously identified measures are implemented as planned. The potential for reducing emissions varies from sector to sector, and there are some sectors where the City has limited capacity to influence matters or where emissions are largely fixed. Therefore, to reach this target, the City must use all available means to ensure consistent and full implementation of the measures.
- The importance of reducing emissions from traffic is becoming increasingly highlighted in Helsinki's climate efforts. By 2030, traffic is expected to account for over 60 per cent of all emissions, while emissions from heating in particular will have decreased significantly. To achieve the stricter emissions reduction target of 85 per cent and net-zero emissions by 2040, the City must promote the transition to alternative fuel sources in transport, as well as measures to reduce the number of vehicle kilometres travelled.
- The City is preparing for an increasing number of alternative fuel sources by means such as developing its distribution infrastructure. The increase in the number of charging points for electric cars will be accelerated, and the first green hydrogen filling station in Helsinki, built by Helen, will open in Vuosaari in 2027. The environmental criteria for the City's own vehicle and transport service procurements will become stricter. Going forward, they will steer procurement even more strongly towards electricity and other alternative fuel sources.
- Of the City's public transport projects, the replacement of the Junatie metro bridge will require temporary traffic arrangements and a pause to the metro service in 2027. The Crown Bridges Light Rail link between Laajasalo and the inner city will be completed and the tram service will start operating by the start of 2027 at the latest. Work on the West-Helsinki Light Rail project will begin in 2026.
- HSL's costs will continue to increase in the coming years, and this will be reflected in higher public transport ticket prices. As an important part of a sustainable transport system, the appeal of public transport must also be improved by offering affordable tickets.
- The walkability of the Central Railway Station will be improved by closing Kaivokatu to motor traffic. The area will be developed into a green and inviting main entrance to Helsinki. In the future, improvements will also be made to the pedestrian environments in other busy station areas. Cycling conditions will be improved in line with the new Bicycle Action Plan for 2026–2029.

- The legislation on the energy efficiency of buildings and municipalities is set to change significantly in the next few years. The City has been involved in preparing for the implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) in Finland. In accordance with the new legislation and regulations, the energy efficiency requirements for buildings will become stricter as the construction of new buildings moves towards zero-emission buildings and the use of fossil fuels decreases. New obligations will be introduced for renovation projects, particularly those involving buildings in the lowest energy efficiency classes. Municipalities will be required to improve the energy efficiency of public buildings. Moreover, new regulatory measures will be introduced, such as the Building Renovation Passport and updated Energy Performance Certificates.
- The management of the carbon footprint of business premises in renovation projects will be looked into, and the low-carbon targets and concepts for commercial construction will be clarified. The emissions reductions achieved through material choices and circular economy solutions in infrastructure construction will be verified as part of emissions calculations, and the calculation data will be used to control emissions from construction.
- The City will improve the effectiveness of its climate change adaptation work by developing its monitoring and assessment methods. The adaptation work will be prioritised on a risk basis, and the information on climate risks will be updated regularly. The results of vulnerability assessments will be used to ensure that measures are targeted as fairly as possible.

Programmes and policies

- [Climate Programme](#)
- Preparedness Plan for Extreme Weather Events (soon to be launched)
- Action Plan for Greening The Built Environment (soon to be launched)
- [City of Helsinki's Environmental Protection Targets 2040](#)

Nature and habitats

Safeguarding biodiversity



Even by international standards, Helsinki is an exceptionally green city close to nature, where the sea, forests and parks are an integral part of the city structure and the everyday lives of the city's residents. The City is working to add yet more greenery by increasing canopy cover in built areas, planting new trees along streets and raising the amount of permeable surfaces. This will make the urban environment more sustainable, comfortable and resilient to climate change. Alongside traditional nature conservation, the City is developing new ways to safeguard its natural assets and the quality of the local natural environment.

Up-to-date nature information supports decision-making

The process of making use of nature information in the maintenance of public areas and the implementation of projects was developed so that up-to-date nature information is available throughout the planning and implementation chain. The design guidelines for the courtyards of the City's service buildings were also updated to enhance biodiversity.

Biodiversity monitoring in all green and natural areas was developed through extensive collaboration between City divisions. The work also took into account the need to monitor adaptation to climate change. A reporting method was developed for the measures promoting the biodiversity of park plans and integrated into project reporting. Additionally, there was a focus on increasing the amount of street greenery in street plans. In maintenance activities, the conditions for biodiversity were strengthened by leaving fallen and felled trees in nature and converting grassland areas into meadows, among other means.

New Nature Conservation Programme launched

The first nature reserves in line with the new [City of Helsinki Nature Conservation Programme 2025–2038](#) were established in 2025. The City Board proposed the founding of five new nature reserves to the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre). The ELY Centre decided to found all of the proposed sites. These included the areas of Tali (16.20 ha), the southern shore of Porvarinlahti bay (49.15 ha), the Meri-Rastila forest (34.80 ha), Mellunmäenluhta (4.80 ha) and the southern part of Mustavuori (29.30 ha). With the new Nature Conservation Programme, there will be a significant increase in the number of nature reserves established in Helsinki each year. The aim is to have more than 10 per cent of land and water areas designated as nature reserves by 2038.

At the end of 2025, Helsinki had 85 nature reserves with a total area of 1,611.6 hectares. The proportion accounted for

Surface areas of the current nature reserves, other protected sites and areas proposed to be founded in 2025

	Land area		Water area	
	Area (ha)	Share of land area (%)	Area (ha)	Share of water area (%)
Nature reserves	1,105.5	5.2	506.1	1.0
Other protected sites*	106.1	0.5	192.2	0.4
Proposals for establishing nature reserves in 2025**	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	1,214.9	5.7	698.3	1.4

* protected nature types, species protection areas and Natura areas not protected by the Nature Conservation Act
**Proposals by the City Board on which no protection decision was yet made in 2025

by nature reserves of Helsinki’s total land area increased by 0.4 percentage points from 2024, from 4.8 per cent to 5.2 per cent. Helsinki also conserved nature sites owned by Helsinki that are located in other municipalities. Helsinki sold large tracts of land in the Kauhala area of Kirkkonummi (over 200 ha) and the Luukki area of Espoo (50 ha) to the Finnish Natural Heritage Foundation, which will conserve the areas with funding from Microsoft.

New nature conservation measures were introduced

Helsinki introduced new ways to protect biodiversity alongside traditional nature reserves. The City will promote the adoption of ecological compensation as part of land use and construction management so that priority is given to the prevention and mitigation of damage to nature and any remaining damage will be compensated in a systematic manner. Furthermore, the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation will bring new City-level obligations and opportunities to improve the condition of habitats and restore degraded areas.

The preparations to establish a national urban park in Helsinki also add to the range of nature conservation methods. The aim of the national urban park is to safeguard a group of valuable natural and cultural

environments and strengthen ecological connections in the city structure. With these new management methods, nature conservation will be examined more holistically as part of the city’s sustainable development.

Biodiversity was safeguarded through the City’s own activities

The choice and timing of work methods can help safeguard biodiversity. Helsinki City Construction Services (Stara) adhere to the mowing restrictions under the Birds Directive and seek to carry out tree felling outside the nesting season whenever possible. Flowering plants in grassland areas and meadows can be left unmowed until they have had time to shed seeds. Where possible, fallen and felled trees are left to decay on the ground in public areas in connection with the felling of trees in poor condition, for instance. In some places, cut branches are left in place or used to make brushwood fences. In autumn, tree leaves are shredded and spread on grasslands to feed soil microfauna. This also reduces transport needs and improves the condition, nutrient status, aeration and water holding capacity of soil.

Large-scale infrastructure and real estate projects of Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd carry out an ecological

Nature reserves in Helsinki



Map 31 December 2025

Nature reseves

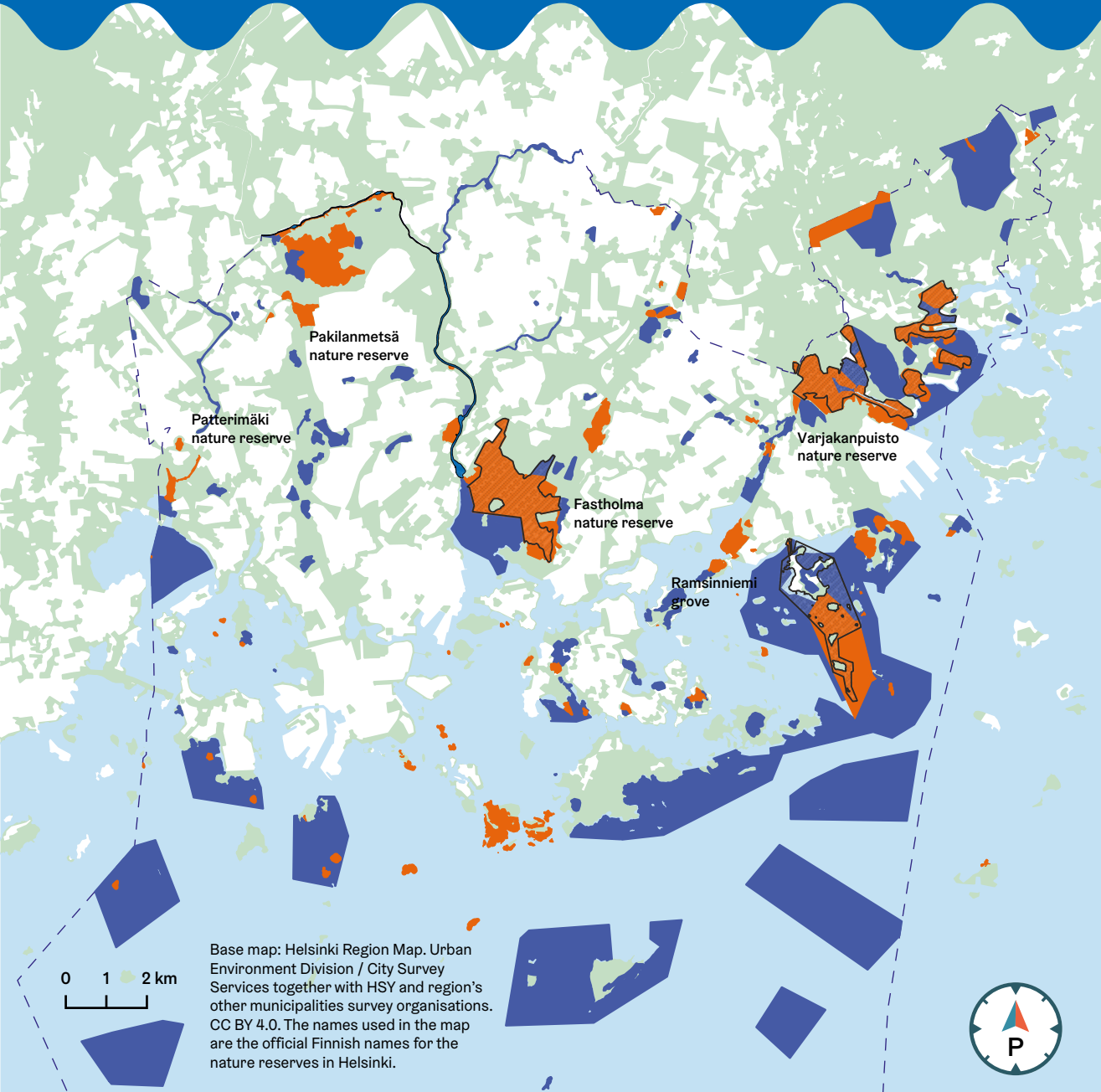
Nature reserves included in the Helsinki Nature Conservation Programme for 2025-2038

Natura areas

Green space

Resdential and industrial areas

Helsinki city border





assessment to select the solutions to be implemented. In 2025, a pilot project was carried out at Herttoniemi metro station to test the suitability of green roofs and walls for the metro station environment. For the duration of the renovation of Mannerheimintie, green walls were installed on the worksite fences and permanent green roofs were installed at tram stops.

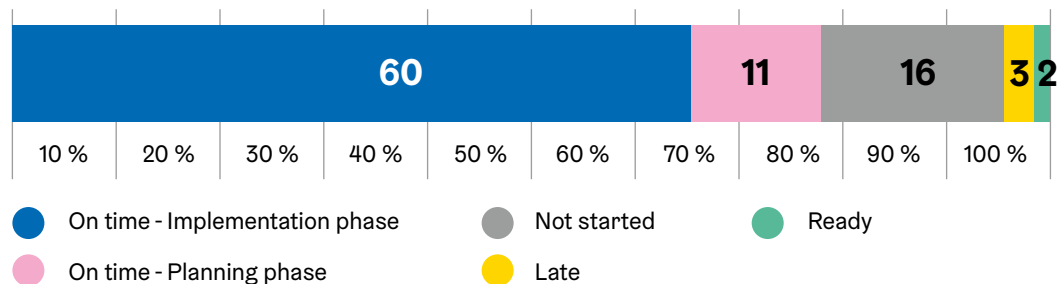
The restoration of the yards of educational institutions closer to their natural state became an important theme in 2025, particularly from the perspective of children's physical activity and climate change adaptation. Increasing the greenery and biodiversity of yards simultaneously supports climate change adaptation,

children's physical activity and play, contact with nature, wellbeing, comfort, and biodiversity. In 2025, the City started planning a development project to restore the yards of schools and daycare centres closer to their natural state.

The set of environmental documentation on street and park planning and implementation was updated by specifying the entries concerning the environment and nature and improving the functionality of the document templates.

The set of environmental documentation on street and park planning and implementation was updated by specifying the entries concerning the environment and nature and improving the functionality of the document templates.

Status of the actions included in City of Helsinki Biodiversity Action Plan 2021– 2028 on 3 March 2026



Water protection



The state of the aquatic environment in Helsinki is affected by the state of the Baltic Sea, stormwater quality, the load caused by worksite water, and nutrients from diffuse pollution. Water bodies are important for the wellbeing of Helsinki residents, the landscape and recreational use, and they are part of the ecological network. In accordance with the City Strategy (2025–2029), the City will cherish its unique island and marine nature and safeguard aquatic biodiversity. Water protection is implemented through the Baltic Sea Action Plan and judicial review by the environmental authority, among other things.

Helsinki set an ambitious goal to protect marine nature

In 2025, the City Board adopted the [City of Helsinki Nature Conservation Programme for 2025–2038](#). The programme includes 22 marine protected areas. By designating these marine areas as protected areas, the City aims to strengthen their marine biodiversity and improve their ecological status. As a result of the new City of Helsinki Nature Conservation Programme, the area covered by the protected marine areas will grow tenfold, from around one per cent to more than ten per cent of the city's total marine area.

Efforts to protect the Baltic Sea continued through the [Baltic Sea Action Plan](#), with measures including the restoration of aquatic vegetation, increasing the ocean literacy of residents and holding cooperation events with stakeholder organisations, among other things.

Monitoring of the marine area provides up-to-date information to support decision-making

The ecological status of Helsinki's coastal waters remains passable, and their chemical status is also below the targets set by the EU Water Framework Directive. The water quality is affected by several sources of pollution, such as the load from catchment areas, sea deposits and filling, the discharging of treated wastewater into the sea, waterway transport and the load from the Vantaa River.

The year 2025 was exceptionally warm, which clearly affected water quality in Helsinki's marine area. The mild and rainy winter increased both the amount of stormwater and diffuse pollution from the catchment area, which was evident in the cloudiness of the water and increased nutrient levels in the marine area. The hot summer increased the amount of things.



phytoplankton, and August saw abundant algal blooms as far as the open sea. In autumn, the decomposition of organic matter sinking to the seabed was reflected in elevated nutrient levels and a reduced oxygen level, particularly in deep basins.

In 2025, overflows in areas with combined sewage systems resulted in more untreated wastewater being released into the environment than in previous years, which was due to factors such as flooding caused by heavy rainfall and localised failures in the sewage system.

The impact of rainfall was particularly noticeable on the beaches along the Vantaa River

In the summer of 2025, 163 official samples were taken from Helsinki's beaches, and most of them were found to be of good hygienic quality. Of the samples taken from beaches along the coast, 96 per cent were of good hygienic quality. Along the Vantaa River, the impact of rainfall was reflected in the quality of swimming water, with 41 per cent of samples being of poor quality. After rain events, the quality of swimming water in the Vantaa River returned to normal within 3–5 days on average. The swimming water samples taken during periods of dry weather were of good quality.

The impact of rainfall was also reflected in water quality at other beaches. Overflows from the stormwater drains placed on the sand at Marjaniemi beach degraded swimming water quality during rainy weather.

After the end of the swimming season, the public beaches were classified based on the previous four years. Eleven beaches were classified as excellent or good. Two were classified as satisfactory. Pikkukoski beach, which is located along the Vantaa River, was classified as poor.

The amount and occurrence of blue-green algae on beaches were low in the summer of 2025. However, large amounts of blue-green algae were observed on a few beaches in late July. The City issued recommendations to avoid swimming whenever blue-green algae was observed.

During the 2025 swimming season, only one sample taken from Palettilampi beach had a small amount of blue-green algae, and the hygienic quality of the water was good across all samples. There was no recurrence of the large amount of gold algae observed during the previous swimming season or the associated abnormal odour. In the summer of 2025, there were suspicions of swimmer's itch occurring in Palettilampi.

At winter swimming spots, water quality was mostly good, but there were also occasional samples with poor quality, which will require water quality monitoring by the parties maintaining the winter swimming spots.

The quality of small water bodies was monitored

Water quality monitoring samples were taken from creeks in Helsinki three times during 2025. Additionally, water quality was monitored at the five most important trout creeks in Helsinki for a month using a continuous measurement device. In Longinoja, a continuous measurement device was used from May until the end of August to collect baseline data for the future nature reserve.

The measurement results from Longinoja and Mellunkylänpuro were normal during the monitoring periods. In Mustapuro, Haaganpuro and Mätäjoki, short-term peaks were observed for turbidity, high temperatures and high pH.

The measurements carried out in trout creeks in 2025 also included measuring concentrations of harmful substances, which had not been previously studied. The preliminary results showed that the concentrations of harmful substances in the creeks were mostly low, but higher concentrations of PFAS were observed in Longinoja compared to the other creeks.

There was active discussion on how to take habitats protected under the Water Act into account in various projects, and guidance and advice were provided regarding this matter. Additionally, the details of the Water Act sites identified in the City's map service were updated.

Environmental monitoring and supervision boosted water protection

The worksite water instructions for the Helsinki Metropolitan Area were implemented through site monitoring visits and active processing of hazard reports. Construction sites are one of the most

significant sources of stormwater pollutant loads in cities.

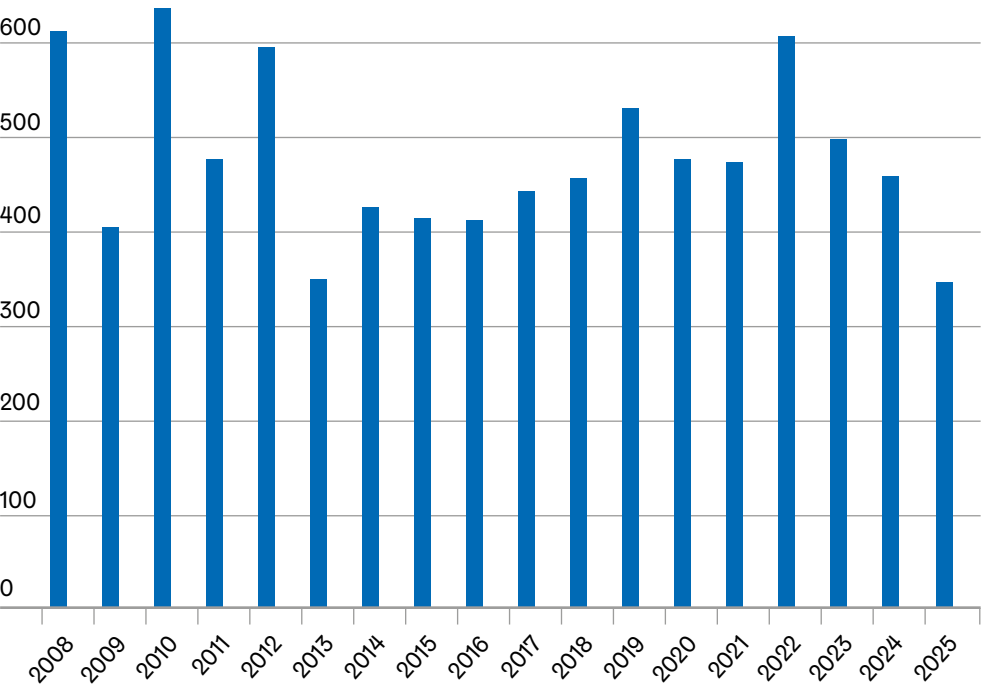
The City responded to all notifications concerning the start of drilling of geothermal wells by distributing instructions to the operators on how to adequately manage the drilling water. In the same context, the City informed the operators of the 'Sensitive water sites' map layer of the City's open map service. The purpose of this map layer is to help planners and contractors identify sites that require special care in their worksite water management.

In 2025, the City received hazard reports about damage caused by worksites, geothermal heat well drilling operations and wastewater in particular. The drilling of geothermal wells continued to cause damage to creeks as geothermal heating became more popular. Operators were actively monitored and advised to prevent drilling operations from causing damage to water bodies.

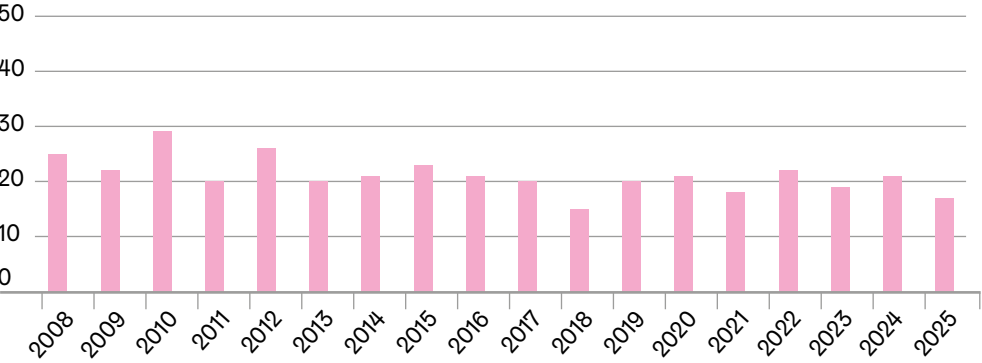
The negative environmental impact of graffiti removal was discussed with certain larger parties that requested graffiti removal. The goal is to produce guidelines on how to carry out graffiti removal in the most environmentally friendly way possible. The guidelines were prepared in cooperation between officials of the cities in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

The City prepared the Helsinki water management development plan for 2025–2034. The plan was adopted in early 2026. The plan emphasises surveying water management needs brought about by changes in the societal structure, as well as the water management needs of areas located outside networks. A new priority in the plan is to improve the management of the City's own water management assets. The aim is to lay a strong foundation for further planning of land use and water management, while supporting the development of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area's urban structure and water management over the next ten years.

Nitrogen load channeled to the sea from the Viikinmäki treatment plant, tons per year



Phosphorus load channeled to the sea from the Viikinmäki treatment plant, tons per year



After a break of a few years, systematic monitoring of horse stables and other animal houses was resumed thanks to the allocation of additional resources for environmental monitoring and supervision. During the year, the City carried out inspections on six animal houses, of which two were found to have shortcomings, mainly in manure handling, which led to re-

inspections. An inspection was also carried out on one large animal house that has an environmental permit.

Wastewater was treated efficiently in Viikinmäki

In 2025, 93.1 million cubic metres of water was pumped into the water supply network in the water supply area of the Helsinki

Region Environmental Services Authority (HSY), of which 49.7 million cubic metres was pumped into the Helsinki network.

The Viikinmäki wastewater treatment plant treated a total of 108 million cubic metres of wastewater, of which 73 million cubic metres came from Helsinki. Both the total amount of wastewater and the amount of wastewater from Helsinki were slightly smaller than in the previous year. The Viikinmäki wastewater treatment plant met all the environmental permit regulations. Combined sewer network overflows accounted for 0.06 per cent of the overall amount of wastewater in Helsinki.

The removal efficiency achieved in Viikinmäki in 2025 was 98 per cent for phosphorus, 97 per cent for biological oxygen demand and 94 per cent for nitrogen. The phosphorus and nitrogen loads from the Viikinmäki wastewater treatment plant on the marine area in front of Helsinki are presented in the figure below.

The City responded to oil spills

The Helsinki City Rescue Department responds to oil and chemical spills both on land and at sea. The Rescue Department is also prepared for oil spill response in the event of a maritime disaster. The number of oil spills in 2025 is shown in the table below.

Water protection is also part of the City's construction activities

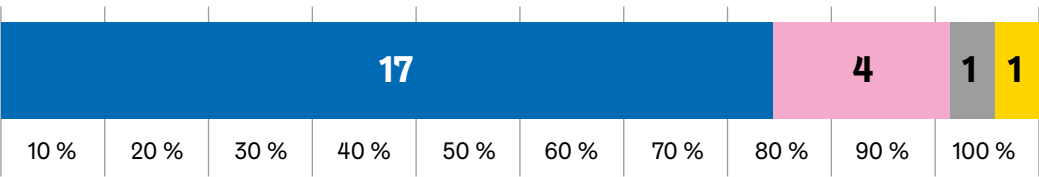
The City continued the work to establish solutions for worksite water management in its own construction activities. In 2025, the City introduced a monitoring plan for worksite water in sensitive water sites.

Stara expanded its use of stormwater filters, and the functionality of the filters was monitored automatically. As part of its innovation activities, Stara also developed stormwater filtration systems to more effectively remove solids from worksite water when working on clay soil before the water is discharged to the ground.

Oil spills in Helsinki 2020–2025

Oil spills in Helsinki	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
In marine or inland water areas or at harbours	50	68	47	49	54	80
In important groundwater areas	10	11	10	3	10	8
Elsewhere	302	286	259	225	257	269
Total	362	365	316	277	321	349

Status of the measures of the Baltic Sea Action Plan as of 31 December 2025



- On time - Implementation phase
- On time - Planning phase
- Not started
- Ready

Soil protection



Soil protection is important for carbon balance, biodiversity and human health. As the urban structure becomes denser, the restoration of contaminated lands poses a major challenge for Helsinki. Systematic use of soil also contributes to circular economy. Through cooperation in city planning and oversight, the City can ensure that no soil contamination occurs in its area.

Contaminated lands were studied and restored

The planning process involves studying and identifying contaminated land areas and using plan provisions to ensure that the future land use meets public health requirements. In 2025, 14 high-risk sites owned by the City of Helsinki were studied as part of the planning process to determine whether previous land use had caused soil contamination.

In Helsinki, there are areas being developed that require ground preparation before new use. As part of this ground preparation work, contaminated lands are restored to make the plots suitable for construction.

In 2025, besides planning, the City also commissioned soil contamination surveys at several other sites where construction is planned. Additionally, contaminated soil was remediated in several areas. The largest soil remediation projects took place in Kalasatama, the Koskela depot and Southern Postipuisto, where work was carried out to rehabilitate a former landfill site.

Environmental monitoring and supervision prevented soil contamination

As an environmental protection authority, the City protects the soil as part of ex-ante control of activities that cause



contamination. Additionally, ex-post control is carried out regularly based on risks.

In 2025, the City issued 42 decisions on the remediation of contaminated soil. The City also oversaw 63 industrial plants subject to an environmental permit or notification and 136 registered functions in 2025.

Planning the city with consideration to soil

The maximisation of permeable surfaces, the preservation of topsoil in vegetated areas, such as woodlands, and consideration of contaminated soil are all aspects of the multidisciplinary planning carried out in the detailed planning phase. For city block areas, the plot-specific green factor is a key means of control. It applies

to all construction of new buildings and additional construction, with the exception of detached house plots. The plot-specific green factor indicates the required amount of vegetation and water-retaining solutions in relation to the plot area. The green factor guides builders to preserve existing vegetation and thus also existing soil.

In green space design, the City promotes the principles of nature-based design. The aim is to design green spaces based on the soil, rather than changing soil layers based on the functions planned for the area. Another aim is to reduce the amount of materials that release microplastics into the soil and find alternatives for them. In park planning, the City uses recycled substrates where possible.

The contaminated soil transported for treatment or final disposal from the City's rehabilitation sites, and the costs incurred by the City from the rehabilitation of contaminated soil and landfills

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Soil, tonnes	100,100	216,320	110,000	276,700	493,000
Costs, euros	15,785,000	15,037,000	11,500,000	11,206,000	23,159,000

Air protection



In Helsinki, we mostly breathe fairly good outdoor air. However, from time to time and in some places, street dust, emissions from small-scale wood burning and exhaust emissions from traffic have adverse effects on people's health and the comfort of the environment. The health-based guideline values of the World Health Organization (WHO) are largely exceeded. The focus in air protection has shifted from exhaust emissions to combating street dust and emissions from small-scale wood burning.

Future limit values pose a challenge

The revised EU Ambient Air Quality Directive entered into force in December 2024. As a result, the binding EU limit values for air pollutant concentrations will become significantly stricter in 2030. If the new limit values are exceeded between 2026 and 2029, Helsinki's Air Quality and Noise Abatement Plan will need to be revised and expanded to correspond to the roadmap under the new Directive. It will be especially challenging for Helsinki to meet the new limit values for street dust, i.e. inhalable particles.

Exhaust emissions from traffic and emissions from energy generation decreased

The cessation of coal burning for energy generation in 2025 reduced sulphur dioxide concentrations almost to zero. Concentrations had already previously decreased significantly as a result of the construction of desulphurisation units at power plants and the introduction of stricter emissions standards for shipping, among other things.

Concentrations of nitrogen dioxide from vehicle exhaust gases have also decreased in recent years, thanks to advances in vehicle technology and the electrification of

vehicles. This trend is expected to continue. However, the WHO's annual guideline level was exceeded at almost all measuring points with heavy traffic.

Concentrations of fine particles have also decreased in traffic environments. However, exceptionally high concentrations were measured in February 2025 due to long-range transport of particles from abroad.

The City focused on promoting the use of friction tyres and developing street maintenance

Dusty days occur in spring in particular. Street dust is especially affected by traffic volumes and speeds, as well as spring weather conditions and street maintenance measures. In 2025, high levels of particulate matter in the air were also measured in late autumn after the start of the winter tyre season. The future EU daily limit value for street dust would have been exceeded in Helsinki in the busiest areas.

KATTIE, a two-year joint research project on the formation and control of street dust, was launched at the beginning of 2025 as a continuation to previous projects. The best practices identified in these projects have been adopted in the maintenance of the city's streets, significantly reducing



the amount of street dust. In spring, the City held a seminar where recent street dust control information was shared with experts from all over Finland. A new guide called *Pidä pihailma puhtaana* (Keep the outdoor air clean, available in Finnish only) was published for housing companies and property maintenance companies to promote street dust control by properties. Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd launched a trial on the use of a dust-binding agent to reduce street dust on tramways.

Research has shown that studded tyres cause a considerable proportion of street dust, as much as half, by grinding on the pavement. Accordingly, the City has set itself the objective of increasing the proportion accounted for by friction tyres of all winter tyres to 70 per cent by the 2030–2031 winter season. During the 2025–2026 winter season, the proportion of friction tyres was around 45 per cent, according to counts at parking halls. This proportion has been gradually increasing over the last few years.

Helsinki, in cooperation with other cities in the region and HSY, once again highlighted the benefits of friction tyres extensively through various communication channels, both in autumn and during the spring street dust season.

The City Board decided to extend the pilot ban on studded tyres on Lönnrotinkatu for the next three winter

seasons. As a change to the previous pilot, cars with studded tyres will no longer be allowed to drive on Lönnrotinkatu at all, except to enter a property's courtyard or a parking hall. The aim of this is to increase effectiveness and facilitate control.

In addition to communication and the pilot ban on studded tyres, further action is needed to meet the friction tyre target for 2030. Towards the end of the year, the City launched a study to identify the most effective actions.

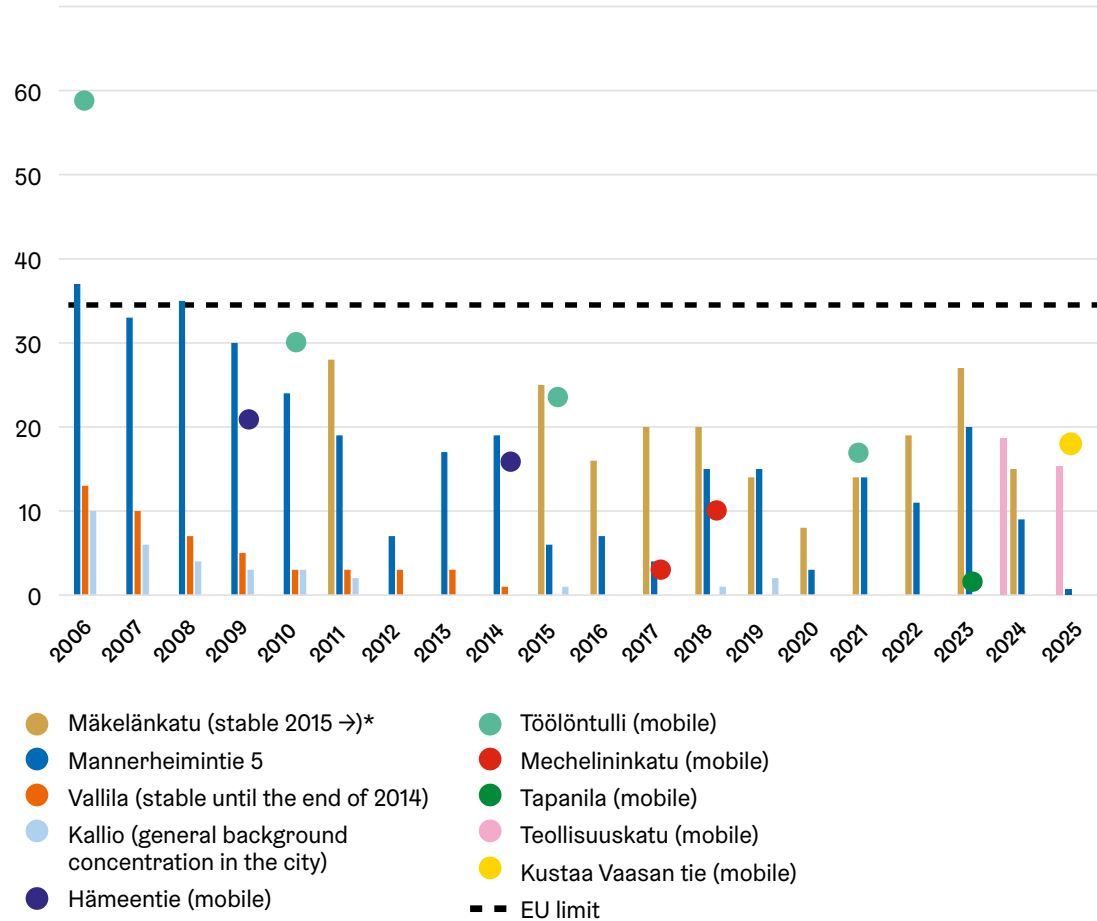
Wood burning techniques have a major impact on emissions

Wood burning in fireplaces occasionally causes high concentrations of particulate matter and associated black carbon and benzo[a]pyrene in detached house areas. On nights with freezing temperatures and no wind, the concentrations can climb significantly higher than in busy traffic areas at peak times. According to HSY's measurements, in some detached house areas in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area concentrations of the carcinogenic benzo[a]pyrene are close to the current EU target value, which will become a binding limit value in 2030. The mild winter of 2025 reduced the need for heating and, through this, the amount of emissions generated.

Helsinki, in cooperation with HSY, promoted cleaner wood burning techniques in online and social media,

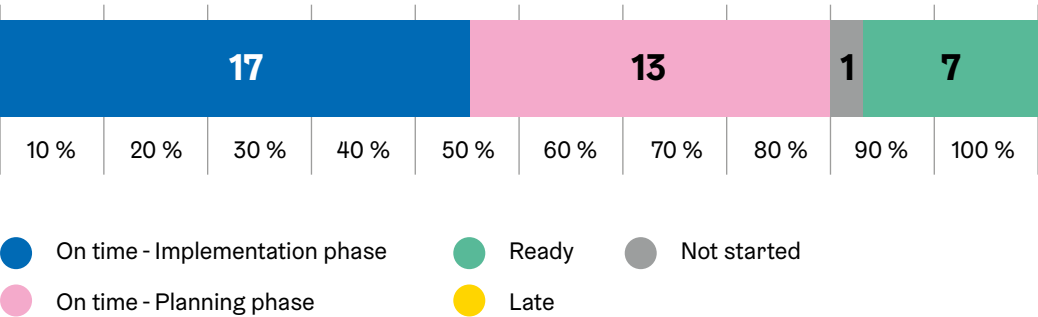
Particulate matter (PM₁₀) concentrations in ambient air

The number of days when the limit value level (50 µg/m³) for particulate matter (PM₁₀) was exceeded in the air quality measurement stations in Helsinki. The limit value is exceeded if the number of days with PM₁₀ levels above 50 µg/m³ is more than 35/year.



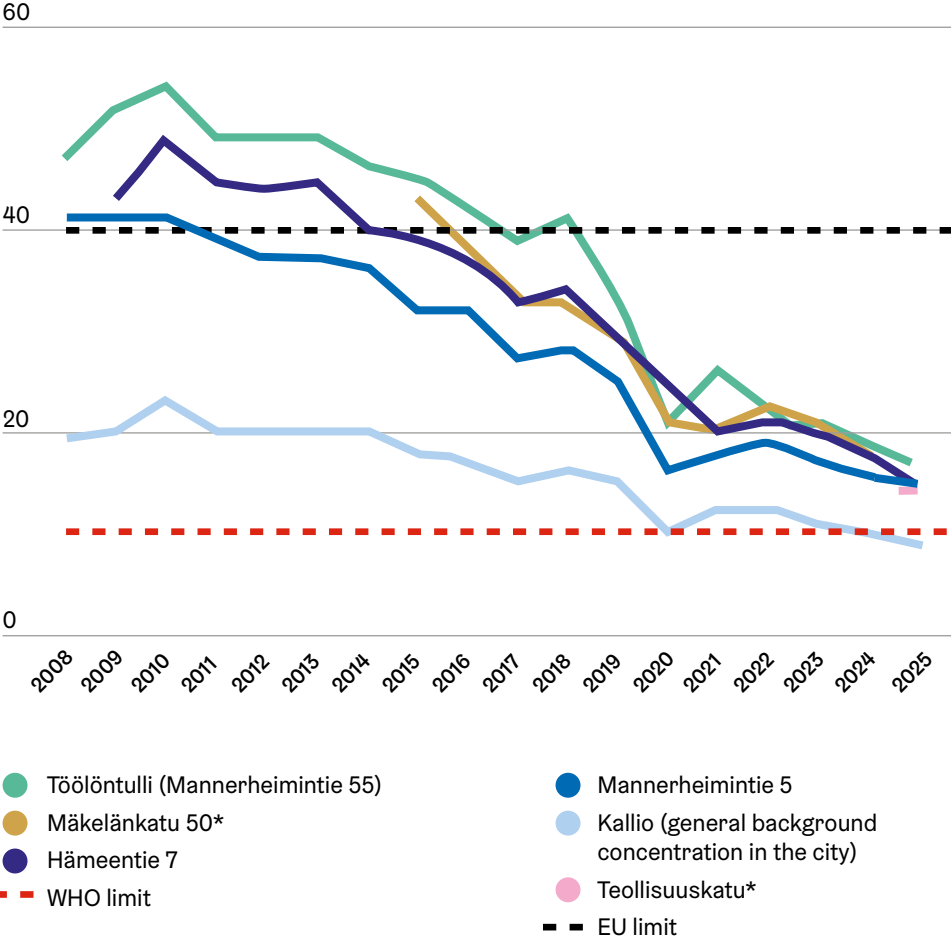
*The Mäkelänkatu measuring point was relocated to Teollisuuskatu for the duration of the renovation. The measurement results are not fully comparable.

Status of the measures of the Air Quality and Noise Abatement Plan as of 11 March 2026



Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations in ambient air

Annual average nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations measured by HSY's monitoring stations and passive samplers, µg/m³



*The Mäkelänkatu measuring point was relocated to Teollisuuskatu for the duration of the renovation. The measurement results are not fully comparable.

and this communication will be further developed in the future.

A combined plan guides air protection and noise abatement

Helsinki's first combined [Air Quality and Noise Abatement Plan \(ILME\)](#) contains the air protection and noise abatement objectives and measures for the period 2024–2029. The vision for 2040 presented in the ILME plan is that the air quality and soundscape of Helsinki are excellent. The plan sets ten objectives for 2024–2029 that the City will pursue through almost 40 measures. In particular, the measures focus on preventing street dust and emissions from small-scale wood burning, as well as reducing traffic noise.

Noise abatement



Noise significantly impairs the quality of the environment in Helsinki. The most significant cause of noise nuisance is traffic. Helsinki’s goal is to ensure a healthy and pleasant soundscape, reduce exposure to loud noise, safeguard the tranquillity of green spaces, prevent exposure to noise in sensitive sites and keep the noise from temporary activities at a reasonable level.

Many Helsinki residents were exposed to noise from road traffic

Traffic is the most significant cause of noise nuisance in Helsinki. The proportions of Helsinki residents living in areas exposed to noise from traffic are presented in the figure below. However, living in an area exposed to noise is not directly correlated with the indoor noise level. In newer residential buildings, traffic noise has been taken into account in the sound insulation design, and the noise level is also below the guideline values for indoor noise in buildings located in areas exposed to noise. Nevertheless, traffic noise can

make the living environment restless and reduce the comfort of courtyards and balconies, for instance.

The number of people exposed to noise has increased in recent years, particularly because urban infill and new residential areas are located close to busy traffic routes. The city-wide noise mapping is updated every five years, next in 2027.

Noise management is part of city planning

The most effective way to prevent noise nuisance is to take measures in the early stages of city planning. For this reason,

noise management is widely integrated into the City’s own planning processes and established practices.

Moreover, noise abatement is promoted through the City’s environmental protection objectives and the measures under the [Air Quality and Noise Abatement Plan](#). Among other measures taken in 2025, speed limits were widely lowered on streets near schools to improve road safety. Lowering the speed limit may also have local effects on noise levels.

Efforts were also made to improve the soundscape through pilot projects and cooperation with residents. The structure and functionality of mobile green fence elements were tested at the Mannerheimintie renovation site. This pilot project offered a new way to improve the comfort of the construction site environment. The pilot project continued the product development of green noise barriers.

Residents were asked about quiet areas

In a noisy city, the importance of peaceful and pleasant soundscapes is highlighted. A survey of residents conducted in spring 2025 showed that quiet and peaceful places can be found not only in large forest and park areas, but also in smaller, sheltered areas of the built environment. According to the survey, Helsinki residents consider quiet places to be very important.

In addition to the sound level, perceived tranquillity was also affected by nature experiences, the visual characteristics of the surrounding environment, functionality and the social environment. The survey provided valuable information on the places that Helsinki residents find peaceful and the factors affecting them. The sites were found to contribute significantly to the wellbeing of residents and the comfort of the urban environment.

The resident survey’s results are presented in the [Peaceful pockets of Helsinki](#) report, published in November.

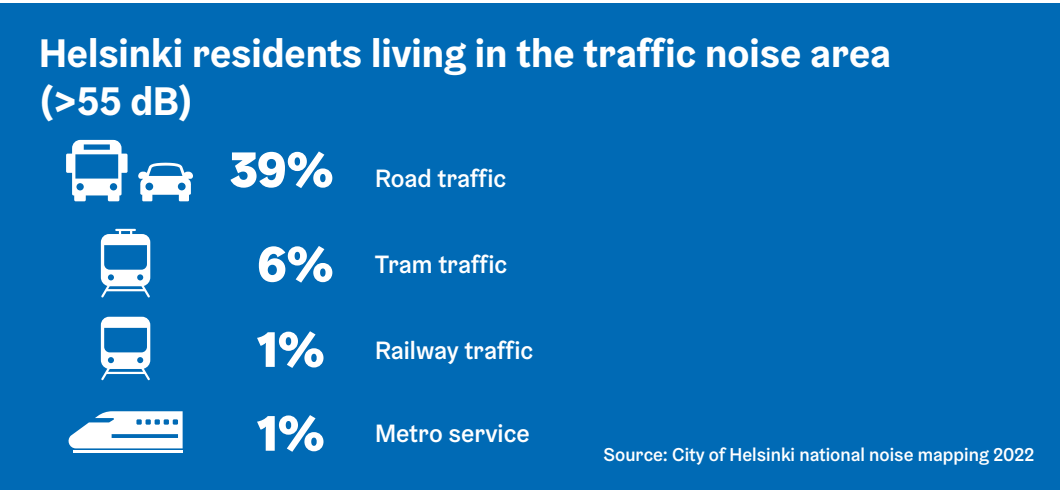
Noise nuisance was prevented through regulatory control

Other sources of environmental noise besides traffic include industrial plants, restaurant terraces and the building services systems of buildings, for example. Many construction works and open-air concerts, on the other hand, cause temporary, particularly disruptive noise. They can generate noise levels of up to 85–100 dB in residential areas.

The Environmental Protection Act provides for environmental permit, registration and notification obligations, the purpose of which is to prevent noise nuisance caused by industrial plants and temporary activities.

In 2025, the environmental protection authority of the City of Helsinki made 141 decisions on notifications concerning temporary activities that cause particularly disruptive noise or vibration. The decisions always included provisions on noise abatement. Furthermore, the environmental protection regulations of the City of Helsinki set a notification and negotiation obligation for temporary activities causing noise nuisance, and they also restrict noisy activities at night.

In 2025, the City of Helsinki received more than 300 complaints from residents regarding noise nuisance from industrial plants and temporary activities. Almost 60 per cent of these complaints concerned music noise and the rest mainly noise from construction and maintenance work. In addition to the environmental protection authority, noise nuisance control is supervised by health protection and building control authorities.



Indicators for City of Helsinki's Environmental Protection Targets

Conservation of biodiversity

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Share of natural areas in total land area	39 %	39 %	No change in the indicator
Canopy cover	30 %	31 %	The indicator has improved
Total number and area of protected areas and area as a percentage of land area	80 areas, 1,480.46 ha, 4.8 %	85 areas, 1,611.6 ha, 5.2 %	The indicator has improved

Water protection

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Proportion of Helsinki's groundwater areas that are in good condition	80 %	80 %	No change in the indicator
Number of protected marine areas, their total area, and area in relation to the city's marine area	1 area, 228.28 ha, 1 %	1 area, 228.28 ha, 1 %	No change in the indicator

Soil protection and remediation of contaminated soil

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Number of decisions to clean up contaminated land	43	42	No set direction of development
Quantity of permeable surfaces as a percentage of the total land area	63 %	63% (2024)	The indicator is calculated every two years

Air protection

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
The annual average nitrogen dioxide concentration at the Mannerheimintie measurement station (limit value of 40 µg/m³, as specified in the EU directive)	16.0 µg/m³	13.0 µg/m³	The indicator has improved
The annual average nitrogen dioxide concentration at the Mäkeläncatu/Teollisuuskatu measurement station (limit value of 40 µg/m³, as specified in the EU directive)	18.0 µg/m³ (Mäkeläncatu)	14.0 µg/m³ (Teollisuuskatu)	The Mäkeläncatu measuring point was relocated to Teollisuuskatu for the duration of the renovation. The measurement results are not fully comparable.
Number of days when the limit value level of particulate matter was exceeded at the Mannerheimintie measurement station (EU directive: max. 35 days per year)	9 days/a	1 day/a	The indicator has improved
Number of days when the limit value level of particulate matter was exceeded at the Mäkeläncatu/Teollisuuskatu measurement station (EU directive: max. 35 days per year)	15 days/a (Mäkeläncatu)	14 days/a (Teollisuuskatu)	The Mäkeläncatu measuring point was relocated to Teollisuuskatu for the duration of the renovation. The measurement results are not fully comparable.
Annual average amount of benzo(a)pyrene at the Vartiokylä measuring point	0.5 ng/m³	0.4 ng/m³	The indicator has improved

Noise abatement

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Number of residents exposed to road traffic noise (above 55 dB LAeq7-22)	256,541 (2022)	-	Data available every five years



Eyes on the future: Nature and habitats

- Cooperation will be further intensified to coordinate the city's growth and the preservation of local nature as early on in the planning process as possible. An ecological compensation model will be built for Helsinki to compensate for any loss of natural assets that cannot be avoided in the future. An assessment of the state of nature in Helsinki will be completed in 2026. Helsinki's LUMO programme will be developed based on the suggestions for improvement received in the mid-term review.
- Marine biodiversity will be enhanced by planting eelgrass in front of Hattusaari island and in the Hevosenkälahti bay area in Lattasaari as part of a wider collaboration to restore seabed habitats. The dissemination of the worksite water instructions for the Helsinki Metropolitan Area will be continued. The instructions for the Helsinki Metropolitan Area on the management of drilling water in geothermal wells will be updated. The survey of harmful substances in Helsinki's urban creeks will be continued and the research programme will be specified. The inventory of habitats protected under the Water Act will be continued and added to.
- The City is also preparing to rehabilitate the Iso-Huopalahti landfill site in the coming years. There is no designated party responsible for overall soil protection within the City organisation. The EU Soil Monitoring and Resilience Directive came into force in December 2025, and subsequent changes in national legislation may also affect the work of the City.
- The EU's binding limit values for air pollution will become significantly stricter in 2030. For Helsinki, keeping the concentrations of street dust under the limit values will be particularly challenging. New measures are needed, and existing measures need to be enhanced. Reducing the use of studded tyres plays an important role. The densification of the urban structure will reduce transport performance, but the mixing and dilution of air pollutants will also decrease.
- In addition to reducing noise levels in the city, attention will be increasingly focused on holistic improvement of the soundscape and the factors that affect it. In a city growing ever denser, the importance of noise abatement in sensitive sites and residential areas is even more pronounced.

Programmes and policies:

- [Helsinki's Air Quality and Noise Abatement Plan 2024–2029](#)
- [Baltic Sea Action Plan 2024–2028](#)
- [The City of Helsinki Nature Conservation Plan 2025–2038](#)
- [City of Helsinki Biodiversity Action Plan 2021–2028](#)
- [City of Helsinki's Environmental Protection Targets 2040](#)
- [The City of Helsinki's Environmental Watch \(in Finnish\)](#)



Resources and management

Circular economy



By transitioning to a circular economy, we can conserve diminishing natural resources and reduce waste generation. Moreover, a circular economy is an effective way of combating climate change. By reducing the use of virgin raw materials, we can also reduce emissions from the production of those materials. The Helsinki City Strategy (2025–2029) states that Helsinki is a bigger player than its size when it comes to the circular economy.

Reinforcing the steering of the circular economy

In Helsinki, circular economy work is guided by [The City of Helsinki's Action Plan for the Circular Economy](#). With regard to soil materials, the City pursues its objectives through the [Principles for the Utilisation of Excavated Soil, Aggregates and Recycled Materials](#) (in Finnish only). The City is also working to reduce littering in Helsinki through [the Litter Control Action Plan](#).

The circular economy was also one of the economic policy priorities set out in the City Strategy. In 2025, the City prepared its commitment to the national Circular Economy Green Deal. Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd drew up its own commitment, which was approved in autumn 2025. The Green Deal and other recent developments kicked off the process to update the Action Plan for the Circular Economy.

New operating models were created through collaboration

In 2025, the Food Waste Ecosystem project carried out a total of nine pilot projects in collaboration with various operators of the City, food service providers in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and organisations. These pilot projects were related to reducing food waste and making use of surplus food. The pilot projects led to the creation of three operating models for donating surplus food to food aid organisations, a [publication](#) (in Finnish only) covering the topic more broadly, and related training.

Palvelukeskus Helsinki took part in the Proactive Services project, which aimed to use data on food waste and consumption to facilitate the placement of proportionate meal orders. Additionally, Palvelukeskus Helsinki partnered with the University of Helsinki to look into the possibility of predicting food consumption and waste by using existing data and artificial intelligence.

The Arabia Circular Hub Helsinki project, partly funded by the EU, accelerates the cooperation, innovation and growth of small and medium-sized circular economy companies. In 2025, the project opened ARKI 135, a meeting place for circular economy operators and a showroom for sustainable solutions that is located in the Arabia area of Helsinki. More than 50 companies have been actively involved in these activities. The project is being implemented by Forum Virium Helsinki and Business Helsinki.

The three-year BALTIPLAST project, which was funded by the EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme and ended in December 2025, produced a publication called [the Plastics Roadmap for Helsinki](#) (in Finnish only). The roadmap was designed to serve as a comprehensive information package that compiles best practices and policies for the sustainable use of plastics. The objectives include prioritising the circular economy and recycling of plastics in the City's operations, among other things.

The City focused on the reuse of products

DigiHelsinki puts the City's ICT equipment and services out to tender. Equipment suppliers are required to maintain a cycle stock of equipment and always prioritise second-hand equipment when fulfilling equipment orders for City staff. In 2025, a total of 517 workstations and 225 phones were supplied for internal reuse. A total of 1,868 workstations and 872 phones were delivered elsewhere for reuse. Of the Education Division's student computers, 4,302 were made available for reuse.

Stara's logistics centre furnished its new premises with second-hand furniture. Additionally, Stara carried out a pilot project in which doors and windows from a primary school renovation project were sold directly to customers.

The City addressed littering in a variety of ways

Within the context of the Litter Control Action Plan, the City continued the communication campaign by participating in events, among other methods. In collaboration with Green Building Council Finland, the City organised a training session called 'Major infrastructure projects with a circular economy approach'. With young people, the City implemented a communication campaign on littering. The process to update the action plan began in spring 2025.

The City monitors littering and has adjusted the placement of waste bins and their emptying frequency as appropriate. Stara takes care of the cleaning of coastal waters and nearby islands in a responsible manner, which helps reduce the amount of litter in fragile marine nature.

The circular economy was promoted as part of the planning of the built environment

In land use planning, the City has identified the need for intermediate storage areas for circular economy materials and carried out development work to take them into account in planning. Planning based on the principles of circular economy took place in places such as the circular economy block located in the Vallila industrial area, where, besides preserving some of the existing frames, the aim has been to dismantle and reuse load-bearing structures while keeping them intact.

The objectives for ecologically sustainable construction that apply in all projects of the City's Facilities Service include durability and repairability. A reuse assessment is carried out for demolition sites. The same procedure is also followed in the City's housing production. The City of Helsinki's draft Circular Economy Green Deal commitment, drawn up in 2025, set the objective of taking the circular economy into account in all projects.

In housing production, design guidelines were developed to reduce the use of



harmful substances in construction, which also supports the reuse of building components. Circular economy surveys were carried out in Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd's construction projects, which made it possible to avoid demolition, among other things.

A storage and maintenance building was built in Mustikkamaa using reused parts

The City carried out a practical trial to see how reused building components could be used to construct a building that is technically functional, of high architectural quality and durable. This resulted in the completion of a City storage and maintenance building in Mustikkamaa, built almost entirely with reused building components. The materials were sourced from a number of different demolition sites. The project stemmed from a design competition organised for students by Helsinki's Circular Economy Cluster Programme and Aalto University.

Helsinki's Circular Economy Cluster comprises 180 organisations. It piloted new

solutions in collaboration with businesses and organised training sessions and innovation challenges. The use of more sustainable building products was piloted on the Materialising platform, and the products' EPD information was used to support decision-making. The KOPPI project promoted the reuse of building components and developed the reuse process.

Practical circular economy solutions were implemented at numerous sites

The European Union's LIFE programme seeks to find solutions to achieve the objectives of the Plastics Roadmap for Finland. In Helsinki, studies were carried out on ways to reduce the use of plastics in construction, reuse artificial turf and utilise old plastic structures that need to be removed, as well as installation waste from the installation of new products.

The impacts of circular substrates were studied by monitoring the Konala scenic embankment, which is made of crushed concrete, and the biochar substrates in Kalasatama. Slope supports made

from recycled concrete were piloted in Alppipuisto, and timber and metal were reused in the repair of environmental structures. At park and sports facility construction sites, fixtures were recycled and spare parts were salvaged from outdoor structures. Benches were refurbished and reinstalled at Myllypuro Sports Park's local exercise area, and a large climbing frame was installed in Pukinmäki. In the renovation of the piers at Sarvasto marina, the old floats were reused. Used sand from sandboxes and safety gravel were reused in dog parks, among other places.

Trees felled at construction sites were used to make tables and benches for nature reserves. The dog toilet made from decaying wood in Pääskylä Park was found to divert the effects of dog walking away from the adjacent line of street trees. Trees were left to decay on the ground, and brushwood was used to make fences. In Annala, a pilot project was conducted to compost plant waste at high temperatures in order to prevent the spread of invasive alien species. Common reed was trialled as a safety surface material at a playground in Porthaninpuistikko and as mulch in

green spaces. Meanwhile, the Ala-Malmi Park construction project piloted circular economy reporting to improve material tracking.

In construction carried out at Helsinki's own construction sites, 36 per cent of the excavated soil was reused. This reuse allowed the City to save roughly EUR 4.1 million and 1.1 million litres of fuel. Demolition materials were used as fill material at the Koskela depot, for example.

Recycled stone materials were used not only in construction and maintenance projects in urban areas, but also in the construction of routes in nature reserves. The use of recycled stone materials resulted in a cost saving of EUR 355,000 compared to buying new stone materials. The use of recycled substrates saved EUR 400,000.

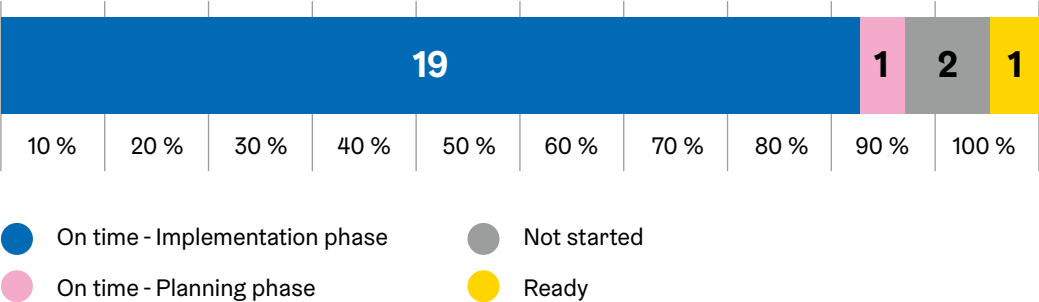
The recycling fields in Hernesaari, Jätkäsaari, Kyläsaari, Kivikko and Vuosaari continued to operate. The Malminkenttä recycling and logistics field was opened, and plans were finalised for the new Satamakaari recycling field in Vuosaari. At snow dump sites, efforts were made to develop the recovery and reuse of salt, recyclable materials and water.



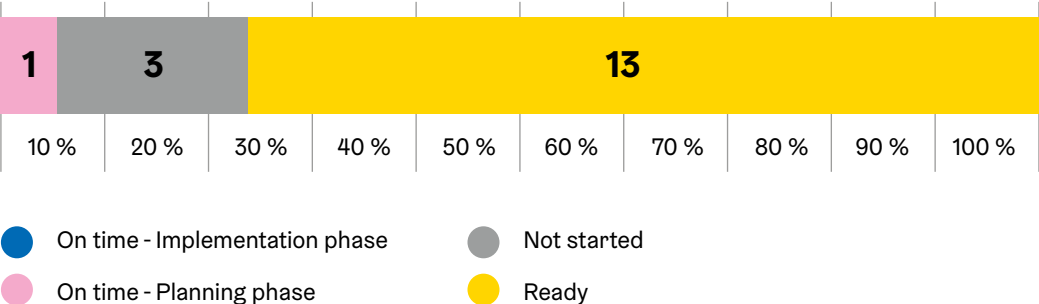
Emissions reductions achieved through the circular economy in Helsinki 2025

Actions	Emissions savings compared to new purchases (kg CO ₂ -ekv.)	Equivalent to the annual car emissions of the following number of average Finns. (1,799 kg CO ₂ -ekv./year, source: Sitra)
5,055,323 books borrowed from the City's libraries	5,662,000	3,147
3.1 million items provided for reuse from the Helsinki stores of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre	9,700,000	5,392
Reuse of stone materials from the built environment	224,000 (compared to Chinese stone) 78,000 (compared to domestic stone)	125 43
Reuse of soil from the City's construction sites	3,086,000 (emissions savings from transport)	1,715
Reuse of recycled substrates	545,000 (emissions savings from transport)	303

The status of the actions included in the City of Helsinki's Action Plan for the Circular Economy as of 31 December 2025



Status of the measures of the Litter Control Action Plan as of 31 December 2025



Responsible procurement



Procurement is one of the key ways to implement the City Strategy (2025–2029) and many of the action plans related to environmental protection. In line with its City Strategy, Helsinki is working to reduce indirect emissions and the environmental impacts of its procurements. The aim is to assess the environmental impacts of all procurements by the Helsinki Group and, as a general rule, pursue ambitious environmental targets in all procurements.

Environmental criteria were used in around 60 per cent of procurements

In 2025, the City's major divisions and enterprises used environmental criteria in an average of 59 per cent of their procurements exceeding the threshold value when examined as individual procurements. Examined in euros, the average was 70 per cent of the total value of the procurements.

The most comprehensive use of environmental criteria was seen in Palvelukeskus Helsinki, which included environmental criteria in each of its procurements. Environmental criteria were included in 95 per cent of the total value of procurements by the Education Division and 82 per cent of the total value of procurements by the City Executive Office. Stara used environmental criteria in 96 per cent of its procurements when examined as individual procurements. The corresponding figure for the Urban Environment Division and the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services

Division was 37 per cent. The annual fluctuation in percentages is affected by the differences between procurements and changes in practices.

The most used environmental criteria were those supporting circular economy, those reducing the environmental impact of vehicles and non-road mobile machinery, and those requiring an ecolabel. Also highlighted were the reduction of harmful substances, the requirement for an environmental management system, and consideration of energy efficiency, renewable energy and the carbon footprint. Commitment to the Green Deals for emission-free worksites and the reduction of harmful substances was well reflected in the use of environmental criteria.

Several development projects were launched during the year

The City Strategy (2025–2029) highlights the role of procurement, particularly in reducing indirect climate and environmental impacts and supporting

ethical behaviour. In 2025, a code of conduct was drawn up for Helsinki's contracted suppliers. It requires contracted suppliers to ensure, through their own agreements, that they meet the requirements of the code of conduct in their own operations and supply chain. The City Executive Office started the process to update the City's procurement strategy. Additionally, the procurement management information system project progressed to the procurement phase. Environmental criteria for software procurements were included in the procurement of the information system.

In the spring, the City started work to update the environmental criteria for the City's vehicles and transport services. In addition to climate emissions, these criteria will reduce emissions affecting air quality and traffic noise in the City's own vehicle and transport service procurements. Besides revising the criteria, the update involved developing the user-friendliness of the criteria through service design.

As a major public procurer, the City is involved in the national Vauhti network, launched in 2025, and its three developer groups. During its first year of operation, the network set out to improve procurements in practice and published four 'Biodiversity in procurement' guides to support the identification and mitigation of environmental impacts in procurements.

During the year, the Urban Environment Division developed a division-wide procurement classification tool, where one of the areas of procurement assessment and classification is the assessment of the sustainability of procurements from the perspectives of risks, objectives and impacts, among other things. The tool was piloted in late 2025 and rolled out more widely in early 2026.

The travel instructions for City employees were updated

The number of flights taken by City employees and the amount of climate



emissions generated by this once again decreased slightly from the previous year. The City's travel instructions state that the carbon neutrality and low-emission perspectives need to be taken into account in all official travel by employees. The travel instructions were updated to better facilitate travelling overland. Employees are encouraged to undertake official travel within Finland by means other than flying, and they must also use their discretion when planning other travel and favour low-emission modes of travel.

The electrification of construction sites requires a detailed plan

For the most part, Helsinki has progressed on schedule with regard to the Green Deal for emission-free worksites, but future targets pose a challenge. In the procurement contracts concluded in 2025, emission class requirements for non-road mobile machinery were included in

all applicable contracts of the Facilities service and housing production, as well as local public area maintenance contracts. Among infrastructure contracts put out to tender, such requirements were specified for 93 per cent of the contracts.

Renewable diesel accounted for 63 per cent of the diesel fuel used by Stara. Stara obtained wind energy certificates for the year's electricity consumption. Stara's Logistics division included Green Deal requirements in all of its subcontracts. In late autumn, Stara made a procurement decision in cooperation with the Cities of Imatra, Kotka and Lappeenranta regarding the piloting of a 15-tonne electric excavator and a charging solution.

Although the Green Deal target for the percentage accounted for by alternative fuels (20%) cannot be achieved at the City level by the beginning of 2026, the City will continue to work towards this target and seek to identify the most effective methods. In order to achieve the target related to alternative fuels, there is a need for a nationwide and City-wide detailed plan, and market dialogue is key to its implementation.

Reducing harmful substances through procurements

The agreement period for the Green Deal for reducing harmful substances in the procurements of the early childhood education sector came to an end. This commitment gave a significant boost to the City's chemical-smart procurements, and the chemical criteria developed were also used in other procurements in 2025, where applicable. According to the final evaluation of the Green Deal, the coordinated cooperation was cost-effective and procurement units are also committed to using the criteria in the future.

The NonHazCity 3 project, which ended in late 2025, organised a proactive market dialogue on harmful substances in construction and published the 'Building material catalogue for tox-free construction' and the 'Chemical-smart

construction' digital training package, among other things. Awareness of harmful substances in construction was raised through an open webinar, and training sessions were organised for the City's housing production, Helsinki City Housing Company Ltd (Heka) and Stara. As a result of the NonHazCity 3 project, the guidelines provided by the City's housing production and Heka for designers and contractors were updated, and harmful substances in construction are now taken better into account.

In 2025, the ChemClimCircle 2 project studied the potential for reducing harmful substances in the preparation of procurements for detergents, cleaning agents and workwear. In procurements for workwear, the use of the textile criteria of the Green Deal for early childhood education will be extended to new product categories, and the chemical criteria of the national Criteria Bank will be used, among other things.

Achieving the food targets in procurements requires multifaceted cooperation

The City's food procurements use comprehensive sustainability criteria that also take into account climate and environmental impacts. Food service procurements of the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division set environmental criteria for the foodstuffs, detergents and cleaning agents used in the service and related transport. The criteria for food service procurements for daycare centres and schools include the number of vegetarian dishes, compliance with the WWF Seafood Guide, domestic content, provision of organic food, eco-labelled cleaning agents, a sustainability plan and actions to reduce food waste, among other things. Procurement units monitor the implementation of the criteria.

In accordance with the City's environmental protection targets, the Helsinki Group aimed to halve the

consumption of meat and dairy products from the 2019 level by 2025.

The amount of meat purchased for the resident and patient meals provided by Palvelukeskus Helsinki has decreased by 24.8 per cent from 2019 to 2025. In 2025, the amount of meat consumed was 39.8 g/meal/client. Changes to the resident and patient menu have focused on reducing red meat and replacing it with chicken and fish. In 2025, vegetarian dishes were available at lunch once a week, every week. The amount of dairy products purchased for the resident and patient meals provided by Palvelukeskus Helsinki increased by 8.2 per cent from 2019 to 2025. In 2025, the amount of dairy products consumed was 173.7 g/meal/client.

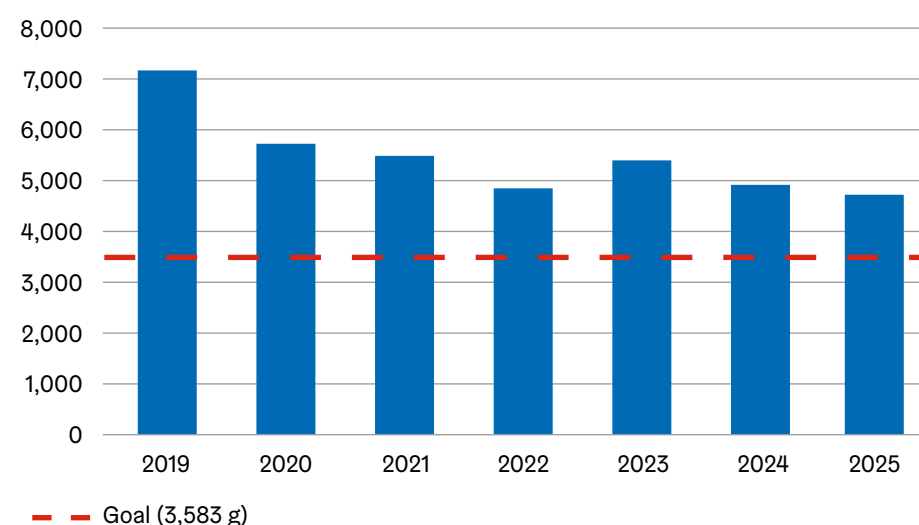
The amount of meat purchased for daycare centre and school meals was surveyed for all food service providers for the first time in 2021. The amount of meat purchased in 2021 was about 22 g/client/meal and about 23.9 g/client/meal in 2025. The exceptional arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the volume

of purchases in 2021. The amount of dairy products, calculated for all food service providers for the first time in 2025, was about 88.8 g/client/meal.

The annual use of meat in the daycare and school meals provided by Palvelukeskus Helsinki decreased by 32 per cent from 2019 to 2025. The annual change in the amount of meat purchased is shown in the graph below.

The goal of halving the consumption of meat and dairy products was not achieved on schedule, but work towards the goal continues. A new target date has been set for 2030. The food served by the City's food services is in line with national nutrition recommendations and client group specific meal guidelines. The shift towards a more plant-based menu will be implemented so that clients still perceive the food as tasty, food waste is minimised and client group specific needs are met.

Use of meat at schools and daycare centres, g/client/year



Environmental awareness and responsibility



Environmental efforts need the input of all Helsinki residents. The aim of environmental education is to change values, knowledge, skills and behaviours to be in line with the principles of sustainable development and to increase environmental awareness. Environmental awareness and responsibility are promoted as part of the City's services, eco-support activities and environmental protection sub-programmes.

The Sustainable Development Fox model received a European prize

Developing a positive relationship with the environment and appreciating biodiversity are included in the curriculum objectives for all levels of education. In Helsinki, this work is supported by a network of several environmental education operators, which started holding meetings in 2025.

In environmental education provided as part of early childhood education and the first two grades of basic education, the emphasis is on outdoor pedagogy and using local nature as a learning environment. Two daycare centres and two comprehensive schools, in cooperation with Environmental School Polku of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre, launched cultivation activities and developed pedagogical content for them. Several other early childhood education and basic education units also planned and launched activities focused on allotment beds.

Helsinki's Sustainable Development Fox model strengthens the sustainability knowledge of children in early childhood education and the first two grades of basic education. The Fox model was awarded as one of the best sustainability education practices in Europe at the European Commission's Education for Climate event in autumn 2025.

At general upper secondary schools, students' skills were nurtured through the Carbon-neutral Helsinki course in particular. The course strengthens students' knowledge, agency and ability to make a difference. The Helsinki Finnish Adult Education Centre and Swedish Adult Education Centre Arbis organised a wide range of courses and lectures on topics such as crafts with recycled materials, vegetarian food and climate change mitigation.

Helsinki Vocational College (Stadin AO) has prepared circular economy surveys for all industries, making use of its own sales

points and Young Entrepreneur activities in the preparation process. To genuinely involve students in circular economy activities and their development at the institution, Stadin AO has facilitated the recognition of these activities as part of the students' studies.

Daycare centres and educational institutions were supported with environmental advice

The Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority (HSY) provided daycare centres and educational institutions with free-of-charge lessons, materials and visits to support environmental education. The aim was to promote environmentally friendly everyday skills and increase awareness of the impact of one's actions on the environment. The education provided included indoor, outdoor and distance learning. The lessons were implemented by HSY's cooperation partner, Environmental School Polku of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre.

A total of 6,240 children and young people in Helsinki attended the environmental education lessons provided by HSY. A total of 355 hours of advisory lessons were provided. Around 900 schoolchildren, students and teachers from Helsinki visited the Viikinmäki wastewater treatment plant and the Ruskeasanta Sortti station.

Residents were made aware of sustainable choices in everyday life

In 2025, the 'Sustainable daily choices' project organised a total of 28 discussion and information sessions, visits to educational institutions and workshops in cooperation with different City operators and organisations. The project also participated in five public residents' events. In total, the project reached more than 800 people. The project produced material on circular economy in everyday life, water consumption and littering in multiple languages. The multilingual 'Sustainable daily choices' website was also completed.

Different services of the City and their partners organised an 'Everything Circulates' circular economy event for residents at Cultural Centre Stoa. The main themes of the event were fashion and the environmental impact of clothing. The event programme included tips on things such as how to clean sneakers, circular economy fashion shows and various repair and customising workshops. An estimated 400 visitors attended the event.

Mobility-related environmental education encouraged people to be physically active

The aim of mobility-related environmental education is to raise children and young people's awareness of the impact of transport and mobility on the environment and their own health, and to encourage them to choose sustainable modes of travel.

The City's Environmental Services in collaboration with the Education Division produced an animated video on sustainable mobility: [Fox friends go cycling – sustainable mobility in the city](#) (in Finnish only). The target group of the video is children in early childhood education and primary school.

Instructors of after-school activities were trained to lead sustainable mobility workshops (Kulkuri afternoons) as part of the activities. As a result of the training, sustainable mobility materials were sent to around 700 children in total.

A school commute survey focusing on modes of transport was conducted among the parents of pupils of Arabia Comprehensive School. The aim of the survey was to collect information on how pupils travel to and from school, the volume of pick-up and drop-off traffic and the factors that affect these. Another aim was to provide families with information on this theme and the benefits of physical activity. Additionally, workshops on sustainable mobility were organised for pupils in the 2nd grade at Arabia Comprehensive School to help them practise riding a bike, among other things.

Harakka Nature Centre and guided tours attracted people to learn in nature

Harakka Nature Centre attracted visitors to learn in archipelago nature. Around 10,000 people visited Harakka island by ferry between May and September. The island hosted 85 island adventures for early childhood education groups. For schoolchildren, the island hosted 40 nature study days and 70 environment study days. The island also offered a Baltic Sea camp and archipelago nature camp, four environmental education courses and guided island tours on Saturdays. On Helsinki Day, the island hosted a nature and art event open to all, and a family fishing day was held there in the autumn.

A total of 31 free-of-charge guided nature tours were organised in Helsinki. Additionally, seven island adventures were organised for families on Harakka island on summer Sundays, and nomenclature walks were held in six suburban areas. Nature awareness was promoted by adding information signs about protected natural habitats to coastal meadows on the islands of Lauttasaari and Koivusaari. The protected Tullisaari oak tree, which has been granted the status of a natural monument, also received a sign with information on its biodiversity.

To make it easier for visitors to get around in nature, the City compiled accessibility information on 25 nature trails and marked routes in the accessibility app. The information is available in the City service map and the 'Outdoor activities, parks and nature destinations' website.

Signposted routes and resting places were created in the nature reserves of the Stansvik grove and mine area and Hallainvuori.

The City of Helsinki contributes to the funding of the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia. Haltia hosted a total of 41 free-of-charge nature school days for school groups from Helsinki. Additionally, schools in Helsinki were offered discounted tickets to Haltia's exhibitions and affordable guided tours of

Haltia and the surrounding environment.

A sustainable everyday life and future was a theme in cultural and leisure activities

Cultural Services focused on making art-based environmental education and a sustainable future visible in theatres, galleries and course activities. The City Museum hosted an exhibition called 'Trash! What we leave behind', aimed at families with children. Cultural Centre Stoa was certified as a nature school.

Helsinki's libraries celebrated Eco Week together with other Nordic libraries. For pupils in the fifth grade, Cultural Services organised sessions focusing on the themes of a sustainable future, climate change and multiliteracy. A mobile game was used to increase pupils' understanding of the concepts of sustainable development and environmental literature.

Youth Services carried out numerous everyday actions for the environment, such as organising planting and clean-up campaigns, recycling and customisation events and excursions to local nature. Nature school activities were expanded to groups in preparatory education. The aim was to make nature accessible to young people who were previously unfamiliar with nature, and at the same time encourage participation in shared experiences.

Sports Services strengthened the environmental awareness of the staff through communication, targeted training, and guidelines on things such as waste sorting, chemical safety, circular economy and more sustainable everyday life.

Helsinki residents were offered volunteer work events, advisory services and citizen science

Helsinki residents once again had the opportunity to get involved in environmental protection by taking part in volunteer work events and activities. With support from the City, residents organised 189 volunteer-based environmental clean-up events that attracted more than 22,000 participants in total. Both residents and

the City organised several dozen volunteer work events to combat invasive alien species, attracting hundreds of volunteers. There were also hundreds of volunteers who participated in picking up litter and combatting invasive alien species through Park Pal activities.

In the spring, the City approached allotments, allotment gardens and summer hut areas with an information letter encouraging people to combat invasive alien species on their land with support from the City.

In Uutela, a nature guidance pilot project was organised to promote responsible activities in nature. During the summer season, two nature advisors toured the area and talked to people about the ground rules of responsible activities in nature, such as conservation orders regarding nature reserves, everyone's rights and biodiversity. The nature advisors also cleaned up the traces of illegal campfire sites to prevent new ones from being created. The successful pilot project also involved cooperation with a local environmental organisation called Pro Uutela.

A separate collaboration with special services for immigrants produced a set of nature guidance materials for groups that included simplified and multilingual instructions for responsible activities in nature.

The City continued its citizen science partnership with the University of Jyväskylä. The new point count route established in the Broända creek valley was added to the 'Muuttolintujen kevät' (Spring of Migratory Birds) app. People made point-count recordings along the five established routes.

The Ilmastoinfo service provided advice on energy and climate change adaptation

HSY's Ilmastoinfo service together with the City held an energy-themed evening for housing companies at City Hall. The event included presentations by experts, a panel on climate change adaptation and a mini fair by operators in the energy industry.

Ilmastoinfo organised 23 energy-themed training sessions for decision-makers in housing companies and one training session for people living in detached houses in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Additionally, four housing company energy expert training courses were held for decision-makers in housing companies. Personal energy advice was offered by email and phone and at local residents' events. Furthermore, property managers and those studying to become one received training from the energy experts of Ilmastoinfo.

A total of 25 articles were published on the [Ilmastoinfo website](#) (in Finnish) on topics such as saving energy, water consumption, sustainable consumption, solar power, electric cars and ways to adapt to a changing climate.

Advisory services and communication related to climate change adaptation were established alongside Ilmastoinfo's energy advice.

City employees are concerned about the environment

In January 2025, Helsinki together with six other cities conducted [a survey on the environmental attitudes and awareness of the cities' employees](#) (in Finnish).

Employees are widely concerned about environmental and climate issues. Economic changes and increased general uncertainty were reflected in the responses. For example, the simultaneous protection of both biodiversity and economic growth was considered to be more uncertain than in the previous survey conducted in 2018.

The results show that there is a particular need to provide more information on environmental and climate issues and increase employee involvement in things such as the preparation of climate and environmental programmes. The visibility of environmental and climate issues in preparation and decision-making and the commitment of management to environmental and climate work were rated highest in Helsinki and Vantaa.

Environmental management



The purpose of environmental management is to ensure that the environmental protection targets are taken into account in all of the Helsinki Group's operations and decision-making. According to the City Strategy (2025–2029), climate and nature form one of the cornerstones of the City's activities. The City's climate and nature targets are implemented based on the City of Helsinki's environmental protection targets for 2040.

The environmental protection targets guide the overall approach to ecological sustainability

The City of Helsinki's [Environmental Protection Targets 2040](#) is a document adopted by the City Board that specifies the environmental protection targets of the City Strategy and sets targets for areas of environmental protection not covered by the strategy. The targets are part of the City's overall sustainable development approach. In 2025, the City worked on an update to the targets on the basis of the new City Strategy.

The environmental protection sub-programmes contain actions for achieving the environmental protection targets. The City has also entered into a number of agreements and commitments to make progress towards the environmental protection targets.

The management of the City's programme packages will be developed during this strategy period. A coherent

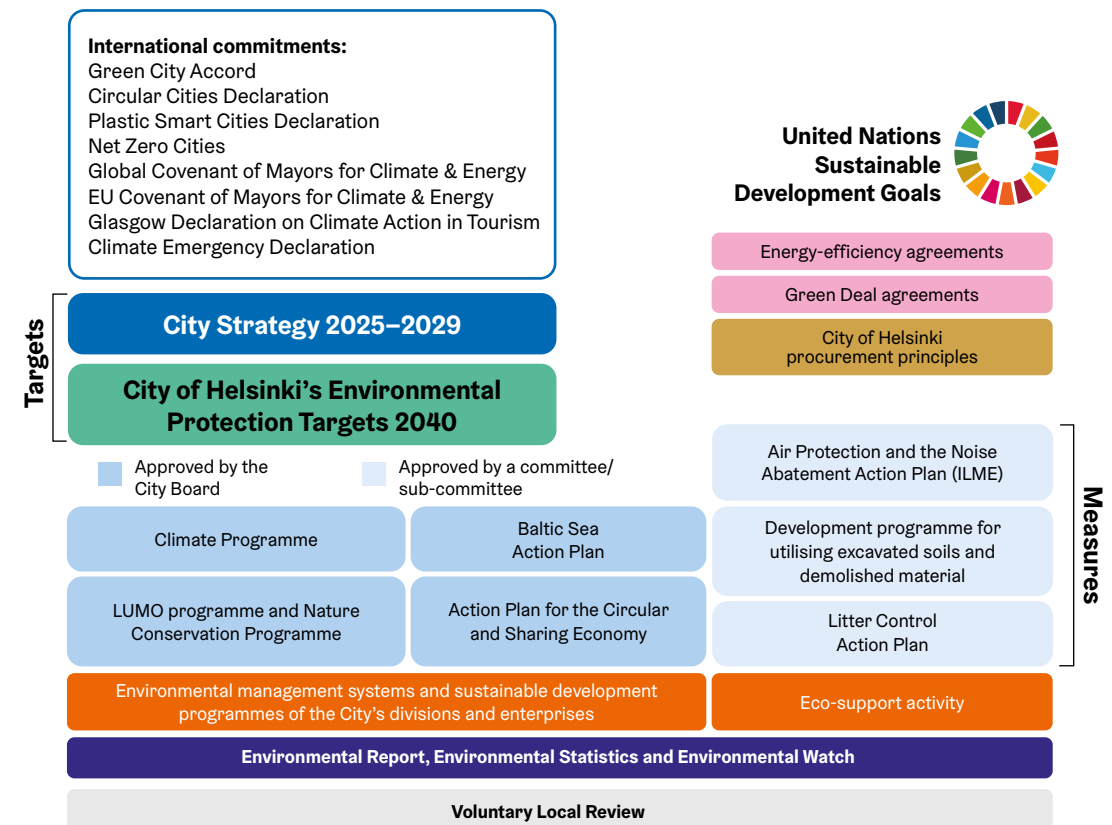
model has been created for the packages to serve as a guideline for decision-making concerning the programmes.

One of these packages is the Environment and Climate programme package, which is being prepared by a preparatory group led by the City Executive Office. Decisions on the programmes are taken by the City Council or committees.

The Environmental Watch monitors the progress of targets and actions

The City of Helsinki's [Environmental Watch system](#) (in Finnish) is a new tool for monitoring the City's environmental protection sub-programmes. The system provides up-to-date information on the progress of programmes and related actions to the City's decision-makers, employees, partners and stakeholders. The procurement preparations took place in 2025, and the system was put into service in autumn 2026.

Ecological sustainability overview



The revised Environmental Statistics provide comprehensive information on the state of the city's natural environment

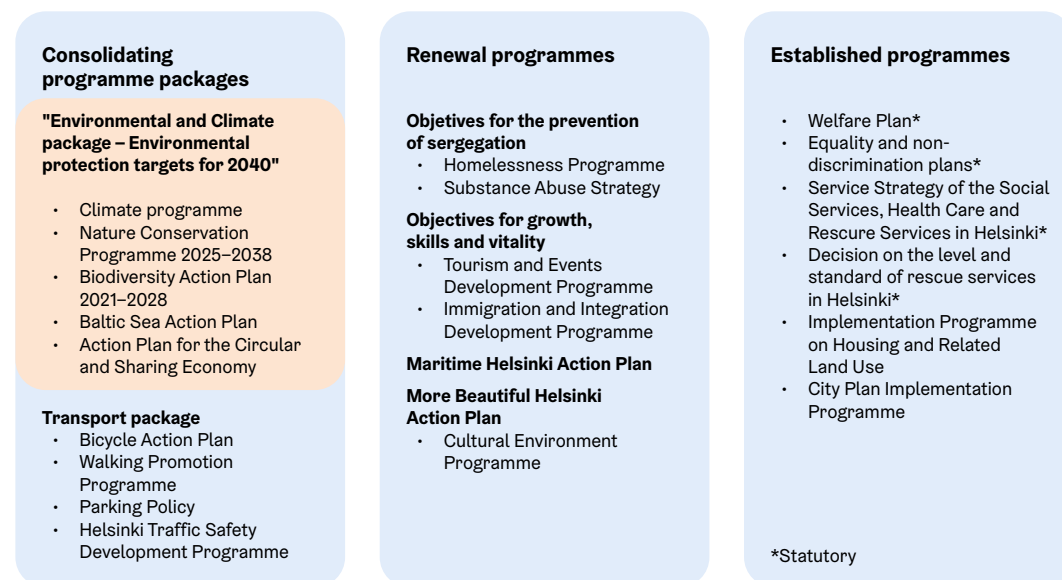
The project to develop [Helsinki Environmental Statistics](#) (in Finnish) was completed in 2025. The Environmental Statistics were revised both in terms of content and technical solutions. The process also included changing the data collection methods and automating updating processes. Now the Environmental Statistics provide open and up-to-date information on the state of the natural environment in Helsinki. The Environmental Statistics also compile the indicators of the Environmental Report, presenting them as long time series. The information is updated annually in conjunction with reporting.

The environmental work of the City's divisions and enterprises is guided by certificates

Helsinki's goal is that its divisions, as well as municipal enterprises and subsidiaries with significant environmental impacts, have a verified environmental management system and/or a sustainability programme in place that broadly takes into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The EcoCompass environmental management system of the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division was re-audited in 2025. The priorities of the division's Sustainable Development Programme for 2024–2026 are reduced inequalities, sustainable processes and engagement, climate action, responsible procurement and circular economy. The division calculated its carbon footprint

Programme package for the strategy period



for the first time and developed three scenarios to 2040 as a basis for its climate work.

In 2025, the Education Division started building a division-wide EcoCompass environmental management system. The division chose waste, procurement and advocacy as the priorities for its environmental programme. The aim is to obtain EcoCompass certification in spring 2027.

The Culture and Leisure Division promotes environmental management in each service area through the EcoCompass environmental management system. In 2025, the environmental management systems of [Library Services](#) and [Sports Services](#) were re-audited. Cultural Services received EcoCompass certification for the first time, and the Culture and Leisure Division's Shared Services started building an environmental management system. Youth Services prepared a new environmental programme for 2026–2028, focusing on biodiversity, advocacy, the use of materials, circular economy and procurement.

[The Sustainable Urban Environment](#)

[Division package](#) which guides the division's sustainability work was completed in early 2025. The sustainability principles developed through this work will guide projects to identify actions for sustainability, address conflicting views and strengthen multifunctionality. Critical development needs for the implementation of the sustainability principles were included in the division's target programme, which will guide financial and operational planning during the strategy period. The key areas for development in terms of environmental sustainability were related to increasing the biodiversity of urban greenery, strengthening adaptation to a changing climate, improving the conditions for circular economy, and reducing emissions from construction and traffic.

In 2025, the City Executive Office, guided by the EcoCompass environmental management system, enhanced the recycling of furniture and ICT equipment and developed its internal environmental communication. The City Executive Office supported tourism businesses in obtaining environmental certifications and through

The environmental and sustainability management tools of divisions and enterprises

Division/enterprise	Environmental management system / sustainable development programme
Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division	- Certified EcoCompass environmental management system (division-level) - Sustainable development programme (division-level)
Culture and Leisure Division	Certified EcoCompass environmental management system (Library Services, Sports Services, Youth Services, Cultural Services; a system is under development for Shared Services)
Urban Environment Division	Sustainable development programme (division-level)
Education Division	- EcoCompass environmental management system in the works (City division level) - Eco-Schools programme and certificate (23 early childhood education, basic education and general upper secondary education units), Sustainable development certificate for educational institutions (2 units)
City Executive Office	Certified EcoCompass environmental management system
Helsinki City Construction Services, Stara	Certified EcoCompass environmental management system
Palvelukeskus Helsinki	- Certified EcoCompass environmental management system - Sustainable development programme
Financial Management Services	No certified environmental management system or sustainable development programme
Employment Services Enterprise	No certified environmental management system or sustainable development programme

sustainability training.

Stara's [environmental work](#) is guided by the EcoCompass environmental management system. The objectives of Stara's environmental programme for 2023–2026 are related to the reduction of waste volumes, procurement, material efficiency, improvement of chemical safety, fossil-free transport, communication and advocacy.

With regard to ecological sustainability,

Palvelukeskus Helsinki's [sustainable development programme for 2025–2027](#) is focused on halving the amount of food waste produced by food services by 2030 and developing food services that are sustainable in terms of the environment, climate and human health. In 2025, the efforts to reduce food waste concentrated on making use of data on food waste as part of food waste management. The actions to develop



sustainable food services were related to recipe development, meal structures and communication, among other things.

Eco-support activities supported the environmental actions of work communities

Eco-support activities ensure that the different units of the City operate in an environmentally smart way in their everyday routines. The designated eco-supporters at workplaces encourage the entire work community to take environmentally friendly everyday actions. Eco-supporters also play a key role in raising environmental awareness both among their colleagues and clients. In 2025, the City of Helsinki had around 1,200 eco-supporters. Each division and almost all enterprises of the City have eco-supporters. Interest in eco-support activities has grown in recent years, with a record 240 new eco-supporters trained in 2025.

In addition to basic training, further training and division-specific network meetings were organised for eco-supporters. In 2025, the City in

collaboration with ChemBee – Chemical Ambassadors for Europe, coordinated by Turku University of Applied Sciences, focused on raising awareness among eco-supporters about harmful everyday chemicals in particular. A training series on the topic was organised for eco-supporters working in early childhood education, and the topic was also discussed in a webinar for early childhood education directors. Furthermore, an online training module on harmful chemicals was created for the revamped eco-support website.

The City and tourism businesses worked together to develop sustainable tourism

For the second year in a row, Helsinki took the top spot in the international Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index. This reinforces Helsinki's position as the most sustainable destination in the world and serves as a testament to the strong commitment of the City and tourism businesses to sustainable development. The GDS-Index assesses the sustainability of tourist destinations against more than 70 indicators, comparing more than 100 cities from around the world that are

committed to sustainability.

In autumn 2025, Helsinki was selected for the Green Destinations Top 100 Stories list thanks to its activities in the Urban Climate Leaders in Tourism group. The group is committed to its common objectives and actions to promote climate-neutral tourism. The group includes leading tourism businesses from Helsinki and Tampere, as well as the City of Helsinki and Visit Tampere. At the beginning of 2026, Helsinki achieved its long-standing goal of having 100 Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) labels in the Helsinki area. The STF label, awarded by Visit Finland, indicates that the business operates in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

Voluntary Local Reviews were published in cooperation between cities

Helsinki published its fourth Voluntary Local Review (VLR) in 2025. The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities organised a joint launch event for the VLR reports of Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa and Turku. In addition to the launch of the reports, the event featured commentaries by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the General Secretariat of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the umbrella organisation for local governments throughout the world. The management and key stakeholders of the aforementioned cities also took part in panel discussions.



Environmental economy

Environmental economy includes the income, costs and investments primarily arising from environmental protection reasons. The information is presented for the parent organisation, meaning the City's divisions, enterprises and departments.

The environmental costs, including amortisations, added up to a total of EUR 99.1 million (+2.53% from 2024). The environmental costs made up 1.6 per cent of the City's total operating costs, equalling EUR 143 per capita. The largest expense items were the promotion of climate and environmentally friendly transport (21.6%) and the sanitation and waste management of city areas (18.9%).

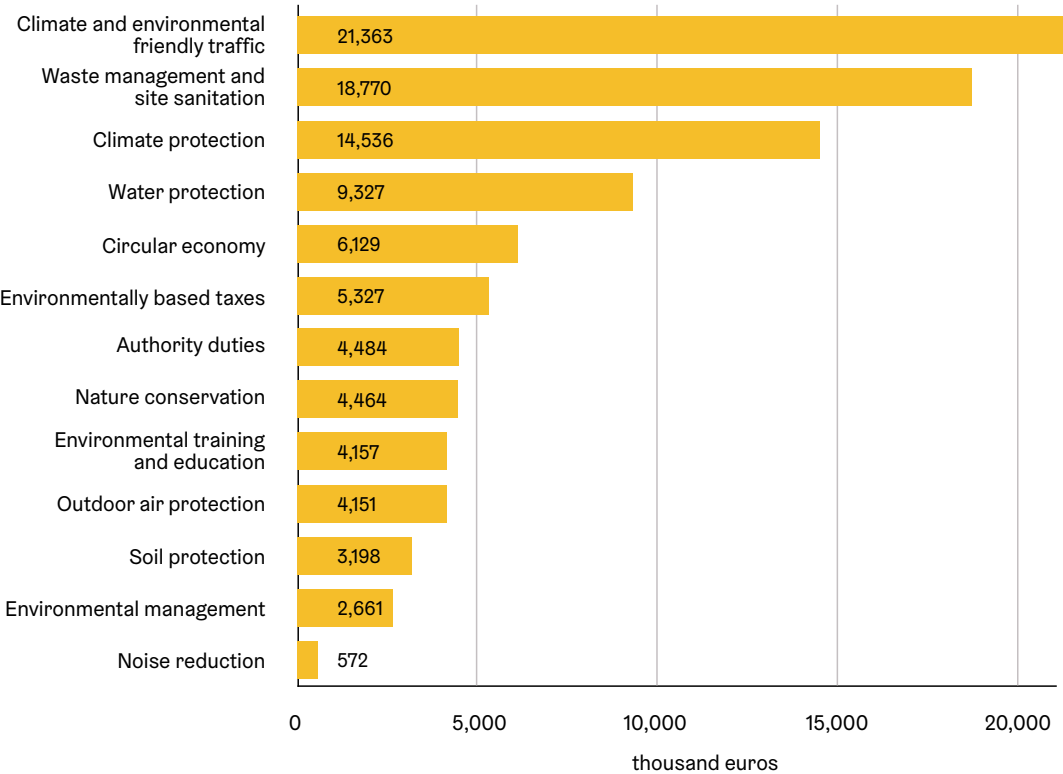
The environmental investments added up to EUR 92.5 million, which was 12.9 per cent of the total capital expenditure of the City and EUR 133 per capita. In 2025, the City's environmental investments decreased

by 4.6 per cent from the previous year. The greatest investments were related to climate and environmentally friendly transport (52.7%), the restoration of contaminated soil (23.7%) and climate protection (15.7%).

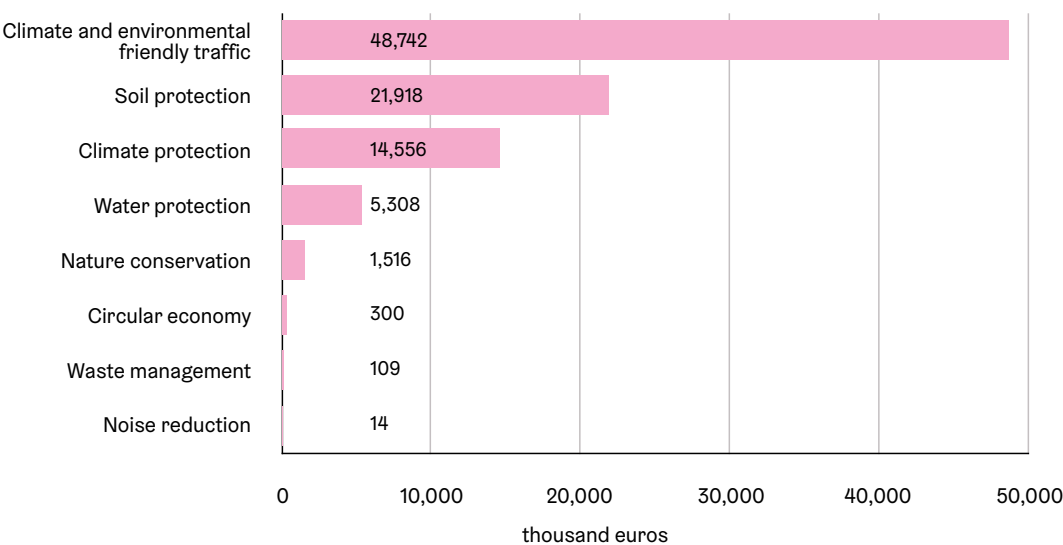
The City's environmental income added up to EUR 6.7 million (+18.2% from 2024). Environmental income accounted for 0.5 per cent of the total operating income of the City, amounting to EUR 10 per capita. The most significant income was generated from vehicle transfer fees in connection with street cleaning (29%) and the promotion of circular economy (26.7%).

The value of environmental liabilities in the financial statements on 31 December 2025 was EUR 22.2 million in total. The liabilities concerned preparing for the rehabilitation of old landfills and the remediation of soil.

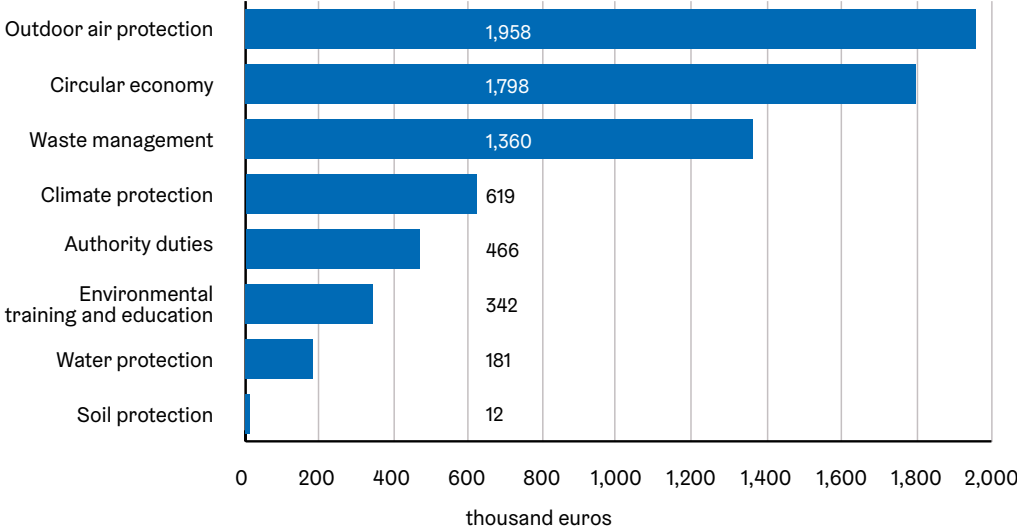
Environmental costs



Environmental investments



Environmental income



Binding environmental targets in the budget

The City’s divisions and enterprises have the option to set binding operational targets related to the environment in the budget. Six of the eight indicators for the set targets were achieved.

Indicators and binding environmental goals in the budget, Urban Environment Division

Objective: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy efficiency and strengthening circular economy	
Indicator	Actual figure
Proportion accounted for by passenger car traffic of all modes of transport (%) Indicator baseline value: 21 Indicator target value: <21	The indicator was achieved. The actual figure was 18%.
Calculated cumulative electricity and heating energy savings in the City’s premises and public areas (GWh) Indicator baseline value: 0 Indicator target value: ≥5.9	The indicator was achieved. The actual figure was 8.7 GWh.
Rate of utilisation of excavated soil (%) Indicator baseline value: 0 Indicator target value: ≥30	The indicator was achieved. The actual figure was 36%.
Energy guidance sessions for housing companies (number) Indicator baseline value: 150 Indicator target value: ≥165	The indicator was achieved. The actual figure was 193.
Objective: The city will grow in balance with the surrounding nature	
Indicator	Actual figure
Revised local detailed plans covering 400,000 m² of floor area for housing on City-owned land during the year (three-year moving average, m² of floor area) Indicator baseline value: 0 Indicator target value: ≥400,000	The indicator was achieved. The actual figure was 512,587.
Number of new housing units initiated in the City’s own housing production Indicator baseline value: 0 Indicator target value: ≥1,500	The indicator was not achieved. The actual figure was 838 housing units. The number of new housing units initiated was affected by the discontinuation of the construction of new Hitas and Haso housing and the number of suitable sites available for construction.
Percentage of residents living less than 300 metres away from a local recreational area (%) Indicator baseline value: 98 Indicator target value: ≥98	The indicator was achieved. The actual figure was 98%.

Indicators and binding environmental goals in the budget, Helsinki City Transport (HKL)

Objective: We respond to key customer needs to maintain a high-quality customer experience	
Indicator	Actual figure
Proportion of satisfied customers in metro transport (%) Indicator baseline value: 90.4 Indicator target value: ≥92	The indicator was not achieved. The actual figure was 91.2%. The spring survey was largely carried out before the start of a traffic interruption, and the result exceeded the target. In the autumn survey, the result fell below the target level. The outcome of the final survey round of the year is interpreted as the final result for the year.



Indicators for Helsinki's environmental protection targets

Promoting the circular and sharing economy

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Amount of land mass recycled	297,728 t/a	403,603 t/a	The indicator has improved
Recycling rate of municipal waste from the city organisation's service buildings	55 %	56 %	The indicator has improved
Food waste in school and daycare centre food services (Palvelukeskus Helsinkis meal services)	60.9 g/ eater	57.4 g/ eater	The indicator has improved

Promoting responsible procurement*

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Percentage of procurements (number) exceeding the threshold value that have set environmental criteria	70 %	59 %	The indicator has deteriorated

*Monitoring data on the consumption of meat and dairy products can be found in the 'Responsible procurement' section of this report.

Promoting environmental awareness and responsibility

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Number of participants in the Harakka Nature and Environment School and guided nature walks	6,112 persons	6,032 persons	The indicator has deteriorated
Number of companies offering circular economy services on the Service Map	238	373	The indicator has improved

Environmental management

Indicator	2024	2025	Definition
Proportion of divisions, enterprises and subsidiaries with environmental certification / adhering to the principles of an environmental management system / implementing a responsibility programme	53 %	53 %	No change in the indicator
Number of eco-support staff trained / year	152 persons	240 persons	The indicator has improved
Percentage of divisions and enterprises where environmental issues are included in the orientation programme	70 %	80 %	The indicator has improved



Eyes on the future: Resources and management

- More resources and broad cooperation are needed to implement the Circular Economy Green Deal. The use of soil materials, structures and building components will be systematically promoted at all stages of planning and implementation. The emissions reductions achieved through circular economy solutions will be verified as part of emissions calculations, and the calculation data will be used to control emissions from construction.
- Resources must be allocated to the dissemination of future procurement principles and updated procurement responsibility goals. The piloting of the procurement management information system will be launched. Among other things, the information system will improve the lifecycle management of the City's procurements and the transparency of information. Externally funded projects will continue to play an important role in the development of environmental responsibility related to procurement and the creation of new solutions in particular.
- Environmental reporting will be developed in 2026. By developing reporting, the City aims to present relevant information, improve resource efficiency and better integrate the City's environmental statistics and upcoming Environmental Watch service, which will monitor the progress of environmental protection sub-programmes, into overall reporting.
- The network of eco-supporters will be further expanded, with the aim that every workplace will have at least one eco-supporter. Efforts will also be made to keep eco-supporters active and motivated.

Programmes and policies:

- [The City of Helsinki's Action Plan for the Circular Economy](#)
- [The Principles for the Utilisation of Excavated Soil, Aggregates and Recycled Materials \(in Finnish\)](#)
- [The Litter Control Action Plan 2026-2029](#)
- [City of Helsinki Procurement Strategy 2020](#)
- [City of Helsinki's Environmental Protection Targets 2040](#)
- [The City of Helsinki's Environmental Watch \(in Finnish\)](#)

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