

Participation plan of the Urban Environment Division for 2026–2029

Shared Services
Communications

Helsinki



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Part 1. Background

**Participation plans
promote participation in
Helsinki**

What is a participation plan?

- The participation plan for the Urban Environment Division sets out policies on the development of participation in the division, new participation methods and trials.
- The plan is not a comprehensive description of all the ways in which the division ensures the participation of Helsinki residents.
- The division uses a wide range of participation methods in its various processes, and this established practice will also continue during the current plan period.

Examples from the division

How to participate

- Giving feedback
- Presentations and discussion events
- Walking tours and plan walks
- Surveys (e.g. Kerrokantasi)
- Workshops
- Resident panels and worksite committees

What can you participate in?

- Land use planning
- Street and traffic planning
- Park and green area planning
- Nature and landscape management
- Development of services

Levels of Citizens Participation and Influence

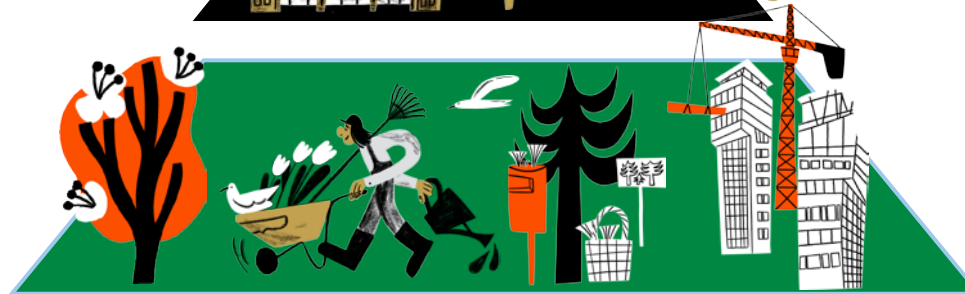
Participation is the experience of belonging and having opportunities to influence matters that are meaningful to you.



I can influence and participate in society



I can influence and participate in the city



I can influence and participate in the local area



I can influence and participate in my everyday life



I am seen, heard, and acknowledged every day

Principles of participation in City of Helsinki



Utilizing the knowledge and expertise of individuals and communities



Enabling independent activities

Creating equal opportunities for participation

Participation plans of the divisions

- The divisions of the City of Helsinki draw up participation plans for themselves as part of the City's participation and interaction model.
- These plans are based on the three participation priorities set for the period 2026–2029 (slide 13). These priorities are the same for all divisions.
- The Urban Environment Division pursues the priorities and the associated objectives (slide 14) through the measures set out in its participation plan (slides 15–). The division can update these measures as part of its wider operational planning.
- Examples of these measures include new trials and the development of new methods. Additionally, the division engages in many other types of participation work.
- The division will report to the Urban Environment Committee on the implementation of the participation plan at the end of the plan period.



Background to participation work

The participation work of the City's divisions is guided by numerous strategies, programmes and objectives of the City. These include the following, for example:

- Helsinki City Strategy 2025–2029
- the division's action plan (2026), target programme and other division-specific objectives
- surveys and workshop materials produced in connection with the update of the City's participation model (slide 9)
- discussions with service providers and annual communications planning
- City-wide plans and programmes, such as:
 - City of Helsinki Welfare Plan 2026–2029 (incl. the Child Friendly Cities Initiative)
 - equality and non-discrimination plan for services 2026–2029
 - Immigration and Integration Development Programme 2026–2029
 - suburban regeneration
 - objectives for the prevention of segregation.



Materials used in the plan

The process of updating the City's participation and interaction model involved extensive engagement with various stakeholders. The resulting materials were used in the preparation of the plan.

Helsinki residents

- Discourse on participation on the Voxit platform
- Discussion sessions of the regional networks of the suburban regeneration areas
- Events aimed at specific target groups, such as young people and foreign-language-speaking residents

Businesses and organisations

- Surveys

Personnel

- Discourse on participation on the Voxit platform
- Survey of the participation network
- Themed workshops

Influencing bodies and councils

- Youth Council workshop
- Workshop of the Elderly Citizens Council, Council on Disability, Equality and Non-discrimination

Advisory Board, Advisory Board for Organisations, and Bilingualism Commission

Helsinki

2,128
survey
respondents

301
workshop
participants

11
organised
events



A Helsinki we can be proud of

Key Participation and Inclusion Priorities in the City Strategy 2025–2029

Pleasant neighbourhoods with a strong sense of community

- The districts and neighbourhoods of the city are distinctive local communities that play an important role. We support local organisations and associations and include their voice in the development of their area. Helsinki is shaped by its residents.
- We make a variety of methods available for people to share their experiences, wishes and opinions with us.
- We strive to develop these means of participation so we can reach Helsinki residents of all ages and backgrounds.
- Together with local associations, we plan concrete ways to enhance people's sense of agency, their willingness to forge connections and their desire to do something for their local community.
- Our activities promote the connection diverse communities and people from different backgrounds feel with Helsinki, as well as their identity as a Helsinki resident.

Widespread wellbeing

- In Helsinki, everyone – regardless of their background or starting point – should be able to live a good life and pursue their dreams. All of Helsinki's residents should feel like they belong. We are resolutely working to ensure that every resident of Helsinki can live a good life in our city.
- The city is committed to combating regional segregation and inequality between residents. We devote special attention to keeping differentiations between the realities of children and young people to a minimum. We are resolutely working to improve wellbeing in every neighbourhood of the city and support every resident on their journey through life.

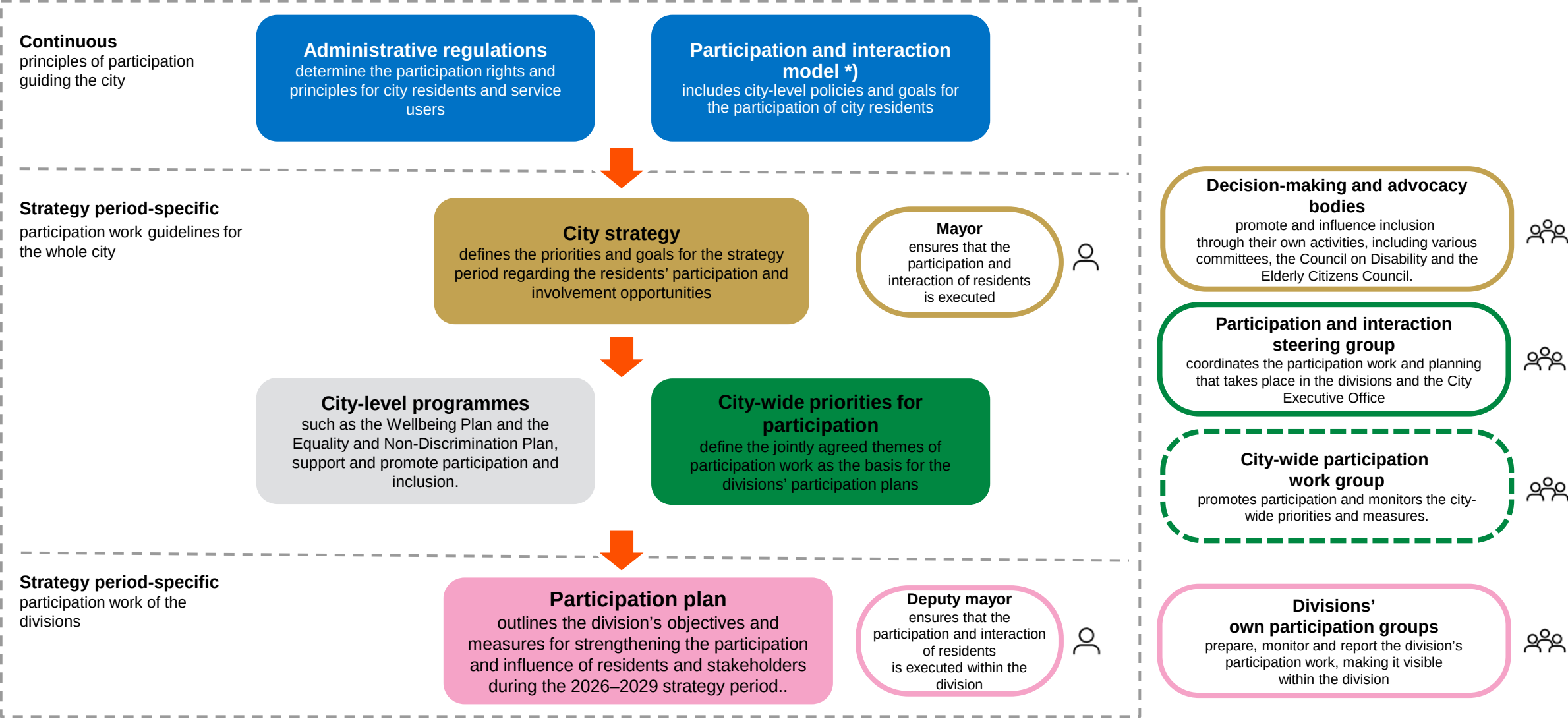
A smooth everyday life and functional services

- The good life of Helsinki residents is founded on a smooth everyday existence and functional services.
- People's situations in life vary. The significance of different services and phenomena changes at different stages of our lives. Each of the city's divisions has an important role to play in ensuring that Helsinki runs smoothly and provides residents with the conditions for a good life.

How we work

- We exist for the people of Helsinki. We care about the wellbeing of the city and its residents. Our work is open and straightforward.
- We are utilising multilingual services and communications to reach out to and include different residents of the city
- We work in cooperation with the third sector, businesses and residents of the city. We have an open mind and positive attitude when it comes to new ideas.

Implementation of participation plans and division of tasks



City-wide Actions for the Strategy Period

Priority	City-wide Actions for the Strategy Period
Promoting Equality and Diversity Through Participation	PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES AND INTERACTION: 1. We develop, embed and pilot diverse methods for participation and engagement. 2. We invest in timely and effective communication throughout the different stages of participation processes, taking into account the needs of different population groups. 3. We strengthen opportunities for children and young people to have their voices heard across the city and pilot new ways of engaging with children and young people in vulnerable situations.
	WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP: 4. We develop and strengthen new forms of partnership with residents and a wide range of stakeholders. 5. We design participation measures and promote participation together with representatives of target groups, civil society organizations, businesses, and other partners.
Strengthening Local Influence and Community Participation	USING KNOWLEDGE AND DATA: 6. We make better use of existing knowledge and data in local participation work and in service development.
Functional Services and a Positive Customer Experience Through Participation	PARTICIPATION COMPETENCE OF STAFF: 7. We further strengthen staff competence in participation and engagement through a range of capacity-building and professional development measures.

Part 2. Objectives

Priorities, objectives and measures for participation

City-wide participation priorities for 2026–2029



Promoting non-discrimination and diversity of opinion by means of participation



Strengthening local influence and regional participation



Smooth services and a positive customer experience by means of participation

Objectives of the Urban Environment Division that support the participation priorities

Promoting non-discrimination and diversity of opinion

1. We will promote the participation of children and young people
2. We will promote the participation of people in vulnerable positions
3. We will reduce barriers to participation

Strengthening local influence and regional participation

1. We will make the voices of local residents, communities and businesses better heard in the development of areas
2. We will act as a reliable partner that supports active participation

Smooth services and a positive customer experience by means of participation

1. We will strengthen the impact of participation
2. We will promote a customer-oriented approach and knowledge-based management
3. We will promote a service culture and the customer experience by means of participation

Promoting non-discrimination and diversity of opinion by means of participation



Objectives and measures of the Urban Environment Division (1–6)

We will promote the participation of children and young people

1. We will develop methods that are suitable for the division for engaging children and young people
2. We will look into setting up a city planning lab for schoolchildren in our office building
3. We will gather schoolchildren's views on traffic safety and plan school streets in a way that takes children's views into account
4. We will test new public engagement methods in Itäkeskus

We will promote the participation of residents in vulnerable positions

5. We will make the voices of vulnerable young people better heard
6. We will develop the activities and services on Harakka island to cater to a wider target group

We will reduce barriers to participation

7. We will organise training for our personnel on planning and implementing participation

Strengthening local influence and regional participation



Objectives and measures of the Urban Environment Division (7–14)

We will make the voices of local residents, communities and businesses better heard in the development of areas

- 8. We will establish the use of the placemaking method
- 9. We will continue and develop our 'Kaupunkiympäristöä meidän kulmilla' information events in neighbourhoods
- 10. We will involve residents in the planning of the temporary use of Hanasaari
- 11. We will plan business districts in dialogue with local entrepreneurs
- 12. We will test new ways of engaging with the public in the design of parks
- 13. When planning large-scale infrastructure and building construction projects, we will take into account local residents, communities, organisations and businesses
- 14. We will further develop and test the early participation model

We will act as a reliable partner that supports active participation

- 15. We will make an effort to involve the business community
- 16. We will expand and develop the opportunities for residents to volunteer in things related to urban environment themes

Smooth services and a positive customer experience by means of participation



Objectives and measures of the Urban Environment Division (15–21)

We will strengthen the impact of participation

17. We will develop ways to measure residents' experiences of the division's engagement with the public

We will promote a customer-oriented approach and knowledge-based management

18. We will develop our processing of feedback, maintenance requests and fault reports
19. We will develop maintenance and related communications with regard to the city's public areas
20. We will improve our customer communications

We will promote a service culture and the customer experience by means of participation

21. We will develop e-services by means such as service design
22. We will develop the rental of the City's vacant premises in a user-oriented manner
23. We will prepare a coherent worksite communications model for Kaivokatu

A closer look at the Urban Environment Division's participation measures and their monitoring

Promoting non-discrimination and diversity of opinion by means of participation



We will promote the participation of children and young people	Monitoring of measures
We will develop methods that are suitable for the division for engaging children and young people The toolkit contains instructions, examples and templates tailored to the division for the use of various participation methods. The aim is to ensure that efforts to engage and listen to the views of children and young people become easier and more effective within the division. We will share information on these methods within the division.	• We have completed and published the toolkit • We have communicated about the methods within the division and organised training as necessary Responsible party: Communication Services
We will look into setting up a City Planning Lab for schoolchildren in our office building A City Planning Lab means a physical learning space in the Urban Environment Divisions' facilities and/or content tailored to school groups that is related to the urban environment and opportunities for participation.	• We have made the decision to develop and establish the City Planning Lab • We have defined the next steps Responsible party: Communication Services
We will gather schoolchildren's views on traffic safety and plan school streets in a way that takes children's views into account We will conduct surveys among schoolchildren as part of regional traffic safety studies. The results of the surveys will serve as baseline data for planning the immediate surroundings of schools and traffic. We will plan school streets in a way that takes into account the needs of local children and young people.	• We have conducted surveys and they are an established part of regional traffic safety surveys • We have planned school streets together with pupils Responsible party: Traffic and Street Planning, Communications Services

Promoting non-discrimination and diversity of opinion by means of participation



We will test new public engagement methods in Itäkeskus

The Itäkeskus area is undergoing ambitious development. The planning of the area will take children and young people into account and make use of innovative, arts-based participation methods. We will organise workshops, as well as an open competition for residents that is linked to the general architectural competition for the Itäkeskus public transport terminal. We will pay particular attention to groups that are more difficult to reach.

- We organised a competition that was open to the public and related to the public transport terminal
- We have tested arts-based methods of participation
- We have communicated about the trials both internally and externally

Responsible party: Detailed Planning Services, Communications Services

We will promote the participation of residents in vulnerable positions

Monitoring of measures

We will make the voices of vulnerable young people better heard in planning

Under the Child Friendly Cities Initiative, Helsinki is committed to promoting opportunities for vulnerable young people to participate. As part of this initiative, we will identify suitable pilot sites and strive to engage in cross-divisional cooperation. This cooperation is facilitated by the City-wide working group on the participation of children and young people.

- We have identified suitable pilot sites (1–3) and fostered participation at them
- We have shared the lessons learnt and experiences gained

Responsible party: Communication Services

We will develop the activities and services on Harakka island to cater to a wider target group

We will provide environmental education for children and young people from Helsinki on Harakka island. We will look into ways to develop the island’s activities and services so that they can better reach children and young people in vulnerable positions.

- We have worked on developing the service
- We have reached new target groups

Responsible party: Environmental Services

Promoting non-discrimination and diversity of opinion by means of participation



We will reduce barriers to participation	Monitoring of measures
We will organise training for our personnel on planning and implementing participation We will support our personnel in taking participation and public engagement into account by implementing Oppiva online training courses for the division (in particular, a new training course on interaction plans). We will foster engagement and constructive dialogue by organising training on dialogue.	• We have implemented training • We have organised dialogue training Responsible party: Communication Services

Strengthening local influence and regional participation



We will make the voices of local residents, communities and businesses better heard in the development of areas

We will establish the use of the placemaking method

We will carry out quick-to-implement trials based on resident participation in the urban environment and develop processes related to the design of inclusive public spaces. Our placemaking trials will mainly take place in suburban regeneration areas, creating pleasant, safe and inviting spaces.

Monitoring of measures

- We have carried out trials in the current suburban regeneration areas
- We have extended the testing to new areas
- We have promoted the design of inclusive public urban spaces in the division (e.g. workshops, clinics)

Responsible party: Strategy Unit

We will continue and develop our ‘Urban environment in our neighbourhood’ events

We will continue and further develop this event concept that we have created in collaboration with Library Services. This involves local libraries hosting low-threshold events focused on topics related to the urban environment. At these events, we share information on current matters within the division and converse and engage with residents on issues that are important to them. These events reach a wide range of residents of different ages and backgrounds right in their own neighbourhoods.

- We have also held these events in new areas
- We have collected feedback on the events (quality of feedback) and developed them based on the feedback received

Responsible party: Communication Services, Library Services of the Culture and Leisure Division

We will involve residents in the planning of the temporary use of Hanasaari

In line with the City Strategy, we will involve residents in the planning of the temporary use of the Hanasaari area. The aim is for residents to take ownership of the area and to introduce resident-driven activities in the area.

- Residents have had the opportunity to get involved in planning activities in the outdoor spaces
- Residents have had the opportunity to get involved in planning matters related to the use of the facilities

Responsible party: Commercial Plots and Property Development

Strengthening local influence and regional participation



We will make the voices of local residents, communities and businesses better heard in the development of areas	Monitoring of measures
We will plan business districts in dialogue with local entrepreneurs We will organise communications targeted at businesses and engage with them in areas where the planning of the areas has a significant impact on the day-to-day operations and future of existing and potential businesses. Examples of this include the planning of the Pitäjänmäki, Herttoniemi and Roihupelto areas.	• Number of events aimed at businesses • Volume of communications aimed at businesses Responsible party: Strategic Urban Planning, Economic Development, Communications Services
We will test new ways of engaging with the public in the design of parks We will conduct an analysis of park users and test methods to consult residents who are more difficult to reach.	• We have completed the user analysis • We have conducted trials with different target groups • We have shared experiences Responsible party: Park and Green Area Planning, Communications Services
When planning large-scale infrastructure and building construction projects, we will take into account local residents, communities, organisations and businesses We will ensure that we reach different target groups by using appropriate methods right from the very start of projects.	• We have prepared interaction plans • We have assessed the methods Responsible party: Public Areas, Premises Services, Communications Services

Strengthening local influence and regional participation



We will act as a reliable partner that supports active participation	Monitoring of measures
We will make an effort to involve the business community We will improve understanding within the division of the operating environment of businesses through a business interview survey and other methods. We will share the findings of the interview survey with the division’s personnel and, based on them, take development measures to involve entrepreneurs, in collaboration with the Economic Development Department of the City Executive Office.	• We have conducted a business interview survey under the leadership of the Economic Development Department • We have put the survey findings into practice within the division • We have identified areas for improvement in the cooperation between the business community and the division and have carried out related development Responsible party: Communication Services
We will expand and develop the opportunities for residents to volunteer in things related to urban environment themes We will start using the City’s Oma Työ client information system for volunteer activities in our Park Pals activities. Additionally, we will assess the current state of volunteer activities within the division. Volunteer activities foster resident participation, a sense of community and thriving neighbourhoods.	• Adoption of the Oma Työ system (resource management system for volunteer activities) by the division for its Park Pals activities, for example • We have conducted an assessment of the current state of volunteer activities Responsible party: Maintenance, City-wide working group on volunteer activities
We will further develop and test the early participation model This development and testing will take place in cooperation with residents and communities in different areas.	• We completed the testing Responsible party: Communication Services

Smooth services and a positive customer experience by means of participation



We will strengthen the impact of participation	Monitoring of measures
We will develop ways to measure residents’ experiences of the division’s engagement with the public Our aim is to measure residents’ experiences of the division’s engagement with them and the effectiveness of this engagement. We will make use of the results in the effective planning of participation.	• We have identified and adopted measurement methods • We have utilised the results in planning participation Responsible party: Communication Services
We will promote a customer-oriented approach and knowledge-based management	Monitoring of measures
We will develop our processing of feedback, maintenance requests and fault reports We will establish a coherent response process and target times and improve them within the division. The aim is to respond more quickly to feedback, fault reports and maintenance requests relating to the urban environment.	• First contact resolution rate • Processing time for feedback • Processing time for fault reports Responsible party: Services and Permits, Urban Environment Division
We will develop the maintenance of the city’s public areas and related communications We will improve our situational awareness of maintenance within the division. We will provide residents with real-time information on maintenance and make it easier for them to give feedback.	• We have released a trial version of the Siirtovahti vehicle removal alert service (spring 2026), with further development of the service from 2026 onwards • Procurement of a new contract management system in 2026 • A plan to make a situational overview available to residents in 2027 Responsible party: Maintenance of Public Areas

Smooth services and a positive customer experience by means of participation



We will improve our customer communications We will develop the division’s outbound customer and online communications to make them clearer and more customer-oriented. The division’s customers include local residents and businesses that work with the division, among others.	• Training in customer communications made available in Oppiva in 2026 Responsible party: Services and Permits
We will promote a service culture and the customer experience by means of participation	Monitoring of measures
We will develop e-services We will develop our e-services with a customer and resident-oriented approach, for example by means of service design. Our aim is to ensure a smooth service experience throughout the entire customer journey.	• Number of e-services offering strong authentication • Customers’ perception of how easy it is to use the e-services (Customer Effort Score) Responsible party: Services and Permits
We will develop the rental of the City’s vacant premises in a user-oriented manner We will facilitate the rental of premises by working together with residents, organisations and businesses. We will create and roll out a clear toolkit for our tenants.	• Making use of feedback from tenants and prospective tenants • We have developed the toolkit for the rental of premises Responsible party: Premises Services, Sales and Leasing Team
We will prepare a coherent worksite communications model for Kaivokatu We will improve the mobility experience through proactive communications and resident-oriented site planning. We will involve the target groups in the search for solutions. The model can be copied and may also be used in communications relating to other major worksites.	• Worksite communications model created in 2026 • Worksite communications model put into practice in 2027 Responsible party: Communication Services

Helsinki