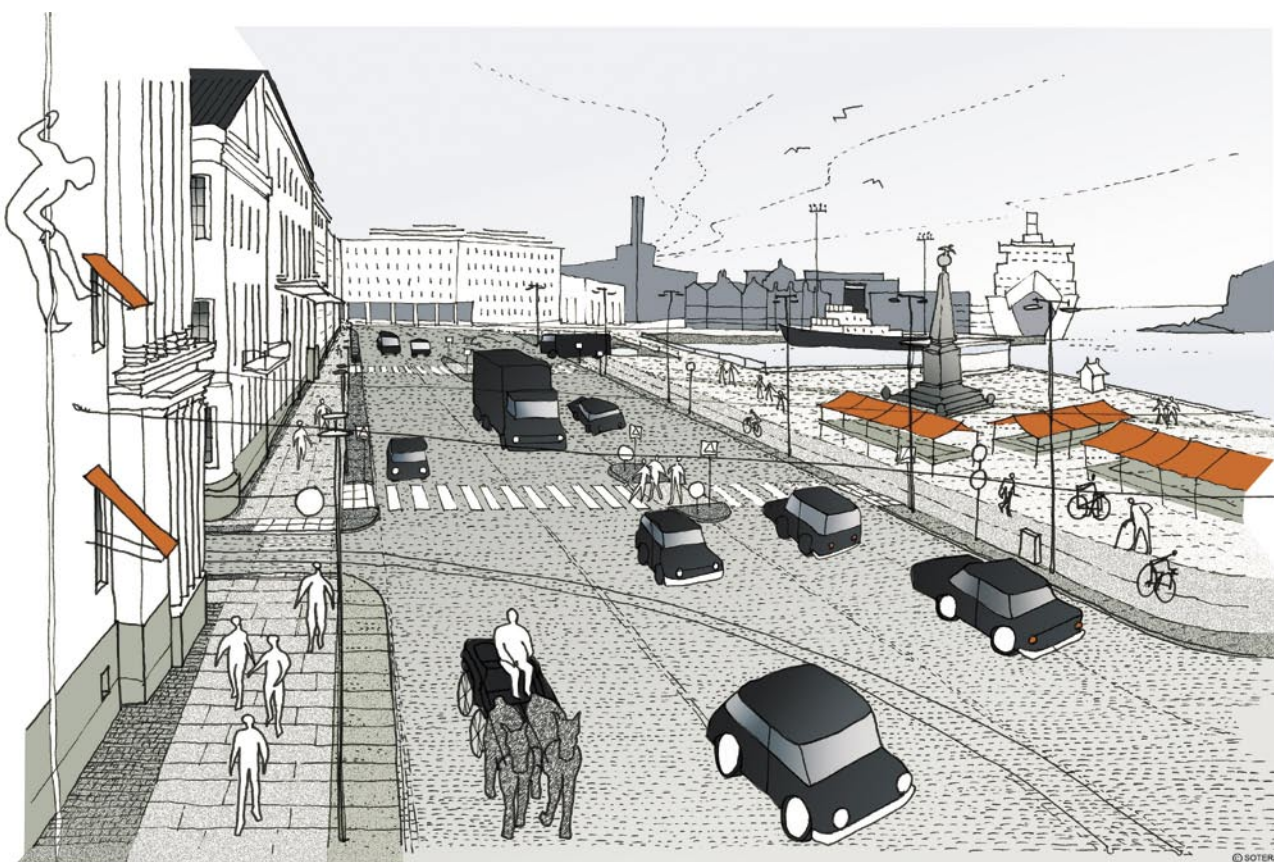




# HELSINKI FOR ALL



Creating a safe and accessible environment strengthens residents' wellbeing and enhances a society's overall quality of life. The Helsinki for All project aims at ensuring easy and inclusive access for all people, regardless of ability, age or gender.

Participating in the project, established by the Helsinki City Board and headed by the Public Works Department, are all city agencies, Helsinki-based associations for senior and impaired citizens, residents' associations and commercial and industrial life. The interactive co-operative process will continue until 2011.

## What does an accessible environment mean?

- convenient movement on streets, squares, parks, yards and playgrounds
- easy access to buildings and unimpeded movement within them
- stairless access from one place to another and between transport modes
- clear directional signs
- a good acoustic environment

The Helsinki for All project sets guidelines for the design, construction and maintenance of accessible living surroundings. Another purpose of the project is to influence attitudes; an accessible and safe environment results from wise attitudes.

## Accessible Finland

The SuRaKu (from the Finnish words for “design”, “construction”, and “maintenance”) programme, headed by the Helsinki for All project and featuring the participation of six Finnish cities, was launched in 2003. Its task was to create a set of accessibility guidelines for the design, construction and maintenance of the city’s public street, park and yard areas. The SuRaKu guidelines were completed in 2004.

Also utilised by other municipalities, communities and designers, the SuRaKu guidelines have laid down the basis for the implementation of the Helsinki for All project.

### The SuRaKu guidelines contain:

- criteria, with which the accessibility of outdoor spaces can be assessed and directed.
- instructions based on model designs whose criteria can be applied to the design of public outdoor spaces.

General instructions are provided for the design, construction and maintenance of accessible public areas. In the criteria charts and guidelines, recommendations are also provided for special-level areas more challenging from the standpoint of accessibility. To facilitate design and construction, a target level is first specified for the area, route or location.



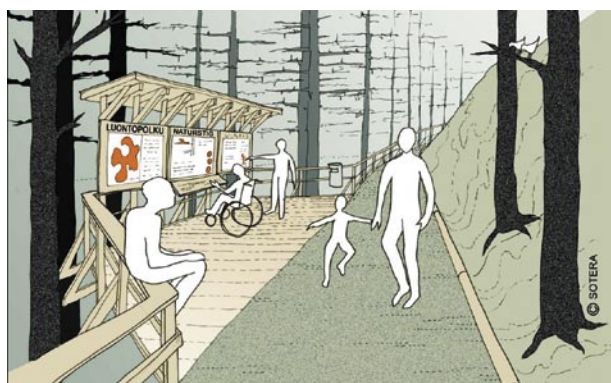
### Pedestrian and cycle path – for all

- clear separation between pedestrian and cycle paths
- resting places at side and material differentiated from pathway
- paths’ intersections clearly marked with different materials
- lampposts on same side of pathway direct movement
- tree branches do not impede movement



### Public transport platform area – for all

- platform’s edge markings clearly perceivable
- furnishings clearly located in their own zone
- clear signage at sufficient height
- adequate lighting



### Park’s information panels – for all

- information panels set back from pathway
- different paving material; guide rails lead to panels
- relief map and other information identifiable



## Designing Helsinki for all

Street and green area planning, the design of public buildings and public transport modes, as well as the demands for improved accessibility guide the plan. Accessibility levels have been divided into two: basic and special.

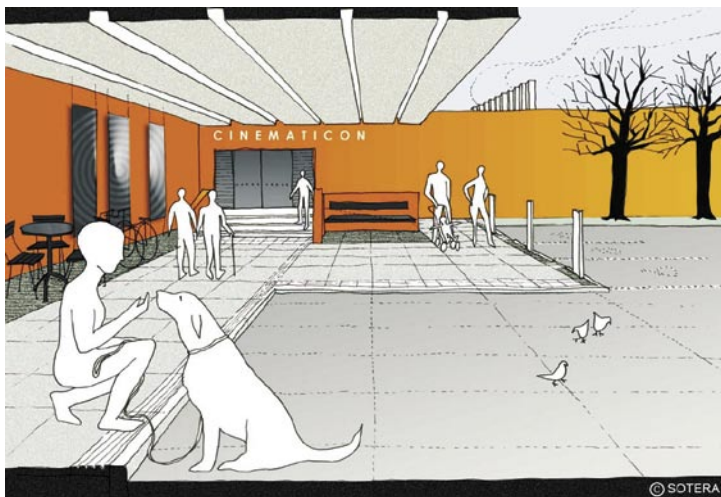
### Special level areas for which recommendations have been formulated include:

- pedestrian streets
- areas in the city centre
- the immediate surroundings of health centres, service buildings and other similar functions
- areas with a predominance of elderly people
- public transport terminal and parking areas

- public recreational areas and playgrounds designed for all
- main routes in recreational areas

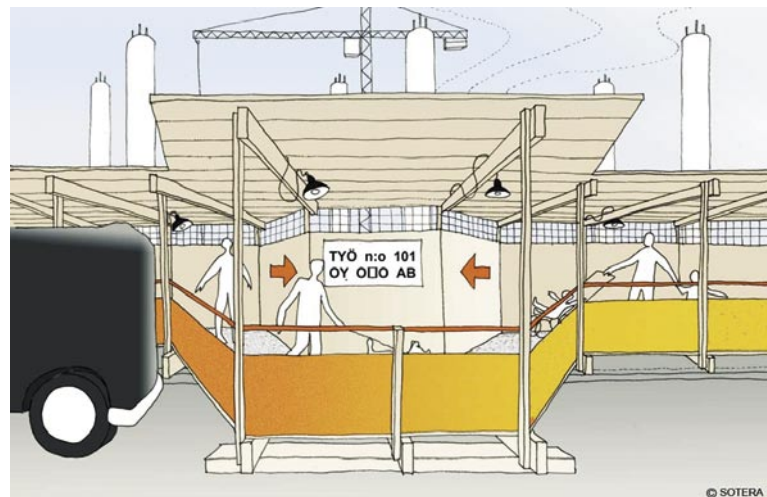
A basic level of accessibility requirements has been formulated for other areas.

Need-based prioritisation is based on the actual physical requirements of the users of the environment; this is the primary starting point for the Helsinki for All project. A set of priorities based on construction economy can be used to guide, for example, accessibility planning for large-scale renovation and repair projects; the targets for sustainable development approved by the City of Helsinki are also taken into account.



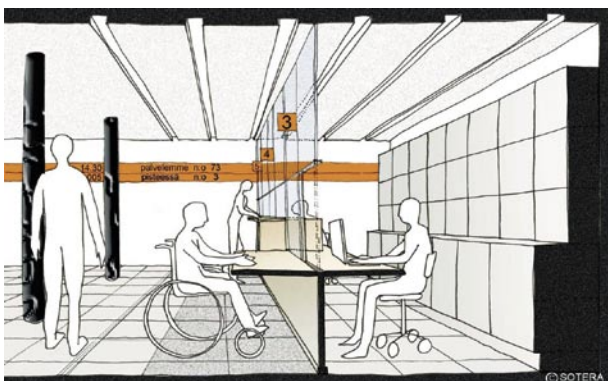
### Building's entrance area – for all

- building's entrance clearly visible
- ramp as well as stairs at entrance
- street furniture in separate zone
- bollards for traffic barriers marked clearly



### Walkway bypassing construction site – for all

- sufficiently wide ramps
- protective fence and canopy
- proper lighting
- clear directional signs



### Customer service counter – for all

- contrasting floor colour leads to customer service point
- customer service counter separated by glass requires induction loop
- service desks at different heights



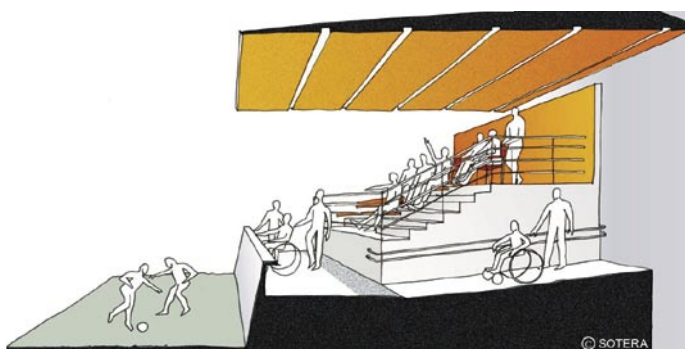
## Regional accessibility plans

Accessibility relates to moving and acting in the environment. All public routes and locations, for example public buildings and public transport stops, shall comply accessibility requirements. Accessibility must be studied regionally, taking each area's special characteristics into account.

All municipal agencies functioning in the area are participating in the Helsinki for All project's regional accessibility planning. An interactive design process also takes into account the

needs of stakeholder groups functioning in the area; these include local associations for the elderly and impaired, parishes, commercial and business interests, property owners and public administration.

All municipal agencies and institutions are responsible for the implementation of accessibility in their own operations and draw up their own accessibility plans.



### Spectator seating – for all

- path to seating facilitates accessibility for all
- railings do not block views
- clear colour scheme
- handrails at two levels

## Equality is the goal

### The cornerstones of accessibility are:

- legislation
- standards
- functional design
- education
- communications
- socio-political support
- co-operation

### Accessibility is promoted by:

- functional designs
- concrete solutions
- availability and attainability

### Accessibility solutions include:

- ramps
- railings
- resting places
- kerb stones for all
- low-floor transport
- automatic door opening mechanisms
- highlighting of doors with colour contrast
- winter maintenance
- lifts
- guide plates
- orientation stripes
- parking
- relief signs
- warning areas
- sound signs
- colour contrast
- good acoustics
- nonglaring lights

### Implementing accessibility requires:

- political commitment
- practical measures
- co-operation
- interaction

**Send us your ideas,  
questions and opinions!**

**A Helsinki for All  
is our common goal!**



### Helsinki for All

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