# Goals and measures:

#### 1. STRENGTHENING WALKING CONNECTIONS

The areas around railway and metro stations, such as the main railway station, Kamppi station and the University of Helsinki station, are key locations for improving walking connections.

The environment around the main railway station is particularly significant, as most people arriving in the city center pass through this area. Important walking connections from the main railway station include routes to Töölönlahti, Kamppi, Aleksanterinkatu, Esplanadi, Eteläsatama and Hakaniemi via the street of Kaisaniemenkatu. All these walking connections will be improved by developing the walking environment around the main railway station according to the plan of a car-free public transport street at Kaivokatu. In addition, public transport transfer connections will be enhanced, and the area's street-level functions will be improved.

Next, the detailed zoning plan around Kaivokatu will be updated with the goal of transforming the street into a car-free public transport street in front of the main railway station. Good conditions for service, taxi, drop-off, and emergency traffic will be ensured in the new pedestrian-oriented environment.

#### 2. DENSIFYING THE NETWORK OF URBAN LIFE PLACES

Urban life places refer to spots where opportunities for stopping and staying are improved. These places create pleasant urban spaces where people can stop to observe their surroundings or spend longer periods. They help pedestrians navigate the urban environment and encourage them to continue their journey by providing interesting experiences along the way.

The city center and surrounding inner city areas are developed as a dense network of urban life places in collaboration with residents, property owners, and other stakeholders. Later, area-specific traffic plans will identify different levels of potential urban life places. The quality of both small and local as well as significant urban life places will be improved, and the network will be densified by creating new places, for example, in connection with new land use or smaller places at street corners. The assessments will follow guidelines set by the city's walking planning guide and the land use development plan for the city center. Station environments, squares, parks, and waterfronts will be considered as independent urban life places and part of the walking network.

Examples of significant urban life places in the city center include the environment around the main railway station, Esplanadi Park, and Kauppatori. Local urban life places include Kampintori and Kolmikulma. Small urban life places include street corners at local street intersections with added street furniture, trees, and terraces. The identity of each place will be strengthened.

In the local streets (local traffic cells), the attractiveness of walking routes and urban life places is strongly emphasized. Car traffic will be adapted to the needs of pedestrians, as local streets serve only as access routes to properties. In principle, car traffic on local streets is limited to departure and arrival within the local traffic cell, allowing cyclists and electric scooter riders to safely use the roadway and pedestrians to cross the street anywhere. Local streets are clearly separated from the main car network by using extended sidewalks or other structural solutions at local street intersections, clearly signaling entry into the local network. These intersections will be supplemented with street furniture and street greenery where possible, aiming to integrate intersection areas into the network of urban life places. In developing street spaces, priority is given to streets with abundant commercial functions on street level.

# 3. ACCESSIBILITY OF PROPERTIES BY CAR

Good access to all properties is maintained, considering the needs for developing a pedestrianoriented city center, prioritizing public transport and introducing local traffic calming measures. Special attention is paid to the availability of loading and drop-off spaces, supported by parking policies and choices affecting street cross-sections. The number of loading spaces will be increased gradually through area-specific traffic plans.

### 4. ACCESSIBILITY OF UNDERGROUND PARKING FACILITIES AND SERVICE OPERATIONS

The usability of underground parking facilities in the city center is improved by adding new access routes and enhancing walking conditions above ground. The city center service tunnel and its connected parking facilities are developed based on the needs of the properties.

The service tunnel is not intended for through traffic. In the future, all entrances to the service tunnel will provide access to all connected parking facilities. Initially, a new entrance to Hakaniemi north of Pitkäsilta will be targeted. In the long term, smoother access routes to the west side of the tunnel will also be developed.

In further planning, it will be ensured that service traffic operates according to the rules set for it throughout the city center. This will improve walking conditions and the safety and pleasantness of urban spaces. Service operations on Aleksanterinkatu and other pedestrian-oriented streets will gradually decrease by directing service traffic to property service yards or the service tunnel. On Aleksanterinkatu, the change will be made gradually by tightening the current time restrictions for service operations and eventually removing service vehicles from the sidewalks entirely. For other pedestrian-oriented city center streets, the use of retractable bollards and time restrictions for service vehicles will be strengthened.

# 5. ACCESSIBILITY AND TRAVEL CHAINS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Special attention is paid to improving the accessibility of public transport services. The focus is on providing smooth transfers between different modes of public transport and ensuring good feeder transport options by foot, bicycle and car.

The improvement measures will focus on the areas around the main railway station and the Kamppi terminal. Here, the accessibility of public transport services is improved by emphasizing smooth pedestrian connections and a pleasant urban environment on key walking routes leading to the main railway station, metro stations, bus terminals, and the busiest tram stops, both above and below ground. At the main railway station and Kamppi terminal, proper arrangements for drop-off, taxi services and bicycle parking will provide for effective feeder transport also by bicycle and car.

To improve the accessibility of the metro, a new entrance to the University of Helsinki metro station is proposed near the intersection of Unioninkatu and Liisankatu.

#### 6. DEVELOPMENT OF TRAM TRAFFIC

With the implementation of the "Network City" based on the city master plan, the city center's tram network will be complemented by light rail lines. Dedicated tram lanes and improved tram stops will ensure reliable travel and operational reliability, independent of congestion. The new light rail based trunk routes will be located along the Unioninkatu-Kaisaniemenkatu-Kaivokatu-Simonkatu axis and Mannerheimintie, extending to Kolmikulma. The developing tram network will gradually replace current bus routes.

*Efficient and uninterrupted tram traffic improves the overall accessibility of the city center. Measures to improve efficiency will be addressed in area-specific traffic plans. These measures may include reducing traffic disruptions caused by street parking or rearranging intersections.* 

# 7. MAIN NETWORK FOR CAR TRAFFIC

The main network for car traffic in the inner city consists of main streets and collector streets. Meanwhile in the city center the main network consists of only collector streets. The main network is being thinned out in the city center by removing the east-west connection along the Kaivokatu axis. This enables a larger pedestrian-oriented area and reduced barrier effect of car traffic. At the same time, it is ensured that the main car network remains dense enough, considering the volume and direction of car traffic demand, to facilitate inter-area travel by car and ensure accessibility to central urban areas. In the southern part of the Helsinki peninsula, the main car network will be supplemented with a connection between Telakkakatu and Laivasillankatu. By developing the existing street connections, this new main network link will, in the future, connect the Hernesaari area to the Pohjoisranta direction. This change will help structure the street network locally from a traffic perspective.

The streets of the main car network will be designed to separate pedestrian, cycling, and car traffic, with crossings primarily occurring at designated pedestrian crossings at intersections. The development of the pedestrian environment will focus on the zone extending from the building frontages to the curbside, where the needs of walking and social spaces are integrated while enhancing the street's appeal with greenery. Safe and efficient pedestrian crossings will reduce the barrier effect of the roadway.

Currently, most of the collector streets in the city center have more than one lane per direction. These include Eteläranta, Unioninkatu, Laivasillankatu, Pohjois- and Eteläesplanadi, Mannerheimintie, Uudenmaankatu, Lönnrotinkatu, Albertinkatu, and Fredrikinkatu. With their wide roadways, these streets create dividing lines within the city center, thus conflicting with the city master plan's pedestrian-oriented ambitions for the area. The goal, where traffic conditions allow, is to limit the number of lanes to one per direction, thereby reducing the barrier effect of roadways in an environment with very high pedestrian volumes. This approach to street network development in the city center aims at primarily serving local traffic needs and supporting the goal of reducing through-traffic. Changes to lane configurations will be prepared for decision-making based on more detailed plans and impact assessments.

On some collector streets, ensuring sufficient traffic capacity remains crucial due to their sensitivity to disruptions and pronounced role for emergency vehicles and port traffic. The Esplanadi streets are an example of such streets.