



City of Turku's development programme for pedestrian and leisure areas 2029



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Image 1. The 2020 art project "One summer", funded by the Beautification fund, created new places for people to meet in city. Also the parklet -terraces, where businesses can rent the parking space for terrace or other leisure use, and the Cathedral square summer terrace has enlivened the city center and been welcomed by city dwellers. Photograph: Saana ja Olli.



Introduction

Pedestrians and people spending their leisure time in the city are indicators of urban life. Increasing walking and spending time helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and increase the comfort and safety of the environment. A good and safe walking environment enables more encounters, and walking also easily changes into spending time, enabling an active urban life. Walking also has significant impacts on health and well-being. The urban space should be planned on the terms of walking and spending time with the resident at the centre. Turku is a compact city, which creates good preconditions for increasing walking on both everyday and leisure journeys.

Promoting walking and spending time is not only about building a physical environment, but also about developing the functionality of pleasant places and opportunities to spend time, encouraging the use of urban space and promoting sustainable choices. The quality factors of walking and spending time in an area are largely the same – in other words, the quality factors of an urban space that create a pleasant walking environment also create urban spaces that invite people to stay and be. It is therefore justified to look at them together. Walking is part of all travel chains, so promoting it will also create comfortable urban space for users of other modes of transport and promote their usability. The factors that promote walking and spending time should be considered at all planning levels, and they should be included in the objectives from the beginning of the planning processes. The best way to promote walking and spending time is through long-term and multidisciplinary cooperation, taking the needs and wishes of city residents into consideration.

On 30 November 2020 (section 524), the Turku City Board decided to launch a development programme for pedestrian and leisure areas in Turku. Turku has prepared a development programme for walking and cycling in 2010. The development programme for cycling in Turku 2029, approved by the Turku City Board on 26 November 2018 (section 463), replaced the previous programme for the development of walking and cycling in 2010 as regards cycling. At the same time, it was noted that there is a need to draw up a separate development programme for walking. **This programme has not yet been approved by the Turku City Board (7/2022).**

The aim of the programme is to promote the development of walking and spending time and to define actual measures to improve walking conditions and create an attractive urban space. The aim of the development programme and the measures presented in it is to have 66% of journeys with sustainable modes of transport by 2029. The 2018 strategic agreement on urban environment sets targets for 2% annual growth in cycling and pedestrian volumes. The measures also promote the objectives of smooth mobility and an urban space that is a pleasant place to meet. The target year of the development programme is 2029. The focus is on the current city centre, however, so that the measures of the development programme can also be applied to the area of the expanding centre and to the rest of the city. The development programme was prepared as part of the URBACT Space4People project (2020–2022). A temporary experiment, Kristiinankatu Summer Street 2021, was also carried out as part of the preparation of the development programme.

Interaction and stakeholder cooperation

Large and small working groups were established for the Space4People project, which have been responsible for drafting, brainstorming and commenting on the development programme.

In addition to the representatives of the city, the larger working group that led the preparation of the programme comprised representatives of the 3rd sector, residents, business life and expert organisations. Representatives of the following parties have participated in the extensive working group of the Space4People project:

- City of Turku's Urban Environment Services: urban planning and land property, mobility services, urban construction
- City of Turku Central Administration: management support, joint services
- City of Turku Recreation Services
- City of Turku Welfare Services
- Valonia
- Regional Council of Southwest Finland
- ELY Centre for Southwest Finland
- The Student Union of Turku
- Turku City Centre Association
- Turku Seura
- City of Turku Accessibility Panel
- Turun kaupungin vanhusneuvosto (Turku Council for Older Persons)
- Turku Youth Council
- Turku and Kaarina parish union
- Turku Urban Environment Committee

The larger working group met 5 times in remote workshops during the preparation of the programme. The vision, objectives and measures of the programme for pedestrian and leisure areas in Turku were mostly worked on in the larger working group of the Space4People project.

The composition of the smaller working group varied through-out the project, and it consisted of representatives of urban planning, traffic planning and maintenance, a project development unit representative, a representative of mobility services, and a representative of the spearhead project of centre development. The urban environment services have been in charge. The work has also been steered by international cooperation with the partner cities of the Space4People project.

There was a temporary experiment in connection to preparing the development programme, Kristiinankatu Summer Street 2021, which was carried out together with entrepreneurs, residents

and other operators on the street. Two discussion events were organised on the summer street experiment, one that included a remote workshop for the draft plan. In addition to the discussion events, the summer street plans were also discussed in the larger working group of the Space4People project. In order to evaluate the experiment, there was an open “Voice your opinion” hearing as well as a separate survey for entrepreneurs and residents of the street. During and after the experiment, the entrepreneurs of the summer street maintained an Instagram account for the summer street, and there was an information board on the summer street telling about the temporary experiment and the Space4People project. The temporary experiment sparked a wider discussion on important issues related to the development programme, such as sustainable modes of transport and the use and quality of street space.

In 2021, the City of Turku commissioned a thesis project in the field of service design, in which the various incentives and obstacles of walking were studied through walking personas. The results of the thesis project were also used in the preparation of the development programme for walking.

Why should walking and leisure areas be promoted?

Walking and leisure areas should be promoted because:

- Pedestrians and people spending time in urban spaces make the area more vibrant and enable encounters
- Promotion of walking as a form of transport reduces the climate and environmental impacts of transport
- Walking has physical and mental health effects
- Everyone is a walker, and walking is part of all travel chains

Urban life is created by people who move and spend time in an urban space. The number of pedestrians is an indicator when assessing the liveliness of city centres. A good and safe walking environment enables more encounters, and walking also easily changes into spending time. Walking is an all-round way to get to know a city, nature sites and your own living environment. Pedestrians make the urban environment safe and interesting for other pedestrians as well.

Promoting walking as a mode of transport reduces the climate and environmental impacts of transport, as walking is a sustainable, noise-free and emission-free mode of transport. For example, of the 50% green-house gas emission reduction in passenger car traffic, roughly half can be achieved by technology changes and the rest must be done by changing transport behaviour. The infrastructure required for walking is also lighter and requires less space.

The mental and physical health effects of walking are well known. At best, walking is an easy, low-threshold way of moving, spending time outdoors and encountering other people. Walking protects against illnesses, such as overweight, diabetes and dementia, and increases functional capacity and social well-being. The promotion of walking even has national economic benefits as healthcare costs decrease, working careers extend and productivity increases. Pedestrians perceive and observe their surroundings diversely. Walking in a comfortable environment helps people recover, and it improves sleep. The accessibility of parks and other local nature sites are incentives for being active.

Walking is the most natural way to move around. Almost everyone is a pedestrian at some point of their travel chain. The aim of walking can also be to move from one mode of transport to another. Walking has many different purposes, but they can generally be divided into walking related to everyday activities and walking related to recreation. A pedestrian's routes are often flexible, and they can change from a sudden urge or stimulus. Walking is affordable and does not require large purchases. Walking is related to self-motivation and independence, especially in the functional capacity of older people. Moving on foot is equal – with aids if necessary and when a high-quality walking environment allows it.



Image 2. The riverside is a popular place for leisure walks all year around. The picture is taken during the annual Turku Day in September. Photograph: Marie Nyman

Turku as a walking city in 2029 - vision and objectives

The vision of the development programme for pedestrian and leisure areas for 2029:

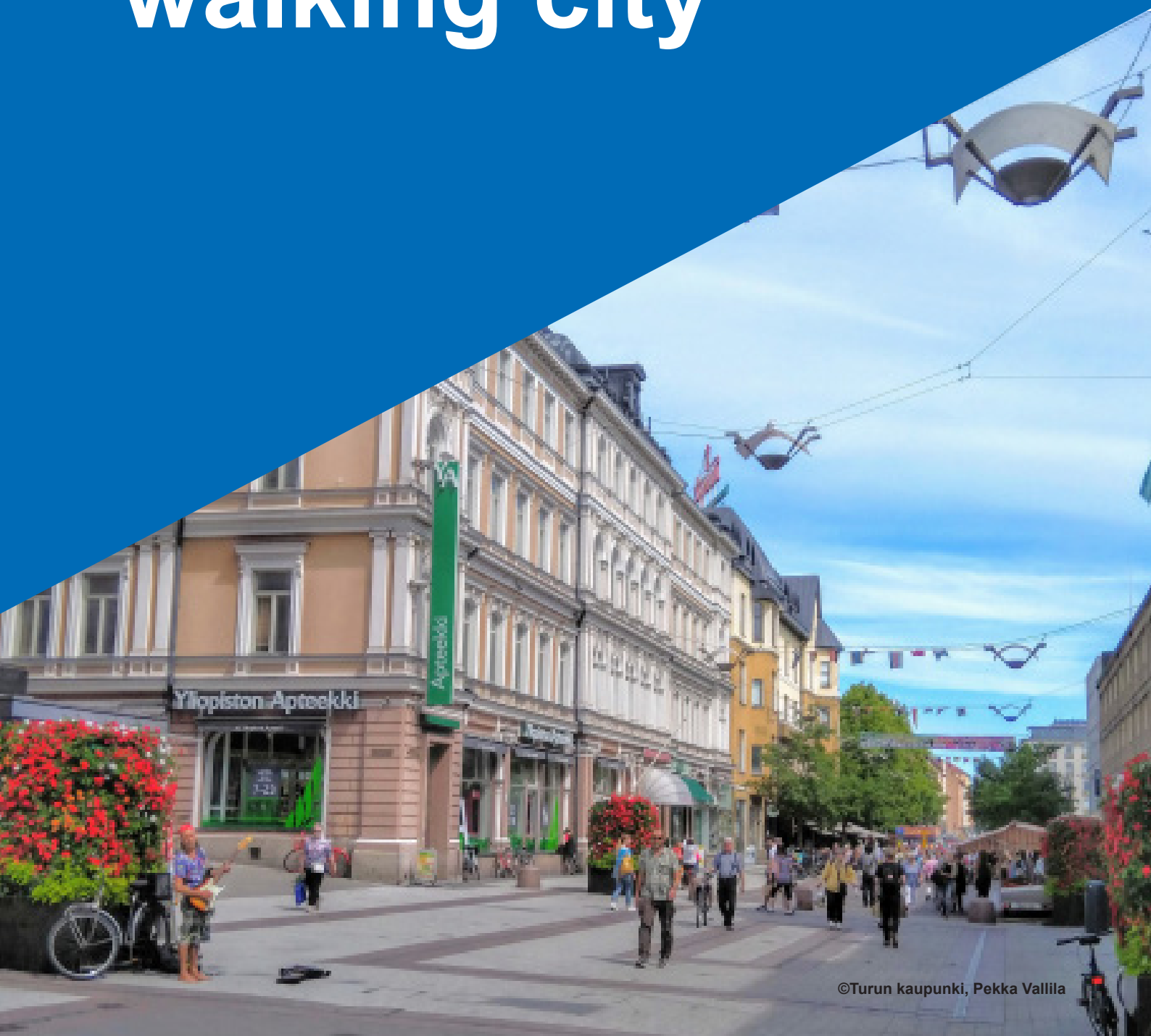
Turku's urban space is planned on the terms of walking and leisure areas, so that it is functional, safe, attractive and pleasant for everyone.

GOAL 1: Planning that takes walking and leisure areas into account – The urban space is planned on the terms of walking and leisure areas. Enough space is reserved for walking, and the urban space is made pleasant and memorable. Walking routes form a network that is as uninterrupted as possible, and the nearby areas have good walking connections to the city centre. A mixed urban structure and close proximity to services make it possible to make many of the everyday trips by foot.

GOAL 2: Comfortable and safe routes all-year round – Walking routes are safe and adequately maintained. The accessibility of the urban space is taken into account as part of planning and maintenance. Temporary traffic arrangements take into account the fluency and safety of walking. The recreational and everyday routes are good connections, but they also provide something to look and wonder at, and encourage people to walk all year round.

GOAL 3: A culture that encourages walking and spending time in the city – The urban space is a living room for city dwellers, and it invites Turku residents and visitors of different ages to hang out, encouraging them to meet others. City dwellers are encouraged to use the city for many activities and the urban space for temporary events. Turku people are encouraged to walk shorter trips in particular, and the benefits of walking are emphasised. Existing routes are actively communicated, and guidance makes different routes easy to find.

Turku - a compact and interesting walking city



Walking and leisure in Turku

Turku has a strong tradition of promoting the conditions of walking and leisure, the greatest achievement of which can be seen as the determined development of the Aura River banks from the 1970s onwards from harbour and vehicle focused areas to an environment of walking and leisure, and protecting the surroundings of the Turku Cathedral from vehicle traffic in the early 2000s. Turku's only pedestrian street, Yliopistonkatu, was introduced in 2001. In 2022, the Market Square and its surrounding streets will be renovated into a high-quality pedestrian and leisure environment. However, Turku still has a lot to do in developing the use and pleasantness of the street space and in utilising the potential of Turku's historically layered and interesting urban space as the focus of city life. Images 3 and 4.

Turku is a compact city with short distances, which creates good conditions for walking as a mode of transport on business, work and study trips as well as on leisure trips. The grid plan structure also makes the city easy to navigate and allows you to select a route along the busiest main streets or on the more peaceful residential streets. At the same time, the grid plan structure also forms long straight lines that do not always provide enough stimulus for pedestrians and make the journey feel longer, whilst on the other hand, they provide considered views of Turku's main landmarks and attractions. The city structure also forms large street spaces in some areas, the potential of which should also be examined from the perspective of the pleasantness of the walking environment.

In many cities, it is harder to promote walking due to barriers, such as large motorways or waterways. Even in Turku, the railway, Helsinginkatu, Aura River and the bay can be regarded as a bottleneck for the walking network. Bridges and underpass options have been improved, and efforts are being made to improve them continuously. During the summer months, the obstacles Aura River and bay are reduced as Pikku-Föri and Föli waterbuses operate. In the future, the aim is to also add waterbus traffic upstream.

There are many kinds of squares, markets and parks available for leisure in Turku. The riverbank with its squares and parks, the Old Town area, the Market Square environment, Kupittaa and the hill parks are the city's most important leisure environments. The city structure and its hill parks are partially challenging in terms of accessibility. In recent years, Turku has promoted the temporary use of urban spaces, which has revitalised the urban space and made urban residents spend time in the city centre's public space.



Images 3 and 4. Since the 1970s, significant traffic changes have been made to the Aura River surroundings, forming the current vibrant and diverse pedestrian and leisure environment. The image shows the Vähätori square before and after banning traffic passing through it in 2011. Photographs: Tomi Hangisto (top picture), City of Turku (bottom picture).

What is the goal in Turku?

The significance of walking and the need to increase the share of sustainable modes of transport have been recognised at both national and local levels. The target of the National Strategy for Walking and Cycling 2020 (2011) of the Ministry of Transport and Communications is that the share of journeys undertaken on foot or by bicycle should increase by 20 per cent throughout Finland. Many of Turku's strategies and programmes have set goals related to walking.

The objective of the **Turku in the 2030s urban strategy** is for the city to have achieved carbon neutrality in 2029. The goal is a smooth and easy everyday life. Leisure services are planned together with residents. Sports facilities in residential areas, such as school surroundings, nearby forests, outdoor gyms and fitness stairs, support an active lifestyle and encourage people of all ages to work out together. According to the strategy, a mobile city dweller feels well. Ecological values guide zoning, construction and mobility solutions. A sustainable lifestyle and a meaningful life go hand in hand in Turku.

The measures set out in **Turku's Climate Plan 2029** and **Turku City's transport system plan 2020** aim at carbon neutrality. The city's goal of low-carbon sustainable transport cannot be achieved without a significant increase in the share of sustainable modes of transport. *In order to achieve this goal, the share of walking, cycling and public transport in Turku must be more than 66% in 2030.* The conditions for walking and cycling are strongly improved all around the year, and citizens are encouraged to engage in active every-day, beneficial and leisure-time movement. Continuous, high-quality main connections, safe local tracks and functional arrangements in the city centre are provided for walking and cycling. In 2020, Turku was found to be behind its target. The greatest potential for increasing sustainable modes of transport was seen in public transport and cycling. The Turku City Council has already approved the strategic agreement of the urban environment division in 2018 that set a target of 2% annual growth in both cycling and pedestrian volumes.

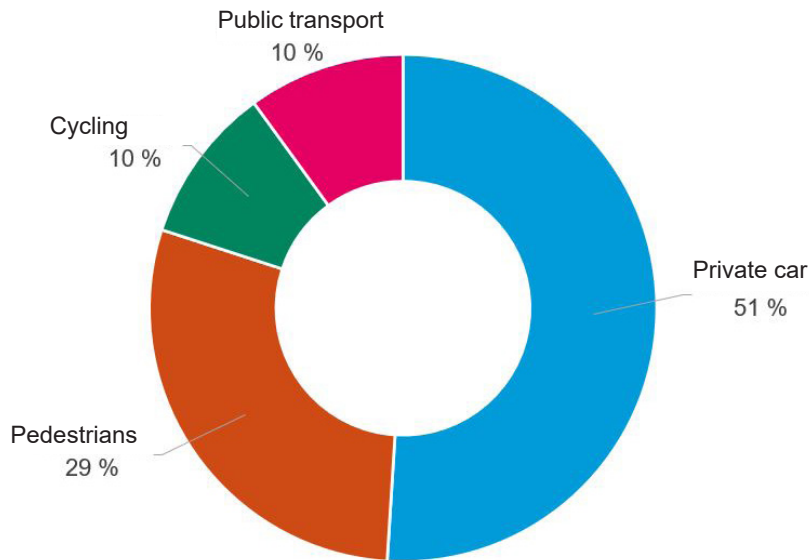
As part of the work on the current **2029 master plan**, traffic scenarios have been prepared for the centre of Turku. A transport network in accordance with the rapid change scenario has been the starting point for the master plan work. In the rapid change scenario, the most important measures are to make the street network more pleasant and restrict driving through. The hierarchy of the city centre's street network has been clarified by allocating some of the streets for walking, some for public transport and some for residents. Other goals set whilst working on the master plan include a living centre 24/7 and all-year round, and the development of routes linking the commercial centre, riverbank, parks and the historical centre so that different functions overlap. The zone of sustainable urban structure presented in the pending master plan contributes to supporting sustainable modes of transport and the accessibility of services.

According to the goals of **the spearhead project of centre development**, the centre of Turku must be accessible and easy to move in, commercially attractive and pleasant, and a vibrant platform for encounters. The appearance of the mobility environment is also pleasant and

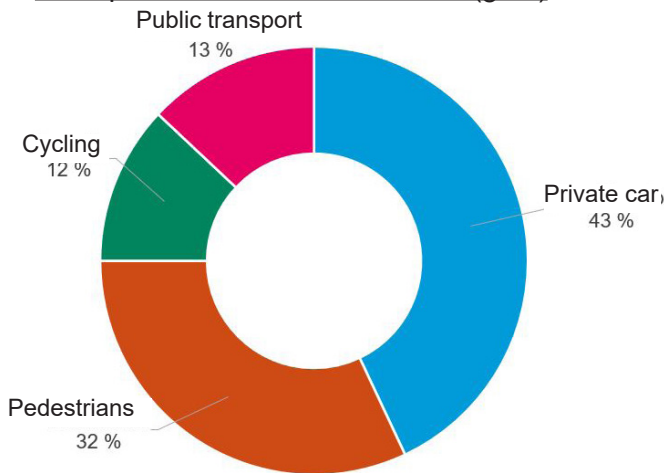
attractive throughout the year. The measures presented in **the vision for the city centre of Turku for 2050** include developing a coherent network of walking and cycling routes throughout the city centre, improving the safety and pleasantness of routes, and gradually making new streets more focused on walking and cycling. Regional development plans have also been drawn up as part of the centre's development project, such as for the Aura River banks, the Old Town and the overall concept of Aninkainen. These plans emphasise the development of the environments for walking and cycling and the revitalisation of public space.

In recent years, many plans and decisions for transport arrangements in the centre of Turku have also been made that indirectly promote walking. **The city of Turku's parking policies** state that *the purpose of street space is primarily to provide a channel for walking, bicycles, public transport, distribution traffic and car traffic, in this order of priority in the centre*. According to the policies, space is also reserved for elements that increase the pleasantness of street spaces, such as trees. City centre speed limits have also been dropped in recent years, thus increasing safety for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike, as well as the attractiveness and pleasantness of the city centre for pedestrians.

Transport mode distribution 2016



Transport mode distribution 2024 (goal)



Transport mode distribution 2029 (goal)

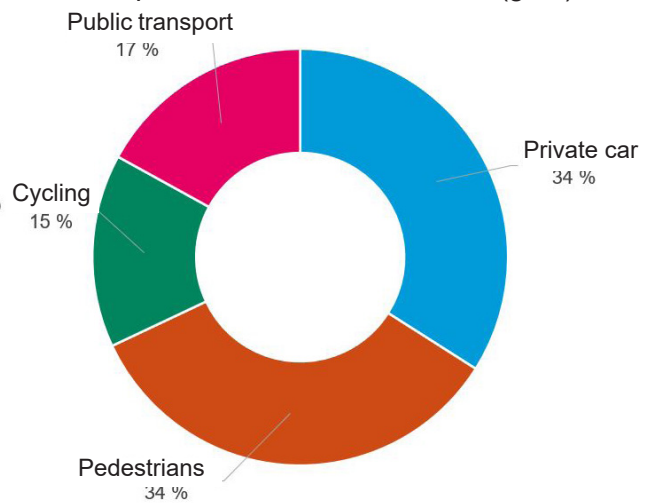


Image 4. According to the transport mode distribution in the passenger transport survey from 2016, approximately 49% of the journeys were made using sustainable modes of transport (by foot, cycling or public transport). In Turku, the goal is that 66% of journeys are made using sustainable modes of transport by 2029. In practice, the intended change in the distribution of modes of transport means that journeys by car are transferred to public transport, cycling or walking.

Turku walking in the light of research and statistics

Turku walking and leisure in numbers:

- Turku has 700 kilometers of sidewalks, combined pedestrian and cycling lanes and pedestrian walkways, 100 kilometers of park pathways and 1,850 park benches
- Around 29% of journeys in Turku are made by foot, and around 35% of trips for errands in the city centre are done by foot.
- 83% of Finnish-speaking comprehensive school pupils live within a walking or cycling distance from their school

According to the distribution of modes of transport, 49% of journeys in Turku are made using sustainable modes of transport. With regard to the use of sustainable modes of transport, Turku is middle range when comparing large cities in Finland. Efforts will be made to support sustainable modes of transport so that some of the journeys made by cars are transferred to public transport, cycling or walking. Regardless of the time of the year, walking journeys in Turku are less than two kilometres long on average. As far as walking is concerned, distance is a significant factor, and the most likely car journeys to become walking journeys are the errand runs that are less than two kilometres long. Walking and cycling have been partly alternative modes of transport for each other, as in winter months walking replaces some of the cycling journeys. Image 4.

The Turku city centre transport environment survey (2019) examined the residents' views on the development of the transport environment. The target group was residents of Turku, Raisio, Naantali, Kaarina and Lieto over 15 years of age. Improving the conditions for walking and cycling was considered important especially in the development of central areas. In general, improving road safety for walking and cycling and providing traffic education in schools were considered very important. The respondents also saw the accessibility of services on foot and by bicycle as well as considering walking and cycling more actively in land use and decision-making as important matters.

Turku residents' views on traffic arrangements in the city centre have been surveyed in the "Turku discusses" citizens' panel in 2020. The citizens' panel discussed the traffic scenarios of the city centre, drawing on small group discussions, expert speeches and an information package on traffic arrangements. Participants were invited to the citizens' panels by random sampling, and their opinions were examined before and after their participation in the panel. After the citizens' panel, there was support for adding more pedestrian streets (86%), increasing the number of benches and plants (95%) and more streets for pedestrians and cyclists (85%). Turku residents support the rapid change scenario in the traffic arrangements of the city centre (59%). The second most supported scenario was of large changes (28%).

According to the ASKURA study carried out in the Turku School of Economics in February and March 2020, the journey's purpose had clear connection with the mode of transport. Just over a third of the respondents came to the city centre walking (35%), but almost as many used buses. Drivers counted for 26% and 7% were cyclists. When walking, the short distance, health reasons and ease of access were the main factors affecting the choice of means of transport. When shopping, running errands, visiting cafés and restaurants, using entertainment and cultural services, or just otherwise spending time in the centre, the most common mode of transport was walking. When going to work or school, and when participating in hobbies and meeting friends, a bus was often used. However, almost one third of the respondents drove their car to a work or study place in the city centre; some because they need the car in their work. The share of those arriving by car was emphasised when the main purpose of the journey was a certain service located in the city centre.

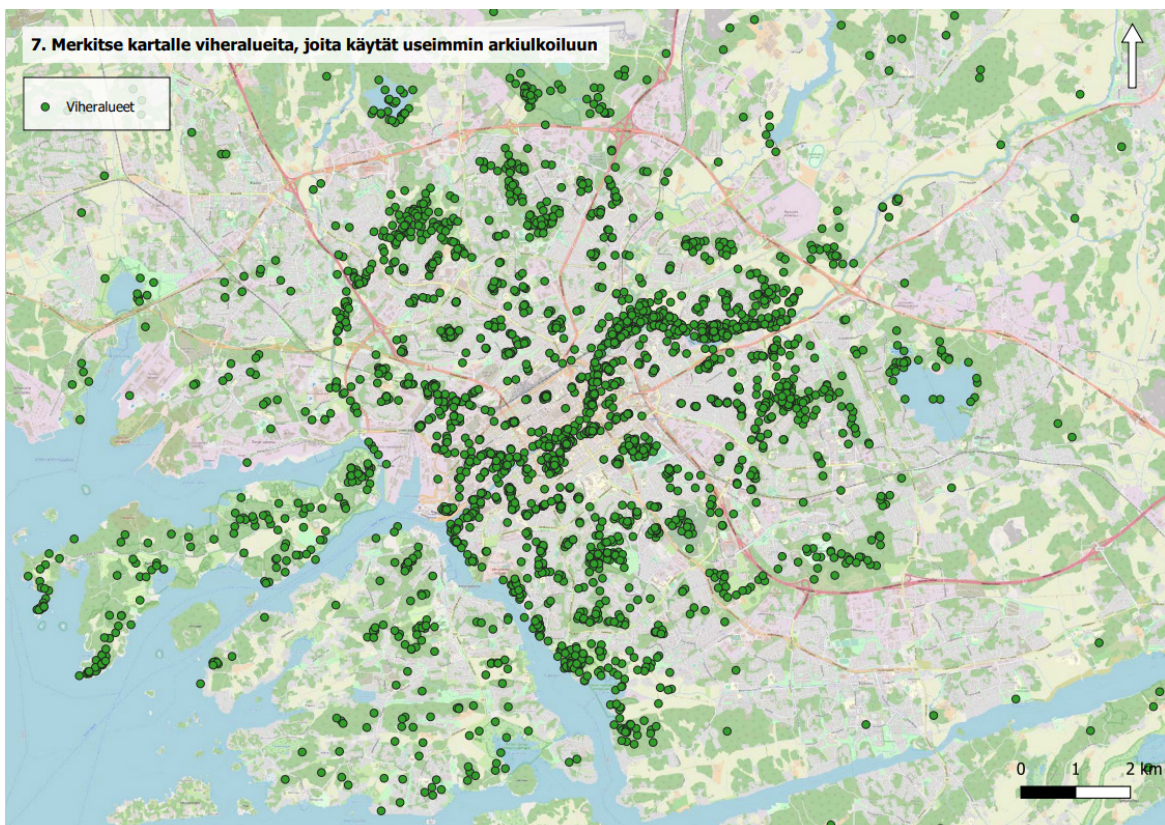
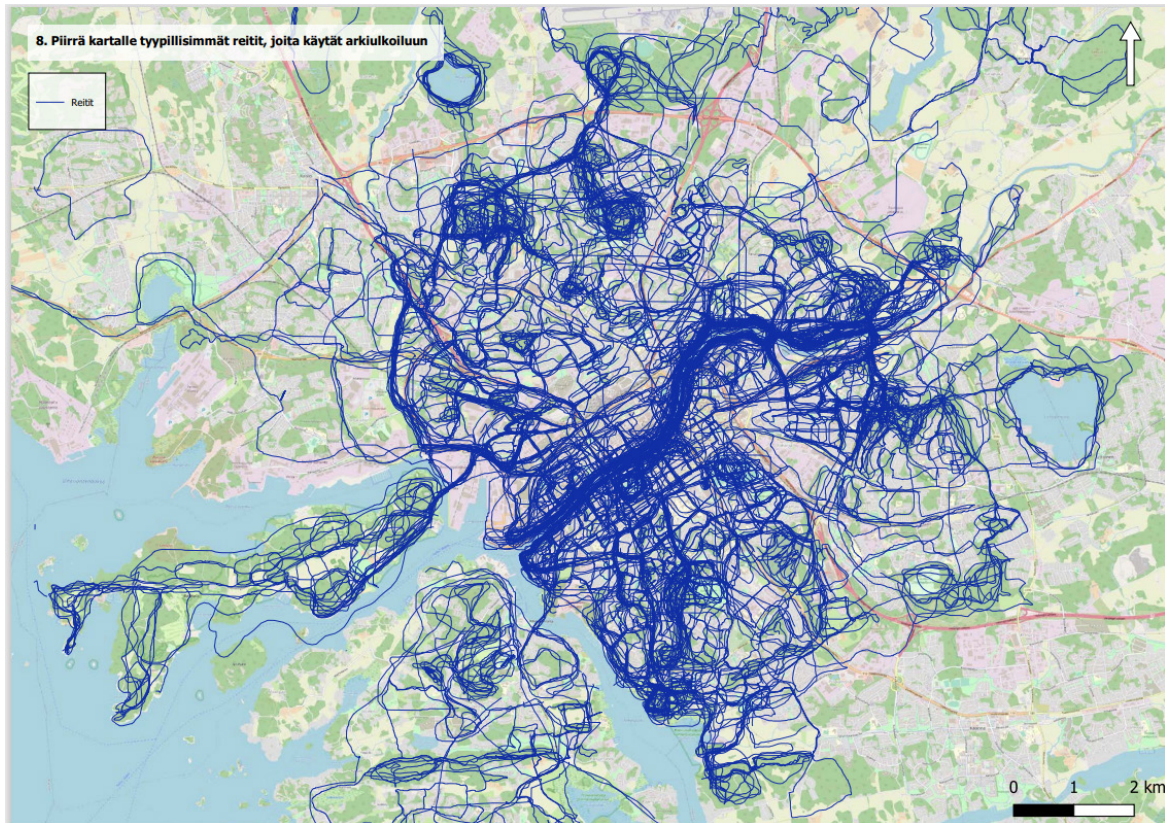
The school network in Turku supports the accessibility of schools with sustainable modes of transport. According to a 2018 study on going to school by foot or bicycle, about 83% of Finnish-speaking pupils attending comprehensive school in Turku live within a walking or cycling distance from their school, but only one fifth of comprehensive school pupils in Turku are physically active enough for their health. The number of pupils in Turku who are actually walking or cycling to school is not known, but making the everyday journeys by foot could be a partial solution for changing young people's mobility habits. The main reasons why school journeys are not carried by foot or bicycle are related to traffic safety and habits.

With regard to recreational walks, enjoying the landscape or nature, the peacefulness and distance from home are emphasised. Based on a 2020 survey on the everyday outdoor activities in Turku green areas, the riverbank is particularly emphasised as a route or place used for recreational walks. Other large green areas outside the city centre and hill parks in the city centre are also mentioned. For the city centre, the street network of the entire grid plan area is also used for recreational walks. In Turku, recreational walks do not usually involve other means of transport; 93% of the respondents said that recreational walks started at their home door. The majority of respondents (30%) felt that the maximum distance to the nearest extensive recreational area is one kilometre, and a total of 13.7% of the respondents would accept a distance of 1–3 kilometres. Image 5 and 6.

In Turku, accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists are more emphasised than in the whole country. According to the traffic accident report, a total of 3,094 personal injuries and 17,427 cases of property damage covered by motor vehicle insurance took place in Turku between 2015 and 2019. The numbers are considerably higher than the accident data of the police, as they are not informed of many minor accidents. Traffic accidents involving pedestrians are mostly concentrated on pedestrian crossings on the main streets of the city centre, most often due to a violation of the traffic rules of one of the parties, and that the turning car fails to notice a pedestrian on the crossing. According to Turku's 2020 safety survey, about one third of the respondents are afraid of being a victim of a traffic accident. However, it is considerably more common for pedestrians to be injured by falling, slipping or tripping.

In the grid plan blocks of the centre of Turku, the buildings are responsible for the winter maintenance and sanitation of pavements. Outside the city centre, some of the pavements and all combined pedestrian and ealking lanes are the city's responsibility. The work order is based on a maintenance classification, which takes into account the number of services on the route, for example. In 2015–2021, a satisfaction survey for city residents was conducted on community services. Based on the survey, the average grade for clearing snow off pedestrian and bicycle routes and for preventing slippery surfaces was 2.9/5, which is slightly lower than the average in neighbouring municipalities. However, with regard to preventing slippery surfaces, the grade has improved in recent years. The condition of pedestrian and bicycle roads received a grade of 3.3/5 and lighting 3.7/5 in the survey.

Image 5 and 6. Based on a 2020 survey on the everyday outdoor activities in Turku green areas, the riverbank is particularly emphasised as a route or place. Other large green areas outside the city centre and hill parks in the city centre are also mentioned. For the city centre, the street network of the entire grid plan area is also used for recreational walks.



Pedestrian counts and observing people spending time in the area

Pedestrian counts provide information on how the use of modes of transport has developed more frequently than passenger transport surveys. They can be used to monitor the development of pedestrian numbers and flows in the longer term and to assess how well the targets are realised. Observation of people spending time in the area also provides information on how they stay and spend time in urban areas.

Traffic volume calculations have been carried out in Turku between 2014 and 2019. Pedestrian calculations have been carried out, for example, on the Aura River calculation line on the bridges crossing the river. Pedestrian counts show that the number of pedestrians is by far the largest in the city centre. Based on pedestrian counts for 2014–2019, more than 2,500 pedestrians move around the riverbank, Hämeenkatu, Kauppiaskatu, Linnankatu, Yliopistonkatu, Humalistonkatu, Kaskenkatu and around the Square Market in a summer day. Image 8.

In 2020, the city acquired automatic EcoCounter calculators, which have been placed on the Library Bridge, Aura Bridge and Theatre Bridge as well as the cycling roads of Raisio and Piispanristi. The devices provide information on the number of pedestrians, cyclists and cars separately in both directions with 15 min accuracy. Image 7.

People spending time in the area has not been systematically observed in Turku, but individual projects have used different methods, such as map observation or drone imaging, to assess the number and habits of people spending time in the area. Image 9.

In 2019, as part of the city guidance ecosystem project, Turku tested the use of Flow base stations to observe people's movements based on the Bluetooth devices they use. The test carried out by Hypercell monitored traffic in the centre area, tourism in Turku harbour, and the arrival and departure of people at the Declaration of Christmas Peace.

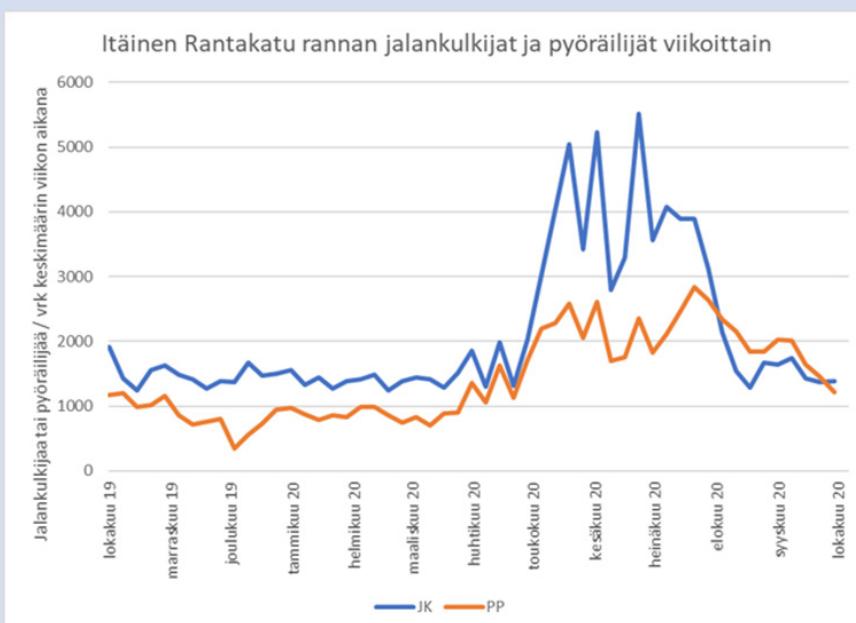


Image 7. The EcoCounters provide continuous information on the number of pedestrians and cyclists.

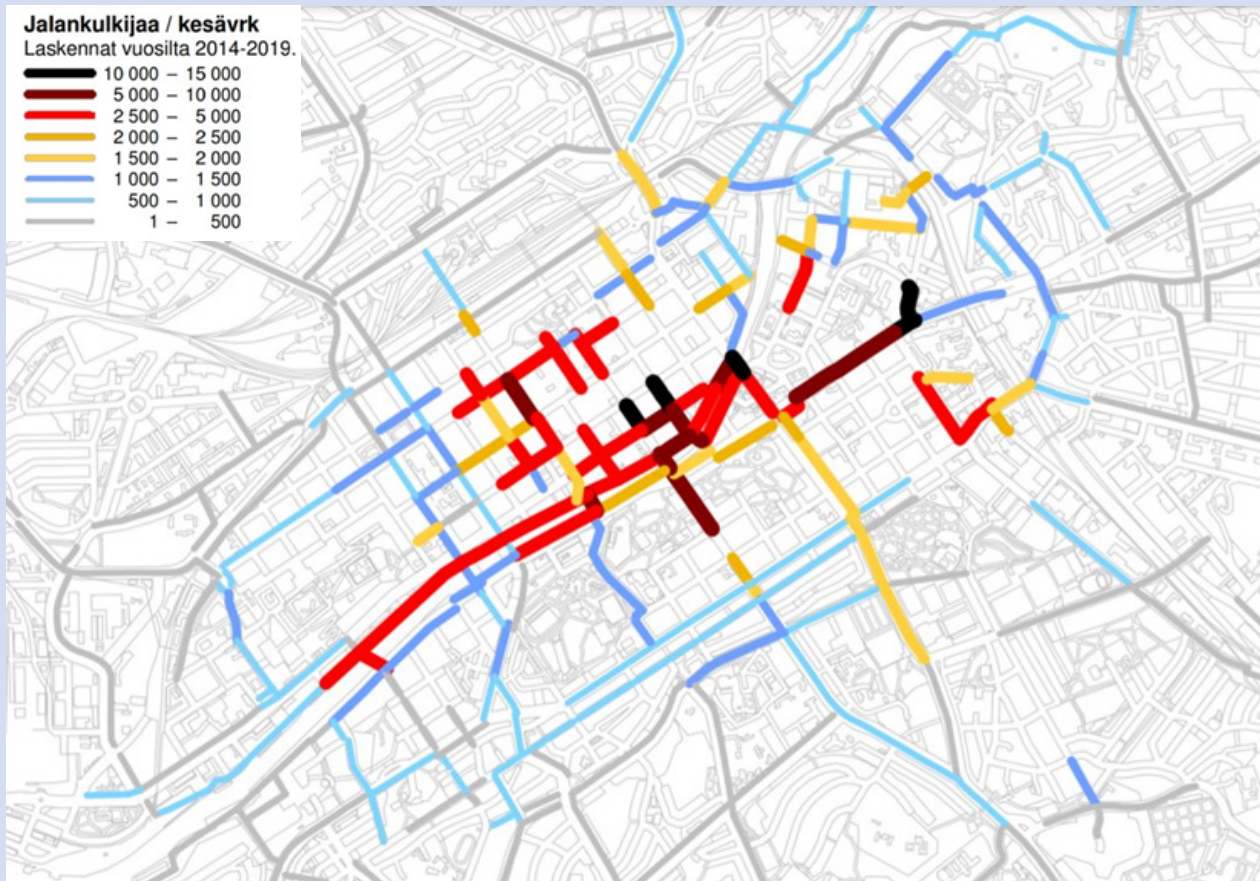


Image 8. The number of pedestrians has been monitored manually in 2014–2019.

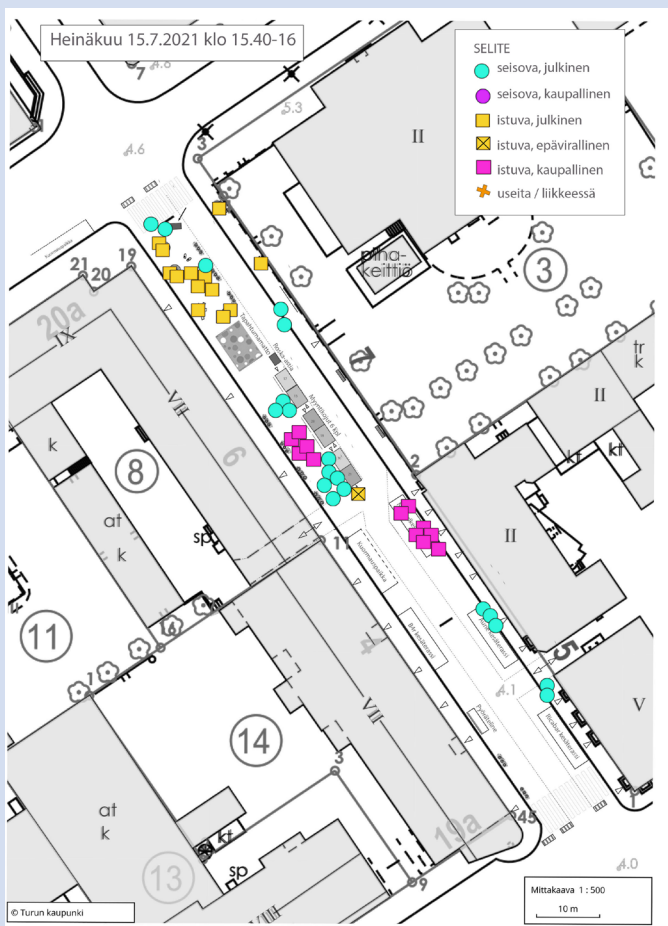


Image 9. In connection with the Kristiinankatu summer street experiment, the stationary people mapping method was tested to observe people spending time in the area.

Challenges in promoting walking and leisure areas

The choice of walking as a mode of transport is influenced by several factors. Good planning can influence many of the challenges associated with walking.

Journey distance and time

Walking is the slowest form of transport, and people usually walk everyday trips of under 2–3 kilometres. The time is particularly important for families with children, and the schedules and destinations of different family members often make them choose a car. In Turku, the range of the school network makes it possible to travel to school by walking or cycling. The location of the home in relation to the workplace or services is a personal choice for many people, which is influenced by many factors.

Traffic safety and perceived safety

Traffic safety is affected by factors such as driving speeds, visual obstructions, lighting, pedestrian crossings, and traffic lights. In addition to cars, other vehicles, such as e-scooters and bicycles, can also be considered dangerous. Narrow pavements affect the sense of safety. A mixed urban structure with functions at different times of the day and other pedestrians increase the sense of safety.

Weather conditions

In Finland, in terms of weather conditions, slipperiness, rain and wind affect people's willingness to walk for everyday matters or recreation. Icy pavements or slippery leaves can cause accidents. Wind or rain makes walking unpleasant if there is no protection against weather conditions. Especially among the elderly, high temperatures also impact their choice to walk as a means of transport.

Pleasantness, ease or accessibility of the walking route

The pleasantness of the walking route, such as beautiful views, places to stop and greenery, also affect the choice. For example, noise or air pollution can be experienced as unpleasant. In terms of accessibility, stairs, narrow pavements, poor condition, a high kerb, uneven surfaces or differences in height affect the choice of route and manner of travel of persons moving with assistive devices or prams, for example. Inadequate walking routes, such as missing pavements or detour sections, also affect the choice. For roughly a third of people, the skills, abilities and prerequisites for mobility require special attention in the traffic environment.

Transport of goods

For example, the transport of goods, such as carrying a shopping bag or a gym bag, can be a reason to choose another mode of transport than walking.

Guidance and navigation

Especially among tourists, choosing to walk is influenced by a clear and guided walking network. Guidance also encourages residents to familiarise themselves with their place of residence.

Habits or desire for comfort

For many, the ease of driving by car and old habits also affect their choice. Mobility habits are already formed in childhood, so traffic education plays an important role in promoting walking.

The promotion of spending time also depends on:

Equality and non-discrimination in the use of urban space

Equality involves, for example, commercial use of urban space, accessibility and safety. In the city, it is important to pay attention to urban space as an open, free space.

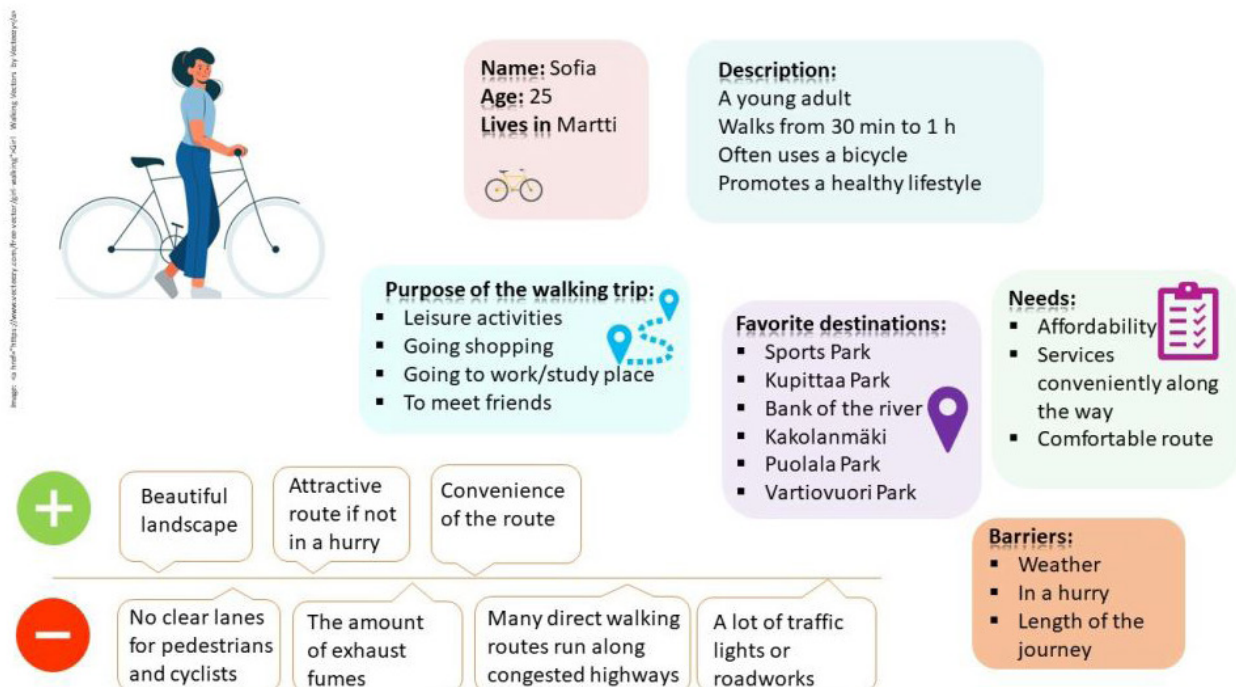


Image 10. The needs of pedestrians can be explored by using the methods of service design to create walking personas. Pictured above one example of a walking persona created for the City of Turku. Picture by Auguste Gronskyte.

Development of walking and leisure areas



Characteristics of a good walking environment

The quality factors of walking and spending time in an area are largely the same – in other words, the quality factors of an urban space that create a pleasant walking environment also create urban spaces that invite people to stay and be.

Creating a good environment for walking and leisure begins with the city structure. A mixed and dense city urban structure creates the right circumstances for a pedestrian city, making it possible for you to go to work, school and services by walking. Short distances between blocks allow you to reach your target as smoothly as possible and without detours. Various building recesses and squares can also be used to create a more interesting walking environment. Pedestrian shortcuts encourage you to choose walking as your mode of transport.

The safety and equality of the walking environment are factors that enable walking and spending time in a place. Safety refers to both traffic safety and perceived safety. In terms of traffic safety, the separation of modes of transport and well-lit and visually unobstructed pedestrian crossings that have a traffic island are important. The lighting of the walking environment, other pedestrians and 24-hour operations increase safety against crimes and also the perceived safety in urban space. Good maintenance and accessibility make the urban environment more equal.

Walking is the slowest mode of transport, which makes it possible to observe the environment well. The pleasantness of the environment is influenced by such factors as greenery, lighting and public cleaning. Various stops and seats structure the walking route. Pedestrians are exposed to various weather conditions, such as rain, wind and sunlight. Various kinds of arcades and shelters can protect from the weather. Trees and other vegetation can also protect against unpleasant sensory experiences.

A memorable walking environment encourages people to walk. The pedestrian level of buildings, such as the shopfronts and materials, affects the experience. The little details matter for pedestrians, such as a beautiful bench or even a piece of art on the grid of a gutter inlet. The recognisability and experiential nature of the urban space can also be increased through, for example, guidance. City events and various activities make an interesting walking environment.

Various tools and methods (Healthy Street index, regional blue green factor, Gehl methods, etc.) have been developed to assess the quality of walking and leisure environments. These tools can be used to assess how well existing locations support walking and spending time or how well these perspectives have been considered in the plans. Images 11 and 12.

Image 11. The 12 Quality Criteria -method by Gehl architects was used in assessing the quality of the street Itäinen Pitkätatu, in preparation for a preliminary plan for renewing the street.

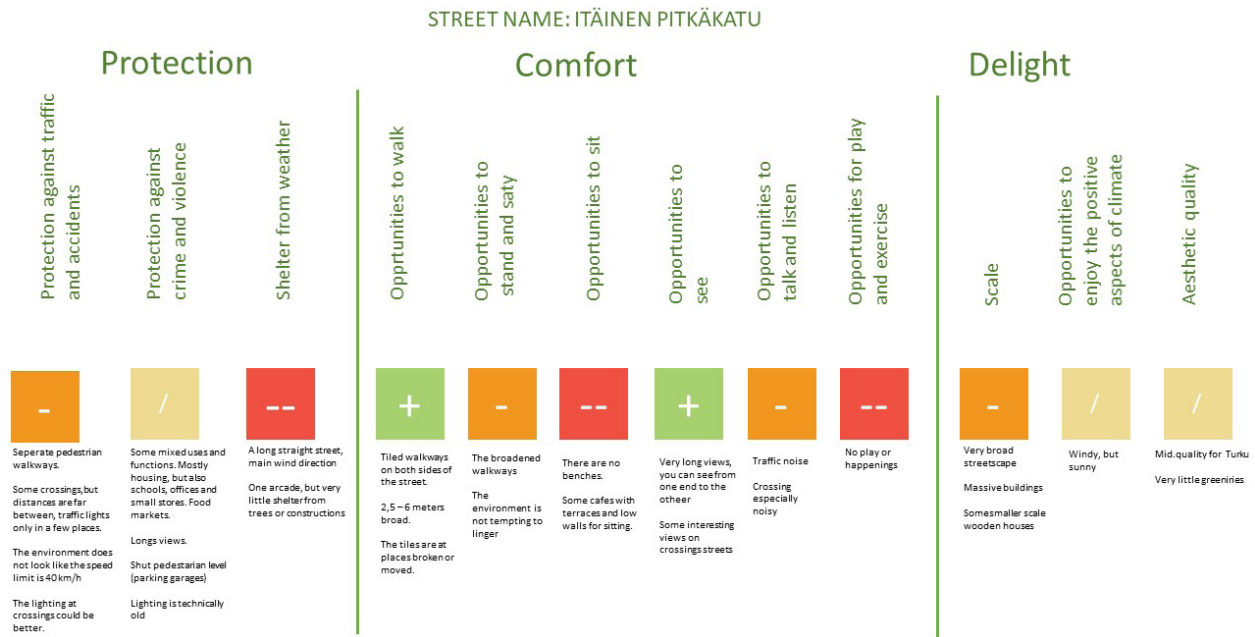
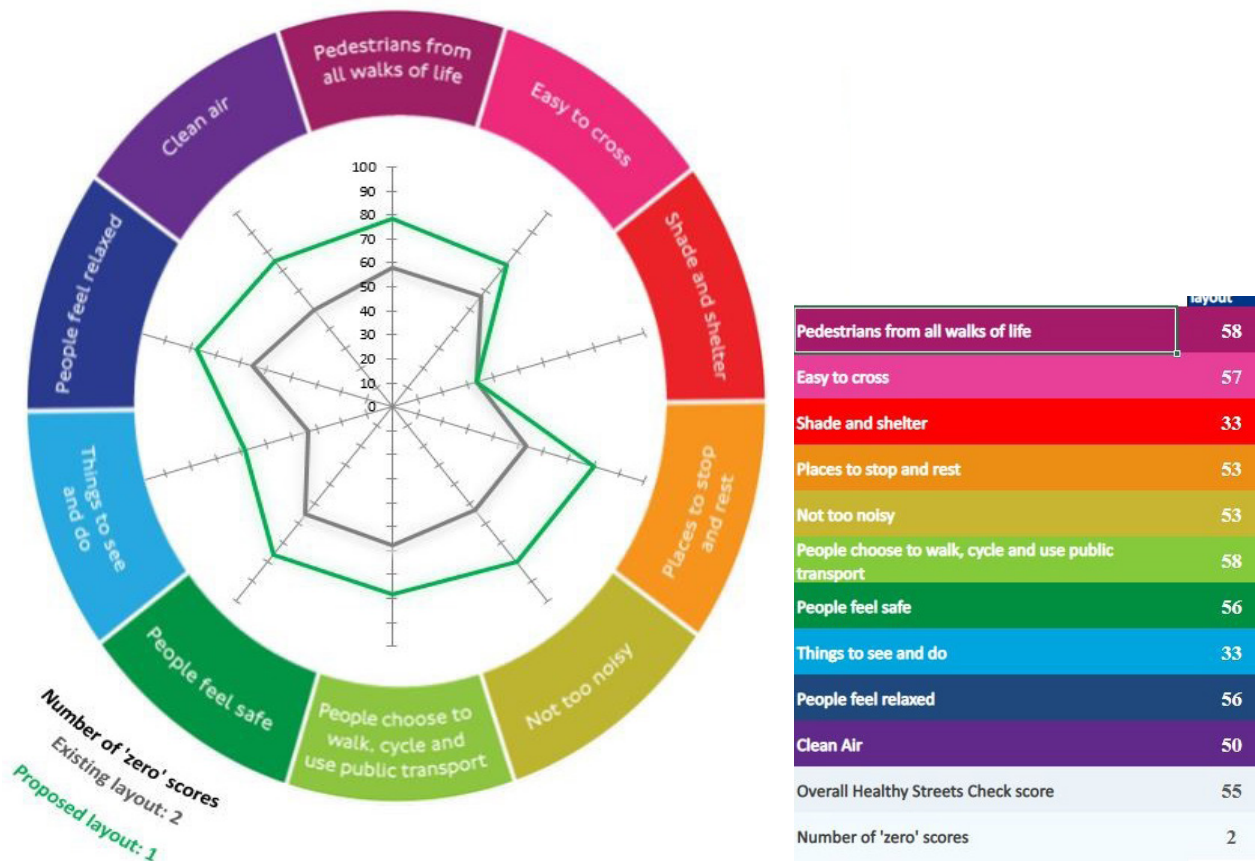


Image 12. The Healthy streets -method by Lucy Saunders was used to assess the quality of the Kristiinankatu street, before and after the small scale action.



Case: Kristiinankatu Summer Street 2021

Kristiinankatu Summer Street 2021 was a temporary experiment carried out in connection with devising Turku's development programme for pedestrian and leisure areas and the Space4People project. Kristiinankatu is being developed into a more pedestrian-focused street in the city centre traffic scenarios, connecting the current pedestrian street to the riverbank.

In the summer of 2021, a novel approach to the use of urban spaces was experimented on Kristiinankatu. Street traffic was restricted in one block and the attractiveness of the street was increased with plants, hang-out areas and different events. Restaurants by the street built Parklet summer terraces. In connection with the experiment, the impacts on people's mobility and leisure, user satisfaction and the success of the implementation process, interaction and communication were assessed.

The users received the summer street experiment mostly positively. Based on an online survey and a feedback survey for the entrepreneurs and residents on the summer street, about 75% of city dwellers and about 90% of the summer street's entrepreneurs considered the experiment successful or at least mainly successful. The opinions of the street's residents were more divided; slightly more than half of the respondents considered the experiment successful, and slightly less than half thought it failed. As regards the summer street, the added plants and benches increased the pleasantness and vitality of the street. The summer street was found to have positively influenced the business operations of the shops on the street. The residents criticised that it was more difficult to drive to the properties and that there were more disturbances. The summer street was clearly used more in the afternoon and evening time, which is partially due to the opening hours of the shops and restaurants on the street. During the experiment, the number of people spending time on the street increased, but the number of pedestrians and cyclists did not increase significantly based on traffic counting.

In addition to the physical environment, the functional content of the street is a challenge in the temporary experiments. Out of the winning suggestions of the Ignite Turku idea competition, the city organised the young entrepreneurs' summer market and the Event Rug, but closer cooperation between the city and the entrepreneurs and associations would have been needed to increase functionality.



Image 13. Kristiinankatu Summer Street 2021 in the early evening of Turku Night of the Arts.

Measures to promote walking and spending time in the city

The programme contains 11 measures aimed at promoting walking as an attractive mode of transport and improving the comfort and usability of urban spaces.

The best results can be achieved by combining various measures, such as transport network development measures for mobility management and service development. With regard to planning, it has been recognised that it is necessary to allocate resources for developing walking and to take better account of objectives related to the quality of the environment at different stages of planning. The aim is for walking to be smooth, pleasant and easy all year round. Improving safety and accessibility will help make the mobile environment more equal and accessible to all. The importance of communication has been recognised in the development programme, and city residents are encouraged more and more to get on their feet and experience the city in a new way. Various experiments and temporary uses make it possible to experiment with design solutions, but also offer experiences for residents.

Target year of the development programme is 2029, and it is implemented by several different parties in cooperation. Measures and projects promoting walking and leisure areas can be funded under the operating costs or investments of the urban environment services of Turku. In most cases, projects that promote walking and leisure areas are part of a larger programme that invests in new infrastructure or renovating the old infrastructure. Turku's beautification fund has also supported projects that improve the pleasantness of the urban environment. External funding can come in the form of state subsidies or from EU funds.

- 1 Commitment to promoting walking and leisure areas, and development of funding.**
- 2 Improving the monitoring of the number of pedestrians and those spending time in the urban space.**
- 3 Development of a pedestrian and leisure area network.**
- 4 Improving the quality of the pedestrian and leisure areas.**
- 5 Creating more leisure environments and green urban space.**
- 6 More cooperation and awareness of accessibility.**
- 7 Improving the safety and accessibility of pedestrian crossings.**
- 8 Improving winter conditions from the perspective of walking and spending time in the urban space.**
- 9 The profiling, guidance and marketing of routes and places will continue.**
- 10 Turku encourages residents to walk and organises campaigns.**
- 11 Promotion of experimental culture and temporary use of urban space.**

1 Commitment to promoting walking and leisure areas, and development of funding.

City of Turku's development programme for pedestrian and leisure areas is approved by the decision-making bodies. Resources for measures to promote walking are reserved annually. State subsidies and EU project funding will be utilised, and promotional work will be carried out as part of the city's activities.

The project planning paths utilise general plans and alternatives, in which a necessary discussion of values on the environmental quality objectives is held.

Responsible parties: The entire Urban Environment Services, Recreation Services, Central administration, decision-makers **Schedule:** Programme approval 2022, other continuous **Funding:** See the funding of separate measures and, in separate infrastructure projects, the cost estimate; for projects worth more than 1 million it is decided based on the project plan.

Image 14. Commitment to promoting walking and leisure in Turku is crucial for increasing the journeys made by sustainable transport modes. Photograph: Visit Turku, Seilo Ristimäki / Iloinen liftari oy



2 Improving the monitoring of the number of pedestrians and those spending time in the urban space.

The monitoring methods, locations and times as well as the needs for the counting data are determined systematically.

Transport counting will be continued to complement the monitoring of the development of the modal distribution in passenger transport research. The current calculator network will be supplemented, and old calculators updated with new technology. Different methods will be experimented with to provide information on human flows and spending time in urban spaces. The implementation of an electronic monitoring system for pedestrian and cyclist volumes is also part of the measures of the Turku City Area MAL agreement period 2020–2031. The counting data is displayed in the transport view of the service map.

The Turku walking barometer will be implemented every three years. The walking barometer will be used to examine the attitudes of Turku residents towards promoting walking and their perceptions of the quality of Turku's urban space. The walking barometer can also be implemented together with the cycling barometer.

Responsible parties: Urban Environment Services / Urban planning and land property (traffic planning), Mobility services (urban mobility solutions), Central administration / Development and information management **Schedule:** Development of the traffic counting network, continuous. A walking barometer for the first time in 2023, after which every three years. **Funding:** The walking barometer will be carried out as consult work, funding to be reserved (EUR 30,000–40,000). Operational economy in transport planning for the planning and development of the counting network. Funding for experimental human flow monitoring methods (EUR 20,000).

3 Development of a pedestrian and leisure area network.

As part of the programme, a project list has been drawn up of development targets for the city centre's walking and walking network.

The pedestrian connections and places for leisure identified as missing or in need of improvement will be added to future investment programmes on their own or together with other projects. Attention will be paid to prioritising projects.

Responsible parties: Urban Environment Services / Urban construction, Urban planning and land property **Schedule:** Projects are divided into priority categories: category 1 (within 5 years), category 2 (within 5–15 years), category 3 (after 15 years) **Funding:** See cost estimate; for projects worth more than 1 million it is decided based on the project plan.

4 Improving the quality of the pedestrian and leisure areas

The City of Turku follows the national and/or City of Helsinki planning guidelines for pedestrian areas, after the guidelines are completed in 2022-23.

A design manual for the urban space in Turku is drawn up to aid planning. The design manual encompasses for example gathering together planning guidelines for urban furnitures and fixtures, surface materials and vegetation. Many of the established practises in Turku is silent knowledge of the planners that is important put down in writing.

Different methods for evaluating the quality of urban space are utilized (f.eg. Healthy street index, areal Green factor tool, Gehl's methods) and the functionality of the tools is evaluated.

Responsible parties: Urban Environment Services / Urban planning and land property (land use planning, traffic planning), Urban construction (implementation planning, maintenance) **Schedule:** The Design manual finished by 2025, others continuous **Funding:** the design manual as consult work, approximately 90 000 e.

5 Creating more leisure environments and green urban space.

In connection to infrastructural renovations and new projects, options are sought for spending time in public urban spaces and to provide more green urban space. Maintenance increases the number of trees and benches in each district based on resident feedback.

In 2022, there were a total of 1888 benches in the Turku street, park and sports areas. By 2029, the number of benches will be increased by around 10%. Accessible bench models with armrests will be favoured, and they will be placed in resting places along walking routes and vantage points. Seating can also be temporarily placed in different locations to assess their utilisation.

In 2022, the city's street and park tree register contained a total of 33,167 trees. By 2029, the number of street and park trees will be increased by about 1,000. In infrastructure renovation projects, the possibility of moving underground infrastructure can also be investigated if this would make it possible to plant new trees. Urban green space also refers to summertime and perennial plants, hedges and vines, meadows and grassland areas.

Responsible parties: Urban Environment Services / Urban planning and land property (land use planning, traffic planning), Urban construction (implementation planning, construction, maintenance)

Schedule: By 2029 **Funding:** Investments and maintenance operating economy

6 More cooperation and awareness of accessibility.

Making accessibility walks with the accessibility panel and designers for the selected renovation site annually. Every year, accessibility training will be organised for land use planners and traffic planners, implementation planners, developers and maintenance. Accessibility training will also include experiential sections.

The operating instructions for temporary construction site arrangements will be updated as part of the excavation and fencing permit processes.

Responsible parties: Urban Environment Services / Urban planning and land property (land use planning, traffic planning), Urban construction (implementation planning, construction, maintenance), Central administration (accessibility coordinator), Accessibility panel **Schedule:** Continuous, in 2022, the TYMI project (Safe environment for older people) **Funding:** Project funding and EUR 4,000 / year for training.



Image 15. Increasing the walkability and accessibility of Turku's streets is a priority.

Photograph: Marie Nyman

7 Improving the safety and accessibility of pedestrian crossings.

Improving pedestrian crossing environments through various measures, such as improving visibility with lighting and improving accessibility by repairing the kerb of pedestrian crossings. The sites are selected based on feedback from residents, school routes and traffic accident statistics. The improvement of pedestrian crossings will continue with at least 10 sites per year (lighting improvements and kerbs).

Drawing up the principles of Turku pedestrian crossings. The work shall consider the development of conditions for walking in street crossing environments.

Responsible parties: Urban Environment Services / Urban planning and land property (traffic planning), Urban construction (implementation planning, construction) **Schedule:** The principles of Turku pedestrian crossings will be completed by 2024, otherwise continuous **Funding:** Operating economy of transport planning (the principles of Turku pedestrian crossings carried out as consult work), Traffic functionality and safety investment funds and maintenance operating economy (pedestrian crossings improvements)

8 Improving winter conditions from the perspective of walking and spending time in the urban space.

The maintenance classifications of the pavement will continue to be reviewed annually and the quality level to be managed.

As regards the pavements that are the responsibility of the properties, communication about the desired quality level will be increased with the Finnish Real Estate Federation. Increasing communication on the limits of responsibility for maintenance. Recommendations on how to promote pavement maintenance as part of a pleasant public urban space will be created on the city website.

In spring, attention will be paid to air quality, especially by binding street dust that rises from the road into air and by removing street grit at the right time for areas under city maintenance.

Measures and experiments will be developed to make walking and leisure conditions more pleasant and attractive in winter and in the dark. For example, projecting traffic signs onto the street surface on combined routes for cycling and walking.

Responsible parties: Urban Environment Services / Urban construction (maintenance), Mobility services (urban mobility solutions) **Schedule:** Continuous **Funding:** Maintenance operating economy, External funding

9 The profiling, guidance and marketing of routes and places will continue.

Compliance with and expansion of the defined uniform signs of the Turku guidance concept will continue. The decision to introduce the physical guidance concept was made in 2022. Guidance projects will be implemented as separate projects and as part of renovations and new infrastructure and facility projects.

Continuing to add all routes on the same jointly agreed platform, taking the guidance concept into account. The platform can be used for different needs, such as for printed and electronic route maps. The transport view created on the Turku service map will be developed further, and it will include a walking section.

The city will be active in marketing of the great and memorable walking destinations and routes as well as creation of new routes in Turku.

Responsible parties: Central administration / Organisation functions (well-being), Joint services (digital unit), Recreation Services / Attractiveness and events, Sports services, Culture services, Spearhead projects, Urban Environment Services / Urban construction (implementation planning, maintenance), Mobility services urban mobility solutions), Visit Turku **Schedule:** Continuous **Funding:** A separate investment programme will be drawn up for guidance. Investments, maintenance operating economy, Spearhead projects, possible project funding.

10 Turku encourages residents to walk and organises campaigns.

Turku participates in at least one national walking campaign per year. Turku organises its own campaigns and events related to walking and outdoor activities in cooperation with other operators. Encouraging people to move around and see the city in a new way, also in winter.

Responsible parties: Organisation functions / Promoting well-being and health, Spearhead project on communality, Leisure time sector / Sports services, Culture services, Mobility services / Urban mobility solutions, Central administration / HR City personnel **Schedule:** Continuous **Funding:** Spearhead projects, possible project funding

11 Promotion of experimental culture and temporary use of urban space

Together with other operators, the city organises tests that promote the temporary use of urban space and the conditions of walking as well as projects that improve communality and leisure areas. The tests and other temporary uses make the urban space more vibrant and make it easy to try design solutions.

Experiments promoting temporary use have included summer streets, parklets, event mats, urban cultivation projects and outdoor terrace areas. Many of these have started as experiments and become continuous. Future tests include winter exercise trials, a pop-up playground and various pocket parks.

The implementation of summer streets will continue in summer 2023. The necessary human resources and funding will be reserved for the implementation of summer streets. An operating model for the implementation and evaluation of experiments will be established.

Responsible parties: Urban Environment Services / Urban planning and land property (land use planning, traffic planning), Urban construction (implementation planning, construction, maintenance), Mobility services (urban mobility solutions), Spearhead projects **Schedule:** Summer street 2023, winter trials 2023 **Funding:** EUR 100,000 for the summer street, Winter trials as part of the city centre spearhead project and the Scale-up project, other possible project funding, Spearhead projects



Image 16. Dinner Under the Sky 2015. Photograph: Päivi Kosonen, City of Turku.

Evaluation and monitoring

Responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the development programme for pedestrian and leisure areas rests with the traffic planning and city planning units of the urban environment services.

Changes in the number and quality of walking and leisure networks can be monitored by:

- monitoring changes in the distribution of modes of transport
- comparing the results of pedestrian calculations and observation of people spending their time in the area, with the help of new monitoring methods
- monitoring pedestrian accident statistics and comparing safety survey results
- using the walking barometer to monitor the satisfaction of urban dwellers with the walking and leisure environment.

The implementation of the measures listed in the pedestrian and leisure area development programme and the network plan is monitored every year, and the results are presented in the operative group for land use. The attached form can be used for monitoring. The city's investment programme is drawn up annually, so the infrastructure projects related to walking and leisure areas must be promoted each year.

Uncertainties and risks

The uncertainties related to the pedestrian and leisure area development programme include conflicts between the use of urban or street space, the attractiveness of the city centre and changes in commuting traffic as well as the resources for planning and implementing urban environment services.

In principle, the majority of Turku residents are in favour of improving the conditions for pedestrians and leisure areas, but often as plans become more concrete, conflicts arise between the uses. The development of cycling and walking often requires additional space in the street, which might affect car routes or street parking. The use of urban space can lead to conflicts between residents or different users in the area. Some find the operation in the urban space noisy or otherwise disturbing. Common topics of conflict include the use of benches, street fundraisers, littering or noisy activities (such as skating or basketball). Young people's use of urban space in particular highlights the need to meet others and have a space to use creatively. The goal is to give residents equal opportunities to use urban space.

During 2020–2022, the global pandemic's impact on the use of public space and commuting has been noticeable. The pandemic has shown how important it is to allow people to meet and spend time outdoors. At the same time, however, the number of commuters, including pedestrians and cyclists, has decreased due to increased remote work. The decrease in the number of people moving in the city centre has also affected the centre's commercial attraction. There is currently no information on the persistence or duration of the effects.

The revitalisation of urban space and thus the number of people spending time there are often also affected by third sector investments. In most cases, the city's role is to act as a facilitator in which the construction of infrastructure and marketing create the conditions for activities in urban space. Investment decisions in the third sector are influenced by many other factors in addition to the environment's conditions. The needs of commercial operators and private service providers compete for public street and urban space, in which case attention should be paid to the balance between commercial and non-commercial activities as well as public and private activities.

The resources for planning and implementing the urban environment services, i.e. human resources and funding, are influenced by the number of personnel resources available in the city, other necessary infrastructure projects and the prioritisation of projects as well as the budget available for the city's investment programme.



