TURKU
ÅBO

Active and safe journeys to school

Action plan

Turun kaupungin julkaisu 2025

Schoolhoods | URBACT

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Contents

URBACT IV program

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1 Introduction

The URBACT program is a European Union initiative that promotes sustainable urban development through international cooperation. Its main goal is to help cities across Europe share knowledge, learn from each other, and develop practical solutions to urban challenges such as social sustainability, sustainable mobility, environmental protection, local economic development, and citizen participation. Cities participate in the URBACT program by forming thematic networks in which they collaborate on specific topics and draw up action plans for themes that are important to cities, such as school travel. The city of Turku participated in the URBACT IV program together with the Brasov Sustainable Development Agency (Romania), Brno (Czech Republic), Parma (Italy), Skawina (Poland), Zadar (Croatia), and Rethymnon, forming a network called SCHOOLHOODS.

The aim of the SCHOOLHOODS network was to focus attention on children's everyday mobility, in which school journeys play a major role. International cooperation has played a significant role in increasing the cities' operational capabilities and expertise. Network cooperation and internal cooperation within the city have promoted a variety of cross-administrative measures to develop children's everyday physical activity. The measures created in the project encourage active mobility, i.e., walking and cycling, through various means, such as improving skills, communication, and changes in the school environment. Local measures have been planned in collaboration with various parties, such as students, parents, and residents.

This action plan is intended to support the city of Turku in its efforts to increase safe and active everyday physical activity among children in the coming years. The action plan was drawn up on the basis of existing programs, the results of previous projects, data collected during the SCHOOLHOODS project, and conclusions reached in cooperation with stakeholders. The action plan brings together the most important measures and actions that the City of Turku should implement in the future to achieve its goals for safe and active school journeys. The plan and the resources required for its implementation will be presented within the organization in more detail in spring 2026.

Stakeholder cooperation has played a significant role in understanding this complex theme and planning measures. Several other service units have participated in the city's internal work. The regional working group, i.e., stakeholders related to the Pääskyvuori school, which served as a pilot school, has been important in creating a local context and evaluating measures. The Mobility Services, which is part of the strategic steering of the u, has been responsible for coordinating the project and writing the action plan.

1.1. Why should active journeys to school be encouraged?

The journey to school is a big part of a child's everyday life, as there can be up to 380 journeys to school in a year. This means hundreds of opportunities for physical activity, socializing with friends, getting to know the environment, and learning traffic skills and health enhancing mobility habits that are essential throughout life.

Physical activity is not only a building block for a healthy body and mind, but also for learning. Studies show that it is beneficial to increase physical activity at different times of the day, such as before learning, as it improves both learning outcomes and memory retention. Physical activity causes concrete changes in the brain – new nerve cells are created and blood circulation in the brain is improved. Traveling to school with friends is an important social activity for children. During the journey to school, children also experience and learn a lot about their surroundings.

Extensive school transportation has many effects on the environment—and on children's experiences of their environment—that may not immediately come to mind. When asked, children say that the most unpleasant aspects of their journey to school are the noise of cars and the fact that heavy traffic can also be frightening. Many parents do not want to let their children walk or cycle to school because of the dangers posed by heavy traffic, but at the same time, they unknowingly contribute to this problem by driving their children to school.

It is well known that driving causes emissions that are harmful to the climate, but it is not always realized that all those fine particles are directly inhaled by children because of their height. Statistically, emissions from road traffic pose a greater health threat to humans than traffic accidents, and every reduction in car use can have an impact on this.

The everyday habits and opportunities for activity formed in childhood are significant for the whole future. A child's social and physical environment and culture of activity shape their worldview in a way that can be difficult to change later in life. If children become accustomed to using only motorized vehicles during childhood, there is a risk that walking and cycling will not become part of their normal everyday lives later on, and their traffic skills will remain inadequate. For this reason, it is important to pay attention to things that may seem small in everyday life but have a greater impact than one might initially think.

1.2. Stakeholders and working methods that guided the planning

At the beginning of the project, stakeholders related to the theme were identified to work with in developing the action plan. The URBACT program provides tools for different stages of planning, which are: mapping the current situation, defining the problem, forming a vision and objectives, creating and piloting measures, planning, monitoring, and resourcing and implementing for the measures.

The project is coordinated by the mobility services department, which is part of the strategic management of urban environment services. The composition of the working groups has varied according to the stages of the work and needs. The principal of the pilot school, traffic planning, infrastructure services, and the Pääskyvuori homeowners' association and Pääskyvuori association operating in the pilot area have been most closely involved in the work. The deputy mayors have monitored the work and responded in particular to concerns raised in the pilot area. Two deputy mayors were involved in a project due to the change in council term in the summer 2025. One member of the regional working group had a dual role as a resident of the area and a member of a large council party. The final action plan has been built on the views formed in cooperation with stakeholders and existing information. The action plan will be presented to various management groups and steering groups in spring 2025, starting in January.

The city's internal working group has played an important role in creating a vision and identifying possible measures. The city's internal working group began its work in November 2023 by familiarizing themselves with the subject matter and forming a common understanding of the existing problems (Figure 1). In January 2025, the second meeting of the broader internal working group was held, focusing on reviewing and prioritizing the proposed and tested measures. Between and after these meetings, the action plan was worked on in smaller groups, which was found to be necessary from a resource perspective. In addition to the working group meetings, parts of the action plan and measures have been presented in other cross-administrative working groups, such as the traffic safety working group and the leisure development and coordination group.

The following service entities and service areas have participated in the city's internal work:
Urban environment services: mobility services, urban planning and land assets, traffic planning, geographic information and city surveying
Urban construction and facilities
Sports services
Children and young people: basic education
Business and economic development: employment services
Central administration: collaborative management, communications services

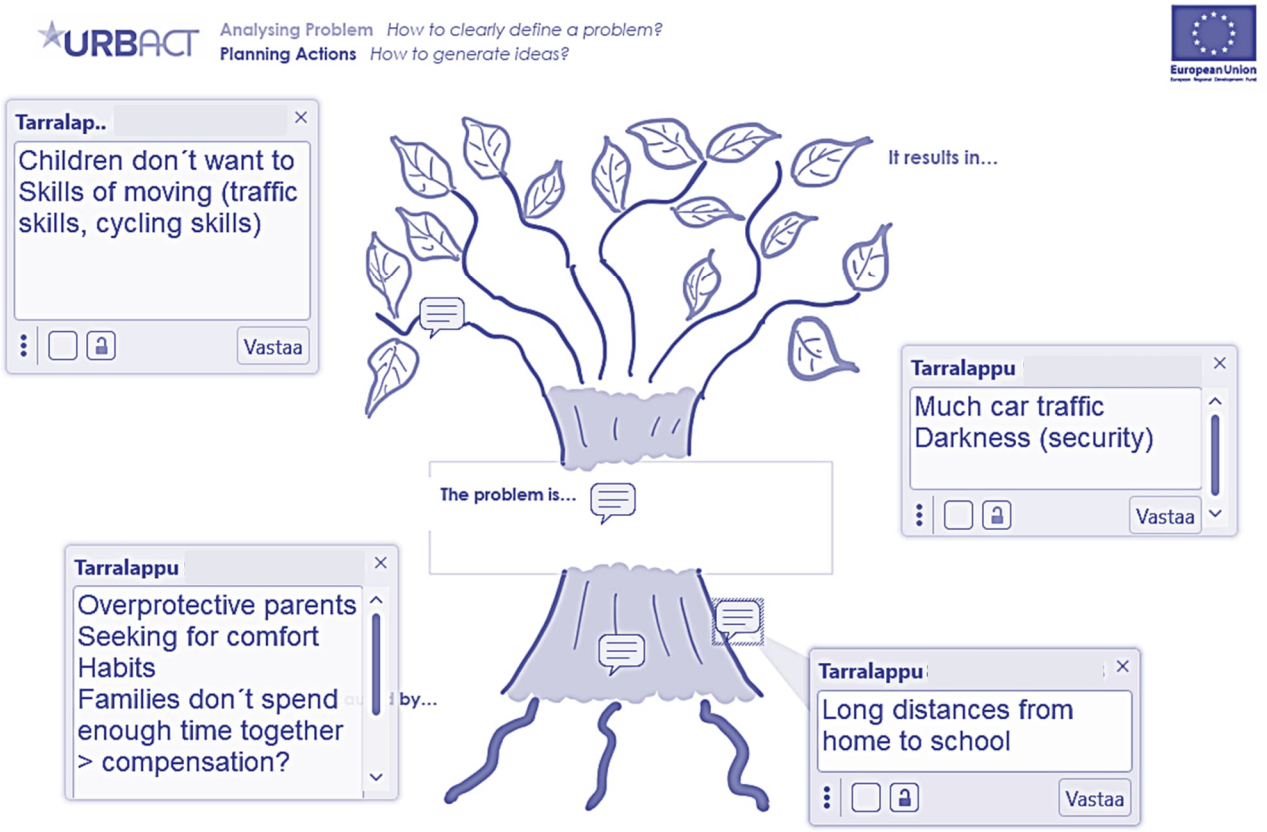


Figure1: Stakeholder cooperation began in an internal city workshop in November 2023, where the problem and its root causes and consequences were discussed. The definition process utilizes a problem tree tool, with the problem at the top and the root causes at the bottom.

The **pilot area working group** had broader representation and focused on defining problems at the local level and developing, implementing, and evaluating measures. The Pääskyvuori school served as the pilot site for the project. The composition of the regional working group varied depending on the issues being discussed, and it met a total of four times at the Pääskyvuori school. The last meetings in particular were well attended by local residents, as the final measure to be piloted affected most of the residents and their mobility. The working group's external stakeholders provided invaluable assistance in presenting the views of residents, parents, and students and in regional communications.

In addition to city employees, the following parties have participated in the pilot area working group:
Representatives of schools and daycare centers in the area
Representatives of the parents' association
Various associations operating in the area: Pääskyvuori Club, Pääskyvuori Home Association, Katariina Parish, Sateenkaari Koto Association, Multicultural Early Childhood Education, School and Home Association
Residents living in the area
The student body was met separately so that the children's perspective could be taken into account more broadly

Figure2: More detailed definition of traffic problems in the pilot area in cooperation with local residents, parents, and other stakeholders.

2 Starting point for developing safe and active school journeys

This chapter presents the local context for promoting active and safe school journeys, i.e., the starting points for development. The population, climate, organizational responsibilities, and service network form the basis for development. The city's strategies and programs guide the organization's activities, which are discussed in this action plan from the perspective of promoting sustainable mobility.

2.1. The city organization creates the basis for active and safe school journeys

The city of Turku underwent an extensive organizational reform in 2025 with the aim of creating a more people- and business-oriented organizational structure. The new organizational structure (Figure 3) emphasizes strong coordination between the city's various service areas and a network-based approach to solving complex challenges such as climate change and citizen well-being. It also aims to improve the efficiency and adaptability of the city's operations.

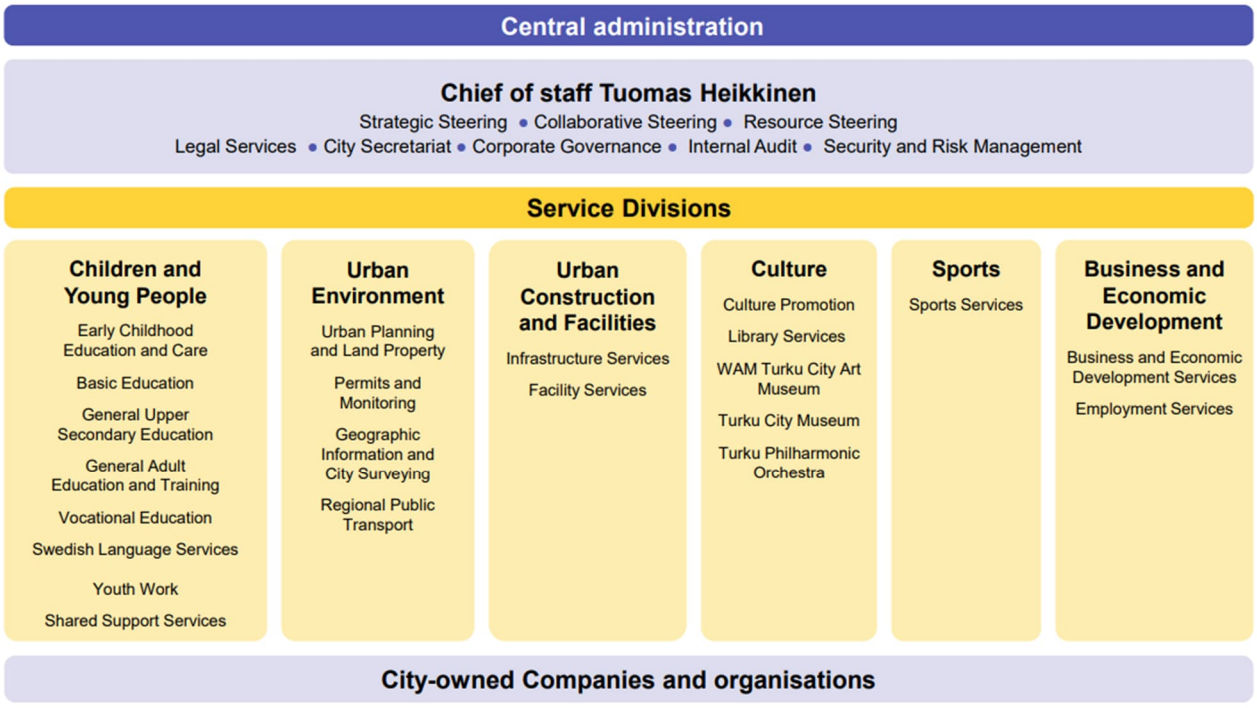


Figure3: Administrative structure of the City of Turku

The purposeful and effective promotion of sustainable mobility in Finnish cities is a relatively new task compared to established service structures such as the provision of education and training, the creation of opportunities for physical activity, and environmental planning and construction.

The Schoolhoods project's responsible body, **Mobility Services** (formerly Urban Mobility Solutions), was established in 2021, and its established functions and resources are still under development. The unit's objectives and activities are guided by the sustainable urban mobility plan, one of the objectives of which is to increase the share of trips made by means other than private cars to 66% by 2030. In 2021, the share of sustainable modes of transport was 55%. The plan also aims to improve health and traffic safety, among other things affecting mobility behavior and its consequences.

In Finland, **basic education** covers children aged 7 to 16. Turku has 33 comprehensive schools (of which two are private) from an administrative perspective, and 15 700 pupils (2025). Of these, 30 are lower elementary schools (ages 7—12) and 17 are upper elementary schools (ages 13—16). 14 offer education for the entire elementary school age group. From the perspective of mobility, this means that the catchment areas for upper secondary schools are larger. Starting in 2026, Turku will have four school districts, each with one principal for administering the school area, in addition to the principals of each school (Figure 4). The aim of this administrative model is to enable closer cross-administrative cooperation and more agile development within the areas.

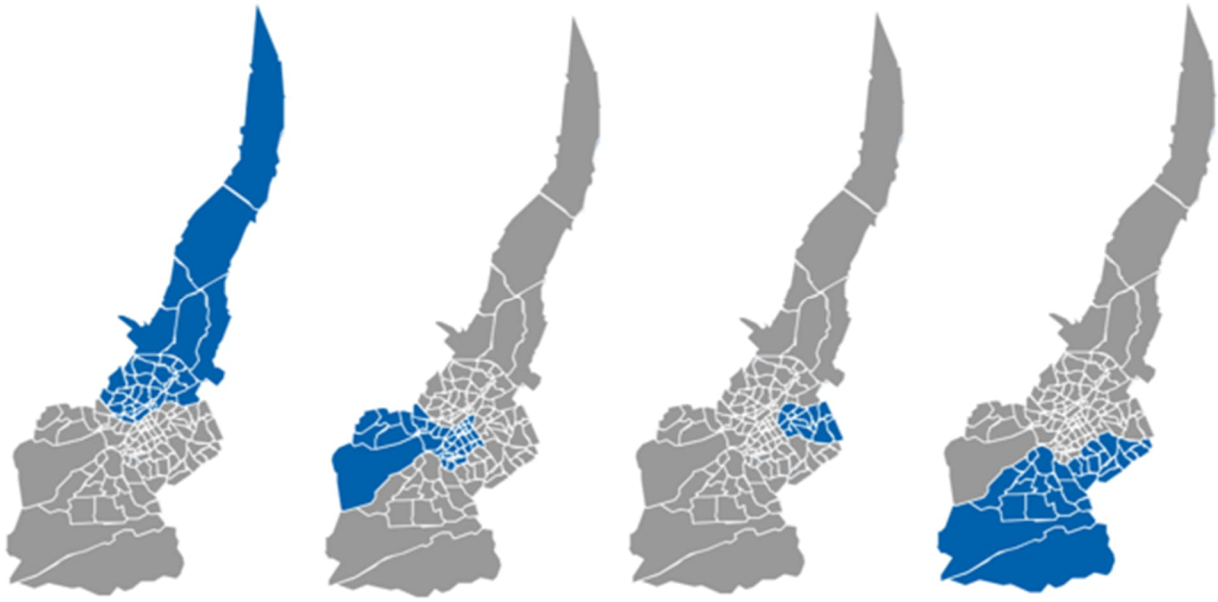


Figure 4: Territorial division of children and youth services.

2.1.1. Transport services in Turku

Turku regional public transport Föli is responsible for organizing public transport in Turku and six neighboring municipalities: Paimio, Kaarina, Raisio, Naantali, Lieto, and Rusko. Föli manages bus and water bus services.

City bikes, known as **Fölläri bikes**, are part of the Föli system but are coordinated by mobility services in cooperation with Donkey Republic. There are around 700 bikes and over 250 stations in the city. The city bike season starts in April and ends at the end of October. Access to the bikes is

automatically included in the Föli season ticket, but access can also be purchased through the Donkey Republic app on a one-time or seasonal basis.

Electric cargo bikes were introduced to the cityscape as part of the EU-funded Scale-Up project in Turku, and they are used in the same app as city bikes. The bikes are maintained by Kaakau Oy. These electric cargo bikes, available in two- and three-wheel versions, can be rented through the app and are suitable for everyday transport needs, such as carrying groceries or transporting children.

New major transport service projects are also under planning, such as a tramway and regional train service. In addition, improving travel chains and making them visible, and developing traffic data and digital guiding are important to the city.

2.2. Sustainable mobility in Turku in light of statistics and research

2.2.1. The basis for promoting sustainable mobility from the perspective of weather conditions and the population

Turku has a mild climate, strongly influenced by the sea and the River Aura. In winter, the temperature is around 0 °C, which makes it difficult to maintain roads and public spaces due to icy surfaces and snow, and affects active mobility. The influence of the sea helps to moderate extreme temperatures, which means that the seasonal variations in Turku are relatively mild compared to inland Finland. Road traffic accounts for one-third of Turku's climate emissions, and private car use increases during the winter months due to weather conditions. There are up to six months of the year when weather conditions are unfavorable for walking and cycling, so it is important to pay attention to these months. In Turku 22 % of the residents never use a bicycle, but in the wintertime the number is 68 % (cycling barometer 2024). In the future, climate change may significantly alter weather conditions in Turku, depending on which climate scenarios materialize.

In 2011, Turku had a population of 178,630, and the total population of the entire urban area was 356,806. By 2023, Turku's population had already exceeded 200,000. Turku has experienced strong population growth, which also affects land use and services. When looking at the forecasts for different age groups, the number of adults is expected to grow the most in the coming years, by 24.8% (Figure 5). The forecast population growth is based on net migration from within Finland and from abroad. If the forecast proves accurate, Turku will be among the municipalities with the strongest growth in the number of children in Finland.

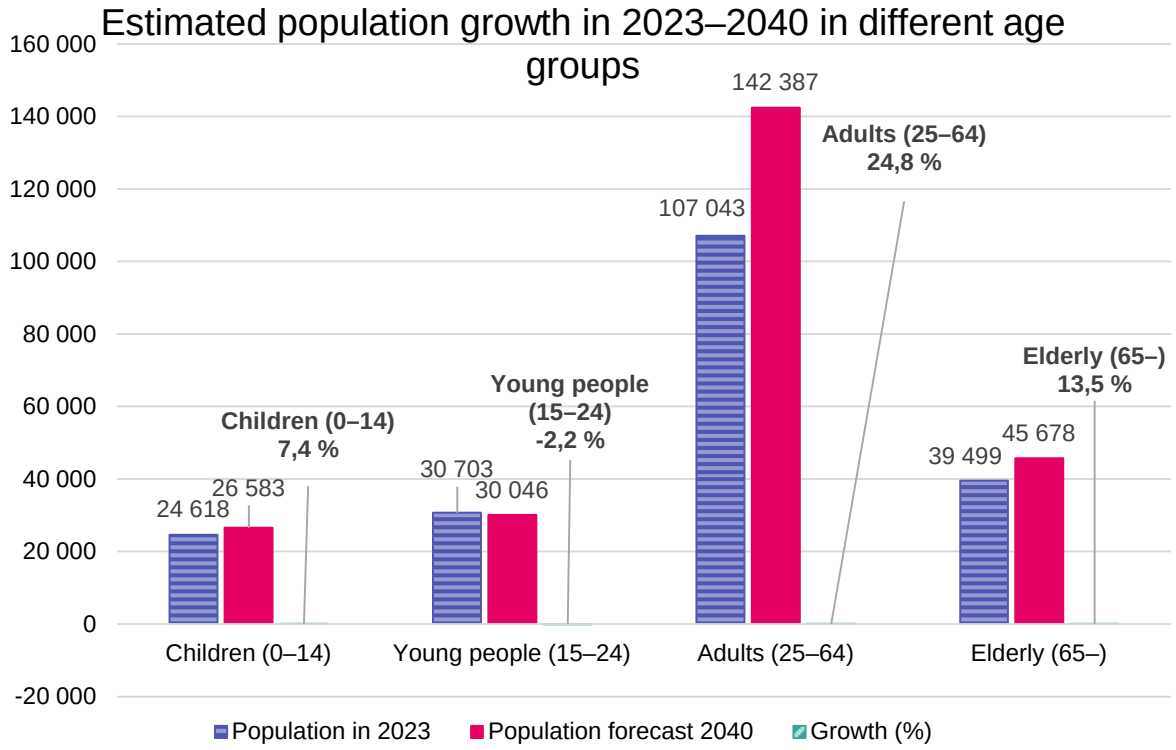


Figure 5: Population and age group proportions in Turku in 2023 and estimate for 2040. In 2023, Turku had 202,000 inhabitants, and in 2040, this number is expected to grow to 245,000, with the number of adults expected to grow the most (24.8%).

Turku is officially a bilingual city, with Finnish and Swedish as recognized official languages (Figure 6). In 2025, approximately 78% of residents will speak Finnish as their native language and 6% will speak Swedish. In addition, approximately 16% of the population will speak a native language other than Finnish or Swedish, reflecting the city's diverse linguistic structure. The most common foreign languages are Russian, Arabic, Kurdish, Albanian, Somali, Estonian, English, and Farsi. People from over 130 countries live in Turku, and over 100 languages are spoken, creating a vibrant multicultural environment. The proportion of non-Finnish speakers is predicted to grow, but even now it is important to consider not only the accessibility of the city's communications, but also different cultural characteristics in the development of sustainable mobility. The city of Turku is divided into nine districts, each with its own characteristics and demographic features that must be considered when developing services.

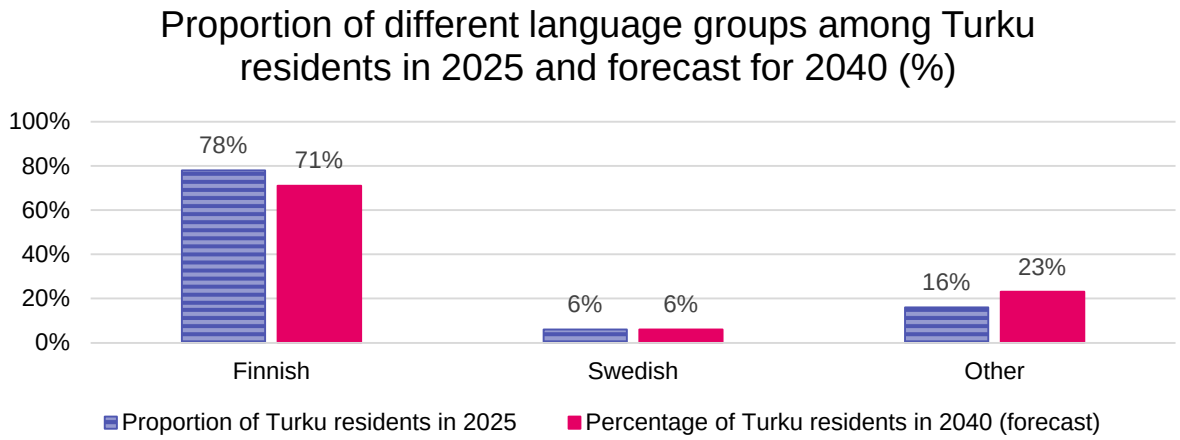


Figure 6: Proportion of different language groups in 2025 and forecast for 2040 in relation to the population of Turku and its forecast (%). Identifying different language groups is important for communication measures, among other things.

2.2.2. Modes of transport for school journeys in Turku

In 2023, approximately 10% of pupils were entitled to a public transport card paid for by the city, which means that for this number of pupils, the distance to school was more than 5 kilometers, the journey to school was unsafe for pedestrians or cyclists, or the child was unable to walk or cycle to school for health reasons. However, in this case, pupils from two schools were in temporary premises, and excluding these, approximately 7% of pupils were entitled to transport paid for by the city.

There are almost half as many upper secondary schools in Turku as there are lower secondary schools (p. 9), so their school journeys are generally longer than those of lower secondary school pupils due to the larger catchment area. In 2024, 96.4% of elementary school pupils and 40.6% of secondary school pupils lived less than 2 kilometers from their school. Only 2.1% of pupils live more than 5 kilometers away. Distances are measured straight line. (Statistics Finland 2024) However, the proportion could be significantly different if journeys were measured along safe routes.

In Finland, it is generally traditional for children to walk or cycle to school independently from a very young age, and school journeys have not been considered a major problem. National studies have faced challenges in formulating questions in a way that would reveal the actual situation regarding modes of transport to school. In Turku, this problem was addressed in the SCHOOLHOODS project, and for the first time, the distribution of modes of transport among all schoolchildren was determined as part of a cross-administrative survey of children's leisure activities conducted in October 2025. The survey was answered by 71% (11,140 pupils) of all pupils in basic education in Turku. The survey asked about the two most common modes of transport to school, as many children are driven to school but walk home. The question distinguished between modes of transport in autumn and winter, as winter travel differs significantly from autumn and spring. According to the survey results, 9–12-year-olds are the most active in their school commute, while upper secondary school students are the least active, with approximately 60% of students using the least active modes of transport (Figure 7). Children aged 10 and above were asked about their reasons for traveling by car (Figure 8). The most common reason was that the journey to school was considered too long (34.51% of respondents).

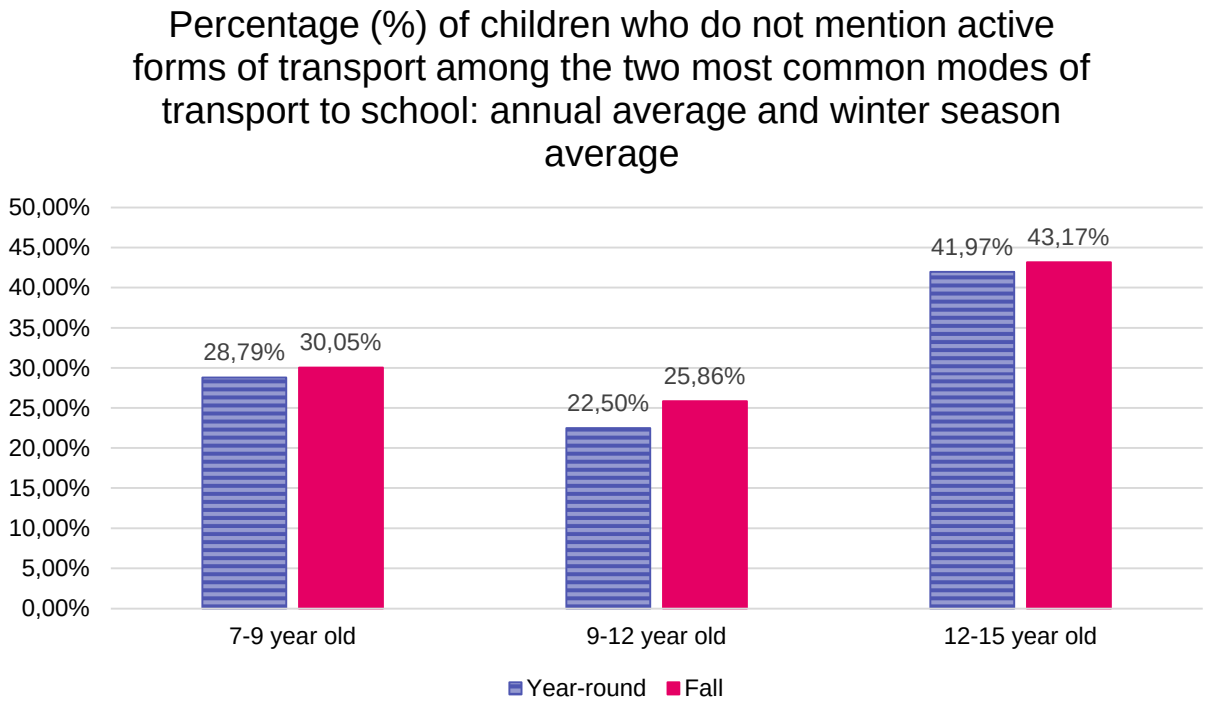


Figure 7: Percentage of children in different age groups who do not mention walking or cycling as the most common modes of transport in 2025.

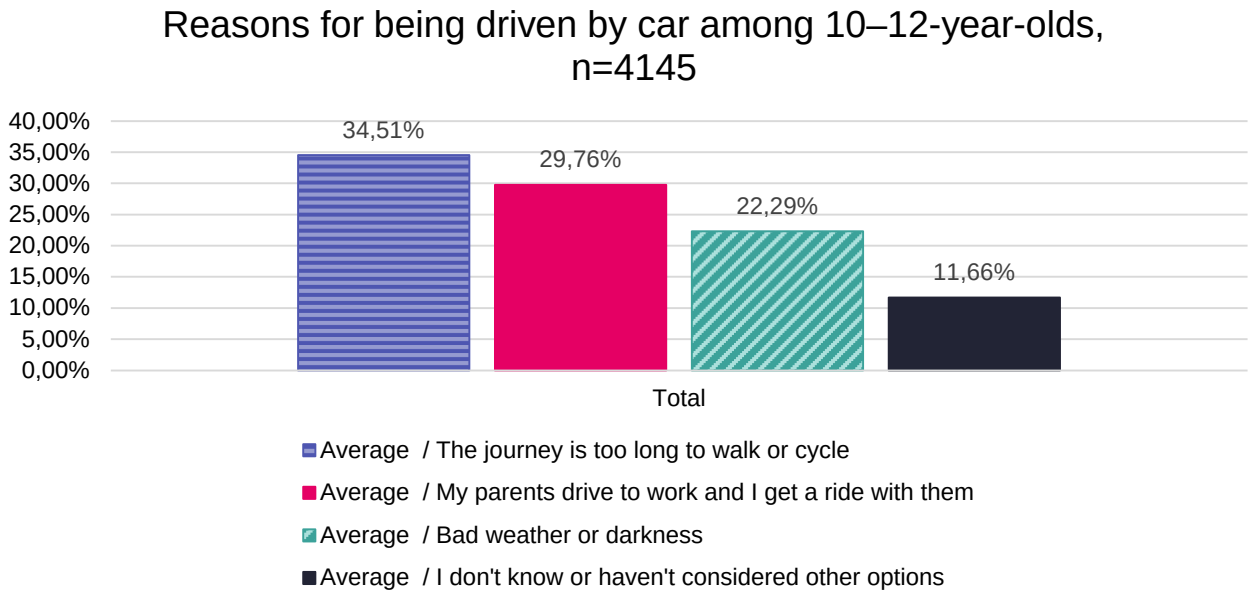


Figure 8: Most common reasons for 10–12-year-olds to travel to school by car.

2.2.3. Measures to improve active and safe school journeys as part of structures and previous projects

Traffic education is an essential part of the basic education curriculum, integrated into broad-based skills and various subjects. It is not an independent subject that is assessed unlike, for example, mathematics. Traffic education is implemented, for example, as part of environmental studies and as part of transitions from one place to another during the school day. Traffic education is

implemented in different ways depending on the teacher, as there are no specific criteria for it. Schools also do a lot of sustainability education, but it mostly focuses on other sustainability themes, such as the circular economy. The theme of sustainable mobility has not yet gained a firm foothold in education.

Schools in Turku have varying practices and traditions when it comes to implementing traffic education and promoting active school travel. In some schools, for example, **teachers** are very active in promoting cycling and traffic safety measures. **The parents' associations** of some schools have organized pedestrian crossing supervision at the beginning of the school year and various campaigns, such as distributing reflectors in the beginning of the dark season (October). Local sports clubs may also have supported safe school journeys by supervising pedestrian crossings.

For several years, **Turku region traffic, Föli**, has organized the education tour "Ykkösten Föli" (translates Föli for first graders), which aims to teach and encourage first-grade students to use the bus. The tour is held annually in all seven municipalities in the region served by Föli. The lesson includes discussions and quizzes about public transport. Pupils also take part in a creative, imaginary bus trip, where the classroom is transformed into a bus. At the end, pupils receive a ticket for a bus trip and a bingo task for the journey.

Turku designed **a sustainable mobility activation model** for schools and daycares within the framework of the Scale-Up project (EU Horizon 2020) to actively encourage walking and cycling from daycare age onwards. The measures included raising awareness through various brochures and informational days at units, teaching cycling skills on a bike skills track and creating a bike loaning system for educational units, as well as motivating people to continue sustainable mobility in winter through campaigns. At the same time, various methods were experimented to analyze traffic conditions in the school environment. The analysis needed to be agile due to the extensive school network of nearly 70 school buildings and their environment.

The sustainable mobility activation model has served as an important basis for the SCHOOLHOODS project, in which pilot school have been used to validate previous measures, test new measures, and build an action plan for the coming years accordingly.

2.3. Strategies and operating principles related to school trips

The city's activities are guided by the city strategy, the mayor's program, which is updated every council term, and dozens of more detailed thematic guidance documents. The development of sustainable mobility and its objectives are guided by two plans: Turku's Climate Plan 2029 and the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, completed in December 2024, which defines the most important measures for sustainable mobility. In addition, there are several more detailed programs and action plans, the measures of which have also been included in the above-mentioned programs. Existing programs must be considered when seeking and allocating resources for new measures, even if these programs are not directly related to children's school journeys. This action plan serves as a

more detailed part of Turku's sustainable urban mobility plan in relation to children's journeys to school.

2.3.1. Turku City Climate Plan and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

The goal **of the City of Turku's climate plan** is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2029 and climate positivity thereafter. To achieve this goal, emissions from transport must be reduced by 50%, which will be achieved by increasing the share of sustainable journeys to 66% of all journeys within the city. Currently, sustainable modes of transport account for around 55% of all journeys.

Transport is one of Turku's two largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 32% of total emissions in 2023. By 2025, transport is expected to account for almost half of the city's emissions, as emissions from other sectors decrease and transport emissions remain relatively stable.

At the end of 2024, Turku finalized its first sustainable urban transport plan, which presents the city's vision: *"Turku's transport environment and service network attract everyone to travel safely, healthily, and sustainably."*

The City of Turku's sustainable urban mobility plan is more detailed than the climate plan, defining and prioritizing actions in four thematic priority areas:

- The city as a platform for sustainable mobility
- Use of urban and street space
- Travel chains and transport hubs
- User-driven services

These four priority areas comprise 22 sets of measures, which together contain a total of 66 measures. Three of these emphasize the importance of traffic education and sustainable school journeys, but do not go into detail regarding scheduling, resourcing, and responsibilities**.**

Schools or school journeys are mentioned in user-oriented services in two measures: 1. Traffic education should be part of all levels of education and should also include themes of sustainable mobility, and 2. Active school journeys should be encouraged through campaigns and communication measures. The plan also lists measures that the city should examine more closely. One of these is traffic calming measures around schools. Table 1 lists all SUMP-measures related to this action plan.

This SCHOOLHOODS project action plan is intended to complement the City of Turku's sustainable urban mobility plan as a more detailed document.

Table 1. The table presents all the action areas and measures of Turku's Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) that are also related to active and safe school travel. The SUMP contains a total of 66 measures.

A The city as a platform for sustainable mobility

A1.1 Ensuring sufficient and permanent human resources for coordinating work and promoting cross-administrative cooperation (2 FTE)

A1.3 Training staff and maintaining their skills in the field of traffic safety and accessibility

A1.4 Budgeting staff working hours across administrative boundaries to promote sustainable and safe mobility (0.1 FTE/service package)

A2.5 Developing a method for assessing the impacts of various land use and service planning processes on the sustainability and safety of mobility as objectively as possible

B Use of urban and street space

B1.25 Define measures to promote traffic safety and accessibility for different types of streets, e.g., with regard to the safety or lighting of crossings.

B3.29 The attractiveness, safety, and accessibility of sidewalks, park paths, and squares will be improved.

B3.32 Increase the visibility, accessibility, and lighting of pedestrian crossings in the most frequently used locations and reduce the number of uncontrolled pedestrian crossings across two or more lanes of traffic in the same direction.

B6.43 A program will be drawn up for conducting regular trials and systematically assessing their preliminary and subsequent effects. The aim is to increase community spirit and social interaction and to systematically test the effectiveness of different solutions.

B6.44 Implement temporary trials in the street environment in accordance with the above-mentioned program, such as "summer streets," i.e., projects in which the roadway is used for walking and cycling during the summer season or otherwise temporarily instead of motor vehicle traffic.

C Travel chains and mobility hubs

C4.55 Identify parking areas that cause safety issues and fix any problems in cooperation with other parties, such as parking facility owners.

D User-oriented services

D3.61 Incorporate traffic education into all levels of education in a concrete manner and address topics related to both traffic safety and sustainable mobility in traffic education.

D3.62 Extend systematic traffic education work to youth work and sports activities.

D3.63 Encourage walking or cycling to school by communicating with parents and through campaigns or events.

D4.64 Implement targeted campaigns, events, and activities to encourage residents to use sustainable modes of transport.

D4.65 Actively communicate the benefits and opportunities of sustainable mobility as part of daily communication.

2.3.2. Other programs and action plans

The Turku Mayor's Program 2025–2029 was approved by the City Council in June 2025. It includes financial targets and six content areas. The area "Education, skills, and employment for the new century" includes the target: "Ensure safe travel to local schools".

The City of Turku's traffic safety program focuses on improving traffic safety for three key groups: children and young people, cyclists and pedestrians, and high-risk users. Its objectives are in line with the EU's Vision Zero goal, which is to have no deaths or serious injuries in traffic by 2050. Responsibility for implementing the program has been divided among several parties to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach. The Schoolhoods project has been co-operating with the traffic safety program.

The road safety program consists of five sets of measures: A. Road safety work basics, B. Traffic education, C. Communication, campaigning, and training, D. Improving the traffic environment, and E. Cooperation with stakeholders.

The Walking and Spending Time Program 2029 aims to improve the availability and quality of walkable green areas throughout the city. The program was created as part of the Space4People network project during the previous URBACT program period. The program's project list also includes a target that serves a large school area.

The Cycling Development Plan 2029 emphasizes promoting cycling among children, improving the infrastructure throughout the city, and targeted mobility management measures for different target groups.

The MAL Agreement 2020–2031 is the most important development framework for the Turku Functional Urban Area (FUA). It was created through strategic cooperation between municipalities and the state. The agreement includes coordinated development measures in the areas of land use, housing, and transport.

The Transport System Plan 2020 has been drawn up in collaboration with the municipalities in the FUA. In practice, the plan serves as a sustainable urban mobility plan for the functional urban area.

3 Challenges for children's active everyday journeys

At the first URBACT local group meeting, the biggest problem with school journeys was identified as the fact that more and more parents are driving their children to school. This has led to significant congestion in front of schools at the start of the school day. Traffic congestion in school areas is caused partly by parents dropping off their children and partly by commuters, as children's journeys to school and commuters' journeys often coincide. In the longer term, this problem also leads to children's everyday mobility habits and learning being neglected.

In Finland, it is common for children to walk or cycle to school as independently as possible. A change can be seen here, but the situation can vary greatly between different neighborhoods and areas. The reasons for the change also vary. Later in the project, it was understood that in some areas, heavy traffic is well covered by well-designed traffic arrangements. This, in turn, has meant that heavy traffic has not previously received widespread attention at the city level.

Reasons for carpooling:

Winter is long and dark, and the weather is not conducive to active mobility. Instead, active mobility in winter requires a lot of encouragement and a change in attitude. In Turku, winter cycling culture is still developing, and only a few children cycle in winter.

The appreciation of active exercise and cycling skills has changed slowly, and this is reflected in the decline in cycling skills or in the fact that people do not necessarily own a bicycle. The change in habits is also reflected in the fact that distances that are perceived as long are often quite short, 1–2 kilometers.

Children's traffic safety skills vary, and parents tend to rely on daycare centers and schools for education and instruction in many areas. Traffic education can also be challenging for parents if their own knowledge of traffic rules is inadequate or they feel uncertain about them.

The busy lifestyle and desire for convenience in society are a threat to active everyday mobility. Traveling by car is comfortable, easy, and fast. Children often get to school at the same time as their parents drive to work.

The centralization of services has many advantages, but it also poses a threat to active everyday travel. The length of the journey is one of the most significant barriers to active travel. Larger units also mean more traffic around schools, which is perceived as a safety hazard, and when asked, children say that heavy traffic makes the journey unpleasant, partly because of the noise.

3.1. Cultural shift in everyday habits

The problems identified are related to several interrelated factors, many of which are linked to changes in adults' lifestyles and attitudes. Families with children often have busy lives, and driving to work is often an easy and convenient option. In some cases, traveling together by car is seen as a way to compensate for limited family time together. On the other hand, parents often give in to their children's reluctance to walk or cycle, especially when it involves discomfort, fatigue, or sweating. In terms of everyday life, it is convenient to drive children to school if their social environment, such as parents, friends, and teachers, does not specifically encourage active travel.

Discussions suggest that this may also be due to a lack of awareness of the immediate and long-term consequences of driving children to school on the traffic environment, children's habits and

skills, and the sense of safety of others. The feeling of insecurity has mostly affected the youngest pupils and their parents and is mainly caused by heavy car traffic in school environments.

In winter, walking and cycling require more effort in terms of equipment and tolerance of discomfort. Cycling can also sometimes be considered less practical or even socially inferior to driving.

Over time, all these factors seem to have contributed to a decline in children's cycling skills, a reduction in the distance considered suitable for walking and cycling and increased parental concerns about safety. Ultimately, this pursuit of comfort and convenience and this cycle of concern lead to more and more parents deciding to drive their children to school.

3.2. Environment and conditions

The condition of the infrastructure is not a major problem in Turku, although there are some shortcomings. For example, the cycling network sometimes requires cyclists to take detours, while motorists can follow more direct routes. However, the biggest challenge is the growing volume of car traffic, which is a result of, among other things, population growth. This reflects a growing dependence on cars, as more parents decide to drive their children to school. The growth in car traffic exacerbates the problem, as busy areas make active travel less appealing due to noise and feelings of insecurity. In spring in particular, heavy traffic also affects local air quality to such an extent that the amount of street dust is directly noticeable.

The **school network** is also undergoing a change, as many school buildings have been renovated or are currently undergoing renovation due to air quality issues. Currently, nearly 80 percent of all the city's facility project plans focus on daycares and schools. At the same time, services have been combined into larger multi-purpose facilities. Changes in the location of services are significant from the perspective of modes of transport and transport environments, so from the perspective of sustainability goals, it is important to take children's walking and cycling opportunities into account when planning the network and new school environments.

In autumn 2025, there were **12 different school buildings being built or under renovation**. The new school buildings to be constructed in the new locations are designed as multi-purpose facilities that will be used from morning to evening and also on weekends. The multi-purpose facility will serve as a daycare center and school and will accommodate a wide age group of children. Before and after school care is available for younger students, extracurricular activities are available for older students, and sports facilities are also available outside of school hours for sports clubs and associations. The multipurpose space may also include a library. Multipurpose spaces offer enormous advantages, but they pose a challenge for planning active mobility for children. With a larger number of pupils, the catchment area is wider, which leads to longer distances between home and school. Increased traffic can also challenge the safety and pleasantness of the environment for those walking and cycling. When planning traffic arrangements, consideration must also be given to evening and weekend users of the facilities, as leisure trips are most commonly made by car.

3.3. Unestablished practices and conditions

Finding the right stakeholders or individuals in a large organization or city can take time. Traditionally, responsibility for a functional transport environment and its condition lies with transport planning and infrastructure services. Facility services are responsible for school premises, such as bicycle and car parking. Schools are individually responsible for their own communication and more detailed guidelines at the local level. School journeys have not been seen as a major citywide challenge due to a lack of comprehensive information. People's modes of transport are also often seen as very personal matters. There are many factors that influence the overall situation, from communication to service development and the traffic environment. As a result, no one has been responsible for managing the overall situation.

The city has many general strategies related to either safe and active school travel or the well-being and safety of children. The challenge with many of these strategies and programs is that it is difficult to secure the resources needed to make them into permanent or long-term measures. Despite many high-level references, no detailed action plan has been drawn up for active and safe school travel, which may lead to the loss of many synergies.

The city has set clear strategic goals for increasing the share of active mobility, but the implementation of the strategy into practical measures is still in progress. The lack of resources and a clear action plan has made it difficult to implement measures aimed at promoting active mobility. In addition, fluctuating political support may be an obstacle to the implementation of the most effective measures, such as traffic calming measures.

3.4. Summary of problems and strengths

The problems and strengths were analyzed (Figure 9) through document review, interviews with key stakeholders, and working group meetings. The conclusion is that there is a lack of information needed for governance and that ownership of the issues is fragmented. The incomplete knowledge base was resolved during the final year of the project (2025), but more data will be gathered during the spring 2026 to achieve a comprehensive baseline for the prioritization of the work and different measures. There are many strengths and opportunities whose great potential could be exploited by committing to long-term development.

Figure 9: SWOT analysis of promoting active and safe school journeys in Turku .

3.5. Verification of measures pilot school

When the first ideas for testing the measures began to be developed, discussions turned to Pääskyvuori School, which was set to undergo major changes in the 2024–2025 school year. The nearby Varissuo school was closed due to air quality problems – an issue that affects many buildings in Turku. As a result, the students of Varissuo school were transferred to Pääskyvuori school, located 1–2 km away. The decision drew significant criticism from both groups: the original students of Pääskyvuori School and their parents, as well as the recently transferred students of Varissuo School and their parents.

Below is a list of all the measures that were implemented in the pilot school between spring 2024 and fall 2025 (Table 2). Some of the measures are described in more detail, as they are also potential measures for other areas. All measures were evaluated using surveys, observations, discussions, and various indicators. The decision to implement traffic calming measures in the pilot area was made when previous measures failed to bring about sufficient change to the busy and dangerous traffic in the school area. In the environmental calming measure, measurement and cooperation with local stakeholders played a key role.

Table 2. The table lists the timing and content of the most important measures, as well as a brief description of the effectiveness of the measure in relation to the resources required.

Date	Measure	Brief description of the effectiveness of the measure
Spring 2024	Bicycle rental for measures implemented by teachers. The bicycle rental system was created during the SCALE-UP project, and its use was expanded to the pilot school.	An important support measure, but one that requires motivated staff.
Fall 2024	Cycling lessons and traffic theme lessons as part of the school's multidisciplinary learning week. The cycling skills track and related materials created during the SCALE-UP project were applied and expanded according to the needs of the pilot school.	The sessions received a lot of positive feedback but also required a lot of staff resources. The cycling skills track has previously been proven to increase children's enthusiasm for cycling and thus effectively improve their cycling skills.
Autumn 2024	Mobility point in collaboration with the SUMPs for BSR project. The mobility point was set up near the Pääskyvuori school, and a shared electric cargo bike was brought there, which is particularly useful for families with children as it allows them to transport their children. City bike stations were also added to the area.	The Mobility Point was intended to serve families with children in the area, but little feedback was received. In connection with the traffic calming trial, feedback indicated that the Mobility Point was a good support measure.
2024 Spring and autumn	Parent evenings and homework. The project coordinator discussed future school journeys at parent evenings for new school starters, and at the same time, a questionnaire was distributed to parents to find out their thoughts and concerns about future school journeys. Slides were also distributed to teachers to support the parent evenings in the coming autumn. Later,	Parent-teacher conferences have been found to be a resource-efficient way to increase parents' awareness, but from a scalability perspective, video material, for example, is needed. Printed brochures support the message and enable school-specific personalization.

	homework related to traffic safety was produced based on the concerns raised by teachers.	
Summer 2024	Commissioning a route analysis to provide information on the length of school journeys and the number of users of different routes and intersections.	Route analysis is an important tool for analyzing and planning school travel safety and for providing guidance.
Summer 2024	Updating property guidance and providing guidance on safe routes to parents using printed material.	Parents often need quick access to information about school transport, bus stops, bicycle parking, and routes. Turku has digital guidance capabilities in its service map, which can be used with printed maps. A need for more visible school transport signage was also identified.
2024—2025	Lighting improvements were made on routes and pedestrian crossings based on geographic information analysis and feedback.	Improving lighting at pedestrian crossings is a cost-effective safety measure. A large proportion of school journeys take place during the dark season.
Summer 2024	An attractive school route was funded as part of the SCALE-UP project. The aim was to encourage pupils to use a specific route, so bicycle lane elements were installed there at the suggestion of the pupils.	The route was analyzed by teachers, among others, and it was found that the elements are fun if they are located along the route, but there are not enough of them to make it worthwhile to travel from further away. The elements have been fun for children cycling along the route.
2025 Spring	Campaign	Campaigns are a resource-efficient way to encourage active travel to school, but their effects may be short-lived.
2024	Walking school bus on three occasions	Walking school buses require a lot of coordination resources. The measure was not successful in the pilot area, but it is important to keep it as an option for other areas.
2025	Restricting traffic in school environments	The measure requires considerable human resources for planning, communication, and stakeholder cooperation. However, the results were very good from the perspective of the objectives, but also caused inconvenience to some residents as car journeys became longer and feelings of insecurity shifted elsewhere.

The pilot measure for calming car traffic utilized a geographic information analysis on school routes of children in the Varissuo and Pääskyvuori areas. Analysis helped in gaining an understanding of how uniting two school units affected traffic flows in the area and to identify the routes most used by pupils. Map visualizations of theoretical routes were used to identify areas and intersections with the heaviest school traffic, and where safety improvements could be implemented (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Results of the theoretical analysis of the most commonly used school routes in Pääskyvuori.

As part of the analysis, the lengths of the children's school routes were assessed (Figure 11). The study examined three different schools but focused mainly on the school routes of Pääskyvuori schoolchildren. The analysis revealed that 98% of students in the Pääskyvuori area live less than two kilometers from school. This showed that Pääskyvuori School should have good opportunities to increase the amount of active school trips.

	Koulumatkojen pituudet ja oppilasmäärät																Liikenne-ympäristö	Pyöräily-potentiaali	Pyöräilypotentiaali sanallisesti
	Oppilaita kaikkiaan	<0.5 km		<1 km		<2 km		<3 km		<4 km		<5 km		<6 km		Yli 6 km				
		lkm	%	lkm	%	lkm	%	lkm	%	lkm	%	lkm	%	lkm	%	lkm	%			
Kohmo	48	35	73%	44	92%	46	96%	**46**	96%	48	100%	**48**	**100%**	48	100%	48	100%	Esikaupunki, Rauhallinen	suuri	*Erittäin pieni koulu, vähän oppilaita jotka asuvat hyvin lähellä koulua. Liikenneympäristö turvallinen.*
Hannunniittu	586	95	16%	251	43%	409	70%	464	79%	499	85%	512	87%	531	91%	586	100%	Esikaupunki, Haastava	keskisuuri	*Iso koulu, paljon oppilaita joista osa tulee pidemmän matka päästä. Koulun lähiympäristö erittäin rauhallista liikenneympäristöä, etäämmällä kuitenkin reittejä kokoojakatujen ja pääkatujen varressa.*
Pääskyvuori	481	50	10%	209	43%	469	98%	473	98%	475	99%	477	**99%**	478	99%	481	100%	Esikaupunki, Vilkas	suuri	*Kokoluokassansa erittäin lyhyet koulumatkat. Liikenneympäristöä vilkastaa yhden reitin kulku pääkadun varressa.*

Figure 11: Distances to school and number of pupils at three different schools in Kohmo, Hannunniittu, and Pääskyvuori.

The results of the analysis led first to the development of soft measures, such as communication activities aimed at parents, traffic and cycling lessons, campaigns, and improvements in lighting in

certain areas. Based on the routes, a fun school trip measure was also planned. Many of the soft measures were based on good practices observed in previous projects implemented by the city. It was noted that soft measures alone were not effective enough in the area, so a traffic calming trial was planned and implemented in the neighborhood from August 2025 to November 2025.

In the traffic calming pilot project, the area was divided into two traffic cells between which motor vehicle traffic was not able to pass (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Changes made to the school area in connection with the traffic calming trial.

According to a survey conducted among residents and other stakeholders in the area, satisfaction with the safety of children's journeys to school increased significantly, and traffic safety in the area was also perceived to have improved overall. Based on traffic measurements and the experiences of survey respondents, walking and cycling increased significantly during the trial period compared to before the trial (about 10 % depending on the data source).

The trial also sparked conflicting views, with most of the criticism focusing on longer driving distances on certain routes, increased traffic on the east side of the barrier, and the intersection of Hännikönkatu and Littoistentie, which was perceived as unsafe due to not having traffic lights. The trial also led to an increase in U-turns in front of the school, which had already been the subject of much feedback before the trial, when traffic flow was heavier and there were more possible driving directions.

Figure 13: In the traffic calming trial in the Pääskyvuori area, street furniture was used to emphasize the change in the functional classification of the street. The perception of safety and the number of active school trips increased significantly.

Most of the praise was directed at the reduction in traffic on Talvitie along its entire length, increased safety on school routes, and improved living comfort in certain areas. The majority of respondents to the survey supported continuing the trial either as it stands or with some modifications, while 40% opposed continuing it. The pupils of the school supported continuing the trial, and the City Environment Committee decided to continue the arrangements until the temporary premises at the Pääskyvuori school are vacated in 2029. The prerequisite for continuation was that the new issues raised by the neighbourhood would be investigated and the evaluation of the solution would continue in cooperation with stakeholders in the area. In 2029 the traffic arrangements will go through a new decision-making procedure.

4 Turku enables learning about active and safe everyday travel

In Turku, it has been observed that children are not on an equal footing when it comes to cycling skills and opportunities. Different cultures, backgrounds, and attitudes influence how children feel about cycling and how they are encouraged to challenge and improve their cycling skills. A child's social environment, such as family, friends, and teachers, are important influences of attitudes. The school system is an important institution, and families often respect the messages it conveys. The attitudes of the surrounding community and institutions towards everyday physical activity also influence the tone and intensity of communication and, consequently, the formation of children's attitudes and habits. In addition to environmental attitudes, the physical environment has a major impact on children's activity levels – an environment that is perceived as pleasant and safe encourages walking and cycling and promotes physical activity, while an environment that is perceived as dangerous or unpleasant reduces physical activity and creates a barrier to cycling and walking.

Providing children with the right physical and social opportunities creates the motivation needed to develop skills and make better mobility choices from an early age, as well as to form strong mobility habits that, in the best case, will continue into adulthood. Based on these findings, the following vision was created for Turku:

"In Turku, children are encouraged to be physically active in their daily lives by creating a supportive social and physical environment and providing equal opportunities to develop lifelong health-enhancing mobility skills and habits."

Figure 14: Children often become enthusiastic about cycling when they are given the right kind of support, without forgetting the fun aspect. Cycling skills are important for enabling an active everyday life, but not everyone has equal opportunities to learn them.

4.1. Development goals

The objectives have been formulated on the basis of the challenges identified and with the vision as the goal. The objectives have been set ambitiously so that they require systematic work in terms of both cooperation and the search for resources. The objectives are measurable, and the criteria will be updated as necessary in light of new information obtained first in the spring 2026 and thereafter.

Objective 1
By 2030, every child aged 5–9 will have been given the opportunity to develop their cycling skills. Children will also be supported in learning other traffic skills and encouraged to make active everyday journeys in the long term.

Objective 2
By 2030, the number of parents encouraging active school travel will have increased, and the City of Turku will communicate consistently about ways of traveling to school.

Objective 3
The areas surrounding schools will be designed to encourage walking and cycling. At least three school areas will be reviewed each year to ensure that they are safe for children to travel in.

Goal
By 2030, Turku will have established operating principles and structures for developing safe and active school journeys for children. This development will be supported by the participation of children and regional stakeholders, as well as regular surveys on modes of transport and attitudes.

The objectives are linked to the sets of measures and plans discussed in the following section. The thematic sets of measures are: 1. Children's skills and motivation, 2. Raising awareness and support from adults, 3. A safe and attractive environment, and 4. Coordination and knowledge-based management. The overall picture, from vision to objectives and measures, is described in Table 3.

Table 3. The top row shows the vision on which the objectives were based. The sets of measures were derived from the objectives on the basis of verified and tested measures.

VISION In Turku, children are encouraged to be physically active in their everyday lives by creating a supportive social and physical environment and by providing equal opportunities to develop lifelong health-enhancing mobility skills and habits.			
GOALS			
CHILDREN ARE GIVEN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN ACTIVE AND SAFE DAILY TRIPS	PARENTS AND SCHOOLS ENCOURAGE ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL	SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS SUPPORT CHILDREN WALKING AND CYCLING	CHILDREN'S EVERY DAY MOBILITY IS SUPPORTED IN A MULTIDISCIPLINARY MANNER AND BASED ON ESSENTIAL INFORMATION
ACTION PLANS			
CHILDREN'S SKILLS AND MOTIVATION	RAISING AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FROM ADULTS SUPPORT	SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT	COORDINATION AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED LEADERSHIP

5 Measures to promote active and safe school journeys

In the first paragraph of this section, the measures are compiled and presented by theme, along with a timeline for their implementation on a city-scale. The second paragraph presents implementation plans for certain measures. The detailed implementation plans for the measures concern either a single area or the whole of Turku in the case of measures that are easier to scale. The last two measures are measures that have been tested in a pilot school and are seen to have potential for expansion to other schools but were not functional as such in the pilot site, or their expansion would require further clarification of resources. The measures derived from the vision and objectives have been verified in previous projects, in the pilot school using various assessment methods, and on the basis of stakeholder discussions and shortcomings identified during the process.

Figure 15: Children cycling to school in winter (Photo: Suvi Elo).

5.1. Schedule for the set of measures

Table 4. The table shows the different sets of measures and related actions. The icons are linked to the sets of measures in the sustainable urban mobility plan.

Children's skills and motivation

- Bicycle loaning possibilities for day-cares and schools
- Development of cycling skills and winter cycling
- Annual campaigns encouraging active school travel
- Bicycle loaning for children's leisure time
- Card game on safe school journeys for 6–8-year-olds

Raising awareness and support from adults

- Consistent communication about school travel
- Demonstrating the accessibility of schools for walking and cycling
- Key points for traffic safety in school areas
- Participation in theme days related to traffic safety and sustainable mobility
- Training adults to teach children's cycling

Safe and attractive environment

- Reviewing and planning drop-off points, busy intersections, and other potential problem areas from the perspective of active school travel
- Trials of safe traffic neighborhoods in school environments, based on available information and resources

Coordination and knowledge management

- Monitoring modes of transport to school every two years in a survey of basic education pupils' leisure activities
- Collecting information on parents' attitudes in a leisure time survey in 2026 and 2030
- Monitoring development across administrative boundaries
- Stakeholder cooperation will continue between different service entities, and regional stakeholders will play a key role in regional planning

5.1.1. Children's skills and motivation

Stakeholders in planning and implementation:
Transport services coordinate and implement. Cooperation partners include basic education, employment services, project services, and sports services.

Connection of the measure to the strategy:
Sustainable urban mobility plan, user-oriented services D3.61: “Incorporate traffic education into all levels of education in a concrete manner and address topics related to both traffic safety and sustainable mobility in traffic education.” (p. 14)

Traffic Safety Program B10: Traffic education in basic education and highschools.

Result indicator: Modes of transport used for school journeys, number of children cycling to school in a survey of basic education leisure activities. The baseline will be established in autumn 2025, monitoring will be carried out in 2027, and the target date for achieving the objective is autumn 2029.
Target: By 2030, every child aged 5–9 will have been offered the opportunity to develop their cycling skills. Children will also be supported in learning other traffic skills and encouraged to make active everyday journeys in the long term.

Measures for which external funding is being sought in addition to the city budget are marked with an asterisk (*).

Measure	2026 Measure	2027 Measure	2028 Action	2029 Action	Performance monitoring
1. Bicycle loaning opprtunities for daycares and schools.	Spring 2026 Marketing of the bicycle reservation system to grades 1–4 Procurement of bicycles suitable for upper secondary school students in winter 2026 **(**Funding: another project)	Needs assessment regarding the number of bicycles and procurement of additional bikes. *****	Seeking funding for expansion and updating support materials for bicycle use.	Communication measures related to the introduction of the system	Number of reservations per unit, number of reserved equipment, number of reservation days. Measures will be reviewed in accordance with the results of monitoring
2. Improving cycling skills and development of winter cycling	Educational tour for 2nd graders in spring 2026 and distribution of cycling skill cards to participants (Funding: Traficom)	Winter cycling tour for 3rd graders in winter 2027, ***** and city budget.	Targeting of cycling tours in 2028–2029 based on the results of previous measures to meet the target. City's own budget.	Targeted cycling tours will continue, city budget.	Number of children reached with cycling activities and number of children cycling (according to the result indicator survey) 2025, 2027, 2029
3. Annual campaigns encouraging active school travel	A campaign organized in winter in which schools can participate. The campaign is carried out during the winter because winter travel requires the most encouragement.	A campaign organized in winter in which schools can participate. The campaign is carried out during the winter because wintertime exercise requires the most encouragement.	Evaluation of past campaigns, updating material themes, and possible targeting of specific age groups based on the 2027 student survey	Repeating the 2028 campaign with a new theme and target groups.	The number of participating classes, teachers' views on the motivational value of the campaign, and parents' views on what measures schools should implement. The budget is reviewed based on the number of participants in the previous year, with the aim of reaching a wider audience each year.

4.	Bicycle rental for children's leisure time Not all children have access to bicycles.		Enable bicycle loan for leisure time during the summer (vacation from the school). The city's bicycle reservation system has many bicycles that are unused during the summer**.**	Add the option to reserve bikes during the school year and develop the process**.**	Add the option to reserve bikes during the school year *****	Number of bikes borrowed during children's free time.
5.	Card game for safe school journeys for 6–8-year-olds.	The card game created by Skawina will be distributed to first graders in Turku.	Collect feedback and ideas for development	Expand the card game so that it is also suitable for older students, if the card game receives good feedback *****		

5.1.2. Raising awareness and getting support from adults

Stakeholders in planning and implementation:
Transport services will coordinate and implement. Cooperation partners include project services, geographic information services, basic education and sports services, as well as school staff, students, parents, and possible organizations in each area.

Connection of the measure to the strategy:
Sustainable urban mobility plan, user-oriented services D3.63: "Encourage walking or cycling to school by communicating with parents and through campaigns or events." (p. 14)

Traffic Safety Program C16: Positive communication and reward campaigns.

Result indicator: Change in parents' attitudes towards traveling to school. Attitudes will be measured in a cross-administrative leisure time survey aimed at parents of children in basic education. The survey will include questions on attitudes and thoughts on everyday mobility, and perception of safety on school routes. Survey will be conducted for the first time with the mobility themes included in spring 2026 and will be repeated in spring 2030.
Target: By 2030, the number of parents encouraging active school travel will have increased, and the City of Turku will communicate consistently about ways of traveling to school. The target level will be determined based on the results of spring 2026.

Measures for which external funding is being sought in addition to the city budget are marked with an asterisk (*).

Measure		2026 Measure	2027 Measure	2028 Action	2029 Action	Performance monitoring
6.	Illustration of walking and cycling accessibility to schools	School accessibility zones will be digitally linked to nature and exercise locations and printed in material for three (3) schools. (Funding: Collaboration with another project)	The material will be expanded to five new units, city's own budget.	The material will be expanded to ten new units, city's own budget.	The material will be expanded to the remaining units, city's own budget.	Number of maps created, number of uses, and number of distributions
7.	Consistent communication about school travel	Provision of a video (5 min) on school travel for use by schools.	Agreeing on consistent communication on school websites and other channels.	Reviewing and updating the video and communication situation as necessary.	Reviewing and updating the video and communication situation as necessary.	Number of video views and number of updated communication channels
8.	Training adults to teach children how to ride a bike	Organizing training in teaching children to cycle for preschool staff in autumn 2026, city's own budget.	Report on the need for after-school club instructors and primary school teachers, and expansion of training for them in 2027, city's own budget.	Repeating training according to the needs identified by the target groups, city's own budget.	Repeating training according to the needs of the target groups, city's own budget.	Number of participants in training, which is also linked to the use of the bicycle rental system and the number of children cycling
9.	Participation in theme days related to traffic safety and sustainable mobility	Communication of the annual calendar of theme days and provision of ideas: cycling week, European Mobility Week, road safety week, reflector day, the city's own winter mobility campaign, the city's own budget.	Repeat, city's own budget.	Repeat and develop material as needed, city's own budget.	Repeat and develop material as needed, city's own budget.	Number of schools participating in campaigns
10.	Key points of traffic safety in school areas as part of teaching materials	Determine the needs of schools for traffic safety-related material in accordance with section 6 and combine the material as far as possible	In accordance with the schedule for measure 6			

5.1.3. Safe and attractive environment

Stakeholders in planning and implementation:
Transport services and traffic planning will coordinate in cooperation. Implemented by geographic information services and infrastructure services. Local cooperation partners include school staff, pupils, parents, local residents, and any relevant organizations in the area.

Connection of the measure to the strategy:
Sustainable urban mobility plan measure Use of urban and street space: in particular B3.32 and B6.43 (p. 14). Turku Mayor's Program 2025–2029, objective 4.1.

Traffic safety program D 18: Safety of pedestrians and cyclists crossing streets, D19: Traffic safety at service locations for children and young people, D20: Improvements in lighting that add traffic safety

Result indicator: Parents' perception of the safety of school journeys, modal splits on school trips, and traffic accidents on school journeys (National survey repeated every two years).
Objective: The immediate surroundings of schools are designed to encourage walking and cycling. At least three school areas are reviewed annually to ensure that they are safe for children to travel to and from school. Measures are budgeted accordingly.

Measures for which external funding is being sought in addition to the city budget are marked with an asterisk (*).

Measure	2026 Measure	2027 Measure	2028 Action	2029 Action	Performance monitoring
11. Checking school transport stops, the busiest intersections, and other potential problem areas from the perspective of active school travel.	Traffic planning and schools are working together to identify problem areas, particularly in the vicinity of primary schools. The work will utilize a student survey, a spring 2026 parent survey, geographic information, and the city's own budget. The possibilities for execution of the geographic route mapping as part of the city's own work will be investigated.	Improvements to road safety at three school areas (external funding and the city's own budget). Three new areas mapped. *	Implementation of measures to improve safety at three school crossings (external funding and the city's own budget). Three new areas mapped. *	Implementation of measures to improve safety at three school crossings (external funding and the city's own budget). Three new areas mapped. *	Mapped schools per year (target 3/year), Number of problem areas, reaching relevant external stakeholders
12. Implementation of safe traffic neighborhoods in school environments based on available information and resources.	Search for funding for already identified school environments such as Torninkatu. Mapping of the needs of other areas. City's own budget	Implementation of 1–2 school areas according to the mapping in 2026 in cooperation with local stakeholders, * and the city's own budget	Reassessment of the measures in the Pääskyvuori area and new decisions. Implementation of 1–2 school areas according to the mapping in 2026 in cooperation with local stakeholders, * and the city's own budget	Implementation of 1–2 school areas according to the mapping in 2026 in cooperation with local stakeholders, * and the city's own budget	Number of areas implemented

5.1.4. Coordination and knowledge management

Stakeholders in planning and implementation:

Mobility services coordinate and implement in cooperation with other service divisions of the city.

Connection of the measure to the strategy:

Sustainable urban mobility plan. The city as a platform for sustainable mobility: A1.1, A1.4, and A2.5 (p. 14)

Result indicator: Amount of funding and person-years used

Objective: By 2030, Turku will have established operating principles and structures for developing safe and active school journeys for children. This development will be supported by the participation of children and regional stakeholders, as well as regular surveys on modes of transport, attitudes, and measures implemented.

Measures for which external funding is being sought in addition to the city budget are marked with an asterisk (*).

Measure	2026 Measure	2027 Measure	2028 Action	2029 Action	Performance monitoring
13. Monitoring of modes of transport to school in a survey of basic education pupils' leisure activities		Repeat the survey based on the findings from 2025 survey, city's own budget		Repeat the survey in 2029. The autumn 2029 survey will serve as the final results report for the action plan, city's own budget.	Number of survey respondents
14. Collecting information on adult attitudes in a broad leisure time survey	Preparation, communication, and evaluation of the first survey, city's own budget	Planning the possibilities of including the school travel theme in the school staff's Active School survey, city's own budget	The Active School survey provides more detailed information on the implementation of the action plan from the schools' perspective, city's own budget	Preparation of the 2030 survey. The 2030 survey will serve as the final results report for the action plan, city's own budget.	Number of survey respondents
15. Monitoring development across administrative boundaries	Action cards for schools and four school areas will be created, including parents' attitudes, pupils' travel habits and traffic accidents on school trips. Reporting results and measures in cross-administrative groups. *	Updating and monitoring action cards in cross-administrative groups. Project services and other parties applying for projects are aware of measures requiring external funding. *	Updating action plans based on results	Update action plans based on results	Number of presentations, number of project applications submitted
16. Internal and external stakeholder cooperation within the city	Continue internal communication on the current situation and action plan. Raise staff awareness of opportunities for influence and of ownership of measures. Involvement of external stakeholders as part of action planning, city's own budget.	Status of current facility projects in light of active and safe school journeys. Targeting necessary supportive measures such as cycling skills education as a mitigation for change. Involvement of external stakeholders in the planning of measures, city's own budget.	Involvement of external stakeholders in the planning of measures, city's own budget.	Establishing internal cooperation structures. Involvement of external stakeholders in the planning of measures, city's own budget.	Number of stakeholders reached.

5.2. Implementation plans for selected measures

Measure 2: Cycling skills training during the school day

Responsible party and implementation partners: Mobility Services in cooperation with basic education and employment services. Service procurement for cycling skills education.

Brief description: Cycling skills lessons for 2nd graders on a cycling skills track during the school day. Skill cards for families to raise parents' awareness.

Budget: Traficom has granted funding for the coordination and implementation of the measure for 2026. Coordination 0.2 FTE, focusing on March-June 2026. Education of cycling skills €15,000.

Action	Schedule	Output	Risks
Scheduling cycling lessons for all schools and reserving equipment	1–2/2026	More detailed schedule for April–May	Scheduling is difficult due to the large number of classes and regional dispersion. The schedule is challenging and too busy for employment services.
Communication about the measure and booking lessons	1–2/2026	Booking calendar for schools	Teachers do not receive information or the schedule is not suitable for them
Recruitment and training of instructors	2–3/2026	Agreements with instructors and training	Difficult to find instructors who are able to commit to the schedule
Production of supporting materials	3/2026	Updating old material and placing additional orders, translating material into Swedish	The material is not being used.
Implementation of lessons and communication	4–5/2026	90% of the target group participates in the lesson	The lessons are not considered inspiring
Evaluation of the measure	June 2026	The results will be used to plan and target measures for the coming years	Funding will be sought for the following years.

Measure 3: Campaign to promote active exercise during the winter season

Responsible party and implementation partners: Mobility Services coordinates and plans for the basic education in cooperation with Communications and Marketing Services. The plan covers the 2027 campaigns, when the material will be updated.

Brief description: Cycling skills lessons for 2nd graders on a cycling skills track during the school day. Skill cards for families to raise awareness among parents.

Budget: City budget (€2,000) + planning and coordination 0.1 FTE mobility services, graphic design procured or as an internal work of Communication and marketing services 0.1 FTE.

Action	Schedule	Output	Risks
Campaign planning	10/2026	Campaign material	The material is not inspiring for children or easy to use in classrooms
Communication to schools about participation opportunities and methods	11/2026	50 participating school classes	Communication does not reach schools or is not considered relevant
Delivery of materials to schools and implementation	2/20267	More children walking or cycling to school	Children do not receive support for active travel to school
Analysis of results and communication	3/2027	Conclusions will be utilized in next year's campaign	Not enough info on how useful the material is and how it affects how kids get to school.

Measures 11 and 12: Calming traffic in school areas

Responsible party and implementation partners: Mobility Services coordinates the project in cooperation with the school, while Traffic Planning is responsible for planning and Infrastructure Services for implementation. Geographic Information Services assists in the initial survey. The external stakeholders in the measure are pupils, parents, and local residents. The action plan is based on the experiences and lessons learned from the pilot in autumn 2025.

Brief description: The school's immediate surroundings were made safer for pedestrians and cyclists by blocking motor vehicle access from two streets. The changed functional classification of the route was highlighted with green street furniture.

Budget: €25,000, including paintings, traffic signs, and temporary solutions to improve comfort and direct traffic + working hours: traffic planning 0.5 FTE and mobility services 0.3 FTE

Action	Schedule	Results	Risks	Responsible parties
Route analysis	1 month	Length of children's journeys to school and number of children on different routes and at intersections	Computer-based work does not reveal all the routes used by children, so additional information is needed by interviewing children and parents.	Transport services, basic education, geographic information
Planning and decision-making on restricting car traffic	12/2024–5/2025	Where should car traffic be restricted in order to harmonize traffic flow?	A large number of cars will move elsewhere.	Traffic planning and local stakeholders coordinated by mobility services
Communication with ULG, the neighborhood, and other stakeholders	2-5	Discussions and communication	Approval of the solution and prioritization of the problems of different target groups	
Implementation and evaluation	8	Fewer cars in front of schools, increased sense of safety among schoolchildren, their parents, and the neighborhood	The problem moves to another nearby area, or the solution does not work	
Plans to expand the solution	1-4		Resources for expansion and decisions on making it permanent in the pilot area	

Measure 14: Extensive leisure time survey for parents of primary school pupils

Responsible party and implementation partners: The Children's Leisure Activities Development and Coordination Group coordinates and implements the survey in cooperation with mobility services, sports services, culture services, youth services, and basic education.

Brief description: The city is planning a survey for parents of children in basic education that will serve the needs of the city's various service divisions. The survey is conducted for the first time in 2026 so that it includes mobility related themes.

Resource: 0.15 FTE for mobility services in 2026 + time resources for other service areas participating in the survey

Action	Schedule	Results	Risks	Responsible parties
Planning of questions	1 month	Information needs of different service entities clarified	Prioritization of questions in relation to the needs of different service areas	All service areas with information needs
Technical implementation of the survey	1 month	Finalization of the survey program and completed survey	Consistency of the survey and ease of use for respondents	Cross-administrative working group for the survey
Language versions of the survey	0.2 months	Survey in Finnish, Swedish, and English		
Survey communication	1 month	The survey receives a comprehensive number of responses from different parts of the city and from parents of children of different ages.	The number of respondents to the survey is not comprehensive enough.	All parties with information needs related to the survey
Analysis of results	1 month	Parents' attitudes and sense of safety on school journeys	Analysis of the results is challenging due to the wording of the questions	Transport services are responsible for analyzing their own information needs in more detail. Information services help with analyzing the whole picture and making it visible
Communication of results	0.1	City residents receive information about the general situation regarding school journeys	There is not enough time for communication	Transport services and communication services

Pilot measure: Fun school route

Responsible party and implementation partners: Mobility Services is responsible for applying for funding, coordination, and planning. Children are essential planning partners. Infrastructure Services assists in planning and is responsible for implementation.

Brief description: Placing cycling track elements on a route that has great potential to increase the number of children cycling to school. The aim is to make active travel more fun and attractive, and in addition to cycling, pedestrians should also be taken into account, for example in the form of paintings or lighting.

Resources: Installation, materials, and evaluation of €10,000. Coordination, implementation, and communication 0.2 FTE. The measure was implemented as a pilot project in Pääskyvuori in 2024 as part of the Scale-up project (Horizon 2020) funding.

Actionplan in case of repetiton:

Action	Schedule	Results	Risks	Responsible parties
Determining a suitable location	1 month	Decision on location	Unexpected problems with the location	Mobility services, transport planning, infrastructure services
Brainstorming ideas for the measure	1 month	Children's opinions	Children's wishes cannot be fulfilled due to lack of resources	Mobility services and student councils
Procurement and installation of equipment	1 month	Installation of elements	Delays in delivery and installation by subcontractors	Mobility services, infrastructure services
Communication	1 month	Target group finds the route	Not everyone can take advantage of this due to prohibitions or missing equipment	Mobility services, communication services
Evaluation of the measure	1 month	Children want to use a certain route and bicycle more.	Children lose interest in the elements because they are not easy to change.	Mobility services

Pilot measure: Parent-led walking school bus

Responsible party and implementation partners: Mobility Services is responsible for planning the routes, timetables and implementation partners. The school assists in communicating to parents.

Brief description: A walking bus run by parents in the neighborhood, with a new platform that allows parents to post their own announcements: "I'm walking my child to school on dd.mm. at mm.hh, would anyone like to join us?" The measure was implemented with the help of two associations working in the area, as voluntary parents wasn´t found.

Resource: The platform was funded by the Scale-up project and tested alongside other solutions with schoolchildren and at the SCHOOLHOODS pilot school. Coordination and planning 0.2 FTE. School as a communication partner.

Action	Schedule	Results	Risks	Responsible parties
Determining routes	9/2024	Routes are drawn on the platform		
Cooperation in developing the registration platform		Platform ready for use	The platform is not easy to use or reliable.	Transport services, company responsible for the platform
Schedules, coordination and search for implementation partners, communication	7-10	Testing the platform for registration and communication	Parents do not want to walk with other children in the neighborhood. Risks associated with anyone being a responsible adult	Mobility services in collaboration with school and other stakeholders
New test in spring and stakeholder involvement to find responsible parties for the start of the school year (instead of parents)	10/2024, 4/2025	More aware and involved children	No walking bus "drivers" can be found	Mobilityservices
Implementation and evaluation in one area of interest	8/2025 (first two weeks of the school year)	Several participants		

6 Implementation and monitoring of measures

This final section of the action plan provides a framework for the implementation and monitoring of measures.

6.1. Administration and stakeholders

Ownership of the city's sustainable urban mobility plan and the SCHOOLHOODS action plan lies with the mobility services within the strategic steering of the urban environment service division. The status of implementation as well as effects and results are presented annually in various management groups or steering groups linked to the sustainable urban mobility plan (environmental impact management group), the traffic safety program (mobility working group), or as an independent entity when needed. The monitoring of measures is also linked to the monitoring and reporting of the mayor's program, which is carried out in a cross-administrative manner.

Table 5. Internal stakeholders of the action plan and their responsibilities.

Internal Stakeholder	Responsibility
Mobility services	Coordination, planning and implementing soft measures, responsible for stakeholder co-operation and budgeting of the soft measures within the plan.
Transport planning	Participation in the assessment of development needs, planning and budgeting of infrastructural measures.
Basic education	Joint implementation of communication measures, participation in mappings and measures in accordance with school-specific results, and some measures based on voluntary participation
Geographic information	Planning and implementation of geographic information analyses in accordance with measures already initiated
Infrastructure services	Participation in the planning and implementation of infrastucture measures.
Communication and marketing services	Assistance in the planning and implementation of communication measures
Employment services	Bicycle reservation system functions and development cooperation
Facility services	Taking existing mobility-related information into account in school facility decisions by involving transport planning at an early stage and including the resources required for supportive soft measures in the overall project budgets
Other	Sports services, collaborative steering and development services work in cooperation with mobility services in terms of knowledge management, stakeholder cooperation, communication, events and project applications.

Within the organization, there are several service divisions and units, as shown in Table 5, that play a key role in ensuring that synergies between different functions are not lost and that issues related to children's everyday mobility are also taken into account when addressing other major themes in the city. The neighborhoods surrounding school units and other external stakeholders (Table 6) will also play a key role in the future in defining more detailed measures to be planned for the area or school.

Table 6. Key external stakeholders related to the action plan and related entities.

External stakeholders	Task
School student councils	The views of the student council are taken into account as widely as possible in measures related to the school environment and other development measures.
Parent associations	Parent associations act as messengers in two directions in developingt measures
Local homeowners' associations and other residents	Residents play a significant informational role when identifying problem areas and as co-planners. They also act as important communicators regarding measures planned in the area.
Other associations	There may be other important stakeholders in the area who can act as messengers or co-implementers of measures.
Student welfare	Pupil welfare services are provided with up-to-date information on children's everyday mobility and traffic safety. Pupil welfare services play an important role in promoting the overall well-being of children.
Police and rescue services	The police and rescue services are an integral part of regional safety from the perspective of monitoring and responding to changes in the environment.
National Traffic safety agency	Exchange of information, implementation of traffic safety measures, and communication
National Smart Ways to School program	Exchange of information and communication at the national level in cooperation with municipalities

6.2. Funding plan and implementation readiness for measures

The aim is to incorporate man-years and low-cost measures, such as annual campaigns and other communication measures, as well as small-scale infrastructure improvements in the budgets mobility services and other service divisions of the city (Table 7). External funding will be sought for measures requiring greater investment and planning, as well as for innovative measures, but this is conditional on the required person-years, such as traffic planning and infrastructure services, being included in the city's own budget. If the person-years for the theme are committed solely to project funding, long-term work will be challenging, and the city will lose valuable knowledge and capacity. Larger development measures for which external funding is sought are listed in Table 8. The main responsibility for applying for funding lies with the mobility services, but funding needs are also

brought to the attention of other bodies that regularly apply for external funding, such as development services.

Table 7. The table shows the targeted resources for each set of measures. Required resources v

Action	Resource 2026	Resource 2027	Resource 2028	Resource 2029
Planning and coordination of measures, Mobility services	1 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE
Traffic planning	0.5 FTE	0.5 FTE	0.5 FTE	0.5 FTE
Communication measures	0.1 FTE	0.1 FTE	0.1 FTE	0.1 FTE
Purchased services and materials related to cycling measures, operation of the bicycle reservation system	€15,000 €30,000	€15,000 €30,000	€15,000 €30,000	€15,000 €30,000
Design and implementation of campaigns and other materials	€2,000	€2,000	€2,500	€3,000
Infrastructural measures (painting, lighting, agile experiments, measurement) traffic planning and infrastructural services		€80,000	€80,000	€80,000

Table 8. The table shows the measures theme wise for which external funding is being sought. The main responsibility for applying for funding lies with the mobility services.

Measure	Source of funding
Development of cycling skills	Suomi liikkeelle (Finland on the Move) program, Traficom has granted funding for 2026
Availability of bicycles for children, winter cycling	Erasmus+, Horizon (pilot projects aimed at changing behavior)
Safe and attractive school environments	LIFE program, ERDF, national road safety
Planning processes, data and guidance	National innovation calls, Interreg, Horizon (GovTech), digital inclusion calls

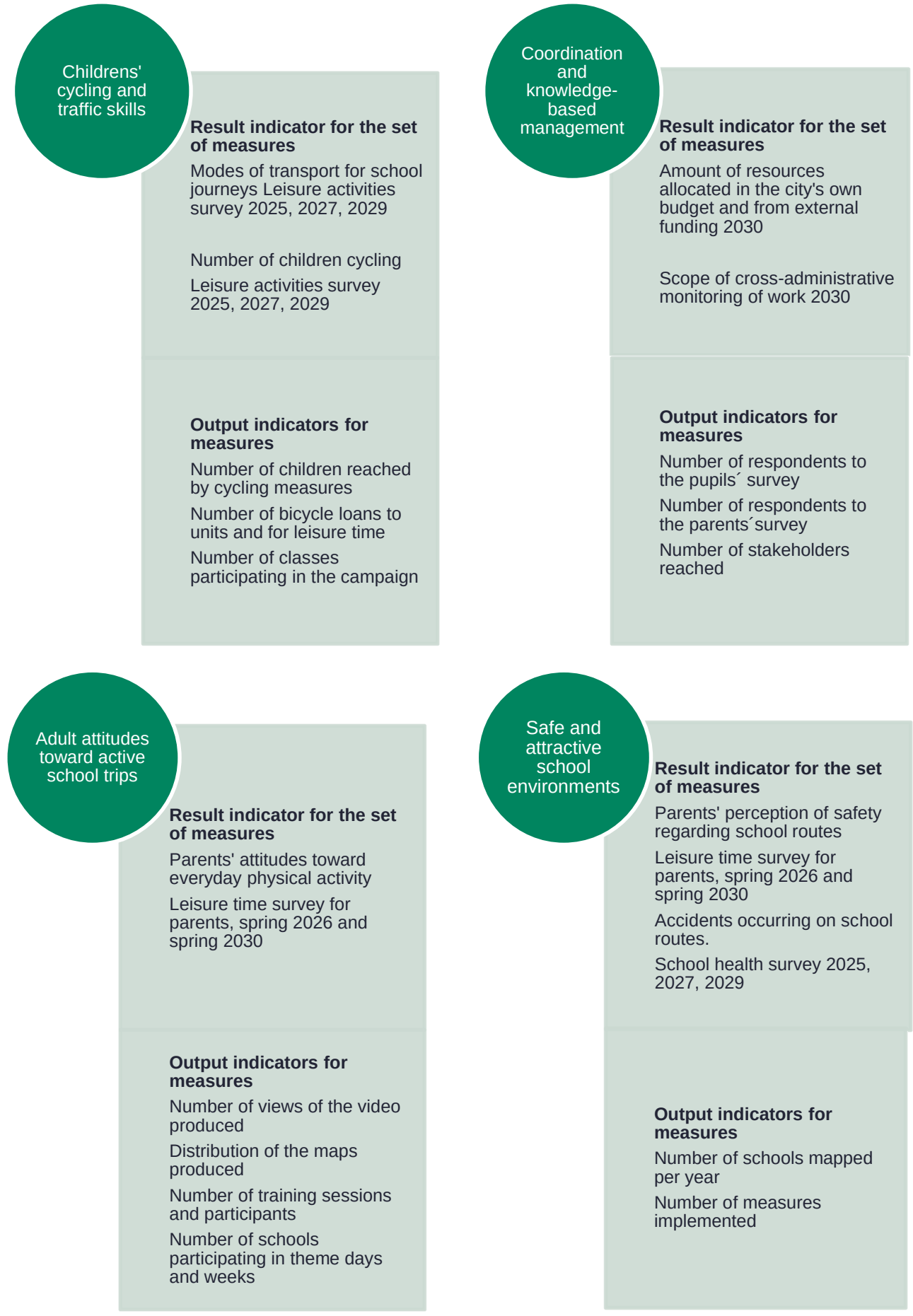
6.3. Monitoring and reporting

The final target year for the program is 2030, which is a significant milestone in terms of the city's climate and sustainable mobility goals. In 2029, the current council term will also come to an end and the measures of the 2025–2029 mayor's program will be completed.

Monitoring is divided into four subcategories according to the sets of measures. They include both output and outcome indicators (Figure 9). The target levels for the first three outcome indicators will be defined in spring 2026, once their baseline levels have been combined and analyzed. The resources to be applied for will also be specified as the action plan progress.

1. **Distribution of schoolchildren's modes of transport.** Information on schoolchildren's journeys to school is obtained from a cross-administrative basic education hobby survey, which was first conducted in autumn 2025. The results relating to journeys to school will be repeated in autumn 2027 and 2029.
2. **Traffic accidents on the way to school**. Information on the number of traffic accidents on the way to school is obtained from a national school health survey conducted every two years, which is produced and analyzed by the National Institute for Health and Welfare.
3. **Adults' attitudes towards children's active journeys to school and parents' sense of safety on children's school routes.**
   This information will be collected for the first time in a comprehensive well-being survey aimed at parents of primary school pupils in spring 2026. The target level will then be set, and the survey will be repeated in spring 2030.
4. **Resources used for active and safe journeys to school.**
   The action plan sets the target resources for each measure, including the city's own budgeting and external funding. The last indicator, together with the first three result indicators, shows whether the targets have been achieved with the allocated resources.

Figure 9. Schoolhoods program monitoring framework, including output indicators.



6.4. Risk managament of the integrated plan

The plan aims for horizontal integration of measures, including digital, physical, and behavioral measures, which indicates the need for a cross-administrative approach to the theme. The city's organization has six service divisions and a total of 31 units, employing nearly 7,000 people (in 2023). This poses a challenge for the implementation of horizontal and integrated measures. Identifying relevant stakeholders within the organization is crucial to ensure that potential synergies and resources are not wasted. For example, with the pressure to build new schools or renovate old ones, sustainable mobility issues may not have always been given sufficient consideration in light of the current and latent mobility culture and the city's goals. Placing children in a new school environment also means that children and families have to familiarize themselves with a new transport environment. If the journey to school becomes longer, this can be seen as a barrier to active travel. This means that a wide range of support measures related to skills and attitudes may be needed to counterbalance this, so that solving one problem does not create new ones. In addition, the level of awareness of sustainable mobility goals within the organization varies, as do the problems and related measures, because all service divisions have their own legal obligations and thematic priorities. If the objectives are to be achieved, the theme will require strong leadership, coordination, and long-term resourcing in the coming years.

Table 9. Different areas of the plan's collaborative approach and their self-assessment.

	Sub-theme of the collaborative approach	Self-assessment of the plan on a scale of 1–5	Comments on self-assessment
1	Participation of stakeholder groups in planning	3/5	Stakeholders have been involved in the work in stages and in a targeted manner, which has led to greater commitment to cooperation.
2	The plan is in line with existing strategies and programs.	5/5	The measures in the plan have been designed in a consistent manner in accordance with numerous programs and strategies.
3	The plan supports sustainable development	4/5	The plan complies with the principles of sustainable development, particularly from an ecological and social perspective.
4	The plan is time-bound	4/5	The schedule will be refined based on new information, among other things.
5	Stakeholder involvement in implementation	3/5	Most of the measures are aimed at the plan implementers. The ownership of other measures will be specified as the schedule is finalized.
(6)	The plan is multidisciplinary.	5/5	The plan takes into account many factors that influence human behavior and the parties responsible for implementing them.
(7)	The plan is regionally consistent	4/5	The plan will be refined regionally based on information obtained during the final months of the project.
(8)	The plan is scalable	3/5	The plan includes many easily scalable measures, but some of the measures require more detailed consideration of regional data.
(9)	The plan brings together different levels of government	4/5	The plan takes into account the decision-making, strategic, planning, and implementation levels.
(10)	Utilization of different sources of funding	4/5	Those applying for projects are aware of the measures and know how to take different sources of funding into account.