

National Transport System Plan for 2021–2032 — Draft Plan

Summary

The National Transport System Plan presents an assessment of the current state of the transport system and the future operating environment, objectives for the transport system, and measures for achieving the objectives. The twelve-year action plan included in the National Transport System Plan entails central and local government measures. In addition, the plan includes a central government funding programme, which requires setting the financial framework for the planning period. The plan also includes a summary of the impact assessment and advice regarding the drafting of the next plan.

Three objectives, which run in parallel and all seek to mitigate climate change, have been set for the National Transport System Plan:

- **Accessibility:** The transport system will ensure access to the whole of Finland and will respond to the needs of businesses, working life and housing.
- **Sustainability:** Opportunities to choose more sustainable modes of mobility will improve, particularly in urban areas.
- **Efficiency:** The socio-economic efficiency of the transport system will improve.

The objectives have been defined further with strategic guidelines. Most of the strategic guidelines relate to various aspects of accessibility.

The action plan addresses transport networks and transport hubs, passenger and goods transport services, transport system support measures, specific regional issues, the use of EU funding and having an impact internationally, as well as the development of transport system planning. In addition, the action plan presents financial provisions and compilations of measures by topics.

With regard to the state's route network, the draft plan contains measures both for the maintenance of the existing road network, the railway network and waterways (basic route operation) and for their development. The development needs of the state's route network and other transport network have been summarised in the transport network's strategic situational picture. In terms of both basic route operation and development, funding will be directed to the sites identified in the transport network's strategic situational picture. Funding for basic route operation, used to maintain and repair highways, the railway network and waterways, will be raised to EUR 1.4 billion per year starting from 2025, also taking into account the rise in cost level. For the entire route network, the service level will be adapted especially to the needs of the business sector and commuting, as well as to the needs of transport services. The repair deficit will be reduced in a cost-effective manner according to demand, prioritising the needs of the business sector and commuting. The repair deficit for the state's route network will decrease from EUR 2.8 billion to EUR 2.2 billion during the period of the plan. Of the funding for basic route operation, 52% will be allocated to highways, 39% to railways and 9% to waterways.

According to the draft plan, funding for development investments will be approximately EUR 500 million per year, or a total of approximately EUR 6.1 billion in the years 2021–2032. Of this sum, approximately EUR 3.26 billion will be at the disposal of new development projects. Road network would account for 45% of development funding, the rail network for 51% and waterways for 4%. Aside from these, the train control system (Digirail) will be renewed. In addition, the central government will set aside a total of approximately EUR 661 million for new contractual infrastructure projects and potential development of services, to be co-financed with land use, housing and transportation (LHT) urban areas. Effort will be made to implement new high-speed rail connections through project companies, and the situation of project companies will be taken into account in maintaining and developing the rest of the network.

With regard to private roads, the central government will increase appropriations for government aid to EUR 25 million per year from 2023 onwards. With regard to the street network, the draft plan highlights local government measures related to, for example, maintenance and connections to the most important transport nodes. With regard to the walking and cycling infrastructure, the central government will increase municipalities' government aid to EUR 30 million per year from 2025 onwards, and a total of EUR 30 million in government aid to municipalities will be reserved for park and ride. In addition, in the state network, the central government will invest in walking and cycling infrastructure and in park and ride.

With regard to harbours, the central government will develop highway and rail connections to major harbours utilising project assessment data. In harbours, digitalisation will be advanced and Connecting Europe Facility funding will be utilised to develop the operating conditions for shipping. With regard to airports, the functionality and operating conditions of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport will be developed. Ensuring the conditions for the development of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport also enables operations at other airports. Trip chains to airports will be developed throughout the country, and government aid to airports will continue.

With regard to funding of the transport network, the draft plan includes guidelines for the development of a co-financing model. According to the draft plan, the co-financing model will be used more comprehensively and consistently than at present, as the project will bring significant benefits not only to route operators but also to other parties. The draft plan includes principles for applying the co-financing model in different types of projects.

With regard to passenger transport services, the draft plan includes measures to develop public transport and trip chains. Public transport encompasses air transport, train transport and bus transport. Cooperation between public transport operators will be developed. In addition, the overall picture of market-based and public transport service provision will be studied, and the development of the transport market will be followed. Service level objectives will be defined for the most essential long-distance commuting and business connections (train, bus and air transport) between regional centres, and funding (EUR 48 million) will be directed so that the service level objectives are realised. The central government will supplement market-based services for passenger train traffic by purchasing services from VR Group Ltd. In addition, the central government can purchase air traffic to locations from which the travel time to Helsinki by train exceeds three hours, and due to COVID-19 will temporarily support

flight connections to Kokkola–Pietarsaari, Joensuu, Kajaani, Jyväskylä and Kemi–Tornio airports until the end of 2021. The purpose of the support is to enable a return to market-based scheduled air transport from the beginning of 2022. If necessary, the central government will support flight routes in accordance with separate decisions, taking into account regional equality and accessibility as well as business needs.

From 2025 onwards, the central government will invest considerably more funding in public transport in urban areas and other areas. From 2025 onwards, support to public transport will be increased by EUR 20 million per year in large urban areas and by EUR 6–8 million per year in mid-sized urban areas, and support to the trunk network of bus transport organised by the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres) by EUR 6 million per year. Due to COVID-19, the central government is also preparing for stimulation support for public transport in the coming years. The climate-based increase of EUR 20 million in public transport support will continue during the period of the plan. In addition to the rises in support, the whole of public transport services will be developed to be easier to use, faster, more accessible and more reliable, and development of the range of public transport-based mobility services and the smooth flow of trip chains will be promoted.

In developing trip chains, efforts will be made to improve the availability of timetable and route information and to develop ticket and payment systems. The accessibility of trip chains will be improved and the combining of passenger transports will be promoted. In addition, mobility services will be advanced. In the years 2022–2025, a total of EUR 17 million in central government funding will be directed to the development of trip chains.

With regard to goods transport services, the draft plan includes measures to promote, in particular, the digitalisation of logistics. Pilot projects in urban logistics will promote the introduction of new technologies. In addition, studies will be prepared on the possibilities of logistics to reduce emissions, on combined transport and on transit traffic.

According to the draft plan, land use will promote low-carbon and resource-efficient community development and sustainable mobility, and the inclusion of the national transport system plan in land use regulation. A long-term development picture of the regional structure will be prepared. The construction of an alternative propulsion distribution network throughout the country will be promoted, and funding for mobility guidance will be increased to EUR 2.5 million per year from 2025 onwards. Parking policy will be integrated into transport system planning. With regard to road safety, the plan is committed to a zero vision by 2050 and to long-term strategy work.

In order to promote data and digitalisation, the draft plan includes measures related to the development of legislation as well as the collection of basic digital business services. The availability and usability of data will be improved with the help of Traffic Management Finland Group. Consistent and fair operating models will be created for transport service providers when developing new services across means of transport. Traffic management and situational awareness are being developed in all modes of transport to meet customer needs better. Automation is promoted in all modes of transport through pilot projects and tests. An assessment will be made of

the sought-after level of road traffic automation and the measures needed for its advancement. The development of communication networks will be furthered to meet transport system needs. Preparations are made for disturbances in the transport system, and the transport system will be developed keeping in mind the security of supply and national defence needs.

With regard to regional special features, the draft plan describes project companies' state of preparation concerning major rail projects. Inland waterway transport is seen as part of the emission reduction potential in logistics. In the case of connection vessels, the organisational criteria will be renewed, and highway ferry transport will be operated as part of the road network. The smooth flow of cross-border traffic will be ensured, and transport support will meet the challenges of small and medium-sized enterprises operating in remote areas.

The draft plan also contains guidelines on how transport issues will be addressed in the future, for example in agreements between the central government and urban areas. In addition, the draft plan addresses international influence and the utilisation of EU funding, in particular the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Extending the North Sea–Baltic Corridor north of Helsinki will increase the number of rail projects eligible for support in Finland, for which reason Finland is aiming to receive more from the CEF than in previous funding periods. The main emphasis in the forthcoming CEF funding period for Finland will be to obtain funding for rail network corridor projects and their planning, as well as for the planning of project companies and Digirail.