

Summary of the impact assessment of the National Transport System Plan

The National Transport System Plan is a strategic plan for the development of Finland's entire transport system in the long term. 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 plan includes a central government funding programme. The plan creates long-term strategic guidance for the transport administrative branch, and makes the programming and implementation of development measures more systematic and coherent. The plan makes more efficient use of society's resources.

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 plan's measures for the route network include an increase in funding for basic route operation to EUR 1.4 billion per year. In addition, 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. The set of public transport services will be developed to be easier to use and more reliable. The smoothness of travel and trip chains will be promoted, among other things through measures targeting transport nodes and terminals and by ensuring the operating conditions of airports. Sustainable mobility is also supported by developing cooperation between the central government and urban areas, as well as by investments in both the walking and cycling infrastructure and in park and ride. The plan supports better utilisation of data than before as well as the preconditions for digitalisation and automation.

Two versions of the plan were prepared during 2020, under the guidance of a parliamentary steering group. The effects of the plan versions were assessed using an assessment framework. The parliamentary steering group decided on the draft plan to be sent for impact assessment and on a round for comments on 13 November 2020. From this point forward, that draft is referred to as the plan. The effects of the plan were assessed according to an assessment framework and the Act on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (200/2005). The impact assessment paid particular attention to the correspondence of the National Transport System Plan with the objectives set for it. The impacts of the plan have been compared against a comparison option that describes development without the measures presented in the plan.

The plan's measures support the realisation of the accessibility objective fairly well. Accessibility will improve at the international, interregional and intra-urban and intra-regional levels as a result of basic route operation, the set of public transport services and measures influencing trip chains. In particular, a better level of service for trips and transports and user benefits greater than the comparison option contribute to securing the accessibility of all of Finland. The change in accessibility in urban areas is positive with regard to the needs of the

business sector, commuting and housing. The plan's measures support urban area connections and the consolidation of community structure. Improving socio-economic efficiency, for its part, contributes to the objective of accessibility because effective measures give rise to a better service level and accessibility in relation to the funding spent.

The plan's measures realise the sustainability objective well. The plan's measures will improve opportunities to choose more sustainable modes of mobility. Choices will improve, especially in urban areas, where internal accessibility will improve along with investments in walking, cycling, public transport and trip chains as well as rail investments. Highway network measures as well as investments in walking and cycling will improve road traffic safety, which will promote walking and cycling. The impact of the plan's sections on greenhouse gas emissions from transport is slight in relation to the comparison alternative, but the measures will enable the transition to sustainable modes of transport. The plan will increase possibilities for adaptation to climate change.

The plan's measures support the achievement of the efficiency objective well. The increase in user benefits, especially in goods transport, will improve socio-economic efficiency. The improvement in accessibility will largely take place on existing route networks which, together with improved reliability and the advancement of digitalisation, will make the use of networks more efficient. A higher level of funding for basic route operation will enable lifecycle efficient maintenance. Socio-economic efficiency will also improve through reduced accident costs and the health benefits brought by walking and cycling.

Improving socio-economic efficiency requires that the future allocation of the plan's funding programme in the future at a more precise planning level be based on the implementation of socio-economically profitable projects.

The plan's effects on the environmental impacts under the Act on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment as a whole are minor. The assessment identifies climate change, use of natural resources and weakening of biodiversity as environmental issues relevant to the plan. The plan's measures will improve the energy efficiency of the transport system and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but the impact will be slight. However, the plan enables the transition to sustainable modes of transport and supports a sustainable community structure. These effects will only intensify in the longer term than the plan's period for impact assessment (2021–2032).

The plan's effects on the use of natural resources and biodiversity are indirect. The funds allocated to the development and improvement of the route network will have an indirect impact on the use of natural resources as projects materialise. Depending on the projects, the indirect effects may also have an impact on fragmentation of the living environment, ecological corridor connections and the habitats of endangered species.

With regard to other environmental impacts under the Act on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, it has correspondingly been assessed that the plan has mainly indirect impacts. For these, too, impact assessment will be prepared, for example, in more detailed project planning. The environment report provides recommendations for further planning to curb and prevent adverse environmental impacts.

Follow-up of the National Transport System Plan includes monitoring of the implementation of the measures and monitoring of both the direct effects of the plan and the indirect effects

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of the plan's implementation. Follow-up of the plan is part of wider monitoring of the state of the transport system.