City of Turku

Sustainable urban transport plan (SUTP)

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Strategic decisions, previous plans and reports

The Sustainable urban transport plan (SUTP) of the City of Turku has been required by the city's signature of the Aalborg Commitments on 29th March 2005.

Sustainable development is a basic value of the Turku city strategy adopted on 2nd May 2005. Sustainable urban structure, responsible climate policy and reduction of private car use and its emissions have been taken up as strategic aims in several strategy documents.

Sustainable urban structure, reduction for the need for private car and development of walking, cycling and public transport have been aims in the Regional Plan of Turku Urban Region (2004), Turku master plan (2001) and Transport System Plan of the Turku Urban Region (2000/2004). However, only small parts of the walking, cycling and public transport improvements proposed in these documents have been implemented. Road projects have been implemented on schedule.

The Turku Self-Assessment on Sustainable Urban Transport was completed in spring 2006 and
The Peer Review of Sustainable Urban Transport in Turku was carried out on 21st – 25th August 2006 and the report was completed by January 2007. The analysis of current situation and the actions proposed in the Turku SUTP are based on these reports.

Scenario analysis of current development

The development of urban transport and urban structure was analysed on basis of two scenarios:

A: Expansion of urban structure and growth in car traffic
This scenario represents the continuation of current development trend. The competition between the municipalities of the region for good taxpayers is not limited and the regional land use and transport plans are not co-ordinated. In land use and transports solution serving “good taxpayers” on the conditions set by business are favoured. Expansion of urban structure and growth in car traffic continue.

B: Compact urban structure, limitation of growth of car traffic
The scenario represents the fulfilment of the strategic objectives set in the city strategies. A co-operation agreement is reached between the municipalities of the Turku urban region. Land use and transport solutions are co-ordinated optimally with respect to sustainable economic, environmental and social development. Land use, transport system and public transport are planned regionally. New building is directed mostly to complementary development and the increase in personal transports to public transport, walking and cycling. The aim for the modal split share of sustainable modes (walking, cycling and public transport) is set as 2/3 of all trips.

Analysis
The sprawling land use and services already cause pressure for increased use of private cars. Current transport system cannot cope with increased traffic without congestion in key nodes. Walking, cycling and public transport are currently not attractive enough to solve the congestion by modal shift.

The continuation of the current development trend does not fulfil Turku’s international commitments such as Aalborg commitments and EU reduction aims for greenhouse gases. It does not fulfil the sustainable development aims of the city strategies and causes urban sprawl. The current development trend causes negative environmental, economical and social consequences.

Development fulfilling Turku’s strategic aims requires particularly a co-operation agreement between municipalities of Turku urban region, re-evaluation of land use plans and investment in walking, cycling and public transport. Environmental, economical and social consequences are mostly positive. Largest risk is “free riding” by municipalities, who do not commit themselves to joint objectives. The development fulfilling Turku’s strategic aims cannot be achieved by City of Turku alone. It requires that the state and the other municipalities of the region participate in development of sustainable land use and transport system. Alone, Turku can implement only attractive complementary development and internal walking, cycling and public transport improvements.

Aims for sustainable urban transport by 2030

The aims fulfil the strategic objectives and commitments of the City of Turku

Prevention of climate change:
- CO_2 emissions from transport are reduced by 30%

Modal split
- In Turku, modal split share of cars is maximum 1/3 and walking, cycling and public transport minimum 2/3
- Cycling and public transport trips per inhabitant increase at least 50% and walking trips are maintained on current level
- Increase of regional traffic to Turku city centre occurs as public transport

Urban structure
- Share of population and workplaces in districts with high quality walking, cycling and public transport increases

Environmental impacts
- Emissions affecting air quality are reduced
- Noise standards are set in the noise reduction plan

Quality of life
- Number of injured and dead in traffic accidents is reduced by half
- Walking and cycling on daily trips for health benefit is increased
- Traffic safety is not an obstacle for walking and cycling
- Traffic environment is as barrier-free as possible
- Different age and population groups have equal transport opportunities

Key actions in Turku SUTP

Municipal structure must be reformed in the Turku urban region so that land use plans, service location and transport network is decided, implemented and financed regionally.

In *City strategies* clear sustainable objectives must be set for land use and transport, and the strategies should be implemented.

Land use and services must be decided regionally in a regional master plan. Complementary development should be focused on areas with local services available by walking and cycling and with functioning public transport. Centres, densely built areas and detached house areas should have differentiated requirements for local services, walking, cycling and public transport. Shops should be located according to master plan on areas with sufficient population and good access by sustainable modes.

Transport policy in Turku must increase the modal split share of walking, cycling and public transport and reduce the share of car use in order to prevent congestion and achieve objectives for climate change prevention. Transport policy decisions to implement sustainable transport should be made in the regional transport system plan.

Development of city centre as the most important shopping centre and workplace and an attractive housing area is a key component of sustainable transport system. Access to the city centre by walking, cycling and public transport should be improved, and commuting by car to work in city centre must be limited to allow for shopping by car. Decisions on developing the city centre can be made in a partial master plan of the city centre.

Mobility management focusing on everyday trips should be started by founding a mobility centre in Turku. Outreach campaigns should reach politicians, employees and residents and function actively at workplaces, schools and kindergartens. Pricing of transport should be corrected by using public transport tickets and cycles subsidised by the workplace and pricing parking at work corresponding to costs.

Walking and cycling development programme will guide their development. The incomplete city centre cycling network is the main obstacle for cycling. The gaps in the cycling network must be removed with priority on the city centre and other missing key links. Quality and safety of pedestrian environment

should be improved and barriers removed.

Public transport use should be increased by 50% which is a considerable challenge. A regional public transport authority responsible for the whole urban region must be started. State and other municipalities must participate fairly in the costs of public transport system. A trunk line system covering the city centre and densely built suburban areas will be implemented. The trunk lines will have traffic priorities, 10 minute headways in daytime and they can be operated by high-capacity buses or partly by trams. Barriers in public transport must be removed and the information system be improved. Travel centre and regional local trains should be implemented.

Road network improvements should be studied in more details to determine their need and impact. Reducing need for transport, more effective use of existing roads and small improvements should be prioritised over large investments. Environmental, traffic and land use impacts of roads should be studied. Only projects with positive results should be implemented, and eventual negative effects mitigated.

Of *Environmental impacts of transport* the most problematic in Turku is currently noise. A noise prevention plan based on noise mapping must be implemented. Climate change impacts are best mitigated by changing the modal split. State laws regarding alternative fuels and low-emission vehicles must be altered to allow their favourable treatment. An environmental zone with emission requirements for heavy vehicles should be studied in the city centre.

Traffic safety can be best improved by reducing vehicle speeds in city centre and housing areas. Traffic environment must be redesigned to support safer speeds. Automatic enforcement of speeding, red light and public transport lane rules should be studied.

Indicators

Monitoring the implementation of Turku SUTP will be based on the sustainable development indicators used by the largest municipalities of Finland. Indicators on service levels of urban structure will be developed further and traffic studies will be updated regularly. Additional indicators will be developed for traffic counts, air pollution and noise emissions of transport.