
Four corridors, four profiles: Urban node dialogue on the corridor network by Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council

Venues & Dates

- Tampere, regional workshop 1.12.2016
- Turku, regional workshop 2.12.2016
- Kotka, regional workshop 8.12.2016
- Lahti, regional workshop 15.12.2016
- Helsinki, final seminar 18.1.2017

Urban node dialogue summary

In the process of preparing a long term Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Plan 2050, an urban node dialogue process in Southern Finland was organised by Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council in spring 2017. The dialogue was also part of the Regional Council's role as activity leader of the Strategic Corridor Node Dialogue on the Scandria[®] Corridor. The dialogue included a series of regional workshops, final seminar and a report as the final outcome of the process. The urban node dialogue process draws on the scenario that Southern Finland is becoming a consistent functional urban area by 2050s. In recent decades urbanization as well as the development of transport systems and services has caused rapid changes in functional areas which can be seen, for example, in the expansion of employment areas and long-term commuting. The aim of urban node dialogue has been to form an overview of how the Capital Region – Helsinki-Uusimaa – links with the wider network of development corridors in Southern Finland. The corridor metaphor is used as a tool in regional development planning with the aim to steer growth to optimal corridor zones. The overall aim is to promote economic growth, social and territorial cohesion and sustainable development.

In the Helsinki-Turku corridor, the emphasis is on the sea and related recreational living, tourism and industry. In the Helsinki-Tampere corridor, the focus is on good labour market opportunities, start-up companies and innovation ecosystems. The environment, ground waters and eco-business are highlighted in the Helsinki-Lahti-Kouvola corridor. In the Helsinki-Kotka corridor, the emphasis is on good connections to Russia and the proximity of the Eastern markets, as well as on the related potential from the point of view of companies and expertise.

Four corridors, four profiles

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region is preparing a new long-term land use plan, i.e. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Plan 2050. Choosing the focal points for the development of the area and its main transport network is an essential part of the groundwork for the land use plan. As part of this process, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council carried out a profile study on the corridor network in Southern Finland. The study focused on four development corridors: Helsinki-Turku, Helsinki-Tampere, Helsinki-Lahti-Kouvola and Helsinki-Kotka. The Finnish development corridor process was carried out by Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council in cooperation with MDI and the work was part-funded by the Scandria[®]2Act project.

The regions of Southern Finland form a network that consists of four significant development corridors. Each corridor starts from the Capital Region and spreads out to West, North- West, North-East or East. In the urban node dialogue process these development corridors are assessed from the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region's perspective by three different everyday functionalities: people, companies and environment. In the report, each corridor is profiled by its unique strengths.

Each of the four corridors was studied by observing the following topics: people, companies and environment. The corridors were profiled in cooperation with the respective regional councils and other regional operators. Material for the profiling was acquired mainly through electronic surveys but also in four cross-regional workshops, Helsinki-Uusimaa regional workshop and a summarizing workshop. Based on the results, each corridor was given its unique profile consisting of strengths and future potential.

Blue corridor – Helsinki–Turku development corridor

Due to the sea and the related recreational living, tourism and industry, the Helsinki–Turku development corridor is viewed as the blue development corridor. For people, proximity to sea as well as historical settings and culture add to the appeal of the corridor from the viewpoint of residents and visitors. The corridor is part of the Southern Finland growth triangle, which creates future potential to this corridor in economic and transport development.

Diversified economic structure, multidisciplinary expertise and higher education create promising future prospects for companies on the corridor. The strengths include industrial production and processing as well as tourism. The corridor is part of the European TEN-T transport corridor – Scandinavian-Mediterranean core network corridor, which includes E18 and connects Finland to Sweden and Russia.

For the environment, strong environmental and cultural values and the proximity of the sea are characteristics of this corridor. Future potential consists of sustainable and fast mobility and the development of tourism and recreational services.

The key strength and opportunities of each development corridor are summarized into the following table:

Orange corridor – Helsinki–Tampere development corridor

Due to large job opportunities, start-up companies, innovation ecosystems and skilled labour force, the Helsinki–Tampere growth corridor is given the colour orange.

For people, a functional labour market, versatile services, attractive urban living environment and good accessibility are among the pull factors of this corridor, which is also part of the Southern Finland growth triangle that builds around Helsinki, Turku and Tampere.

Start-up companies and innovation ecosystems along with the highly-educated population are key strengths of the corridor. The corridor contains strong expertise in e.g. technology and food products. The corridor forms Finland's most coherent labour market is part of the main artery in the country's logistics.

The built environment on this corridor has cultural strengths such as old city structures and urbanism. Water systems and bioeconomy are highlighted as strong points of the natural

environment. Future potential consists of sustainable solutions in passenger and freight transport.

Green corridor – Helsinki–Lahti–Kouvola development corridor

Due to the green environment, Salpausselkä, ecobusiness and recreational lifestyle, the Helsinki–Lahti–Kouvola corridor is the green development corridor.

For people, this corridor offers great recreational and leisure opportunities and urban lifestyle close to nature. Residents and tourists are attracted to the area’s sports and nature-oriented image and good connections to the capital area and to the Finnish Lake area.

A diverse business and economic structure is the strong point of this corridor. Bioeconomy, cleantech, wood industry, forestry and logistics are highlighted on this corridor. The future potential of this corridor consists of further strengthening its logistics services especially towards Russia and further to Asia towards China.

The environmental values on this corridor consist of diverse nature, Salpausselkä ridge, groundwater and water systems. The green corridor is strong in ecobusiness and bioeconomy.

Red corridor – Helsinki–Kotka development corridor

The Helsinki–Kotka development corridor has good connections to the Eastern and Russian markets. The Eastern end of the corridor offers massive market opportunities: over five million people live within 250 kilometres of the corridor. In addition, the sea and several important ports are strengths of this corridor.

The strength of this corridor lies in good connections to Russia and Estonia and the closeness to the enormous market area of St. Petersburg. The sea environment, and sustainable living solutions are seen as future potential for this corridor.

Large ports with logistics services, international connections and the availability of Russian-speaking labour force are strengths of this corridor. Expertise in energy, petrochemicals and bioeconomy as well as tourism are underlined in this corridor. The corridor is part of the TEN-T Scandinavian-Mediterranean core network corridor (incl. E18).

Table: Key qualities of four development corridors in Southern Finland

Four development corridors	Strengths	Opportunities
Helsinki-Turku development corridor (colour code blue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong maritime heritage • Attractive living environment with high historic, cultural and international values • Strong labour market, well-educated work force, strong research sector • Strong industries, e.g. ship building, agritech, food production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High employability • Development and integration of Helsinki-Turku-Tampere growth triangle • New fast Helsinki-Turku railway connection (forthcoming) • Growth potential as commuting corridor • Sustainable development

Four development corridors	Strengths	Opportunities
		of urban areas
Helsinki-Tampere development corridor (colour code orange)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good domestic and international connections • Strong commuting culture • Strong start-up culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient railway connections, logistics artery • Development of station areas • Culture and nature tourism • Digitalisation, MaaS
Helsinki-Lahti-Kouvola development corridor (colour code green)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature values, access to the great lake area • Diversity of living environments and lower price level • Good transport connections between East and West • Strong logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection between West and East, connections to Russia and China • Natural resources and value added services • Eco-friendly business opportunities
Helsinki-Kotka development corridor (colour code red)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban lifestyle close to nature • Coastal area, sea and archipelago • Strong seaports • Closeness to Russia and St. Petersburg • Attractive natural and historic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to East, especially to Russia • Access to neighbouring mass market • Collaboration potential between seaports and dry ports • Innovation industries and living solutions • Near-food and organic food production • Tourism potential based on Kymi River, cultural values and archipelago

Conclusions

The following list of recommendations was built to boost the positive and fluent growth of the four development corridors:

1. Form a network (alliance/community) of private and public operators
2. Create a dialogue forum for owners, 'Club'
3. Create a clear vision, explain and market with clarity
4. Design a platform, i.e. a formal base for those who share the vision
5. Get a strong personal leader, 'Colour-bearer'
6. Get lobbying power, political support, remember transverse routes and points

7. Create a clear action plan / strategy
8. Activate work teams with adequate resources
9. Create a strong knowledge base, gather information on regional economic effects and monitor development
10. Use examples of the best practices – praise peer power

The Scandria[®]2Act corridor process

In the Scandria[®]2Act project the results from the series of regional workshops in Finland will be combined with those of other regional workshops in Germany and Sweden later in 2017. The joint transnational experience will be reported into a Scandria[®]2Act policy document.

Contact:

Malla Paajanen, chief adviser

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council

Mob. +358 50 3667391

malla.paajanen@uudenmaanliitto.fi