

## METREX Spring Conference in Helsinki

Helsinki-Uusimaa 10-12 June

### From Polycrisis to Multibenefits – Promoting Holistic Sustainability in Spatial Planning

How cities and metropolitan regions can move beyond crisis management towards generating solutions that deliver multiple benefits.

The METREX Helsinki Team, a shared METREX membership of three organisations from the Helsinki metropolitan area, is hosting the conference in Helsinki next summer. While each organisation approaches regional development and planning from its own perspective, they are united by a shared ambition: to foster a Helsinki metropolitan area that is liveable, vibrant, and climate-resilient.

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The conference provides a platform for shared learning and exchange on how different dimensions of sustainability can be addressed simultaneously in metropolitan development, while also offering participants an experiential introduction to the Helsinki metropolitan area and its most inspiring locations.

Particular attention is given to:

- Comprehensive and sustainable planning for growing cities and urban regions. We examine how urban growth can be aligned with rapid climate action, stronger biodiversity, and social sustainability.
- Regional-scale planning as a driver of sustainable transformation. We explore the trade-offs and tensions that inevitably arise when balancing environmental, social, and economic objectives.

The role of knowledge and data. We consider how evidence can support holistic sustainability in planning and assessment.

By bringing together planners, researchers, and practitioners, the conference offers a platform to share insights and best practices and to discuss current challenges. Together, we will deepen our understanding of holistic sustainability in urban planning and explore how well-considered choices can turn challenges into opportunities for more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban regions.

## Programme

### Tuesday 9 June – Helsinki

#### Pre-conference programme Walking Tour and drinks

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#### Meeting point: Hotel Helka at 18:00

Participants arriving on the day before the start of the conference are offered the possibility to meet in front of Hotel Helka at 18:00 for a relaxed walk across the western part of the city.

The route will pass through Lapinlahti Park, a former hospital area now closely connected to the surrounding urban development and the ongoing transformation of this part of Helsinki.

The walk will conclude at the art-inspired Hotel AX in Jätkäsaari, located in the heart of one of Helsinki's newest districts. Participants will then be invited to enjoy drinks and cocktail bites. Weather permitting, these will be served in the hotel's welcoming inner courtyard.

Participants who are unable to join the walk are welcome to meet the group directly at Hotel AX at 19:00.

Drinks at Art Hotel AX

Time: 19:00

Address: Välimerenkatu 18, Helsinki ([Google maps](#))

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## Wednesday 10 June – Helsinki EXPERT-NETWORK GROUPS MEETINGS, INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS, RECEPTION, EVENING CRUISE

Venue: Urban Environment Building, City of Helsinki  
Address: Työpajankatu 8 / Verkstadsgatan 8, 00580 Helsinki

08:30 - 09:00 | **Registration and Welcome Coffee**

09:00 – 09:15 | **Welcome and Instructions for the day**

09:15 – 12:30 EET / 8:15 – 11:30 CET | **Network- and Expert group meetings**

Format: multiple rounds of parallel sessions open to the membership with short, spot-on presentations / Q&A / illustration of what the group's work has produced so far and what the ambitions, plans, and objectives are, and/or preparation for the afternoon workshops.

### Parallel sessions

9.15 - 12:30 local time (EET) / 8:15 – 11:30 CET | [Nordic Baltic Network](#)

9.15 – 10.45 / 8:15 – 09:45 CET | Round 1

### MAPPING METREX

[Link to join online: teams meeting](#)

The session includes an **introduction to the group's state of the art** by Mariana Faver, Province South Holland, EG coordinator, and an inspiring presentation from the local context: **Mapping the Helsinki Metropolitan Region** by Senior Specialist **Miliza Ryöti**, PhD, from the Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority HSY. Miliza will share experiences in mapping metropolitan dynamics and phenomena, drawing on insights from an agreement-based city-regional planning process. With a particular focus on data – including a deeper dive into housing-related data – the presentation aims to explore how information, knowledge, and data practices can support and even shape both planning processes and their outcomes. The meeting will end with a collective work preparing for the afternoon session.

### ECONOMETREX 2.0

[Link to join online: teams meeting](#)

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Europe's metropolitan regions face significant spatial-economic challenges. We see this as a timely opportunity to come together—sharing concerns, exchanging ideas and best practices, and collaborating on a White Paper to inform policy at the European, national, and regional levels.

### Spatial Planning for Circular Economy

Link to join online: [Teams Meeting](#)

As a follow-up to the ASSET Interreg project, this group continues the discussion about the spatial demands of a Circular Built Environment and a Circular Economy with insights into best practices from Amsterdam and others.

### METREX 2049: Foresight EG

The Proposed Outline includes:

#### 09:15–09:45 | Introduction and updates

Brief introduction and roundtable exchange on members' foresight activities, including the initiative name, timeframe and foresight horizon. This will be followed by an update on the Foresight EG activities, next steps and the Friday morning Foresight session.

#### 09:45–10:45 | Contributions to the afternoon thematic sessions

Group discussion to collect inputs for the two afternoon thematic sessions, based on the guiding questions provided in the preparatory material.

10:45 – 11:00 / 09:45 – 10:00 CET | **Break**

11:00 – 12:30 / 10:00 – 11:30 CET | **Round 2**

### EURODELTA ALLIANCE Network group

Link to join online: [Teams Meeting](#)

#### Megaregions, cross-border regions and city-regions: How do soft spaces matter in territorial governance?

Speaker: [Eva Purkarthofer](#), Aalto University

The EuroDelta Alliance working group meeting will feature Eva Purkarthofer, postdoctoral researcher in Spatial Planning and Transportation Engineering at Aalto University. Eva will deliver a keynote titled: *"Megaregions, cross-border regions and city-regions: How do soft spaces matter in territorial*

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*governance?*” This hybrid workshop will dive into the concept of megaregions, exploring how informal planning and cross-border collaboration can drive future developments.

#### Concept Program

- 10.00-10.20 (CET) Introduction to EuroDelta by [Dagmar Keim](#)
- 110.20-10.45 (CET) Keynote by [Eva Purkarthofer](#)
- 10.45-11.30 (CET) Interactive discussion on informal planning and megaregional developments

## METROPOLITAN CLIMATE CHALLENGE EG

>> Join the meeting online: [Join Teams Meeting](#)

During this meeting of the expert group, we will be focusing on the topics raised in the Green Transition Handbook: communication, the energy transition from a regional/spatial planning perspective, and the role of spatial planning in circular economy innovations. We will develop perspectives based on sharing examples and ideas. The discussions will form a basis for our contribution to the afternoon session and further development of the expert group.

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## METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE & STRATEGIES EG

>> Join the meeting online: [Join Teams Meeting](#)

During the meeting, this expert group will focus on current activities of the [Metrocase Interreg project](#), with particular attention to:

- The selection of Good Practices that METREX should develop for the Handbook,
- The template to be used for describing them.

The goal is to collectively define a plan for the realisation of the Good Practices Handbook, collecting inspiring policy tools contributing to an effective metropolitan governance.

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12:00 – 13:30 | *Lunch Break* (Pop-in Buffet Lunch)

13:30 – 13:45 | Launch of the **New Expert Group ‘Spatial Planning for Circular Economy’** with [Bas Horsting](#) / Auditorium

13:45-13:50 **Introduction to the Parallel Workshops**/Thematic Sessions / Auditorium

13:50 – 15:30 | **(Parallel) Workshops**

Interactive exchange between hosting partners and expert groups along the following themes:

### **Theme 1: Green Transition Handbook**

‘Green transition handbook’ best practices presented. Discussion on implementation.

Presenters/facilitators:

[Ilona Mansikka](#) Head of Regional planning, Helsinki Uusimaa Region

[Alpo Tani](#) Climate Change mitigation specialist, City of Helsinki

[Petra Ståhl](#), Mayor, City of Lohja

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The session will focus on the newly completed Green Transition Handbook, developed by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council through two years of collaboration with stakeholders across the region, from business and industry to nature conservation. The handbook examines how regional spatial planning can support the green transition in a rapidly growing metropolitan area by reconciling the land-use needs of green transition projects with other land uses and environmental values. Featuring real-world practices, the session invites Metrex expert groups from European city regions to reflect, share insights, and co-create solutions. Through expert dialogue, the session explores how regional planning can accelerate the green transition, strengthen collaboration, and inspire more effective approaches.

### **Preparatory material**

Please read through the materials shared by the Helsinki Team to prepare for your participation in this workshop session

> [Green Transition Handbook](#)

> [Workshop - Introduction](#)

> [Workshop 1 - detailed information & questions](#)

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## Theme 2: Strategic urban planning of sustainable infrastructure. Case: Crown Bridges, Helsinki

Presenters/facilitators:

[Niko Setälä](#), Team Manager in public transport and transport system planning, City of Helsinki

[Heikki Salmikivi](#), Head of unit in strategic planning, City of Helsinki

The session will explain the targets and the long-term strategic commitment behind the recently completed Crown Bridge project in Helsinki. The new bridge connection is a major change in the city's urban structure from several viewpoints, and these will be introduced in the presentation. Presentation will be followed by a discussion about the case and questions presented by Expert Group members.

### Preparatory material

Please read through the materials shared by the Helsinki Team to prepare for your participation in this workshop session

> [Workshop - Introduction](#)

> [Workshop 2 - detailed information & questions](#)

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Free time

15.30 – 16:30 | **MC meeting**

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16.45 | Delegates arrive at the Empire Hall

17:00-18:00 | **Welcome Reception** kindly offered by the City of Helsinki  
Venue: Empire Hall (by the Senate Square)

Address: Aleksanterinkatu 20/[Aleksandersgatan 20](#), 00170 Helsinki

Registration required.

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17:00 | **Official Welcome**

with [Johanna Laisaari](#), Deputy Mayor of Urban Environment, City of Helsinki

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**Tuija Telén**, Helsinki Uusimaa Regional Council

**Tommi Fred**, Helsinki Region Environmental Services (HSY)

Walk to the pier (about 5 min)

18:30-21:00 | **BOAT CRUISE**, new seafront development areas

Meeting point: Market square, in front of the City Hall (departure / arrival)

## Thursday 11 June – Helsinki CONFERENCE DAY & SAUNA, CONFERENCE DINNER

Venue: Maijansali, Oodi Central Library

(<https://oodihelsinki.fi/en/>)

Address: Töölönlahdenkatu 4, 00100 Helsinki

### 09.00 | Registration and Welcome Coffee

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### 9.30 - 9:45 | Official Opening

**Marco Griguolo**, METREX President

**Peter Agh**, Secretary General

Chair of the day: **Peter Agh**, METREX Secretary General

### Introduction to the Region and to the Theme by the hosts

9:45 – 10:05 | Orientation to the Region and the City of Helsinki

- **Mari Siivola**, Regional Planning Director in Helsinki Uusimaa Regional Council
- **Ville Lehmuskoski**, Executive Director of the Urban Environment Division, City of Helsinki

10:05 – 10:20 | Regional data supporting sustainable regional and city planning with **Miliza Ryöti**, Senior specialist, Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority HSY

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Since 2012, HSY has supported integrated land use, housing, and transport planning by providing monitoring data for the Helsinki region's MAL agreements. The presentation also highlights HSY's environmental data—from air quality to greenhouse gas emissions and the circular economy—as well as geographic information on the built environment and land cover.

10:20 – 10:50 | [Keynote Speaker Ville Lähde](#), senior researcher, BIOS Research Unit

### **Understanding the Polycrisis: Environmental Limits and the Sustainability Transition**

Ville Lähde is a Finnish environmental researcher and non-fiction author whose work focuses on resource scarcity, environmental limits, and systemic change. As a senior researcher at the interdisciplinary BIOS Research Unit, he bridges philosophical analysis and sustainability research.

In his keynote, Lähde explores the dynamics of the polycrisis and highlights the necessity of a deliberate, cross-sectoral sustainability transition that enables societies to maintain well-being while operating within planetary boundaries.

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10:50 – 11:20 | break

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11:20 – 11:50 | **Sustainable urban development in the City of Helsinki**  
Keynote Speakers include:

[Alpo Tani](#), Climate change mitigation specialist, City of Helsinki  
[Heidi Huvila](#), Senior sustainability specialist, City of Helsinki

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City of Helsinki has been recognized as one of the sustainability benchmark cities. In Helsinki climate emissions have been declining and social sustainability has been considered as one key driver in cities operations. On the other hand, it is clear that city is far from being ready with its sustainability work and for that reason, the urban environment department has prepared a new strategic framework that takes better into account both planetary boundaries and the social foundation of good urban life.

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11:50 – 12:40 | **Outcomes of Peer Review process on the Green Transition Regional Land Use Plan / Helsinki Uusimaa Regional Council**

Moderators: [Ilona Mansikka](#), [Heidi Koponen](#)

Participants: [Helsinki-Uusimaa Region](#) (Finland), [Gothenburg Regional Association](#) (Sweden), [Harjumaa Omavalitsuste Liit](#) (Estonia), [Oslo City Hall](#) (Norway), [Riga City Council](#) (Latvia), and [Stockholm Region](#) (Sweden)

This peer review session presents the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Land Use Plan draft “VISIO – Innovative Green Transition” through an interactive exchange with METREX colleagues from the Baltic Sea region. The session focuses particularly on assessing the plan’s cross-cutting themes, including climate resilience, security, fairness, and innovativeness, while exploring regional planning solutions for advancing the green transition. The aim is to encourage peer learning, share good practices and development challenges, inspire new approaches, and strengthen professional networks for more impactful regional planning across Europe.

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12:40 – 12:45 | short break

12:45– 13:15 | Wrap-up panel discussion

Moderator: [Peter Agh](#), Secretary General of METREX

Panelists include:

- Ms. [Pia Tynys](#), Chief of Sustainability at the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, FI
- [Dagmar Keim](#), City of Amsterdam, NL
- [Claire Boisset](#), Geographer-urban planner, Delegate for environmental transitions and territorial resilience, Urbalyon, FR

13:15 – 14:15 | Lunch (& chance to explore the building and the Park)

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14:15 – 15:10 | **Exemplary cases & discussion**

Moderator: [Peter Agh](#), Secretary General of METREX

- [Łukasz Medeksza](#), City of Wrocław, PL

The Polish city of Wrocław has been implementing its own ambitious blue&green policies for nearly 10 years. And it has achieved many tangible results in the fields of decarbonisation, reducing air pollution, and improving the water management system. How does a growing economy of a Central European metropolitan city on the rise transform into strengthening resilience, greening the urban environment, and adapting to climate change? How does it use its strategies and structures to achieve such goals? What are its ambitions as a participant in the EU Mission of Neutral and Smart Cities?

- [Daniele Zucchelli](#), Metropolitan City of Milan, IT

**Facing Polycrisis Enriching Metropolitan Governance**

In the context of today's polycrisis, the Metropolitan City of Milan presents a metropolitan governance good practice focused on addressing interconnected sustainability challenges through its role in local economic development. The initiative strengthens decision-making through data-driven analysis and a laboratory-based approach to knowledge co-creation with public and private territorial stakeholders.

Developed at the metropolitan scale, the practice combines strategic dialogue, shared vision-building and information services to support business resilience, address economic vulnerabilities and valorise supra-municipal identities and territorial vocations. It is further reinforced by the update of the 2006 OECD Territorial Review, implemented through an ongoing territorial scan and aligned with existing planning and sustainability frameworks. In collaboration with universities and research centres, the initiative foresees three interconnected working groups – operational, steering and strategic – to support analysis, co-creation and supra-municipal projects. It highlights the metropolitan scale as a key arena for transforming territorial complexity into sustainable development opportunities.

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- **R-map EU project** with [Efstratios Stylianidis](#), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and R-map project coordinator, and [José Ferreira](#), Policy specialist and R-map coordinator for METREX  
(5 min video + 10 min in-person presentation)

15:10 – 15:30 | **Keynote speaker Martin Aarts**, ‘The Transformation of Great European Cities’

Martin Aarts, former head of urban planning, devoted his professional life to the transformation of Rotterdam for over three decades. He participated in many European transurban networks, advised several European cities on their urban agenda, and teaches at the academies of architecture in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. His book ‘The Transformation of Great European Cities’. The birth of a new urban era’ will be presented and discussed from a political perspective

15:30 – 16:00 | **Panel discussion** (leadership aspects to it)

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- [Marco Griguolo](#), President of METREX
- [Sandeep Shingadia](#), Vice-President of METREX
- Metropolitan City of Rome

16:00 - 16:10 | **Wrap-up and Close of the day**

**17:00 – 23:00 Evening Program with Dinner and Sauna Option**

Venue: Uunisaari Island

Address: Pohjoinen Uunisaari 2, 00140 Helsinki

<https://www.uunisaari.fi/en/island-of-uunisaari/#saapuminen>

Ferry to and from Uunisaari leaves non-stop between Kompassitori and Uunisaaren yhteysaluslaituri, the last ferry to the mainland at 23.15.

17:00 – 19:30 | **Pre-Dinner Chill Out (with Optional Sauna) in Uunisaari Island**

[Uunisaari | Unique maritime atmosphere](#)

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On the Uunisaari Island, participants are welcome to relax after a long day. There is a terrace, an indoor space, a bar, and beautiful maritime nature.

For those interested in trying out the Finnish Sauna, there are 2 saunas on the site. Sauna Instructions:

- [Sauna | Uunisaari](#)
- Pre-registration is required/preferred.
- There are two separate saunas available. Each sauna has a maximum capacity of 15-20 persons at a time.
- Both saunas are booked for a three-hour time slot to ensure that everyone who wishes to use the sauna has sufficient time to do so. (On average, one sauna session lasts approximately 30 –60min minutes per person.)
- Guests will wear a swimsuit (bring your own) in the sauna and in the showers. There is also an opportunity to swim in the sea.

Guests who prefer not to use the sauna are welcome to relax on the terrace or in the bar and the restaurant or walk freely around the island. There is also a nice beach.

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Please arrive on the Island latest to 19.30 for dinner.

**19:00 - 19:30 | METREX at 30 – Looking Back, Looking Forward**

A relaxed fireside-style conversation with honorary members [Irma Karjalainen](#) and [Douglas Gordon](#), reflecting on memorable moments, friendships, conferences and lessons learned from three decades of METREX, while exploring the future of metropolitan cooperation in Europe. The session offers a unique look at the people and ideas that have shaped the network over the past three decades—and what may lie ahead.

**19:30 – 23:00 | Conference Dinner** in Uunisaari Island

<https://www.uunisaari.fi/en/restaurant-cafe/>

Last ferry to mainland: 23.00 from Uunisaaren yhteysaluslaituri to Kompassitori.

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Friday 12 June  
CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE WITH DISCUSSION  
AROUND THE FUTURE OF METREX, GA, EXCURSIONS

*Venue: Urban Environment Building, City of Helsinki*  
*Address: Työpajankatu 8 / [Verkstadsgatan 8](#), 00580 Helsinki*

08:30 – 9:00 Registration and Welcome

09:00 – 9:30 | METREX General Assembly (Members only)

09:30 – 11:00 | Discussion on the future of METREX

Collective discussion on the future of METREX, including an announcement marking the 30th anniversary, wrap-up, and closing.

11:00 - 12:00 | pop-in/pop-out program

*Venue: Cave-room (in the Urban Environment Building, right next to the Auditorium)*

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**Low Airspace planning / Drone logistics demo**

Presenters:

[Christina Suomi](#), Project Director of City Aviation, City of Helsinki  
[Jukka Keski-Jaskari](#), Senior Aviation Specialist, City of Helsinki

Helsinki is preparing for the air traffic of the future with the City Aviation project (formerly known as the U-space project). This long-term development project aims to build a clear picture for the City of how the evolving aviation will affect the city structure, safety, environment, and services. The project will produce recommendations for planning urban air mobility and anticipating space needs. Welcome to the demo session in which principles of coming city aviation will be presented in a 3D environment.

12:00 –13:00 | Lunch

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Venue: Restaurant Kellohalli, address Työpajankatu 2 / Verkstadsgatan 2

13:00 – 15:30 | **Excursions**

**Option 1: City Tour** (urban walk)

**Option 2: Bus Tour** (regional sightseeing)

(This second option includes a stop by the airport)

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### Option 1: City Tour — urban walk

Departure location: **Kymp House at 13:30**

The City Tour will focus on discovering and learning about the developing district of **Kalatatama**, one of the **City of Helsinki's major urban development areas**.

Kalatatama is a former container harbour. Its transformation into a new city district was made possible by relocating harbour operations to Vuosaari, approximately 12 kilometres east of the city centre.

Today, **Kalatatama** offers dense urban housing close to services and public transport. The area benefits from excellent connections in several directions. The sea is a constant presence: from Kalatatama, it is possible to walk across **Isoisänsilta Bridge** to reach the Mustikkamaa recreational area, or to walk, cycle or take the tram across the bay to Kruunuvuorenranta, another major development area.

Once construction is completed, a six-kilometre coastal route will run along the shores of Kalatatama.

During the City Tour, we will walk from the Urban Environment House to the Kalatatama district and explore some of the area's most distinctive features. One particularly topical and **important development site is the Hanasaari power plant**. Once a critical part of Helsinki's energy infrastructure, the site has now been freed for new uses following the closure of fossil fuel-based combined heat and power production.

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4 June 2026

Learn more about Kalasatama: [Kalasatama | City of Helsinki](#)

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## Option 2: Regional Bus Tour

Departure: **Kymp House at 13:30**

A regional sightseeing tour across the Helsinki metropolitan area, including a stop at Helsinki–Vantaa Airport.

The Regional Bus Tour departs from Kymp House at 13:30 and explores key metropolitan planning themes, including urban development, housing, cultural landscapes, nature conservation, infrastructure, energy systems, ecological networks, and transit-oriented development.

The route includes areas such as **Kalasatama, Arabianranta, Vanhankaupunginlahti, Viikinmäki, Hakunila, Sotunki, Kuusijärvi, Hanaböle, Tikkurila and Aviapolis**. A short walk and coffee break will take place at Kuusijärvi.

The bus will stop at **Helsinki–Vantaa Airport** at around 16:00 for participants leaving from the airport. The tour will then continue back to central Helsinki, ending near Kiasma at approximately 17:00.

### Schedule

13:30 Departure from Kymp-house

- urban development and housing in Kalasatama and Arabianranta;
- cultural landscapes and nature conservation in Vanhankaupunginkoski and Vanhankaupunginlahti;
- metropolitan infrastructure, including the Viikinmäki wastewater treatment plant, waste-to-energy facilities and thermal energy storage;
- urban development and landscape protection in Hakunila, Sotunki and Hanaböle;

14:20–15:00 **Kuusijärvi, Walk and coffee break**

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- ecological networks, nature-positive planning and ecological compensation at Kuusijärvi, where there will be a short walk and coffee break;

15:15–15:45 **Tikkurila, Walk in the new city centre**

- transit-oriented development and urban densification in Tikkurila;
- airport-city development, business districts and nature-based stormwater management in Aviapolis.

16:00 Helsinki – Vantaa Airport

- **Kartanonkoski and Tammisto**  
The bus will stop at Helsinki–Vantaa Airport at approximately 16:00, allowing participants with flights to leave the tour there.

The tour will then continue back towards central Helsinki, passing through Kartanonkoski and Tammisto, and will end near **Kiasma at approximately 17:00.**

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**Note: 12th June Helsinki Day – lots of nice happenings around the city!**

Helsinki Day is a city-wide festival for everyone!

Helsinki's birthday is traditionally marked on 12 June, when the city is packed with a wide range of free-of-charge events organised by various local associations, companies, clubs, organisations and active residents. Helsinki Day has been celebrated since 1959.

The Helsinki Day programme includes big and small events, musical performances, the performing arts, guided tours, exhibitions, open doors, activities for kids and also fun for older people. Helsinki Day traditions include morning coffees with the mayor and the presentations of the City Slang Man and Woman of the Year, Sports Person of the Year and Helsinki Day Baby. Helsinki Day has become a major annual festival that residents eagerly look forward to and actively participate in.

<https://helsinkiiva.fi/en/>