



aalborgplus10



# STATUS OF SUSTAINABILITY IN LAHTI 2009

## AALBORG COMMITMENTS BASELINE REVIEW

# LAHTI

## FOREWORD

In conjunction, globalisation of the economy and technological development more and more influence our way of taking care of our municipal governance. We face major challenges: improving the employment rate in the expertise economy, preventing poverty and social exclusion, ensuring effective environmental protection measures, reducing our ecological footprint, responding to changes in the population structure, and managing cultural diversity.

Municipalities have a central position as warrantors of sustainable development. At the same time, we need to respond to the challenges together with other administrative levels. This role requires an effective and comprehensive municipal decision-making process as well as standardisation of environmental, social, cultural and financial objectives. We must simultaneously ensure that our striving to improve the local quality of life will not endanger the quality of life of the future generations or other countries.

The legislative background for sustainable development work in Finn-

ish municipalities is based on laws and regulations which guide the activities of municipalities and their service offerings. The first section of the Finnish Municipalities Act specifies the general operational principle of a municipality as:

“(...) The municipality shall strive to promote the wellbeing of its residents and sustainable development within its region...”. Section 20 of the Constitution of Finland obligates municipalities to take into account ecological sustainability: “(...) Nature and its biodiversity, the environment and the national heritage are the responsibility of everyone. The public authorities shall endeavour to guarantee for everyone the right to a healthy environment and for everyone the possibility to influence the decisions that concern their own living environment. (...)”.

The Aalborg Commitments are an agreement document regarding sustainability for local administration. So far, more than 600 organisations all around Europe have signed the Aalborg Commitments. This report is a self-evaluation review of officials in Lahti about

the current status of sustainable development in Lahti. The purpose of this baseline review was not agreeing on any local objectives promoting sustainability, not to mention the multitude of measures required to improve the city’s sustainability work. Based on the baseline review, the work will be continued by setting objectives and by scheduling their implementation.

The baseline review drafting process and the atmosphere when working were marked by values connected to sustainability, such as openness, honesty, and the willingness to change and to develop. When working, it was considered self-evident that it is not wise to try to cover up weaknesses or problems, or strive to improve the city’s image.

The comprehensive involvement in sustainability issues of personnel in different units of the city organisation during the survey period offers a good background for the next stage, a sustainability agenda and programme of measures (i.e., target setting).

## AALBORG COMMITMENTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LAHTI

The concept of sustainable development or sustainability was first introduced in the late 1980's, and the general public became aware of it after the global United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The international plan of action for sustainability, Agenda 21, was approved in Rio de Janeiro. The objective of the plan is to secure good and equal living opportunities for current and future generations. In order to reach this objective, we need to implement continuous, controlled and guided changes globally, locally and regionally.

The City of Lahti has been pursuing sustainable development at the local level from the very beginning. In 1994, Lahti was one of the European municipalities which convened in the City of Aalborg in Denmark to refine the contents of the Rio de Janeiro Agenda so so that they would be more applicable to municipalities. The result of the meeting was the Aalborg Charter in which the municipalities stated that the prevailing development would not guarantee ecological sustainability, or social,

cultural or financial sustainability. The Aalborg Charter was proof that the municipalities wanted to move from a non-sustainable approach to a sustainable one. However, a change could not be achieved by merely drafting a charter; instead, some concrete actions would be necessary. In 2004, after ten years of cooperation, the European municipalities reconvened in Aalborg to sign fifty commitments regarding sustainability, the Aalborg Commitments. The commitments aim at including the sustainability viewpoint in all activities and decision-making of municipalities, and promote the sustainability work already done by the municipalities. The Lahti City Council signed the Aalborg Commitments in October 2007.

The first operational stage regarding the Aalborg Commitments is studying what is the status of the sustainability work in the municipality at present. This stage is called the baseline review. From the very beginning, the City of Lahti wanted to integrate the work pertaining to the Aalborg Commitments as part of the city's already existing structures and activities. Thus, the prepara-

tions of the baseline review took place as part of a Wellbeing Report implemented in Lahti.

In May 2008, the Environmental Steering Committee of the Lahti City Region named the Lahti Region Environmental Service (LSYP) to coordinate the baseline review. An Aalborg Committee was named based on an initiative of LSYP. Officials from different parts of the city organisation were named as the representatives. The members of the committee are listed in Appendix 2.

The baseline review was implemented as a self-assessment procedure guided by the committee. First, the committee performed a self-assessment on implementation of the Aalborg Commitments in Lahti. The preliminary assessment was used as the initial data in a baseline review questionnaire which was sent to 97 representatives of the city organisation selected based on their positions in November 2008. The purpose of the survey was finding out what was the city organisation's own view on implementation of the commitments, and what kind of responsibilities

do the different units of the city organisation consider to have in implementation of the commitments. 31 representatives of the city organisation replied the questionnaire. Despite the relatively low reply percentage, the respondents extensively represented the different sectors and units of the city organisation.

In addition to the self-evaluation, a comparison basis used in the baseline review consists of indicators that are most important from the viewpoint of the commitments. The survey also lists the challenges the representatives of Lahti face when implementing the commitments.

During the entire baseline review stage, the work related to the Aalborg Commitments has been extensively presented to the different sectors and units of the city, aiming at promoting them in participating in the promotion of sustainability.

It was decided to name the baseline review report “Status of Sustainability in Lahti”. The idea is for the baseline review not to remain as a

separate single report but for it to be included in a continuous process, the roadmap of sustainability (Figure 1). This report cannot yet be considered as a fully comprehensive assessment of the status of sustainability in Lahti. It does, however, offer a good basis for assessing sustainability and developing reporting practices,

The next stage in the process of the Aalborg Commitments is drawing up an agenda and programme of measures to specify how sustainability can best be promoted in Lahti, taking into account the local special characteristics.

Figure 1



## INSTRUCTIONS ON READING THE REPORT

**The Aalborg Commitments are divided into ten themes. Each theme includes five separate commitments. In this report, each theme is presented on a double page. The commitments are not reviewed one by one in the actual report part; instead, all the commitments are listed at the end of the report in Appendix 1.**

The chapter **Our commitments** describes in general the issues in which the city commits based on each theme. It does not describe the status in Lahti; instead, it offers a frame of reference as to what is the desirable status.

The chapter **City organisation's view on current status** presents the results of the baseline review implemented as a self-assessment. The results are shown in this report in a graphical format as running figures. The stage of the runner describes how well the commitments have been implemented:



**Just starting**



**At the initial acceleration phase**



**In full speed**

The number of runners describes how much responsibility the city organisation

has assumed for the implementation of the issue in question based on the self-assessment (1=only a few parties have assumed responsibility, 5=plenty of parties have assumed responsibility). The results included in this report are compilations of the results gained for the individual commitments in each theme. The results of all the commitments are included in Appendix 1.

The chapter **Indicators and what they tell us** offers a comparison basis for the self-assessment. Indicators most important from the viewpoint of the commitments have been selected. Other criteria for the indicator selection were that the information had to be up-to-date, and that the selections made had to enable comparison with other municipalities.

The chapter **Development challenges** points out the views of the respondents and the committee on challenges which Lahti faces when implementing the Aalborg Commitments.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE CITY OF LAHTI

The residents of the municipality can participate in decision-making concerning their life and living environment.

JOINT LIABILITY OPENNESS PARTICIPATION

The city is a popular employer with skilled, professional personnel who have willingness to develop.

SUSTAINABILITY EXPERTISE LEADERSHIP

The operations of the city are developed well, and investments and procurements are made according to the principles of sustainable development.

ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY ECO-EFFICIENCY

The city encourages and guides residents and other actors to act in an environmentally friendly manner.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY INTANGIBILITY

Lahti is a growing, vital city.

CREATIVITY DIVERSITY

A dense, sustainable community structure and excellent public transportation system are in place and in compliance with the sustainability principles.

CLOSENESS EQUALITY VITALITY

The city provides the residents the preconditions needed for wellbeing.

RELIABILITY HUMAN SCALE

The finances of the city are balanced in the long term.

VERSATILITY LOCAL APPROACH

The city supports communality and the activities of communities.

COEXISTENCE UNITY

Lahti's greenhouse gas emissions are halved from the 1990 level by the end of the year 2025.

GLOBAL LIABILITY PERSEVERANCE

# AALBORG COMMITMENTS

## 1. Governance

We are committed to energising our decision-making processes through increased participatory democracy.

## 2. Local management towards sustainability

We are committed to implementing effective management cycles, from formulation through implementation to evaluation.

## 3. Natural common goods

We are committed to fully assuming our responsibility to protect, to preserve, and to ensure equitable access to natural common goods.

## 4. Responsible consumption and lifestyle choices

We are committed to adopting and facilitating the prudent and efficient use of resources and to encouraging sustainable consumption and production.

## 5. Planning and design

We are committed to a strategic role for urban planning and design in addressing environmental, social, economic, health and cultural issues for the benefit of all.

## 6. Better mobility, less traffic

We recognise the interdependence of transport, health and environment, and are committed to strongly promoting sustainable mobility choices.

## 7. Local action for health

We are committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

## 8. Vibrant and sustainable local economy

We are committed to creating and ensuring a vibrant local economy that gives access to employment without damaging the environment.

## 9. Social equality and justice

We are committed to securing inclusive and supportive communities.

## 10. Local to global

We are committed to assuming our global responsibility for peace, justice, equality, sustainable development and climate protection.

# GOVERNANCE

1

## **Our commitments**

As an administrative unit, the city will create a specific sustainability vision, and set ambitious goals to reach it. The city will discuss the vision openly and transparently to offer interactive participation means. The city will show leadership and aspire at an extensive general understanding of the objectives. The city will favour long-term benefits over short-term ones in promotion of sustainability.

## **City organisation's view on current status**

The sustainability criteria have been integrated in the administrative structures, and in several respects they create a logical chain from the city strategy

to documents guiding the activities of different units. Some of the city's activities may remain outside of this chain, such as those implemented by groups consisting of decision-makers and officials. The city's actions towards improving participation have been appropriate but not sufficiently comprehensive as of yet. Thus, some of the parties active in the community feel that they are left outside of the decision-making process. Different units feel very much responsible for the issue, and main responsibilities have also been identified.

## **Indicators and what they tell us**

Sustainability has been taken into account in the strategy of the City of Lahti, in a separate Lahti Region Environ-



mental Strategy, and in the strategies of several units. Participation and openness of decision-making processes are mainly monitored by using questionnaires. Based on the results, the residents' opportunity to obtain information and influence decision-making are poorer than average in Lahti when compared to several comparison municipalities.

The city has aimed at improving the opportunities to participate and influence by means of a variety of projects but the activities have often died out after the project period. The number of informative meetings has been decreasing in all sectors<sup>2</sup>, whereas communication investments have been directed towards online communications.

## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

### Content-related challenges:

Finishing the process of presenting sustainability at the strategic level and transforming it into actions.

Further improving sustainability definitions and reaching a consensus as to the content of the sustainability definitions.

Prioritising and evaluating focus points for planning periods.

Developing the impact assessment of decisionmaking and assessing it already at the preparation stage instead of after it.

### Organisational challenges:

Implementing extensive division of responsibility among all the members of the administration, and comprehensive connections up to the action level in sustainability management; thus far, sustainability has been considered an issue for which the environmental sector is responsible.

Taking into account the fact that sustainable solutions often require a process review exceeding unit and sector borders, which is a new approach for municipal sector management.

Expanding the neighbourhood and official trustee activities also to other administrative branches.

Promoting interaction and discussion between units.

Establishing shared rules of the game and reviewing issues in inter-municipal cooperation.

# LOCAL MANAGEMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

## 2

### **Our commitments**

The city will continue the work in line with Local Agenda 21, especially stressing the creation of a good and sustainable administrative framework. This means, for example, defining local sustainability in cooperation by decision-makers, officials and other interested parties. Indicators that can be used to monitor the development of sustainability will be created. The city will ensure that the sustainability principles cover and reach the entire city organisation, and also that they will be taken into account in all decision-making processes. The sustainability criteria will also control allocation of resources.

### **City organisation's view on current status**

Lahti has been involved in long-term local agenda work and also strived to continuously respond to new sustain-

ability challenges by being influential in global networks, for example. Sustainability criteria have been taken into account in management systems but they have not been rooted in all areas of decision-making processes. Many people feel responsible for the issue but the main responsibility is not always recognised. The city organisation has understood that the management of sustainability should be part of the activity of the entire city organisation. The fact that there is no party who carries the main responsibility hinders coordination and integration.

### **Indicators and what they tell us**

Several projects aiming at promoting sustainability have been implemented in Lahti. Lahti has been a member of the ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability network since 1993, and the city has also actively participated in other networks promoting sustainability. The City Council signed the Aalborg Commitments in 2007. After that time, a committee representing the entire city organisation has implemented a process in which the commitments are monitored, assessed and implemented.

Some sustainability management indicators have been taken into account in other commitment themes, such as procurement-related indicators with regard to theme 4.





## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

### **Content-related challenges:**

Adding also longer-term visions to the goal-settings of management systems.

Including sustainability definitions as part of management systems in each municipal sector.

Revising the management indicators so that they will more clearly take into account the sustainability viewpoint.

Developing new management indicators together with other municipalities included in the Aalborg Commitments network.

Defining global responsibility and including such declarations in strategy documents.

Making impact assessments when preparing decisions more extensive and more comprehensive so that all alternatives will be taken into account.

### **Organisational challenges:**

Creating municipal sector management systems that support sustainable development.

Adding process management to support administrative sector management.

Expanding management responsibilities.

Improving openness in management.

Naming a party responsible for coordination of sustainability (such as a committee) within the city organisation.

## NATURAL COMMON GOODS

3

### Our commitments

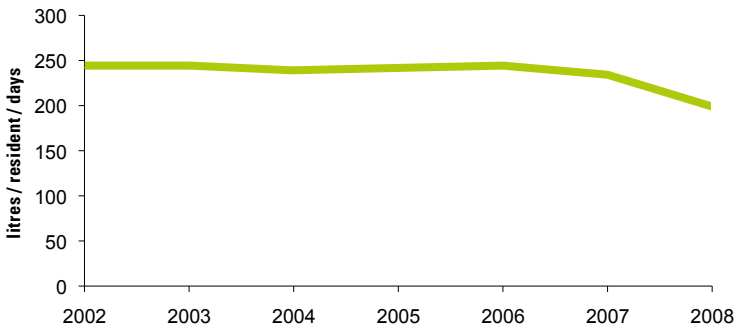
The city commits to sustainable and fair utilisation of natural resources, and to promoting their protection. In energy production, this means reducing the energy consumption level and increasing the share of renewable energy. The pollutant load to waterways and groundwater will be reduced and water

consumption will be decreased. Biodiversity will be increased and the quality of soil will be improved so that the nature's own processes will be more effective. The city will show leadership and encourage the residents and other parties to use natural resources sustainably.

### City organisation's view on current status

The city has implemented measures to improve energy efficiency but the measures have not been very extensive so far. People deem it difficult to influence energy generation forms. Plenty of investments in taking care of the waterways have been implemented but pressures deriving from pollutant loads still exist. All risks pertaining to groundwater have not been successfully eliminated.

### WATER CONSUMPTION IN LAHTI 2002–2008



*The water consumption of the residents of Lahti is slightly decreasing (Lahti Region Environmental Report).*



Investments in improving the air quality have also been made but people in the city organisation feel that the city is unable to influence a major part of the pollutant discharge. There are plenty of parties assuming responsibility but main responsibility is not recognised.

### **Indicators and what they tell us**

The use of renewable fuels and energy waste in energy production have increased as waste sorting systems have been developed. The quality of surface waters and groundwater is being monitored. The region's wastewater treatment plans comply with the treatment requirements included in their permit conditions.<sup>2</sup> Almost all residents of Lahti are satisfied with the quality of drinking water<sup>3</sup>, and the water for household consumption in Lahti

meets all the posed quality requirements. More than a fourth of the current groundwater extraction capacity, is not suitable for household consumption. Water consumption per resident in Lahti has steadily decreased. Only a little over three per cent of the surface area of Lahti is protected by virtue of the Nature Conservation Act.<sup>2</sup>

In average, the residents of Lahti are more satisfied with the level of nature protection in the city than the residents of the comparison cities. The urban forests of Lahti have been awarded an FSC certificate guaranteeing sustainable forestry. Furthermore, recreational and protection values are stressed when taking care of the urban forests. These objectives also enable protection of biodiversity. In general, the air quality in downtown Lahti is good.

## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Stopping the increase of energy consumption and decreasing the consumption levels.

Increasing the amount of other renewable energy production measures in addition to renewable fuels.

Ensuring the natural and recreational values of waterways, and thus offering proper preconditions for business.

Dimensioning the water and sewer network to a specific water consumption level, in which case a major reduction in consumption may cause blockages in the pipelines.

Compacting the urban structure so that groundwater protection measures will not be endangered, and so that scenic values and the good status of nature sites and traditional biotopes will be retained.

Creating a green area network that is as unified as possible and that extends as close to the downtown area as possible.

Designing and constructing green areas that better promote biodiversity and wellbeing of people.

## RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES

### 4

#### Our commitments

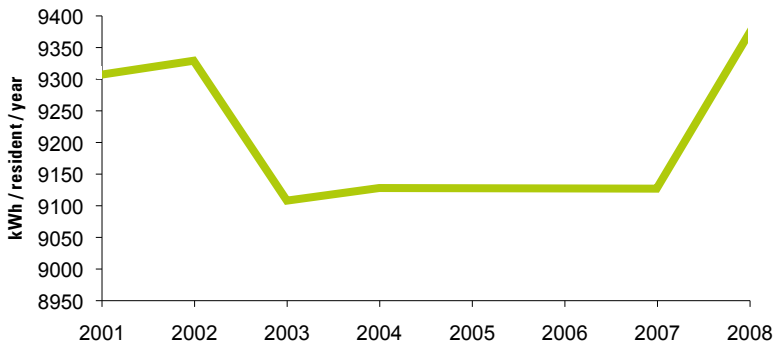
The city commits to sustainable and responsible consumption which takes into account the reduction of environmental loads during the entire consumption lifecycle. Environmentally certified products or products that have been otherwise proven sustainable will be favoured in procurement. The city commits to improving the material and energy efficiency of its activities, encouraging its residents and other parties towards the same goal. Generation

of waste will be reduced, its recycling will be increased, and final disposal of waste that cannot be utilised will be taken care of using the best practices available.

#### City organisation's view on current status

The city has at its disposal means to reduce the generation of waste. Waste treatment methods have been improved, and best practices have been implemented. The sustainability criteria have been presented and discussed within the city but taking the criteria extensively into account has not been possible as of yet. People consider it difficult to assess the impact of a product or service during its entire lifecycle. Different units feel very much responsible for the issue, and main responsibilities have also been identified.

ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION IN LAHTI 2001–2008



*Electricity consumption in Lahti has not started to decrease. The energy efficiency of electrical devices is continuously improving but the number of electrical devices in use increases at the same time (Lahti Region Environmental Report).*



## Indicators and what they tell us

The utilisation degree of municipal waste has steadily increased in the new millennium. At present, more than half of the waste can be recycled or utilised in energy production. The amount of waste going to landfills from city offices and units has slightly decreased from the late 1990's, as has the amount of municipal waste to be disposed of at a landfill (amount of waste / resident in kilograms).<sup>2</sup> Most of the residents of Lahti are satisfied with the recycling activities of the region.<sup>3</sup> Consumption of heating energy in the city's facilities has slightly decreased but no major change in electricity consumption has occurred. The region's total electricity consumption level per resident has been increasing by a couple of percentage units each year. Environmental viewpoints are taken into account in approximately ten per cent of the city's

procurement measures.<sup>2</sup> The number of participants in environmental education offered to children and the youth have remained at the same level as in the past few years. The number of residents reached by the city's environmental counselling has been slightly increasing. The city has strived to improve the effectiveness of its energy utilisation based on an energy and material efficiency agreement signed with the Council of State.



## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Ensuring the resources of proactive sustainability counselling.

Committing officials preparing procurement measures in taking into account the environmental viewpoint.

Monitoring environmentally friendly procurement and developing indicators.

Including carbon footprint in the procurement criteria.

Committing staff to using the Eco-Guide.

Ensuring opportunities to improve cost monitoring and energy use as the building stock is renewed.

Ensuring more effective recycling opportunities in structural elements of buildings.

## PLANNING AND DESIGN

### 5

#### **Our commitments**

The city aspires to guarantee its residents a healthy environment and an urban structure that is functional from every sustainability viewpoint.

This means, for example, keeping the urban structure so concise that services are available by foot or bicycle, or at least by using public transport. Spreading of settlement in green areas will be strictly limited. Abandoned or otherwise unfavourable areas will be utilised before any new constructed areas are created. By means of regional cooperation, unfavourable competition between municipalities in placement of industrial activities etc., will be prevented. The lifecycle of buildings will be

prolonged, and the retention of culturally and architecturally valuable buildings and areas will be ensured. The sustainability principle will be included as a major viewpoint in all new construction and renovation of buildings whenever possible.

#### **City organisation's view on current status**

The city has successfully utilised old unfavourable areas, such as old industrial areas. Opportunities for people to live in the downtown area have been improved, and several suburban development projects have been implemented. The city has been unable to prevent mould and other condition-related damage of some buildings. It has not been possible to address the criteria of design and construction control in such a manner that the sustainability principles would have been realised.

There are not many parties who assume responsibility for the issue, and main responsibility has not always been recognised. This may suggest that in many parts of the city organisation, the



employees do not recognize the participation in city planning and design as being part of their own work.

### **Indicators and what they tell us**

The number of valuable areas, buildings and plots of land protected by virtue of zoning regulations is slightly increasing. Old industrial areas have also been continuously converted to new usage. The share of plots of land located in noise disturbance areas when compared to all land areas has decreased

over the past five years.<sup>2</sup> Approximately half of the residents are satisfied with the location of residential areas, jobs and services in Lahti. This is close to the average satisfaction level in the comparison cities.<sup>3</sup> The residents of Lahti consider the amenity of residential areas to be the most important indicator when assessing the functionality of city planning, and 91% of the residents are fairly or extremely satisfied with this aspect.<sup>4</sup>

## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

### **Content-related challenges:**

Defining sustainability locally in urban environment design.

Developing indicators and regular monitoring activities for the development of abandoned and unfavourable areas as well as for describing integrity of the urban structure.

Implementing stricter energy efficiency criteria in construction.

Adding more resources in construction control and supervision.

Offering more counselling and expertise in renovation activities.

Promoting the utilisation of old buildings in new ways.

Taking into account the nature of the urban environment when condensing the urban structure (architectural heritage, cityscape, versatility, etc.).

### **Organisational challenges:**

Increasing cooperation within the city organisation in different planning and design stages so that more sustainable solutions will be achieved; such as bringing service network planning closer to city planning.

Developing participative methods for the residents.

Improving the value of design offering comprehensive sustainable solutions in the city organisation, meaning longer term assessments and taking into account the regional viewpoint, for example.

BETTER MOBILITY,  
LESS TRAFFIC

6



### **Our commitments**

The city aspires to implement measures that will satisfy the mobility needs of the residents, businesses and other parties by burdening the environment less than at present. This can be achieved by, for example, favouring public transport, pedestrian and bicycle traffic instead of the use of private cars, by supporting a transfer towards more environmentally friendly modes of transport, and by more effectively stressing the sustainability viewpoint at the design stage.

### **City organisation's view on current status**

The city's investments in walkways and bicycle routes are considered successful. However, the city has not been able to promote the use of public transport to a major extent. The general impression is that it is impossible to prevent some services from transferring away from the downtown area. The rapid change of the urban environment com-

plicates traffic planning since major investments cannot be made at a short notice.

Some of the units of the city organisation assume extensive responsibility for this issue but nobody recognises the main responsibility. People in some units also feel that there is not enough information available to assess the current status in Lahti.

### **Indicators and what they tell us**

The attainability of bus stops in Lahti is better than the average in large cities.<sup>5</sup> Approximately half of the residents feel that public transport is arranged well in Lahti; this is a fairly poor result when compared to the comparison cities. 69% of the residents feel that the city has properly taken care of the safety of vehicular traffic. 62% of the residents of Lahti consider the traffic safety of pedestrians and bicyclers good. This result is better than in most of the comparison cities.<sup>3</sup> Development of traf-



fic in the Lahti region has been similar to that in Finland in general. Longer term estimates show that passenger car traffic volumes and the number of private cars in use will increase while the number of people using public transport will decrease. The number of walkways and bicycle routes slightly increases every year.<sup>2</sup>

Carbon dioxide emissions from traffic are increasing in the long term. On the other hand, nitrogen oxide emissions have decreased since catalysts were introduced.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the increased number of walkways and bicycle routes and the relatively good availability of public transport, the private traffic volume will increase in the future. The city has invested in the availability of public traffic by, for example, installing electronic schedule boards at the

marketplace and in the railway station. In August 2009, several measures to improve public transport, such as discount tickets for different user groups, will be implemented in Lahti.

Renovation of walkways will be supported by means of a separate allocation in 2009. The City of Lahti will draw up a comprehensive and sustainable city traffic plan in connection with the currently ongoing compilation of the city master plan.



## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

### Content-related challenges:

Taking sustainability into account in the city traffic plan to be drafted.

Creating a definition of sustainability for traffic.

More effectively utilising the extensive walkways and bicycle routes by means of high-class maintenance measures, also in the wintertime. Making cycling a favoured local pastime.

### Organisational challenges:

Public traffic is managed by entrepreneurs in Lahti. The city needs to use all measures possible to promote the effective utilisation of public transport.

## LOCAL ACTION FOR HEALTH

# 7

### Our commitments

The city commits to comprehensively promoting the residents' health. In practice, this means effective cooperation between the health sector and other units of the city. The city aspires to continuously gather new information on health-related issues, and actively communicates it to the residents and other interested parties. The city will also effectively utilise this information in different sectors of city planning, for example. The city will engage itself in programme work promoting health and alleviating financial inequality. The city encourages all its associates to promote health by developing a variety of incentives.

### City organisation's view on current status

A general feeling among the city organisation employees is that health can and should be promoted in all activities, also those outside of the healthcare sector. However, the actions towards this goal are still at their early stages, except for education. People feel that there are not sufficiently systematic and influential measures for gathering information and



applying the information in practice.

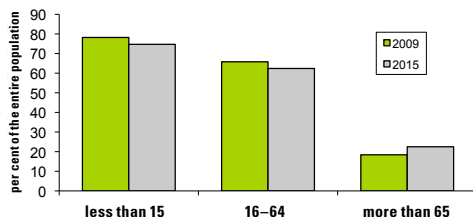
Several units of the city organisation assume responsibility over this issue, which is important taking into account its extensiveness. However, nobody recognises the main responsibility, and this may hinder the coordination and integration of health promotion to some extent.

### Indicators and what they tell us

An annual wellbeing report of Lahti studies wellbeing of different age groups based on several background variables, different social organisations and the individual's opportunities to influence.<sup>5</sup>

Training and employment opportunities significantly influence the total wellbeing of people. Lahti Youth Services have developed measures to support the school attendance of comprehensive school students and assist them in finding further education. In 2008, 485 young people used the special support services.<sup>6</sup> The share of youth who have not obtained student places after comprehensive school among the youth in Lahti has decreased. Permanence of employment relationships and meaningful work are more significant for the

LAHTI POPULATION STRUCTURE FORECAST IN 2009 AND 2015



The share of elderly among the population of Lahti is increasing (Lahti City Statistics Database).

wellbeing of people living in Lahti than for people living in other parts of Päijät-Häme. People consider leisure activities being well-provided in Lahti.<sup>5</sup>

The opportunity of the elderly to live in their own home for as long as possible is considered one aspect of wellbeing. Almost 91% of all residents of Lahti over the age of 75 lived at home in 2007; this is a higher number than in the comparison cities in average. In 2007, 16.9% of all people over the age of 65 received home care allowance support services or were cared for by a relative receiving financial support for it.<sup>5</sup>

18.1% of the population of Lahti live in households whose income level remains below the nation-wide limit for

low-income households. In average, the residents consider their financial status to be satisfactory. The number of homeless people has steadily decreased in the new millennium.<sup>5</sup>

Environmental factors influencing health include, for example, exposure to noise and air pollutants, and also the amenity factors of the living environment. Due to the increased traffic volume, noise has become a more and more serious environmental and health problem in Lahti. 43% of the residents are satisfied with the noise prevention measures implemented in Lahti.<sup>3</sup> Noise is prevented by means of city planning as well as building noise protection barriers along busy traffic routes.

## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Developing incentives aimed at voluntary promotion of health, such as promoting people to walking or cycling to work.

Transferring the focus point from corrective healthcare to preventive work. Prevention of illnesses and injuries is often clearly more affordable than treating them but it requires extensive cooperation and commitment of several parties.

In preventive work, investments in youth work are especially important.

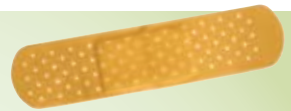
Listening to the young offers new information once the procedure used to offer the young the opportunity to get their voice heard has been established.

Supporting the opportunities of the elderly to choose their own mode of living.

Putting more effort into investing in renovation of the building stock, renovating its structure and targeting measures to the most important sites to remove health hazards of buildings.

Emphasising environmental health and the health of citizens more in procurement and operation, such as avoiding and reducing waste, decreasing energy and water consumption, using proper recycling methods, avoiding chemicals, using MSDSs, implementing ergonomics.

Adding more service planning, setting of objectives and development across organisational administration borders in order to reach a more efficient and comprehensive service system.



## VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY

8

### **Our commitments**

In its part, the city aspires to build and support a vibrant, innovative and ecologically efficient local economy. On one hand, this means supporting a high employment degree and technological innovations by virtue of the EU Lisbon Agenda, and on the other hand ensuring at the local level that the vibrant economy is based on the sustainability principles. Economy will be developed prioritising the long-term benefits in such a manner that natural resources will be sustainably utilised. The city will aspire to create jobs in sustainable sectors, such as environmental expertise and technology, and the city policy and procurement will support the competitive ability of these sectors.

Cooperation to implement good business practices with companies will take place by, for example, promoting the implementation of environmental and quality systems. Furthermore, the city commits to developing and implementing sustainability principles related to the location of businesses.

### **City organisation's view on current status**

The city has succeeded in adopting procedures that will improve and support local employment and establishment of companies in the environmental technology and expertise sectors. Many people feel that not enough information is offered, or the information is not applied in a manner that would enable proper assessment of economical sustainability in Lahti. There are not many parties who assume responsibility for the issue, and main responsibility has not been recognised. This suggests that the city organisation is not yet used to assessing economy from the sustainability viewpoint.





### Indicators and what they tell us

In the past ten years, most indicators describing the economy and employment have been improving in Lahti, such as the GNP as well as the number of employees and entrepreneurs. The improvements have occurred slightly slower than in whole of Finland, however.<sup>7</sup> In 2005, the environmental cluster was selected as the development focus area and future growth sector in Lahti. Thus, the number of environmental businesses, jobs and students places has continuously increased.<sup>2</sup>

## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Conducting discussions on the content of sustainable economic development in Lahti both within the city organisation and more extensively in a manner that includes the entire community.

Studying the opportunities available to favour local entrepreneurs better than now in, for example, procurement (and ensuring that these opportunities are not in conflict with free mobility, equality and non-discrimination principles).

Increasing cooperation with the private sector and third sector in city service production.

Arranging regular events for procurers and suppliers to promote the implementation of sustainable local economy in Lahti.

Developing indicators assessing the sustainability of the local economy and regularly monitoring them.

Promoting sustainable tourism by means of versatile recreational areas and local well-kept route systems as well as related communications.

## SOCIAL EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

9

### **Our commitments**

The city commits to maintaining by its actions equality in general, and to preventing inequality. This means effective programmes to promote a democratic, united, safe and healthy city community. In its service production, the city will ensure that services are extensively and equally available. Furthermore, the city aspires to promote such extensive and equally available services also in the private sector and the third sector.

### **City organisation's view on current status**

The city organisation has implemented programmes to alleviate poverty.

People consider these programmes to



have been influential. Availability and equality of the service supply has been guaranteed in many aspects. People feel that the city has not been able to properly influence the development of residential areas with a versatile residential basis, and no unit assumes main responsibility for this issue. Many units assume responsibility for the issue in general, however, and main responsibility is also recognised.

### **Indicators and what they tell us**

When analysing the employment indicators, Lahti falls short of the other large Finnish cities.<sup>5</sup>

The residents of Lahti consider the current status of educational and cultural services good or satisfactory at the least. The residents of Lahti are more satisfied with the cultural services, in particular, than the residents of the comparison cities.<sup>3</sup>

People consider the opportunity to influence activities of their own residential area important for social participation and wellbeing. Participation in organisational and residential activities is increasing in Lahti.<sup>5</sup> The participation of the youth has been promoted by implementing a model for hearing children and the young, which enables the young to participate in handling of issues important for them.<sup>6</sup>

Indicators describing the safety of the community include property, crime and homicide statistics as well as a nationwide safety barometer. 80% of the residents consider their residential area safe; this is about the same as the average level in the other large cities. The number of property offences in Lahti has remained the same but the number of homicides and health-related offences has slightly increased.<sup>5</sup>

## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Transferring the focus point from corrective efforts to preventive ones.

Drawing up programmes for preventing social exclusion that take into account different age groups.

Reducing group sizes in schools and day-care centres.

Including the residents and the third sector more extensively in the city lead activities, and promoting own liability and shared liability.

Paying more attention in the equality of different traffic user groups.

## LOCAL TO GLOBAL

# 10

### **Our commitments**

The city sees itself as part of the global community and understands the global impact of its own activities. This means, above all, taking comprehensive responsibility for the city's own actions. The city will adopt a strategic long-term approach towards effective prevention of climate change, and will set concrete objectives to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases. In order to reach these objectives, the city will include the environmental protection policy in all of its activities and service production, such as energy production, traffic and city planning, waste management and procurement. In addition, the city will improve the opportunities of other parties to implement more effective environmental protection measures.

### **City organisation's view on current status**

The city has adopted a strategic approach to alleviate climate change but including the climate protection programme in energy, traffic, procurement,

waste, agricultural and forestry policies is still at its early stages. Global cooperation has been promoted but its effectiveness and benefits cannot be fully assessed as of yet. People in some units also feel that there is not enough information available to assess the status in Lahti. Fairly many units assume responsibility for the issue but main responsibility is not recognised.

### **Indicators and what they tell us**

In the long term, the carbon dioxide emissions of energy production and industry in Lahti have decreased. The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from traffic have increased, however.<sup>2</sup> Lahti has in its city strategy committed to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by half from the level of 1990 by the year 2025.<sup>8</sup> Lahti is currently drawing up a climate programme, which will be completed by the end of 2009. Lahti participates in several projects funded by the EU which aim at, for example, promoting global environmental awareness and environmental responsibility.

The global environmental impact of the residents' consumption and emissions can be relatively comparably measured by using the concepts of ecological footprint and carbon footprint. The concept of ecological footprint refers to the size of land needed to cover a resident's current consumption habits, produced waste and its handling. In 2005, the ecological footprint of a



resident of Lahti was 5.13 global hectares. This is close to the average level for Finns. It has been assessed that there are currently 2.1 global hectares of natural resources per person on the globe. Lahti's own natural resources were consumed by the 19th of March in 2005. After this, the residents of Lahti consumed natural resources from other areas.<sup>9</sup>

Carbon footprint measures the amount of greenhouse gases produced per resident. In 2005, the carbon footprint of a resident of Lahti was 8.6 tons CO<sub>2</sub>, which is about the average level for Finns. According to an assessment of the EU, a globally sustainable carbon footprint is less than two tonnes per resident.<sup>9</sup>



## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Effectively transferring in practice the currently prepared city climate programme and the future climate strategy of the region.

Implementing the climate policy as part of the sector-specific action programmes (for example, the master plan and the city traffic plan which are currently being developed).

Exporting the sustainability expertise available in Lahti.

Implementing and developing indicators to assess the greenhouse gas emissions of a variety of actions.

Developing climate training packages.

Thinking and acting both locally and globally. Utilising the opportunities offered by modern technology for the city organisation and other parties to expand their connections outside Finland and increasing cooperation with immigrants in this respect.

Reducing the need for travelling by means of video conferences.

Communications cooperation with different parties and utilising easily available communications methods, such as libraries.

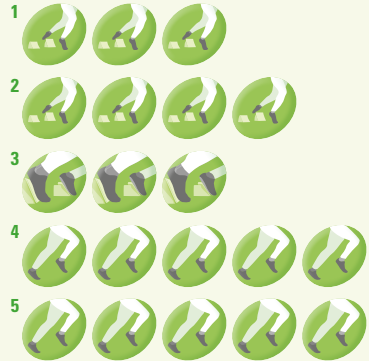


APPENDIX 1  
AALBORG COMMITMENTS  
BASELINE REVIEW  
IN LAHTI: RESULTS

## 1. Governance

**We are committed to energising our decision-making processes through increased participatory democracy. We will therefore work to:**

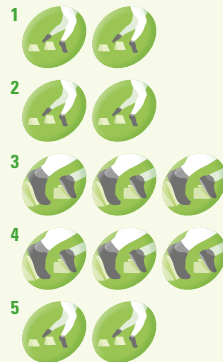
1. further develop a commonly shared long-term vision for a sustainable city or a town.
2. build participation and sustainable development capacity in the local community and municipal administration.
3. invite all sectors of local society to participate effectively in decision-making.
4. make our decisions open, accountable and transparent.
5. cooperate effectively and in partnership with adjoining municipalities, other cities and towns, and other spheres of government.



## 2. Local management towards sustainability

**We are committed to implementing effective management cycles, from formulation through. We will therefore work to:**

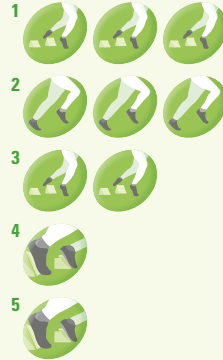
1. strengthen Local Agenda 21 or other local sustainability processes and mainstream them into the heart of local government.
2. deliver integrated management towards sustainability, based on the precautionary principle and with regard to the forthcoming EU Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment.
3. set targets and time schemes in the framework of the Aalborg Commitments and create and follow the Aalborg Commitments monitoring review.
4. ensure that sustainability issues are central to urban decision-making processes and that resource allocation is based on strong and broad sustainability criteria.
5. cooperate with the European Sustainability Cities & Towns Campaign and its networks to monitor and evaluate our progress towards meeting our sustainability targets.



### 3. Natural common goods

**We are committed to fully assuming our responsibility to protect, to preserve, and to ensure equitable access to natural common goods. We will therefore work, throughout our community, to:**

1. reduce primary energy consumption, and increase the share of renewable energies.
2. improve water quality, save water, and use water more efficiently.
3. promote and increase biodiversity, and extend and care for designated nature areas and green spaces.
4. improve soil quality, preserve ecologically productive land and promote sustainable agriculture and forestry.
5. improve air quality.



### 4. Responsible consumption and lifestyle choices

**We are committed to adopting and facilitating the prudent and efficient use of resources and to encouraging sustainable consumption and production. We will therefore work, throughout our community, to:**

1. avoid and reduce waste, and increase re-use and recycling.
2. manage and treat waste in accordance with best practice standards.
3. avoid unnecessary energy consumption, and improve end-use energy efficiency
4. undertake sustainable procurement
5. actively promote sustainable production and consumption, in particular of eco-labelled, organic, ethical and fair trade products.



## 5. Planning and design

**We are committed to a strategic role for urban planning and design in addressing environmental, social, economic, health and cultural issues for the benefit of all. We will therefore work to:**

1. re-use and regenerate derelict or disadvantaged areas.
2. avoid urban sprawl by achieving appropriate urban densities and prioritising brownfield site over greenfield site development.
3. ensure the mixed use of buildings and developments with a good balance of jobs, housing and services, giving priority to residential use in city centres.
4. ensure appropriate conservation, renovation and use/re-use of our urban cultural heritage.
5. apply requirements for sustainable design and construction and promote high quality architecture and building technologies.



## 6. Better mobility, less traffic

**We recognise the interdependence of transport, health and environment, and are committed to strongly promoting sustainable mobility choices. We will therefore work to:**

1. reduce the necessity for private motorised transport and promote attractive alternatives accessible to all.
2. increase the share of journeys made by public transport, on foot and by bicycle.
3. encourage transition to low-emission vehicles.
4. develop an integrated and sustainable urban mobility plan.
5. reduce the impact of transport on the environment and public health.



## 7. Local action for health

**We are committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of our citizens.**

**We will therefore work to:**

1. raise awareness and take action on the wider determinants of health, most of which lie outside the health sector.
2. promote city health development planning, which provides our cities with a means to build and maintain strategic partnerships for health.
3. reduce inequalities in health and address poverty, which will require regular reporting on progress towards reducing the gaps.
4. promote health impact assessment as a means for all sectors to focus their work on health and the quality of life.
5. mobilise urban planners to integrate health considerations in their planning strategies and initiatives.



## 8. Vibrant and sustainable local economy

**We are committed to creating and ensuring a vibrant local economy that gives access to employment without damaging the environment. We will therefore work to:**

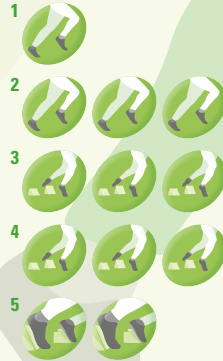
1. adopt measures that stimulate and support local employment and business start-ups.
2. cooperate with local businesses to promote and implement good corporate practice.
3. develop and implement sustainability principles for the location of businesses.
4. encourage markets for high quality local and regional produce.
5. promote sustainable local tourism.



## 9. Social equality and justice

**We are committed to securing inclusive and supportive communities. We will therefore work to:**

1. develop and implement programmes to prevent and alleviate poverty.
2. ensure equitable access to public services, education, employment opportunities, training, information, and cultural activities.
3. foster social inclusion and gender equality.
4. improve community safety and security.
5. secure good quality and socially integrated housing and living conditions.



## 10. Local to global

**We are committed to assuming our global responsibility for peace, justice, equality, sustainable development and climate protection.**

**We will therefore work to:**

1. develop and follow a strategic and integrated approach to mitigate climate change, and work towards a sustainable level of greenhouse gas emissions.
2. mainstream climate protection policy into our policies in the areas of energy, transport, procurement, waste, agriculture, and forestry.
3. raise awareness of the causes and probable impacts of climate change, and integrate preventive actions into our climate change policy.
4. reduce our impact on the global environment and promote the principle of environmental justice.
5. strengthen the international cooperation of towns and cities and develop local responses to global problems in partnership with local governments, communities and relevant stakeholders.





APPENDIX 2  
COMMITTEE AND  
PROJECT WORKERS

## THE AALBORG COMMITMENTS COMMITTEE:

**Päivi Hämäläinen, Harbour Manager**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Municipal Engineering**

**Marja Ilvonen, Head of Social Services**  
**Social and Health Sector / Wellbeing Services**

**Seija Kanerva, Planner**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Premises Centre**

**Jukka Kaunisto, Operational Manager**  
**Sibeliustalo Oy**

**Pertti Kurimo, City Actuary**  
**Group Services / Administrative and Financial Services**

**Tarja Laitinen, Environmental Permit Manager**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Lahti Region Environmental Services, chairperson of the committee**

**Ismo Malin, limnologist**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Lahti Region Environmental Services**

**Timo Permanto, Environmental Protection Planner**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Lahti Region Environmental Services, secretary of the committee**

**Katri Peuralinna, teacher**  
**Educational Sector / Salinkallio Comprehensive School**

**Hannele Poutiainen, Head of Health Counselling Services**  
**Social and Health Sector / Wellbeing Services**

**Virpi Rantanen, Head of Support Services**  
**Educational Sector / Youth Services**

**Juha Reinikainen, Quality Manager**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Administration**

**Theodora Rissanen, City Planning Architect**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Land Use**

**Merja Savolainen, Day-care Manager**  
**Social and Health Sector – Educational Sector / Kanerva Day-care Centre**

**Päivi Siikaniemi, researcher**  
**Educational Sector / City Museum**

**Irma Tolonen, Planner**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Lahti Region Environmental Services**

**Tarja Tolvanen-Valkeapää, Designing Engineer**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Municipal Engineering**

## PROJECT WORKERS:

**Sami Keto, Project Coordinator**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Lahti Region Environmental Services**

**Sanna Vääriskoski-Kaukanen, Sustainability Coordinator**  
**Technical and Environmental Sector / Lahti Region Environmental Services**



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[WWW.LAHTI.FI/SUOMI/AALBORG/EN](http://WWW.LAHTI.FI/SUOMI/AALBORG/EN)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Lahti Region Environmental Service | Technical and Environmental Services | City of Lahti**

Vesijärvenkatu 11 C, P.O. Box 126, FI-15141 Lahti,

tel. +358 (0)3 814 11, fax +358 (0)3 814 3500, [forename.surname@lahti.fi](mailto:forename.surname@lahti.fi)

Tarja Laitinen  
Environmental Permit Manager  
Tel. +358 (0)3 814 3524

Sanna Vääriskoski-Kaukanen  
Sustainable Development Coordinator  
Tel. +358 (0)3 814 3167

**ISBN 978-952-5749-13-7**



The Novatech Satin paper used in this printed product has been granted the EU Eco-label.

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