



CITY IDENTITY

City name

Lahti

Country

FI

City size: (number of inhabitants)

119100

Short description of city

Lahti is located on the southern shore of Lake Vesijärvi, where the first Salpausselkä Ridge splits the city in two. The centre is in a canyon between two ridges. The terrain in the area is generally hilly.

The City of Lahti and the municipality of Nastola merged in 2016, forming the new City of Lahti and creating two centres less than 20 kilometres apart. Buses and trains operate between the areas. The city service points and the basic services operate in the Nastola area and the city centre.

Lahti is a compact city with easily accessible districts. Public transport covers the whole densely populated area. The main bicycle routes provide a connection to the fringe areas of the centre.

SCOPE OF THE INITIATIVES

Accessibility to the built environment and public spaces

The renovation of the Kauppatori market square in 2015 invested in accessible routes, surfaces and connections to the public parking facility built under the market square. Accessibility has been taken into account in the transition from parking to the pedestrian areas in the city centre by light-coloured surfaces, good lighting, indicating free spaces with lights, and colour-coding the different sections of the car park. There are lifts for level changes, and the staircases have automatic doors.

Key measures taken in renovating the main streets in the city centre include expanding the pedestrian areas, building separate bicycle routes and improving the lighting. All the main pedestrian routes in the centre are implemented in accordance with the SuRaKu accessibility guidelines for planning, construction and maintenance.

The public exercise locations are designed and implemented so that the passage to the exercise locations is as accessible as possible. This makes it easier for especially disabled people to participate in various exercise or sports activities.

As the population ages, the importance of accessibility increases. The accessibility of public areas creates equality and sustainable development. The availability of services and the usability of equipment are improving.

Accessibility to transportation and related infrastructures

During summer 2014 a public transport reform was implemented in the Lahti region. The reform increased the number of departures by 40%. The coverage of bus routes was improved and the buses themselves completely replaced. Accessible low-floor buses constitute 100% of the buses in city traffic and more than 90% in the whole area. Bus trips are free for wheelchair, walker or pram users and war veterans. The route and schedule information is available digitally in the journey planner and at stops on digital screens

as well as on paper. A booklet with the public transport schedules is delivered to every household for free. The new Transit Hub for bus and railway traffic was completed in the beginning of 2016, constructed in accordance with the SuRaKu accessibility guidelines for planning, construction and maintenance. The benefits of the Transit Hub include short distances for changes and accessible transfer from one form of transport to another. Accessibility solutions include: Surface materials, lifts with aural beacons for level changes, guide tracks and rails, Braille guidance on handrails and in connection with lifts, benches with different levels for different user groups at stops, travel information available both electronically and statically, as well as an assistance point.

Accessibility to information and communication, including information and communication technologies

Lahti's website was remodelled during spring 2016 to provide structured and easily reachable content and to ensure the site's adaptability to mobile devices. A guide map, bus routes and city plans are also available on mobile devices.

Several different methods and tools for participation are available to residents. Feedback can be given electronically via the eFeedback service and social media channels.

The city's land-use planning processes include interaction with interested parties such as residents. An interaction designer provides information and arranges meetings with different citizen groups. The City Council meetings can be followed online and on Twitter. The draft resolutions are available for public view, and the resolutions themselves are streamed.

New electronic services become available continuously, increasing the opportunities to influence matters and find information. The counsellors of Lahti-Piste service points help you use the electronic services and, if necessary, direct you to the right service or expert. The main library organises group instruction in the use of internet and online services.

Land-use plans are on view at the main library and often also in local libraries, where they can be studied without need for IT capabilities.

Accessibility to public facilities and services

To encourage independence, mobility and sustainable development, premises and services must be open and accessible. Well-functioning premises promote accessibility, achieved through expert design and cooperation with the users of the premises. Current public buildings in Lahti are mainly accessible. The aim of seniors' well-being plan is to empower them as independent and responsible agents and promote a positive attitude towards aging. In a service needs assessment, the suitability of housing is assessed compared to the person's ability to function. Customer guidance unit Siiri has collected information about services for seniors.

In addition to open daytime activities, seniors living at home are supported by technology (e.g. locator bracelets and virtual care), offering stimulation for people with physical disabilities. Accessible home environments have already been supported for years by loaning various aids free of charge. Mobility is promoted by increasing knowledge of health-related exercise.

The new Head Health Clinic is designed to be easily accessible and safe. Electronic health and well-being services have been centralised on the Hyvis.fi website, and there is an online service available where social and health care professionals answer questions related to well-being.

OWNERSHIP / LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

Please describe your overall approach and global strategy to improve accessibility in your city and how the policy is implemented.

The well-being transformation programme implementing the city's strategy states that seniors' special needs must be taken into account in all services, for example, all city planning considers the point of view of accessibility.

The transport policy states accessibility as a key planning principle. The urban structure is developed so that the city centre can be reached from residential areas by public transport, and that the ring around the centre can be reached by car. The public transport system is designed to be used easily, accessibly and affordably.

The goal of the disability policy programme is to build Lahti into a psychologically and physically accessible city. The programme defines concrete actions in total of eight focus areas (communication, accessible living environment, services supporting independent life, early childhood education and other education, employment, social and health care services, rehabilitation, culture, exercise and sports, leisure time and political decision-making).

The opportunity to act, influence and make choices is the vision of the seniors' well-being plan. Its partial goals include promoting accessibility and public transport supporting the mobility of seniors, as well as developing goal-oriented advice and service guidance for them.

IMPACT

How has the city's policy improved equal access and the quality of life of people with disabilities?

Lahti's strategy with its transformation programmes, transport policy definitions, the disability policy programme and the seniors' well-being plan outline the city's accessibility goals and actions. The accessibility programme stresses the accessibility and availability of the urban environment to all residents. In practice, this is ensured by integrating the planning of the service network into the master plan.

Accessible public transport and service transport allow severely disabled people the transport they need for regular hobbies, culture and recreation, for example.

Escort services for physically disabled people have been developed. In 2015, a trial was carried out with bus assistants in public transport, and escorts were tried out this summer. A project enabling better mobility for the residents of the housing unit will start in autumn. It will combine the escort service with the activities of the housing unit for severely disabled people.

Examples of electronic services are various offices' application forms available in electronic format. Also, the services for physically disabled people are developing a personal mail service, where the clients can see their decisions, submit applications and send messages to their own worker via a secure connection whenever they want.

How do these initiatives benefit, beyond persons with disabilities, also wider parts of the population?

The actions in the disability policy programme also benefit the residents that are not disabled, because accessibility makes using services easier for everyone.

Accessible transport serves all residents when the users have temporary difficulties with moving around (e.g. after a surgery) or if they have a pram/pushchair or another aid that could make it difficult to get on/off public transport.

Bus trips are free for wheelchair and walker users; they can enter through the side door, where the driver's help is available with the press of a button. Accessible transport is also easier to use when carrying heavy shopping bags or luggage.

Electronic services and communication channels enable services for applicants with mobility issues or family members with more time in the evenings and weekends, which allows them to deal with issues flexibly. Electronic communication makes it possible to receive information whenever the resident has an opportunity.

QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

How do you ensure the quality and sustainability of accessibility measures?

The accessibility-related measures taking place in the city are carried out in accordance with the law.

The customer guidance at seniors' service point Siiri guarantees them the right services at the right time with high quality. The clients can also use service vouchers.

Together with the national 'Ikä Aske' project, an integrating operating model to promote seniors' living at home has been created in Lahti in 2015. The operating model includes a set of forms and a handbook for assessing the accessibility of flats for seniors.

Any deficiencies found in the environment are reported to the city administration by maintenance supervisors and the contractors for different areas working in the urban environment. Residents and actors in the area can use the electronic eFeedback system to report observations and problems. The high quality and condition of the urban environment is assured through annual resident questionnaires.

The implementation of the accessibility requirements in new construction is examined already during the design phase using an inspection form and statement procedures, and the implementation is ensured through inspections by the authorities in cooperation with the Council on Disability.

The work uses material from the Accessibility Centre ESKE (www.estetön.fi).

What are your plans and initiatives to continue these efforts in the future?

The disability policy programme of the City of Lahti has been written for all residents of Lahti. The goal of the programme is to build Lahti into a city that is both psychologically and physically accessible for everyone. Lahti wants to ensure that disabled people are in a fair position by addressing faults through concrete corrective and development actions. For this work, the programme has outlined concrete disability policy measures for the coming years in eight focus areas (communication, accessible living environment, services supporting independent life, early childhood education and other education, employment, social and health care services, as well as rehabilitation, culture, exercise and sports, leisure time and political decision-making). The City of Lahti Council on Disability monitors the realisation of the disability policy programme and renews it every City Council term.

INVOLVEMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND RELEVANT PARTNERS

Please describe the involvement of persons with disabilities, their representative organisations and accessibility experts in both the planning, implementation and maintenance of city's policies and initiatives aimed at increased accessibility.

Regional accessibility seminars and joint events are held in cooperation with the Invakeskus centre for disabled people, organisations for disabled people and people suffering from diseases or disorders. Meetings with the representatives of the National Council on Disability VANE are held regularly. The Council on Disability participates in national meetings and training events and brings new information for the use of the City of Lahti Council on Disability.

The members of the Council on Disability are members of different organisations themselves, and some participate actively in municipal politics. They receive information from members and residents in their work at organisations and in positions of trust, and they drive this information forward both at the Council on Disability and in political bodies. The interaction goes both ways, increasing the activity and influence of the field.

Events are organised together with third sector actors, for example Dila, the Lahti Mother and Child Shelter, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, culture companions, and the parish.

There is cooperation with both other Councils on Disability and organisations on the national and the international level, such as the joint seminars with the Nordic twin towns of Lahti, held every three years.

Do you carry out awareness raising or information activities around accessibility? Do you exchange and share experience and good practices with other cities at local, regional, national and/or European level?

The Council on Disability states its opinion on implementing accessible building design and the accessibility

of international events.

The Council on Disability has been actively involved in developing accessible urban transport, attitude education and developing accessible movement and environment in our city.

The Council on Disability actively cooperates with disabled people's organisations and third sector operators, and participates in conferences with the Councils on Disability of Nordic twin towns, training events organised by the National Council on Disability VANE and meetings with other Councils on Disability.

WHY DOES YOUR CITY DESERVE THE AWARD?

Please provide a short presentation of your overall accessibility policy and actions. Please explain why your results and your city's accessibility policy are extraordinary and why you believe to deserve the Award.

Lahti is especially proud of the services for seniors and the related guidance. Seniors' services are organized according to the one-stop-shop principle in all service needs. A responsible person is always appointed to those who need a lot of services.

At the customer guidance unit Siiri, seniors can plan their own services and receive advice in the use of services offered by associations, companies and the public sector. Customer-oriented, solution-focused activities are assessed and changed agilely in accordance with an operating model of continuous development. The number of people over 75 years of age living at home has increased. The share of heavy-duty, round-the-clock services has decreased, and the use of lightweight services has become more diverse.

In the seniors' customer guidance, particular attention has been paid to systematic development of assessing the accessibility of homes. An operating assessment model was created in cooperation with different operators, and a handbook and a set of forms were introduced. The services have been expanded to cover the use of safety technology, electronic services and offering the freedom of choice in meal services with service vouchers. As many as 97% of the clients rate their experience of using the services as excellent.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EautjQregc4>

[http://www.ym.fi/fi-FI/Ajankohtaista/Tiedotteet/Ikaantyneiden_asuinolojen_arviointimalli\(38284\)](http://www.ym.fi/fi-FI/Ajankohtaista/Tiedotteet/Ikaantyneiden_asuinolojen_arviointimalli(38284))

<http://www.hel.fi/wps/portal/Rakennusvirasto/Helsinkikaikille?urile=wcm%3Apath%3A//hkr/fi/Helsinki+k>

[aikille/A_Ohjeita+suunnitteluun/Estett_m_n+rakentamisen+ohjeet+%28SuRaKu%29¤t=true](http://www.hel.fi/wps/portal/Rakennusvirasto/Helsinkikaikille?urile=wcm%3Apath%3A//hkr/fi/Helsinki+k)

<https://www.lahti.fi/PalvelutSite/RakentaminenSite/Documents/Rakvan%20lomakkeet%20ja%20tiedostot%20-%20Rakennusluvat/Estett%c3%b6n%20rakennus.pdf>

<http://www.lahtiregion.fi/matkakakeskus>

<http://kartta.lahti.fi/ims>

<https://e-asiointi.lahti.fi/eFeedback/fi>

<http://www.ladec.fi/yriyksille/kasvua-uudistumista-hakevalle/erotu-muotoilulla%21/lahen-d>

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKjPBN5OmyNrmmMsUv65KO_NLvTtZ0-8R

Access City Award 2017 Lahti Picture Presentation.pptx

Lahti A City for everyone_Disability Policy Programme 2011_2016.pdf

Accessibility instructions_Building Permit.pdf

Checklist_Public Spaces.pdf

Accessible Housing_Lahden vanhusten asuntosäätiö.pdf

Initiatives and proposals.pdf

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Official city website

<https://www.lahti.fi/>

Organisational webpages devoted to accessibility

Search: "Esteettömyys"

<https://www.lahti.fi/haku#k=esteett%C3%B6myys>

Lahti A City for everyone:

https://www.lahti.fi/PalvelutSite/SosiaalipalvelutSite/Documents/Lomakkeet%20ja%20esitteet%20Vammaispalvelut/Vammaispoliittinen_ohjelma2011.pdf