

Greater Helsinki Vision 2050: Detailed proposal

Katanajokka-Vuosaari Gateway

'Team Helsinki'

The linear suburb or urban-corridor of the Katanajokka-Vuosaari songline connects a series of islands to the west of the city centre, plugging them into the urban fabric of Helsinki.

The sequence of spaces are arranged linearly along a spinal route connecting Katanajokka to Laajasalo to Vartiosaari and Vuosaari. Other routes weave across and intersect this spinal route.

Parkland, playspaces, and open spaces are intertwined with housing, business, and cultural built form. Parking spaces for private automobiles are restricted, and positioned underground, creating open streets where children might play.

Habitable bridge

An inhabited bridge, instantly christened the Re-Aalto by locals, links Laajasalo to the mainland of Helsinki at Katanajokka. The bridge carries road traffic, foot and cycle traffic, with 2 central lanes for trams.

Ice ramp

At the Eastern edge. Ramps and stairwells down from the bridge connecting the city to the water level. Here, a temporary zone of parasitic functions attaches itself to the bridge. In summer, house boats moor up against the struts of the non-suspended section. In winter, the ice sheet forms a zone for an annual frost fair of ice-skating, ice-hockey, a sculpture field, and ice-speedway.

Helsinki - St. Petersburg terminus

Tourists and business visitors from St. Petersburg arrive at a terminus, an hour and a half journey by high-speed 'Shinkansen'. Here they can see central Helsinki across the bay, and travel into the centre, or enjoy the sights

and facilities of East Helsinki. A link to Tallinn is planned, but officials cannot decide between a bridge and a tunnel.

Rapid tram

A Rapid Tram system travels between the two node points, with frequent stops, from central Helsinki with Vuosaari, replacing a costly plan for an extended Metro line.

Co-working

Katajanokka - Vuosaari is home to a number of multinational corporations, but there are no headquarter buildings. Home working (or telecommuting) fully replaced commuting in 2028. Now, desperate to get out of their home offices, the inhabitants of Katajanokka-Vuosaari seek out co-working facilities and coffee-shop career breaks.

Housing typologies

The housing stock of this linear suburb is an experiment in densification, re-contextualising urban patterns from other urban centres including Barcelona, Rotterdam, and Brasilia onto Greater Helsinki. New housing typologies emerge from the combination of new living patterns, folded street patterns and these housing archetypes.

The housing on the island of Vartiosaari are sweeping blocks that angle to attract the best light and views. The housing is on stilts that frees up the ground plane. At ground level, shops, parklands, paths cut through. At roof level are gardens, play areas, nurseries and solar panels.

Energy self-sufficiency

This urban corridor is entirely energy self-sufficient, thanks to a wind farm located in the sea, which feeds power to grid at the Helsingin Energia power stations in Vuosaari. Elsewhere along the songline, energy-efficient design choices, small scale energy reuse projects and generation reduce the power requirement to 1/3 the 2007 average.

Walking and cycling routes

The urban corridors are designed to match the scale of walking. At approximately 8 km from tip to tip, routes through the linear suburb can be traversed in just over an hour. Though with a selection of cafes, bars, meeting points, there are many temptations to sit for a while. Many of the walking routes are heated and have cover.

With low car usage, and restricted access to cars to much of the housing areas, the residents of Katanajokka - Vuosaari 'inhabit' the streets fully, with a seasonal range of outdoor activities and opportunities to play.