

# Urban Policy Program for Student Unions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area



**HELGA**



**Laureamko.**



# Foreword

Dear reader,

You have received the Urban Policy Program for Student Unions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. This program is intended as a tool for student advocates and to show how student believe the metropolitan area should be developed during the forthcoming parliamentary term.

This program has been created by representatives of the student unions of ASK, Helga, Laureamko, METKA, O'Diako and HUMAKO during 2017. The student unions have already co-operated for a number of years on common urban policy and advocacy issues, but in 2017 have intensified their co-operation with the OPKU6 service design project.

In the spring of 2017, a working group was appointed for the program to which representatives of each student union were picked. The working group for the Urban Policy Program for Student Unions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area has included:

Chairperson

Maria Jokinen, METKA

Vice chairperson

Saana Simonen, Laureamko

Annika Eskman and Roni Huttunen, ASK

Aleksi Säteri, Andrey Veremenko, Jani Mäntysaari and Sini Heino, Helga

Gurmann Saini and Theo Tyrväinen, HUMAKO

Jari Nuutinen and Juha Rautiainen, Laureamko

Aleksi Nenonen, Matti Tujula and Outi Häkkinen, METKA

Hannele Kirveskoski and Iiris Hynönen, O'Diako

The working group's task was to produce an urban policy program during 2017 to be approved by the councils of representatives by the end of the year. Our vision was to produce a good and concise tool for both decision-makers and student advocates.

The working group divided the themes at a very early stage into three themes. These are housing and urban planning, services and traffic. In addition to the experts from the student unions, comments and improvement ideas were also received from the student union boards, councils of representatives as well as students. The program was approved by the student unions' councils of representatives in the fall of 2017.

As with other co-operation between the student unions in the Helsinki metropolitan area working on the program has shown a solution-centered approach, a good team spirit and a common desire to do better for students. Good lines of communication between each other have guaranteed it has been possible to debate on issues and thus reach an end result that serves everyone. Hopefully it also shows in the end result. The student unions in the Helsinki metropolitan area also encourage questions and questioning in order for us to reach a good dialogue that improves our area through new better solutions.

Good reading!

Maria Jokinen

Chairperson for the Urban Policy Program for Student Unions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area -working group.

# Urban Policy Program for Student Unions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area

## Introduction

The Helsinki Metropolitan Area consists of four cities: Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, and Kauniainen. Together they form a growth center of about 1.2 million people (1). Of this total population of 1 million, approx. 100,000 are studying higher education (2). Thus, these students represent approx. 10 percent of the population of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. In addition, there are approx. 61,000 students studying at secondary level (3). The municipalities in the metropolitan area have a statutory obligation to co-operate in waste management and public transport (4). In addition, co-operation is carried out in land use, housing and transport based on the agreement MAL2016 (5).

Arcada Student Union - ASK, The Student Union of Haaga-Helia – Helga, Student Union of Humak University of Applied Sciences HUMAKO, Student Union of Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Student Union of Metropolia University of Applied Sciences METKA, and the Student Union of Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (O'Diako) are the statutory advocacy organizations of students studying at universities of applied sciences in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

The purpose of student unions is to act as a link between their members and the universities. In addition, student unions promote societal, social, and psychological endeavors of the students, as well as the quality of their studies and social aspirations. The functioning of a student union is based on Section 41 of Ammattikorkeakoululaki (Universities of Applied Sciences Act, 932/2014).

The student unions in the metropolitan area have committed themselves to this policy program and its development. This Urban Policy Program for the Student Unions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area has come into effect following a decision taken by the Student Unions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area on 30th of November 2017. The program will be updated if necessary.

## Urban Policy Program

This policy program is divided into three areas of vital relevance for students:

- Housing and urban planning
- Services
- Traffic

These areas of influence cover the foremost targets of urban development from the viewpoint of supporting students' well-being.

All students and residents of the city have opportunities to participate as easily as possible in urban development. The conversation with the city and the decision-makers is open. As many demographic groups of the population as possible are invited to participate in the conversation focusing on urban development.

## Housing and urban planning

*Students are a diverse group with a variety of housing needs. Students represent a wide range of demographic groups, and therefore when building student housing it is necessary to take into account, for example, the role of accessibility and the different housing needs of students with families.*

*Changing trends in housing and the varying and diverse housing needs of students are taken into account in building student housing. The focus is on one-bedroom units and roomie apartments instead of shared flats.*

*In the metropolitan area, students are entitled to affordable student accommodation in the vicinity of their own campus and along good access routes. Instead of student concentrations, student housing will be located in diverse residential areas in close proximity to services. Prevention of segregation is taken into account when planning new residential areas.*

*The urban environment is clean and the focus is on the comfortability of living. When developing the urban culture, attention is paid to communality, e.g. by improving preconditions to organize events in residential areas. Green areas will be spared in building work and new kinds of solutions (e.g. rooftop gardens) will be taken into consideration.*

### Objectives

- Living
  - Student housing is reasonably priced.
  - The volume of new student housing will be increased and the emphasis will shift from shared flats to roomie apartments, and single-bedroom units. Attention is paid to the needs of different demographic groups, such as families.
  - Writing separate rental agreements, should be possible in all housing.
  - Accessibility is a universal value in all construction.
  - Temporary housing is being developed and steps are being taken to ensure that temporary housing does not become a norm.
- Urban planning
  - Plans are being made to set up student housing near campuses and along good commuter connections.
  - Segregation is being prevented in the planning and construction phase by building diverse residential areas, and taking into account multiculturalism and different demographic groups.
  - Green areas are retained, developed and new ones are created, e.g. rooftop gardens and urban cultivation allotments.
  - The city leaves it to the markets to define the parking space requirements regarding housing construction.

### Services

*The services and documents offered by the Helsinki Metropolitan Area are available digitally and seamlessly in both national languages and in English. Regardless where they actually live and where they study, students have preventative and diverse healthcare services available to them. Early childhood care and education is of high-quality, free of charge and flexible. The availability and range of services are developed also in both Swedish and English.*

*The municipalities offer a wide range of leisure time activities at no cost. Cities adopt a positive and encouraging attitude to the organizing of public events and other self-initiated activities.*

## Objectives

- Digitalization

- Wireless and free of charge Internet access is available in the Metropolitan Area.
- The services offered by the municipality are accessible using the most common smart devices with Internet access.
- The Metropolitan Area has in operation a mobile application to which all of the city's e-services will be integrated. The city services communicate seamlessly with each other and the customer does not need to submit the same information more than once.
- The city encourages housing providers to provide their services digitally. The housing company's safety documents must be available to the residents digitally.

- Healthcare and family services

- Ylioppilaiden Terveystieteidenkeskus (The Finnish Student Health Service) is the primary provider of healthcare services to students studying at Universities of Applied Sciences.
- Healthcare services are available at both the students' study locality as well as their hometown.
- In addition to basic healthcare services, students are offered dental, child health clinic, mental health, and sexual health services.
- The prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancies is free of charge for persons under 25 years of age.
- Every student benefits from free basic healthcare, day care for children, and afternoon activities for children as a local service.
- Early childhood education is free of charge and child care is offered flexibly around the clock.
- All services have qualitative criteria and indicators, which are used to ensure and develop the quality and availability of services.

- Leisure time and recreational activities

- Every student is entitled to local services including at least a free of charge exercise facility, playground, afternoon club, library or a service center offering these, as well as reservable individual and group working spaces.
- The organizing of events has been made as easy as possible. Small-scale events may be organized by means of a mere event announcement.
- Every resident of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area has access to nearby parks and jogging trails and the adjoining local sport grounds. The city's green areas and sports grounds are available to residents at no cost.
- When developing urban culture, attention is paid to communality for example by improving the possibilities for organizing events in residential areas.
- Students have access to libraries or service centers from which they can borrow items which are not worth the expense of owning due to their infrequent use.
- The municipalities youth services produce more services for 18 to 29 year olds. Services are tailored according to the age groups.

## Traffic

*In the metropolitan area, students and other residents are able to travel easily, effortlessly, and ecologically by using public transport. All students receive a significant discount on public transportation services. The public transport network is comprehensive and connects the campuses to each other, making it easy to move between them.*

*As means of combining bicycles and private cars, new ways are being invented to make them a natural part of public transport. Bicycle travel is safe throughout the metropolitan area. Public transport has been concentrated on rails. Car sharing and other similar services are available to everyone and cities set up a framework for such services.*

### Objectives

- Student discounts are maintained and extended to persons over 30 years of age when using public transport services.
- Ecology and safety are taken into account in the planning of public transport.
- Cities create the framework and encourage people to go for shared cars.
- Incentive parking and secure storing of bicycles are being invested on and combining different means of transportation is fluid.
- The use of public transport is safe around the clock.
- The track network extends beyond the city hub and makes it more attractive to users and it improves cross-wise commuting.
- Bicycle traffic is being developed by planning and implementing safe, sensible and clearly distinct routes.

## References:

- (1) <https://www.helsinginseutu.fi/hs/selkosivut-fi/kaupungit/paakaupunkiseutu/>
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- (3) [https://vipunen.fi/fi-fi/\\_layouts/15/xlviewer.aspx?id=/fi-fi/Raportit/Ammatillinen%20koulutus%20-%20opiskelijat%20-%20maakunta.xlsb](https://vipunen.fi/fi-fi/_layouts/15/xlviewer.aspx?id=/fi-fi/Raportit/Ammatillinen%20koulutus%20-%20opiskelijat%20-%20maakunta.xlsb)
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