

# 1 HYY'S URBAN PROGRAMME 2021– 2 2024

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5 *The City of Helsinki has the ambitious goal of being the most functional city in the world.*  
6 *The Student Union wishes to be involved in the work required to achieve this goal.*

7 *The Urban Programme challenges our city to continue developing and to make Helsinki*  
8 *the most student-friendly and ecologically sustainable city in the world. The programme*  
9 *covers the most relevant themes for students: housing, transport, services and acting as*  
10 *a resident of the city. In the programme, we outline an alternative for organising these*  
11 *matters in the future, one that reflects students' wishes.*

12 *In addition to the aforementioned themes, we have also called attention to international*  
13 *students. Internationality is beneficial for Helsinki and Finland, and the University is the*  
14 *most natural avenue for internationality to thrive. Despite this, the study mentioned*  
15 *below shows that integration into the Finnish student community is considered*  
16 *challenging and that finding employment after graduation is a major barrier for*  
17 *international students wishing to stay in Finland. These are problems that must be*  
18 *resolved.*

19 *The academic foundation of the Urban Programme is the Opiskelijan kaupunki ('students'*  
20 *city') study, which investigated students' preferences in the Capital Region in 2019. The*  
21 *issues related to transport, internationality and housing that are highlighted in the*  
22 *programme are based on the study.*

23



## 24 HOUSING

### 25 Affordable and accessible housing

26 Rental costs have continued to increase in the Capital Region, whereas students'  
27 disposable funds have not. Less than one third of the students living in the Capital  
28 Region live in student apartments. While the rental level in the Capital Region is  
29 constantly increasing, the level of students' subsistence remains insufficient for  
30 them to participate in the free housing market. Student housing providers that  
31 operate for the public good must be provided with reasonable operating conditions  
32 and opportunities for housing production.

33 The City of Helsinki must guarantee that affordable housing is available to all  
34 higher education students. The city must set ambitious production goals for  
35 affordable rental apartments and, specifically, set a goal of completing 500 new  
36 student apartments every year.

37 The Student Union wants the city to assess the placement and planning of student  
38 apartments. Student apartments must be placed in areas where students get the  
39 services they need and where their everyday life runs as smoothly as possible. This  
40 translates into placing student apartments near campuses and good public  
41 transport connections.

### 42 Dense and adapting construction

43  
44 Helsinki is a promontory with both a limited amount of space and the greatest  
45 demand for it in Finland. Solutions that ensure a sufficient level of production must  
46 be found in housing construction.

47 These solutions include dense city blocks, supplementary construction, especially  
48 near access routes, and high-rise building construction. In the future, family  
49 apartments should be planned in such a way that they are also suitable for  
50 communal housing, while new forms of communal housing should also be  
51 developed. The production of student apartments can be made more efficient by  
52 making moderate concessions to the minimum size regulations, for instance. New  
53 forms of communal housing should also be developed, and the possibility of the  
54 diverse utilisation of apartments as different types of housing forms must be made  
55 possible already during the planning stage. Flexibility on changing the purpose of



56 use of facilities must be increased, so that empty office space could be efficiently  
57 transformed into residential use, for instance.

58 Housing production is slowed down by unnecessary norms regulating parking  
59 spaces and the height of buildings, for instance. A move to a market-based model  
60 should be made in the construction of parking spaces and, in the case of student  
61 apartments, the obligation to construct parking spaces should be entirely  
62 abandoned. When high-rise building construction without parking spaces is made  
63 possible, the supply of student apartments will significantly increase.

64

## 65 **TRANSPORT**

66 Free movement

67 Going from one place to another within the city should be affordable and flexible  
68 for students. To achieve this, the student discount in public transport should be  
69 offered on single tickets, too, and the amount of student discount should be raised  
70 back to its former level. The student discount should continue to be the same for  
71 everyone, regardless of age. The public transport and cycling networks must be  
72 comprehensive to make travel in the city effortless for students. The development  
73 of the pedestrian city centre should also be continued by making the City Centre  
74 campus car-free.

75 Public transport

76 Public transport must connect campuses as well as student homes to one another.  
77 Developing rail traffic is the primary method of improving accessibility: it is the  
78 more sustainable choice from an environmental perspective, and it also makes it  
79 possible to make land use more efficient. In traffic planning, investments should be  
80 made in functional transport connections to the Kumpula and Viikki campuses in  
81 particular by advancing the Science Tram and similar projects. Public transport  
82 should operate round the clock, and the operating hours of the metro should be  
83 expanded to meet the demand in nighttime, too.

84 Cycling



85 As a climate-friendly and healthy method of travel, cycling must be supported in  
86 the city. The city must make cycling easier as much as it can by offering bicycle  
87 stands and safe cycle lanes, by expanding the city bike network and by clearly  
88 marking cycle lanes. The city must invest in the creation of an extensive cycling  
89 network and ensure smooth connections to the campuses. Major cycle lanes must  
90 be kept in good condition all year round.

91

## 92 SERVICES

93 The mental problems of higher education students have increased significantly  
94 during the 21st century. Access to health care services must be available swiftly and  
95 with a low threshold. Access must be provided within one month of seeking  
96 treatment, and the resources of mental health professionals in particular must be  
97 increased. The city must invest in preventive activities, provide diverse and free  
98 exercising opportunities and provide free contraception to everyone under 29 years  
99 of age. Cooperation between the FSHS and municipal health care services must be  
100 ensured.

101 Helsinki must strive to be an accessible city. When a city is accessible, everyday life  
102 is easier for the visually, physically and hearing-impaired as well as the elderly and  
103 those with a family. Investments must be made in accessibility in the Capital  
104 Region by taking these special groups into account in all planning work. HSL must  
105 offer free public transport to physically impaired residents, and accessibility must  
106 be taken into account as a central issue in the development of public transport. The  
107 city must provide students with a family with the opportunity to study and attend  
108 lectures by providing part-time day care services near campuses.

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## 110 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S CITY

111 Services

112

113 The city's services must be as accessible as possible for international students. This  
114 can be achieved by investing in the multilingualism of different services and in



115 coordinated communication by the city, the University and the Student Union on  
116 the existence of the services. The FSHS must invest in the multilingualism of its  
117 services as well as communication about them. The special needs of exchange  
118 students must be taken into account in their move from the FSHS's services to  
119 municipal services, and the competences found in student health care must be  
120 utilised in this move.

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123 Housing

124

125 In its apartment selection, Hoas must take the number and special characteristics of  
126 international students into account by offering furnished apartments, for instance.

127 Investments must be made in the multilingualism of Hoas's communication and  
128 services, and international students must be encouraged to take part in Hoas's

129 decision-making processes, such as tenant committees and the tenants' co-  
130 operation body.

131

132 Employment

133

134 One of the greatest challenges for international students in Finland is finding  
135 employment. Both the city and the University must tackle this problem by investing  
136 in career services offered to international students and critically assessing the  
137 language requirements of their job duties. The city must start using anonymous  
138 recruitment in its own recruitment processes and encourage companies operating  
139 in the city to follow suit. This makes it easier for international students to get hired  
140 for positions in which a command of Finnish is not necessary.

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## 143 **COMMUNAL, RESPONSIBLE AND PARTICIPATORY CITY**

144 Urban space

145 The City of Helsinki must promote education with a large selection of cultural  
146 services. The city must actively work to provide suitable operating conditions for  
147 event and cultural spaces as well as non-commercial activity. The city must also  
148 provide premises for recreational use. The bureaucracy and public space rents  
149 required for events must remain reasonable in order to enliven the city. The city



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150 should offer a student discount of at least 50% at its own museums and other  
151 cultural activities.

152

153 Ecological sustainability

154 Helsinki must be carbon negative. This goal must be promoted vigorously,  
155 especially in the areas of energy use, construction and urban planning.

156 Creating a carbon-free city requires that sustainable solutions and terms that  
157 support their realisation are prioritised in planning and in new construction  
158 projects. For instance, the mitigation of climate change and the creation of  
159 sustainable solutions should take a greater role than before in the city's invitations  
160 to tenders. The more significant the project, the stronger demands must be made  
161 on its carbon footprint. Helsinki must be a pioneer and trendsetter in low-carbon  
162 construction.

163 Dense construction makes it possible to preserve the central natural areas of the  
164 Capital Region and to nurture its ecological diversity. The use of coal power in the  
165 city's energy production must be replaced by sustainable means of production. The  
166 city must also promote recycling and the minimisation of food waste in the actions  
167 of all its residents.

168 Impactful residents

169 The City of Helsinki must adopt the role of an enabler and growth platform for the  
170 growing activity of its residents. In particular, the city must provide comprehensive  
171 and accessible communication to help new experiments and available services  
172 reach the people interested in them. A good example of this is participatory  
173 budgeting, which must be continued and further developed.

174 Students must be heard when developing the city and campus areas. Students must  
175 be involved in the work on developing the areas around campuses, and their  
176 importance must be recognised already at the preparatory stage, in the  
177 participation and assessment plans, for instance.