



(ENG. HELSINKI FOR EVERYBODY) MANIFESTO

We are Kaikkien Helsinki – organizations, grassroots movements, communities, and citizens coming together to defend, nurture, and develop a good, beautiful, healthy, and fair Helsinki! In this manifesto, we declare the central values, principles, goals, and forms of action for the Kaikkien Helsinki Alliance. To join and belong to the Kaikkien Helsinki Alliance, a community or individual must accept and sign this manifesto.

The guiding principle of the Kaikkien Helsinki Alliance is that the city belongs to everyone, and all stakeholders affected by the city and its development should genuinely participate in decisions about the city and urban space. The alliance primarily focuses on Helsinki but may, on a case-by-case basis, also take a stance and influence developments in the wider Helsinki metropolitan area, acting as a partner and catalyst for similar movements elsewhere in Finland and internationally.

Our goal is to establish equal dialogue with the City of Helsinki. We love Helsinki and want to contribute to making it an even better place to live, for both humans and other species. We emphasize a long-term perspective, sustainable solutions, and intergenerational decision-making.

We are concerned that the status of public and common spaces, open and easily accessible to all, is currently under threat. Privatized, controlled, consumption-oriented, and investor-driven forms of new urban spaces are gaining ground in our city, planned with branding and economic growth as the primary objectives. As a result, the well-being and rights of citizens and other species are at risk. We want to address this issue and propose actions and models that guide the realization of a more pleasant and fairer city.

Right to the City

Our main objective is to ensure that everyone has the right to the city. This right includes the right to participate in the city's planning, the right to use the city, and the right to feel a sense of belonging to the city.

The right to participate in the city's planning: The existing methods of participation and influence in Helsinki's city planning are inadequate and do not reach all necessary demographic groups. Even when citizens want to have an impact on the city's planning, their voices are not sufficiently valued. Superficial forms of participation and influence are rather token gestures. Instead, we propose a more direct and inclusive local democracy that actively seeks and considers the voices of all interested parties. This should be an ongoing process that brings decision-making closer to people and the environment it affects. Local democracy may include scientifically based and active neighborhood councils and local committees, such as the local committees used in Copenhagen (Danish: lokaludvalg), which engage and listen to the residents and communities in neighborhoods, maintain dialogue and cooperation between residents and the city, and make proposals for the city's budget.

Right to use the city: We demand that the City of Helsinki recognize and value those urban spaces and places that are significant to different stakeholders. The city is not just an investment target but primarily an arena for the daily lives, social interactions, and well-being of citizens, where each of us has our favorite places, routines, and aesthetic preferences. Different demographic groups experience and use the city differently, and, therefore, we should recognize these diverse urban experiences and consider them in city planning!

Urban spaces should also be allowed to breathe: In Helsinki, there are vacant areas that have become home to low-threshold subcultural activities, and they hold significant value for their users. Instead of invariably viewing these areas as potential sites for speculation, investment, and construction, they should be seen as places for sustainable development and social diversity that need to be preserved and protected for their intangible values. A city thrives when its citizens thrive!

Planning with social and ecological values in mind

Kaikkien Helsinki fights for urban democratic and ecological justice. We need a new kind of planning that moves towards a more enlightened, softer values-based approach, which aims to more directly, consistently, and selectively address societal reality and development. New visions must be based on an understanding of the basic processes that shape cities. This should be done by recognizing the conditions of power, inequality, and social diversity. The future should symbolize something good, with characteristics and virtues (diversity, sustainability, fairness, local quality, participation, responsibility) that are currently lacking. We demand that the voices and rights of those who are not typically heard are considered and that sufficient resources are allocated for this purpose.

The central principle of Helsinki's city planning should be that nature, green spaces, and recreational areas are not reduced or compromised in any way. Operating within the framework of sustainable development requires immediate and concrete actions to keep Helsinki viable in the face of new challenges brought by climate change and biodiversity loss. Development should be redirected to restore and revitalize nature.

Several development trends in Helsinki threaten its intergenerational viability and vitality. One of these trends is the unreasonable construction boom generated by the existing general plan. This boom leads to the demolition of old urban layers and the destruction of local nature. Building new structures on socially, ecologically, or culturally significant sites is consistently justified by the claim that there is no space left in Helsinki. Meanwhile, usable, especially modern heritage sites, are underutilized and demolished because they do not meet everyone's aesthetic preferences. This, in turn, depletes the diversity of our architectural heritage and environment. Instead of demolition, we demand the renovation of old buildings and consideration of new uses for structures that no longer serve their original purpose. Helsinki, the jewel of the Baltic, is a beautiful Nordic city with significant architectural values. A respectful city should let history's growth rings show, as they remind us of the past and guide us toward a more sustainable future.

Bringing actors together for concrete actions

Our goal is to bring together various local actors and groups that are developing and supporting urban culture, communities, biodiversity, heritage preservation, and other crucial values and activities for urban life. Together, we advocate for softer values and encourage dreaming and, through that, the realization of low-threshold public spaces and cities that are equal, safe, and open to all.

Kaikkien Helsinki gathers local actors and groups without infringing on their authority or autonomy. Our purpose is to empower these groups and communities, offering solidarity, support, and collective strength to promote these goals. Our concrete actions include initiatives, action proposals, demonstrations, statements, and appeals, influencing urban plans, as well as workshops on the city's future and utopias. Our community is diverse and open to all who share the same values and want to work together to create a better Helsinki. We recognize that diversity is our strength and appreciate different perspectives and experiences. Together, we create functional, transparent, and fair methods and rules for discussion, imagination, and decision-making within the alliance.

We expect all our partners to adhere to the principles of creating safer spaces. In our events, meetings, and other collaborative situations, we aim to be as open and equal as possible, ensuring that no one feels singled out or subject to discrimination. We also actively address harassment, and all our events should have individuals trained in safer space guidelines.

We believe that openness, respect, and courage to address even challenging issues are crucial when building our collective future. All voices are important, and together, we can find solutions to the challenges our city faces. We encourage everyone to participate because each person has a role and significance. Together, we can achieve more than alone!

We Are Politically Non-Partisan

Kaikkien Helsinki is not affiliated with any political party and is not committed to promoting the agenda of any political party. However, we are open to collaboration with political parties whose objectives align with the central values and principles of the Kaikkien Helsinki Alliance. We welcome all individuals and groups who are committed to this manifesto and the central values and principles of the Kaikkien Helsinki alliance.

We aim to improve the current representative democracy-based decision-making system by introducing more localized and participatory elements. We are willing to collaborate with all political actors who share the key values and principles of the Kaikkien Helsinki Alliance.

We Help Helsinki Succeed

Kaikkien Helsinki wants to be a part of the positive change in our city! We strive to bridge different communities and the City of Helsinki without excluding local development. We offer Helsinki the opportunity to be more humane, ecological, reflective of citizens' values, and more efficient in its processes. We believe in developing the city for the benefit of its residents, rather than prioritizing the interests of construction companies, property speculators, or investors. Kaikkien Helsinki aspires to build the world's most sustainable city!

The City of Helsinki has a wealth of knowledge and well-intentioned individuals in various sectors, including urban planning, culture and leisure services, education, research, social and health services, and emergency services. Kaikkien Helsinki wants to highlight these people and their expertise, allowing them to have a greater role in decision-making. The city also has plenty of research, programs, and strategies that, if followed, would make the city constantly better, more beautiful, healthier, and fairer – just as our alliance wishes. Helsinki does not need to be entirely reinvented; rather, its most valuable and essential features, as well as the needs and desires of its residents, should be emphasized more, and their importance should be valued above economic growth, money, and "efficiency." Representatives of the City of Helsinki are warmly welcome to join the Kaikkien Helsinki alliance!

We aim for dialogue and co-development with the city. We advocate for the starting point of city planning to be the revitalization of existing cultures, structures, local communities, and local nature, and the recognition of distinctive and self-initiated urban cultural phenomena. This way, we build an internationally recognized, distinctive, and positive image of the city, of which we can be proud. Could Helsinki be internationally known for its metro access to the mushroom forest? Or for valuing self-initiated and distinctive urban culture that makes our city unique and interesting, rather than merely replicating other similarly sized prosperous cities?

Helsinki is a unique city, and it is the Helsinki residents themselves who make it so beautiful, good, and appealing. However, there are also development trends threatening these values. Nevertheless, these trends can be influenced, and the Kaikkien Helsinki Alliance protects Helsinki for future generations. This is our Kaikkien Helsinki!

