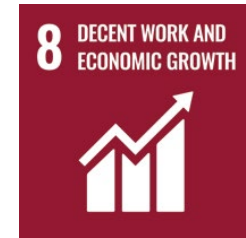


Turku 2025

Sustainable Development Goals and Progress



City of Turku's third
Voluntary Local Review 2025

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



Mayor Minna Arve's Greeting



In Turku, we have taken this responsibility seriously. For us, sustainability is not just a strategy—it's a way of thinking, acting, and making decisions every single day. We are fully committed to the UN's Agenda 2030 goals and have set an ambitious target: to become climate-neutral by 2029—the year Turku celebrates its 800th anniversary. This is not just a symbolic milestone. It reflects Turku's unwavering determination and bold spirit to lead the way forward.

The headstrong make history.

The Turku Manifesto reminds us that we are part of a story that has spanned centuries—and that every sustainable action, every innovation, every act of community shapes the next chapter. We believe the decisions we make today will echo into the future.

Turku's story is a story of sustainability.

We are a city unafraid to set the bar high. Our work is grounded in concrete goals, which we follow through with transparency and consistency. I believe that by combining innovation, participation, and collaboration, we can drive real and lasting change. Sustainability is not just a goal—it is how we live, how we lead, and how we build a better future for everyone in Turku.

I know this work is not easy. The challenges ahead are great—but so are the opportunities. Together, we can show the world what cities are capable of. We can be an example for

others, pioneers who prove that ambitious and sustainable development is not only possible—but essential.

I want to thank everyone involved in this important work. Your ideas, commitment, and passion make all of this possible. Turku is not just a place—it is a community that believes in a future where everyone has the chance to live a good life, in harmony with each other and the environment.

Let us build a more sustainable, equitable, and vibrant future—together.

Turku leads the way—now and forever.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Minna Arve'.

Minna Arve
Mayor, City of Turku

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Turku 2025: Sustainable Development Goals and Progress

City of Turku's third Voluntary Local Review

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Summary

The 2025 VLR (Voluntary Local Review) report of Turku demonstrates the city's strong commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a part of the UN Agenda 2030 program. This report brings together key actions, achievements, and plans from 2022 to 2024, offering a comprehensive view of how the principles of sustainable development have been integrated into the city's strategy and everyday practices.

Turku has made significant strides across all areas of sustainable development. Securing biodiversity and more strongly integrating climate actions into urban planning are the concrete examples of how to promote ecological sustainability. Social sustainability is reflected in the efforts to combat segregation, strengthen inclusion, and improve equality in the residential areas. In terms of economic sustainability,

Turku has invested in innovation, promoting employment, and strengthening sustainable economy.

In recent years, Turku's population growth has accelerated at an unprecedented pace. In 2024, the city's population grew by over 4,200 residents, marking the largest increase in over 50 years. Most of this growth has come from young people and the working-age population, supporting the city's vitality but also bringing challenges in housing, education, and service accessibility. Population trends directly impact the implementation of the SDGs, and the city has responded by investing in public transport, green infrastructure, and resource-efficient housing solutions.

While Turku has made progress across many sustainability areas, the report also highlights areas in the need of improvements. Preventing

segregation, managing population growth, and ensuring resource availability will require long-term planning and proactive decision-making. The VLR indicators show that emission reduction efforts are progressing as planned, but challenges in sustainable urban development require greater investments in reducing inequality, protecting biodiversity, and promoting sustainable consumption.

Strengthening international and regional cooperation remains a key priority for Turku. It provides the city with opportunities to share and learn best practices for advancing sustainable development. In 2029, Turku will celebrate its 800th anniversary, and our goal is for the city to proudly showcase its sustainability achievements and serve as an example to others. This report is not just a milestone but a guidepost on the path toward a vibrant, just, and sustainable future.



Introduction to Turku's Work on Sustainable Development and the VLR Report

Turku has positioned itself at the forefront of sustainable development, committing to achieve all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN's Agenda 2030. The city's ambitious vision not only focuses on solving global challenges but also on how local actions can serve as examples for other cities in Finland and around the world. The 2025 VLR report (Voluntary Local Review) is an important milestone on this journey, as it outlines the city's progress, challenges, and achievements during the years 2022–2024, and outlines the steps toward 2030.

Turku is a city that believes that change starts with action. This guiding principle has shaped the city's strategy, which integrates sustainable development work across all sectors. Turku is committed to carbon neutrality by 2029, and in addition to climate work, the city has

invested in protecting biodiversity, promoting circular economy, and strengthening social sustainability.

Turku's approach emphasizes that at the heart of sustainability are the residents, their well-being, and their ability to influence their environment. Innovative solutions and bold goal setting have made Turku's journey toward a sustainable future not only determined but also impactful.

This report is not just a look back; it is also a look forward. Setting concrete goals has been central to Turku's strategy. These goals measure the progress and serve as a guarantee of the city's accountability and transparency. The report highlights both achievements and areas for improvement, providing a roadmap for how Turku will continue its journey toward fulfilling the Agenda 2030 goals.

Cooperation, inclusion, and data-driven decision-making are cornerstones of this work. Turku wants to demonstrate that cities not only have the potential but also the responsibility to address great challenges of our time, such as climate change, reducing inequality, and preserving biodiversity.

However, Turku does not see itself alone; it is part of a larger community. Through networks like the Six Cities, international cooperation projects, and global sustainability networks, Turku strives not only to learn but also to share its expertise.

This VLR report is proof that local actions can lead to global change. It is an invitation to a collective journey toward a more sustainable, fairer, and better future – not just for Turku's residents, but for the whole world.

Turku in Brief:

City Introduction and Key Achievements

Turku, Finland's oldest city, was founded around the early 1200s at the mouth of the Aura River, on the coast of the Archipelago Sea.

With a population of over 200,000, Turku is a dynamic and international city that combines its historical heritage with modern urban development. In 2029, Turku will celebrate its 800th anniversary, further emphasizing its role as a significant cultural, educational, and sustainability leader.

Turku is renowned for its expertise in biotechnology, maritime industries, and the circular economy.

The city is a hub for higher education and research, with its science park serving as a driver for innovations.

Excellent accessibility, an active port, and comprehensive public transport links strengthen

Turku's position as a key node in the Baltic Sea region.

Sustainable development lies at the heart of Turku's strategy. The city's work on climate, biodiversity, and circular economy solutions has gained international recognition.

The city also invests in community-building and inclusion, creating safe and attractive living environments for its residents.

Culture and events are an integral part of Turku's identity. Recognized as the European Capital of Culture in 2011, Turku continues to strengthen its cultural offerings and its appeal, providing experiences for both residents and visitors.

Looking toward the future, Turku combines its historical roots with its ambitious goals, building a more sustainable and vibrant city.



Progress on Goals and Sustainable Development Indicators for 2022–2025

Turku has made significant progress towards its SDGs during 2022–2025, with this progress measurable using the VLR indicators integrated into the city's strategy. Notable advances have been made in climate action, social inclusion, and economic sustainability.

Turku's carbon neutrality goal for 2029 guides the city's decision-making, and the indicators show that emission reductions are progressing as planned.

Investments in energy efficiency, the use of waste heat, and the development of low-emission public transport are concrete actions that support the city's climate goals and create a sustainable infrastructure for future needs.

In terms of social sustainability, the city's investments in combating segregation and reducing regional inequality have produced tangible results, evident in community-driven development and the implementation of new participatory models, such as deliberative democracy projects and influencer groups. Strengthening community engagement is particularly important as Turku's population growth has been exceptionally rapid during the reporting period: in 2024, the city's population increased by 4,229 people, the largest increase in over 50 years.



Most of this growth has come from young people and working-age residents, which supports the city's vitality and economic growth but also presents significant challenges in housing, education, and service network development. Population growth and the city's appeal place pressures on resources, requiring more focused investment to ensure sustainable growth.

The VLR indicators show that population growth supports economic sustainability and labor market dynamism but also increases pressure to densify the urban structure and ensure sustainable use of natural resources.

Turku has responded by investing in the development of public transport, green infrastructure, and sustainable housing solutions. Managing growth effectively is crucial to ensure that the city's vitality and sustainable development goals align with one another.

Through these actions, Turku has managed to create an environment where economic

growth and environmental sustainability support each other while preparing for the challenges that growth brings.

Turku continues to assess and measure its progress towards sustainable development goals regularly using the VLR indicators, ensuring that the city's development is continually transparent and measurable.

These indicators also help ensure that set goals materialize at the practical level, and that Turku can respond to the changing needs and challenges.

In the coming years, particular attention will be given to combating segregation, protecting biodiversity, and enhancing resource efficiency so that the city can grow responsibly and sustainably. This means that future progress will continue to be reported regularly to ensure the city's responsible and equitable development.



SDG 1–17:

Current Status and Concrete Goals

Turku's work on sustainable development is based on the belief that large changes stem from concrete actions. To ensure that the city's efforts are impactful, measurable and time-bound goals have been set for each of the SDGs.

In this report, each goal is discussed separately, examining what has been done in recent years, the challenges faced, and the goals ahead.

Additionally, concrete targets for each SDG have been established, guiding development efforts and creating a clear roadmap for progress. This approach is unique and demonstrates that Turku aims to lead the way in systematically implementing the SDGs.

These concrete goals help ensure that development progresses in a controlled

manner, and the results can be genuinely tracked. This is not only a way to evaluate progress but also a method for engaging stakeholders and resources toward achieving common objectives.

For each goal, the report discusses the measures needed to achieve impacts, how these actions will be implemented in practice, and how progress will be assessed. This ensures that individual actions do not remain isolated but form a sustainable and long-term approach.

Achieving the SDGs is a long-term commitment that relies both on local expertise and extensive cooperation among different actors. Turku believes that such a planned and measurable approach not only promotes sustainable development but also serves as a model for other cities.



SDG 1 No Poverty

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

The City of Turku is committed to combating poverty as a part of its core activities, influencing the level and accessibility of services through its decisions and actions. Special attention is given to preventive services, as corrective actions are often costly and less effective.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Combating poverty and inequality are central priorities for Turku's sustainable development work, and the city is committed to creating long-term solutions to overcome these challenges. Turku is involved in a national program aimed at ending long-term homelessness by 2027. To this end, the city has established a broad cooperation group that includes city stakeholders, the Southwest Finland welfare

region, NGOs, research institutions, and real estate sector actors. In 2023, Turku launched an affordable housing advisory service, which offers free support to all residents, regardless of their housing situation. This service helps prevent rent arrears, evictions, and other housing-related issues.

The Turku City Research Program is funding interdisciplinary research from 2024 to 2025 that examines homelessness prevention and the factors influencing it. The research results will be used in developing new solutions, such as improving the quality and coverage of housing services.

In Turku, particular attention is focused about low-income families with children, as inter-generational poverty poses a significant risk. The city aims to strengthen employment and provide quality education services. Additionally,



the growing share of foreign language speaking residents has increased the need for integration and anti-discrimination efforts.

Turku is investing in preventive services such as housing advice and improving access to education, as well as multidisciplinary support models that combine the expertise of various actors. Additionally, the city's projects focus on preventing segregation and promoting regional equality.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- The main challenges in poverty reduction in Turku are the high proportion of low-income households and regional and social inequality. The risk of intergenerational poverty is particularly significant for low-income families with children.
- The number of households receiving social assistance remains high, and housing costs place a burden on low-income households.
- The increasing share of foreign language speaking residents brings new challenges in integration and combating structural discrimination in the labor and education markets.
- To narrow inequality, better accessibility to low-threshold services and regional equity is needed.

Concrete goals for 2030

The Finnish Ministry of the Environment's programme to eliminate long-term homelessness by 2027 (in Finnish)



SDG 2 Zero Hunger

End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Turku supports the “Zero Hunger” goal by offering nutritious food according to dietary recommendations, particularly for children, young people, and the elderly. Developing healthy school meals, increasing vegetarian options, and reducing food waste are key actions. The city also supports food security by distributing food aid and investing in sustainable food service solutions that reduce inequality and strengthen community ties.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Turku has implemented several actions from 2022 to 2024 to promote food security, nutrition, and ecological sustainability. As the

economic situation has worsened, the demand for food aid has increased, and the city has responded by coordinating the food aid operations in the Southwest Finland region. In cooperation with food aid providers, parishes, welfare areas, educational institutions, and businesses, new, more humane and efficient food distribution models have been developed.

The distribution of surplus food from schools, which began in 2024, has been a successful example of combining ecological sustainability with social justice. This initiative will continue to expand. Additionally, Turku has published national dietary guidelines that promote healthy and sustainable food choices and reduce healthcare costs.



Reducing food waste has been a central goal. Raising awareness and changing behavior at different stages of the food chain have yielded positive results.

Turku has also invested in the long-term sustainability of food aid operations: the food aid regulation that came into force in 2024 improves funding for operations and creates more sustainable conditions for food distribution.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- Future challenges include the growing need for food aid, rising food costs, and the integration of ecologically sustainable solutions into the food system.
- Ensuring food security for all requires the development of new logistical solutions and strengthening multi-sectoral cooperation. Additionally, climate change and biodiversity decline threaten the sustainability of food production.
- In terms of nutrition, the challenge is to ensure healthy and affordable nutrition, especially for vulnerable groups such as children, young people, and the elderly. Developing healthier and more plant-based options in schools and other public food services will require continuous effort.

Concrete goals for 2030

Eliminate food queues and establish humane, equal food distribution system.

Committee for the Promotion of Wellbeing and Health: **State funding granted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to support food aid operations in Southwest Finland in 2024** (in Finnish)



SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

The city's key task is to promote health and well-being of its residents across all age groups. Well-being is seen as a broad concept that includes factors such as education, culture, recreational opportunities, safe and pleasant living environments, and accessible services.

The city is actively developing low-threshold services, such as neighborhood living rooms, which support community engagement and prevent social exclusion.

Additionally, Turku invests in culture and leisure opportunities as a part of supporting well-being, for example, through the cultural pledge and the hobby model. With these actions, Turku aims to ensure that every resident has the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

The core task of the City of Turku is to secure and promote well-being of its residents. This is achieved by providing high-quality and accessible services and strengthening community involvement. Well-being is influenced by many factors, such as education, culture, recreation, safety, and service availability. Turku's city strategy aims for a thriving Turku by 2030.

During the reporting period, the city has implemented numerous actions to promote well-being. Through the community well-being initiative, many societal issues, such as loneliness, regional segregation, and social exclusion, have been addressed. To prevent social exclusion, a safety plan for children and



youth, a youth service guidance model, and Wimma's night café activities have been developed. Additionally, pilot projects using situation-based management have been tested, enabling more precise resource allocation for the identified needs.

Turku's cultural pledge supports residents' well-being by enabling equal access to cultural services for all residents. The goal is for culture to be present in everyone's daily life, regardless of their age or background. The cultural pledge

includes low-threshold cultural events and programs that reach a wide variety of resident groups.

Furthermore, Turku's Hobby Model promotes opportunities for children and young people to participate in free or low-cost leisure activities. The goal is to offer every child and young person a meaningful recreational activity that supports their social, physical, and mental well-being.

Regarding mental health and preventive substance abuse work, Turku has provided training for NGOs, professionals, and residents. The city has also piloted national operating models, such as the Mieli ry's "Good Mood Municipality" concept, and developed services supporting the work capacity of the unemployed as a part of the employment reform.

A significant achievement has been development of the neighborhood living room concept. Currently, there are 12 such spaces, covering all major districts of Turku. These low-threshold spaces offer a safe, substance-free, and inclusive environment for residents and are a key part of the city's preventive well-being services.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- While most of Turku's residents enjoy good well-being, the polarization of well-being between different areas and population groups remains a significant challenge.
- Issues such as loneliness, mental health problems, and regional segregation require the city to develop new, innovative ways of supporting residents' well-being.
- It is also important to strengthen residents' ability to promote their own health and well-being.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Turku's Hobby Model:**
Every child and young person in Turku will have access to a preferred, free hobby.
- **Cultural Pledge:**
 - Every child and young person will have at least one cultural or artistic experience annually as a part of basic education, promoting cultural accessibility and inclusion among different demographic groups.
 - Promote the cultural inclusion of older adults by providing easily accessible cultural services that enhance their well-being and prevent loneliness. Special emphasis will be placed on developing low-threshold cultural offerings and events that cater to the specific needs of older residents.



SDG 4 Quality Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Turku invests in high-quality and equitable education, as well as lifelong learning opportunities, to strengthen the skills and competitiveness of its residents.

The city promotes learning goals by improving the quality of early childhood education and basic education and supports secondary education as an accessible option for all. Strengthening the language skills of multilingual students is an important part of promoting educational equality.

Additionally, collaboration with universities and businesses supports lifelong learning opportunities and innovations. Turku's education strategy emphasizes equality and aims to ensure that all residents can learn and develop throughout their lives.

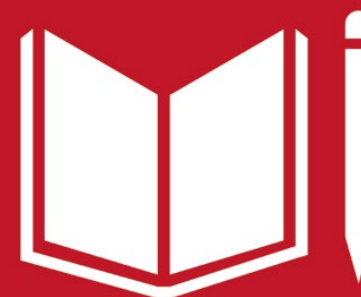
2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

The City of Turku is committed to promoting educational equality and accessibility, which is reflected in concrete actions from the early childhood education through to the secondary education.

Close cooperation between education services and employment and integration services played an important role, particularly in supporting immigrant students and ensuring their smooth transition in the education system.

The city made significant investments in building new daycares and schools, as well as renovating existing facilities, ensuring high-quality and safe learning environments for all students.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Particular attention has been paid to the needs of late-arriving young people, as their educational paths and adaptation to the school system require tailored solutions. Educational guidance and Finnish as a second language (S2) teaching have been developed to ensure that these young people receive the support they need both in language and academic skills. The literacy strategy has also strengthened basic literacy among children and youth, which is especially important in the early stages of their educational paths.

The city has responded to the growing demand for the upper secondary education by increasing the number of starting places, ensuring that as many young people as possible can access post-secondary education. This is an important step from both an individual and societal perspective, as it prevents social exclusion and improves future potential employability.

The “Best Learning Path in the Country” project, launched in 2024, provided valuable insights into areas for development in education and teaching. The project surveyed the views of students, parents, and teachers on how education services can be improved, and its results will support future decision-making.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- The growth in Turku’s population increases the demand for services, particularly in primary and secondary education.
- The city’s growing diversity due to immigration presents challenges in improving learning outcomes and ensuring educational equality.
- Additionally, staff well-being and expertise are key factors in providing quality education.
- The decline in learning outcomes and regional segregation are significant challenges, as is supporting multilingual learners at all educational levels.
- Preventing bullying and violence in school communities, supporting families, strengthening cooperation with guardians, and developing language skills as prerequisites for employment and social integration are also central for the future.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Vision for Skills:**
Half of the 25–34-year-old population will have a higher education degree by 2030.
- **The Best Learning Path in the Country:**
Turku will have the best learning path in the country, ensuring that all Turku residents have sufficient literacy and numeracy skills.
- **Mayor’s Program:**
Turku will be Finland’s best upper secondary educator, with every young person graduating with at least a secondary degree.



SDG 5 Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Turku promotes gender equality by integrating it into the city's decision-making and services. The city aims to ensure that all residents have equal opportunities in education, employment, and well-being services, regardless of their gender.

Turku also works actively to prevent and identify violence against women and domestic violence in collaboration with NGOs and other actors.

Strengthening gender equality is a key part of the city's strategic goal of promoting equality and social inclusion.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

The City of Turku promotes gender equality across many sectors, including health services, education, and employment. The city aims to identify and prevent violence against women, as well as family and domestic violence, which remain significant challenges.

The city's equality and gender equality plan includes a monitoring framework to assess and advance gender equality more effectively. This framework uses the SDGs of Agenda 2030 and provides information, for example, on gender, age groups, and education levels. This enables services to be targeted more effectively and equitably.



During the reporting period, the city has focused on promoting gender equality by developing data-driven leadership. The monitoring framework built to track equality and gender equality enables the analysis of the situations of different population groups and the targeting of services as needed.

The indicators have revealed significant gender differences, for example, in homelessness, education levels, and health. In addition, Turku has focused on strengthening the targeting of services and resources to better serve gender equality.

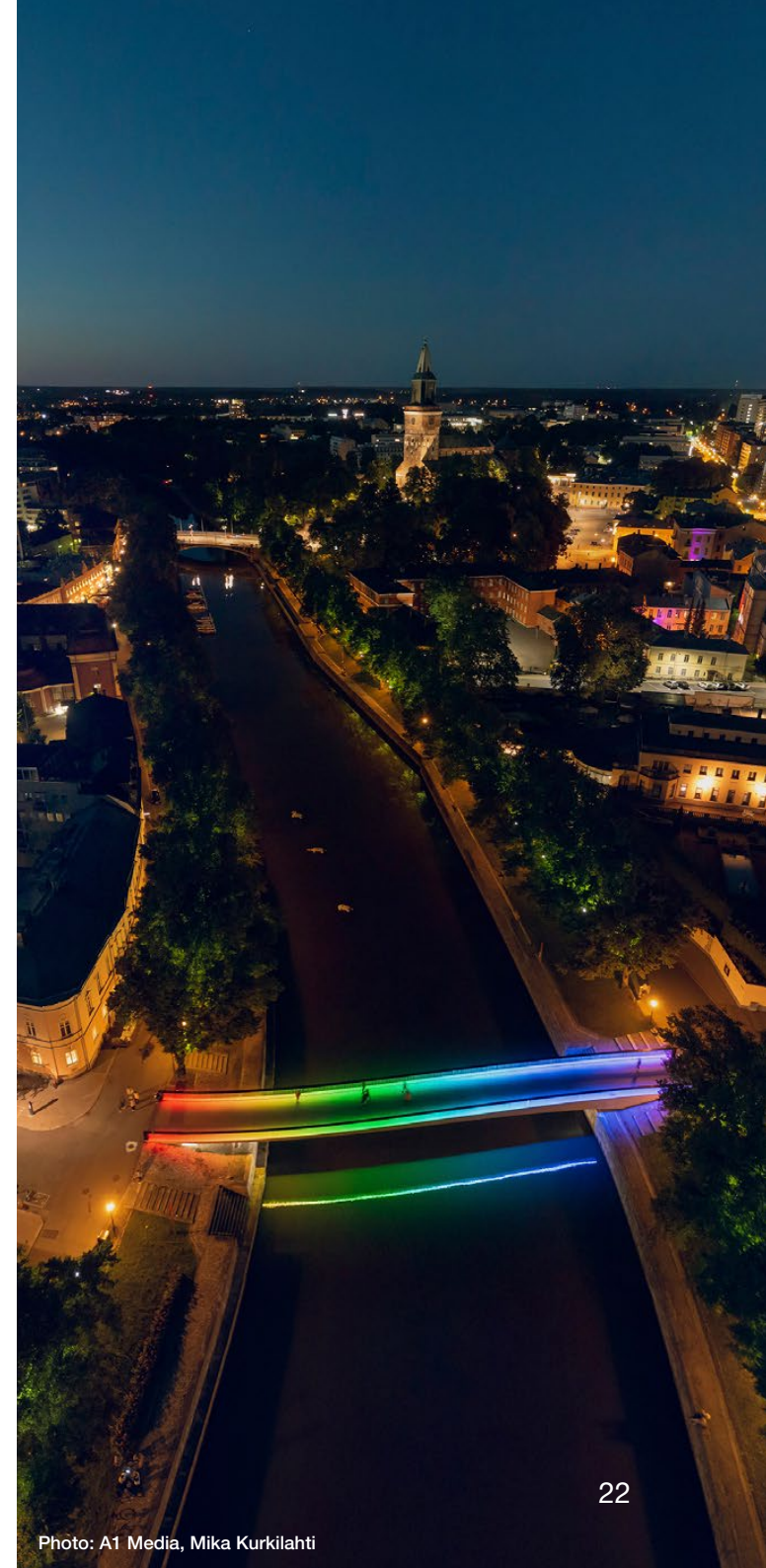
Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- The biggest challenges in Turku are the higher homelessness rate, lower education levels, and higher unemployment among men compared to women. Boys are more likely to be overweight from early childhood, while girls face higher levels of loneliness and anxiety, especially in early adolescence. Gender differences in these issues tend to level out in adulthood, but the well-being gap between different education levels remains significant.
- To promote gender equality, the city must continue to develop data-driven leadership in its customer and reporting systems. In addition to population-level well-being indicators, data on the gendered allocation of services and resources is needed.

Concrete goal for 2030

- **Equality and gender equality plan:** City of Turku's staff will regularly have access to training and workshops on equality, gender equality, and gender diversity, as well as norm-aware pedagogy.



SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Turku ensures the availability of clean water and sustainable water use through high-quality water supply and wastewater treatment services. The city owns water supply and sewage facilities that guarantee residents safe drinking water and sanitation. Turku also invests in reducing water pollution and protecting water bodies, which further promotes environmental well-being and sustainable development.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

The City of Turku plays a significant role in ensuring sustainable water abstraction, water availability, and wastewater treatment. These efforts guarantee safe drinking water and hygiene, as well as contribute to the protection of water bodies. The city owns water supply and

sewage facilities, the operation of which directly impacts service quality, pricing, and the reduction of wastewater pollution in water bodies.

Clean water and sanitation are key areas where the city promotes sustainable development and the achievement of climate goals.

During the reporting period, Turku has made significant progress in the development of water supply and wastewater treatment. In 2023, a UV treatment plant was introduced that continuously disinfects wastewater to a quality that meets swimming water standards. Furthermore, the city's wastewater treatment plants operate significantly more efficiently than environmental permits require, which has greatly reduced the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen, and other pollutants entering water bodies.



In terms of climate impact, Turun seudun puhdistamo Oy has achieved a significant reduction in its carbon footprint. The treatment of municipal wastewater, the beneficial use of sludge in a biogas plant, and the use of wastewater heat have made the overall operation carbon-negative, meaning it has a better environmental impact than carbon neutrality. The treatment plant produces approximately ten times more energy than it consumes.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- The impacts of climate change, such as increased stormwater, will cause overflow events and rising costs for wastewater treatment. To manage overflow and reduce costs, active collaboration and new technologies are needed.
- Wastewater treatment is also a critical operation for continuity, so ensuring operational continuity and strengthening cybersecurity will be key priorities in the future.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Turun seudun puhdistamo:**
 - Turun seudun puhdistamo aims to reduce pollution in water bodies, especially phosphorus and nitrogen, exceeding environmental permit requirements.
 - Turku region water companies are committed to a shared environmental program that includes actions to promote sustainable water management and the protection of the Baltic Sea by 2029.
- **Turun vesihuolto:**

Turun vesihuolto aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2029, requiring improvements in energy efficiency and emission reductions in water supply operations.



Photo: Turun seudun puhdistamo

SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

Turku supports sustainable and clean energy production and improving energy efficiency through the energy companies it owns.

The city utilizes new energy forms in public transport, transportation services, and buildings. In addition, the city's strategic entities are committed to Turku's climate goals and contribute to the transition towards a carbon-neutral future.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Turku supports sustainable energy production and improving energy efficiency. The city owns energy production facilities that play a central role in achieving regional

climate goals. New energy forms are being used in public transportation and buildings. Turku Energy and the city's strategic entities are working towards the city's goal of carbon neutrality by 2029.

During the reporting period, Turku Energy has made long-term investments in increasing renewable energy and improving energy efficiency. The company has implemented a climate and environmental program to support the city's climate goals. The district heating, steam, cooling, and electricity sold by Turku Energy are targeted to be produced completely carbon-neutrally by 2029. Investments in electric boilers at the Pääskyvuori site aim to reduce the use of combustion technologies



and fossil fuels. Solar panel projects, electric car charging solutions, and demand-response services have been implemented in cooperation with customers.

Turku Energy has also been involved in EU-funded projects, such as RESPONSE and USER-CHI, promoting electric mobility and sustainable energy solutions. A new energy solution implemented at the Tyysijä site, utilizing return heat from district cooling and the district heating network, won the European Heat Pump Association's award Heat Pump City of the Year 2024.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- The future opportunities lie in the development of intelligent and flexible energy systems, electrified district heating production, and sector integration.
- The utilization of waste heat (e.g., from data centers), heat and cold storage development, and carbon capture and storage offer significant ways to advance energy production and networks' flexibility.
- The energy sector's goal is to promote biodiversity in a way that the overall impact on nature is positive by 2035.

Concrete goals for 2030

Turku Energy:

- Carbon-neutral energy production: all energy forms sold by Turku Energy will be produced carbon-neutrally.
- Waste heat utilization: waste heat from data centers and other sources will be captured for use in the district heating network.

Turku Energy, the City of Turku, and development partners:

- Smart energy system: develop flexible and efficient energy solutions that respond to consumption peaks and enable broader use of renewable energy.



SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Turku is a significant employer and promotes sustainable economic growth through responsible human resource policies and strategic procurements.

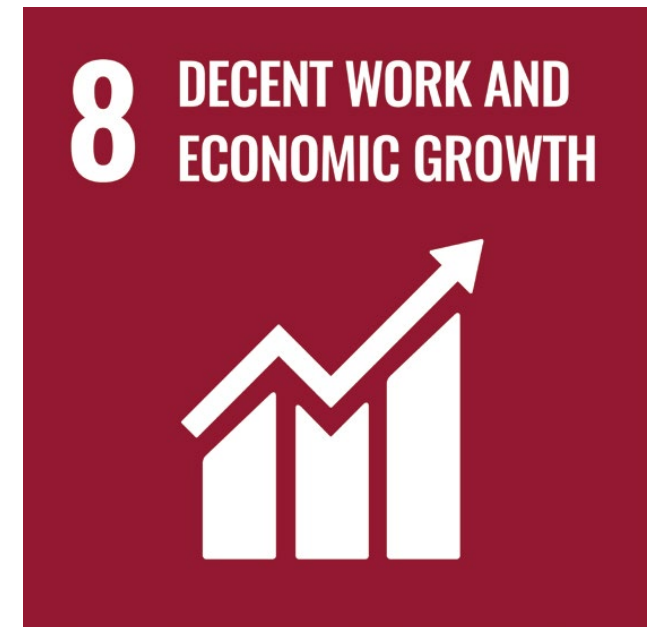
The city's employment services and Business Turku support the development of local economy, regional vitality, and creation of new jobs.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Turku is a major employer in the region, and the city influences the achievement of this goal through its human resource policies and procurement practices.

The city's employment services and Business Turku play important roles in supporting the local economy, regional vitality, and employment growth.

During the reporting period, the City of Turku, as a part of the municipal employment experiment, has offered career planning, job search assistance, and training placement services, particularly to residents facing employment challenges. The "Ohjaamo" service has been available for young people, and the "Työpiste" production initiative has provided low-threshold jobs and pathways to the open labor market.



Employment through procurement is a part of Turku's procurement strategy, where applicable tenders and contracts include a requirement for the contractor to employ people in difficult labor market positions, such as those with partial work capacity, long-term unemployed individuals, or young people at the start of their careers.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- In 2025, responsibility for organizing public employment services will shift to municipalities. Turku will form a labor market area together with 22 other municipalities in Southwest Finland, serving as the lead municipality. The city will provide statutory employment services for the municipalities in the region, as well as for employers and jobseekers in Turku.
- Turku's goal is to achieve an unemployment rate lower than the national average for large cities. Special attention will be paid to the services for immigrants, young people, and long-term unemployed.
- Workforce growth, particularly through immigration, drives regional economic growth, but the employment rate of foreign-language speakers remains lower than that of Finnish- and Swedish-speaking residents. Additionally, youth unemployment and long-term unemployment pose significant challenges that require new solutions.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **City Plan 2029 / City Board of Turku 22.5.2017:** Achieve 115,000 jobs in Turku by 2029.
- **Turku City Strategy Turku in the 2030s:** The unemployment rate in Turku will be lower than the national average for large cities.
- **City Plan 2029:** Blue Industry Park (BIP) in the Turku shipyard area will be home to 100 companies and 10,000 employees.



SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.

Turku promotes sustainable infrastructure through land use planning, zoning, and construction. This includes maintenance of streets and public spaces, waste and water management, and development of quality telecommunications networks.

Services are provided through the city's corporate entities and regional cooperation, which also supports business operations and regional vitality.

The city utilizes data-driven decision-making to ensure the sustainability of services and infrastructure development and to enhance residents' well-being.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Turku has a significant impact on the development of sustainable infrastructure through land use planning, zoning, and construction. The city invests in maintaining streets and public areas, organizing waste and water management, and improving telecommunications networks.

Functional infrastructure supports business activity and market functionality, strengthening sustainable development solutions. Regional cooperation and city procurements play a central role in promoting these goals.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



The city has implemented projects such as the Sustainable Urban Logistics Plan (SULP), which supports efficient and emissions-free freight transport.

The development of smart energy systems and the use of renewable energy sources have been important priorities, and solutions for circular economy and resource efficiency were developed in cooperation with stakeholders.

The Joki Innovation and Visitor Center has strengthened cooperation between the city,

businesses, and universities by providing a platform for new innovations.

Turku's cooperation with higher education institutions has been a key part of promoting sustainable development. The city has collaborated with regional universities on research, development, and innovation projects focusing on digitalization, renewable energy solutions, and the circular economy. Through this collaboration, new technologies and practices have been introduced that support sustainable development goals both locally and globally.

In recent years, RDI (Research, Development, and Innovation) activities have played a central role in Turku's development. Business Turku has promoted bioeconomy, circular economy, and energy efficiency innovation projects in cooperation with local companies and universities. The city has participated in several EU-funded projects supporting digitalization, low-carbon energy solutions, and sustainable mobility. These actions have strengthened Turku's position as a leader in sustainable development and innovation.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- One of the key future challenges for Turku in advancing sustainable infrastructure, industry, and innovation is securing adequate funding for large-scale investments, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainable transport solutions. Without sufficient financial input, the sustainable development goals may not be achieved. Turku will need new financing models that combine public and private resources, as well as strategic planning to ensure resources are effectively targeted.
- Technological advancements will be crucial for ensuring access to innovative and environmentally friendly solutions. Technologies related to circular economy, energy efficiency, and smart city infrastructure will require continuous development and investment. Turku must also ensure that its residents, businesses, and organizations can benefit from the technology transfer and new solutions.
- Strengthening cooperation will be vital in addressing these challenges. Regional cooperation with other municipalities in Southwest Finland is important for climate actions and transport system development. Internationally, Turku must continue to actively participate in the EU-funded projects and city networks, such as the Baltic Sea region cooperation, to share technology, knowledge, and best practices.
- Developing the knowledge base for decision-making is also a key challenge. Collecting and analyzing up-to-date and high-quality data will allow for better monitoring and assessment of the progress of sustainable development goals. This is especially important for monitoring the climate budget and planning and implementing infrastructure projects.

SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Addressing these challenges requires Turku to engage in strategic and long-term actions that leverage strong cooperation with higher education institutions, innovations, and partnerships among various stakeholders. Turku aims to build a sustainable and competitive city that serves as a model both nationally and internationally in promoting sustainable development.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Turku City Strategy:**
Modern, smart services: many services will be digital and accessible; the indicators for this will be the proportion of digital services relative to the total number of services and user experience.
- **The City of Turku's Vitality Programme:**
Increasing RDI investments: Turku will increase RDI investments to 4% by 2030.
- **MAL Agreement on Land Use, Housing, and Transport:**
Sustainable land use: at least 85% of new residential building areas in the zoning plan will be directed toward urban/town development target areas, and diversified housing development will meet the needs of various residents.



SDG 10 Reduced Inequality

Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Turku attempts inequality reduction through equality and anti-discrimination plans and a wide range of services related to education, sports, and recreational opportunities. The city collaborates closely with NGOs, educational institutions, and other organizations to ensure that services are accessible to all. Additionally, Turku emphasizes the active involvement of residents and stakeholders in the city's activities and decision-making, supporting transparency and strengthening inclusion.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Turku reduces inequality through a variety of measures, including welfare, equality, and anti-discrimination plans, and services. Improving access to education, sports, and recreational

opportunities, as well as involving residents and stakeholders in decision-making, are key methods to achieve this goal.

Turku has taken a comprehensive approach to preventing segregation and its effects. The city has developed a collaborative governance model aimed at data-driven decision-making and increasing understanding of the regional segregation. Using the Trimble Locus Cloud geospatial platform and reporting portal, the city collects and analyzes data on the well-being and socio-economic changes of residents.

In 2023, Turku carried out a geospatial study in collaboration with Ubigu Oy on regional segregation, which provides geographically accurate information on segregation. Based on these results, services such as sports services are being targeted in areas with the greatest need.



To prevent school segregation, Turku has implemented the “Kaikil’ hyvä opintie” (Everyone’s Good Learning Path) program, which includes a roadmap for reducing segregation. The distribution of resources across schools has been renewed to support equal learning opportunities. Schools are also used as engines of regional development through the “School as a Platform” model, which opens schools for a broader community use.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

One of Turku's greatest challenges is preventing segregation in the longer timeframe. Stopping advancement of segregation requires systematic planning, adequate resources, and development of evaluation models. Measuring the impact of resources is challenging, and results often become visible only in the long term. To combat segregation, it is important to ensure that the evaluation of investments and projects considers their impact on reducing inequality.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Decision of the city council 10.6.2024:**
Develop and institutionalize a set of indicators for measuring the impacts of segregation, which will be integrated into the city's decision-making.
- **Core Working Group for Children and Youth / City of Turku Operational Plan 2025–2027:**
Reduce the effects of school segregation: implement the roadmap for reducing school segregation and the associated actions across all educational levels to increase community engagement.
- **Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan:**
The City of Turku is committed to systematically considering the needs and perspectives of disadvantaged and minority groups in both decision-making and service design, promoting equality and inclusion at all levels of its operations.



SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Ensure safe and sustainable cities and human settlements.

Turku promotes safe and sustainable urban environments through land use, zoning, and construction. The city develops infrastructure, provides affordable rental housing, and emphasizes residents' participation in decision-making. Key aspects of Turku's approach include area maintenance, traffic planning, development of public transport, and improving the comfort and safety of local environments — all of which support the goals of sustainable urban development.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Turku promotes sustainable cities and communities through land use, urban planning, and construction. The city invests in a sustainable urban structure, participatory city planning, and the creation of diverse residential areas. Turku

also supports the development of public transport, improvements to cycling and pedestrian routes, and stormwater management to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The City Plan 2029 directs growth toward the city center and along main public transport routes, supporting a functional and sustainable urban structure. 96% of new local detailed plans are located within areas of densifying urban structure. The goal is to reduce car dependency and increase the use of sustainable modes of transport.

The city has introduced stormwater management requirements and green factor indicators, which support the creation of greener, more ecological, and pleasant environments. These actions also help prevent stormwater flooding and promote biodiversity.



Resident participation is a key part of Turku's planning. The city utilizes a wide range of participatory methods, including public meetings for zoning plans, feedback services, participatory budgeting, and digital "Share Your Opinion" surveys. These tools improve the accessibility and transparency of decision-making.

Resident satisfaction with urban technical services has been monitored since 1996. In 2023, the highest satisfaction was reported in the quality of drinking water, recycling opportunities, and street lighting. Improvements were especially needed in the winter maintenance of pedestrian and bicycle paths.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- Turku's rapid population growth demands continuous development of public transport and sustainable urban structure. According to the 2024 population forecast, Turku's population could grow by up to 59,000 people by 2040. The city is preparing for this by renewing its public transport system — for example, by launching Föli's trunk line network in 2025 and continuing the planning of the light rail system.
- Reducing the carbon footprint of construction is a central objective. The city is proposing limit values for carbon emissions in its building ordinance, with plans to tighten these gradually. Zoning regulations will support low-carbon development, for example by encouraging the reuse of building materials and the preservation of existing structures.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Climate Plan 2029:**
Construct a high-capacity, carbon-neutral public transport system to support sustainable urban development and meet growing demand along trunk routes
- **City Board 8.2.2021 § 70:**
Expand the use of green factor indicators: All new local detailed plans aim to create a sustainable and green urban environment.
- **Climate Plan 2029 and City Plan 2029:**
Increase the modal share of walking, cycling, and public transport through active measures. The share of sustainable modes of transport will exceed 66% by 2030.
- **City Plan 2029:**
Expand pedestrian zones and buffer areas. Improve accessibility to the city center with high-quality cycling infrastructure and efficient public transport. Detailed goals for traffic in the city center are outlined in the section "Mobility in a sustainable urban structure."



SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The City of Turku promotes sustainable consumption and production by reducing food waste, minimizing overall waste volumes, and improving the efficiency of waste management.

The city adheres to the principles of sustainable development in all public procurement by incorporating environmental and social responsibility. Although the majority of procurements relate to services, the most significant carbon footprint originates from energy use and construction of buildings. To reduce this, Turku is investing in energy-efficient solutions.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Turku advances responsible consumption and production across multiple sectors. The city's efforts have focused on reducing food waste, promoting the circular economy, strengthening

responsibility in public procurement, and embedding sustainable practices across municipal operations. A key objective is to raise awareness of sustainability among both residents and city employees.

Turku's procurement strategy guides all procurement activities toward more responsible approaches. The city has adopted category-specific strategies that include quality criteria related to sustainability, cost-efficiency, and social responsibility. These strategies ensure that aspects such as environmental friendliness, circularity, and emissions reduction are considered in procurement decisions.

In food services, the focus has been on halving food waste and increasing the share of plant-based meals. For example, vegetarian options are available daily in schools, and the city actively collaborates with service



providers to reduce food waste. By 2023, the carbon footprint of the standard menu had decreased by at least 30%, largely by replacing beef with lower-emission protein alternatives.

Turku has also organized “Responsible Procurer” training for employees, focusing on ecological, economic, and social sustainability in procurement. In addition, the city has introduced participatory models for students and residents, such as food councils and student council cooperation, to embed responsible consumption into everyday life from an early age.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- A key challenge for Turku is to further increase the use of responsibility criteria in public procurement. This requires close collaboration between procurement professionals, sustainability experts, and market stakeholders. Market research is conducted in all major goods and service procurements to better integrate sustainability objectives.
- In food services, the city aims to continue halving food waste, increasing vegetable consumption, and further reducing the carbon footprint of food production. Turku plans to apply new national nutritional guidelines in the development of public food services and will work to enhance children's and young people's awareness of sustainable food choices.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Procurement Strategy:**
 - Substantially increase the share of circular economy principles in all procurement categories.
 - Include anti-shadow economy measures in all city procurements.
- **Procurement Strategy and 2023 Implementation Summary:**

Double the number of staff trained through the “Responsible Procurer” programme.



SDG 13 Climate Actions

Urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Turku is implementing an ambitious climate plan with the goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2029. The city has already reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 70% compared to 1990 levels, and has the lowest per capita emissions among Finland's major cities. The most significant reductions have come from shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Emissions from transport have also been substantially reduced.

Turku applies climate budgeting to assess the impact of investments and advances its climate goals through land use, construction, transport, and energy efficiency solutions.

Climate awareness is actively promoted, and local businesses and organizations are engaged through the Climate City Contract. At the same time, the city is developing strategies for climate risk management and adaptation.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

The City of Turku is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2029 and is a nationally and internationally leading climate city. The city influences climate change mitigation and adaptation through energy solutions, land use, planning, transportation, housing, and construction. Additionally, the city's mission is to increase climate awareness and promote sustainable practices among both residents and the business community.

During the reporting period, the City of Turku implemented climate budgeting, which guides and tracks the achievement of its carbon neutrality goal.

District heating production has shifted to low-carbon solutions by utilizing waste heat, biofuels, and heat pumps. In addition, the



city has initiated the design of a tram system as a part of its zero-emission public transport and included carbon footprint limits for construction projects in the city's building regulations, with these limits being gradually tightened.

Low-carbon supportive provisions, such as recycling requirements and material reuse mandates, have also been introduced in planning.

To prepare for the impacts of climate change, provisions for stormwater management have been included in zoning regulations to prevent heavy rainfall and flooding.

Furthermore, the city's infrastructure investments are directed toward enhancing climate resilience, such as implementing heat pump solutions and electric boilers to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

During the reporting period, Turku also joined the European Mission for Climate-Neutral Cities, and has gathered key regional companies, universities, and public organizations as partners in the Climate City Agreement.

The city has also strengthened the operations of the open Climate Team, a community-driven network that promotes climate actions and sharing climate-related stories.

The Climate Team, which includes around 150 businesses and organizations, is committed to concrete emissions reduction actions and shares best practices to support climate work. The collaboration network also serves as a platform for raising climate awareness and conducting joint projects that support the city's low-carbon goals.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future Challenges

Turku aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2029, which requires stronger participation from key local actors in climate actions, as well as continuous investment in low-carbon solutions, renewable energy, energy efficiency improvements, and sustainable mobility. The city's infrastructure must be developed to enhance climate resilience, and planning must continue to support low-carbon construction and the circular economy.

Increasing climate awareness among residents and encouraging their active participation in climate actions will be key future priorities. The city must utilize participatory models and communication to encourage sustainable lifestyles. At the same time, the city aims to integrate climate adaptation measures, such as storm-water management and flood risk reduction, into all levels of urban planning and infrastructure development.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Carbon-neutral Turku by 2029**

- Climate Plan 2029
- Climate City Agreement
- Climate Budgeting

- **Sustainable energy transition development**

- Transition toward non-combustion solutions
- Energy renewal in the built environment and human activities
- Climate Plan 2029
- Climate City Agreement
- Climate Budgeting

- **Low-carbon mobility measures**

- Sustainable urban mobility plan (SUMP)
- Development of public transportation
- Development measures for walking and cycling
- Extensive projects that renew mobility culture and solutions

- **Enhancing carbon sinks (and biodiversity)**

- Climate Plan 2029
- Turku City Forest Program
- LUMO Program
- Land use and zoning

- **Sustainable urban structure and construction**

- Leading sustainable urban development projects
- Collaboration in land use, housing, and transportation in the urban region (and MAL Agreement)
- Carbon footprint limit for residential buildings (16,0 kgCO₂e/m²/a, to be demonstrated at the final inspection).

Turku City Building Regulations 2025
(in Finnish)

- **Regular monitoring and reporting of the climate budget across all sectors.**

- Climate Plan 2029





Photo: Laidun-design Oy, Marko Kivistö

SDG 14 Life Below Water

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

The City of Turku promotes this goal through spatial planning, water protection, and enhanced wastewater treatment. In addition, the city uses sustainable public procurement and investments, and supports research and collaboration to improve the conservation of water bodies and marine biodiversity.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Turku plays an active role in protecting the Baltic Sea and advancing the sustainable use of marine resources.

The city contributes to achieving this goal through spatial planning, water protection measures, efficient wastewater treatment, responsible procurement, and research cooperation. These efforts aim to secure the health of aquatic ecosystems and reduce the city's waterborne pollution load.

In cooperation with the City of Helsinki, Turku is implementing its fourth Baltic Sea Action Plan (2024–2028), which includes 27 concrete measures to reduce pollution.

During the VLR reporting period, Turku introduced a new UV disinfection system that improves the quality of coastal waters and ensures compliance with bathing water standards. Three new boat sewage disposal stations have been installed, and the construction of nature-based stormwater solutions has continued across several districts.

Turku's City Plan 2029 includes a unique sustainable water management map, and the new building code requires the use of a green factor in planning. These tools support the promotion of biodiversity and sustainable stormwater management.

The city has carried out stream restoration projects, such as the rehabilitation of the



Kuninkoja urban stream and the headwaters of the Järvioja stream. On city-owned leased farmland, nutrient runoff into water bodies has been reduced through improved agricultural practices.

The Port of Turku has developed environmentally friendly waste reception systems, and environmental port fee incentives encourage more sustainable shipping practices.

In municipal food services, the use of locally sourced fish has increased, and carbon footprint calculations are now integrated into menu planning.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- Turku's growth and increasingly compact urban structure place additional pressure on aquatic ecosystems. Climate change impacts — including rising rainfall and stormwater volumes — require innovative management solutions.
- The city aims to increase the area of protected and ecologically valuable habitats under its ownership by 25% by 2029, and to complete a survey of underwater habitats and species by 2027. A rehabilitation plan for the Halistenkoski rapids is expected by 2025.
- Strengthening participatory decision-making and cooperation with research institutions and residents will be essential to achieving the goals of sustainable water management and marine protection.
- Turku is also committed to increasing awareness of marine conservation through activities such as the annual Baltic Sea Day and events promoting ocean literacy.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Stormwater Strategy:**
Reduce stormwater pollution by 20% from current levels.
- **Turku Biodiversity Programme (LUMO):**
 - Increase the area of protected and ecologically valuable sites by 25%.
 - Complete the mapping of underwater habitats and species by 2027.



SDG 15 Life on Land

Protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

Turku promotes biodiversity in the region through land use planning, zoning, and building regulations. The city owns significant forest areas and is responsible for the remediation of contaminated land, which supports sustainable environmental management. Regional cooperation and partnerships with other stakeholders strengthen the achievement of these goals.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

The City of Turku plays a significant role in promoting biodiversity in its own area and through regional cooperation. The city uses land use planning, zoning, and building regulations, as

well as managing its forest areas and remediating contaminated land. Additionally, Turku implements proactive land use planning through comprehensive nature surveys and supports establishment of the new nature reserves.

In 2023, Turku approved its first Biodiversity Program (LUMO 2023–2029), which aims to increase the area of nature reserves owned by the city by at least 25%.

The program includes the restoration of hardwood forests, meadows, peatlands, and bog areas, as well as improving habitats for endangered species. Invasive species control has been strengthened, and biodiversity expertise has been integrated into the city's operations.



Key projects included establishment of the Mälikkälä Nature Reserve and restoration of Pomponrahka bog with support from the HELMI program. The city has also implemented the Coastal-Life project, focusing on the management and development of Natura areas.

Turku has also carried out several comprehensive nature surveys, such as forest network, flying squirrel survey, and green space accessibility surveys. These help guide the city's land use in a sustainable direction, ensuring nature values are proactively considered.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- Turku aims to fully implement the LUMO program by 2029 and prepare a new program by 2030. The city also aims to achieve a 10% protection rate in accordance with the EU Biodiversity Strategy. This requires prioritizing nature conservation in budgets and ensuring sufficient human resources.
- In land use planning, it is important to prevent the loss of green spaces and set clear goals for preserving the quality and quantity of green environments. New opportunities for nature conservation, such as using native plants and creating new habitats for endangered species, need to be more widely implemented.
- The integration of biodiversity expertise across all levels of governance and into the city's corporate entities is crucial for advancing sustainability as a part of normal operations.

Concrete goals for 2030

Turku Biodiversity Program (LUMO):

- Increase the area of nature reserves owned by the City of Turku by at least 25%.
- Achieve a 10% protection rate in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy.
- Expand the restoration of ecologically valuable habitats and establish new habitats for endangered species.



SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Promote peaceful societies, ensure equal access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

Turku promotes a safe and welcoming urban environment through land use planning and construction. The city plays a key role in local democracy, where decision-making and the opportunity for residents to participate and influence decisions are crucial in building trust, strengthening social peace, and supporting a democratic society.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

The City of Turku promotes the principles of peace, justice, and good governance, focusing on creating a safe and welcoming urban environment through land use planning and construction. In recent years, the city has made significant investments in developing residents'

opportunities for participation and influence. For example, the total amount for participatory budgeting has been increased to three million euros in line with the mayoral program, and new democratic methods, such as deliberative citizen discussions, have been institutionalized as a part of the city's engagement work.

Turku has a diverse range of advocacy groups, such as the senior citizens' council, disability council, youth council, multicultural council, and the Children's Parliament, which provide a platform for various groups' participation and influence. The city has particularly focused on increasing participation opportunities for multicultural residents and children. Through these groups, residents can influence significant decisions that promote equality and inclusion.



Turku has also integrated sustainable development work into its city strategy. A key part of the strategy, the VLR indicators, enable systematic monitoring of sustainable development goals and assessment of the impact of actions.

Additionally, the city has developed data-driven decision-making practices that support transparency and rely on up-to-date, accurate and objective information. This data is used, for example, to analyze residents' well-being and segregation trends, helping to allocate resources effectively and fairly.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- In the future, Turku will face challenges such as population growth, increasing segregation, and ensuring the participation of all population groups. A key model for preventing segregation, which enables all Turku residents to have the conditions for a good life, will be essential. This requires targeting of resources and long-term commitment.
- The city aims to continue developing deliberative democracy methods and ensure their effectiveness. Strengthening democracy will particularly emphasize the inclusion of marginalized groups and further development of resident-driven practices. This requires close cooperation between the city's departments and corporate entities.
- Turku will continue strengthening its sustainable development work through the city strategy and deepen cooperation with the regional and national actors. The application of VLR indicators will be expanded, and they will be used to monitor how well the city succeeds in promoting peace, justice, and good governance. This ensures that the city's actions align with the needs of residents and support long-term social peace.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Reduce inequality in residential areas:** The goal is to create pleasant, accessible, and safe residential areas and significantly reduce inequality between areas.
 - [City Council 10.6.2024](#) (in Finnish)
- **Turku City Early Childhood Education Plan:** The goal is to reduce the effects of segregation by improving the Finnish language skills of multilingual children in early childhood education.
- **City Strategy Turku in the 2030s:** Turku City will achieve all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.



SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Turku promotes this goal by actively building partnerships and collaborating locally, regionally, and internationally. The city works with various stakeholders, including businesses, universities, organizations, and other municipalities, to ensure the achievement of sustainable development goals.

2022–2024: Key measures to achieve this goal

Regional cooperation in the Turku metropolitan area is a key element in advancing sustainable development goals. Cooperation with municipalities in Southwest Finland focuses particularly on climate action, transportation system development, and improvements in water management. For example, regional transportation system work has enabled the implementation of more sustainable and accessible transportation solutions, while the

Turku region's climate partnership network has strengthened measures aimed at reducing climate emissions across the area. Furthermore, the metropolitan area actively invests in development of the residential areas, particularly in reducing segregation and combating regional inequality.

In the Six Cities Alliance, efforts are made to jointly increase the number of early childhood education professionals, reduce segregation, improve employment services, and attract international talent to the region. These themes aim to support sustainable social and economic development, as well as enhance regional competitiveness and equality.

The Turku and Southwest Finland European Office plays an important role in the city's participation in the EU-funded projects that support regional development and sustainable innovation activities. Internationally, Turku is



an active participant in the Baltic Sea Region's urban networks, focusing on strengthening climate actions, reducing regional inequality, and promoting good governance.

Collaboration with universities, organizations, and businesses complements the city's sustainable development work by providing concrete solutions to common challenges. These partnerships ensure that Turku can utilize both local and international resources and expertise. With these collaborative networks, the Turku metropolitan area is a strong actor promoting sustainable development.

Looking ahead – challenges and new goals

Future challenges

- A key challenge for Turku in achieving sustainable development goals is the adequacy of funding. This requires directing both public and private investments toward sustainable projects through strategic planning, long-term budgeting, and close cooperation. The development of financing mechanisms and new partnership models will be crucial.
- Another important theme is the use of innovative and environmentally friendly solutions. Turku focuses on the development of digitalization, renewable energy, and the circular economy, while also leading the way in technology transfer and sharing best practices both regionally and within international networks.
- Strengthening data-driven decision-making is essential. Turku is developing data management practices that enable better monitoring of goals and efficient allocation of resources. For example, monitoring and reporting on the climate budget are key tools in this effort.
- In the Turku metropolitan area, strengthening multi-stakeholder cooperation is crucial. Collaboration between governance, businesses, organizations, and educational institutions supports achievement of the sustainable development goals. Examples include the Six Cities Alliance collaboration and regional cooperation in Southwest Finland.
- International partnerships, such as those in the Baltic Sea region's urban networks, offer opportunities to share resources, knowledge, and technology. They are essential for the successful implementation of Turku's SDGs and strengthening the city's competitiveness.

Concrete goals for 2030

- **Regional Strategy 2024–2026:**
Establish stable cooperation with the joint municipal authority and other regional organizations promoting economic, attractiveness, and retention power, and develop a feedback and evaluation system to monitor the development and impact of regional cooperation.
- **Mayor's Program Actions:**
 - Create a digital service portal in Turku, making it easy for citizens to manage their affairs smoothly, regardless of time or place. Leverage digitalization and data in urban planning, permitting, street maintenance, and signage.
 - Collaboration is important for Turku, and we will set the region's major economic policy goals in cooperation with various actors.



Conclusions

The 2025 VLR Report for Turku shows that the city is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has made significant progress toward achieving its vision.

The city's strategy is ambitious, and the future looks bright in many areas. However, there are also multiple struggles ahead that require careful planning and proactive measures.

Population growth, which has been particularly rapid in recent years, brings both opportunities and challenges. Turku has succeeded in attracting young and working-age residents, which supports the city's vitality and economic growth. However, this also puts pressure on the city's infrastructure, housing production, education, and services. Population growth especially strains the city's ability to provide sufficient resources that serve all Turku residents equally. This is a multi-stage process that requires long-term urban development.

Turku's climate strategy is one of the city's greatest strengths but also one of its biggest challenges. The city has set a goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2029, which is a significant and ambitious target. This demonstrates how the city believes a more sustainable future can be achieved through transparent, measurable, and realistic actions.

Carbon neutrality is not just a climate target; it is part of a broader strategy that also includes increased energy efficiency and renewable energy use, as well as development of sustainable transportation. While these actions are crucial for addressing climate change, they can also have social and economic impacts that must not be overlooked. Climate action must not lead to increasing inequality; instead, all residents must have the opportunity to benefit from the well-being brought about by the change.





Photo: Pasi Leino

At the same time, it is important to remember that the city's sustainable development is not based solely on environmental actions. Population growth brings significant social challenges. While Turku has developed rapidly and the city's vitality has grown, inequality and social exclusion remain significant concerns.

The increasing diversity of the population brings the need to develop better integration services, support vulnerable population groups, and ensure that all residents have equal opportunities for education, employment, and social services. The city must ensure that regional inequality does not progress and that no parts of society are left behind. This means that decision-making must be not only environmentally but also socially sustainable.

Turku must also manage the challenges related to population growth, which directly affect the built environment. Developing housing, education, public services, and infrastructure is critical to ensuring that the city's growth does not lead to greater inequality. While Turku has invested in many residential area development projects, it should ensure that inequality between areas is gradually erased or, at least, does not deepen. This requires not only investments but also precise regional policies that support different residents and ensure the availability of services. In this context, it is especially important to pay attention to low-income and marginalized groups, as their inclusion in the city's development cannot be taken for granted.

In the future, Turku's role both regionally and nationally will become more significant. The city has opportunity to act as a pioneer and an example of how urban structure can support sustainable economic growth and vitality without increasing inequality.

Turku can demonstrate that environmental sustainability, economic vitality, and social well-being can go hand in hand. To achieve this, however, the city must continually assess its actions, listen to its residents, and make bold decisions that are based not only on short-term goals but also on long-term sustainability perspectives. This requires both proactive urban planning and transparent, participatory decision-making that involves various population groups and stakeholders in building a sustainable future.

Terms and Abbreviations

VLR (Voluntary Local Review):

A local-level self-assessment where the city evaluates its progress towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDG (Sustainable Development Goals):

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which guide global efforts toward a more sustainable and equitable future.

ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives):

An international organization that supports local governments in implementing sustainability actions.

CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project):

A system that helps cities and companies report progress on their climate targets and environmental data.

Covenant of Mayors:

A regional and global network where cities commit to improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

EU Green Deal:

The European Union's strategy to transform the EU's economy into a more environmentally friendly one, including emission reductions and sustainable economic growth.

Carbon Neutrality:

Achieving a state where all emissions are offset, for example, through reducing carbon emissions and compensating for the remainder.

EIP (European Investment Bank):

The European Investment Bank, which finances sustainable projects such as climate change mitigation and renewable energy initiatives.

SBTi (Science Based Targets initiative):

An initiative that supports companies and cities in setting science-based emissions reduction targets that align with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to below 1.5°C.

Green Economy:

An economic model focused on reconciling environmental and economic sustainability by reducing pollution and resource use.

Circular Economy:

An economic model that seeks to keep resources in use for as long as possible, minimizing waste.

Net Zero:

A situation where no additional emissions are added to the atmosphere, and any remaining emissions are neutralized, for example, through carbon sinks.

Sustainable Mobility:

Transportation solutions that reduce environmental impacts and promote less polluting means of transport such as electric vehicles and public transportation.

Appendix 1: Turku VLR indicators

Check the current status of VLR indicators in [Turku's strategic metrics PowerBi report](#) (in Finnish). Indicators can be updated as needed.



Goal 1 No poverty

Indicators	Source
General at-risk-of-poverty rate, municipal level	THL
Child poverty (children's at-risk-of-poverty rate)	THL
Number receiving long-term income support	THL
Number of families with children receiving long-term income support	THL
Lone homeless persons	THL



Goal 2 Zero hunger

Indicators	Source
Overweight children	THL
Overweight adults	THL



Goal 3 Good health and well-being

Indicators	Source
National health index	THL
The population's perceived well-being (adults and children/youth)	THL
Children and young people's perceived health (in addition to general perceived health)	THL
Depression	THL
Incapacity for work caused by mental health	THL
Loneliness	THL
Waiting time to see a doctor for non-emergency reasons	THL
Years of potential life lost	THL



Goal 4 Quality education

Indicators	Source
Educational structure of population	Statistics Finland
Educational level of inhabitants with foreign language as native language	Statistics Finland
People aged 17–24 not in education or training	THL
Acessability to primary schools	Syke
Participation rate among 1–6 years old's in early childhood education	Varda



Goal 5 Gender equality

Indicators	Source
Distribution by gender in the municipal council	Statistics Finland
Distribution by gender among receivers of parental allowance	KELA
Degree of education	Statistics Finland
Unemployment	TEM



Goal 6 Clean water and sanitation

Indicators	Source
Realized purification results	Turun seudun puhdistamo
Realization rate of the Green deal commitment	Turun seudun puhdistamo



Goal 7 Affordable and clean energy

Indicators	Source
Rate of renewable energy in Turku Energia's production	Turku Energia
Electricity consumption per municipality	MayorsIndicators
The cities' energy use in accordance with the municipalities' Energy Efficiency Agreements	City of Turku



Goal 8 Decent work and economic growth

Indicators	Source
Unemployment	TEM
Unemployment among foreigners	TEM
Youth unemployment	TEM
Economic dependency ratio	THL
Intermunicipal net migration	Statistics Finland



Goal 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Indicators	Source
Investments in R&D activities, man-year/1000 inhabitants	Statistics Finland
Started – terminated (net)	Statistics Finland



Goal 10 Reduced inequalities

Indicators	Source
Measures depicting regional differences in the city strategy	City of Turku
Gini coefficient	THL



Goal 11 Sustainable cities and communities

Indicators	Source
Number of passengers in public transport/inhabitant	City of Turku
Rate of inhabitants satisfied with the conditions in their residential area (%)	City of Turku
Air quality (NO2)	MayorsIndicators
Air quality (PM10)	MayorsIndicators



Goal 12 Responsible consumption and production

Indicators	Source
The Turku Region's ecological footprint	City of Turku
Utilisation rate of material and energy derived from waste	Lounais-Suomen Jätehuolto



Goal 13 Climate action

Indicators	Source
Total amount of greenhouse gas emissions	Syke
Number of companies and communities part of City of Turku's climate team	City of Turku



Goal 14 Life below water

Indicators	Source
State of the lakes	MayorsIndicators
State of the rivers	MayorsIndicators



Goal 15 Life on land

Indicators	Source
Balance of nature	City of Turku
The carbon neutrality objective's degree of readiness	City of Turku
The tree stand's growth	MayorsIndicators



Goal 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions

Indicators	Source
Crime / crime rate (age distribution)	MayorsIndicators
Voter turnout, municipal elections	THL
Voter turnout, parliamentary elections	THL



Goal 17 Partnerships for the goals

Indicators	Source
Turku's official roles in international networks	City of Turku



