

Towards Accessible Transport

*Accessibility Strategy of the
Ministry of Transport and Communications*



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
AND COMMUNICATIONS FINLAND

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Towards Accessible Transport

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Foreword

Accessibility promotes many social goals, such as social equality, preventive action, independent life, sustainable development and the planning principles of an environment suitable for everyone. The responsibility of the transport sector for the implementation of the fundamental rights of citizens and the abolishment of discriminating practices becomes tangible in the form of a transport system which supports especially independent and equal living of elderly and disabled people and their participation in the operations of society.

An accessible environment and accessible transport services also benefit others in addition to elderly people and people with different disabilities. According to international practice, people with reduced mobility are deemed to include also those moving with small children. It has been estimated that the development of accessible services and the building of an accessible environment serve directly at least some 35–40 percent of the population. With the help of more careful planning and new guidelines, it is possible to improve the general functionality and safety of the transport environment and simultaneously to increase the attraction of public transport services. This will increase the popularity of walking and improve the competitiveness of public transport in relation to using private cars.

When the population ages, the significance of accessibility increases even more. The ageing population of the future will be even more active and demanding. By developing an accessible transport system and public transport so that it better suits the elderly, we also support their possibilities to participate and continue living at home. Thus we also prevent the growth of costs arising from accidents, institutionalised care, rehabilitation and special transport.

This document is an expression of the will of the Ministry of Transport and Communications to invest in a high-quality transport system that is suitable for all as well as of its aim to prevent and abolish barriers to equal transport for all

citizens. They may include both physical barriers and barriers relating to obtaining information as well as attitudes.

The aim is that the transport infrastructure maintained by the State and the services of public transport are accessible and safe for everyone. The State administration also co-operates with municipalities and the private sector to improve the transport-system that is their responsibility.

This documents is part of the strategic work serving long-term planning in the Ministry. It is based on the outlines presented by the Ministry in November 2000 – *Towards Intelligent and Sustainable Transport* – and on the public-transport strategy *Public Transport – an Attractive Alternative* issued in December 2001.

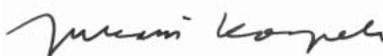
The Ministry of Transport and Communications has prepared the document in co-operation with different Ministries, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities as well as public organisations operating within the administrative sector of the Ministry. The starting point has been, inter alia, the Working Group Report of the Ministry *Forward without Obstacles* handling accessibility of public transport and the statements issued thereon. The participants of the said Working Group included, in addition to those referred to above, also representatives of several transport operators as well as of various associations of the disabled and the elderly.

Helsinki, 5th of August, 2003



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Abstract

The starting points of the strategy are the promotion of social equality and the principle of non-discrimination, preparing for the ageing of the population, functionality and safety of the transport system as well as improvement of the quality of public transport.

Mobility: the right and possibility to move. The possibility of independent mobility is an important factor affecting the quality of life. An accessible environment suitable for everyone offers citizens a possibility to live independently and on their own initiative: to work, use services, enjoy free time and meet other people.

The long-term transport policy guidelines of the Ministry of Transport and Communications emphasise the right of everybody to mobility and the opportunity to exert that right. Moreover, the transport system shall also be designed and constructed so that children, the elderly and people with reduced functions can safely manage their daily travel needs. Everyone shall have access to basic services and the related information. Public transport will also be made more accessible.

In the decision-making process, consideration will be given to the negative effects of traffic and the impact of transport-related decisions on the living environment and access to services from the point of view of different population groups. The aim of equality shall be included as part of all administration and decision-making. This will best promote the principles of participation and independent management in the policy on disabled and elderly people. Also the Constitution requires not only an elimination of discriminating practices but also active measures to promote equality.

The need for an accessible environment is growing. Reduced mobility is often related to age, illness or injury. The problem, however, touches us all: it has been estimated that people spend approximately 40 % of their lifetime with reduced mobility and function in one way or another. For example passengers carrying heavy loads or moving with small children also experience different types of obstacles to mobility.

The fast ageing of the population poses a great challenge to the future years. By the year 2030, the share of the population who are 65 years old or older will increase from the present 15 per cent to over 25 per cent. During the same period, the number of those over 74 years of age will double from the present number to over 700,000 persons.

From the point of view of the overall national economy, a more accessible environment and transport system brings about savings as the possibility to independent mobility will slow down the growth of costs of special transport and care services needed by the ageing population. Independent mobility will also promote the independence of ageing people, which, for its part, will reduce the need for institutional care and rehabilitation.

Functional solutions serve all citizens. Functional and accessible solutions most often facilitate the mobility of all people. Good examples of solutions that are user-friendlier or safer for all end-users are low-floor trains and buses, clear public transport information, an easily observed road-transport environment as well as the good anti-skid treatment of sidewalks.

The trouble caused by reduced function depends on the properties of the environment. The user-friendliness of transport networks and services has, in many

respects, improved, but many shortcomings still exist. Most often, problems relating to mobility are faced by people with mobility handicaps, people with impaired vision and people who have several simultaneous impairments of function hampering mobility. The most common obstacles for mobility are still various differences in level both in the pedestrian environment, in terminals and in vehicles. For persons with impaired vision, the most common problems are poor orientation of the route, the danger of bumping into obstacles along the route and access to information.

The full benefit of solutions that are suitable to all users may be derived only after the entire door-to-door journey is functional. In addition to the conditions of the physical environment and the transport services offered, a functional travel chain shall cover access to the necessary information, skilful service of the personnel and the safety and reliability of travelling.

The goal is a transport system suitable to all. Achieving the goal requires that the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications takes into account the mobility needs of all population groups in its normal activities – for example, in preparing legislation and planning instructions as well as in maintaining and building the transport infrastructure – and works actively to remove existing shortcomings. It is essential that the actors in the administrative sector commit themselves to the goal set and appreciate the work that is necessary. Commitment means taking responsibility and directing the operations accordingly.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications guides the work of the administrative sector through operational and financial planning, by setting goals and by determining action guidelines. Where necessary, the Ministry will support measures belonging to the responsibility of the administrative sector by means of performance management by the authorities and ownership steering in State enterprises and State companies. In addition, the Ministry continues to develop statutes, instructions and procedures relating to accessibility.

The public organisations operating within the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications – Road Administration, Finnish Rail Administration, Civil Aviation Administration, Finnish Maritime Administration, Finnish Vehicle Administration and the Transport Departments of Provincial State Offices – shall chart the problems and development needs of their own areas of responsibility, estimate the costs and take measures to remove the shortcomings as well as develop their operations so that accessibility will be adequately observed in the future operations of the organisations. The administrative sector shall also ensure that the programmes, plans and solutions relating to transport and transport infrastructure include an assessment of their effects on the mobility possibilities and the safety of different passenger groups.

Co-operation and joint responsibility for the accessibility of the transport system.

Accessibility of the transport system is the joint responsibility of all the parties participating in the building, production, maintenance, administration and financing of the transport infrastructure and services: the owners, maintainers, planners and builders of the infrastructure, the producers of transport services and

The aim is that the transport infrastructure maintained by the State and the services of public transport be accessible and safe for everyone. The State administration operates in co-operation with municipalities and the private sector to improve the transport-system sectors that are their responsibility.

those ordering the transport, the various authorities as well as also the representatives of the different customer groups as co-operation partners.

In particular, the municipalities play a key role in the creation of an environment for mobility suitable for all.

The administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications co-operates with the municipalities in planning and implementing projects promoting accessibility. The Ministry encourages the municipalities to take action by launching, in co-operation with the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Provincial State Offices and the Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, the *Accessible Municipality* network, which shall disseminate information on good solutions, functional practices and encouraging examples as well as create a discussion forum for the municipalities and other actors.

Most of all, promotion of accessibility requires paying attention to operating methods, i.e., to how the issue is observed in daily operations. The participation of the users in planning and evaluating the environment, the products and the services ensures their suitability to their needs.

Measures and financing. The strategy report in hand includes several measures to increase the accessibility of the transport system. The present situation, problems and measures have been handled separately with regard to the pedestrian environment, driving and the quality, information and terminals of public transport and the different modes of public transport. The party responsible for each measure has been determined and possible co-operation partners have been assigned.

In order to carry out solutions that increase accessibility it is proposed that accessibility always be observed in the normal management, maintenance and investments of transport infrastructure – for example in the building and winter care of pedestrian routes, the construction and improvement projects of public-transport terminals, the construction of information systems and the drawing up of various planning instructions – and that the financing of the present transport infrastructure is directed at measures promoting accessibility. It is also proposed that research and development financing of public transport be directed at planning as well as at research and development measures supporting accessibility. Thus also the conditions of State support to public transport will be renewed better to take into account the needs of customers with different forms of reduced mobility.

It is not proposed, at this stage, that the financing of transport infrastructure or the financing of research and development of public transport be increased. However, the purpose is to accelerate the development by directing the financing of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications to measures promoting accessibility for example through theme-related packages to be included in the operating strategy and financial plan of the Ministry or through separate accessibility financing. In the future, the Ministry and the organisations of its administrative sector shall prepare proposals on possible theme-related packages for budgetary handling. The Ministry is also prepared for the need of

supplementary financing for public transport possibly arising from measures promoting accessibility so that the needs of other important public transport goals may also be secured.

A Research and Development Programme for Accessibility as a tool. To support the work promoting accessibility, a Research and Development Programme for Accessibility shall be launched under the leadership of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, through which operations on the local level are supported by financing and planning as well as by pilot projects. The *Accessible Municipality* network already mentioned shall as well be included as part of the programme.

The aim is to activate the municipal sector, the transport-service producers, the authorities and the general public to notice the significance of an accessible environment, to encourage the observance of the issue in daily activities as well as to produce and disseminate information on good solutions and practices.

Examples of the topic areas for research and development projects possibly financed from the programme are:

- a more accessible pedestrian environment
- public-transport passenger information, payment systems, terminals and vehicles
- assistant services and travel dispatch centres
- transfer of passengers to aircraft
- passenger terms of maritime transport and rail transport and equal rights of passengers
- clarity and manageability of the road transport environment
- driver's requirements of a disabled person as well as approval of a vehicle for transport
- the economic significance of accessibility and effectiveness of measures promoting accessibility
- development of evaluation methods for accessibility and user-friendliness.

The programme also supports training and co-operation projects, through which it is possible to influence the knowledge, skills and attitudes of transport administration, planners, implementers and the personnel in charge of transport services to promote accessibility for example by producing training material for professionals and supplementary training of the transport sector as well as by promoting the familiarisation of passengers with reduced mobility and function to the use of public transport.

The implementation of the research and development programme will not require additional funding, but the present research funding of the Ministry and the transport authorities as well as the public-transport development funding shall, in a co-ordinated manner, be directed through it to projects promoting accessibility. The aim is to gather research and development relating to accessibility under one umbrella. The implementation of the projects included in the programme may also take place in other research and development programmes, such as the public transport interchange project, the *Jaloin* programme promoting pedestrian and bicycle traffic and the passenger information programme HEILI.



A OUTLINES TOWARDS ACCESSIBILITY

1 The starting point

1.1 Need for accessibility

The possibility of independent mobility is an important factor affecting the quality of life. An accessible environment suitable for everyone offers the citizens a possibility to live independently: to work, use services, enjoy free time and meet other people. This is also most advantageous to society.

A transport system may include four different types of obstacles to mobility. They affect all travellers, but they restrict especially strongly the possibilities of people with reduced mobility:

- physical obstacles, such as changes of level in the walking environment or access to a vehicle
- lack of information, such as insufficient or complex information on public transport services
- costs, such as the price of a journey or a vehicle
- lack of trust, such as uncertainty as to whether the transport chain is functional or whether help is available when needed.

Those with reduced mobility are people whose ability to move, function or communicate without help is temporarily or permanently weakened because of an illness or injury, ageing or some other reason. Reduced mobility or function may be visible or invisible and it may relate for example to the ability to move, the function of the senses, the ability to understand and learn, an allergy or to other factors making moving or travelling more difficult.

Approximately 10 percent of the population in Finland are deemed permanently disabled. In addition, a considerable number of people get temporarily injured every year. The problem, however, touches us all: it has been estimated that, in one way or another, people have reduced mobility and function for approximately 40 % of their lives.

Reduced mobility is not always related to age, illness or injury. For example passengers moving with heavy luggage or small children also experience different types of obstacles. Functional and accessible solutions most often facilitate the mobility of all people. A good example of an improvement that has facilitated the mobility of all passengers is the low-floor bus, which has rapidly become common in city traffic.

The ageing of the population poses a great challenge to the future years. Ageing causes several problems affecting mobility, such as weakening of vision, hearing and muscular strength. In order to be able to offer the ageing citizens the possibility to move independently and to live at home as long as possible, we need to improve the present transport environment – elevators and step-free access to buildings and public premises, a safe and easily accessible neighbourhood, easily accessible near-by services as well as accessible and functional transport services.

1.2 Accessibility as a transport-policy goal

In the long-term transport-policy guidelines of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, *Towards Intelligent and Sustainable Transport 2025*, the target set for transport policy is intelligent and sustainable transport, which takes account of economic, ecological, social and cultural considerations. The target relating to social equality emphasises the right and possibility of all people to move. The transport system shall be constructed so that also children, the elderly and people with reduced function can safely manage their daily mobility needs. Everyone shall have access to basic services and the related information. The accessibility of public transport shall be improved. The ageing of the population has been identified as one of the biggest challenges of transport policy.

The European Ministers of Transport have already for a long time co-operated in order to promote the accessibility of the transport environment both in the Nordic Council of Ministers and the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, ECMT/CEMT. The Ministers of Transport of the ECMT, including the Finnish Ministers of Transport and Communications, have adopted several resolutions and recommendations on the accessibility of the transport system to be implemented and complied with in national transport policy.

The resolutions and charters approved by the Council of Ministers of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport ECMT/CEMT on the accessibility of the transport system:

2001 Conclusions and Recommendations on Transport Policy and Ageing of the Population

2001/3 Consolidated Resolution on Accessible Transport

1999 Charter on Access to Transport Services and Infrastructure

1997/4 Reciprocal Recognition of Parking Badges for Persons with Mobility Handicaps

1997/3 Comprehensive Resolution on Transport for People with Mobility Handicaps

1994/2 Access to Taxis for People with Reduced Mobility

1991/8 Information and Communication

1990/4 Access to Buses, Trains and Coaches for People with Mobility Handicaps

1989/68 Access for Pedestrians

1987/63 Transport for Disabled People

1985/54 Transport for Disabled People

1981/45 Transport for Handicapped Persons Obligated to Use Wheelchairs

1978/38 Transport for Handicapped Persons

The central starting points of the accessibility strategy have been the proposals made by the Working Group on Accessibility and User-friendliness of Public Transport, appointed by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, relating to the promotion of applicability of public transport particularly to the disabled, the elderly and other people with reduced mobility and function ("Forward without Obstacles", publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 23/2001) as well as the opinions issued regarding the proposals.

With regard to the walking environment, the background has been the walking-policy programme "Incorporating Walking into Transport Policy" (Publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 6/2001) and the opinions issued thereon.

With regard to passenger car traffic, the issue has been handled in the report of the Finnish Vehicle Administration AKE "Persons with reduced mobility as drivers – charting of the problems" (AKE, Research and Reports 1/2002).

From the view point of passenger-car traffic and non-motorised traffic infrastructure, the topic has been handled in the publications of the Finnish Road Administration "Accessible environment to everyone – how to observe the elderly and people with reduced mobility and function in road maintenance" (Finnish Road Administration 2002) as well as "Mobility of the elderly and road management" (FinRa Reports 14/2002).

Important starting points for the action proposals of the accessibility strategy have also been "The National Traffic Safety Programme for 2001–2005" (Programmes and strategies of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 2/2000) drafted by the National Traffic Safety Council as well as the public-transport strategy of the Ministry of Transport and Communication "Public transport – an attractive choice" (Programmes and strategies of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 2/2001).

The promotion of an accessible transport system is related to the implementation of the fundamental rights referred to in the Constitution, the standard rules adopted by the United Nations on equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and to non-discrimination as well as to the general goal of social equality. The Constitution requires not only an elimination of discriminating practices, but also active measures to promote equality. The activities of the EU to promote the accessibility of the transport system are supported by the Amsterdam Treaty, which also includes a clause against discrimination on the basis of disability, a declaration on the need to take disability issues into account in internal market legislation and an Article on the legal foundation of action plans against social alienation.

Transport policy shall, for its part, meet the general socio-political outlines according to which each administrative and social sector shall develop its own operations to make them suitable for all citizens. This will best promote the corner stones of the policy of the disabled and the elderly, participation and independent living.

Legislation on land-use planning also aims to create an urban structure where the availability and accessibility of services is ensured to all population groups. According to the national targets for land-use planning approved by the Government, the urban structure will be developed so that the services and jobs are easily accessible to different population groups. At the same time, the easy accessibility of services will reduce the need of transport, which will promote the reaching of the goals of sustainable development set on the transport sector.

1.3 An environment accessible to all user groups

The trouble caused by reduced function depends on the characteristics of the environment. The fewer obstacles for mobility and function there are in the environment, the smaller is the trouble to the individual. The gap between the ability to move and the characteristics of the environment may be narrowed by good planning and careful implementation.

The usability of transport networks and services has improved in many respects, but several shortcomings still exist. The most problems relating to moving are faced by people with mobility handicaps, people with impaired vision and people who have several simultaneous impairments of function hampering their mobility. The most common problems regarding travelling are still the various differences in level in the walking environment, in terminals and in transport vehicles – steps, steep ramps, kerb stones and differences in level when boarding a vehicle – as well as, with regard to people with impaired vision, the difficulty of getting an idea of the route and the risk of bumping into objects along the route.

The full benefit from solutions that are suitable to all users may be derived only after the entire door-to-door journey is functional. For example, the user-friendliness of public transport requires not only suitable vehicles but also a possibility to acquire information on the transport possibilities and an accessible entry to



We may all face reduced mobility or function irrespective of our life phase or work.

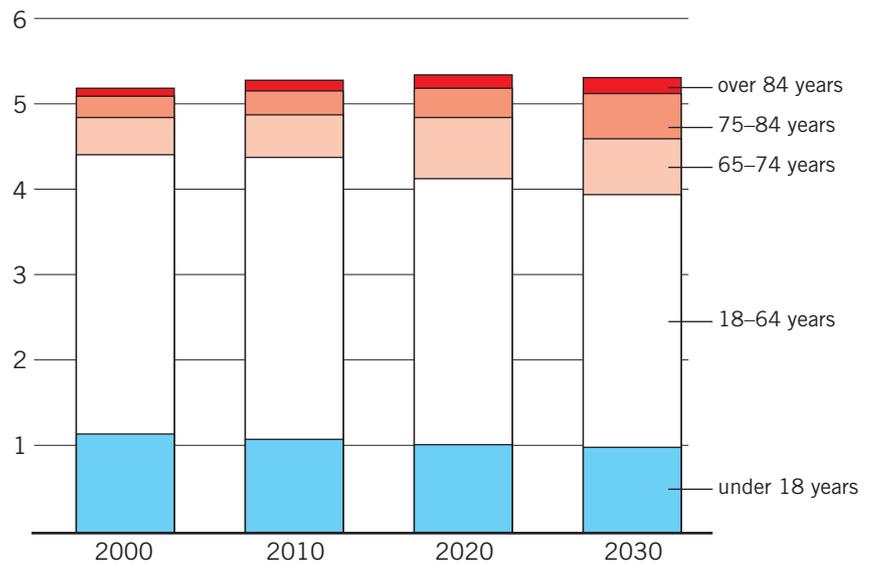
the station. A low-floor bus or train carriage will facilitate mobility only after the bus stop or train platform has been raised. Therefore mobility and its improvement have to be examined as an entity covering the entire travel chain from the starting point to the destination. Also the need and reason for moving have to be taken into account. In addition to the conditions of the physical environment and the transport services, a functional travel chain shall cover access to the necessary information and the skilful service of personnel. It is important that the traveller can experience travelling as safe and reliable at all of its stages.

In order for an entity to be functional, also its details have to be well carried out and managed. For example, a slippery sidewalk may prevent the journey of an elderly person to a bus stop, a high kerb stone in a crosswalk may stop the journey of a person in a wheelchair and a poorly organised construction site may be dangerous to a person with impaired vision even if the other parts of the journey are in order.

The promotion of accessibility requires paying attention to operating methods, i.e., to the fact how the matter is handled in daily operations. According to the principle of user-friendliness, the environment, products and services have to be designed so that they are user-friendly and adapted to the different needs of the different users so that all people, irrespective of their age, functional ability and cultural background, may use them. The participation of the users in the planning and evaluation of the environment, the products and the services ensures their suitability to their needs.

According to the Act on Land Use and Construction (132/1999), "The purpose of land-use planning is, on the basis of interactive planning and an adequate evaluation of effects, to promote the creation of a safe, healthy, comfortable and socially functional living and operating environment which fulfils the needs of the different population groups, such as children, elderly people and disabled people."

population, in millions



Ageing population

The population is ageing fast in Finland just like in other industrialised countries. At present about 15 % of Finns, i.e. almost 800,000, are at least 65 years old. The forecast is that in 2030 the number of people who are 65 years old or older will already be more than a quarter of the population, i.e., almost 1.4 million. Proportionally, the oldest age groups will increase even faster. By the year 2030, the number of people over 74 years of age will double from the present 340,000 to over 700,000 and the number of people over 84 years of age will increase from 80,000 to 170,000.

The ageing population will be healthier and more functional than before for a longer time. However, the need for care will also increase. With the help of the living environment and means of traffic planning, it will be possible to keep the number of those needing help as small as possible. Independent mobility will keep the elderly healthier and more functional for a longer time and thus reduce the need for institutional care and rehabilitation. In addition to the quality of life, maintaining the ability of independent mobility is thus also a question of cutting the costs of the national economy.

Ageing causes several problems affecting mobility, such as weakening of vision, hearing, muscular strength, mobility of the joints and balance. Observation, evaluation and reaction often take more time than at a younger age. Also illnesses and their medication may affect one's ability to function in traffic.

The reduced mobility caused by ageing is not necessarily one's own choice but a result of reduced possibilities of mobility. One is no longer able to use the same means of transport or move in the surrounding walking environment in the same way as earlier.

Problems in the environment

The built environment and vehicles contain many obstacles and problems for mobility.

The level-difference problem is the biggest problem for those with reduced mobility. It may be eased by arranging, in both inside and outside premises, even routes without steps and thresholds as well as by building elevators and gentle slopes.

The space problem is especially familiar to those using wheelchairs and those moving with a pram. Routes, ramps, doorways, elevators, toilet facilities, etc. should be designed so that they are sufficiently roomy.

The problem with distances is emphasized when moving with things to carry. Distances must be designed short and, where necessary, resting possibilities should be provided.

Orientation causes the biggest problems for people with impaired vision. The problem may be eased by clear route planning and easily comprehensible floor plans of buildings, correctly chosen materials and colours as well as by good signs and signals.

The problem with balance becomes more apparent on stairs and ramps as well as in transport vehicles. Non-slippery surface materials of routes, non-skid treatment as well as handrails and support bars alleviate the problem.

The problems with reaching relate to children, those short of stature and those using wheel chairs. Different operating buttons, automatic machines and service desks have to be designed to serve everyone.

The problem with lack of strength is most apparent when opening heavy doors. It is often related to age or an illness. The solution is the use of lightly-operating joints and automatic door mechanisms.

The problem of complexity is above all related to the use of various devices and machines and to the content of information. It especially hampers people with impaired vision. The user-friendliness and ergonomics of products as well as supplementary guidance and personal help also serve those who are not used to such devices.

The safety problem is related inter alia to stairs, obstacles along the route, construction site excavations and the directing of pedestrian crossings. They are especially problematic for those with impaired vision. Premises and routes should be well-designed, adequately lit and any dangerous places shall be marked well. We should avoid creating premises that are felt to be dangerous, such as dark tunnels.

Impurities and factors causing allergies in the breathing air may restrict or hamper the mobility of people suffering from allergies or respiratory illnesses. The most common problems are animal allergens and residues of tobacco in vehicles as well as the spring-time street dust in the walking environment.

Problems with equality arise when an environment or service results in inequality of the users. The solutions are related not only to structures and planning but also to the service culture.



Differences in level and obstacles along the route are the most common factors that make moving difficult.



A traffic environment that is felt to be safe encourages one to move.

1.4 A safe journey

Different population groups have different requirements for functioning in traffic. Everyone should, however, be able to move safely. A transport environment that is – or felt to be – dangerous significantly restricts the mobility of children, elderly people, people with impaired vision and several other population groups. Shortcomings in the details of the transport environment, such as high kerb stones, sudden bumps or slipperiness, are serious safety risks and already a fear of their existence creates obstacles to mobility.

Both the improvement of traffic safety and the increasing of the accessibility of the transport system require sufficient appreciation of and commitment to the goals set. Commitment means taking responsibility and directing the operations accordingly. At the same time, it also encourages others to act so as to promote accessibility. The awareness of citizens of the significance of accessibility and the ways to improve it should be raised by systematic and versatile dissemination of information. The systematic training of decision-makers, planners and implementers ensures the realisation of accessibility in practical solutions and in decisions. In many respects, the work aiming at promoting traffic safety and accessibility may be carried out in co-operation by using joint resources and the same influencing channels.

Traffic accidents

The improvement of traffic safety requires explicit planning of the transport environment and especially of crossings, low driving speed in difficult traffic situations, improvement of the conditions of non-motorised transport as well as adequate safety equipment. The need is emphasised especially with regard to children, elderly people and those with different forms of reduced mobility. In a comparison between age groups, the risk of dying in a traffic accident is highest for young and elderly people. One in every four people who die in a traffic accident is over 64 years of age. Approximately half of all elderly people who die in traffic accidents are travelling by foot or by bike and the other half by car.

The work to improve traffic safety shall be continued in accordance with the measures presented in the *National Traffic Safety Programme 2001–2005* published by the National Traffic Safety Council. From the point of view of accessibility, the most important measures are those improving the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, decreasing the accident risk of elderly drivers and increasing the clarity of the transport environment and the reaction time:

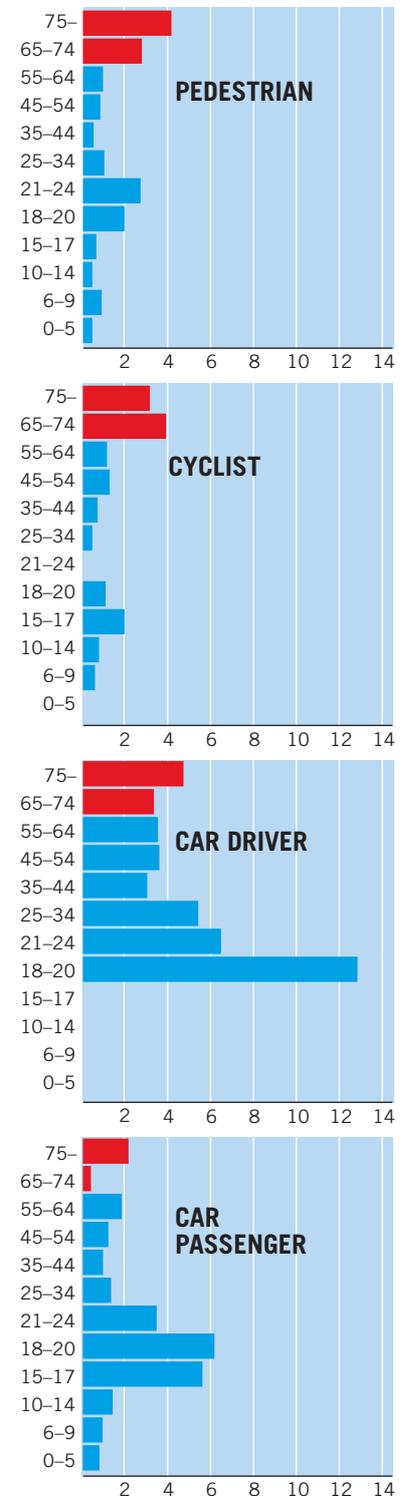
- extensive introduction of progressive speed limits in built-up areas and their support with structural solutions
- checking of the speed limits of villages and other settlements along the public road network
- careful planning of the junctions of non-motorised and motorised traffic
- checking of the speed-limit system and intensification of speed surveillance
- improvement in monitoring the state of health and driving skills of elderly drivers
- improvement of moderately-priced further training targeted at elderly drivers.

In order to improve the safety of pedestrians, it is necessary to intensify traffic control and especially compliance with crosswalk and traffic-light provisions. Measures by which road crossing points may be improved so that they are safer and user-friendlier for all pedestrian groups are for example crosswalk islands and narrowings, raised crosswalks, sufficiently low kerb stones, introduction of easier-to-use traffic light technology and guidance principles as well as speed limits with their support measures. Special attention should be paid to improving the safety of crossing a road by people with impaired vision for example with sound-signal traffic lights, crosswalks at the right angle from the kerb stone line as well as with surface materials guiding to a safe crossing of the road.

More attention shall be paid to the safety of elderly bikers. In addition to the measures directed at the traffic environment, the use of a helmet shall be emphasised in particular. Also growth of popularity of the more easily manageable bike models – for example tricycles – among the elderly is to be hoped for.

TRAFFIC DEATHS BY AGE GROUP

deaths per 100 000 persons, 2001





Reduction in the number of accidents is not the only purpose of maintenance as, for many people, snow and slippery conditions along the route may mean that they cannot move at all or that moving is dangerous.

Accidents caused by slipping or falling

Approximately 70,000 accidents caused by slipping or falling in road, street or yard areas take place in Finland annually. Two-thirds of the injured are pedestrians and one-third are bikers. The most common causes for the falling of a pedestrian are slipping in winter and falling in summer. A special risk group for accidents caused by slipping are elderly women, as women walk more than men and the falling of an elderly person leads to an injury easier than that of a younger person.

The significance to national health and the economy of falling and slipping accidents of pedestrians and bikers is big. Although the injuries suffered are in most of the cases not serious, the accidents are very common and they cause, especially among the oldest age groups, reduced mobility and a great need of specialised hospital care and rehabilitation. The indirect consequences of the accidents of elderly people may be very serious because of the weakening function and the raised infection risk resulting from reduced mobility and long-term hospital care. The costs to be paid by society for accidents caused by falling and slipping are around 420 million euros and they include the following costs: health care (55 million euros), lost work input (95 million euros) and loss of welfare (270 million euros). As the population ages, the problems become emphasised.

By intensifying the maintenance of especially the most popular routes in the centre, public transport stops and yard areas, great savings in health care may be gained with small additional cost. A reduction in the number of accidents is not the only purpose of maintenance as, for many people, snow and slippery conditions along the route may mean that they cannot move at all or that moving is dangerous.

Joint responsibility

The accessibility of the transport system is the joint responsibility of all the parties participating in the building, production, maintenance, administration and financing of the transport infrastructure and services: the owners, maintainers, planners and builders of the infrastructure, the producers of transport services and those ordering the transport, the various authorities as well as also the representatives of the different customer groups as co-operation partners.



Land-use and service structure planning have a significant influence on mobility needs and possibilities.

The different needs and possibilities for the mobility of different population groups should be taken into consideration at all the stages of planning and implementing the transport system. The principle is to take accessibility into consideration whenever building something new and when repairing something old; similarly, the goal has to be for each party to remove obstacles of mobility from the existing infrastructure and transport services within the limits of resources.

However, it is not only the transport sector that is responsible for ensuring the mobility of people and accessibility of services. Efficient operations require co-operation between the different parties both on the national level and on the local level.

Important co-operation partners include land-use planners and construction organisations as well as the actors in the social and health care sector. The development of land use and service structure are of central significance to attain transport policy goals, because mobility needs and possibilities are influenced by the location of various operations, the distances between them as well as the quality of connections and services. Therefore land-use planning should promote the conditions of transport modes available to all – walking, cycling and public transport – by favouring the harmonisation of building and by supporting the maintenance and strengthening of local services.



2 Goals and action guidelines

The goal is that the transport infrastructure maintained by the State and the services of public transport are accessible and safe for everyone. The State administration cooperates with municipalities and the private sector to make the whole transport-system accessible.

2.1 Responsibilities of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications

The goal of a transport system suitable for all requires that the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications takes into account the mobility needs of all population groups in its normal activities and works actively to remove the existing shortcomings. Efficient operations require continuous development of the know-how of the personnel as well as operating models and planning practices which take better account of the mobility needs and possibilities of the different population groups. The administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications is also responsible for developing co-operation modes promoting accessibility together with other administrative sectors, municipalities, undertakings of the transport sector and citizens.

An accessible transport system promotes independent living for everybody, especially elderly and disabled people.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications guides the work of the administrative sector to promote accessibility by means of performance guidance and action guidelines as well as operative and financial planning. Where necessary, the Ministry promotes measures assigned to the responsibility of the administrative sector also by means of ownership steering of State enterprises and State-owned companies. The Ministry also continues the development of statutes, instructions, practices and procedures relating to the accessibility of public transport and travel chains as well as ensures, for its part, that the programmes, plans and solutions relating to transport and transport facilities include an assessment of their effects on the possibilities to move and the safety of different passenger groups.

When granting funding for the development of public transport and pilot projects, the Ministry of Transport and Communications requires that the needs of the customer groups with reduced mobility and function are taken into account in the planning and implementation of the projects. The Ministry and the Provincial State Offices direct the funding to plans and research aiming at increasing accessibility and they require that accessibility is taken into account in connection with plans relating to public transport.

An examination of the entire transport system creates a basis for the programming, planning and implementation of individual measures. The administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications ensures that accessibility concerns and social equality in general are included in regional and area-specific transport system plans. At first, accessibility may have to be raised as the special theme of one of the plans to be launched in the near future. On the basis of the experiences gained, instructions and recommendations will be drawn up of good operating models to handle accessibility in transport system planning. Accessibility shall be taken into account also in preliminary agreements aiming at implementing public transport plans and signed by the parties. In addition, it is necessary to consider the introduction of a preliminary agreement procedure in other projects and action plans promoting accessibility with shared responsibility.

Transport system planning

Transport system planning is long-term strategic planning, where the development of the system relating to mobility and transportation is studied in its entirety and into which the transport system and land-use development are integrated.

The objects of transport-system planning are all transport modes and transport networks, travel chains by different transport modes with their terminals and places of change as well as the regional and urban structure.

The target area of a transport-system plan may be an urban area, one or several municipalities or a region. Usually a working area is a natural area for a plan.

Transport-system plans are drawn up also on the county level. The accuracy of the study is determined case by case.



The task of the organisations operating within the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications is to chart the problems and development needs of their own areas of responsibility, to estimate the costs and to take measures to remove the shortcomings and ensure observance of accessibility in future operations.

Accessibility shall always be taken into account when something new is planned or implemented or something old repaired. Obstacles to mobility which exist in the present infrastructure or transport services shall be removed within the limits of the available resources and by their redirection.

Road Administration

The Finnish Road Administration is in charge of the infrastructure management of public roads. Its tasks include management, maintenance and development of public roads and their traffic conditions as well as road-transport services as part of the transport system. The Finnish Road Administration looks after the planning and programming of road and traffic conditions, the ordering of products and services for infrastructure management, control and services of road transport as well as expert tasks of the road transport system. The operations of the Finnish Road Administration are led by a central administration. The regional organisation consists of nine road districts. The road network includes, in addition to public roads, streets and private roads. Street infrastructure management is the duty of the municipalities and the management of private roads belongs to private-road infrastructure management associations formed of road users.

Goals: The Finnish Road Administration develops the State-owned road infrastructure as part of the transport system so that the pedestrian and cycling environment is as accessible and safe as possible to all population groups, the infrastructure relating to public transport creates possibilities for accessible travel chains, the transport environment is safe also for elderly drivers and the services meant for road users are available also for drivers with reduced mobility and function. All population and traveller groups are taken into account in developing information services for road transport.

During 2002, the Finnish Road Administration has drawn up instructions for an evaluation of the accessibility of roads in built-up areas, routes for non-motorised transport, bus stops as well as rest areas. In the road districts, the instructions may be used to help chart the present shortcomings and the central improvement needs in connection with traffic-safety plans, for example when studying small accessibility measures or as initial data for the planning of roads in built-up areas or as support for more extensive action plans such as the development of a rest-area network. Implementation of the charting is also an efficient training method for those commissioning and implementing plans and infrastructure management. The purpose is that the chartings and the improvement measures implemented as part of normal infrastructure management give the Finnish Road Administration a general idea of the magnitude of shortcomings and the tasks and resources required to remove them. At the same time, the Finnish Road Administration tries to find new operating models in order to include accessibility as part of normal infrastructure management. On this basis, the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Finnish Road Administration agree on the procedures and timetables to correct the infrastructure-management practices and the shortcomings in the traffic environment.



Accessibility shall be improved as part of normal infrastructure management and, for example, in connection with the road safety projects of roads in built-in areas.



Accessibility of railway stations for passenger transport has been charted and the shortcomings shall be corrected in an order of urgency.

Finnish Rail Administration

Goal: People with different forms of reduced mobility can get to the station, platforms and further to the train and off the train as independently as they can as well as to obtain and attain the information relating to travelling and services at all stations and stops.

The Finnish Rail Administration has in 2002 drawn up instructions for drawing up an accessibility charting at railway stations and, based on it, charted the present situation at all the passenger stations, also at those owned by VR Ltd. On the basis of the data obtained through the charting, the resources required to remove the shortcomings shall be estimated, the needs for measures shall be prioritised and the most urgent measures shall be launched without delay. On the basis of the surveys, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Finnish Rail Administration and VR Ltd shall agree on the measures and the timetable for correcting the shortcomings.

The Finnish Rail Administration shall take accessibility into account also in the technical requirements relating to rolling stock to be drawn up on the basis of possible EU legislation as well as in the application provisions to be decided on at the national level.

The Finnish Rail Administration administers the national rail network, including equipment, structures and land area. Its task is to be in charge of maintaining and developing the rail network as well as of the safety of rail transport and administrative duties relating to rail management.

The transport of passengers and goods by rail is operated by the State-owned VR Ltd. Some of the railway station buildings are owned by the Finnish Rail Administration, some, including most of the busiest stations, by VR Ltd. The rolling stock is owned by VR Ltd.



The passengers shall be able to move at the airport and transfer to the aircraft as independently as possible.

The Civil Aviation Administration provides airport and air navigation services for the needs of civil and military aviation and carries out other related business operations. Of the 29 airports in Finland, 25 are maintained by the Civil Aviation Administration. There is regular air traffic on 21 airports of the Civil Aviation Administration. The airports with regular air traffic maintained by other parties are in Mikkeli and Seinäjoki.

The Civil Aviation Administration is a State business enterprise, which operates in accordance with the targets and business-economic principles set by Parliament and the Government under the guidance of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The enterprise finances its expenditure with the revenues from its operations.

Civil Aviation Administration

Goal: The infrastructure and services shall be developed and maintained at the airports with regular passenger air traffic so that people with different forms of reduced mobility are able to move at the airport and further transfer to the aircraft as independently as possible as well as have access to and attain the information required for travelling and the services offered at the airport. The Civil Aviation Administration and the airports co-operate with different authorities as well as with airlines and other operators in order to promote safe and seamless air travel from the beginning of the travel chain to its end.

During the year 2003, the Civil Aviation Administration and the other airport operators have together with airline and ground handling companies charted the present accessibility situation in the service chain of the airports. The needs for action shall be determined and prioritised in accordance with the results and the most urgent measures shall be launched without delay. On the basis of the surveys, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Civil Aviation Administration and the other responsible parties shall agree on the measures, liabilities and the timetable to correct any shortcomings.

In addition, the Civil Aviation Administration and the other airport operators shall, in co-operation with the airline and ground handling companies, assess the problems and improvement needs relating to transferring to the aircraft at the different airports in Finland from the point of view of passengers with reduced mobility and assisting personnel, the practices applied elsewhere in the acquisition and management of passenger bridges and lifting devices and the pricing of their use. The technical, administrative and cost-distribution questions of different alternative solutions shall also be described. The Civil Aviation Administration shall simultaneously follow the international discussion relating to the issue. After the assessment, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Civil Aviation Administration, the other airport operators and the airlines shall agree on the responsibilities, timetable and financing possibilities to correct the shortcomings.

Finnish Maritime Administration

Goal: The aim has been to draft the safety regulations of maritime transport so that the safety of all passengers can be ensured even in emergencies. However, the often unyielding requirements of safety provisions and practices regarding escorts and a limitation of the number of disabled passengers result in conflicts with the possibilities and rights of people with reduced mobility to travel. Nor is the practice on different ships uniform. The conflicts between the safety regulations and the opportunities to travel shall be reduced and the practices complied with shall be generally acceptable and publicly known to customers.

During the year 2003, the Ministry of Transport and Communications shall appoint a working group operating under the leadership of the Maritime Administration to clarify the practices of the different shipping companies relating to the travelling of persons with reduced mobility, the requirements set in the current regulations as well as the needs and rights of the passengers. The present situation shall be compared to the recommendations of the EU as well as to legislation which is being prepared by the Ministry of Transport and Communications in accordance with the EU legislation which will enter into force in the near future. The legislation shall relate to the accessibility of vessels and to the safety of passengers with reduced mobility in emergency situations. The survey shall form a basis for a decision on measures to unify the practices and for possible initiatives to review the provisions.

Goal: The suitability of inland shipping as well as the coastal service shipping operated by the State for passengers with reduced mobility shall be improved. The vessels of the coastal ship service and the private inland-waterway vessels in use today are often less suitable for passengers with reduced mobility than large passenger vessels as accessibility was not taken into account when they were built and the possibilities to change their structures afterwards are very limited.

The Maritime Administration shall also clarify any problems occurring in inland waterway traffic and coastal service ships, the measures required for their correction and the resources required for the measures. Proposals to improve the situation shall be made on the basis of the surveys, for example by determining requirements for the accessibility level of vessels to be acquired or renovated and to improve the present vessels in the waterway traffic carried out by the State and corresponding recommendations for private inland waterway traffic.

The Finnish Maritime Administration is responsible for the smooth running and safety of navigation in Finland. Its tasks include infrastructure management, maintenance and improvement, icebreaking, piloting and vessel traffic service, maintenance of radio navigation systems, hydrographic surveys and production of nautical charts, promotion of boating and boating safety as well as the handling of coastal ship service in the Archipelago Sea. Vessel traffic and vessels are the responsibility of private shipping companies. Passengers terminals are also owned by the shipping companies or municipalities.



The coastal ship service in the Archipelago Sea is carried out under the responsibility of the Maritime Administration.

Finnish Vehicle Administration

The Finnish Vehicle Administration is an administration, service and information centre belonging to the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The responsibilities of the Finnish Vehicle Administration include inter alia vehicle registration and annual vehicle taxation, type approval of vehicles and their parts, organisation of driving tests and driving licence registration, supervision of vehicle inspection as well as information services relating to road transport.

Goal: The processes relating to the driving licence and the approval for traffic of the cars of the disabled shall be as customer-friendly and clear as possible. Information on them shall be readily available. The acceptance procedures relating to driving tests and vehicles shall be clearly instructed and uniform in different parts of the country.

During 2003, the Finnish Vehicle Administration shall draw up a brochure for people with reduced mobility on the current provisions and practices, the parties involved and financial support relating to driving licences and vehicles.

During 2003, the Finnish Vehicle Administration shall start the preparation of instructions for driving examiners, vehicle inspectors and the companies performing modifications in vehicles for people with reduced mobility relating to the driving aids recommended for compensating various reductions in mobility, the requirements set thereon and the technical approval process of vehicles. At the same time, the Finnish Vehicle Administration shall launch the required training.

The Finnish Vehicle Administration shall also issue instructions on the driving test, its contents and the statement to be issued thereunder. These will be issued after the legislative amendments have been made.

Provincial State Offices

Goal: Provincial State Offices shall promote co-operation to help create an accessible transport system in the same manner as they promote transport safety work: they shall bring together the central actors as well as maintain and distribute information on the measures launched by the different actors in order to facilitate their integration. The Provincial State Offices shall also develop their own operations as regional experts of accessibility. They shall aim at increasing the accessibility and user-friendliness of public transport through funding and development measures as well as by co-operating with the other actors. With regard to service transport, the Provincial State Offices shall ensure that, upon developing the systems, also the views of the different customer organisations are taken into account from the very beginning.

The Provincial State Offices have appointed persons who are responsible for improving the accessibility of public transport and defined their tasks. During the year 2003, the Provincial State Offices shall compile county-specific or regional councils or working groups from among the representatives of the main co-operation parties with the task of promoting accessibility for people with different kinds of reduced mobility. Intensification of co-operation between the transport units and the social and health care units within the Provincial State Offices shall be continued. The national accessibility team lead by the Ministry of Transport and Communications includes representatives of the counties in charge, and also representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the social and health care unit of the counties.

From 2003, the Provincial State Offices have promoted the accessibility chartings of bus stations and the passenger terminals of maritime transport. The parties in charge of the chartings are those managing the terminals: municipalities, Matkahuolto, bus operators and shipping companies. The Provincial State Offices co-ordinate the chartings and are also in contact with the municipalities in order to include the work as part of the general accessibility chartings of the municipalities. The need for co-ordination has increased due to the varied ownership and management structure of the terminals. The Ministry of Transport and Communications shall, together with the Provincial State Offices and the parties in charge of the terminals, draw up instructions for making the chartings during 2003.

From 2003, the Provincial State Offices shall, together with the Ministry of Transport and Communications, support the accessibility chartings of public transport in municipalities with a State aid to public-transport planning and ensure that the quality-corridor projects supported by the State take into account the needs of all population groups. The Provincial State Offices shall also provide any necessary expertise.

During the period 2001–2005, the Provincial State Offices shall co-ordinate the determination of the regional service-level goals of public transport for rural areas in co-operation with municipalities, Regional Councils, environment centres and transport operators. The service-level goals shall also include goals for the accessibility of transport services. In addition to other operations, the Provincial State Offices shall arrange training, information services and regional seminars on accessibility.

The Provincial State Offices are joint regional authorities of seven different ministries promoting the implementation of the national and regional goals of central State administration. The transport departments of the Provincial State Offices attend to the tasks of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. They are licensing authorities, whose tasks include inter alia licences for public transport, scheduled bus transport, taxi licences, licences for goods transport as well as licences for driving schools.

Within the county, also the towns and the Ministry of Transport and Communications have competence in issues relating to licences for scheduled public transport. The task of the transport departments is to safeguard and develop the public transport services of their regions through planning, research and development activities, the purchase of transport services and the transport licensing procedure. The transport department also co-ordinates and monitors the transport-safety work carried out in the county and promotes the equal mobility opportunities of citizens.



Development of service transport services in accordance with the needs of the different user groups is one of the tasks of the Provincial State Offices.



The needs of both people with impaired vision and those needing a level passage have been taken into account in the Swedish crosswalk solution.

2.2 Influencing other actors in charge of accessibility

Supporting the work of the municipalities

The municipalities play a key role in the creation of an environment for transport services suitable for all residents. The municipalities are in charge of streets, parks and recreational areas as well as of most of the public buildings. In the Helsinki metropolitan area and in Turku and Tampere, public transport services are entirely purchased by the municipality. Also in many smaller communities, transport services are purchased by the municipality to supplement self-supporting transport. Many municipalities own stations. In addition, arrangements for transport services for disabled people and various types of service transport are the responsibility of the municipalities.

The goal is that accessibility is always observed when building something new or repairing something old. The present obstacles to mobility should be removed within the limits of the available resources and by their redirection. As there is



The surveys of the present situation should include:

- **charting of the physical environment: pedestrian environments, public transport services, stop and terminal environments (in co-operation with the parties in charge of the terminals) as well as related information,**
- **charting of plans: accessibility and suitability for all in various projects pending or being planned – such as public transport interchanges and terminals, quality corridor projects, service transport pilot projects, plans for pedestrian areas and street projects,**
- **charting of procedures and methods: the procedures and methods of different municipal administrative sectors promoting and preventing accessibility and the possibilities of the citizens to have an influence in decision-making.**

still a lot to improve in the present environment with regard to mobility, it is often necessary at first to chart the present situation and, on this basis, decide on the best ways to promote accessibility. In the municipal accessibility programme, the target of the evaluation of the physical environment should be the entire travel chain as well as the practices that have an effect on the environment or on transport services. It might be well-founded to link or include the necessary surveys in other planning procedures of the municipalities so that it is possible to avoid overlapping and so that the measures can be integrated with the other implementation plans of the municipality. It is naturally necessary to act in co-operation with the local organisations of disabled and elderly people, which could help also in chartings and with user evaluations.

However, what is most important is to launch practical work to improve the mobility opportunities of the inhabitants. The necessary measures may be divided into improvement of the mobility environments in connection with normal operations, changes in the present practices, procedures and plans as well as into projects or project entities requiring separate resources and programming.

It is also important that the municipalities increase the awareness of their personnel of problems relating to mobility and of functional solutions. Training in accessibility should be arranged for the personnel participating in the planning, purchase and production of the environment for mobility and transport services.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications and its administrative sector support the work of the municipalities by assisting the accessibility chartings and good pilot projects of the municipalities with research and development funding and with State aid to public transport. The central channel is the Research and Development Programme for Accessibility to be presented in Chapter 7 and the *Accessible Municipality* network to be implemented within it. The administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications also participates in the construction and maintenance of transport infrastructure in the joint projects of the State and the municipalities promoting accessibility, such as, for example, public transport interchanges and when improving roads in urban areas.



The public-transport enterprises are encouraged to develop their services to suit all customer groups.

Influencing transport operators and other service providers

Accessibility of public transport services requires that, in addition to the State and the municipalities, the transport operators – bus operators, taxi drivers, VR, airlines and shipping companies – as well as the producers of supplementary services relating to transport – for example the service entrepreneurs of public transport terminals and the parties in charge of the maintenance of stations – develop their operations and service provision to suit all customers. This is often also economically advantageous for the enterprises as people with different kinds of reduced mobility are a significant traveller group that keeps growing as the population ages. Many of the measures will simultaneously ease travelling for all the other passengers and thus increase the general appeal of public transport.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications and its administrative sector promote the development of accessible public transport services by assisting good pilot projects with research and development funding and State aid to public transport as well as by participating in the production of material for personnel training. The central channel is the Research and Development Programme of Accessibility to be presented in Chapter 7. The importance of accessibility in arranging transport will be increased by adopting accessibility and user-friendliness as quality factors of public transport inter alia in competitive tendering for public

The Accessible Municipality network and the municipal accessibility programmes

Goal: The goal is to encourage municipalities to improve the accessibility of the transport system, public areas and buildings. The administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications co-operates with the municipalities in planning and implementing projects aimed at promoting accessibility. Within the *Accessible Municipality* network, information shall be disseminated on good solutions, functional practices and encouraging examples and a discussion forum shall be created for the municipalities and other actors.

Contents and timetable: The Ministry of Transport and Communications will, in co-operation with the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Provincial State Offices and the Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, launch the *Accessible Municipality* network and, within it, support the drawing up of municipality-specific accessibility chartings and action programmes, the development of new operating practices, training directed at municipal employees and the planning of pilot projects.

- In the municipal chartings of problems and action plans, the transport environment is encouraged to be examined as a whole – accessibility of the transport system, public areas as well as of buildings and measures improving the safety of the target group in traffic.
- In addition to the physical environment, the purpose is to examine also the actual guidelines and practices that influence the operations and design of the environment and transport services.
- The pilot projects may cover both practical measures and operating models to change the physical environment and measures to include the accessibility perspective in the everyday work of the different actors. Good examples will be brought forward with rewards and by disseminating information on them.
- In order to ensure co-operation and to avoid overlapping, it is the task of the Provincial State Offices to gather information on the places where the accessibility chartings of municipalities, the Finnish Road Administration and the public transport terminals have been or will be made.

The *Accessible Municipality* network and the accessibility chartings and pilot projects supported by it shall be linked as part of the Research and Development Programme on Accessibility of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The preparation of the network and the applications for the first State aid shall be carried out 2003.

Responsibility for the launching of the network: Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities/ co-operation partners: municipalities, Provincial State Offices, Finnish Road Administration, organisations representing different population groups.

Responsibility for the measures and the municipality-specific chartings: municipalities, property owners, transport-service producers, Road Administration, Finnish Rail Administration / co-operation partners: local organisations of disabled people, tenant associations.

Financing: The Ministry of Transport and Communications and, with regard to public transport, also the Provincial State Offices may fund the drawing up of accessibility chartings and action programmes. The Ministry of Transport and Communications may also assist in the planning of the pilot projects with research funding or with municipal incentive funding for transport safety with funding directed at the development of the public-transport information systems and funding for the public transport interchange projects. The authorities of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications shall contribute to the costs with regard to their own infrastructure.

The other financing channels for supporting local-level projects are, inter alia, operational support to organisations as well as the research and development funding of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of the Environment.

An example: Helsinki for All project

for further information: www.hel.fi/helsinkikaikille

Helsinki for all is a project that started out from a city-council initiative and its aim is to make Helsinki accessible to everyone by 2011 by building and repairing the public areas and buildings as well as the public-transport solutions of the city so that they become accessible and safe for all people – also for the disabled, the elderly, children and families with children. In addition, the city shall influence the private sector so that the goal will be reached.

The project started in 2002 and will last until the end of 2011. All the administrative bodies of Helsinki participate in the project lead by the Public Works Department. The goal is to direct the planning to take into account accessibility concerns and to ensure that the operating and work methods and structural solutions are accessible. Increasing accessibility shall be incorporated as part of the annual budget and operational planning of the city and the administrative bodies from 2003.

The work will be supported by:

- The project group seeking accessible solutions mainly with regard to the own activities of the Public Works Department.
- The steering group including representatives from the most important administrative bodies, enterprises and associations regarding the project.
- An interest group consisting of representatives from tenant associations, organisations for the disabled, business associations, agencies, institutions and State administrative bodies. The interest group promotes the dissemination of information on the project.

The project includes three parts, which supplement each other:

- The accessibility plan is drafted for the whole city. It includes estimating the present situation, determining the general accessibility criteria as well as forming the general principles based on needs and the region.
- The regional accessibility plans chart the present situation and start the drawing up of the region-specific quality goals as well as the planning of the routes and premises that are the most important with regard to accessibility.
- Each administrative sector draws up its own accessibility implementation plan. The administrative sectors shall also draw up criteria relating to accessibility for their own operations, which shall be observed in making decisions relating to planning, building and maintenance.

The first development targets: improvement of the Aleksanterinkatu Street, the Töölönlahti park route and the old centre of the Vuosaari suburb. The purpose is to utilise the best solutions discovered in the planning of the pilot projects also in other areas and in other targets in co-operation with the property owners, residents and other interest groups. During the project, also a guide for the basic renovation of buildings will be drawn up. It will include information on different funding alternatives and on source material providing instructions on basic renovation.

The *Helsinki for all* project is carried out in co-operation with the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Transport and Communications. A close co-operation project is the Elevator Project lead by the Development Office of Helsinki City, the aim of which is to speed up the building of elevators in old houses.

transport in cities, the purchased transport of the Provincial State Offices and in the documents for competitive tendering for service transport. More attention shall be paid to the professional skills and training of personnel as well as the use of customer feedback. The quality of transport services may be influenced also by renewing legislation as well as the technical specifications and standards, where necessary, inter alia upon the development of EU legislation or the global treaties relating to air and maritime transport.

The development and adoption of technical and functional innovations intensifying the winter management of the pedestrian environment in undertakings carrying out maintenance shall also be supported through the research and development funding of the administrative sector as well as through the acquisition procedures of the Finnish Road Administration. The private sector is encouraged to develop even better and more user-friendly products for everyday use, such as aids for walking and carrying of goods as well as footwear with good grip in winter conditions.

The acquisition of a driving licence and the modification of the vehicle to correspond to the reduced mobility caused by an injury or illness are, at present, tedious and complicated processes. In order to simplify the operations, guidelines and training are needed both for disabled people and the parties who in practice have to decide issues relating to the driving of a vehicle by a disabled person. The Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Finnish Road Administration shall promote the development of professional skills in undertakings arranging driving instruction, carrying out inspection operations, manufacturing vehicles and their special equipment as well as performing modifications on the vehicles. Instructions and training shall be given in the technical specifications and approval process of the additional control equipment of vehicles and other aids as well as on the adjustment of the equipment to match the functional skills of the persons.

Development of professional skills and co-operation

The overall improvement of the user-friendliness of the transport system requires that all parties responsible for the promotion of accessibility become aware of their responsibility and understand the effects of their own actions. This requires knowledge and training in both the need for accessibility and good solutions. It is important that the users of the transport system may themselves participate in and influence their conditions for mobility. Therefore we need more possibilities to influence and new forms of co-operation between the parties in charge of the transport infrastructure and services and the customers.

It is necessary to direct systematic training in accessibility awareness to the people in charge of the maintenance and construction of the infrastructure as well as the ordering of public transport services in municipalities, Provincial State Offices and in enterprises as part of their other supplementary training. The knowledge, skills and attitudes of the transport administration have a crucial effect on the direction in which the transport system will be developed.

Development of the professional skills of public transport personnel has been discussed in more detail in the publication "Development of the professional skills of public transport personnel especially from the point of view of the elderly and people with reduced mobility and function", publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 12/2001.



The professional skills of the personnel of public transport services have a great effect on the possibilities, comfort and safety of travelling.

With the basic and supplementary training of the planners, it is possible to have an influence on the extent to which accessibility, user-friendliness and safety are observed already in the planning of transport environments, buildings and vehicles. This is the way to create long-term preconditions for improving the accessibility of the environment of mobility and transport services. The correct implementation of details relating to the user-friendliness of the environment is, on the other hand, emphasised in the basic and supplementary vocational training of builders and maintainers. The central goal of the training is to motivate the students to understand the effects of an accessible environment on the well-being of all population groups. The starting points of planning and implementation are especially a user-oriented approach and solutions suitable for all.

The professional skills of the personnel of public transport services have a great effect on the possibilities, comfort and safety of the travelling of people with different forms of reduced mobility. Although total accessibility of the transport infrastructure and vehicles has not, in any way, been achieved, the possibilities of mobility may be improved with the basic and supplementary training of the personnel. As the quality of the service largely involves the attitudes of the personnel, a central aim of the training is to influence the attitudes so that meeting and serving the disabled, the sick and the elderly is as natural and positive as possible. We need training at all the levels of the organisations because transferring the knowledge into practice requires, in addition to the professional skills of the service personnel, also that the management level of the organisation is familiar with the issue and committed thereto.

The authorities of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications co-operate with the municipalities, the transport-service providers, the organisations for disabled people and the parties responsible for training in order to improve the professional skills and develop the training supply. They also

provide supplementary training for their own personnel as required by their own administrative duties. During 2003, the Ministry of Transport and Communications shall convene a working group, the task of which will be to examine systematically the needs for information and attitude questions, through which it will be possible to create preconditions for solutions supporting accessibility. The working group shall influence the contents and provision of professional and supplementary training as well as promote training and the dissemination of information aiming at facilitating the familiarisation of the passengers with reduced mobility and function with the use of public transport. The first task shall be to produce material for practical training. The work of the working group shall be linked as part of the Research and Development Programme of Accessibility.

2.3 The Research and Development programme as support

The Ministry of Transport and Communications shall launch a three-year *Research and Development Programme of Accessibility* in 2003. The programme aims at supporting local-level operations promoting accessibility by financing planning and pilot projects as well as by disseminating information on good solutions and practices. The programme is a central tool in trying to activate the municipal sector, the transport-service producers, the authorities and the general public to recognise the need and significance of an accessible transport environment. The aim is that accessibility be observed in daily operations.

In addition to the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the other possible financiers of the research and development projects include the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Provincial State Offices, the Road Administration, the Finnish Rail Administration, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Finnish Maritime Administration, the Finnish Vehicle Administration, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA, the National Technology Agency of Finland TEKES and the municipal sector as well as possibly interest organisations of operators providing transport services. In addition to the said parties, representatives of organisations representing the central target group shall be invited to the steering group co-ordinating the development programme.

With the help of the programme, present research funding of the organisations participating in it as well as public-transport development funding can be directed in a co-ordinated manner to projects supporting accessibility. The aim will be to gather research and development relating to accessibility under one umbrella. The carrying out of the projects included in the programme may also take place in other research and development programmes, such as the programme on public transport interchanges, the *Jaloin* programme promoting pedestrian and bicycle traffic and the passenger information programme HEILI. Also the *Accessible Municipality* network described in Chapter 2.2 and the activities aiming at the development of professional skills described in this chapter shall be linked as part of the development and research programme.

The Research and Development Programme of Accessibility has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.



3 Implementation and financing

The goal of the strategy is that the transport infrastructure maintained by the State and the services of public transport are accessible and safe for everyone. In order to attain the goal, the public organisations operating in the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications – the Road Administration, the Rail Administration, the Civil Aviation Administration, the Maritime Administration, the Vehicle Administration and the transport departments of the Provincial State Offices – shall, in accordance with Chapter 2, assess the problems and development needs of their own areas of responsibility, estimate their costs and take measures to remove the shortcomings. The measures shall be developed so that accessibility is adequately taken into account in the normal operations of the organisations – for example in preparing legislation and planning instructions or in building and maintaining the transport infrastructure.



In order to carry out solutions increasing accessibility it is proposed that

- **accessibility be taken into account in the normal maintenance of and investments in the transport infrastructure;**
- **the present funding for infrastructure management and the research and development funding of public transport be directed at measures promoting accessibility.**

In order to accelerate the development it is proposed that

- **theme-related packages be included the operating strategy and financial plan of the Ministry of Transport and Communications in order to promote accessibility;**
- **preparations be made for additional funding for public transport so that, in addition to accessibility, other important goals set on public transport are met.**

In order to implement solutions increasing accessibility, it is proposed that accessibility is always taken into account in the normal maintenance of and investments in transport infrastructure – for example in the building and winter maintenance of pedestrian paths, in the building and improvement of public transport terminals, in information systems and in planning instructions. In addition, the current funding of infrastructure management would be directed at measures promoting accessibility. It is also proposed that the research and development financing of public transport be directed at plans, research and development measures supporting accessibility. Thus also the terms of State aid to public transport shall be checked so that the needs of customers with different forms of reduced mobility will be taken better into account than at present.

It is not proposed, at this stage, that the financing of the infrastructure management or the financing of the research and development of public transport be increased. However, the purpose is to accelerate the development by directing the financing of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications to measures promoting accessibility for example through theme-related packages to be included in the operating strategy and financial plan of the Ministry or through separate accessibility financing. In the future, the Ministry and the organisations in its administrative sector shall prepare a proposal on possible theme-related packages for budgetary handling. It is well-founded to compile the theme-related packages of entities that also serve other central development needs of the transport system besides accessibility. The theme-related packages could be used for example to improve public-transport terminals and stops, urban environments and routes for non-motorised transport. The Ministry is also prepared for additional funding for public transport so that despite the possible additional costs arising from measures promoting accessibility, other important goals set on public transport can be implemented.



A well-planned, accessible and user-friendly environment benefits us all.

The State administration operates in co-operation with the municipalities and the private sector to improve the accessibility of the whole transport chain. The central tool is the *Research and Development Programme of Accessibility* proposed in Chapter 7, with which the implementation of the local-level planning and pilot projects shall be supported. The implementation of the programme will not require additional funding, but the present research funding of the Ministry and that of the transport authorities as well as public-transport development funding shall, in a co-ordinated manner, be directed to projects promoting accessibility. Many of the projects serve also other development goals at the same time.

Accessibility seldom results in significant additional costs. Above all it requires remembering and observing the issue in the normal, day-to-day operations of the administrative sector. The investment costs of a well-planned and user-friendly pedestrian environment or station building suitable for all are not usually higher than those of a less functional solution. Also many existing solutions may be made more accessible without significant additional costs in connection with basic renovations.

Most of the measures resulting in additional costs serve all users and thus improve the general quality and service level of the transport environment and transport services. Solutions suitable for all users are an integral part of a high quality level and their possible additional costs are part of the price we are willing to pay for the improvement of quality. For example, the implementation of a pedestrian area, the renovation of a road in a built-up area, low-floor public transport vehicles, clear information and intensified non-skid treatment are good examples of solutions that are more comfortable, user-friendlier and safer for all.

With regard to public transport, the increase in accessibility is also a question of the way to develop the public transport system so that it will become more competitive and attractive to all travellers. For example, the new low-floor busses used in public city transport or the IC carriages with level access in rail transport are in many respects of higher quality and more functional to all users. The better quality attracts more passengers.

Accessibility brings savings

From the point of view of the overall national economy, a more accessible environment and transport system brings about savings as the possibility to increase independent mobility will slow down the growth of the costs of special transport and care services needed by the ageing population. Independent mobility will also help an ageing person to continue living independently, which, for its part, will reduce the need for institutional care and rehabilitation. By improving the accessibility of the transport system, we can also support the opportunities for disabled people to study and work, which will have a positive effect not only on the functional skills and the quality of life of disabled people but also on the overall national economy.

It is also possible to gain national economic savings with measures aimed at reducing the number of accidents caused by slipping. Slipping accidents are very common and they cause reduction of mobility and a great need for specialised health-care services and rehabilitation, especially for people in the oldest age categories. According to research, the costs paid by society for accidents caused by falling and slipping of pedestrians and bikers are around 420 million euros and they include the following costs: health care (55 million euros), lost work input (95 million euros) and loss of welfare (270 million euros). As the population ages, the problem is expected to grow.



B ACTION PROGRAMME

4 Accessible pedestrian environment

4.1 Uninterrupted routes for everyone

Walking has also been discussed in Chapter 2.1 'Responsibilities of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications' and the development of the professional skills of the planners in chapter 2.2 'Development of professional skills and co-operation'.

Walking forms a part of all travel chains and therefore the development of a more accessible walking environment is a basic precondition for the building of a society that is functional and accessible to all. For pedestrians, an accessible environment means uninterrupted routes, easy and easily comprehensible traffic paths, safer street crossings and better accessibility to buildings, stops and public areas. At the same time it also means the functionality of public areas as the common living room of all population groups.

When building a pedestrian environment, solutions that are suitable for all shall be sought. For example, crosswalks shall be suitable for all those crossing the street. In conflict situations, solutions that are suitable for both persons with impaired vision and those needing even surfaces need to be found. The requirements of aesthetics and accessibility may also be combined with good planning.

In addition to car traffic, also the arrangements relating to bicycle transport shall be implemented with quality so that pedestrians – especially children and persons with impaired vision – need not be afraid of passing bicycles. At the same time, the conditions of cyclists may be improved. Cycling is an important transport mode especially for children, youngsters, elderly people as well as for many other population groups with poorer possibilities to move, but this has not been studied any further in this connection. The outlines of the Ministry of Transport and Communications have been entered in the cycling-policy programme of the Ministry, *'New Stimulus for Cycling'*.

Various diggings and roadwork as well as work sites spreading to the sidewalk often cause situations where a person moving with a wheelchair or otherwise moving poorly is hampered or prevented entirely from making progress. A poorly marked roadwork site is a serious hazard for a person with impaired vision. The arrangements made for non-motorised transport around work sites shall be handled better than today, the duration of special arrangements shall be made as short as possible and, after the completion of the work, the sites shall be quickly repaired. Also cars parked on the sidewalk and the advertising boards of shops often cause danger situations for persons with impaired vision.

The information directed at pedestrians must serve all the different travellers with varying observation and comprehension abilities. In addition to traffic lights and markings, this also applies to the increasing amount of electronic information. The aim should, however, more and more, be that, instead of special signs, the pedestrian environment as such signals of its correct and safe use. The facilitation and securing of the journeys of especially those with impaired vision require clearer and mutually agreed upon practices on the use of various guiding surface materials and colours in the pedestrian environment and especially on crosswalks.

4.2 Attention to maintenance and service

More and more attention shall be paid to the level of maintenance of the transport environment. The winter maintenance of sidewalks and routes of non-motorised transport is of great significance in the prevention of injuries caused by slipping as well as in safeguarding the preconditions of mobility of elderly people and others with poor mobility. In the future, with the ageing of the population, the significance of winter maintenance will increase further. Ensuring that for example sidewalks are not slippery is also worth while financially as the necessary additional costs will be gained back as savings in health care. Due to the extension and ageing of the networks for non-motorised transport, it is also necessary to reserve more resources for their basic repair and maintenance.

The ways to arrange sidewalk maintenance as well as the division of responsibility and costs between the municipality and the real-estates are undergoing changes in many municipalities. After the reorganisation of the Finnish Road Administration, the way of maintaining routes for non-motorised transport on public roads has changed; nowadays the FinRA buys the maintenance services of pub-

Four main targets were set for the promotion of walking in the walking-policy programme of the Ministry of Transport and Communications "Incorporating Walking into Transport Policy":

- *Popularity of walking as an every-day travel mode will increase both independently and as a natural part of travel chains*
- *Safety of walking will improve and the feeling of insecurity will be reduced*
- *Walking environments will be accessible and functional for all population groups*
- *Walking environments will be agreeable and pleasant places for moving and spending one's time in the open air.*



Improvement of winter maintenance will prevent slipping injuries and thus save health-care costs.

lic roads from their producers. The aim shall be that, along with the changes, the level of winter maintenance of sidewalks and routes for non-motorised transport improves and that the variation in the level decreases. In addition to changes, also supportive development work, national policy solutions and changes in legislation are needed.

Pedestrians will pay more attention to slippery weather conditions by increasing general knowledge of injuries caused by slipping, by encouraging the use of footwear with better grip and the use of anti-skid equipment, by creating a slipperiness classification for footwear as well as by developing and extending weather forecasts to pedestrians.

In spring the streets shall be cleaned as early and as efficiently as possible so that the street dust, which especially affects people suffering from asthma or another respiratory disease, will not restrict their possibilities to move.

The Ministry of the Environment has started work to revise the act relating to maintenance and cleaning of streets. The research and development programme of non-motorised transport of the Ministry of Transport and Communications includes an action plan for the promotion of walking in winter. The *Jaloin* Programme also clarifies the means, effects and costs of winter maintenance and launches development projects for the promotion of the approved measures.

Measures

Implementation of an accessible environment. Accessibility shall be observed whenever building something new and repairing something old. An example of a good practice is the systematic accessibility audit of the building plan. Remove all the existing obstacles to mobility from routes, public areas and property. Where necessary, chart the present situation and draw up a plan to promote accessibility. A quality-level target shall be prepared to support the evaluation of the present state of the routes for non-motorised transport and sidewalks as well as to determine their planning and maintenance level. The administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications also has the responsibility to improve the pedestrian environment: it participates in the determination of quality goals and promotes the work of municipalities by participating in joint planning and construction projects and by supporting chartings and improvement projects through the *Accessible Municipality* network (cf. Chapter 2.2) as well as a Research and Development Programme (cf. Chapter 7). **Responsibility:** municipalities, property owners, Road Administration / co-operation partners: organisations for the disabled, resident associations, transport-service producers.

Accessibility in planning instructions. When revising planning instructions of roads, streets and other outdoor premises that are in common use, the functionality of the solutions recommended in the instructions shall be ensured for example through an audit procedure. The planning of an accessible environment must not require knowledge of separate planning instructions or remembering the issue separately. Implementation of details in accordance with instructions may also be uncertain because the importance of the solutions presented in the instructions is not understood. Therefore the recommended solutions need to be adequately justified. **Responsibility:** the parties drawing up the instructions, inter alia Road Administration, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Kuntatekniikan yhdistys [Association of Municipal Engineering], Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of the Environment and municipalities.

Functional and safe crosswalk solutions. There is a clear need to develop more suitable standard solutions for the kerb stones and surface materials of crosswalks and junctions suitable for both persons with impaired vision and those moving with devices equipped with wheels both in towns and in urban areas. With regard to people with impaired vision, development is needed also in traffic-light technology and pedestrian path solutions of rotary intersections. **Responsibility:** Road Administration, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and municipalities / co-operation partners: organisations for the disabled, representatives and interest groups of builders, developers and product manufacturers, parties drawing up the instructions.

Pedestrian path arrangements of street work sites. The permit and supervision procedure of street work sites is under development. Good practices aiming at ensuring good co-ordination of the work and minimising disturbances during it shall be promoted; examples of these are written permits issued by municipalities and related instructions, co-operation agreements of municipalities and construction companies as well as quality issues in competitive tendering. The guiding and information systems of worksites shall be developed so that the needs of all travellers are better taken into account. In addition, co-operation between the different municipal authorities supervising the work and imposing sanctions shall be tightened. The legislation shall be checked in order to increase the guidance possibilities of municipalities and to transfer the right to impose sanctions to the same authority. The possibilities of drawing up a building code also in the field of infrastructure construction shall be examined. **Responsibility:** with regard to legislation, Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Transport and Communications; with regard to practices, the municipalities and Road Administration / co-operation partners: Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, representatives and interest groups of builders and developers, parties drawing up the instructions.

Intensification of winter maintenance. Winter maintenance of non-motorised transport and sidewalks shall be intensified by raising the maintenance level of the most important routes of non-motorised transport, by creating a maintenance class to intensify anti-skid treatment for the most used sidewalks and routes for non-motorised transport in town centres and urban areas, by creating maintenance methods and by better notifying the residents of the timetable of winter maintenance. In problematic areas, slipperiness shall be fought also through technical solutions such as roofings, street heating and drying. Sand shall be removed from the street as soon and as efficiently as possible in order to reduce the amount of street dust. **Responsibility:** municipalities, property owners, Road Administration / co-operation partners: organisations for the disabled, tenant associations, transport-service producers.

Weather forecast service to promote safe walking in winter. The weather forecast service shall be extended to serve pedestrians and winter maintenance of sidewalks. The reliability and effectiveness of the weather forecasts forming the basis of the service shall also be improved by developing forecast models. **Responsibility:** Finnish Meteorological Institute and Ministry of Transport and Communications / co-operation partners: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Road Administration, municipalities, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.

Development of aids for walking and carrying of goods. The difficulties caused to walking by weakening mobility and the need to carry goods may be reduced with various aids. It is possible to encourage the development of even better and user-friendlier aids and equipment for mobility suitable for everyday use by competitions for the innovations as well as by supporting research and product development. The targets may for example be equipment for carrying and transportation, such as wagons, carriages and carrying devices as well as walking aids for elderly people and others with reduced mobility. Mobility in winter can be promoted by improving the grip of footwear and by testing and creating a classification for non-skid equipment. Research and product development is also needed in technology facilitating the changing of level. **Initiative responsibility:** Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) / co-operation partners: National Technology Agency of Finland, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Technical Research Centre of Finland, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, the research and educational institutions of the field, undertakings of the field.



5 Functional public transport

5.1 Central operating principles

The professional skills of public transport personnel have also been discussed in Chapter 2.2 Development of professional skills and co-operation.

To make public transport attractive and user-friendly, it has to be flexible and take into account the needs of different users – especially elderly and disabled people. In addition to developing different public-transport modes, it is important to ensure the functionality of the entire transport chain.

The starting point for the development of public transport is user-friendliness for all potential passengers and attractiveness for the general public. Development of public transport for the needs of persons with reduced mobility usually also facilitates the travelling and mobility of others. Thus increasing accessibility is a question not only of equal rights but also of a means to make the public transport system more competitive and attractive to all users.

The use of public transport may be difficult not only for disabled people but also for elderly people or those moving with small children or with heavy things to carry. Therefore the target group of accessible public transport is extensive and represents a considerable passenger potential.

The ageing of population also imposes new requirements on the quality of the service, information and vehicles of public transport. The need for special transport increases, which will in turn increase the costs for society if no action is taken. The situation may be curtailed by developing public transport available to all. As the authorities plan and arrange school transport as well as transport services relating to social and health services, they have to clarify and utilise the possibilities of transport available to all. This is a challenging task when remembering that there will always be people – for example severely disabled children – whose transportation must be carried out in a more individual manner than normal group transport.

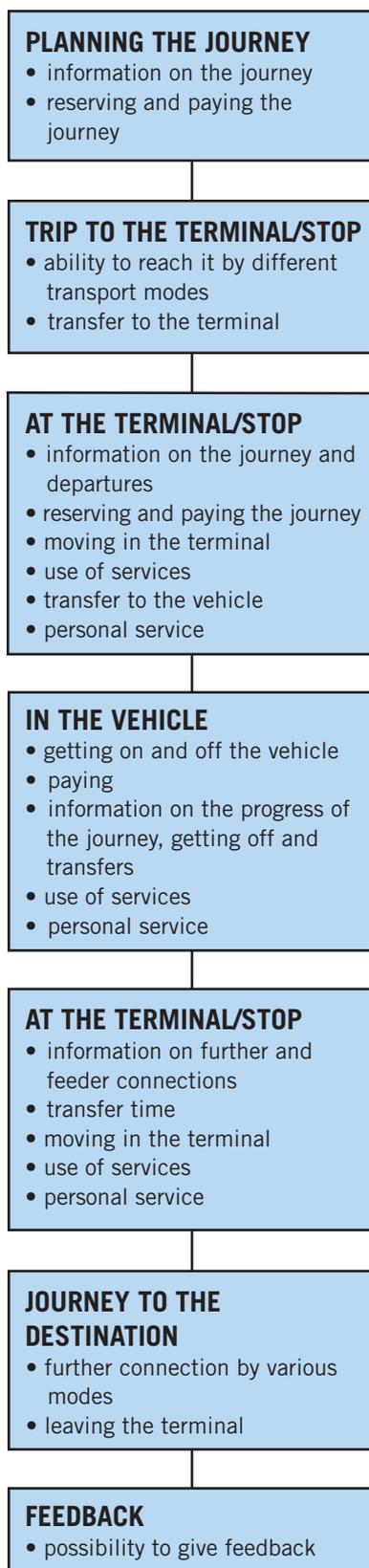
More and more attention has to be paid to the functionality of the entire public transport system and the flexibility of door-to-door journeys. Accessibility thus involves the user-friendliness of the public transport system as a whole. The concept of accessibility therefore also means that the destination must be attainable by means of public transport and that transport has to be safe. Good implementation of details is very important as part of the whole. In addition to physical circumstances and available connections also information and service by the personnel are important issues.

5.2 Accessibility as part of the quality of public transport

Accessibility and user-friendliness are an essential part of public transport quality. More and more attention has to be paid to improving the quality of the public-transport system and measures have to be taken that promote an increased focus on quality factors in transport. A central measure is making accessibility and user-friendliness into quality factors of public transport inter alia in the terms of competitive tendering and in the development of the quality systems of the operators. The authorities responsible for provisions on transport, transport licences and the purchasing of transport – the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Provincial State Offices and the municipalities – as well as transport operators will have to develop customer feedback systems giving the customers a possibility to provide feedback and ensuring that it is taken into account. Additional attention will also have to be paid to the professional skills and training of the personnel.

With the exception of local transport in the capital area and Turku and Tampere, the present Finnish public-transport system is largely based on transport carried out on the basis of ticket revenues without support from society. The transport is the responsibility of the operators. This means that the planning and provision of transport services is also the responsibility of these companies. The public sector works to create prerequisites for the development of the quality and service level of transport operating on the basis of ticket revenues. The transport licence system, on the other hand, protects the operators from fully open competition. Therefore transport operators are responsible to ensure that transport serves the customers as well as possible on the basis of ticket revenues. When granting li-

The quality of public transport has also been discussed in Chapter 2.1 The responsibility of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.



Travel chain.

cences and supervising transport, the licensing authorities will have to ensure that transport operators carry their responsibility.

Setting requirements for licences relating to equipment is controversial. On the one hand we have to ask whether it is possible to set additional requirements for transport operating on the basis of ticket revenues and if so, to what extent. The aim today is, through co-operation of licensing authorities and transport operators, to have accessible vehicles first on routes where they are most needed. At the same time the issue relates to the basics and structure of the whole transport licence system and, through that, the whole bus and coach transport system in Finland.

The situation is different in the biggest cities, in transport purchased by the Provincial State Offices and the municipalities as well as in purchased rail transport. Here the public sector determines the service level desired and, with the exception of railway traffic, usually arranges competitive tendering for the transport. The service level and quality are ultimately determined by the demand for the service and the price that society is willing to pay for the transport.

Higher quality costs more. Therefore higher quality requirements may result in a diminished supply of transport. The State is purchasing bus, train and taxi transport for the very reason that the demand is not big enough to maintain ticket-revenue-based public transport. In this case we have to consider whether public financing is used to increase the supply of transport (regional equality) or accessibility (social equality). It is well-founded to introduce quality improvements in places with higher demand and more users. In practice more accessible equipment in purchased rural transport cannot be required except gradually, because there is hardly any supply of equipment accessible to all. Outside the biggest cities, society will have to ensure that the requirements for vehicles do not guide the best and most accessible vehicles from ticket-revenue based transport to unprofitable purchased transport, where the number of passengers is usually smaller.

The European Union is at present preparing a so-called public service contract Regulation, a central aim of which is to improve the quality of public transport. Although the manner in which bus and coach transport is arranged in Finland differs from that in the other EU Member States, the development of legislation must, in any case, ensure that the legislation enhances a higher quality of service – including accessibility.

Measures

Purchasing of and competitive tendering for transport

- In the course of the year 2003, the Ministry of Transport and Communications will supervise the drafting of competitive tendering documents for service transport, by means of which the municipalities will be able better to take into consideration quality issues and different quality features and purchasing service transport. **Responsibility:** MinTC and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities / co-operation partners: the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Provincial State Offices, Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA, the Finnish Bus and Coach Association, interest groups of customers.
- The development of the quality models of Provincial State Offices for purchased transport will continue in co-operation with bus and coach as well as taxi operators. The quality models of the Provincial State Offices for purchased transport are significant also as an example of quality models for municipalities. The work will also clarify the possibilities to set higher requirements for transport accessibility and the possibilities to give accessibility a higher weight in the quality models. The Ministry of Transport and Communications will launch the work in the course of the year 2003. **Responsibility:** MinTC / co-operation partners: Provincial State Offices, Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA, the Finnish Bus and Coach Association, Public Transport Association, the Finnish Taxi Association, transport operators.
- The terms of competitions regarding public city transport will be continuously developed so as to give quality factors a greater value than at present. Like low floors, other characteristics increasing accessibility and user-friendliness will be included in the quality requirements. **Responsibility:** the municipalities in question, Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council / co-operation partners: Provincial State Offices, the Finnish Bus and Coach Association, Public Transport Association, MinTC
- In the near future, also the accessibility of transport as well as the quality requirements of transport provided will be taken into account when making decisions about competitive tendering in rail transport in the capital area and in this context, also about ownership and acquisition of rail equipment. With regard to vehicles, the elimination of quality differences will have to form the starting point of all decision alternatives. **Responsibility:** Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council, capital area municipalities, MinTC
- The promotion of accessibility in non-profitable purchased rail transport and the cost effects of the alternative methods of progress will be clarified in 2004. **Responsibility:** purchaser of transport (MinTC) / co-operation partners: Finnish Railways, Finnish Rail Administration.

Transport licences. During 2003 and 2004, the Ministry of Transport and Communications will supervise a study into ways of supporting company-initiated quality development – including accessibility – by means of the licence system. Attention should be paid also to quality factors in licence applications, because for example the vehicles used in transport have a significant influence on how the transport in question serves the customers. **Responsibility:** the licensing authorities (MinTC, Provincial State Offices, municipalities) / co-operation partners: the Finnish Bus and Coach Association, Public Transport Association, transport operators.

Quality provided by companies. The operators of public transport improve the accessibility of transport services as part of the continuous development of quality for example by introducing quality systems to determine the quality that they provide and to monitor its realisation. **Responsibility:** public transport operators / co-operation partners: the Finnish Bus and Coach Association, Public Transport Association, interest groups of customers, transport purchasers and licence authorities, Liikenneturva.

5.3 Passenger information and payment systems

Information will have to be understandable, it will have to be disseminated in a suitable form and it will have to include the necessary information on the accessibility of the travel and the services.

A public-transport customer needs information at all stages of the journey – at the terminal, at the stop and on their way there, in the vehicle and when getting off it as well as in advance when planning the travel and acquiring the tickets. Good and continuous information makes the passenger feel safe and confident at all stages of the travel. Public-transport information needs to be improved on three levels so that it would better serve also people with reduced mobility and function:

- information has to be disseminated in several ways and so that it is available to all population groups. Special attention shall be paid to the needs of those with impaired vision and hearing.
- information on accessible services included in the journey and on their use has to be available to the passengers.
- all the information has to be understandable. Information that is easy to understand and use facilitates the travelling of everyone.

Although the aim is general user-friendliness benefiting everyone, we need also to develop special solutions and new aids supplement the guiding of for example people with impaired vision and hearing.

Information and guiding models will have to be drafted especially for changes and emergencies also for passengers with reduced function such as hearing impaired people and people with impaired access. The personnel will have to be trained in communication skills with people with reduced function and in offering information to them.

It is aim of the Ministry of Transport and Communications to create preconditions for a nationwide entity consisting of several compatible information systems and giving the passenger the possibility to obtain information on a door-to-door journey and the related accessible services through one point. In addition to information on schedules and prices, high-quality information includes information on vehicles, connections, stops and stations. Information is disseminated electronically, over the telephone and in the form of printed schedule booklets and route maps. Both the information disseminated at public-transport stations, stops and in vehicles as well as its quality needs to be improved. There are defects in both printed, electronic and over-the-telephone information.

The creation of a national information system is an extensive development entity, where the owners of different information systems are responsible for the maintenance of their own systems and the Ministry of Transport and Communications creates preconditions for the development of the system together with the operators. The first step will be an Internet-based nationwide service portal of public transport, which, in addition to general information, also contains links to existing schedule services. The aim is that an electronic information system covering the whole country and all modes of public transport providing door-to-door routes can be introduced in 2003. At that point the system would contain long distance bus and coach and rail transport, the parts of local transport ready to joint the nationwide system as well as domestic air transport.

Information suitable for all is a quality factor, which has to be taken into account in the development of public transport services and in competitive tendering relating to transport. The Ministry of Transport and Communications has drafted a general guide for those implementing the service on the user-friendliness of contents and operating forms of electronic communications services for passenger transport (*Guide for Improving the User-friendliness of Information Service of the Public Transport, Publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications B 2/2003*). The guide cards of the publication contain recommendations on issues to be taken into consideration in the implementation of electronic information services, such as information essential to passengers with different forms of reduced mobility as well as on means for the provision of the information. The guide takes into account the norms and recommendations of the European Union for example on the user interfaces of info kiosks, up-to-date on-board displays and terminology. The guide should be appended when requesting tenders on the planning of information so that it can be taken into account at the initial stages of the project. In addition to electronic information, the contents, availability and user-friendliness of traditional printed and telephone information will also have to be improved.

It is also necessary to make the means of payment as well as reservation and payment systems easier to use. Central targets of development include inter alia the following:

- possibility to reserve a ticket and to have it delivered home
- possibility to reserve the whole journey from one place
- the functionality and user-friendliness of new means of payment (smart cards etc.), reservation systems and ticket machines for different customer groups
- development of customer profiling systems (recognition of the needs of the passenger).

Sufficient attention will have to be paid to the accessibility of the reservation systems inter alia from the perspective of persons with impaired vision, since ticket services are more and more extensively provided as electronic services and or by ticket machines. Sufficient personal customer service has to be maintained also in the future.

In the development of new means of payment, the goal is to extend joint use of payment and other cards with the aim that the passenger may pay all the parts of their travel with one user-friendly electronic smart card. However, it is important in developing electronic means of payment to maintain also the traditional means of payment, i.e., cash.

The use of new means of payment has to be designed in as simple and uniform a way as possible. The technology shall also be developed further so that the system will recognise the means of payment automatically for example when the passenger passes through the identification equipment of vehicles. The design of smart cards has to take into account identifiers complying with standards, such as surfaces, notches and colours, since they help people with impaired vision to recognise the cards better.

It should be possible to include information on a passenger to be assisted in the smart card to facilitate the recognition of his needs. In this way the smart card can also be developed into a transport aid for example to identify a bus, to open doors or to increase the size of text on automatic information machines.

Measures

Guides on the acquisition of information. Those responsible for passenger transport information services draft clear, continuously updated guides directed at the target group on the present sources of information, the connections and the services available and the ways of functioning in different situations. The Ministry of Transport and Communications will assist in the compilation of the first guides and also require their continuous updating. **Responsibility:** transport operators and orderers, Finnish Rail Administration, Finnish Civil Aviation Administration / co-operation partners: MinTC, Provincial State Offices, interest groups of the customers, Matkahuolto, travel agencies, Selkokieliokeskus (Plain Language Centre).

The inclusion of information on accessibility. Those responsible for passenger transport information services will include information on the accessibility of public-transport in schedule publications and other schedule information available at present. The Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Provincial State Offices will make the presentation of this information a condition for any State support on schedule information and publications. **Responsibility:** transport operators and orderers, Finnish Rail Administration, Finnish Civil Aviation Administration / co-operation partners: MinTC, Provincial State Offices, interest groups of the customers, Matkahuolto, travel agencies, Selkokieliokeskus (Plain Language Centre).

Improvement of information. Those responsible for public transport information services will improve the availability, contents and understandability of both printed, electronic and over-the-telephone information especially from the perspective of those with impaired vision. Also the user-friendliness of information tools (e.g. info machines) will be improved. The Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Provincial State Offices will assist in the development of information systems. Projects improving the user-friendliness of electronic information will be promoted also in the *Info programme of passenger traffic* (HEILI). **Responsibility:** transport operators and orderers, municipalities, Finnish Rail Administration, Finnish Civil Aviation Administration / co-operation partners: MinTC, Provincial State Offices, interest groups of the customers, Matkahuolto, travel agencies, Selkokieliokeskus (Plain Language Centre).

Development of means of payment. The means and methods of payment will be developed so that they will, in all situations and modes of transport, take into account the needs and requirements of all users. Smart cards will be developed to identify the needs of the passenger and to facilitate his/her travel. The Ministry of Transport and Communications may grant State support for the planning of public-transport development projects. **Responsibility:** transport operators and owners of the systems / co-operation partners: interest groups of the customers.

Development of travel reservation systems. Travel reservation systems will be developed so that they will take into account the needs and requirements of all users. The aim is, already when ordering a journey, to give information on the need for any assistance relating for example to the mobility or functioning of the customer and to make sure that for this information will be forwarded at the different stages of the journey. **Responsibility:** transport operators and owners of the systems / co-operation partners: interest groups of the customers.

The provision of information will also be improved by utilising new electronic means of communication. In the Swedish Tågplus network service, the passenger obtains not only schedule information but also detailed information on matters relating to the accessibility of the journey.



5.4 Public-transport terminals

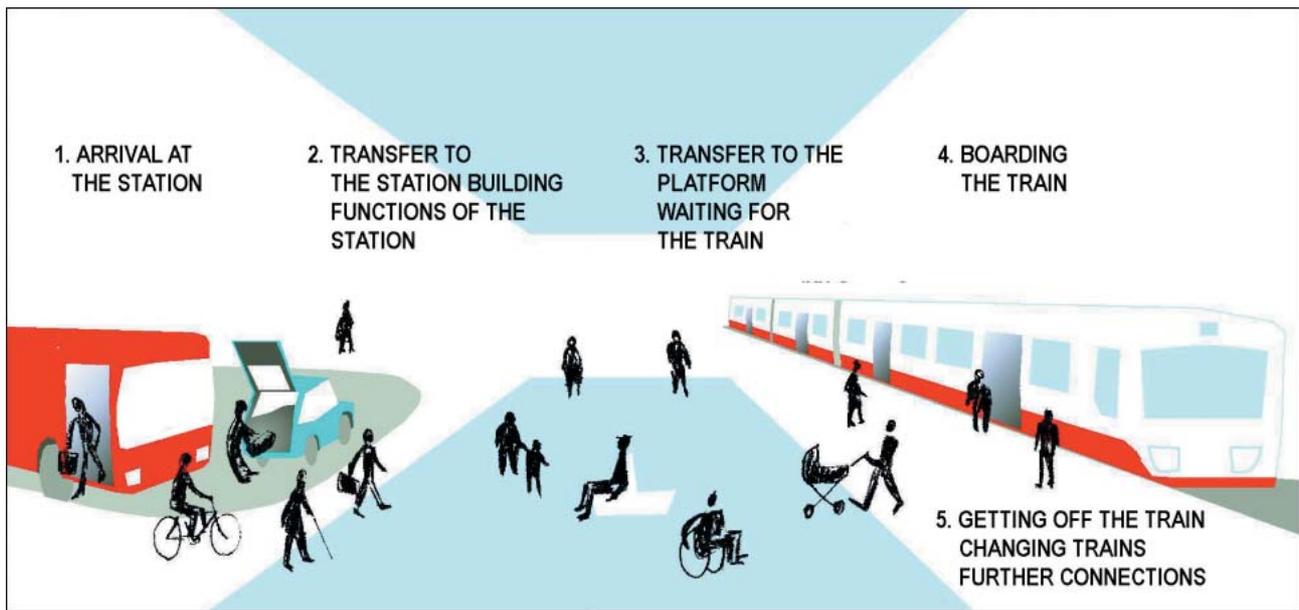
The Land Use Act and the Building Act require that new buildings must, taking into account their purpose of use, be suitable for persons with reduced mobility. Administrative and service buildings as well as service facilities that must, from the perspective of equality, be available to everyone have to be made accessible. In renovation and repair work subject to a permit, accessibility requirements are applied depending on the nature and extent of the measure and the intended use of the building. More detailed instructions on the requirements are included in the National Building Code of Finland. Ultimately, the instructions are interpreted in the building permit procedure.

However, the mandatory requirements of legislation are not sufficient from the perspective of travelling. Therefore more detailed instructions on accessibility as well as measures to ensure compliance with them are needed in the construction and renovation of terminals. Attention must also be paid to the functionality of the terminals in emergencies, such as the accessibility of exits and the dissemination of information so that it reaches all those in the terminal. The implementation of an accessible environment requires constant attention from design all the way through the construction.

It is most advantageous to make the changes necessary to facilitate the mobility and information needs of people with reduced mobility (e.g. ramps, toilets for the disabled, automatic doors, floor surfaces, service desks, new lighting, electronic display boards, seats) in connection with other renovation measures. Small repair and alteration work (e.g. marking the steps and edges, rails, adjustment of lighting and doors, positioning of fittings) can easily be done in connection with ordinary maintenance. In order to launch the measures, the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications will draft instructions to chart the accessibility of the stations and terminals of different modes of transport as well as to chart the situation in State-owned targets and to promote this also at other terminals.

When the national public transport interchange project is implemented, the functionality and user-friendliness of bus and railway stations is expected to improve in 22 public transport interchange locations. The public transport interchanges combine local and national bus and railway stations and related services. It is the purpose of the public transport interchanges to improve circumstances at the stations and transfer connections between different transport modes. Design instructions and a checklist have been compiled for public transport interchanges to ensure that accessibility is taken into account. Instructions have also been drafted on information to be given at the public transport interchanges. The Ministry of Transport and Communications participates in the financing of the information systems and accessibility of public transport interchanges upon discretion and project-specifically. A precondition for State financing is compliance with the design instruction *Accessible public transport interchange*. The party undertaking the construction of the project is liable to ensure that the instructions are complied with both during the design and the construction stage.

The public transport terminals have also been discussed in Chapter 2.1 The responsibility of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.



In a functional terminal all the stages of a travel chain are accessible.

The problem of railway and bus stations is the age of the buildings. Numerous bus stations comply with the requirements used in the 1950s–70s. Hardly any basic renovation has been carried out although entry has at many places been facilitated with slopes and the toilets have been improved. No funding has been found to acquire for example automatic doors, electronic public transport information or announcement machines. Numerous bus stations also operate in rented premises and in several municipalities their improvement usually awaits decisions on the development of a whole area around the station with a central location. Therefore the role of the municipalities is often central in the improvement of the stations. The quick improvement of the conditions is likely to require the participation of the public sector in the renovation projects of bus stations or in separate accessibility projects.

At present public funding has been directed at developing public transport interchanges, which will simultaneously improve the accessibility of both bus stations and railway stations in the locations in question. At the public transport interchange it is important to ensure an accessible travel chain not only in the terminal building but also between the terminal and the vehicle. Therefore the aim is, in connection with a public transport interchange project, also to raise the train platforms and improve the routes leading to the platforms if this has not been carried out earlier. It is a prerequisite for public financing of both public transport interchanges and other terminals and stations that accessibility is sufficiently taken into account.

It is, however, important to note that at numerous terminals and stations there are also several minor needs to improve accessibility and safety from the perspective of the target group and that these costs are reasonable. Many measures can be implemented in connection with the framework of ordinary real-estate maintenance as long as people are aware of the defects.

Measures

Evaluation and improvement of terminals. The owners and those operating at the stations and terminals of different modes of transport will chart the functionality and development needs of the stations in 2002–2004 in co-operation with local associations for disabled and elderly people as well as with representatives of municipalities. The examination shall cover not only the terminal building but the functionality of the whole station area. The Provincial State Offices shall co-ordinate the charting of the terminals in their area, promote the launching of the charting and collect the improvement needs with cost estimates. The Ministry of Transport and Communications will, together with the Provincial State Offices and those responsible for the terminals, draft charting instructions for bus stations and ship terminals. The National Board of Civil Aviation together with others maintaining airports will draft the charting instruction for airports and the Finnish Rail Administration those for railway stations. Small improvement measures will be implemented at once as part of ordinary real-estate maintenance and larger improvements in connection with more extensive renovation or public transport interchange projects or as separate work. The Ministry of Transport and Communications may assist significant improvement measures with funds for the development of public transport. **Responsibility:** Charting instructions: MinTC, Provincial State Offices, Finnish Rail Administration, National Board of Civil Aviation, other parties owning terminals and operating therein. Charting and repair of defects: parties owning terminals and operating therein / co-operation partners: municipalities, interest groups of the customers.

Instructions on the accessibility of public-transport terminals. It is unclear if the present building provisions and instructions guarantee all aspects of the accessibility of public-transport terminals. A survey will be conducted of the situation and guidance given on how problems seen in implementation can be prevented. Where necessary, planning instructions or recommendations will be drafted on the accessibility of public-transport terminals with a checklist like the *Instructions for accessible public transport interchanges*; either to cover all terminals or just some modes of transport. **Initiative responsibility:** MinTC / co-operation partners: Ministry of the Environment, Matkahuolto, VR Ltd, Finnish Rail Administration, Finnish Civil Aviation Authority, municipalities, interest groups of the customers, Building Information Foundation RST.

Specification of the service level of the terminal network. The specification of the public-transport terminal network will be continued also at a level below the national public transport interchange network by classifying the terminals of different modes of transport on a national and regional level in connection with transport-system planning and public-transport plans. Service level targets including accessibility will be set for terminals with different classifications. **Initiative responsibility:** MinTC / co-operation partners: Provincial State Offices, municipalities, Regional Councils, transport operators, partners responsible for the terminals.



The needs of people with reduced mobility have to be taken into account better in new terminal buildings.

5.5 Bus and taxi transport

City buses

Bus and taxi transport has also been discussed in Chapters 2.1 Responsibility of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, 2.2 Development of skills, 5.2 Quality requirements of Public transport, 5.3 Passenger information and payment systems as well as in 5.4 Public transport terminals.

City buses are little by little being replaced by low-floor buses. The number of low-floor buses in city transport has been increased inter alia by the State aid granted earlier by the Ministry for their acquisition and at present especially by the vehicle requirements used in competitive tendering. In addition, bus companies themselves have strongly invested in low-floor vehicles for city transport and service transport. Almost all the local-transport buses sold or ordered lately have low floors. In addition to a low floor, the buses have been equipped with ramps (once a requirement for State aid).

At present in the capital area and in Turku and Tampere, 50–70 percent of city buses have low floors and in the other large towns their share is 20–30 percent. In smaller cities the replacement of the vehicles is slow. Therefore it is still necessary to support and speed up the development inter alia by strongly emphasising the significance of accessible vehicles as a quality factor for all passengers and by making an even greater input in the general design and user-friendliness of these buses, for example regarding seating arrangements. In order to get the maximum benefit from low-floor buses in the transition period, transport operators, licensing authorities and organisations representing the customers can have local negotiations on the most appropriate way of using the most accessible vehicles.

In addition to the low floor, more attention has been paid in the new buses also to other details increasing user-friendliness, such as the location of stop buttons, the use of contrasting colours and the numbering of the lines. Issues still requir-



Low-floor city buses have become more common in the last years.

ing a lot of development include stop announcements and visual information at stops as well as the support rails and handles of the vehicles. Nor has sufficient attention been paid in the present buses to the safe fastening of wheelchairs. In order to improve the situation it is necessary to prepare a national standard on the fastening system for wheelchairs. This can be used for example as a condition for purchasing transport.

The so-called Bus Directive of the European Union on the structure of buses adopted in 2002 and containing new technical requirements for new buses has an effect on the characteristics of new local-transport buses. According to the provisions, city buses have to be accessible.

In addition to better vehicles it is important, in the training of the drivers, to pay attention to technology facilitating mobility and a soft way of driving safe to the passenger. Co-operation to develop professional skills is handled in Chapter 2.3.

Long distance vehicles

The user-friendliness of long-distance buses and coaches has not developed in the same way as that of city buses. Therefore their development requires a special input. Despite the development, it is likely that the vehicles will be rare for a long time, because a significant replacement of buses will take 5–15 years.

The biggest problem with coaches are the high floors, which makes them badly suited for passengers with reduced mobility. Since a significant part of the revenues of express transport comes from goods transport today, a sufficient cargo space is necessary for an express bus. Therefore the low-floor concept of city transport as such is unsuitable for express transport even though the evenness of the main roads and the level of winter maintenance would make it possible. What is positive in long-distance transport is the fact that stop announcements are more common while visual information at stops still requires development.

For the transport operator new vehicles may involve an economic risk and therefore, from the perspective of transport operators, the introduction of new types of vehicles may require support from society. For example a double decked low-floor coach complying with the Swedish example is more expensive than an ordinary coach with regard to its acquisition price and operating costs. Besides, its value and usability in other transport later on is uncertain.

The so-called Bus Directive referred to above in connection with city transport makes it possible for each Member State to issue its own provisions on the accessibility of long distance coaches. These provisions are likely to speed up the development of the vehicles. The development is also supported by research. In 2001 the Ministry of Transport and Communications launched a planning project of a future long-distance bus (*The Future Coach Project*). The purpose of the work is to develop a concept-level proposal, which means a solution of the main principles of the vehicle's distribution of space, equipment, interior and outward appearance without too exact commitment to detail. The focus of the work is to plan the coach so that it is suitable for all passengers and to develop factors in-

Measures

CITY TRAFFIC

Promotion of the replacement of city transport vehicles

- **In the contract transport of the largest cities**, nearly all the vehicles will be replaced by low-floor vehicles in the next few years due to the requirements for competitive tendering. **Responsibility:** purchasers of transport.
- **In other large and middle sized towns**, almost all vehicles used in city transport and urban neighbourhoods will be replaced by low-floor vehicles by 2010 due to new acquisitions and transfer of older low-floor vehicles from the biggest cities. The change will primarily take place at the initiative of the transport operators themselves. However, should this not take place, the licensing authorities have a possibility to intervene through the licence terms. **Responsibility:** transport operators and licensing authorities.
- **In small towns**, low-floor vehicles will also be introduced. However, the change will be slower because some of the buses come second hand from elsewhere and the vehicles will not be fully replaced until the available second-hand city buses are primarily low-floor vehicles. The licensing authorities will monitor the development and, where necessary, intervene considering together with transport operators and organisations representing customers the most appropriate way of using vehicles of different age and whether vehicle requirements tend to decrease this unprofitable form of transport. **Responsibility:** transport operators and licence authorities.

LONG-DISTANCE TRANSPORT

The development of the future coach. Research and development projects will be continued and launched to develop the accessibility of coach services, especially new types of vehicles. Possibilities to increase the accessibility of vehicles through technical legislation will be clarified in co-operation with transport operators and the necessary changes made in legislation. The aim is the introduction of accessible coaches serving all customer groups as well as possible in long-distance transport. **Responsibility for initiation:** MinTC / co-operation partners: National Technology Agency of Finland TEKES, equipment manufacturers, transport operators, Finnish Vehicle Administration Centre AKE, interest groups of customers.

TAXI TRANSPORT

Development of taxis. The Ministry of Transport and Communications participates in international projects relating to the development of taxis and, where necessary, drafts technical recommendations relating to taxis. Where necessary, the Ministry of Finance will renew the technical requirements of service taxis entitling the owner to a higher tax exemption than ordinary taxis. When developing quality models for the purchased traffic of municipalities and Provincial State Offices, the possibilities to set accessibility requirements for the transport and accessibility will be given a higher weight in quality models (cf. Chapter 5.2). The aim is that ordinary taxis will, as far as possible, be suitable for the transport of all population groups and the availability of accessible taxi vehicles and services will be officially acknowledged for all customer groups. **Initiation responsibility:** MinTC and Ministry of Finance / co-operation partners: Finnish Vehicle Administration Centre, Finnish Taxi Association, taxi operators, interest groups of the customers, car manufacturers.

creasing comfort. At the same time the projects aims at making coach transport a more attractive alternative to the public for example to families and business travellers.

The work is divided into parts, the first of which is the outline of the concept as a basis for further planning and the last, still awaiting stage, is the construction of an actual pilot coach. The result of the first stage are presented in the publication *The Future Coach—multipurpose and accessible (Ministry of Transport and Communications 2002)*. The willingness and possibilities of the different parties to take further steps in the work will depend on the results of the preceding stage, and they are always ascertained during each stage.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications is participating in the international COST 349 research action supported by the European Union and examining the accessibility of long-distance bus and coach services. The purpose is to chart the best practices and to improve the functionality of scheduled bus transport from the perspective of people with reduced mobility and function and elderly people as well as to make suggestions and disseminate information on recommendable measures. The focus of the action is on the whole travel chain including information, accessibility of terminals and stops, getting on the bus, busses and coaches, safety instructions regarding the transport of wheelchairs, personnel training and connections with other modes of transport. In order to utilise the research, the project largely involves also transport operators, equipment manufacturers and designers.

(COST = European Co-operation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research)



The Swedish coach has a low floor.

Taxis

The background for the need to develop taxis is, on the one hand, the fact that at present taxis are not necessarily suitable for all and, on the other hand, the fact that there are still numerous vehicles with an image of special vehicles, the use of which may not be attractive to the great public. Therefore there is a need for new types of vehicles which will serve well all passenger groups and which the general public will also like. It is also clear that in different types of taxi transport there is a need for different types of vehicles.

The development of taxis has also been discussed in the joint working group of the European Conference of the Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) representing bus and coach, taxi and cargo transport associations. According to the recommendations of this working group, the number of vehicles suitable for persons with reduced mobility should correspond to the supply of taxi services for the general public. Needs regarding the vehicles vary. For some of the target group, an ordinary car is suitable while many are facilitated for example by a turning seat or a sufficiently widely opening door and others again need a vehicle able to carry a wheelchair. The experiences of taxis suitable for all passenger groups in Sweden and England are good and indicate that also the great public appreciates well designed vehicles with wheelchair access. Irrespective of the vehicles, all taxi drivers should be given training about the needs and assisting of people with reduced mobility.

Bus stops and accessible lines

Bus stops are a central part of the public transport system. Raising their quality level and increasing their accessibility is equally important as the development of the rest of the transport system. Great expectations are directed at the development of stops as part of a seamless travel chain both in city transport and in long-distance transport. The present service level of stops and stop shelters is not sufficient. Stations and stops also have to be safely accessible by foot.

The development of bus stops can be speeded up through new guidelines and pilot projects on different types of stops and totally accessible pilot lines. It is important that pilot projects quickly result in the improvement of stops in a larger area. The launching of more extensive projects requires increased development and this also implies greater costs. The investments must be correctly proportioned to the benefits achieved not to prevent the launching of the project or to scare others from launching similar projects.

The introduction of low-floor buses in cities has increased the need for accessible bus stops. The Finnish Public Transport Association has drafted a design guide on the design of an accessible bus stop. More extensive development projects to raise the level of platforms have, however, so far been launched only in Helsinki. The Road Administration has also drafted design standards for stops along public roads, which take into account the needs of people with reduced mobility, but no systematic repair of old bus stops has started. The question of improving the quality of stop shelters also involves the transfer of the responsibility for bus shelters along public roads from the municipalities to the State. So far the building, maintenance and care of bus stop shelters along public roads – such as snow removal – has been under the responsibility of municipalities. The need to develop bus stops can be charted e.g. as part of the accessibility chartings of municipalities and the Road Administration referred to in Chapter 2.2.

Examples of the need for development: the fittings of stops, information at the stop, bicycle parking and escort transport arrangements, outside appearance, maintainability and responsibilities for maintenance – especially during winter – as well as facilitation of mobility.



Accessibility is one of the features of a high-quality stop. It is, however, difficult for a person with impaired vision to grasp large glass surfaces.

Measures

Raising the quality level of stops. The aim is to improve bus stops with regard to their service level, accessibility and user-friendliness to a level corresponding to the new vehicles and other forms of public transport services. Examples of the need for development: the fitting level of bus stops, information at the stops, parking arrangements (bicycles, escort transport), outer appearance, maintainability (especially in winter) as well as facilitation of mobility. The first stage will be to implement best practice examples of stops, to improve the stops along public transport quality corridors being developed and to raise the quality of stops used by low-floor bus transport. Some of the quality corridors and express line stops of public transport will be selected as pilot targets, and used to determine the quality level aimed at and the level of costs. A number of the most important express stops from different parts of the country can be selected as pilot targets, and their level and accessibility will be improved in co-operation with the different parties. The experiences gained will be used to review the design instructions of bus stops and stop areas aiming at more user-friendly stop areas and shelters and easy maintenance also in winter time. **Responsibility:** Municipalities and Finnish Road Administration / co-operation partners: MinTC, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Finnish Bus and Coach Association, Public Transport Association, Provincial State Offices, transport operators, representatives of customers.

Accessible pilot lines. Accessible pilot lines in a large city and a small town will be implemented as development models of the bus stop environment. The projects may relate e.g. to the development of public transport quality corridors or for example the implementation of the *Helsinki for all* programme. The focus is the whole travel chain including stops and pedestrian and cycle connections, winter maintenance, information and vehicles used. The aim is to combine bus routes with pedestrian and cycle connections to the stops and stations into an accessible travel chain. **The responsibility for initiation and implementation** lies with the towns; the Ministry of Transport and Communications participates in financing with the funds for the development of public transport, the co-operation partners include i.a. Public Transport Association, Finnish Bus and Coach Association, the transport operators, representatives of the customers and, depending on the target, also Finnish Road Administration and the Provincial State Offices.

On foot to stations and stops. The aim is an accessible, smooth, pleasant, safe and well-guided connection for pedestrian to the stations and stops. The construction and improvement of the connections will be continued. Special attention will be paid to access to the stops in the public transport quality corridor projects. **Responsibility:** municipalities, Road Administration, Matkahuolto, Finnish Rail Administration / co-operation partners: Regional Councils, zoning authorities.

5.6 Service transport, assistant services and combined travel

The purpose of service transport arranged by municipalities is to improve the possibilities of elderly people and other people with reduced mobility for independent mobility and living and to curb the growth pressure of costs of separate transport paid by society. In addition, the goal is to improve the service level of the public transport system in general or to offer transport services in areas with no public transport services. In the implementation and development of service transport the emphasis has to be on the quality of the service and the individual needs of the customers. Customer organisations and/or municipal councils of elderly people and disabled people should be included in planning from the very beginning.

Since the lack of an assisting person prevents numerous customers from using service transport, assistant services will have to be increased and developed. The aim is that a passenger needing assistant services will also get them at public transport interchanges. It is necessary to study the need for, and the costs and methods of arranging assistant services in pilot targets. Service transport also has to be developed to serve the customers as flexibly as possible outside office hours.

In municipalities the issues of passenger transport has to be clearly made the responsibility of one person or body, which shall also be given sufficient decision-making power and resources for efficient functioning. The co-operation of different administrative sectors and the co-ordination of different transport services will be improved by dispatching, or combining, the journeys and through municipal logistics. In addition to co-operation within a municipality, attention has to be paid also to more extensive co-operation with the neighbouring municipalities, the Provincial State Offices and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA. Also regionally centralised transport planning and co-ordination is a functional solution. There is a need for co-operation with private transport operators in the planning of the transport services and in the development of the new forms of transparent services.

The need to combine journeys and to achieve cost savings in transport has increased in several municipalities especially with the ageing of the population. Functional travel chains can be arranged for more numerous journeys and customers by means of a Travel Dispatch Centre. A large number of journeys under the Act on Services for the Disabled will also in future be such that they cannot be easily dispatched due to the health of the customer or the time or direction of the journey. Significant savings will, however, be attained by having another alternative than an individual taxi for some of these journeys.

The Travel Dispatch Centre (TDC) dispatches and routes journeys ordered in advance. Through the centre, journeys in the same direction can be dispatched either by directing the journeys to service lines or scheduled traffic or by arranging joint transport by an ordinary taxi or a service taxi. The dispatching of the journeys requires that they are ordered sufficiently early.

The dispatch may result for example in

- *feeder transport by taxi to a service line or bus*
- *a routing change in service transport which then covers the whole travel chain*
- *joint taxi journeys.*



Service transport is a new form of public transport. In its implementation and development, the emphasis has to be on the quality of the service and the individual needs of the customers.

Measures

Development of service transport The supply of service transport will be increased according to demand. Quality criteria will be drafted for service lines paying attention i.a. to the skills of the personnel. Purchased transport will be awarded after competitive tendering. A study will be conducted into the possibilities of introducing preliminary contracts on the financing principles of service lines in order to co-ordinate the fragmented transport financing of different State and municipal parties and in order to comply with the principle of the beneficiary pays. The Provincial State Offices assist in the planning and launching of service transport by granting State aid for a maximum period of two years. Thereafter the transport will be fully financed by the municipality if it cannot be maintained with customer revenues. State aid requires a plan on the financing of the transport after the aid has run out. If service transport is integrated into local transport of an urban character, the Provincial State Offices may take the net costs of permanent service transport into account when granting State aid to city transport. Also other new models for arranging transport can be developed with State support. Provincial State Offices will assist in the planning and development of the transport, and the Ministry of Transport and Communications will determine the financing principles for maintaining the transport after the results of the pilot projects are clear. **Responsibility:** municipalities / co-operation partners: MinTC, Provincial State Offices, Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA, transport operators, representatives of the customers.

Assistants in service transport. Service transport will be developed so that a trained assistant will be available in the vehicle where necessary. **Responsibility:** municipalities / co-operation partners: MinTC, Provincial State Offices, Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA, transport operators, representatives of the customers.

The relationship of accessible public transport services and service transport. A study will be conducted to ascertain how the increase in service transport, dispatching of journeys and accessible public-transport services has affected the need for and supply of special transport services under the Act on Services for the Disabled and the journeys of patients and people in rehabilitation as well as the effects on the service level experienced by different user groups and on their mobility. **Responsibility:** MinTC / co-operation partners: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Provincial State Offices, Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA, municipalities, representatives of the customers.

Further development of Travel Dispatch Centres. The operations of travel dispatch centres will be developed especially in chaining different public transport journeys, in arranging feeder connections and in utilising scheduled traffic, and the co-operation between the centres will be increased. These will form the basis for recommendations on continuing the operations and extending the service into ordinary practice in 2004–2006. The Ministry of Transport and Communications will assist with the pilot projects together with Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA. **Initiation responsibility:** Long travel chains: MinTC and Provincial State Offices / co-operation partners: municipalities, Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA, transport operators, representatives of the customers. Use of long-distance buses: Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA / co-operation partners: MinTC, municipalities, Provincial State Offices, Matkahuolto, Finnish Bus and Coach Association, Finnish Taxi Association, transport operators, interest groups of customers.

Pilot projects relating to assistant services at public transport interchanges. Pilot projects will be launched to test different models to arrange assistants to the public transport interchanges and to study the effects of this new service on the general quality and popularity of public transport and the public transport interchanges. The experiments can form a basis for further recommendations on the continuation and expansion of these services. The Ministry of Transport and Communications will participate in the pilot projects with funds for the development of public transport. Also the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the municipalities will participate in the financing. The interest of municipalities and the parties responsible for the maintenance of public transport interchanges as well as the costs of the pilot projects will be ascertained during 2003. **Initiation responsibility:** the working group for training/responsibility for implementation: municipalities / co-operation partners: VR Ltd, Matkahuolto, Finnish Bus and Coach Association, MinTC, interest groups of the customers.

As Travel Dispatch Centres become more common, co-operation between them should be increased. The operational model could for example be a principle of reciprocity, so that the Travel Dispatch Centres arrange the customers total services including all access journeys included in the travel chain. The operations can be extended also to assistance services. According to the Decree on Customer Charges of Social and Health Care the charge collected for transport services arranged by a Travel Dispatch Centre may not exceed the charge for public transport in the locality. The practice has also been not to charge disabled customers any costs relating to the dispatch of the journeys or only to charge them a fee for the reservation call. Charge for the call should not exceed an ordinary network charge. The other users will pay for the services of the dispatch centres as they use them.

5.7 Rail transport

Rail transport has also been discussed in Chapters 2.1 The responsibility of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, 5.2. Quality and service-level requirements of public transport, 5.3 Passenger information and payment systems and 5.4 Public transport terminals.

In accordance with the recommendations presented in the report *Kyytiä kaikille* (1989), some of the ordinary carriages of express trains were adapted into so-called carriages for the disabled with State aid. The report also required that new long-distance and local trains should be suitable for the disabled. However, further requirements have not been set for the accessibility of rail carriages by the authorities. The quality of new carriages has largely been the responsibility of the Finnish Railways (VR Ltd). Also the Finnish Rail Administration is responsible for the accessibility of new rail carriages, because it approves the acquisitions of VR Ltd. Lastly, the Ministry of Transport and Communications will, through ownership steering, ensure that accessibility is paid sufficient attention to when acquiring and developing the carriages.

In the new carriages of VR Ltd – in the double-decked InterCity carriages, in Pendolino and local trains and in the new rail buses to be introduced in 2005 – the needs of passengers with reduced mobility have been taken into account in many different ways. At present, one-third of the long-distance trains of VR Ltd are suitable for passengers with reduced mobility. The number of accessible trains will continuously increase as the carriages are being replaced. After 2006, the majority of long-distance trains are likely to be suitable also for passengers with reduced mobility. The metropolitan area transport now has ten low-floor local trains and another twenty have been ordered. However, old local trains will be used in transport until about 2020. They have places for disabled people, but lifting a wheelchair onto the train requires an assistant.

In order to increase the accessibility of rail transport, boarding the train must be made easier. The central factor here is the height difference between the platform and the floor of the carriage. The best solution is a step-free entrance, which will facilitate the mobility of all passengers. The Finnish Rail Administration has already started raising the platforms and VR Ltd has acquired low-floor carriages. At stations where the platforms have already been raised, the floors of the InterCity carriages and the new carriages of local traffic are at the height of the platform.

In InterCity carriages, the gap between the platform and the carriage has been removed by means of a ramp used by the passenger himself or herself, which in principle makes it possible to move independently in a wheelchair or with a baby

carriage. However, new local-transport trains do not have the ramp and the accessibility of local traffic still requires solutions to minimise the gap between the platform and the carriage. In Pendolino trains, the floor level has not been lowered to that of the platform; instead, trains are equipped with lifts for wheelchairs. The new rail buses will also have lifts for wheelchairs. It is possible that sleeper cars will be replaced after 2005, at which time they will also have places suitable for passengers with reduced mobility. There is also a need to improve the details of trains and their compatibility with the platforms.

In addition to carriages, it is important to improve the accessibility of old railway stations. The Finnish Rail Administration has planned raising the platforms of the most important long-distance stations by the year 2007. Some of the raises will be implemented in connection with public transport interchange projects and others in connection with renovation work of rail yards and station areas. In the same way, also the connections to platforms will be improved for example by building tunnels and overhead passes as well as lifts. At these stations, boarding the train will become much easier. In order to improve the situation at stations with lesser traffic in a reasonable period, it is necessary to clarify the usability of implementation step by step and temporary solutions such as raising only a part of the platform with a separate level. In addition to the raising of platforms, it is necessary to facilitate the travel of people with impaired vision and to improve the safety of travelling i.a. by improving the announcements as well as by making the platforms and stations easier to grasp. In the metropolitan area, the municipalities and the Finnish Rail Administration are improving the rails and stations used for local traffic together.

Accessibility is one aspect that is being taken into account in EU legislation on rail transport which is currently being prepared as well as in the technical specifications to be drafted on the basis of this framework legislation and in the application provisions at the national level. At the EU level, there have also been discussions on starting the preparation of legislation on the rights of rail passengers. The discussions cover general contract terms of rail traffic, availability of information, ticket arrangements, the quality of services, appeal procedures, possibilities for compensation and the obligations of the passenger. The quality of service includes quality criteria, the level of service for passengers with reduced mobility and the personal safety of the passenger. The alternative paths of progress presented include mandatory legislation on international transport or the voluntary commitment of those responsible for rail transport services and infrastructure in the way already used in air transport.

At present the rights and obligations of the passenger and the transport operator are recorded in the passenger terms of rail transport of VR Ltd. However, the application of the terms has in some cases been in conflict with the possibilities of disabled people to travel in cases where there have been no places for them on the train or the trains have been full. There has also been confusion on the transport of guide dogs for people with impaired vision. Therefore it is necessary to review the passenger terms so as to ensure the implementation of the rights of people with different forms of reduced mobility in all circumstances. At the level of legislation, provisions on the rights of passengers are found in the Act on Liability on Rail Transport and the Rail Transport Act.

Measures

Accessibility of train carriages. When acquiring new train stock and repairing the present stock, the starting point is the suitability of the stock to all passengers. Accessibility will be taken into account also in EU legislation on rolling stock being prepared, in the technical specifications to be drafted thereon and in the application provisions to be decided on at the national level. The background of the provisions will be the recommendations included in the international COST 335 study. The applicability of the recommendations to Finnish circumstances shall be studied, the present state analysed and the necessary measures launched. **Responsibility:** with regard to acquisition and basic renovation of the train stock: VR Ltd; with regard to type approval and technical specifications: Finnish Rail Administration; and with regard to legislation: MinTC / co-operation partners: interest groups of the customers.

Access of passengers to trains. The platforms of passenger transport stations will be raised so that they will be compatible with the new train stock; connections to the platforms will be made accessible and the safety of the platform areas i.a. from the perspective of those with impaired vision will be improved. **Responsibility:** Finnish Rail Administration / co-operation partners: municipalities, VR Ltd (Measures regarding railway stations are presented also in Chapter 5.4 Passenger terminals)

The passenger terms of rail transport and the rights of passengers. The contents and practices relating to the passenger terms of rail transport will be studied together with the associations for disabled people and, where necessary, amended to ensure the implementation of passenger rights for people with reduced mobility in all circumstances. Paying attention to passengers with reduced mobility in international co-operation will be promoted in order to determine the rights of railway passengers. **Responsibility:** with regard to passenger terms: VR Ltd; with regard to international co-operation: VR Ltd, Finnish Rail Administration and the MinTC / co-operation partners: interest groups of the customers.



An accessible train journey is a result of new accessible rolling stock, improved stations and a good information system.

5.8 Air traffic

Air-traffic legislation and practices are often based on international conventions and recommendations. Influencing them requires participation in research and the development of legislation at the international level. The instructions and recommendations relating to accessibility in air traffic have been and are drafted by both the International Air Traffic Association, IATA, and the International Civil Aviation Organisation, ICAO, and the European Civil Aviation Conference, ECAC, representing the States.

The voluntary Airline and Airport Passenger Service Commitment – Air Passenger Rights – resulting from a co-operation project launched by ECAC and the European Commission also includes principles for attending to the needs of passengers with reduced mobility. A legislative project on the rights of passengers is also pending in the European Commission, and its contents are under discussion between the Commission and IATA and the ACI Europe representing European airports.

In air traffic, responsibility for passenger service at the airports is usually divided so that the airport takes care of passengers in the actual airport terminal until check-in. After that the responsibility for passengers is transferred to the air carrier. As the infrastructure provider, the airport, however, shares the responsibility for passengers after check-in. The ground handling services, which include check-in as well as gate and arrival services, are usually the responsibility of the air carrier and the ground-handling companies. At different airports, the operations have in some cases also been out-sourced and services have been subcontracted. The parking places and the feeder traffic stops at airports are the responsibility of the airport. However, the additional services at terminals, such as restaurants and shops, are the responsibility of each service provider.

Especially with regard to the accessibility of terminals and assistant services, air traffic has in many respects assumed the pioneering role. Although these services too need to be improved, the biggest problems relate to boarding the aircraft and getting off it, to the scanty space inside the aircraft as well as to the transport of a wheelchair in the aircraft. In addition, the assistant of a passenger with reduced mobility should have better access to the different parts of the terminal since the waiting periods have become longer for example due to tightened security checks.

Boarding ramps facilitating transfer between the terminal and the aircraft are already used at Helsinki-Vantaa and Rovaniemi Airports. In other airports passengers using for example a wheelchair are carried aboard and off the aircraft in a boarding chair. Passengers have to be carried also at the Helsinki-Vantaa and Rovaniemi Airports because not all the aircraft are placed at the end of a boarding ramp. In the case of smaller aircraft, steps are needed at the entrance even when a boarding ramp is used. This is a growing problem, because the construction of the third runway at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport increases ground transport. In addition, feeder traffic taking place with smaller aircraft types is estimated to increase in the future. Special lifting devices facilitating the boarding of passengers with reduced mobility or passenger transport vehicles rising to the level of

Air traffic has also been discussed in Chapters 2.1 Responsibility of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, 5.3 Development of professional skills and co-operation and 5.4 Public-transport terminals, as well as in more detail in the publication "Improving accessibility in scheduled air traffic, Publication of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 12/2001".

the aircraft entrance are not yet used at the airports in Finland. Such aids should be available for all air carriers and, at the same time, for all passengers needing assistance.

Information and reservation systems need to be improved further in order to ensure that information on the needs of the passenger is forwarded along all the different stages of the travel chain and that information on possible changes and exceptional circumstances reaches all passengers. A good example is the mobile service launched by the Civil Aviation Administration at the beginning of 2003. It is directed especially at persons with impaired vision or hearing and it gives the passenger the opportunity to order mobile phone information on all departures from and arrivals at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport including information on boarding or landing of an aircraft.

Rights of an air-transport passenger

The central principles of the voluntary European Airline and Airport Passenger Service Commitment relating to passengers with reduced mobility are the following:

The airports and those providing additional services there also have to meet the needs of passengers with different forms of reduced mobility. The passenger shall, however, notify how much assistance they need and do it in the correct manner and at the correct time. The air carrier will not prevent the access of a passenger with reduced mobility to the flight if they can be transported safely and if there is space for their transport in the aircraft. Should the transport be prevented, the air carrier shall present the reasons for the refusal clearly and accurately.

Preconditions for independent management shall be provided for passengers with reduced mobility, where possible. The basic structures of airports – ground transport, parking places, the lifting, lowering and transport systems as well as information dissemination – shall all be suitable also for passengers with reduced mobility. Air carriers, the Civil Aviation Administration and the other airport operators aim at finding different technical and operational alternatives in order to facilitate boarding an aircraft and to improve the facilities in aircraft of different sizes especially in connection with major alteration and renewal work.

All information shall be easily accessible also to persons with reduced mobility so that they can plan and make the journey by themselves. The personnel shall be appropriately trained so that they understand the needs of persons with reduced mobility.

A medical certificate shall not be required to serve a passenger with reduced mobility and the costs of the service may not fall directly on the passenger.



Passenger ramps facilitate the boarding of an aircraft.

Measures

Transfer of passengers to the aircraft. According to the recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the transfer of passengers from the terminal to the aircraft shall be facilitated for example with boarding ramps and lifting devices so that all passengers can safely board the plane and get off it and so that the carrying of passengers can be avoided, where possible. At the first stage, alternative solutions, their costs as well as questions relating to responsibility and the division of costs of the investments and the maintenance of the service shall be clarified. Models of the devices shall also be tested at a pilot airport, for example at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. Solutions that benefit all passengers should be favoured.

Responsibility: air carriers, Civil Aviation Administration, other airport operators/co-operation partners: ground-handling companies, the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

Space solutions of aircraft. Today, when air carriers acquire aircraft, they pay more attention to the functionality of space and structural solutions of aircraft from the point-of-view of disabled and elderly people and those moving with small children or other persons with reduced mobility. **Responsibility:** air carriers / co-operation partners: Civil Aviation Administration, aircraft manufacturers, interest groups of the customers.

Improvement of information. The ways of disseminating information at the different stages of the journey shall be diversified and clarified, information relating to accessibility shall be included in the normal information material, informing of exceptional situations shall be improved and an uninterrupted flow of information at all the different stages of the journey shall be ensured between travel agencies, air carriers and airport services. In connection with the accessibility charting of airports, the functionality of the information flow shall also be checked and all the user groups shall be taken into consideration in the development of information. **Responsibility:** Civil Aviation Administration, other airport operators, air carriers/co-operation partners: travel agencies, companies responsible for the services, interest groups of the customers.

5.9 Maritime transport

Maritime transport has also been discussed in Chapters 2.1 Responsibility of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, 5.3 Passenger information and payment systems and 5.4 Public transport terminals.

¹⁾ *Amendment of Directive 98/18/EC on the safety rules and standards for passenger ships*

Like air transport, maritime transport is based on international conventions. Influencing them requires participation in research and the development of legislation at the international level. For example the recommendations presented in the EU project HANDIAMI, concentrating on the safety of ships and especially the options for moving passengers with reduced mobility in emergency situations have formed the basis for the new EU legislation¹ that will enter into force before long and which will be implemented in the Member States in the near future. However, many of the issues requiring improvement can be influenced by the transport operators directly in their own actions or indirectly as purchasers or charterers of ships. The International Maritime Organisation has, in fact, issued recommendations on the accessibility of vessels and the training of personnel. Sweden and Great Britain have, for example, also carried out studies and drafted guidelines on the accessibility of vessels and the passenger infrastructure of maritime transport.

Central development targets in international maritime transport and in cruise transport include the carrying of luggage on board, the accessibility of the common premises of ships and finding one's way on board, the user-friendliness of ordinary cabins, the number of cabins for the disabled and their toilets. Attention has also been paid to making information channels more versatile, developing personal service as well as alarm systems suitable for passengers with impaired hearing. Inland-water ships are a separate problem as are also coastal service ships and ferries. Earlier, accessibility was hardly considered in their construction, and therefore they are often ill-suited for passengers with reduced mobility.

The accessibility of passenger terminals also needs to be improved. The aim is for all passengers to get to the terminals and further onboard as well as off the ship as independently as possible and for them to get the information relating to travelling and the services of the terminal. Terminals are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.4.

The aim has been to draft the safety regulations of maritime transport so that the safety of all passengers can be ensured even in emergencies. The Decree on the Passenger Lists of a Passenger Vessel provides that, in an international maritime voyage or if the length of a voyage of a passenger ship is over 20 nautical miles from the point of departure, the passenger list must also contain an entry on the need of a passenger for care or assistance if the passenger or his guardian so request due to old age, disability or another reason, and if the need is of significance for rescue operations. However, safety requirements, practices regarding escorts and a limitation on the number of disabled passengers also cause conflicts with the possibilities and rights of people with reduced mobility to travel. Co-ordination measures are therefore needed.

Measures

Implementation of EU legislation. Measures will be taken to amend the Finnish legislation in order to implement the EU Directive on the accessibility of ships and the ensuring of the safety of passengers in emergencies (amendment of Directive 98/18/EC on the safety rules and standards of passenger ships), which will enter into force in the near future. **Responsibility:** MinTC / co-operation partners: Finnish Maritime Administration, representatives of transport operators, associations of disabled people.

Quality of services and ships. Shipowners promote their service and information in order to take better into account the needs of disabled and elderly people and those moving with small children and others with reduced mobility. When acquiring vessels, the companies will also pay more attention to the functionality of the premises from the perspective of different passenger groups. With regard to inland water transport, the present situation has to be clarified. **Responsibility:** shipowners / co-operation partners: Finnish Maritime Administration, the shipyards, the associations of disabled people.

The equal rights of passengers of passenger ships. Safety regulations and practices sometimes conflict with the opportunities of people with reduced mobility to travel. Nor is the practice uniform on all ships. The Ministry of Transport and Communications will set up a working group under the Finnish Maritime Administration to study present practices, requirements set by legislation and the needs of passengers and it will, on this basis, issue recommendations to unify the practices and to review the provisions. **Initiation responsibility:** MinTC and Finnish Maritime Administration / co-operation partners: ship owners / associations of disabled people.

Accessibility of maritime transport operated by the State. The present state of accessibility on coastal service ships, ferries and motor ferries shall be examined. This will form a basis for recommendations to improve the situation for example by recommendations for the accessibility of new and renovated ships in transport operated by the State (coastal service traffic of the Finnish Maritime Administration, ferry and motor-ferry transport purchased by the Road Administration, the archipelago transport of the Government and Administrative Board of the Åland Islands) taking into account the requirements set by new EU legislation. **Responsibility:** Finnish Maritime Administration, Road Administration and the Government and Administrative Board of the Åland Islands / co-operation partners: MinTC, the ferry unit of the Road Administration, private transport operators, shipyards.



In maritime transport, accessibility has best been taken into account onboard large passenger ships and at their terminals.



6 Possibilities for safe driving

6.1 The traffic environment and driving skills

Car transport has also been discussed in Chapter 2.1 Responsibility of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

This chapter only examines the use of the car by elderly people and by people with reduced mobility. However, we can see that the popularity of light motor vehicles is increasing as means of transport for elderly people and people with reduced mobility. In the next few years, we will have to consider both the technical characteristics of the vehicles and the right to use them and the status of new vehicles among the rest of the traffic. Important viewpoints will include the traffic safety, the use of traffic space and the need for new vehicles and the benefits to their users.

A safe traffic environment

The ageing of the population increases the significance of qualitative and subjective service-level factors alongside measures of efficiency when determining the overall service level of the traffic environment. Traditionally, the service level experienced by drivers is described by driving and waiting times and the lengths of lines. Elderly drivers, whose observation and reaction capacity has weakened due to age or some other reason, may, however, appreciate good driving conditions, good lighting or a safe traffic environment more than speed or travel time.

The risk of elderly drivers to die in traffic is relatively higher than that of younger ones. This is due to the greater frailness of the body, the higher occurrence of illnesses, the weakening of eye sight, the increase in reaction times and the slowing-down of decision-making as well as to the weakening of motor skills and muscle strength. On the other hand, the accident risk is often diminished by the long driving experience and the decrease in extra reasons to drive and by compensating for the accident risk by driving less in conditions felt to be problematic.

We can influence the service level and traffic safety experienced by elderly drivers by designing and constructing the traffic environment so that it is as easily manageable and as simple as possible both with regard to infrastructure and information. The amount of information directed at the driver will have to be decreased and clarified so that his attention is drawn to information significant for traffic. The traffic environment will have to be clarified, the possibilities of conflicts and unexpected situations will have to be decreased and the time left for decision-making will have to be increased e.g. by reducing speed. Measures which are popular with elderly people include the channelling of intersections, rotary intersections and traffic lights, lighting, lanes for overtaking and a clear and logical use of traffic signs.

When driving longer stretches, safety and the service level are improved by a rest and service-area network so that the driver can stop and rest sufficiently often. Rest areas and other road-side services have to be suitable also for people with reduced mobility. In winter, especially the level of winter maintenance and the predictability of the weather conditions are important.

Road planning guidelines aim at ensuring the safety of all. When drafting these guidelines, the performance ability of the vehicle and the driver are described by certain dimensioning values, which aim at taking into account individual differences and to ensure the sufficient safety margin in traffic. Often the starting point in the dimensioning values is that 85 percent of the drivers exceed the value. As the population ages, the average age of drivers also increases. A larger and larger share of the drivers are elderly, and the dimensioning values guiding planning describe a smaller and smaller share of them. This places new requirements for the planning guidelines and their up-dating.

Parking

It is important for drivers with reduced mobility to be able to park so that they can get into and out of the car and so that the distance from the parking place to the destination is short and accessible enough. Besides a wheelchair, the use of walking sticks and other mobility aids requires larger dimensioning at the parking place. That is why a sufficient number of parking places suitable for people with reduced mobility have to be reserved in general parking places as well as at parking areas along streets, roads and houses.

According to the Road Traffic Act, the police of a municipality may grant a permit allowing parking in a slot reserved for disabled people. The permit can be granted to the disabled person or for their transport. The holder of the permit may also, free-of charge, use parking places and areas ordinarily subject to a charge and

he may apply for a refund of the annual vehicle tax. The permit is primarily granted to the person with reduced mobility himself even if he does not himself drive the car. The permit is valid in the whole country for five years at a time. The total number of these permits in Finland is about 20,000. A parking permit for the disabled valid in the whole European Union was introduced on 13 August 2001, and so the permits will look the same in all the Member States of the Union. The legislation on the granting of the permit will remain the same.

Monitoring of driving skills

According to legislation on driver's licences, the medical evaluation of the health of the driver takes place on the basis of doctor's certificates presented to the police by the person in question or submitted to the police upon their consent. If a person does not present a doctor's certificate when so required by legislation or an order of the police, the licensing authority will revoke the licence. Information on the health of a driver and any changes therein is normally submitted to the licensing authority only when applying for a driving licence and later on at certain ages.

A drawback of the medical examinations is that a general physician is not necessarily able to evaluate the person's driving skills, which may have weakened because of age, an illness or the use of alcohol or drugs. If the driver does not get a positive certificate from the first doctor, they can go and see other doctors, which is also a problem. A special problem of ageing persons are illnesses causing dementia, because the patient is not aware of his symptoms and so he may continue driving even if the accident risk is great.

On 9 January 2002, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health set up a working group to promote the passing of information between doctors and driving licence authorities. In its Memorandum *Driving Health and Information Flow* the working group proposes that doctors should have the right, irrespective of provisions on secrecy, to notify the police when a person's driving ability is weakened for a reason that is not temporary and when the health prerequisites for a driving licence are therefore not met. At the same time, the health monitoring system will have to be lightened by eliminating the medical examinations of 60-year-olds for a licence to drive a car or tractor and to ride a motor cycle and moped and to introduce a lighter monitoring procedure to prove the health prerequisites. Irrespective of the right of the doctor to notify, the proposal promotes the data security of citizens, because the present practice will be changed so that only information necessary to evaluate driving ability is sent to the police.

Measures

Clarity and manageability of the transport environment. Improving the traffic safety of the increasing ageing population requires explicit planning of the transport environment and especially of crossings, and it requires low driving speeds in complicated situations and an improvement of traffic-guidance information. **Responsibility:** Road Administration and the municipalities.

Winter maintenance. Efficient winter maintenance and weather information will be used to offer drivers advance information on foreseeable traffic conditions. **Responsibility:** Road Administration and the municipalities.

Review of planning instructions. When reviewing the planning instructions of the traffic environment, an audit method will be used to ensure that the needs of the ageing population are taken into account. **Responsibility:** the parties drawing up the instructions, such as Road Administration, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Kuntatekniikan yhdistys [Association of Municipal Engineering], Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of the Environment and municipalities.

Parking places. A sufficient number of parking places suitable for people with reduced mobility will be reserved in connection with general parking places as well as at parking areas along streets, roads and houses. **Responsibility:** municipalities, property owners, Road Administration.

Monitoring of the driving ability of elderly people. The monitoring of health and driving ability will be developed and the information flow between doctors and driving license authorities will be improved in accordance with the recommendations of the *Working group on Driving Health and Information Flow*. Driving ability will be evaluated stage-wise so that the basic-care physician is in charge of the overall evaluation. The medical examination will include instructions and material facilitating the evaluation of driving ability. Doctors will be granted the right, irrespective of the provisions on secrecy, to notify the police if the driving ability of a person is permanently weakened so that the health requirements for a driving licence are no longer met. The ability of those accepting the tests and driving instructors to evaluate the driving ability of an elderly person will be improved. **Responsibility:** Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, MinTC, Ministry of the Interior, Finnish Vehicle Administration AKE.



A sufficient number of parking places suitable for people with reduced mobility has to be reserved in connection with services.



The vehicle of a disabled person has to be equipped so that the aid equipment compensates for the reduced mobility.

6.2 Acquisition of a car and driving licence by a disabled person

For many people with reduced mobility, a car is not only a vehicle but also an indispensable aid to mobility. The walking distances required by daily needs may be too long, the municipal special transport services are quantitatively restricted and sufficient public transport services suitable for people with different forms of reduced mobility are not available everywhere. Especially in sparsely populated areas, where the distances are often long and public transport services are scarce, a car offers a possibility for active moving and hobbies. The goal is to remove administrative, legislative and economic obstacles which unnecessarily hamper the use of a car by the disabled and to unify financial support for the use of cars.

The driving licence of a disabled person involves special safety issues relating both to the driver and the vehicle. Often the vehicle of a disabled person has to be adjusted to them so that it compensates for their reduced mobility and meets the requirements set for safety. The starting point is the same safety level as that of other citizens, because the grounds for granting a driving licence are the same for everyone.

The problems relating to the acquisition of a driving licence and a vehicle for a disabled person have been studied in the survey of the Finnish Vehicle Administration AKE "People with reduced mobility as drivers – charting the problems".

Financial support for the acquisition of a car

Due to the additional costs of special measures, the acquisition of both driving skills and a car is often significantly more expensive for a disabled person than for other people. Therefore, in all the Nordic countries and in most EU Member States, society supports the acquisition of vehicles by disabled persons and often also their driving lessons. The background for this is both the principle of equality and the fact that it is advantageous for society to support the independent living of a person with reduced mobility. Despite the support, the acquisition of a car and a driving licence is, however, often too expensive for a disabled person. The total amount of support is small compared to the additional costs caused by quite expensive additional control equipment.

Financial support for the acquisition of a car comes from more than one administrative sector. One can get support from the Social Insurance Institution of Finland KELA and your own municipality, in addition to which you can get a refund of the vehicle tax and exemption from the annual vehicle tax. According to the Vehicle Tax Act, disabled persons or a family with a disabled child can obtain a refund of all or part of the vehicle tax included in the acquisition price. The amount of the refund varies depending on the nature and severity of the disability and it has a maximum limit. Annually about 1,500 persons obtain refunds from the vehicle tax. According to the Vehicle Tax Act and Decree, a vehicle is also automatically granted an exemption from the annual tax if a vehicle tax refund has been obtained. Upon application, the exemption may also be granted to holders of a parking permit for the disabled. In 2001, 24,000 vehicles were exempted from the annual tax.

Depending on where they live, disabled persons may be in unequal positions, because municipalities have no uniform practice with regard to the grounds for granting support and also the support granted by KELA may vary depending on the practice of the local office. At present, the system for refunding the vehicle acquisition tax is rigid and inflexible. Also the technical restrictions relating to vehicle taxation apply poorly to the needs of people with reduced mobility.

The financial support for disabled people for the acquisition of a vehicle should be separated from the vehicle tax system and the level of the support should be raised. At the same time, the support from KELA for the use of vehicles by the disabled should be made more uniform. A reform of the tax refund system for the disabled is pending, and its background is the proposal of the Disability Working Group set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health for a total reform of the present system. What is being considered is a totally new support system, taking better into account the individual mobility needs and possibilities of a disabled person. The party liable for any reforms relating to taxation is the Ministry of Finance.

Acquisition of a driving licence and additional control equipment of the vehicle

The acquisition of a driving licence and the adjustment of the vehicle to the reduced mobility caused by an injury or illness are, at present, tedious and complicated processes. The aim is to draft a clear operating model for all the parties involved for measures relating to the acquisition of a driving licence and a car for a disabled person. Guidelines are needed both for parties who in practice have to decide issues relating to the driving of a vehicle by a disabled person and for disabled people themselves. The most important parties are those teaching driving and approving the driving test, those granting driving licences and examining and accepting vehicles for traffic, the manufacturers and suppliers of vehicles and special equipment, the doctors taking care of disabled people and disabled people themselves.

A test drive is arranged to see what kind of equipment and aids are necessary in different cases. There are no exact provisions on the test drive or its contents; the person approving the test gives their independent statement assessing the possibilities of the person to drive a vehicle. The lack of provisions has, in practice resulted in a situation where, depending on the case and county in question, the practice has varied. With regard to legal certainty, we should promote the unification of the practices and familiarise driving instructors and those approving the test with the special problems of the disabled. Nor are there any driving schools in Finland specialising in teaching driving to the disabled and neither has the organisation of this branch given driving schools any instructions or recommendations relating to teaching the disabled to drive.

The acceptance process of the necessary aids in the vehicle inspection process requires inspectors with expertise on disabilities and good co-operation with the experts of equipment suppliers. The inspector has to approve the additional equipment of a vehicle and to make sure that it is sufficient with regard to safety in traffic taking into account the restrictions in the person's ability to function. However, there are no instructions on what equipment is needed in different cases. A problem so far has also been the fact that it has been possible only to adjust the driver's seat to meet the needs of the disabled person. It has not been possible to make changes in the seat next to it, even if this would be good on long driving stretches when you have to change drivers. However, in this respect the legislation was reviewed at the end of 2002.

Measures

Instructions on the driving test. The legislative amendment will give the Finnish Vehicle Administration the authority to issue further instructions on the test drive, its contents and the statement to be given on the basis of the test drive. **Responsibility:** MinTC.

The Finnish Vehicle Administration shall issue to those accepting the driving test instructions complying with the Decree on Driving Licences on special control equipment recommended for various function impairments. **Responsibility:** Finnish Vehicle Administration.

Technical requirements of vehicles and aid equipment. Instructions or recommendations on the technical approval procedure and its different stages will be issued for inspectors and companies modifying vehicles for disabled people. Instructions will be compiled for vehicle inspection on the requirements for and functioning of additional control and other equipment of vehicles. The requirements for the validity in Finland of additional control equipment approved in another EU Member State will be determined. A code system for additional control equipment will be introduced in the technical register information of vehicles. **Responsibility:** Finnish Vehicle Administration.

A unified classification will be introduced for aid equipment. **Responsibility:** equipment suppliers.

Training. Some of the inspectors and persons accepting driving tests will be given special training in adjusting the aids and special equipment according to the functional ability of disabled persons. The readiness of the person accepting driving test to evaluate the driving ability of an elderly person will be improved. **Responsibility:** Finnish Vehicle Administration.

At least some driving instructors will be trained as instructors specialised in teaching driving to disabled people and they will be familiarised with the operation and purpose of various additional control equipment. **Responsibility:** driving schools and educational institutions training driving instructors.

Information. An instruction booklet will be drafted for disabled people on the present legislative provisions and practice on the driving licence and the vehicle, the parties involved and the financial support available. **Responsibility:** Finnish Vehicle Administration.

Information on the issue will be added to the web sites of different actor organisations. **Responsibility:** Finnish Vehicle Administration, Association of Driving Schools, National Technology Agency of Finland STAKES.



7 The Research and Development Programme of Accessibility

Goals

The Research and Development Programme of Accessibility is a cross-administrative programme implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, which aims at

- promoting and supporting work to increase the accessibility of the transport system.
- supporting local-level activities by financial planning and pilot projects within the framework of research and development funding.
- gathering research and development relating to accessibility under the same umbrella. The implementation of the projects included in the programme can take place also within the framework of other research and development projects, such as the implementation of public transport interchanges, the *Jaloin* programme promoting walking and cycling, and the information programme of passenger transport HEILI.
- producing and disseminating information on good solutions and practices.
- bringing the topic to general awareness.

The aim is to activate the authorities in the transport sector, the municipal sector, the providers of transport services and the general public to notice the need and significance of an accessible transport environment and to encourage taking this matter into account in the everyday actions of the different parties.

Organisation

The programme will be supervised by a Steering Group to be set up with the task of co-ordinating research and development projects and of promoting research on accessibility and the utilisation of research information

- by guiding the development and research funding of the participants to projects serving the programme,
- by prioritising and co-ordinating development activities and research projects and by disseminating information on the actions of the different parties to the other parties,
- by collecting already existing information and nationally applicable results and information from local reports into generally available material,
- by promoting co-operation between and networking of different actors and by introducing new actors into the research and development work also from outside the transport sector,
- by supporting international exchange of information and networking for example by means of international research projects and seminars and by disseminating information on the international activities of the different parties to the other parties,
- above all by actively disseminating information on the programme and on the results of research and development projects.

In addition to a representative of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Steering Group will include representatives of other parties financing research and development projects in accessibility as well as of central organisations representing the target group. In addition to the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the other possible financiers include the Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Provincial State Offices, Road Administration, Finnish Rail Administration, Civil Aviation Authority, Finnish Maritime Administration, Finnish Vehicle Administration, Social Insurance Institution of Finland, National Technology Agency of Finland and the municipal sector as well as possibly interest organisations of companies providing transport services. The aim is also to include in the research and development work universities, other institutions of higher education as well as vocational institutions and so to create a basis for including training in accessibility in the curricula of educational institutions.

Contents

The research subjects include technology and the physical environment (infrastructure, information, mobility and functioning aids, public-transport vehicles), the assessment of the parts of and plans for the transport system from the per-

Examples of topics of research and development projects possibly to be financed from the programme:

★ the topics marked with an asterisk are included in the proposals for measures in Chapters 4–6.

Walking

- ★ Implementation of an accessible environment
- ★ Functional and safe crosswalk solutions
- ★ Arrangement of pedestrian path at street work sites
- ★ Enhancement of winter maintenance and a decrease of street dust
- ★ Development of aids for walking and carrying of goods

Passenger information and payment systems

- ★ Guides on the acquisition of information
- ★ Improvement of information
- ★ Development of means of payment
- ★ Development of travel reservation systems

Public-transport terminals

- ★ Evaluation and development of terminals
- ★ Instructions on the accessibility of public-transport terminals

Bus and taxi transport

- ★ The development of the future coach
- ★ Increasing the quality level of bus stops
- ★ Accessible pilot lines for buses
- ★ The relationship between accessible public transport services and service transport financed by society
- ★ Development of the activities of Travel Dispatch Centres
- ★ Pilot projects relating to assistants at public transport interchanges

Rail, air and maritime transport

- ★ The passenger terms of rail transport and the rights of passengers
- ★ Transfer of passengers to the aircraft
- ★ The equal rights of passengers on passenger vessels
- ★ Accessibility of maritime transport operated by the State

Driving

- ★ Clarity and manageability of the transport environment
- ★ Instructions and development work relating to the requirements of drivers
- ★ Instructions and development work relating to the approval of cars for disabled people
- Safety and usability of additional aids and services utilising telematics



It has been the goal of the Noppa project to create an uninterrupted transport chain for people with impaired vision by improving the availability of information services.

Development of equipment

Recommendations on the compatibility of wheelchairs with different forms of public transport

The development of wheelchairs so that they will be better suited to the public transport chain

The development and standardisation of fastening systems for wheelchairs

Development of technology relating to changes of level and product development

The financial significance of accessibility and evaluation methods

The economic significance of accessibility and effectiveness of measures promoting accessibility

Development of evaluation methods for accessibility and user-friendliness

The basic service level of transport services from the perspective of different population groups.

spective of accessibility, transport safety, the development needs of administration and legislation as well as, more generally, the equality of different population groups with regard to mobility. Examples of development work that may be financed from the programme are presented in connection with the proposals for measures in Chapters 4-6. The development projects to be financed in the Accessible municipality network and the accessibility chartings of municipalities will also be made part of the programme.

At the beginning of the programme it is appropriate to collect literature on the central research topics into a list of sources as well as to chart other related development projects in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of what has already been clarified and to avoid overlapping work.

Financing

The Ministry of Transport and Communications will finance research and development projects relating to accessibility from funds reserved for research and development activities as well as from State support to public transport within the framework to be reserved for the programme.

The other parties will participate in the programme within the framework of their ordinary resources for action, research and development. Each financing party will decide on the allocation of its own funds, but the Steering Group aims at directing funding to projects that they consider important and it will agree on the responsibility for each project. The programme also aims at financing university research papers relating to the topic.

Another task of the Steering Group is the co-ordination of the implementation of the projects with other research and development programmes in the area and ensuring that they will, where applicable, take into consideration the research on and development of accessibility.

The aim is to make some of the projects part of international research programmes for example in the field of transport or social sciences. The programme will also participate inter alia in the international COST research co-operation.

Schedule and evaluation of the programme

The purpose is to launch the three-year programme in 2003.

The implementation of the research and development programme, its focus on the different topics and the quality of the projects will be evaluated both during and after the programme. An annual interim evaluation will be carried out, and it will be used to evaluate the success of the programme and, where necessary, to redirect activities. Also an annual summary will be compiled of the events of the year and the attainment of the goals of the programme.

Upon the end of the programme, a more extensive summary report will be drafted of the projects of the programme and their central results as well as a final evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of the programme goals. The final evaluation will be conducted by an outside evaluator. The evaluation will form the basis for a further continuation programme.

Information and utilisation of the results

Information about the programme will help to understand the need for and the significance of accessibility as well as promote the utilisation of the programme results. With regard to individual research and development projects, it will ensure that their stages and results will, as effectively as possible, be disseminated to the parties of the project, the potential users of the results and to all the target groups that are important for the goals of the programme in one way or another.

The information will be handled systematically in accordance with a plan to be drafted at the beginning of the programme. The information channels to be used will include, for example, Internet pages, national and regional seminars, information to the press and targeted email information. A central task of the Steering Group and its secretary will be to direct the information and to adjust the research results so that they are suitable for different target groups.

Information dissemination will clearly be divided into two partial entities of different types. In the early stages of programme, the aim is to awaken the interest of different parties in the programme. Later on, during the programme, the emphasis of the information will be in the publication of the research results. Continuous information will promote the spreading of the research results and their utilisation as extensively as possible. In addition, an active dissemination of information will increase the discussion on the results of the programme and, at the same time, of the entire topic and so increase the weight of accessibility.

The information of the programme can also be divided into internal and external information. The target groups of internal information are the parties participating in the Steering Group of the programme, the financiers of research and development projects as well as the parties implementing measures increasing accessibility, such as the municipal sector and the providers of transport services. The dissemination of information on the research programme will mainly be internal information.

The target groups of external information are, via the mass media, all people living in Finland: individual citizens, companies, associations and public organisations. Accessibility touches us all. External information will mainly focus on disseminating information on the results of the research projects as well as influencing attitudes.

The information plan will be drafted when the research and development programme starts in 2003. The financing needs specified on the basis of the plan will be included in the programme budget.

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