

The future of mobility
Journey planner as the key to seamless travel

Inform Norden 2025



HSL
HRT

Anything is possible

Helsinki Region Transport

Speaker



Mr. Joona Packalén

Head of Information

Helsinki Region Transport Authority, HSL

Background in Administrative Sciences and Human Geography. Promoting smart mobility and user-oriented information solutions



Beyond The Office

Passion for Forests: Committed to sustainable forestry and protecting nature. Promoting sustainability beyond professional life. Nature Steward: Hands-on involvement in forest sustainability and conservation.

This is Helsinki Region Transport

Helsinki Regional Transport Authority in Brief



Public transport
authority

Also responsible for
transport system
planning

Employees
~ **400**

Boardings
384M**

Owner municipalities

9

Residents in the area

1.4 M

Income 2024

876 M

Municipalities' share of income
50–55%*

** 2025 goal



HSL Travel Info Focus

Convergence of Digital and Physical

Integration of digital tools (journey planners, mobile apps) with physical signage and station environments.

Major Environmental Changes

Urban development, climate goals, and increasing passenger expectations require adaptive wayfinding.

Journey Planning as a Core Service

Real-time information, route planning, and disruption updates are central to the user experience.

Disruption and Planned Works

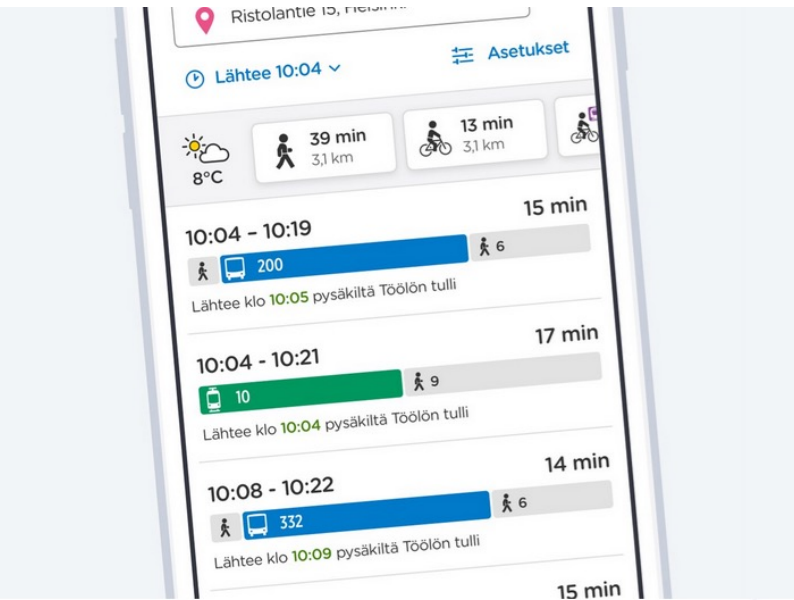
Clear communication during construction or service changes is essential to maintain trust and usability.

Strategic Autonomy

In-house design and system control allow for consistent, scalable, and inclusive wayfinding solutions.



HSL Journey Planner since 2001



2001 — First Journey Planner

2015 — Beginning of OpenTripPlanner-based service

2017 — Transition to new Journey Planner

2020 — Reshaped service based on the needs and wishes of our customers

2025 — Implementing Travel companion feature

HSL's estimated market share of the Journey Planner market in the Helsinki Region is 88%.
Even high for **Google** and **Apple**.

Two user interfaces for Journey Planner:

- Desktop
- Mobile App

Based on Open-source Digitransit platform

- HSL provides to all Finnish cities (Tampere etc)
- Also used internationally, such as in Oklahoma, USA.

HSL Travel Companion

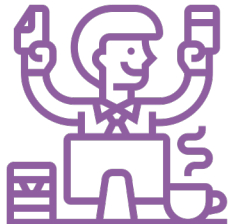
Background

Why?

Rationale

Fragmented user experience created barriers to seamless travel.

- HSL identified the opportunity to integrate wayfinding, accessibility, and real-time travel information into one unified solution.
- Addressing these needs aligns with HSL's mission of inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainable mobility.



Outcome

The Travel Companion feature transforms HSL's service offering by:

- Enhancing customer trust and satisfaction.
- Leveraging data and analytics for smarter planning.
- Demonstrating leadership in public transport innovation.

Background

Evaluation phase 2020-2023

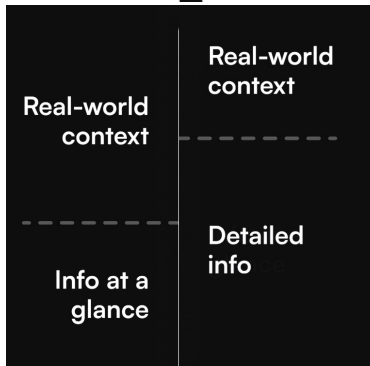
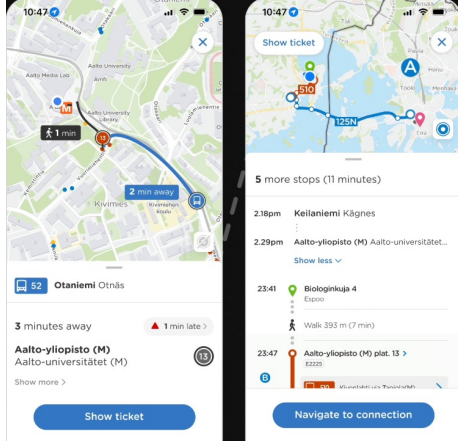
- HSL's own core work (2020).
 - The current Digitransit UI was developed
 - This topic was shortlisted.
- Aalto-University student Katarina Blind's study (2023).

Note: no comprehensive transit based guidance was available on the market (e.g., via Google).

- When these two were combined, a new kind of use case emerged.

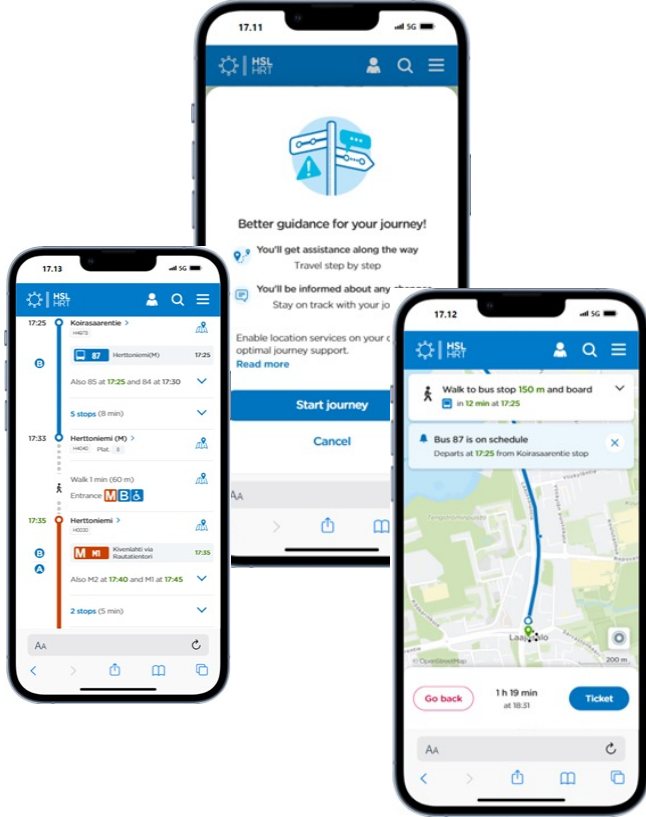
Implementation phase 2024-2025

- HSL / Digitransit design and planning phase: 2024
- Launch for customers: April 2025



HSL Travel Companion

Key Features



Travel Companion

Personal Route Guidance:

- Provides step-by-step support tailored to your journey.

Travel Companion:

- A smart assistant that helps you navigate transfers, alerts you of important updates, and offers real-time advice.

Accessibility Features:

- Designed to support passengers with disabilities — including visual aids, and easy-to-use interface.

Notifications:

- Receive alerts if something changes or if there are disruptions on your route

User awareness & inclusion challenges:

- reaching *all user groups* (seniors, migrants, tech-resistant users).

510 Herttoniemi (M)
via Pasila as.

Matkakumppani

Kaupunki helposti haltuun



MNX-249



HSL
HRT

Kaikki on
mahdollista

HSL Travel Companion

Main benefits

Customer Benefits

Simplicity and reliability

1.Accessible Communication

Customers receive updates without needing separate searches.

Inclusive Wayfinding: Accessible physical and digital tools (e.g., contrast, multilingual support) meet diverse user needs.

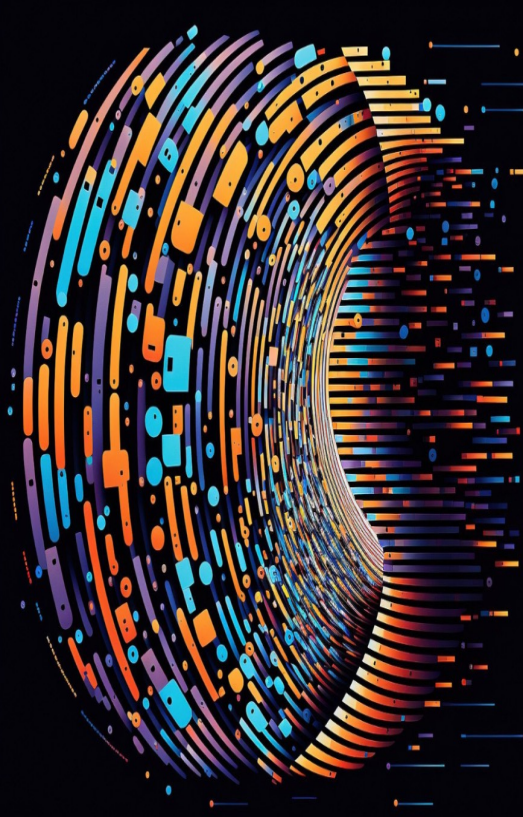
2.Visual Travel Information

Feature: Real-time text updates on delays, changes, and boarding.

Location-Aware Services: last-mile and in-station navigation with travel companion features.

Overall Benefit: A travel companion that combines these features empowers users and makes journeys easier to manage.





Benefits for HSL



Service Scalability

- New information types can be added without rebuilding the entire user interface.

Analytics and Data Utilization

- Comprehensive data from all transit modes provides insight into customer behavior.
- Enables smarter trip selection, predictive travel planning, and better resource allocation.

Overall Benefit

- Provides deeper insights into customer usage and travel patterns.
- Strengthens trust and demonstrates HSL's genuine commitment to inclusivity.

HSL Travel Companion

Roadmap and Future

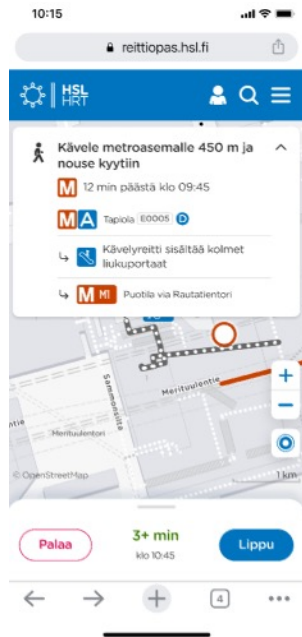
Roadmap: near future

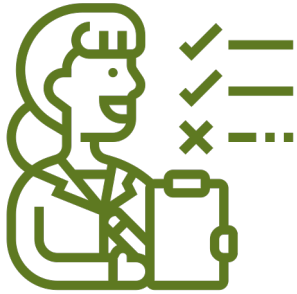
From MVP to evolved product

- Broader implementation
- More accurate information
- More transport modes

Feature Enhancements

- Adding accessibility to trip functions
- Improving navigation information (indoors)
- Possibility of notifications
- Feedback on trips (good or bad)





Broader Future Vision & What Ifs

Transforming use of Journey Planning?

- Could this replace the current way of using information?
- Combine with language models
 - Better situational awareness (not just transit, but broader contexts).
 - Information from surrounding environment, not only from transit systems.



Guided Travel Experiences

- Personalized and inclusive travel guidance.
 - Can be lobar standard for inclusive travel guidance?

Partnerships and more customer information

- Collaborations with 3rd party provides (end-to-end trips and services).

Vision: Local hosts who “know you” → tailored, human-centered experience.



Mr. Joonas Packalén
Head of Information
Helsinki Region Transport
Authority, HSL

Thank You

HSL team is happy to share more about how we've managed to create a universal and open-access platform for transit services.