Transcription in English

Ihan Raisiosta! E18 Raision keskusta

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Interviewer: Director of Communications Mirkka Ruohonen
Interviewees: Mayor Eero Vainio, Technical Director Timo Oja

Mirkka Ruohonen:
Turun kehätie, or E18, is one of the most important main roads in Finland. Kehätie runs through the city centre of Raisio, and there can be up to 30 000 cars per day. Today, we will talk about Kehätie and the famous intersections of Raisio. We have with us the mayor of Raisio, Eero Vainio, and the technical director, Timo Oja. Welcome, Eero and Timo.

Eero Vainio, Timo Oja:
Thank you.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
Let's go straight to Turun kehätie. This is Ihan Raisiosta podcast.

[jingle]

Mirkka Ruohonen:
Eero, could you tell us where we are at the moment with the improvement of the city centre of Raisio?

Eero Vainio:
The city centre of Raisio, or E18, is owned by the state-owned company, Väylävirasto. They have eight-year investment program, and they think that it should be implemented as soon as possible. The plans are already in place here. So, the level of readiness is at a high possible level. Now, we are waiting for the decision of the state council, or the national government. The decision could be made in the spring or in the autumn, depending on the budget. So, this is a long-awaited phase for us.

Timo Oja:
Yes, we can add that everything is ready here, and we are waiting for the order to be issued. All the plans are ready, and the necessary improvements to the road area have been made. So, we can implement the road plan as soon as the government approves it.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
So, the level of readiness is very high. How long has the city centre of Raisio been planned for?

Timo Oja:
It has probably been planned since the 2000s, and maybe even earlier, there have been names and effects for the different crossings of Raisio. The current road plan is based on the area readiness survey started in 2010, which was completed in 2014 and approved. There were four options. We thought about the option, and option number four is the basis for the current road plan. So, there is a short tunnel, and there is a three-level crossings.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
What is the difference between all the essential things for the city of Raisio?

Eero Vainio:

The essential thing for Raisio is the improvement of our city centre's traffic safety. Through the E18 project, traffic safety improves, and all the road traffic becomes smoother. Then there is the effect of a city-wide preventive measure. So, even if the city hall crossing is open to the public, it is much easier to continue driving when the traffic goes under the tunnel. So, light traffic, cycling, walking, all these things become significantly easier for us. In addition, this project locally halves traffic costs, and then there is also the effect that we have a maximum of 4,500 inhabitants, which makes it possible for the city to build and plan a new city centre. Based on the city centre vision, we are also running an architectural competition this summer.

Timo Oja:

In addition to the fact that safe light traffic can be achieved through the implementation of this plan, as Eero said, new lanes will be built on both sides of Raisiotie, which is currently not possible. Also, two new light traffic bridges will be built on 8-tie. So, we are now waiting for the company in the light, but in the future we will have our own bridge along the light rail, and also the internal traffic in the city will improve. So, the Raisiotie part will get better, and then we will continue to get to Voudinkatu under this light rail. So, it is currently the most dangerous intersection of Voudinkatu and Kehätie in the nature of Finland, so there is often a barrier there, regardless of the fact that there are traffic lights directing the traffic. But when it is so bright, we go there in old green and new red, and when the cars may be in the wrong place, it will change significantly. So, the safety will improve both with cars and light traffic.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
And you said, Eero, that we are waiting for something visible from the state budget, or decisions on how the situation now affects. The situation seems to be exciting.

Eero Vainio:
I would say something like 50-60. We have done a lot of supervisory work in Raisio. We have invited ministers of the previous government, representatives of the EU, and Raisio has had its own supervisory objectives in which this has been presented. This has been done actively. And then, on the other hand, this is a joint project between the state and Raisio, but this is primarily a state project. And when the state officials and our colleagues in the state hold this as the first project of the state, there is not much more that can be done. It is now up to our representatives of the state and the ministers of the government to decide whether to fund such large projects or whether to leave the large projects unfulfilled and make smaller projects for the country. With the corresponding money. But yes, the expectations are high that this year's funding will be received.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
Can this project be left to wait from the point of view of Raisio?

Eero Vainio:
From the point of view of Raisio, the project cannot be left to wait. As Timo said, there is constant lack of business success. There is constant lack of business success. This means that the port of Naantali, the port of Turku, the port of Rauma, the port of Uusikaupunki, are starting to receive new ships. And then there is also traffic safety. And even though there are quite different questions about tire wear, the horror scenario is that a chemical tire collapses in the center of Raisio. And it is a very sad situation if this happens. For example, during the Lahti kehätie project, there was a chemical tire crash in the residental apartment building.

And after that, the funding decision was made. Now I would hope that the decision would be made before the current situation has worsened.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
And when the funding is approved, what happens to Timo at that point? Where does the work start?

Timo Oja:
Yes, when the funding decision is made, we will try to find a way somehow, but of course not in the city, but here at the office. There is a small plan for strengthening the network and for the next two years. The cable operators have already begun to do their own cable transfer work over the past few years. And they have quite a lot already here on different sides of Raisio. There have been these excavations and they have made new lines for their cables, which now run along the Kehätie. They will be removed from there or they will be cut off or will be out of use. They must have new lines. In addition, our own water company will have to make new lines. There is one decisive main line that goes under the Kehätie and in that direction. It must have a new line made before it can be removed from use before the construction of the road starts. Those are the ones that start. There is a lot of water supply work and the Martinkatu street is also being improved according to the street plan. Martinkatu will of course be completely ready when the tunnel and others are ready. Väylävirasto is also starting the preparation of the route, the competitions, the plans are being considered, the construction plans are being made. At the stage of the road plan, they have been done for quite a long time, but some details are still to be done. Contractor can make some small changes there. The work will probably start with the construction of the roundabout systems. The tunnel section will have a parallel road and the roundabouts will also be on Valtatie 8. The traffic will be able to go to the north and also to the east, to Helsinki. This will start with the roundabout systems.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
If we think about the funding coming this spring, when would be the first time when the cars could fit into the tunnel at Raisiankohda?

Timo Oja:
If we throw in a very optimistic estimate, I would say on December, 2027. Then we will cut the tape and get to drive from the tunnel.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
On December, 2027. Is there a lot of trouble during the construction period?

Timo Oja:
Of course there is some thinks like the road systems themselves cause that everything you can drive at the moment does not necessarily get and you have to take into account that there will be a huge amount and there is heavy traffic with 10% and you have to avoid them. Of course, the traffic will not be controlled for all the city's narrow streets. Only the railway traffic will be controlled from the port of Naantali through Härkämäki. They will not be controlled during the construction period. The roundabout will be left to private traffic. The drivers will also find good routes when the construction starts. Tunnel work will be done by digging in the center. Light traffic crossing will be made at intermediate bridges towards Tasala. You can always drive, but you have to be and careful that you can't follow the familiar routes during the three-year period. It does not change day by day, but time has changed and it has been requested that the Väylävirasto constructors are actively informed when there are closed streets and where to go. All social media channels will probably be used and informed. And the current center will not be closed, but customers will still find their way to the center.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
And the current center will not be closed, but customers will still find their way to the center?

Timo Oja:
Yes, it is important that it has already been presented to the city that it cannot be closed and of course this will not happen. You can get there even better in the future. The continuation of the Solinius street to Kehätie is the first work. Traffic can go straight to the center and it will also be informed where to go, but it will not be closed during car traffic. You can get to Solinius street and you can cross the work site at any time. The traffic that is there can be operated and the customer flow will certainly be enough for them as well.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
This project is important not only for Raisio but also for the region and for the state. Why?

Eero Vainio:
This is also the main project of the Finnish Trade Chamber and also of the Turku City Council's Trade Chamber. This includes the traffic to Naantali's port and the traffic to Turku's port and in practice also the traffic to Rauma and Uusikaupunki. If we think about the activities we have here, there are important plant shelters, we have water terminals where we keep the fuel at Vaasa, Jyväskylä and Helsinki line. There are Raisio factories and there is significant industry here. In fact, there are quite a lot of arguments here plus the daily work-travel business, school-travel business and everything else that goes on here. This is very important and especially the transformation and smoothing of the traffic is the biggest thing and the tunnel makes the traffic smoother and improves the situation for us Raisio people. The three-tier crossing system primarily serves the traffic passing through Raisio and of course for us Raisio people as well.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
How about when in December the tape is cut and the car traffic goes to the tunnel, what happens in Raisio center after that?

Eero Vainio:
In Raisio center there is a lot of new construction happening. The center road plans has made in 2017 and based on that we are doing an upgraded architecture competition that is based on land acquisition and this competition will be organized this year and probably the first excavations will be made next year as well. In Raisio center it is possible to have at least 4500 new residents but of course we are trying to bring greenery to the center and also the new residents will be able to live in Raisio center in an excellent commercial location and also to get new residents in Raisio center we are also supporting the survival of the current and new commercial workers in Raisio center and so on.

Timo Oja:
You mentioned the center excavation and there will be more open space so on the top of the tunnel there will be 50 meters wide and 500 meters long area which can be used as a storage area and these will also be taken into account in the future planning so as many activities as possible we will be able to create and make different activities than now so you should not step on the road and your feet will be under the car pretty quickly.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
What kind of visions or wishes have been achieved or are there?

Timo Oja:
There are probably many of them but one situation has been organized at least in the library for a year and a half and there came several draft notes and there was a slide track and

water topics and of course probably gyms and kiosks and activities like this and of course if there is water in the winter it could be used for ice skating so let's see what the result is.

Eero Vainio:
For example these. there is a closed-off construction on the head due to cost reasons and now there is quite a lot of space for a four-story football field and so on so it is a good place for planning but if you don't build buildings then it is possible to make a park or a sports area lighter buildings and there could possibly be one-story coffee buildings or something like this.

Timo Oja:
Yes, there could possibly be this kind of maintenance buildings or kiosk-type activities. The area will be quite different.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
What about the costs? The state pays only part of the project what is left to be paid by the city of Raisio?

Timo Oja:
Yes For such a large project there are quite high costs so in the end of 2020 when the road plan was completed the cost estimate was 65 million. And now in the end of 2023 when the index has been raised 235 million is mentioned in the estimate. About 7 % of the city of Raisio participates in this project and that means about 17 million at the moment. The hope is that the costs will not rise anymore otherwise the city's cost share will rise but the state pays the majority of their projects so there are some streets that are left only to be built by Raisio but Väylävirasto also does the majority of the streets that will remain streets for the city in the future. And of course the phone operators, district heathing and water companies, their transfer costs will also be paid by the state itself. The state has these contracts that it gives permission to put wires into the area but on the condition that if the state needs that area the owner of the wire transfers it at a cost. The operators have to transfer the wire at their own cost. Then there is the state's business management and they get some telematics cost of some millions. In any case the state has the biggest part in this project.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
Is there anything that either one of you would like to add at this point?

Timo Oja:
Of course we are waiting for the funding decision. It is the deciding factor in this. Both the Väylävirasto and Väylävirasto's project office and of course the city have made street plans and water companyer is working on their own plans and we will get The Väylävirasto always has information about the situation so there is nothing to be done but to wait for the funding decision.

Eero Vainio:
Väylävirasto already has people in Raisio who are working day and night on this project and plans but the actual funding decision is missing. We are waiting for that and Raisio has a historical opportunity to renew our center. The center is a complete transformation that is possible and of course it can take a decade before the center becomes a new thing but it has a significant impact on the movement of our Raisio people mainly in a good way. Of course things can change and an old piece can be left behind but we will get our center for the Raisio people in our own use and we will get a significant amount of common space in our center so this is a matter for many opportunities in the future. Now we just hope that the representatives and ministers are active and that this can be decided by them and not by anyone else.

Timo Oja:

Now we just hope that there is a group of decision makers who will listen to us.

Eero Vainio:
That’s true.

Timo Oja:
One of the biggest things in the development of the center is that it is possible to list a lot when the roads are going in different ways. We always talk about traffic lights in Raisio that you have to wait next to every pole and now the traffic lights are going away Of course at the moment the traffic lights are on for safety reasons but it is quite important that the waiting in the traffic lights is removed. I don't think anyone will regret that.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
Today we have made an earlier and safer road network and opened the Raisio center tunnel and invited the development of the Raisio center to the new decade. Thank you to the speakers Mayor Eero Vainio and Technical Director Timo Oja.

Eero Vainio, Timo Oja:
Thank you.

Mirkka Ruohonen:
This is Ihan Raisiosta podcast. Stay tuned for more.

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