



E18 HAMINA–VAALIMAA

motorway to be completed in the spring of 2018



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ALMOST AT THE FINISH LINE

On the E18 Hamina–Vaalimaa motorway work site, the final spurt to the finish line is in progress. At the moment, efforts are going on between Kattilainen and Vaalimaa, where paving work and roadway painting are being completed and guardrails are being installed.

The construction that started on the motorway in summer 2015 has advanced excellently, in advance of the planned

schedule and in accordance with the budget. The new motorway will be finished in its entirety in spring 2018.

After that, the work will transfer to the current Road 7, whose name will change after the motorway is opened to Finnish National Road 170. Paving is being performed there and a light traffic lane is under construction. The work is set to be completed in autumn 2018.

E18 – A VITAL HIGHWAY FOR FINNISH EXPORT

The completion of the E18 Hamina–Vaalimaa motorway section in spring 2018 is set to become a significant milestone in the history of Finnish transport. The road section along the motorway from Turku will end at the eastern border and serve as the last leg of the east coast highway for Finland as a whole. It will join not only the road and rail network but the sea routes, ports and airports as well. E18 has highly important significance for Finland's commercial and industrial life as a whole since, in addition to its domestic connections, it links the nation to the capital cities of the Nordic region and to both Russia and Central Europe.

The first section of the E18 motorway began with the construction of Tarvontie Road in 1956. **Matti Vehviläinen**, Director of the ELY Centre for Southwest Finland, joined the effort thirty years ago, when the planning for the Turku–Paimio section commenced.

“Our goal has been to create a high-standard route that serves the Finnish community as a whole. The international significance of the motorway is also quite large, as E18 represents the EU's most important link to Russia,” Matti Vehviläinen declares. At the mid-point of the 1990s, Finland committed itself to implementing a motorway-standard



Matti Vehviläinen emphasises the international significance of the E18 motorway.

route extending all the way to Vaalimaa by 2018. The resolute progress of the project is being realised quite well, as the route is scheduled for completion next spring. European Union support has also been obtained to implement the route.

Hamina–Vaalimaa completion hits the spot

Improved connections have brought new possibilities for commercial life and employment in areas alongside the E18 motorway.

“This will hopefully be seen in Vaalimaa as well. The motorway completion hits the spot, since the economic situation in the world is showing recovery. We must remember, however, that a road alone does not bring successes – other kinds of effort and enterprise are also required.

“Improvement of the E18 route will continue in the years to come along the Turku ring road leading to the ports of Turku and Naantali. In addition to foreign trade, special requirements are being imposed by the strong growth of the Meyer Shipyard.”

Safety on a whole new level

Safety improvement has been a crucial factor guiding the construction of the E18 motorway. The motorway is five times safer than a normal road. Accidents along the Turku–Helsinki route have declined by over 70 per cent as a result of building the motorway.

Raisio resident Matti Vehviläinen has a summer cottage in Virolahti, so a better road connection than before is also important to him on a personal level.

COMPLETION SCHEDULE



February 2018

The section from Kattilainen to Virojoki is opened to traffic

March 2018

The section from Virojoki to Vaalimaa is opened to traffic

The entire motorway is in use. Improvements to the old national road 7 (to be changed to road 170) begin.

November 2018

The entire project is completed

2018

SPEED AND QUALITY WITH THE LIFE CYCLE MODEL



Jaakko Kouvalainen
Managing Director,
Tiesyhtiö Vaalimaa Oy

“The E18 Hamina–Vaalimaa route is being realised by means of the life cycle model. The service provider is Tiesyhtiö Vaalimaa Oy, which is responsible for road planning, construction, financing, maintenance and possible general renovations during the contractual period set to continue until 2034. The responsibility of the service provider is therefore considerably wider in scope than with traditional contracts.

The life cycle model is a good solution in this respect. Compared to regular budget-financed building, the life cycle model can significantly accelerate the construction stage: i.e. a safe motorway is brought quickly into use. The benefit of the model to the orderer – in this case, the Finnish Transport Agency – is that unanticipated extra costs do not ensue. This facilitates the planning of public funding.

The first life cycle project in Finland was the Vt4 Järvenpää–Lahti motorway. The advantages of the model – rapid deployment of the road, for instance – came clearly to the fore. Other life cycle projects prior to this project were the Muurla–Lohja and Koskenkylä–Kotka E18 motorway sections.

“A large project with a demanding schedule has succeeded very well. It’s a pleasure to observe the positive attitude of the employees and professional approach they have in working to achieve the goals.”



Juha Laamanen
Project Manager, ELY Centre
for Southeast Finland

“Using the life cycle model, it was already possible to fully implement the E18 Hamina–Vaalimaa motorway during the 2010s. Otherwise, the schedule would have been extended by years.

Experience had collected from other E18 motorway projects regarding how important active dialogue with residents and landowners is. In the E18 Hamina–Vaalimaa project, close co-operation began in connection with general planning and the assessment of environmental impacts, and this decisively encouraged positive attitudes towards the project.

Dialogue was introduced in, for instance, public events, workshops and visits to the terrain. The planned rerouting was ultimately the most desired solution by the majority of the inhabitants. The road is actually situated farther from human settlement, in the midst of woodland.

The Finnish Association for Impact Assessment (FAIA), which assesses environmental impacts, awarded Hamina–Vaalimaa for its environmental assessment project with regard to its smooth, well-organised dialogue and for taking the environment comprehensively into consideration. It is unusual that a road project receives this sort of award.

The completion of the motorway so quickly is a highly positive matter for Kymenlaakso region. We hope the route will bring new vitality to the entire sub-region.”

E18 HAMINA–VAALIMAA IN A NUTSHELL

The E18 motorway link from Turku to the eastern frontier is being completed as part of the E18 Hamina–Vaalimaa motorway. The section under construction is 32 kilometres in length. The orderer of the motorway is the Finnish Transport Agency and is being realised by Teyhtiö Vaalimaa Oy, with YIT Rakennus Oy as the main contractor. The work began in summer 2015 and the road is set for completion in spring 2018. In addition, seven kilometres of noise protection and a 4.5-kilometre light traffic route are being built. The total budget of the project is MEUR 600.

European route 18, or E18 as it is better known, is an international route which runs from Craigavon in Northern Ireland to Saint Petersburg in Russia. The European route numbering is used parallel with the national road numbering. The national road number for E18, running from Helsinki City Centre to Vaalimaa, is national road 7. When the motorway is completed, it will take up the number 7, and the old route will become road 170.

DID YOU KNOW?

The E18 motorway and predecessor to Road 7 were called the 'Great Shoreline Route'. The road was a big strain for the peasant farmers, because its construction including the bridges was their duty. In the year 1654, the district courts of Vehkalahti and Virojoki set out an ultimatum: "The road sections are to be divided during the period of the Valpuri Mass and the bailiff, reader of the law and jurors shall arrive to perform the task, but the commoners must sand the road immediately. Whosoever neglects this shall be fined to the amount of 40 Finnish markka." The message did not reach its target group very well: sometimes the district court judge resorted to delivering fines to 200 peasant masters simultaneously...

You can read more in the history of Finnish National Road 7, to be released later.



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