

Whim MaaS Platform

Helsinki Metro Area, Finland



Key Dates & Project Owner

In 2016, Helsinki, Finland became the first major metropolitan area to launch a MaaS platform, known as the [‘Whim’ app](#).¹ A true private-public partnership, the app was made possible by private sector development and investment and public sector direction. Specifically, project ownership is shared between the Finnish developer and operator MaaS Global, and Helsingin seudun liikenne (HSL), Helsinki’s public transit authority.²

In addition to Helsinki, the Whim platform now operates in several cities and countries including, but not limited to, Belgium, Greater Tokyo, Japan, Switzerland, and Vienna, Austria.

Geographic Context

This project serves both urban and suburban areas within the Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland.

Project Goals

The core goals of Helsinki’s Whim app include:

- Demonstrating that bundled mobility services that combine many different transportation modes into a single package can influence the travel behavior of the public, moving them away from private car ownership and onto more environmentally sustainable modes
- Leveraging MaaS-enabling actions taken by the Finnish government to benefit a MaaS platform
- Demonstrating that a private sector leadership role in MaaS can result in a stable and profitable business, which could potentially foster similar activities in Finland and internationally

Governance Model

Multiple government organizations are involved in this project in varying capacities. In general, the Finnish federal government has taken on a ‘MaaS Enabler’ role for this project. After legislation passed which encouraged HSL to pursue MaaS, the public transit authority was involved in standardizing the local public transit data so that it could be

¹ <https://whimapp.com/helsinki/en/>, <https://dutchmobilityinnovations.com/spaces/59/talking-traffic-partnership/articles/news/24855/helsinki-s-maas-app-whim-is-it-really-mobility-s-great-hope>

² <https://whimapp.com/about-us/>

used in private sector applications. Find out more about this public sector governance role, and others, on the MaaS Governance Models page.³

Even with public sector support, development and operation of the MaaS platform is led by the private sector. MaaS Global decides whether to include a mobility service in Whim, according to its own criteria. MaaS Global leads the technical integration of the platform, evaluates the relevance of the mobility packages offered, and considers the possibility of entering into an agreement with operators.⁴

Regarding the public transport and bike sharing services set up by local authorities, MaaS Global has signed standardized conditions of use of the APIs proposed by the transport authority HSL. For other mobility services such as taxis or car rentals, MaaS Global signs agreements on a case-by-case basis that define the conditions of access to the service, fare system, etc.⁵

In Finland more broadly, MaaS developments have been largely paired with an evolving concept of deregulated personal mobility. This deregulatory reform ideology advocates for an increasingly 'hands-off' role for the public sector in general transit. At the same time, MaaS is being supported by regulatory bodies like the Finnish Ministry of Transport (LVM). LVM, in partnership with other public sector actors at the national level and supported by a strong group of MaaS champions, has been a strong and vocal advocate for market-oriented MaaS developments. This has pushed Finnish public transit authorities (PTAs) into taking more reactionary roles in relation to MaaS. To comply with the new regulations, PTAs have developed (or are currently developing) digital interfaces and contracts for third-party resale of their tickets, which has enabled MaaS experimentation. In particular, HSL has taken to this strategy, as they have actively spurred MaaS experimentation through an MaaS-related innovation challenge."⁶

Funding

HSL provided data that Whim's app ingests at a cost of several hundred thousand euros, presumably from its own funding sources.⁷ MaaS Global has said that the total investment raised as of August 2021 is €65 million.⁸ As explained in the white paper by Cerema, '[MaaS in Europe: Lessons from the Helsinki, Vienna and Hanover experiments](#)', "HSL sells tickets for its network to MaaS operators at the same price as the general public rate. As MaaS Global does not wish to resell them at a higher rate, it does not make any margin on the sale of public transport tickets, which nevertheless represent the vast majority of tickets sold via the Whim application. MaaS Global's strategy is to convince its customers to buy mobility service packages, hoping that their actual consumption (paid to transport

³ MaaS Governance Models Page

⁴ https://www.cerema.fr/system/files/documents/2020/04/cerema_parangonnage_maas_synthesis_eng.pdf

⁵ https://www.cerema.fr/system/files/documents/2020/04/cerema_parangonnage_maas_synthesis_eng.pdf

⁶ https://research.chalmers.se/publication/516812/file/516812_Fulltext.pdf

⁷ https://www.cerema.fr/system/files/documents/2020/04/cerema_parangonnage_maas_synthesis_eng.pdf

⁸ <https://whimapp.com/helsinki/en/maas-global-announces-additional-e11-million-financing/>

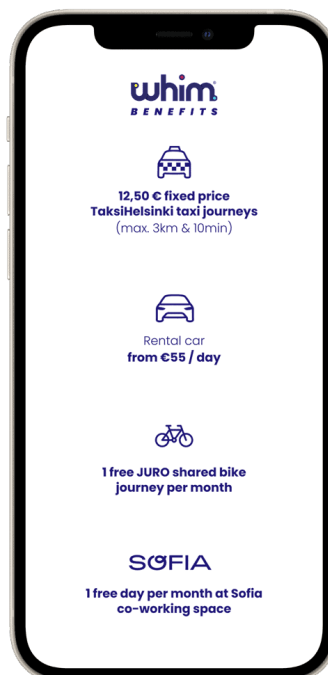
operators) is lower than the volume purchased (collected by the MaaS operator). MaaS Global also makes profits on the sales of other mobility services.”⁹

Project Components

The Whim MaaS Platform allows users to utilize multiple features including:

- **Trip planner:** Whim allows you to plan a trip on one or several modes including city bikes, e-scooters, ferry tickets, taxis, and affordable rental cars.¹⁰ Trip planning integration is made simple in Helsinki in part because public transportation (e.g., trains, buses, trams, metros) are already combined into one information and scheduling source.¹¹ Gaining data from several different public transportation agencies is not required.
- **Packages of bundled mobility services:** Whim experiments with different subscription models in order to learn which models best meet the needs of the largest percentage of users. As of November 2021, the Whim app in Helsinki provides two options to users regarding modal and price combinations: 1) users can “pay as you go” (i.e., pay for each trip on each mode separately) or 2) users can purchase season/serial tickets from various transportation providers. When they do the latter, users receive access to “Whim benefits”.

1. An example of Whim Benefits offered to users¹⁰



⁹ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.cerema.fr/system/files/documents/2020/04/cerema_parronage_maas_synthesis_eng.pdf

¹⁰ <https://whimapp.com/helsinki/en/>

¹¹ <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/maas-ambitions-public-transport-authorities.pdf>

Related Efforts

In addition to the Whim app, a variety of legislation encouraging MaaS in Finland has been passed in recent years. This has included:

- Finland's requirement that all road transportation services provide open data and interoperability since 2017. This law "has enabled private sector MaaS platforms that are comprehensive: multiple private entities have platforms with aggregated options for the consumer."¹²
- A requirement "that all providers of road-based and rail-based mobility services in Finland, including brokering and dispatch organizations, give third parties access to the sales interface of their ticketing and payment systems and to allow them to resell ticket products for single trips. In other words, LVM forced mobility service providers embrace externally managed MaaS fare services."¹³

This legislation laid the framework for Finland to become an international early adopter of MaaS. As Helsinki continues to hone its MaaS product and attract users to the Whim app, it looks to [expand MaaS concepts to more rural areas across the country](#).¹⁴ Both its federal legislation and innovative approach towards MaaS make Finland one of the most successful examples of implementing MaaS service.

¹² <https://learn.sharedusemobilitycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Towards-the-Promise-of-MaaS-in-the-US-July-2020-Shared-Use-Mobility-Center.pdf>

¹³ https://research.chalmers.se/publication/516812/file/516812_Fulltext.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2210539518300403>