

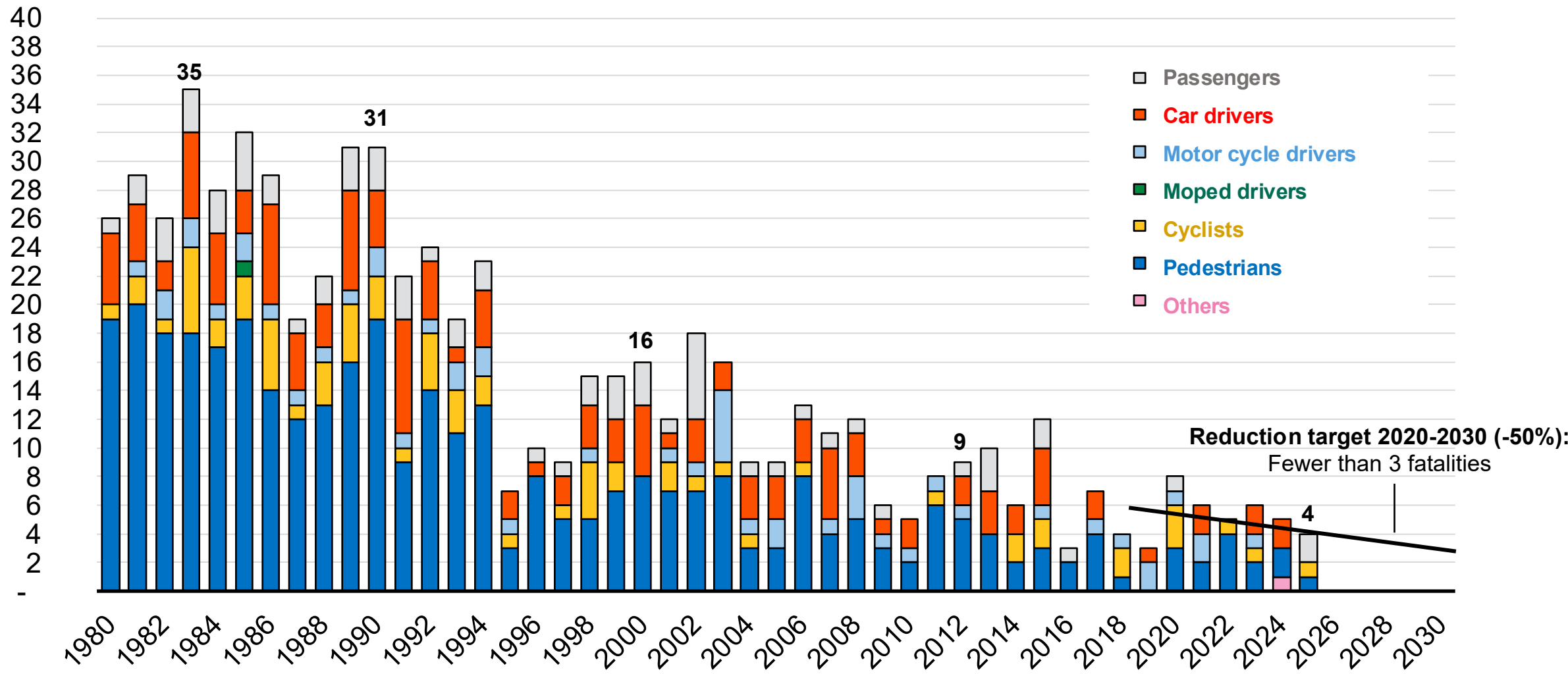
Towards Vision Zero: Traffic Safety in Helsinki

Roni Utriainen
Traffic Engineer, PhD
City of Helsinki

Helsinki

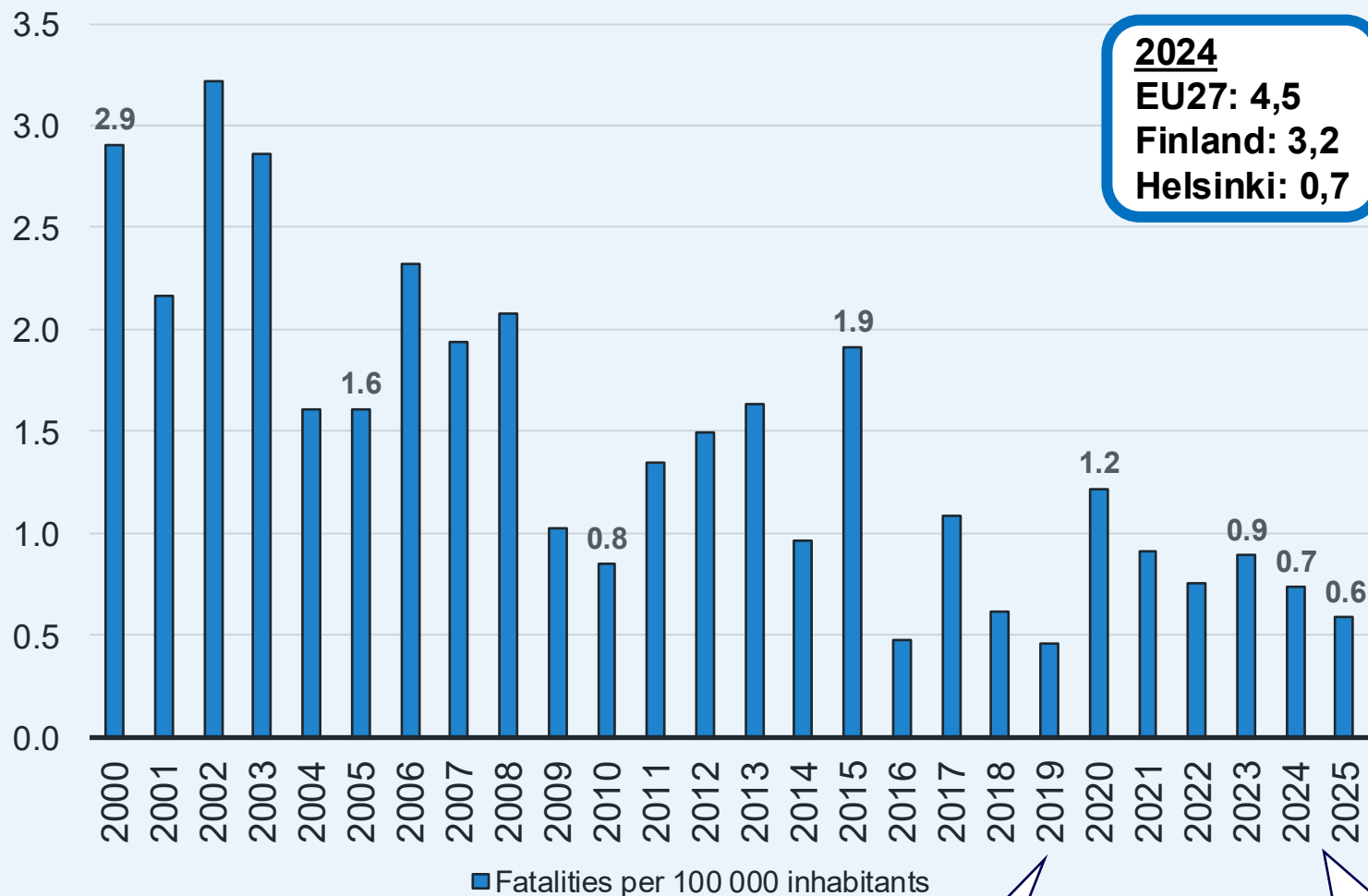


Number of traffic fatalities in Helsinki 1980–2025



The number of traffic fatalities has decreased by about 80% since early 1980s.

Road traffic fatalities in Helsinki per 100 000 inhabitants in 2000-2025

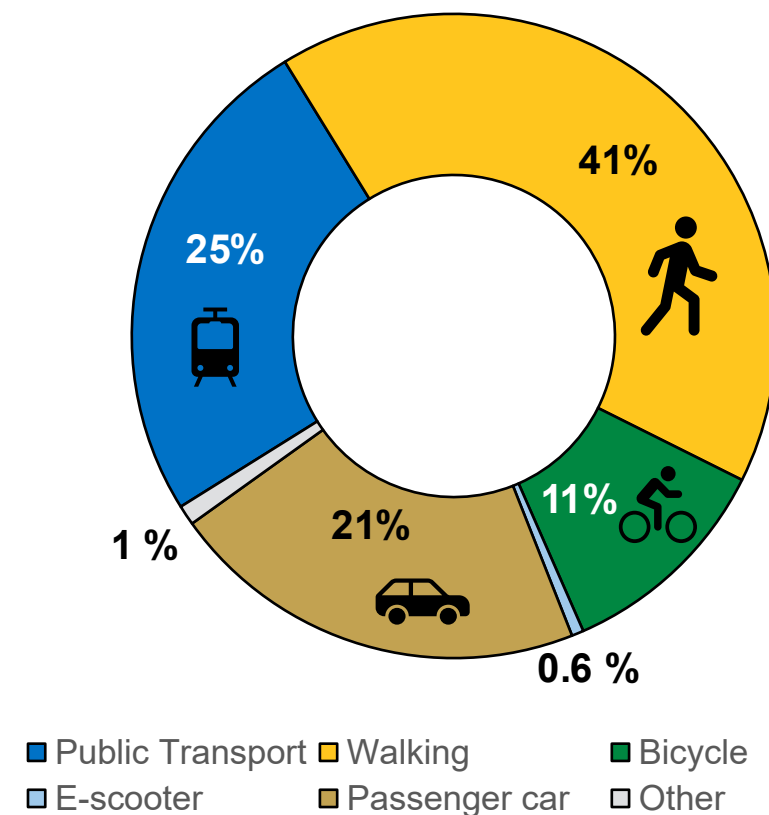


Helsinki

No pedestrian or
cyclist fatalities
in 2019

No road traffic fatalities
between August 2024 and
July 2025 (12 months)

Main mode of transport in 2024 of residents of Helsinki within the borders of the city



Helsinki Traffic Safety Development Programme 2022–2026

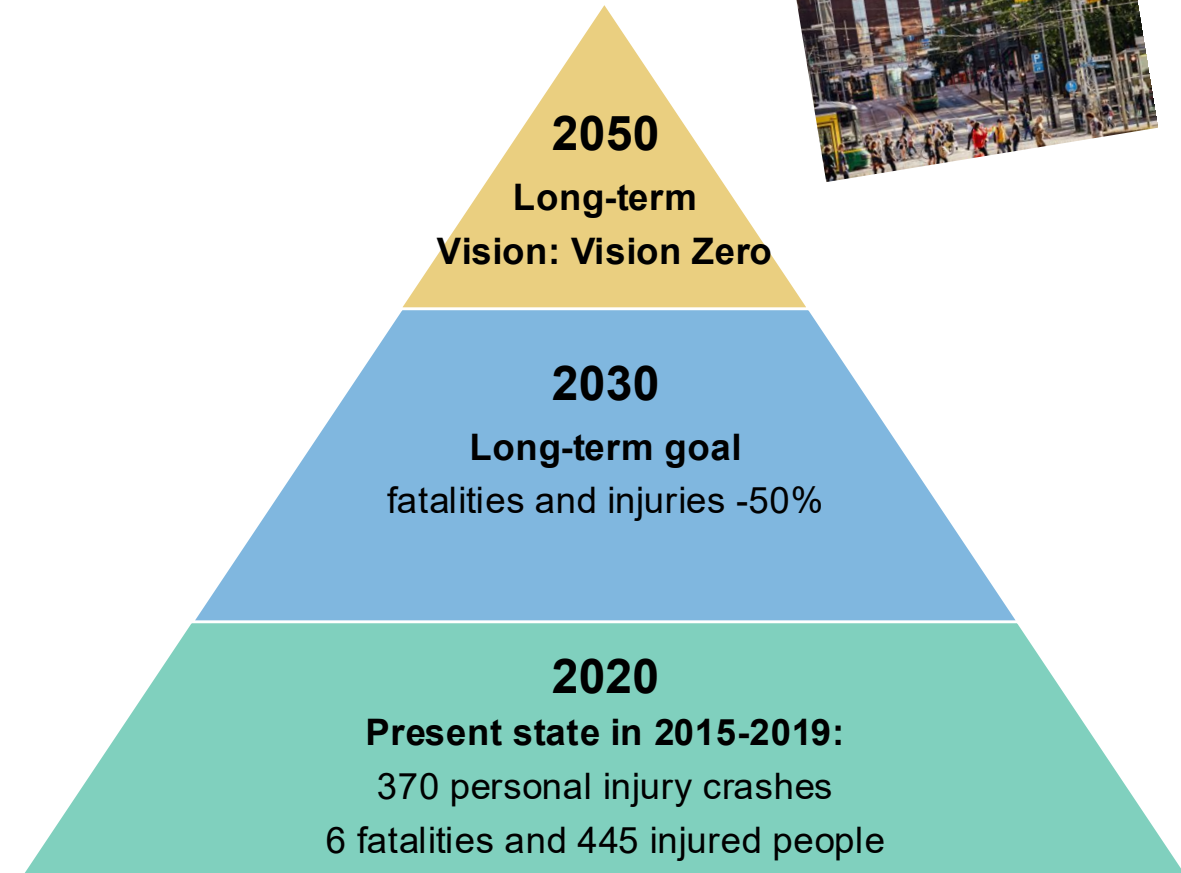
- The programme determines key measures to improve traffic safety
- Most measures aim to improve traffic environment, but measures regarding education, traffic enforcement and informing are also included



Safety measures emphasize the safety of **children and the youth, pedestrians and cyclists**:

- **Less crashes** involving children, pedestrians, and cyclists
- Walking and cycling is **perceived as safer**
- **Accessibility** is improved

Helsinki



(Some) key measures regarding traffic environment to improve traffic safety in Helsinki

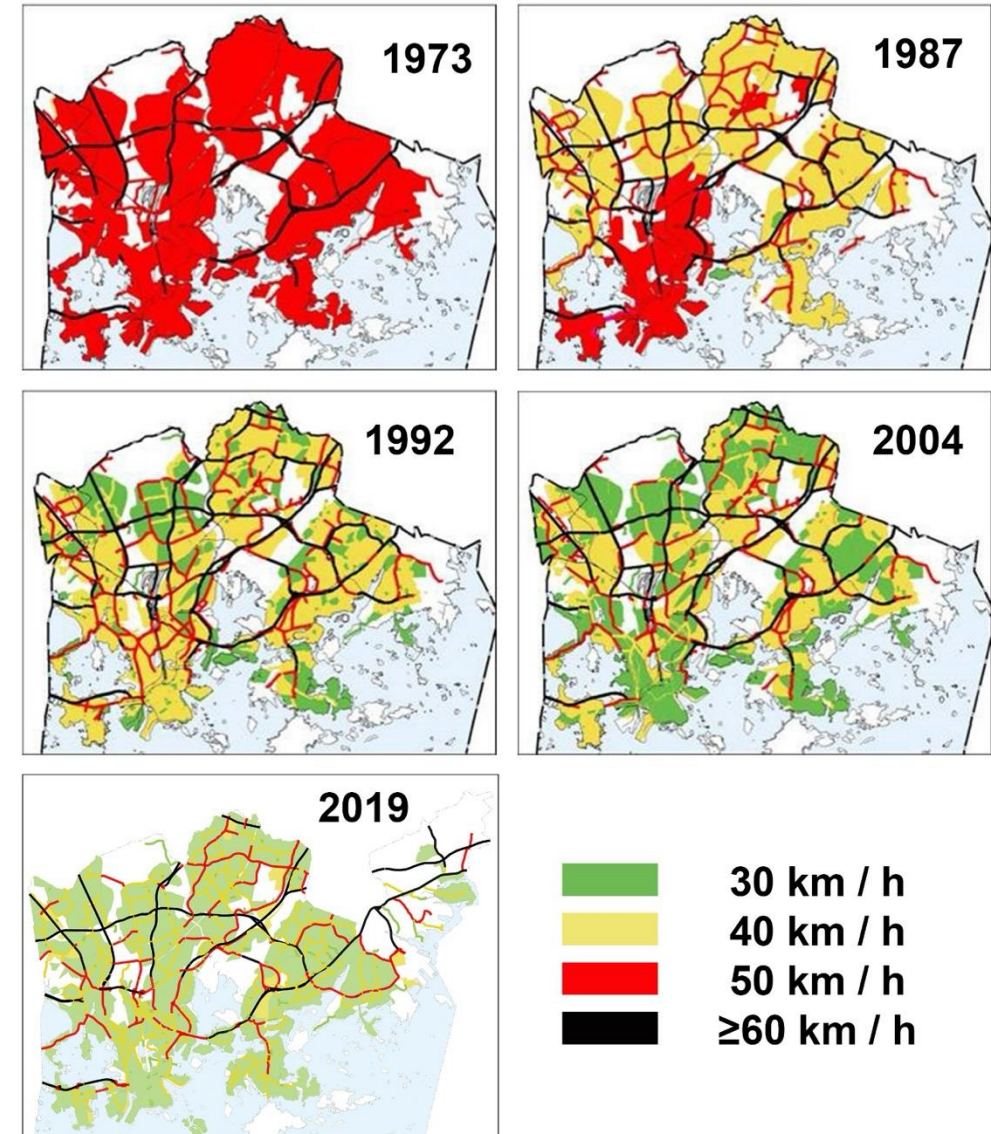
- Reducing speed limits
- Improving pedestrian and cyclist crossing arrangements
- High-quality and straight cycling route network
- Redesigning street space and narrowing the roadway
- Introducing automatic speed cameras



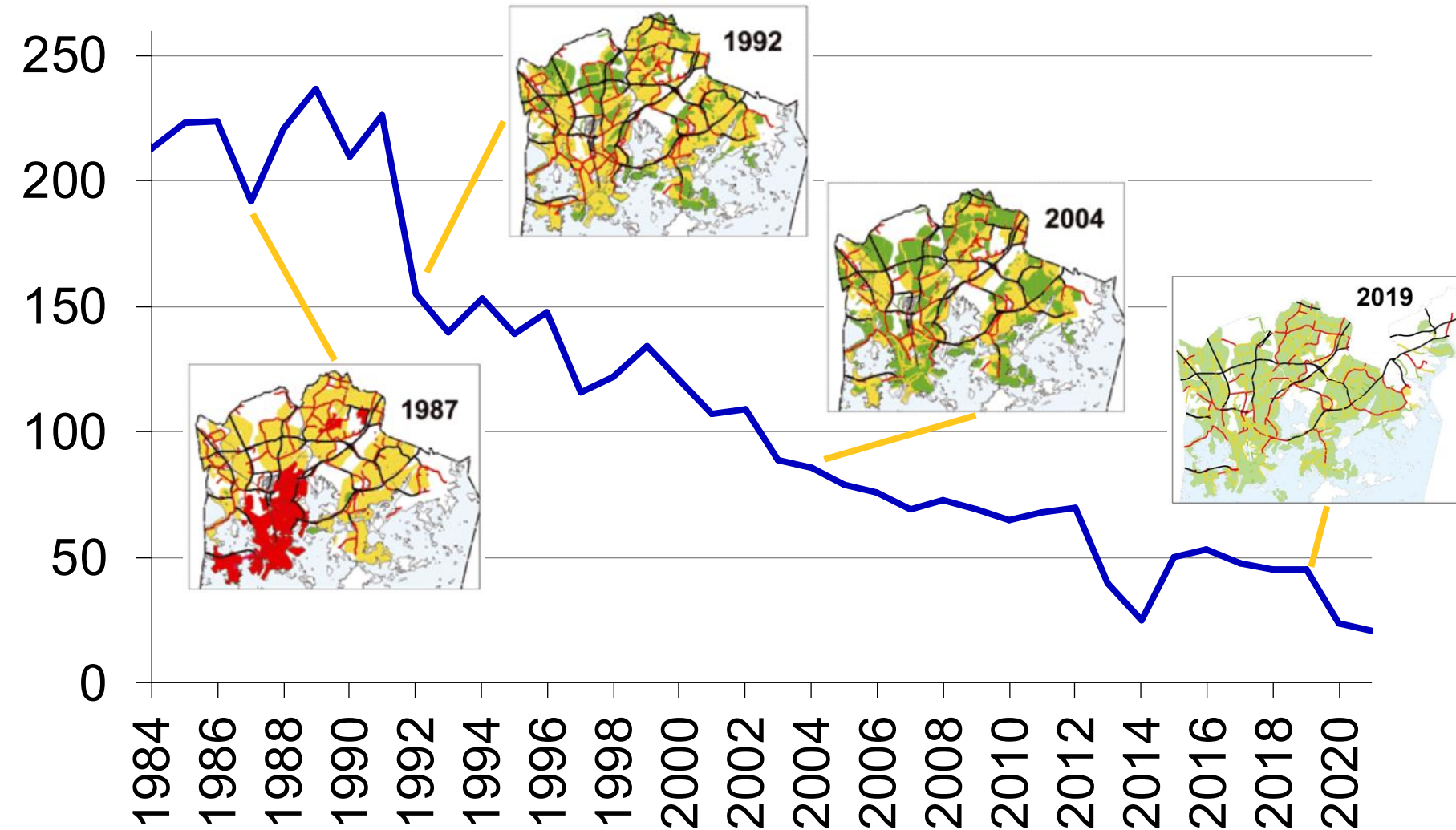
Reducing speed limits

In the 1970s, 50 km/h was the most common speed limit in Helsinki, but today more than half of the city's streets have a speed limit of 30 km/h.

Helsinki



Fatal and injury crashes of pedestrians in the inner city of Helsinki



**Speed limit changes
in 2004 & 2019:**

**On streets with
decreased speed limit,
8-9 % less personal
injury crashes** have
occurred compared to
streets without changes
in speed limits.

Improving pedestrian and cyclist crossing arrangements

A physically separated cycle path & raised pedestrian crossing on main street

Crossing arrangements have been developed to be safer **not only based on hotspot areas for crashes but also on a crash risk assessment.**

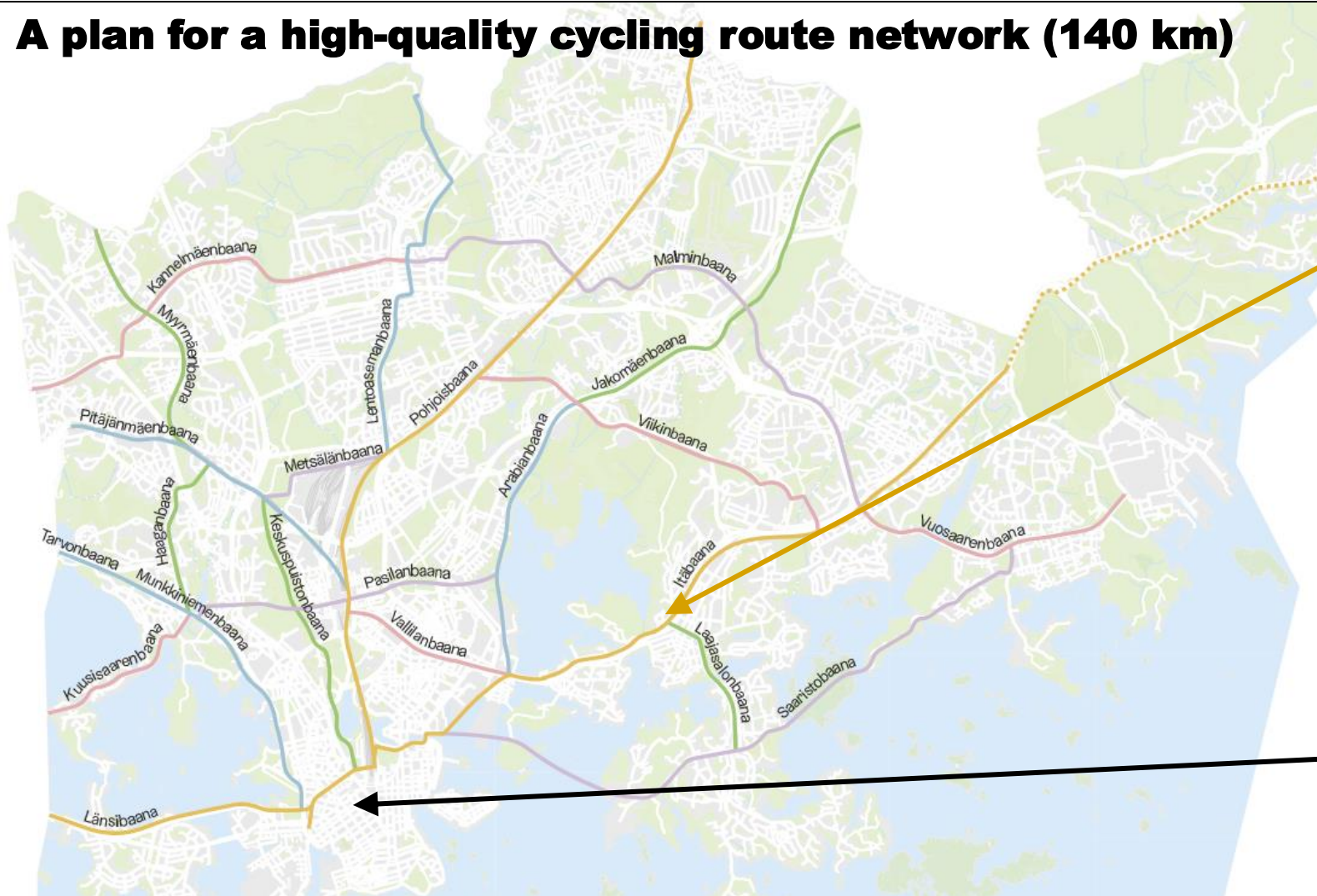


Photo: Google



High-quality and straight cycling route network

A plan for a high-quality cycling route network (140 km)



On high-quality cycling network, cyclists are physically separated from motor vehicles.



On traffic calmed local streets, cyclists and motor vehicles share the road. 



Photo: Google

Redesigning street space and narrowing the roadway

Street space on main streets:

- Narrowed car lanes
- Typically one-way bicycle paths
- Tramway in the middle (in the inner city area)
- 1+1 / 2+2 lanes depending on the role of street



Traffic calming on local streets:

- The goal is to reduce through-traffic and driving speeds
- Measures include continuous sidewalks, one-way streets, street narrowing, speed bumps etc.

One way, traffic calmed street



One-sided street narrowing



Kallio neighborhood's traffic calmed summer streets and street network



Two-sided street narrowing



Introducing automatic speed cameras

- About 60 speed cameras on main and collector streets
- Enforcement for speed, traffic lights, and bus lanes

Before-and-after study:
The share of freely driving vehicles exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 km/h **dropped by 56 %** (12 % → 5 %) near the enforcement sites.

[Malin et al. 2023](#)

The share of freely driving vehicles exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 km/h (%)

