



Oulu2026  
European Capital  
of Culture

# Nordic Shine! – Oulu 2035

Oulu City Strategy 2035





# NORDIC SHINE OULU2035

**The shine of  
northern people,  
culture, and nature**

**The shine of  
competence,  
learning, and  
cooperation**

**Oulu grows sustainably,  
humanely, and smartly.**

**In 2035, we will have 240 000 residents  
and the goal is 2 000 new jobs annually.**

Oulu 2035 –  
Cooler than  
you think!

## VALUES

**BOLDNESS**

**FAIRNESS**

**RESPONSIBILITY**



# Nordic Shine! – Oulu 2035



Oulu shines with humane energy, culture, and future competence. Oulu means safety and high quality of life. High-quality education and effortless everyday life make Oulu an excellent place for children and youth.

Sustainable growth is Oulu's direction. In 2035, Oulu will have **240 000 inhabitants**, and a targeted **2 000 new jobs every year**. The city grows in a way that reinforces human well-being and the surrounding nature.



## In Oulu, people get to shine

Oulu is a creative and caring city that supports a physical and balanced way of life. Our northness is wildly urban. It is visible in hospitality, perseverance, and cooperation. The city's strength is in different types of people and neighborhoods. Oulu has the space, time, and opportunities for encounters and learning new things.



## In Oulu, cooperation and entrepreneurship get to shine

Oulu is a city of cooperation where pre-existing networks get stronger and new ones are built. The business-friendly atmosphere and strong capability create the prerequisites for entrepreneurship and meaningful working life. Everyday life flows with the residents. Oulu is the power of opposites. Warm summers, cold winters, northern lights, and the midnight sun give life its rhythm here.



## Oulu shines to the whole world

Oulu is an international city with great connections anywhere. The region's know-how and technological solutions have global effects. Nordic cooperation is strong. The bold hinterland attracts visitors with northern experiences. The city gathers its strength from waterways and nature. Oulu shines brightly in Finland and in the world.

# The city of Oulu's values

## BOLDNESS



We make forward-looking decisions boldly for an improved future in the north. We dare to try the new and give up the conventional.

## FAIRNESS



We are straightforward and flexible together. We treat each other with respect and humanity, without prejudice.

## RESPONSIBILITY



We promote sustainable life styles smartly, and ensure through action that future generations are capable of making decisions. Fair and transparent methods create safety and trust.

# City of Oulu's Strategic Goals



Oulu has implemented Cultural Climate Change successfully. It has made Oulu into a lively and communal culture and event city.



All residents of Oulu live an everyday life that enables well-being, communality, and participation.



Oulu is and is known as a high-quality pioneer of competence, learning, and education.



Oulu grows sustainably and develops while supporting nature.



Oulu reinforces its status as a home for expansionary businesses.



Oulu promotes the national and international growth of businesses by committing to expediting research and development as an active part of the region's innovation ecosystem.



The city centre's vitality investments continue to progress. Oulu's traffic becomes more accessible.



The city's economy is in balance.

# Oulu's strengths

## PEOPLE AND EXPERIENCES

The visibility and legacy of the Capital of Culture year

Effortless and family-friendly everyday life

High-quality path of growth and education

Physical life style and opportunities

Effect evaluation in decision-making

UNICEF Child-Friendly Alumnus City

## CITY OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Local nature and urbanity exist side-by-side

Safe and comfortable environment

Diverse housing opportunities

Excellent conditions for year-round cycling

Pioneer of sustainable cultivation

## SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

World-class city of technology and product development

Young and educated population

Infrastructure for clean transition

Hub of logistics and effortless connections

City of international education

Wide selection of university and upper secondary education

## PEOPLE AND EXPERINCES

In Oulu, people are healthy in all stages of their lives.

The caring, international, and safe atmosphere makes Oulu a communal city where it is good to grow and live.

We promote physical life styles. Youth employment, competence, and well-being are the city's most important development goals.



**1. Oulu has implemented Cultural Climate Change successfully. It has made Oulu into a lively and communal culture and event city.**

- The number of events and international congresses
- Tourism income
- Revenue of private event organizers



**2. All residents of Oulu live an everyday life that enables well-being, communality, and participation.**

- Promotion of well-being and health, HYTE rate
- Promotion of health, TEA pointer
- Average duration of youth unemployment
- Employment rate of foreign citizens



**3. Oulu is and is known as a high-quality pioneer of competence, learning, and education.**

- Participation rate of early childhood education and preschool
- Average grades of basic education and matriculation diplomas
- People outside of upper secondary education
- Primary applicants to universities

## CITY OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Oulu grows in balance with people, nature, and built-up environment.

Oulu is a beautiful, pro-nature city where neighborhoods and services are linked naturally.

The city realizes the 3-30-300\* principle. Mobility is effortless for all modes of travel.

The condensed urban structure and sustainable construction support the city's development and growth.

Oulu is committed to its national goal to achieve carbon-neutrality by 2035.



### 4. Oulu grows sustainably and develops while supporting nature.

Municipal infrastructure is zoned and built while preparing for business plot production and diverse housing plot offering based on demand, favoring infill development:

- Relinquished business plots
- Plot offering
- Natural value hectare calculation
- Greenhouse gas emissions

\*you can see at least 3 trees from your window; your neighborhood's canopy covers at least 30 %; and the distance to the nearest greenspace is max 300 meters.



**SUSTAINABLE  
ECONOMIC  
GROWTH**

Oulu is Europe's best operational environment for businesses and for international growth, new innovations, and a capable work force.

Oulu is business-friendly, globalizing, and attractive.

It is easy to operate and succeed together here. Oulu promotes clean transition and dual-use technology development.

The city's balanced economy creates the prerequisites for Oulu's development.



**5. Oulu reinforces its status as a home for expansionary businesses.**

- Established businesses
- Investments
- Development of wage income
- Promotion of clean transition investments



**6. Oulu promotes the national and international growth of businesses by committing to expediting research and development as an active part of the region's innovation ecosystem.**

- Development of RDI funding in the region



**7. The city centre's vitality investments continue to progress. Oulu's traffic becomes more accessible.**

- Investments in the station area
- Accessibility spearhead projects



**8. The city's economy is in balance.**

- The growth of operational economy expenses is smaller than the combined growth of tax income, central government transfers, and operational income.
- Annual profit > depreciations
- Max investments of 150 million €

**PERSONNEL AND  
WORKING CULTURE**

The city's working culture is humane, goal-oriented, and attractive; a municipal workplace where the employee well-being and learning get to shine. The 'one city, one employer' principle supports effortless work and cooperation. We work for the best of Oulu's residents.

Service satisfaction of residents is surveyed consistently. Persevering and logical personnel leadership prepares the organization to face changes. Rewarding policies are compiled and their implementation is monitored.



**9. The city of Oulu's operational culture and leadership are responsible, persevering, and humane.**

- Employer recommendations for personnel



**10. Our personnel are healthy and motivated.**

- Sickness absences / person-workyear
- Psychological safety at the workplace



**11. Our personnel is competent and designed to meet the demand.**

- Total number of person-workyears

## OUR OPERATIONAL CULTURE

# 'One city, one employer' – effortless operations and cooperation

### We are building a city of the future together

We offer high-quality, solution-focused and human-centered services to residents, businesses, communities, and visitors.

We are building sustainable personnel policies supported by political and economical decision-making.

Continual development of operations and services is a central part of our operational culture.

### We shine together

Our operational culture is built on trust, equality, and mutual respect.

We recognize the diversity of working communities as a strength.

Listening and participation opportunities reinforce the cooperation between the community and the organization. Up-to-date information and open communication increase trust and improve the transparency of decision-making.

### We can and we dare

We react to changes with anticipation, openness, and positivity. We dare to run trials.

Our operations are responsible and effective. Encouraging leadership supports shared successes.

Our personnel has the needed competence and the number of personnel meets the demand. We handle procurements with competence. We utilize digitalization in our services and operations.

"Our motivated, professional, and healthy personnel produces high-quality services for residents. Investments in employee well-being and competence development are seen as investments in the personnel and productive operational culture."



**Indicators and  
target levels  
2029**

## PEOPLE AND EXPERIENCES



Strategic goals	Indicators	Starting level	Target level 2029
1. Oulu has implemented Cultural Climate Change successfully. It has made Oulu into a lively and communal culture and event city.	The number of events and international congresses	2025: 5 600 events 2024: 31 international congresses	5 600 events/y 40 international congresses
	Tourism income	2025: 261 mil. €	290 mil. €
	Revenue of private event organizers	€ / year	Goals will be set as the City Budget 2027 is compiled.
2. All residents of Oulu live an everyday life that enables well-being, communality, and participation.	Promotion of well-being and health, HYTE rate	2025: 20,2 € / resident	20,5 € / resident
	Promotion of health, TEA pointer	2025: 79	80
	Average duration of youth unemployment	2025: 21 weeks	17 weeks
	Employment rate of foreign citizens	2024: 50,9 %	55 %
3. Oulu is and is known as a high-quality pioneer of competence, learning, and education.	Participation rate of early childhood education and preschool	2025: 4yrs 95 %, 5yrs 96 %, 6yrs 98 %	4yrs 95%, 5yrs 96%, 6yrs 98%
	Average grades of basic education and matriculation diplomas	2025: Basic education 8,0 2025: Upper secondary 4,34	Basic education 8,0 Upper secondary 4,34
	People outside of upper secondary education	2025: 41	Under 41
	Primary applicants to universities	2025: 18 381	20 000

**CITY OF  
SUSTAINABLE  
GROWTH**



<b>Strategic goals</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Starting level</b>	<b>Target level 2029</b>
4. Oulu grows sustainably and develops while supporting nature.	Relinquished business plots	2025: 22	30
	Plot offering	Apartment building apartments 211 Row house apartments 162 Single-family home plots 92  Total of 465 apartments annually	New goals are set as the new land use implementation plan is compiled.
	Natural value hectare calculation	Not yet adopted	Goal will be set as the City Budget 2027 is compiled.
	Greenhouse gas emissions • 67 % emission reduction by 2029 • 80 % emission reduction by 2035	2024 preliminary report: 639,1	460,3

## SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH



Strategic goals	Indicators	Starting level	Target level 2029
5. Oulu reinforces its status as a home for expansionary businesses.	Established businesses	2025: 1440	1500
	Investments	2025: 278 mil. €	300 mil. € / year
	Development of wage income	2025: 4,45 bil. €	Growth
	Promotion of clean transition investments: Laanila, Pyyryväinen, Oritkari, Vihreäsaari		Finished city plan
6. Oulu promotes the national and international growth of businesses by committing to expediting research and development as an active part of the region's innovation ecosystem.	Development of RDI funding in the region	2024: 907,4 mil. €	Annual growth

## SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH



Strategic goals	Indicators	Starting level	Target level 2029
7. The city centre's vitality investments continue to progress. Oulu's traffic becomes more accessible.	Investments in the station area		Finished city plan, construction decision of the Experience Arena
	Accessibility spearhead projects: TEN-T Core Network, main line, Rail Nordica, Highways 4 and 20		Progressed projects
8. The city's economy is in balance.	The growth of operational economy expenses is smaller than the combined growth of tax income, central government transfers, and operational income.	2025: growth of expenses 5,1 % 2025: growth of income 3,6 %	Targets will be updated as the City Budget 2027 and Plan 2028–2029 are compiled
	Annual profit > depreciations	2025: annual profit 78 mil. € 2025: depreciations 96 mil. €	Annual profit 115 mil. € Depreciations 107 mil. €
	Max investments	2025: investments 171 mil. €	150 mil. €
	Oulu's portion of unemployment benefit funding	2025: 35 mil. €	Under 30 mil. €

## PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONAL CULTURE



Strategic goals	Indicators	Starting level	Target level 2029
9. The city of Oulu's operational culture and leadership are responsible, persevering, and humane.	Employer recommendations for personnel	2024: 81,4 %	82 %
10. Our personnel are healthy and motivated.	Sickness absences / person-workyear	2025: 17	16
	Psychological safety at the workplace	2024: 74,3 %	75 %
11. Our personnel is competent and designed to meet the demand.	Total number of person-workyears	2025: 6676	6676



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