“Passenger safety is paramount”

West Metro CEO Ville Saksi is in charge of building the world’s safest metro. It requires close cooperation with top professionals.

The second phase of the West Metro is being built at a fast pace. By 2023, five new stations will be completed to facilitate the movement of residents in the Greater Helsinki area.

Ville Saksi, CEO of Länsimetro Oy (West Metro) personally visits the sites weekly to maintain a good feel for the overall progress and situation, and he is pleased with the construction of Phase Two. “Phase Two is under construction and all station and track lines are underway. Work is proceeding quickly, on schedule.”

Guided by safety

West Metro promises to build the world’s safest metro. All design is guided by safety, which Saksi believes is based on both technical and perceived safety. “The most important thing of all is the safety of everyday life, which means that passengers have a safe feeling when traveling on the subway.”

The West Metro is neither dark nor cramped. Special attention has been paid to lighting. The facilities are designed with passengers in mind to minimize the risk of slips or injuries.

Saksi says he uses the subway weekly himself. “I realized that traveling time can be used for efficient work, such as reading emails. We have tremendous potential to attract new passengers in this target group of middle-aged men who are driving.”

Traveling by subway is a highly sustainable method of transport, which is of great importance for many passengers, especially emphasized in the younger generation. “Leaving the car at home and using the subway makes it an environmental act every day.”

Identifying and resolving risks

But what happens behind the scenes in the subway is not visible to passengers. Security-related technology is world-class. For example, ABB delivers a property monitoring system to all Phase Two stations. It provides real-time monitoring of trains, subway stations, service tunnels, escape shafts, lifts, lighting and alarm functions.

“In exceptional circumstances, the system triggers automatic alarms and automatic actions,” says Saksi. He stresses the importance of cooperation with the authorities in terms of security. “All the risks identified have been worked out in close cooperation with the authorities.”
There are also strict criteria for all partners of the West Metro.

“We have chosen the nation’s top professionals to deliver the metro. The subway cannot be a training ground to be tested.”

At a career turning point

Three years ago, Ville Saksi was at a turning point in his career. Continue in the construction industry or try something else? Having worked in the construction industry for over 25 years, he had several options in front of him alongside West Metro.

“I was aware of this project and the challenges of West Metro. I have led a number of changes during my career and I needed a new challenge for me as well, so the contact came just at the right time.”

He is delighted to be in charge of building the second phase of the subway from scratch. “The next two years will be a busy period of construction on every front. As many as 1,000 top professionals are building the second phase of the metro.”

About Ville Saksi

- Production Economics Engineer and Civil Engineer.
- CEO of Länsimetro Oy since November 2016.
- President and CEO of VR Track 2009–2016.
- Employed by Skanska from 1993 to 2009, most recently CEO of Skanska Tekra Oy.
- Selected 2018 RIA professional of the year
- Has a wide range of physical activity; is currently preparing for a half-triathlon.

About Länsimetro Oy

Länsimetro Oy is a limited liability company that is jointly owned by the cities of Espoo and Helsinki. Länsimetro Oy’s task is to build, own, maintain and develop the West Metro system, tracks and stations from Ruoholahti westwards. The transport operator and developer of the rail section and stations from Ruoholahti eastward is the City of Helsinki (Helsinki City Transport, HKL). As the metro system and infrastructure owner, Länsimetro Oy’s task is to ensure that the West Metro’s metro system and its stations provide a safe commuting environment throughout their lifecycle.

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