

Major Road Investment Project Enters Final Phase

The MaKS project, a collaborative investment by Kaunis Iron and the Swedish Transport Administration amounting to over SEK 2 billion to improve road standards and traffic safety on the routes used for ore transportation, is nearing its end. "Collisions with reindeer and other wildlife have decreased for all types of traffic," says Logistics Manager Nils-Johan Haraldsson.

The final stage is currently underway in the billion-krona project "Ore Transport Kaunisvaara–Svappavaara" (MaKS), in which the Swedish Transport Administration, supported by Kaunis Iron, has upgraded the road network used by ore transports. Kaunis Iron has contributed SEK 127 million to the project, and Logistics Manager Nils-Johan Haraldsson is pleased with the results. "We've improved traffic safety along the entire route. If you drive through the area, you'll notice that the roads here in Pajala are excellent compared to many surrounding roads. We've also added pedestrian and bike paths, which make everyday life easier for residents, along with important bypasses in Masugnsbyn and Vittangi," he says.

He explains that the project has eliminated many hazards. Dangerous curves known for accidents have been removed, and other risk factors have been addressed as well.

"We've also leveled out some steep inclines, reducing fuel consumption for everyone using the route – which is good for the environment too. We work closely with road maintenance crews to improve sanding, salting, and snow clearing when needed. Kaunis Iron co-finances a fixed annual amount to ensure an elevated level of road maintenance along the route we operate on," Haraldsson adds.

During the course of the project, all road users have naturally had to deal with disruptions due to construction and reduced accessibility. Kaunis Iron also had to adjust its transport operations and use escort vehicles to enable driver shifts in accordance with agreements. But that solution is no longer necessary, and each transport vehicle can now complete its route calmly and efficiently.

Haraldsson sums up:

"From a community perspective, Pajala has come closer to Malmfälten thanks to the improved road. Wildlife and reindeer collisions have decreased for all traffic, which is important. Fuel consumption is down for all road users, conditions for pedestrians and cyclists in Lovikka and Erkheikki have improved, and the living environment in Masugnsbyn and Vittangi has been enhanced. In other words, the MaKS project has given the social infrastructure of Pajala Municipality and the surrounding area a real boost. That naturally feels good."

The MaKS project is nearing completion, but road safety remains a daily focus. This autumn, Kaunis Iron continues its efforts with the project "Stop, Look, Wave", in collaboration with Volvo Trucks and Wist Last & Buss – an initiative aimed at schools to raise awareness of traffic safety among children as well.

Total cost of the collaboration project with the Swedish Transport Administration (Trafikverket):

Approximately SEK 2,3 billion, with Kaunis Iron contributing SEK 127 million.

Project elements and expected completion dates:

- Vittangi Bypass – estimated completion: 2021
- Masugnsbyn Bypass – estimated completion: 2021
- Anttis–Lovikka – estimated completion: 2021
- Junosuando–Masugnsbyn – estimated completion: 2022
- Bridge over Tärendö River – estimated completion: 2022
- Palokorva–Junosuando – 2022–2023
- Junosuando village – 2022–2023
- Snowmobile crossing at Merasjärvi – 2023
- Demolition of the old Tärendö River bridge – 2023
- Autio–Anttis – 2023–2024
- Paving work in Lovikka – 2024
- Temporary bridge over the Torne River – 2024
- New bridge over the Torne River – completion: 2025
- Autio Bridge – 2026

Additionally:

- Wildlife fencing
- Pedestrian and bicycle paths
- Two wildlife crossings
- Noise protection measures
- Nearby houses have received noise-insulated windows

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Image Attachments

MaKS Erkheikki