

The Family in Erkheikki Welcome Road Improvements: “Our Yard Feels Even More Homely Now”

When Megan Robson and Ola Kostet left the big city life in Canada for a ancestral home in Erkheikki, the MaKS project hadn't started yet near their home. The phase was completed in the fall of 2025 and today they can safely walk with a stroller on the new pedestrian and bicycle path through the village. “When we came home from the maternity ward, the sidewalk was already in place – it was perfect timing,” says Megan Robson.

In the summer of 2021, Megan Robson, 33, and Ola Kostet, 34, moved to Erkheikki. The move took them from Megan's homeland Canada to Ola's home municipality Pajala, with a few years in Skellefteå in between. Today, they live on Ola's ancestral home with their one-year-old son August and their dog Phoebe.

Next to the family's red house with white trim, Road 395 is being upgraded to ensure a safe traffic environment and a good residential environment, as part of the MaKS project (Ore Transport Kaunisvaara–Svappavaara). Along the route, the road has now been widened and reinforced, and upgraded with features such as new bus stops, noise reduction measures, and a pedestrian and bicycle path in the form of a sidewalk in Erkheikki.

The family appreciates the improvements, which make walking along the road feel safer. “There's a lot of traffic through the village, and before, walking here with all the traffic didn't feel great. Especially in the winter when we had to walk in the snowbanks on the side, we would often choose to walk somewhere else. But when we came home from the maternity ward with August, there was a sidewalk in place – so the timing was perfect. Now it feels safe to walk here with the stroller,” says Megan Robson.

There's traffic passing by 24/7, something Megan and Ola say they've gotten used to. “You don't think much about the noise when you live here. But many people drive too fast through the village. The 60 km/h limit is fine – if people would just stick to it. A speed camera or reduced speed limit in certain parts would help make people think twice. I have to say though, the ore trucks drive sensibly. They even slow down extra if they see us out walking – that's really nice,” says Ola Kostet.

As part of the road improvements, a red noise barrier has been installed next to the family's house. It helps muffle traffic noise and creates a more private and cozy feeling in the yard. “Many people assume we think the red noise wall outside the window is ugly, but we actually feel the opposite. It's nice, and our yard feels even more homely now since the house feels more protected and separated from the road. Not everyone can see straight into the kitchen window like before,” says Megan, laughing.

In their daily lives, Megan works as a primary school teacher at Smedskolan in Pajala, and Ola as a theater technician at Tornedalsteatern. A lifestyle quite different from the urban buzz of Vancouver – but one they enjoy in Tornedalen.

“There’s a sense of freedom living here. You get a lot of space and value for your money,” says Megan.

Ola agrees:

“For me, it just feels like home. It’s calm and safe.”

Image Attachments**Family in Erkheikki**