

# Chalking out Abu Dhabi's future transport systems

SUSTAINABILITY AND MOBILITY TO BE GUIDING PRINCIPLES



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## View to a thrill

*Every inch of space is taken up by new commercial and residential towers in Abu Dhabi. Abu Dhabi's transport plans, an essential component of the emirate's Vision 2030, are poised to incorporate a variety of transport alternatives.*

By SAMIHAH ZAMAN  
Staff Reporter

**Abu Dhabi** As economic growth and technology contribute to the worldwide urban sprawl in the 21st century, urban planners and city design professionals are increasingly concentrating on designing cities around their mobility and transport systems.

This is especially necessary because unmanageable traffic congestion and inadequate road networks have recently become a pressing problem in some countries, according to urban transport experts who gathered in the capital on Tuesday as part of the three-day Global City 2011 conference.

Sustainability, focus on economic growth and environmental viability should be important features of future transport systems, explained Mohammad Mezghani, project manager and urban transport expert at the International Association of Public Transport.

To that end, Abu Dhabi city's transport plans, an essential component of the emirate's Vision 2030, are poised to incorporate a variety of transport alternatives in a manner that will not place undue pressure on the city's road network or be environmentally detrimental.

"Changes in people's lifestyles have also impacted mobility patterns. More and more trips are being undertaken for leisure, as are a greater number of complex trips with multiple destinations. The mobility chain is also made more complex by flexible working hours and by people making more journeys during weekends and at night," Mezghani said.

"This is why most cities now need to revise and structurally change their mobility systems," he added.

In fact, according to the DoT's Surface Transport Master Plan (STMP), the metropolitan population of the capital will triple to 3 million residents by 2030.

The number of trips in the emirate will also increase fivefold to 10 million trips in 2030, up from 2 million in 2008.

Therefore, the STMP lays down a transport framework for the capital which will include improved roads, a high-speed regional train, a metro system, a

tram network, as well as bus, ferry, water taxi and taxi services.

"The major themes of the capital's future transport system are sustainability and mobility. Sustainability is essential to accommodate new population growth while conserving environmental, social and natural resources," said Asma Al Jasmi, section head of the plan implementation and monitoring section at the Department of Transport (DoT) in Abu Dhabi.

The national rail will connect Abu Dhabi to other emirates and neighbouring countries via trains travelling at 400 kilometres per hour.

And the inter-Abu Dhabi metro, the first phase of which is expected to be completed by 2015, will cover more than 130 kilometres. The tram network will also be prevalent in busy areas of the city by 2016 which stops every 500 metres, and a ferry and a water taxi system will be operational afterwards.