

# Al Ain Draws up High-Speed Rail Network Blueprint

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A multi-layered transport system including metro and high-speed rail networks, continued ban on buildings above four stories and meticulous focus on preserving cultural heritage and environment are some of the highlights of the Plan Al Ain 2030 which was announced by the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (UPC) on Wednesday.

The Plan envisages a layered public transport network for Al Ain with a high-speed rail link to Abu Dhabi and Dubai and a surface tram and bus network to connect key areas of the city.

In addition, the metro network is expected to be in place by the next five to seven years, said Falah Al Ahabbi, General Manager of the UPC.

The authorities have decided to continue with the G+4 or 20m height limit imposed by late Shaikh Zayed, the Father of the Nation, on the buildings in Al Ain.

In low density areas, G+2 will be the maximum permitted height.

The mosques and minarets will be exempted from the rule in order to give expression to the cityscape skyline.

To compensate on the building height restrictions, the Plan envisages enhancing the building density in the city and multi-family residential density to be expanded into a series of nodes along the east and west direction of the city. The plan provides for two major industrial areas, a high-tech business park at the airport and a heavier industrial district along the truck route.

The plan aims at supporting movement of transit traffic.

It envisages creation of five new major roads leading to the Central Business District of Al Ain.

These roads will be linked to each other and the rest of the city through surface tram and bus routes.

All the oases in Al Ain will receive special treatment to prevent their deterioration and over-exploitation. Tourism will be an important driver of Al Ain's future economy, said Al Ahabbi.

Sustainability is a key theme of the plan and it envisages of a range of components like renewable energy, water conservation and public transportation initiatives in Al Ain.

The Plan will be implemented in phases and will be revisited every two years in terms of economic agenda and every five years in terms of the Plan's objectives, the official said.