

Plan Al Ain 2030: Urban Structure Framework Plan

Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council, United Arab Emirates

Jury comment:

The “Plan Al Ain 2030” is an ambitious plan for an ecologically extreme fragile region. It carefully balances between facing globalisation on the one hand and local/ethnic identities on the other by focussing on physical development and environmental concerns. Using a traditional approach the plan combines a strategic consideration based on local identity with a structural framework. The “Plan Al Ain 2030” is considered an excellent example of strategic/regional planning.

Location and Planning Area

Al Ain (meaning “The Spring” in Arabic) is located approximately 150 kilometres east of Abu Dhabi city and 150 kilometres south of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The fourth largest city in the UAE, it has an estimated metropolitan population of just over 400,000 residents.

Background and Context

The contemporary city lies at the site of an ancient nomadic crossroads that has offered reliable water supplies to human settlements for the past 5,000 years. It still has six oases originally fed by an ancient irrigation system known as falaj, some parts of which date to 1,000 BC. Al Ain Oasis, the largest of the six oases, is located adjacent to the city’s central business district. Al Ain also possesses the UAE’s richest architectural heritage, including 50 historic structures within the oases.

Contemporary Al Ain has reached a crucial turning point in its physical and economic development. A rapidly expanding population and a policy of very large plot allocations have filled out most of the available land. The city must now decide how to develop in order to preserve its character, heritage, and the relaxed lifestyle it offers.

Objectives

The “Plan Al Ain 2030” is an ambitious plan for an ecologically extreme fragile region, carried out by the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (UPC). It carefully balances between facing globalization, on the one hand, and local/ethnic

identities on the other. Using a traditional approach it combines a strategic consideration based on local identity with a structural framework, intended to foster the authentic Arabic identity of Al Ain while supporting continuous evolution and growth.

Plan Al Ain 2030 promises special treatment for the city’s oases, ensuring that they remain at the heart of the community for generations to come. It supports traditional Bedouin living too.

Key environmental principles of Plan Al Ain 2030 include preserving the city as an oasis and protecting the natural environment. Key cultural principles include protecting the cultural heritage and cultural homeland. The key social principle of Plan Al Ain 2030 is a high quality of life, and a living Arabic community. The key economic principle is a diversified economic development. These key principals are laid down in four frameworks of the Plan Al Ain 2030:

- Environmental Framework
- Land Use Framework
- Transportation Framework
- Open Space Framework

Steps of the Realization Process

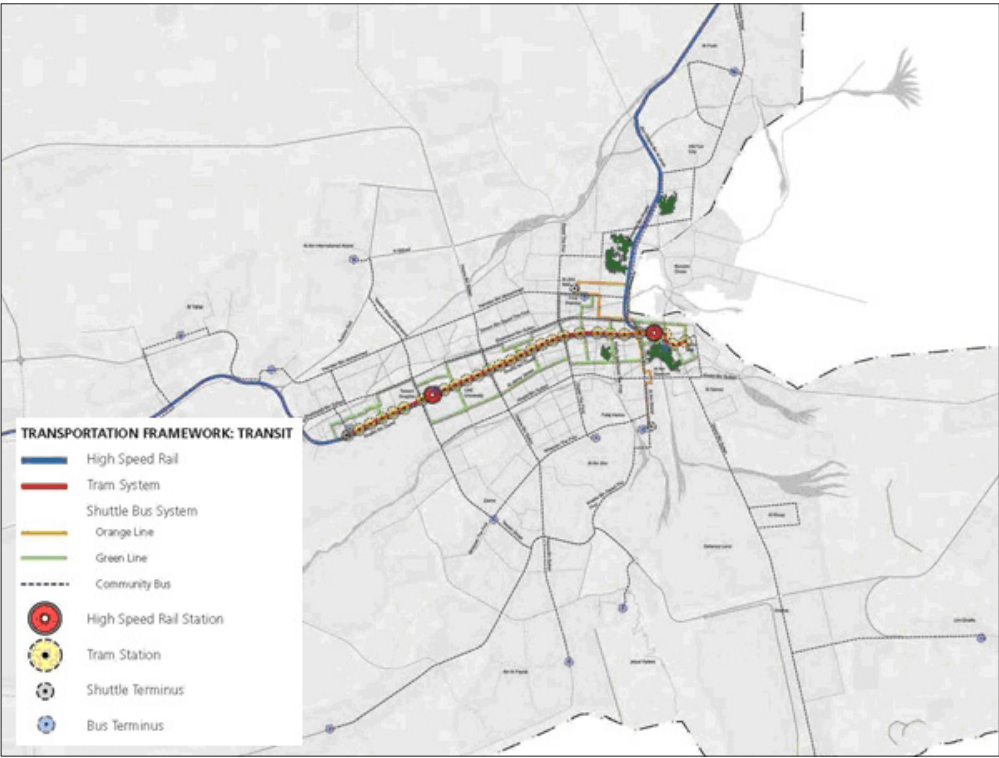
The UPC has already defined three phases for the delivery of the plan but the timing is subject to evolving circumstances and requirements. UPC is already working with private developers to incorporate Plan Al Ain 2030 principles into their development proposals.

During Phase 1, the major structural elements of the Land Use Framework will be planned, including a redevelopment plan for the City’s Central District,

key transportation and transit improvement initiatives, and the advancement of Emirati housing projects.

For Phase 2, the major structural components of the Gateway Transit Corridor will be planned, and development at key transit nodes will intensify. Planning work on the surface tram system will begin and the development of Emirati housing will continue. Through the implementation of Phase 3 by 2030 the majority of Al Ain residents and commerce will be housed.. A second north-south axis will also contain higher density accommodation, creating a crossroad where the two major axes meet.

Innovation and Achievements
Plan Al Ain 2030 is a conceptual document that articulates a clear vision for Al Ain, expressed through principles, policies, geographic plans, urban design details, and architectural guidelines, serving as an interim tool for evaluating development and growth propositions until detailed district-specific plans are completed,
Plan Al Ain 2030 strikes a delicate and much-needed balance between conservation and development. It explores the need to conserve ground water resources and protect natural habitats.. Creating a comprehensive network of protected areas and limiting urban sprawl, Plan Al Ain 2030 proposes projects that exploit existing economic wealth to develop renewable energy production and reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources.



Plan Al Ain 2030 Transportation Framework: Transit