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Connecting Abu Dhabi

The **Surface Transportation Master Plan (STMP)** was commissioned by the Government in order to deliver a world class transportation system to Abu Dhabi.

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THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT WORKS TO MAKE THE VISION OF HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH KHALIFA BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND RULER OF ABU DHABI, A REALITY: ABU DHABI REQUIRES A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED TRANSPORT NETWORK THAT WILL MOVE PEOPLE AND MATERIALS EFFICIENTLY THROUGH THE EMIRATE, IN A WAY THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND VISITORS.



In February 2008, the Surface Transportation Master Plan (STMP) was commissioned by the Abu Dhabi Government in order to develop a plan that would deliver a world class transportation system that will support the vision of Plan Abu Dhabi 2030. The STMP addresses the regional transport needs of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, while focusing particular attention on the requirements of metropolitan Abu Dhabi. Completed in early 2009, the STMP details six major passenger modes: metro, consisting of 130 km of two-way tracks, with stations every 3 to 5 km.; High-Speed Regional Rail, connecting Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Al Ain; Light Rail Transit (LRT)/Tram, consisting of 340 km (estimated) of two-way tracks supporting high density areas; roadways, providing advanced technology and route guidance; bus, providing increased frequency and service of high quality buses; and Ferry and Water Taxi, supplementing the land-based transport network.

Feasibility studies for the Metro, LRT/Tram, and Regional Rail are already underway. In addition, work has just begun on the pedestrian master plan, the bikeway master plan, and the bus master plan. These plans will also form part of the blueprint for a better transportation system.

In early 2010, the DoT selected ADAPT, (a joint venture between Parsons Brinckerhoff International, AECOM, and DB International) to undertake the Abu Dhabi Metro Study. The objectives of the Metro study are to define and develop a project definition that will gain acceptance by the highest levels of Government.

The DoT, through this study will re-evaluate the recommendations and conclusions contained in the STMP in order to confirm if the Metro is needed as one of the solutions to address Abu Dhabi's transportation issues. The study is in the alternatives analysis phase which investigates a number of options – including buses, bus rapid transit, light rail transit, and Metro – that could address the transportation demand. The results of the alternatives analysis will determine if the proposed Metro is an effective solution and cost-efficient solution; and, if so, also determine the most efficient alignment and technology for the system.

Besides, in May 2010, the DoT selected the Joint Venture SENER-TYPSA to develop the Abu Dhabi LRT/Tram study. The objectives of this study are to design and develop a world class and sustainable transportation system, to support residents' increasing demand for mobility (including demands arising from developments in all Abu Dhabi Metropolitan areas), to improve residents' quality of life, and to maximize social benefits. Since the LRT/Tram system will be a street-running system, its urban integration will help to restructure the city and recover for more effective use by residents and visitors some main streets that are currently used predominantly by private vehicles.

Considerations to be included in the LRT/Tram network design include the latest, proven, cutting edge technologies, and the specific characteristics of the region; for example, high temperatures throughout the year (which can reach more than 45 °C during summer season), and the presence of sand and dust (due to proximity to the desert). To meet such requirements, all LRT/Tram equipment and facilities will be specified and prepared for high performance in extreme conditions. Furthermore, to provide passengers with high levels of comfort at all times during their travel, it is envisaged that both LRT/Tram vehicles and shelters at stations will be air-conditioned.

The study will also identify a Minimum Operating Segment (MOS) situated in the north of the city – an area with higher rates of population – that will be the first LRT/Tram line to be designed and constructed. The length of this MOS might be about 30 km. It is essential that the LRT/Tram network encompasses both Abu Dhabi metropolitan area and all new developments within Abu Dhabi downtown. Some of these new developments are priority areas, as are Al Sowwah Island (will be the new Abu Dhabi financial centre), Al Reem Island, Saadiyat Island (will be a cultural area of world renown), Capital District (where major Governmental Ministries and Agencies will be located), etc. To this end, the DoT is coordinating with stakeholders and developers in order to identify the most effective corridors and stations for the LRT/Tram network. ■■