Waterfront Design Guidelines
June 2009
# Table Of Contents

**Al Bateen Waterfront Design Guidelines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan 2030</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies – Plan 2030</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Framework</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water 2 Water Connection</td>
<td>8 - 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterfront Themes for Developers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. View Corridors &amp; Connectors</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Bateen Waterfront Promenade</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterfront Typologies</td>
<td>13 - 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>17 - 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Special Public Places &amp; Views</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike &amp; Water Taxi</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenade Design Standards</td>
<td>22 - 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenade Details</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Corniche – Bateen Water 2 Water Connection</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

PLAN ABU DHABI 2030 presents a vision for a thriving and sustainable public realm for all citizens, residents and visitors of Abu Dhabi with particular emphasis on safeguarding natural resources and the cultural heritage of the city. The turquoise waters of the Arabian Gulf represent one of the most defining characteristics of Abu Dhabi Island. The experience of the water’s edge on the island is quickly being lost with the rapid pace of development. Because of the significance of the Bateen Waterfront area to the history and development of the city, it is imperative that continuous public access to the water’s edge with supportive community amenities be provided for now and future generations.

Please refer to Appendix A for the Bateen Waterfront Framework Plan.
Overview

The key principles supporting the Bateen Waterfront Design Guidelines are:

The 'City will be structured to provide public access to the waters edge, the island environment and the desert' (pp 39, Plan Abu Dhabi 2030)

'Because all trips begin and end with a walk, walking should be made as comfortable as possible all year round in Abu Dhabi'

Innovative ways will be developed to shade and cool the public realm in Abu Dhabi’s summer climate

Objectives

The purpose of the Bateen Waterfront Design Guidelines is to provide all property owners and developers along the Bateen waterfront with a framework to contribute to the achievement of these goals, through the dedication of land for the design of community access and amenities along the entire waterfront. Underlying these goals is the aspiration embodied in PLAN ABU DHABI 2030 to reflect in Abu Dhabi’s environment the highest standards of design excellence befitting a world class capital city.

The following are the main principles to be realized in the implementation of the Bateen Waterfront Design Guidelines:

• Preserve public connectivity from the waterfront to the primary public access routes of the city
• Preserve views from public access-ways to the water’s edge.
• Provide continuous open public access at the water’s edge for people of all ages and abilities.
• Provide strategic focal points at the water’s edge that offer opportunities to celebrate culture, heritage, and views.
Plan Abu Dhabi 2030

PLAN ABU DHABI 2030 presents a coherent picture for the future of the City of Abu Dhabi as an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable community and as an increasingly important National capital. It provides for a way to grow and take advantage of the economic opportunities at hand without sacrificing the best of the city and while adding new elements to make it a great world metropolis. The Bateen Waterfront Design Guidelines follows in the spirit of the Plan Abu Dhabi 2030.

Objectives

8.5 Public Open Space Policies:

P-4: Whenever a practical opportunity arises, secure public access to the water’s edge (e.g. public beaches and harborside parks) in the inner city, especially on Lulu Island, and avoid further precluding public access to the water’s edge throughout the city.

P-5: Design public open spaces and parks for active public use with hospitable provisions, including shade, use of water, public amenities and public washrooms. Where possible, associate public open spaces with people-generated uses such as cafes and shops.

P-6: Integrate street rights-of-way as a key component of the open space network, and utilize them to link park spaces.

8.4 Transportation Framework Policies

T-3: Provide a variety of interconnected transportation choices as alternatives to the automobile (transit, ferries, buses, bicycle and pedestrian pathways). This layered system should form a functional and efficient network measured by the total number of person trips.

T-4: Design, and retrofit, the accessible public spaces in transportation networks to prioritize and enhance the pedestrian realm (e.g. short blocks, wide and shaded sidewalks, medians, shaded seating at bus stops, active streets).
Capital Framework

One of the primary goals of Plan Abu Dhabi 2030 is the creation of the Capital City Framework linking special districts on Abu Dhabi Island with the new Capital District in order to celebrate places of National significance.

As a part of the Palace District, the Bateen Waterfront offers residents and visitors the opportunity to experience the importance of Abu Dhabi’s rich seafaring history in the development of Emirati culture.
Abu Dhabi will respect, be scaled to, and shaped by the natural environment of sensitive coastal areas and to reinforce its strategic location as an island city. Water is a very important element to any city, and Abu Dhabi will.

The Bateen waterfront has a special place in the history and development of Abu Dhabi as a waterfront location. Water 2 Water Connections will ensure that this is connected to existing and future proposed public waterfront areas such as the Corniche and east side of the city (as shown above).
Examples of the Water 2 Water Connection, outlining good connections for pedestrians and cyclists, integrated transportation network and green spaces.
A. View Corridors & Connections

B. Bateen Waterfront Promenade

C. Special Public Places & Views

D. Corniche Water to Water Connection
A. View Corridors & Connectors Waterfront

The waterfront is to be connected physically and visually to the circulation routes of the city. Primary pedestrian connections perpendicular to the waterfront and linking Bainunah Boulevard and the surrounding neighborhoods will be identified in the Bateen Waterfront Framework Plan and preserved for public use.

These identified routes will provide minimum corridor widths free of built vertical and horizontal constructions to maintain unobstructed and sweeping views to open water. These routes will integrate landscaping, pedestrian scaled lighting, public art and street furniture, way-finding tools and multi-modal transportation uses including light-rail, automobile and bicycle facilities.
B. Bateen Waterfront Promenade

The Promenade shall provide the Bateen Area with a unique identity and focus. Utilizing the unique harbor setting of old Bateen, this unique waterfront promenade will showcase a collective patchwork of developments by creating a new relationship between the City and the Arabian Gulf. This will become a destination which is not only well connected with future public transit options, but will also be a place where all members of the community can walk or bike, enjoy the scenic beauty and relate to the cultural importance of the Arabian Gulf to the history of Abu Dhabi. Additionally, the community shall have the opportunity to participate in diverse retail, cultural as well as non-commercial activities while capitalising on the tourism market.

The Bateen Waterfront Area will provide a continuous connected waterfront spanning a few kilometers in length, with a generous promenade at the water’s edge for open public access at all hours of the day, week and times of the year. The promenade shall be typically 10 - 12 meters in width and can accommodate the following activities:

- Dedicated pedestrian path (6 metres minimum)
- Dedicated cycle path (3 metres typical)
- Cafes, outdoor seating (4 metres suggested)
- Dedicated public seating areas (1.5 metres)
- Wayfinding lighting and signage
- Landscaping and green areas
- Multiple transportation choices as alternatives to the automobile (transit, ferries, water taxis, bus service, shuttle golf buggies, bicycle park and ride)
Waterfront typologies

Horizontal Plane

These examples show how the waterfront can be divided into a pedestrian, seating / landscaping, cycle, privacy screening and seating areas.
Grade Separation

Areas can be separated over various topographic levels which give depth and interest to the area, while providing opportunity to enhance views.
Privacy Sensitive

Private outdoor areas can be elevated alongside completely public spaces using elevations and landscaping elements to obscure views.
Beach Treatment

Many hotel developments have private beach fronts. Structural elements may be placed along the waterfront to allow public / private areas to co-exist & enhance the amenity of the area.
Examples: Abu Dhabi

Intercontinental Hotel Abu Dhabi is an example of waterfront spaces allowing public access with a balance of private / public along the horizontal plane of the promenade.
Examples: Singapore

Singapore River has many good examples of landscaping, lighting, & interactive waterfront terraces for pedestrians. Shading is abundant to protect pedestrians from the weather.
Examples: Adelaide

Glenelg, beach side suburb of Adelaide uses active shop fronts & good urban design to activate marina front walkways. Beach access is public and accessible and non-privatized.
Bike & Water Taxi

Moreover, the Bateen Waterfront will introduce an innovative, first ever implemented integrated system of bicycle and water taxi network in Abu Dhabi. It is intended that with the success of this system, it will gradually evolve throughout the rest of the city along the Corniche and along other primary roads, open spaces, pedestrian networks and other waterfront public places.

Every major development (hotel, residential, retail, office, etc) have at least one:

• Bicycle ‘park and ride’ facility; and
• Water taxi drop off point (if possible)

This bicycle and water taxi system should form a functional and efficient network measured by the total number of person trips per development (will vary on scale and size of each project and the demands thereof).

The location of the bicycle storage unit will need to be accessible to the public and will need to accommodate up to 100 bicycles, however; this number may be somewhat larger or smaller depending on the size and scale of development.

Likewise, a water taxi drop off point will be mandatory for some developments while for other smaller scale projects and sites, it will not be deemed necessary.
Promenade Design Standards

It is understood that a 10 – 12 metre wide promenade may not be achievable in every instance along the stretch of waterfront; however, a minimum 6 meter pedestrian and 3 meter cycle path shall be maintained throughout.

The Promenade shall be a response to the climate and reflect the heritage of Abu Dhabi. This can be achieved through incorporating the following elements in the design of the Promenade:

- Incorporation of Arabic/Abu Dhabi heritage and artistic elements
- Incorporation of sustainability practices i.e. water-wise plants, recycled water for irrigation and ‘green’ materials
- The use of low reflection / energy use or solar lighting along Promenade
- Provision of adequate shade and respite from the harsh summer climate in the form of physical structures and appropriate landscaping
- The use of durable, natural and permanent materials that reflect the marine climate and Dhow fishing village environment
- Ends of the promenade designed to ensure connections to all adjacent properties and developments including to public roads and other accessible spaces
Promenade Details

All elements composing the promenade shall be constructed according to the 2006 International Building Code and the Estidama Green Building Guidelines. As already outlined, the connecting ends and edges of the waterfront promenade will be coordinated by the property owner with all adjacent properties to provide a continuous and uninterrupted visual and physical infrastructure. UPC is looking for cognitive thinking to encourage each property owner to contribute symbolic yet sympathetic forms of public art work along the Promenade.

It should be made clear that the initial cost of the promenade including the ongoing maintenance and upkeep will be the responsibility of the individual property owner.

Seating areas and other structures or fixtures can be strategically placed within the promenade (such as within landscaping or green areas) however, this shall not obstruct the dedicated pedestrian / bicycle access along the promenade.
Promenade Design Standards

Views to and from the promenade shall be protected. These views are a prominent feature/attraction of the promenade and they will be protected and enhanced through the construction of shaded viewing platforms adjoining the Promenade at distinct locations within each development. The viewing platforms shall provide at a minimum seating, information boards and interpretative facilities at viewing points, relating to various points of interest.

Where it is not possible to provide a land promenade at the water’s edge, the land owner may be asked to design and construct an over-the-water boardwalk. Promenades at the rear of sites away from the water’s edge are not recommended. In all cases it is recommended that each property owner provide a 4 meter minimum sidewalk / emergency vehicular route completely around the plot boundary as a continuous link to the promenade and public sidewalks.

In addition, the minimum 6 meter wide public promenade shall connect and provide continuous and complete pedestrian access to adjacent developments and the existing urban grid and neighbourhoods of the area.

In no cases will pedestrian or bicycle access ways dead-end, and plans must reflect connections beyond the boundaries of the individual site. The connecting ends and edges of all connecting sidewalks will be coordinated by the property owner with all adjacent properties to provide a continuous and uninterrupted physical infrastructure.
Views

Where a site intersects/abuts an identified view corridor and connector road / access way or as identified in the Bateen Waterfront Framework Plan as a site of important visual significance, the following additional Community Amenities shall be constructed:

- Useable open spaces featuring a combination of hard and soft landscape treatment
- Shaded seating and walking areas
- Bicycle locks and facilities
- Public Amenities: including but not limited to public art, landscape features, drinking fountains and other visual water features, cultural exhibits, small retail concessions, publicly & universally accessible restrooms, view platforms, water transport connections, etc
- Public water taxi location

Typically these special public places are larger and more generous open spaces which widen the promenade and provide a sense of place within the greater waterfront framework. The design of these spaces should respect the view cones to open water and emphasize distant points of interest. The design of large structures blocking views or vertical structures that distract from the surroundings should be avoided. Open trellis or screen-like structures that provide shade are encouraged.

All designs for developments will factor adjacent developments into their plans and surrounding features and fixtures in the urban landscape.

Perspective looking west through an open causeway to Bateen Wharf marina — UPC conceptual image.
Examples

The interface of 30m & 60m wide links which run perpendicular from Bainuna to the waterfront. Special public spaces at the end ensures they are celebrated with view corridors maintained.
An integral part of the Bateen Waterfront Framework Plan is the water to water connecting corridor to the Corniche. This linear park will link the public amenities of the Corniche with the Bateen Waterfront providing the community with an alternative route for recreational activities in Abu Dhabi. The 60 m wide corridor will be safeguarded from private development and reserved for the incorporation of transit, bicycle and pedestrian ways. Public artwork, landscape and lighting elements will celebrate this unique place in the city. The existing Zalamat Garden will continue to function as a community open space, and be reinvigorated with additional public amenities and a possible future Metro Station. The Corniche and Bainunah intersections with the water to water corridor will be redesigned to provide safe and convenient pedestrian crossing points.
Appendix A

Legend

Appendix A: Al Bateen Waterfront Framework Plan

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