

Riyadh about to launch its US\$ 27 billion Public Transit System

Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia, will soon complete the world's perhaps most high-tech and environmentally friendly public transport system. This project, along with other wellbeing projects under development in the city, will improve the quality of living of its residents, resulting in becoming one of the world's 100 most livable and sustainable cities. The Saudi government has invested US\$ 27 billion in the capital's Public Transit Network, in which a dozen of Swedish companies have taken part.

During the UITP Global Summit in Stockholm in June 9-12, 2019, the Riyadh Development Authority talks about its readiness to launch its metro and bus system, merely five years after initiating the project.

Stockholm, June 10, 2019 – The city of Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia, will soon be launching the world's youngest public transit system. With its 6 metro lines and 85 stations across 176 km, it will be the world's longest driverless transport network. It will also feature 80 bus routes, covering 1,900 km and 3,000 stations and stops. The project is nearing completion after five years, an unprecedented short construction period by global standards.

The system is characterized by a number of high-tech and environmentally sustainable solutions. The rolling stock, for example, is made of up to 98 percent recyclable materials. Bus routes will start running at the end of this year, while the driverless metro is expected to open in the first half of 2020.

Riyadh Development Authority (RDA), responsible for the comprehensive planning and development of the Riyadh Public Transit Network, along with other urban projects in the capital, will be addressing the Union Internationale des Transports Publics (UITP) Global Summit in Stockholm, Sweden, taking place in June 9-12, 2019. The summit is the biggest public transit gathering in the world, covering all urban and regional transportation modes. It has a history dating back to 1886 and takes place every two years. It was last held in Montreal in 2017.

Like many cities, Riyadh is facing 21st century challenges: Its population of almost 7 million is expected to reach 8.3 million by 2030. Today, 89 percent of daily trips in the city are done by private cars, making the need for a public transit network imperative.

Alwaleed Alekrisht, RDA's Deputy CEO for Programs & Projects, explained: "The completion of a public transit system of this scale and complexity, in such a short period of time, is an unprecedented challenge, but what's really rewarding is how it will improve mobility for millions of residents, while helping transform Riyadh into one of the most sustainable and livable cities in the world."

The US\$ 27 billion investment in the public transit network will also increase productivity for both the city and its residents, while generating an excellent return on investment, with every \$1 spent leading to \$3.4 in public savings.

Alwaleed Alekrisht concluded: "Cities across the world are taking initiatives in areas like sustainable development and carbon footprint reduction. With its public transport system, Riyadh is playing its part as a global citizen, to support worldwide efforts in reducing climate change, while maintaining and improving standards of living for its citizens."

Other wellbeing projects for the city of Riyadh were recently announced by the Saudi government at a cost of US\$ 23 billion and included: King Salman Park - the largest city park in the world at 13.4 square kilometers (four times bigger than Central Park in New York). Sports Boulevard - a 135 km of cycling track for professionals between the banks of the two valleys bordering the city. Riyadh Art - a culturally enriching project involving 1,000 pieces of art.

sculpture and interactive art placed throughout the city. And finally, Green Riyadh - a greening project involving planting 7.5 million trees, that will reduce heat levels in the city by up to 2 degrees and cut CO₂ emissions by 3 to 6 percent.

About Riyadh Development Authority (RDA)

The Riyadh Development Authority (RDA) was established in June 1974, as the authority overseeing the development of the city of Riyadh, capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. RDA is in charge of the strategic development of the capital in the areas of infrastructure, environment, culture, education, health, transportation and landscaping. Besides setting citywide policies and regulations, it coordinates between all ministries and other government entities, municipalities, utility companies, as well as the private sector and residents, for the urban planning and development of Riyadh. Over the years, RDA has been responsible for the execution of major landmark projects in the city. Its latest one is the Riyadh Public Transit Network, which includes 6 metro lines totaling 176 km and 85 stations, as well as 80 bus routes covering 1,900 km through 3,000 stops.

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