ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Beit Hanina is situated along the Ramallah Road in northern East Jerusalem. Its primary residential areas, located on either side of the Ramallah Road, border on Shuafat to the south, the municipal border and the Jerusalem-Modi’in Road to the West, the Atarot Industrial Zone and the defunct Qalandiya Airport to the north, and the Palestinian town of ar-Ram as well as the Israeli post-1967 neighborhoods of Neve Yaakov and Pisgat Zeev, to the east. The Separation Barrier is also an important factor delineating all but the southern boundary of Beit Hanina.

Village lands formerly covered about 15,000 dunam, but after 1967 much of the area that was included within the Jerusalem municipal boundary, was expropriated for the establishment of parts of the Israeli neighborhoods of Neve Yaakov, Pisgat Zeev and Ramot. Beit Hanina al-Balad (the village core), remained to the west (outside) of the municipal boundary at the time. Thus, when permanent Israeli residency was granted to East Jerusalemite Palestinians, many Beit Hanina residents did not receive residency status because they were living, staying, or seeking refuge in the village core. Upon returning to their lands within the newly established municipal boundary, they found themselves defined as “present-absentees.” Today, most of Beit Hanina al-Balad is defined as Area B (i.e. under Palestinian civil and Israeli military control), and it is trapped on all sides by the Separation Barrier, along with the villages of Bir Nabala, al-Jadeira, and al-Jeeb. From the 1980s onward, urban development of the Jerusalem part of Beit Hanina intensified, and the Ramallah Road became its new center. The neighborhood attracts inward migration of both Palestinian citizens of Israel and Jerusalemite Palestinians seeking to remain on the Israeli side of the Separation Barrier. Due to high demand, housing prices in the neighborhood have skyrocketed, making the neighborhood too expensive for many Palestinians in the city. However, Beit Hanina, along with Shuafat, is still expected by Israeli planning authorities to provide the solution for much of the housing shortage for Palestinians in Jerusalem. Uniquely, there have been several targeted construction projects (for engineers, Palestinian Electric Company workers, and more) throughout Beit Hanina.

MAP OF ZONES

FACTS

Population 41,000
Area 5,237 dunam
Adjacent Areas 3,391 dunam

MAP LEGEND

- East Jerusalem
- Old City
- Expropriated Land
- Green Line
- Separation Barrier
- Roads
- West Jerusalem
- Greater Silwan
- Mt. Scopus & Mt. of Olives
- Northern Zones
- Central Zones
- Southern Zones
- Mt. of Olives
- Lydda Rd
- Hwy 1
- Ramallah Rd
- Hwy 443
The Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan (pending deposition) proposes a seemingly significant densification of Beit Hanina. However, only a small part of the potential can be realized, as in neighboring Shaafut. In addition, the outline plan allocates two expansion areas for Beit Hanina. The first is already a built-up area of about 460 dunam (of which 40 are de facto part of Shaafut), in the southwestern al-Ashqariyah quarter. During the last decade, two resident-initiated plans have been approved for part of this expansion area, and even a little beyond, in a part of the neighboring al-Aqabeh area. In other words, a large part of the expansion area was already in planning stages even before the outline plan was approved for deposition. The Beit Hanina-Shaafut Community Center seeks to promote planning for the rest of the expansion area, including the establishment of a new cemetery (see: Road 20). The second expansion area, of about 600 dunam, is located in the mostly vacant area known as Tal Al Adasah, north of the al-Aqabeh sub-neighbourhood. In recent years, a general plan for the area has been promoted by local landowners, supported by non-governmental organizations, and in coordination with the Jerusalem Municipality. Proposing some 2,500 housing units, as well as a district park, the plan is still awaiting approval and has not yet been submitted to the planning authorities.

Land Registration

Registration of most of the land in Beit Hanina is considered “in progress.” This status hinders the approval of detail plans, and the granting of building permits, which are conditioned upon proof of land ownership. In the common case of multiple heirs, agreements must be reached among all of the heirs, or verification of ownership by neighbors and nucleators must be obtained. Furthermore, attempts by landowners who live in Beit Hanina al-Balad to register their land can result in the declaration of the land as absentee property, which in turn leads to its registration as Israeli state land. The issue is further complicated by the many re-registration plans that have been approved (or at least in progress) in the neighboring al-Ashqariyah quarter for the past 15 years. The uncertainty has led to many incidents of land theft using forged documents. Simultaneously, the municipality placed stricter requirements on proof of ownership, making it even harder for residents to get building permits. Recently, the municipality began to operate an experimental permits committee outside of the Beit Hanina-Shaafut Community Center. In an effort to shorten the building application process, the committee verifies ownership for residents interested in legalizing existing construction and/or building new buildings according to a proposed and approved plan.

Road 20

The route of Road 20 is mostly based on the original road that ran between the upper part of Beit Hanina and the Ramallah Road. After 1967, the old road continued to serve the residents of Beit Hanina, among other things to reach the cemeteries in the upper core. Over the years, the original road was expanded and extended eastward to provide the residents of Pisgat Ze’ev quicker access to Road 20, now Modin Road. In addition, the road severed Beit Hanina in two, leaving pedestrian-only passages via two bridges. The western segment, diverging from the original route in order to bypass the Separator Barrier enclave, was constructed as a massive bridge, to the detriment of the landscape. The blocking of the original road by the Separator Barrier has turned the short drive to the village core into a long haul, causing a halfords that involves passing through the Qalqiliya checkpoint. Following a petition to the HCJ by a village resident who lives adjacent to the barrier, on the Israeli side, a gate is opened upon coordination, in order to allow him to farm his land beyond the barrier.

Settler Activity

In 2012, the phenomenon of Israeli settlement in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem spread beyond the neighborhoods around the Old City, when a family of 13 was forcefully evicted from its home in Beit Hanina. In the same compound, after ongoing harassment from settlers, two more Palestinian families were evicted. According to newspaper reports, the settlers are planning to submit a plan for dozens of housing units on site. The eviction of the Palestinian families was made more likely in light of the recent removal of the last remaining Jewish land ownership prior to 1948 (a legal option not available to Palestinians regarding their pre-1948 lost property). In addition, late, settler organizations have tried to cancel a legitimate transaction in which the Hebrew University sold some of its lands in Beit Hanina to the Palestinian organization Majlis al-Ikwan, which operates as a de facto Housing Ministry for Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

Settler Activity

Near the intersection of the Ramallah Road and Highway 60 (at the entrance to Neve Yaakov), is an area that was originally zoned for public kindergartens. Its proximity to a gas station made it impossible to implement it as a public area. The community sought to develop the area as a public park, while searching for an alternative site for essential public services. They filed a request to rezone the area away from the site, but the request was not fully received, as it was included in the area of a military base and currently zoned for future planning, as a public high school. The opposition was steadfast also when it was proposed to designate the site for a girls’ school, kindergartens, or even an institution which operates as a de facto Housing Ministry for Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

Approved Plans for Beit Hanina

Part of Local Outline Plan # 3000 for Beit Hanina and Shaafut

Total planned area

Unplanned area

Total area of neighborhood

Two detailed outline plans (4374b, 4374d) rezoned about 3,522 dunam of the area of the local council (excluding 29 re-parcelization plans on a total area of about 130 dunam). Additional detailed outline plans (4261, 9135, 19316) for the al-Ashqariyah area, rezoned another roughly 732 dunam of the area of the original plan.

In addition, about 15 dunam were rezoned as part of detailed infrastructure plans (436a for Road 20, and 537 for the light rail). Altogether, two small-scale detailed plans were approved in the neighborhood, increasing building rights in limited areas.

Approved Plans for Adjacent Areas

Detailed outline plans (436a-b, 5330, 4372) for the atarot industrial zone

Small-scale detail plans (3537a, 6339, 3891) in the unrecognized neighborhood

Total planned area

Unplanned area

Total area of adjacent area

The approved plans for the industrial zone also include part of the area of the unrecognized neighborhood. Seven small-scale detail plans were approved in the industrial zone, adding building rights to those areas. The unplanned areas include water earners within the municipal boundary beyond the Separator Barrier, as well as areas on the Israeli side of the Separation Barrier but not included within the municipal boundary.

Bottom-up Planning

Beit Hanina is an excellent example of a place in which alternative grassroots processes have emerged based on local initiatives, cooperation between residents, and organizations, and outside the frame of the municipal planning center. The plans aimed to enable construction and to legalize existing houses in areas that were previously zoned as open scenic areas. The plan for a residential settlement in the area of the Jordan River (Plan # 6671 for the Hod at Tabel sub-neighbourhood (Yadat ad Dam and Road 16) of the Deir Shatil area) was authorized in January 2021. The plan proposes a unique mechanism, allowing the landowners whose land remains zoned as open scenic area, to build one residential building on each plot, up to a certain volume. The exclusive placement of the house is not stipulated precisely in the plan, and is left to the discretion of the landowner, under certain restrictions. This mechanism enables all landowners to realize their right to live on their land and provides flexibility concerning the precise development of the area.

Settler Activity

The opposition was steadfast also when it was proposed to designate the site for a girls’ school, kindergartens, or even an institution which operates as a de facto Housing Ministry for Palestinians in East Jerusalem.
Adjacent Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Plans</th>
<th>Land Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dunam</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atarot Industrial Zone</td>
<td>1,462</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrecognized Neighborhood (Qalandiya)</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Dakhyat al-Bareed Enclave</td>
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<td>Seam-zone Enclave</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,391</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</table>

Most of the area is zoned for industry and roads, as well as for private and open public areas. To establish the industrial zone, the land was expropriated mostly from residents of Beit Hanina. In the northeastern part there is a vacant area of about 25 dunam that is designated for future planning and on which the residents seek to promote a development plan. On the western edge, about 17 unplanned dunam are today caught within the al-Mawahel section of the Bir Nabala enclave.

Aside from the existing residential buildings, the area contains farmed land as well as un-built land. Most of the planned area is designated for industrial use and for the expansion of the east-west artery connecting Road 45 to Highway 60. About half of the area remains unplanned (see: The Unrecognized Neighborhood).

A sub-neighborhood of ar-Ram, most of which is located outside the Jerusalem municipal boundary but on the Israeli side of the Separation Barrier. The area is entirely built-up (see: Dakhyat al-Bareed).

This area is trapped between the municipal boundary and the Separation Barrier and contains a small part of the Hod at-Tabel sub-neighborhood and an isolated house adjacent to the barrier (see: Road 20). The land is owned by Beit Hanina residents, living both inside and out of the municipal boundary, and is mostly used for agriculture.

Zoning Structure According to Approved Plans • Designation vs. Use - Beit Hanina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Plans</th>
<th>Land Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dunam</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential*</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Combined Residential and Commercial**</td>
<td>184</td>
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<td>Open Spaces</td>
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<td>Roads</td>
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<td>Public Buildings and Institutions</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,237</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In three quarters of the residential areas in the neighborhood, 50-75% building ratios are permitted, with two to three storeys. In the more central areas (one quarter of the residential areas), up to a 12% building ratio is permitted, with four storeys.

** In these areas, 100-150% building ratios are permitted, with 4-5 storeys. In order to create a contiguous commercial storefront façade, a special stipulation was introduced, enabling the building line to follow the plot line and allowing no distance between buildings (joint walls).