About the Neighborhood

Wadi Qaddum abuts the eastern edge of the city, sitting on a hill and on both sides of a tributary of Wadi an-Nar (the Qidron Valley) that slopes down from the Mount of Olives. The neighborhood, named after the Qaddum Valley, in which it sits, stretches from Jericho Road in the north to the central channel of Wadi an-Nar in the south; and from the Separation Barrier and Jerusalem’s municipal boundary in the east to the Old Bethlehem Road in the west. The western border of the neighborhood was determined arbitrarily, since in effect the neighborhood is part of the built-up continuum stretching westward through the area of Ras al-Aamud to the center of Silwan.

Wadi Qaddum developed spontaneously, without any planning infrastructure, from the early 1970s onward. Prior to this, the land was vacant, with the exception of a few structures. In the subsequent decades, construction continued at a slow pace, with new residential structures being added but construction remaining sparse. The significant construction boom began in the 1990s and 2000s, at which time the population of the neighborhood grew and many houses were built.

Most of the built-up area of the neighborhood is in its northern part, on the steep slopes descending to the valley and on the hill that rises up above it. Some of the construction is denser, with houses being practically contiguous. The neighborhood is particularly neglected, with no internal roads, no public structures, and no sanitation services.

The Jerusalem Municipality drew up a plan for the neighborhood (also including the area of Ras al-Aamud) proposing a rural future for Wadi Qaddum. This does not correspond with development trends on the ground. The neighborhood suffers from a severe housing shortage, due to low building rights and a lack of residentially zoned areas. As a result, many of the houses are not legal. In addition, there are plans to run a main urban artery through the heart of the neighborhood; its implementation threatens to disrupt the lives of the residents.
**MAIN PROBLEMS IN WADI QADDUM**

Roads

The situation of the roads is probably the most severe issue faced by the residents on a daily basis. Most of the roads in Wadi Qaddum have never been paved, and residents use dirt roads or defective roads that were paved many years ago. The inner roads are especially neglected, but the situation is bleak as well for vital arteries surrounding the neighborhood. The Old Bethlehem Road, for example, though used intensively by the residents of Wadi Qaddum as well as by thru traffic, is narrow and dangerous, with old asphalt, no sidewalks or security railing, and no street lighting. Many accidents have taken place on this road, with children being injured and cars rolling off the side of the road into the courtyards of the neighborhood’s houses. Another direct result of the neglect of the roads is that there is no garbage collection whatsoever in parts of the neighborhood.

**Insufficient Schools**

Wadi Qaddum suffers from a severe lack of educational structures. The plots allocated in the plans to schools and kindergartens have never been developed, and most of them stand vacant today. As a result of this, and coupled by the topography of the neighborhood, the children of Wadi Qaddum must climb up steep hills to reach the nearest schools in Ras Al Aamud to the west or in Jabal Al-Mokabbir to the south. Most affected by this are the younger children, for whom it is especially difficult to make this trek, and high-school aged girls, who are sometimes forbidden to go to school outside of the neighborhood. A number of years ago the Jerusalem Municipality erected a caravan site for use as a temporary school, on part of a plot zoned for public use. This overcrowded, makeshift school has only eight classrooms and is hardly a solution for the shortage. At the same time, the municipality built a number of permanent structures up the hill in the area of Ras Al Aamud, designating them for use by the children of Wadi Qaddum as well. However, the residents want a solution, even a partial one, to be implemented in the valley itself, in order to spare their children unnecessary suffering. As a result, the residents took matters into their own hands and have built a kindergarten and a mosque, without permission, on a plot zoned as open public area.

Winter Flooding

A single sewerage line and one drainage line run through the middle of the neighborhood, both of which are old, worn out, and underserviced. The drains are completely clogged and the protruding manhole covers cause frequent accidents. The drainage system cannot withstand the annual volume of precipitation. During heavy rains, rainwater draining into the valley from the Mount of Olives, ash-Shayyah, and Ras Al Aamud causes strong water currents to flow from the direction of Jericho Road into the neighborhood. Rainwater also regularly drains into the neighborhood from the direction of Ras Al Aamud, causing flooding of the roads and entrances to homes. Some of this runoff enters the sewerage system causing runoff, accompanied by hazardous odors. A puddle forms at the bottom of the neighborhood every winter, preventing access to the houses near it. Residents have taken matters into their own hands and built a small makeshift sidewalk in the area where the biggest puddles sit all winter long (see photo).

**The Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan**

Although the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, which awaits deposition, includes two expansions for Wadi Qaddum, of which only one (an area of 35 dunams) has already been slated for the construction of the Kidmat Zion settlement (see below). More than half of the second expansion area was already zoned for development in the previously approved outline plan for the neighborhood. These tentative expansions are all the more problematic in light of the stipulation in the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan that all expansions must be planned (or re-planned) prior to the approval of any development in their area. In other words, plots that formerly needed no further planning in order to be developed, were frozen by the new outline plan. Furthermore, the densification proposed in the outline plan for existing residential areas can only be partially realized because of stipulations that require parking solutions and proximity to a wide road. These conditions are almost impossible to meet in Wadi Qaddum. It seems that it will be impossible to fully realize the potential densifications, and that in the residential areas in the north of the neighborhood it will be possible to add only a very small number of housing units.

**The Eastern Ring Road**

The Eastern Ring Road is planned to run north south through the eastern edge of the city. According to plan # 458b, part of the central section of the road will run through the heart of Wadi Qaddum – in the central valley and eastern bank of the neighborhood. Its implementation would have far-reaching implications for the neighborhood, including the severe economic forcing of the residents causing runoff, accompanied by hazardous odors. A puddle forms at the bottom of the neighborhood every winter, preventing access to the houses near it. Residents have taken matters into their own hands and built a small makeshift sidewalk in the area where the biggest puddles sit all winter long (see photo).

Making Sidewalk (photo Bimkom)

**The Kidmat Zion Settlement**

Detail Plan # 7659, for the erection of a new Jewish-Israeli settlement in Wadi Qaddum, looms over the already distraught neighborhood. The settlement is planned on the eastern bank of the main valley of the neighborhood, near the Separation Barrier. This land is zoned in the neighborhood plan (# 568b) for residential buildings, and open of some 25 dunams of land previously allocated as residential, slating of 15 structures for demolition (some of which have already been demolished), and providing other roads and planned roads obsolete. Moreover, the road would separate the eastern residential areas of the neighborhood from the rest of the neighborhood and cut off the few roads that connect between the two sides of the valley. The road is planned to connect to the neighborhood through a huge interchange in the center of the neighborhood, trapping a large cluster of houses in an encirclement and only partially restoring the connections that will be cut off by it. Needless to say, the road is intended as an urban artery for thru traffic and not to solve the traffic problems in the neighborhood.

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CUT OFF FROM THE ROAD TO JERICHO

The Jericho Road provides the residents of Wadi Qaddum with access to essential services that are missing in their neighborhood – a number of medical clinics, branches of health-care providers, stores, and public transportation. In the past there was an important road that connected Wadi Qaddum to the Jericho Road. Although narrow and steep, this road was very useful, providing the residents with access to the vital services found only up on the main road. In the neighborhood outline plan, there was a planned network of roads that would have cancelled this important road, though this was never implemented. The residents continued to use the road until it was blocked off during the second intifada. A few years later, the Jerusalem Municipality unilaterally decided to build a staircase on half the width of the road. The staircase is indeed better than a blocked road, but it is steep and long, and is dangerous for the elderly, the sick, and women with children to make the climb. The residents of Wadi Qaddum are actively trying to pressure the municipality into reopening the road so that the northern part of Wadi Qaddum will regain its access to the rest of the city. To date, the efforts have gone unanswered. In the small sub-neighborhood known as the Misg Slope, there is another, even steeper, connection to Jericho Road through a narrow alleyway that was paved by the residents, to replace a set of stairs. In other words, the angle of the road is unreasonable and it is very hard to climb by foot. In order to make it easier for pedestrians, the residents installed hand rails on the walls of the houses along the passageway. While driving down this road is dangerous, driving up it is nearly impossible. Residents who do not have a 4x4 ruin their tires trying to make the uphill. Next to this road, a longer and less steep road, which appears in the neighborhood outline plan, is meant to enable the needed connection. But the road was never paved. After a legal battle by representatives of the residents, the municipality promised to implement the relevant section of the road by the end of 2011. As of mid-2013 this promise has not been fulfilled.
## Zoning Structure According to Approved Plans • Designation vs. Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Plans dunam</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Land Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential*</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Most of the residential construction in the neighborhood is in the northern part of the neighborhood, on the hill and on the steep slopes descending into the valley. Residential zoning does not entirely correspond with the borders of existing residential areas. Moreover, construction is denser than approved in the plans, and many apartment buildings rise to four or five storeys. In the south of the neighborhood, in areas that are not zoned as residential, some low-density clusters are found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Spaces</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Most of the open space of the neighborhood is defined as open scenic area. This designation is found mostly in the valley and on the gentle slopes in the southern part of the neighborhood. In fact, these areas contain several homes, dirt roads, and improvised dumping sites. One compound of about 15 dunam, on the slope descending into the valley from the west, is designated for sports, while the meager 5 dunam or so zoned as open public areas are scattered between the residential clusters of the neighborhood. Both the sports area and the open public areas remain undeveloped and stand vacant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Roads</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>While vast areas of Wadi Qaddum have been allocated for the development of roads, few of the planned roads have actually been built. And those that have, were developed only partially. The residents use vital existing roads, though these are not statutory. Many of the roads are narrow and extremely steep and in bad physical condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>The area designated for expropriation for the route of the Eastern Ring Road is larger than the entire area allocated for neighborhood roads. This road is not intended primarily for the benefit of residents of the neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Buildings and Institutions</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Although in the neighborhood outline plan, eight plots were designated for public buildings, none of these have been developed. On part of one of them, the Jerusalem Municipality erected a caravan site that serves as a temporary school. A mosque and kindergarten were built by the residents on a small plot designated as an open public area (see: Insufficient Schools).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Area for future development, a hotel, gas stations, and unplanned areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Neighborhood plans allow for only rural-style construction. In 18% of the residential areas, a 25% building ratio is allotted, with a minimal plot size of 400 m². The remaining allotted residential area allows for a 50% ratio, with only two storeys (and with a similar stipulation as to plot size).