EIMKOM

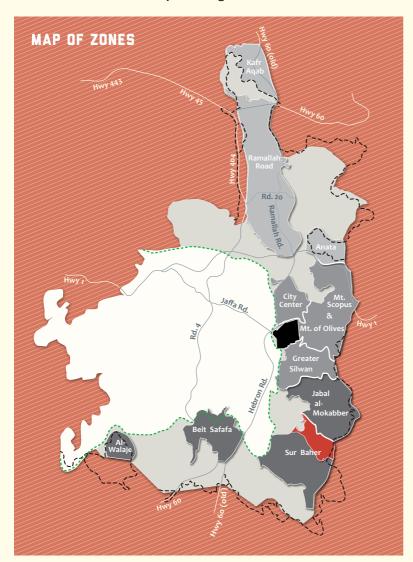
Jerusalem South • Sur Baher Zone

ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Umm Laysoon is a small neighborhood located in southeast Jerusalem, bordering on the post-1967 Israeli neighborhood of East Talpiyot to the west, the municipal boundary of Jerusalem to the east, and two valleys of Wadi ad-Darajeh (Darga Valley) to the north and south. The northern valley, known by the residents as Wadi aj-Joz, separates Umm Laysoon from the neighboring village of as-Sawahrah, while the southern valley, known as Wadi al-Humus, separates it from Sur Baher. Agricultural activity takes place in both valleys: Wadi al-Humus is cultivated by the residents of Sur Baher, while Wadi aj-Joz, along with an adjacent large plain, is cultivated by the residents of Umm Laysoon. The neighborhood is comprised of two sub-neighborhoods; one sits on an individual hill southeast of East Talpiyot and the second, smaller, one – known as Abedieh – sits between the hill and the Israeli neighborhood.

Umm Laysoon is located on lands originally belonging to the village of Sur Baher, and indeed, Sur Baher residents still own lands in the village, though most of the residents of Umm Laysoon originate from the Abedieh Bedouin tribe. Several families from the tribe, who formerly used the lands of Umm Laysoon for seasonal agriculture, purchased lands in the early 1900s and settled there. The Abedieh of Umm Laysoon remain in constant contact with the rest of the tribe, living outside of Jerusalem, and even continue to bury their dead in the tribal cemetery, located in the West Bank. However, the Separation Barrier, which was built more or less along the municipal border, has impaired the connection between members of the tribe living on either side, and made it difficult to carry out traditional burial practices.

When drawing up the neighborhood plans, the Jerusalem Municipality did not distinguish between members of the Abedieh Bedouin tribe and members of the as-Sawahrah Bedouin tribe. Accordingly, Umm Laysoon was included in the plan prepared for as-Sawahrah, and its residents were expected to rely on the public institutions (including the cemetery) of as-Sawahrah. However, the Abedieh continue to function as a separate group and, if anything, maintain contacts with Sur Baher to the southwest.









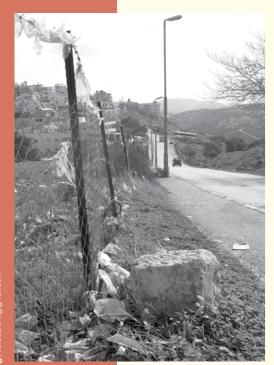
MAIN PROBLEMS IN UMM LAYSOON

Roads

Unlike in most other East Jerusalem neighborhoods, the existing roads in Umm Laysoon, despite being in poor physical condition, actually have a good basic structure. In other words, the run-down roads reach almost all parts of the neighborhood and run along the contours of the topography on comfortable inclines. Therefore, it would have made sense to improve the roads where necessary by expanding the existing system: adding local subsidiaries to reach the residential clusters and widening the existing roads. When the municipality drew up the neighborhood plan, however, it was based only partially on the existing roads. In most cases in which there is a discrepancy between the roads proposed in the neighborhood plan and the existing roads, the planned ones run over houses built in the area and are therefore un-implementable. This is one of the reasons for the delay in building new roads, which subsequently creates obstacles for receiving building permits, since without access roads, building permits are not issued.

Sewerage

Only twenty houses in Umm Laysoon are connected to the municipal sewer system. The rest of the residents have to drain their sewage into private cesspits in the courtyards of their houses. These pose a general health hazard



Typical Streets (photos Bimkom)

and also harm the groundwater. In addition, the high cost of digging and maintaining the cesspits falls upon the shoulders of the were told that the graves will be transferred to residents. The Jerusalem Municipality went a nearby site. However, they will not necessarily as far as delivering demolition orders for the cesspits, which were built without building permits; at least one pit has actually been The Eastern Ring Road destroyed. Representatives of the residents turned to the Jerusalem Municipality many times (for example, when the neighborhood school was built and with the planning of the by the District Planning Committee and only Eastern Ring Road), asking to be connected to the municipal sewer system. Yet only in 2011 did the municipal infrastructure company, Ha-Gihon, begin to plan a sewerage line for with strong opposition. The planners proposed the neighborhood. Although the line is not yet a new route, now in advanced stages of completed, the residents have received bills amounting to thousands of shekels in fees for connection to the new system. These fees are difficult to pay, in particular while continuing to maintain the cesspits.

In East Jerusalem, as in other Palestinian communities, the use of public cemeteries is not common. It is customary for every village, neighborhood, tribe, or extended family to to an alternative location (see inset). bury their dead on lands close to where they live. The neighborhood plan for Umm Laysoon and as-Sawahrah includes the as-Sawahrah cemetery, but the residents of Umm Laysoon, who belong to the Abedieh tribe, do not use it. The members of the tribe use the tribal cemetery located outside of Jerusalem, to the east. Since the construction of the Separation Barrier, burial has become difficult, sometimes violating the dignity of the dead. The residents have therefore worked to find an alternative burial site nearby. They bought a dunam of land from a resident of as-Sawahrah and began to develop it. The municipality stopped the development works, requiring that a plan be approved for the site. Two years of contacts with the municipality have yielded nothing; the land they purchased is still designated as open scenic area, and the residents continue to bury their dead outside of the city. Additionally, in the early 1960s, a family from the tribe built a small private cemetery next to its home in Umm Laysoon. The existence of this family burial plot was overlooked by the municipal planners, who drew the route of the Eastern Ring Road on top of it (see following). The

members of the family presented an objection to the plan for the road and in response they be allowed to bury at the new site.

The Eastern Ring Road is planned to run northsouth along the eastern edge of Jerusalem. More than half of the route has been approved awaits permits. The original plan for the southern section of the road entailed the demolition of many homes and was received approval. This plan includes an additional road that will connect the ring road to the southern industrial zone of Jerusalem and the adjacent neighborhoods. The planned connecting road runs through Umm Laysoon, eating away at residential zones, ignoring a familial cemetery (see: Cemetery), and cutting the neighborhood off from Sur Baher. Likewise, with the implementation of the new route, the entrance to the neighborhood will be moved



Expansions of East Talpiyot

The residential zoning of Umm Laysoon enables low building rights on limited areas. This injustice is particularly stark in light of the high building rights (more than double) in the Israeli neighborhood of East Talpiyot, which was built in part on lands expropriated from residents of Sur Baher after the 1967 war. In addition to the fact that the building rights in East Talpiyot drastically exceed those allowed in the adjacent Palestinian neighborhoods, of late a new expansion of East Talpiyot has

been planned next to the entrance to Umm Laysoon, featuring six-storey residential buildings with high building rights (see inset). This is the first time the Israeli neighborhood is slated to expand beyond the limits of the main road, which for years served as the unofficial border between East Talpiyot and Umm Laysoon. Further north, on the west side of the main road, amidst Abedieh homes, another small expansion is in the process of being constructed.

AT LONG LAST, THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS AN ENTRANCE

For years, the intersection at the entrance to Umm Laysoon posed a severe safety hazard for its residents and visitors; the dangerous structure of the intersection included sharp angles, a steep incline, and bad visibility. Minor accidents frequently occurred at the intersection. Several residents of the neighborhood who own trucks could not enter or leave the neighborhood without straying into the opposite lane in order to get the radius required for their turn. This entrance road to Umm Laysoon, which has been used by the residents for years, is not statutory. In the neighborhood plan, the land on which it is paved is in fact zoned as open scenic area, effectively annulling the road. Instead, the neighborhood plan proposed another, adjacent, connection, with more comfortable angles and an improved field of vision. But the improved, statutory entrance has never been implemented. As the residents were preparing to address the municipality with a request to regulate the existing

intersection, they noticed a sign advertising that a revised plan for the intended expansion of East Talpiyot had been deposited for public review. To their amazement, when they examined the plans that had been deposited, they saw that the unimplemented entrance had been overridden as far back as 2005, as part of the original expansion plan of which they had no knowledge and therefore could not protest. They also noticed that another entrance was being planned for the neighborhood, as part of the new route of the Eastern Ring Road, which has yet to be approved. It became clear that Umm Laysoon had been abandoned without a single statutory entrance and that even the problematic existing entrance was likely to be blocked. Subsequently, the residents submitted an objection to the revised East-Talpiyot expansion plan and it was accepted. In July 2012 a corrected plan was approved, which puts the cancelled route for the entrance back into effect. Until the old-new entrance is implemented, the Jerusalem Municipality has carried out significant temporary improvements to the existing entrance intersection, solving most of the safety problems.



The Improved Yet Unstatutory Entrance to the Neighborhood (photo Bimkom)

APPROVED PLANS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

744.0 dunam Part of Outline Plan # 2683a for as-Sawahrah 413.0 dunam Part of Plan # 4585f for the Eastern Ring Road (pending approval) 53.0 dunam Outline Plan # 7977 & 7977a for expansion of East Talpiyot 3.0 dunam Detail Plan # 12876 for expansion of East Talpiyot 3.0 dunam Part of Detail Plan # 1824a for part of East Talpiyot 1,216.0 dunam Total planned area 17.0 dunam Unplanned area 1,233.0 dunam Total area of neighborhood

In addition, over the years, some 8 detail plans were approved, with no added area for the neighborhood.

ZONING STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO APPROVED PLANS - DESIGNATION VS. USE

Designation	Plans		Land Use
	dunam	%	
Residential*	348	28	Limitations on residential construction are particularly severe. Building rights are low and detailed plans are a requirement for all plots of more than six dunam. Nonetheless, the building rights in the neighborhood have yet to be exhausted: on the one hand there are vacant areas that are zoned for residential construction, and on the other hand houses are built on areas where construction is not allowed. This discrepancy stems from the land-ownership structure, which is not reflected in the plans. The undeveloped areas in the village core belong to residents of Sur Baher who do not necessarily live there. Other residents of Umm Laysoon, who are in need of housing units and can build only on the lands that they purchased, have no choice but to build on their agricultural lands, even if they are not zoned as such.
Open Spaces	538	44	Large open scenic areas, serving primarily for agriculture, surround the neighborhood and separate it from its neighbors. In these areas all development is forbidden. The neighborhood plan does not include a single playground, park, or sports facility. A number of years ago, the municipality developed a sports field with a playground alongside it in the Abedieh sub-neighborhood. The sports field is located partially on land zoned for public structures and partially on land zoned for residential use. The playground is located entirely on land zoned as residential. Neither the sports field nor the playground are kept up by the municipality.
Roads	256	22	The municipality's zoning for roads in the neighborhood revolves around the needs of the Eastern Ring Road as a major artery. The planned roads are therefore designated for urban thru-traffic and are not aimed at improving the neighborhood's current road system, which has a good basic structure but is in poor physical condition and has no sidewalks (see: Roads). Segments of the planned roads diverge from the existing ones and are not implementable because they run over existing structures.
Public Buildings	12	0.5	The neighborhood plans include three plots that are zoned for public buildings: two for kindergartens and one for two schools. On one of the areas zoned for kindergartens, a sports field was built, and the second area stands empty. In 2009, two new buildings were inaugurated as schools, in accordance with the plan. Within the neighborhood, on plots not zoned for public buildings, some kindergartens and another school operate through a private organization.
Commercial	6	0.5	Only one area in the neighborhood is zoned for commercial use. The land is owned by a single family, and therefore they are the only ones who use it. The area is located in the Abedieh sub-neighborhood and is in close proimity to East Talpiyot. The neighborhood plan therefore stipulates that its use "will be suited to the zone's character as a seam-line area between Jewish and Arab populations." Operatively, the area is in a gated compound and access to it is limited.
Expansions of East Talpiyot	56	4	There are two expansions planned for East Talpiyot at the expense of Umm Laysoon. The larger one is located on state land near the entrance to Umm Laysoon (see inset) and the smaller one is being built on contested land within the Abedieh sub-neighborhood.
Other	17	1	Includes unplanned area.
Total	1,233	100	

^{*} The residential zoning type in Umm Laysoon permits a 37.5% building ratio, with only two storeys, and no more than three residential units per dunam.