



SHUAFAT

ABSTRACT



Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research | project No. 518

**The Arab Neighborhoods in East Jerusalem
Infrastructure Research and Evaluation**

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THE ARAB NEIGHBORHOODS IN EAST JERUSALEM
INFRASTRUCTURE RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

SHUAFAT

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This abstract is part of a series of research papers prepared by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research about the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. The purpose of this study is to sketch a social profile, as well as a profile of the infrastructure in the neighborhoods in a variety of areas, so as to promote active, knowledge-based steps, toward the improvement of the quality of life of the Arab residents of East Jerusalem. Beyond describing the current situation, this study attempts to identify mechanisms of growth and development that will help to advance the socio-economic position of the neighborhoods and villages. We believe that research that integrates practice with policy recommendations is the basis for the correction of social and political injustices, in an attempt to create a high-functioning city that is concerned with the wellbeing of all its inhabitants. The research methods include field work, in-depth interviews, consultation of data bases belonging to the local authorities and research institutes, and round table discussions in which participants include representatives from the neighborhoods, the municipality, and civil society.

The Shuafat neighborhood is located in North Jerusalem, on the hilly ridge between Givat Hamivtar and Givat Shapira (The French Hill) in the south and Beit Hanina in the north. The area of the neighborhood is 1,400 dunam (1 dunam = 1,000 square meters) and about 22,000 people live there, most of whom do not belong to the six major clans that established the neighborhood.

Shuafat is considered one of the most prestigious neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. The demand to live there is high among Arab residents of East Jerusalem and the neighborhood is undergoing intensive construction. The ancient rural core of the neighborhood is in its western part, where two mosques are located. The neighborhood is bisected by the Shuafat-Beit Hanina-Ramallah Road and the tracks for the Light Rail Train.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS THAT CHARACTERIZE THE SHUAFAT NEIGHBORHOOD



Planning and Construction Parts of the neighborhood are covered by the Master Plan or by current city building plans but not all. Zoning plans based on updated ownership following a process of parcellation are in the preliminary stages, pending approval, but the percentage of building rights that has been approved is relatively low. The neighborhood lacks public services especially open, green, public spaces, sports fields, and children's playgrounds.

We advise to promote the preparation of detailed plans that will allow the issuing of building permits and the allocation of land for public use.

Where land registration is lacking, and land ownership is unclear, a rapid land settlement must be promoted in the interest of proper planning and construction.



Infrastructures There are no severe infrastructure problems in the neighborhood, however at the same time: A relatively large number of internal streets lack asphalt surfaces that conform to required standards; there is a lack of curbstones and of sidewalks; In the older sections of the neighborhood the street lighting is insufficient; Some of the internal roads lack a decent drainage system and there are floods in winter.

The recommendation is to develop the internal roads in accordance with a systematic multi-year plan whose budget should be known in advance.



Public Parks and Playgrounds The first public park in the eastern part of the neighborhood was opened recently, but since it cannot meet the recreational needs of all the residents, another park is planned to be opened in the western part of the neighborhood. However, these two parks will not solve the problem of the overwhelming lack of small neighborhood green spaces and playgrounds in Shuafat.

The recommendation is to identify available land in different parts of the neighborhood and to designate them for public parks.



Education System Currently, the number of schools and classrooms meet the needs of the neighborhood. However, some of the buildings used as educational institutions are rented in residential buildings and are not suitable for their purposes, and this must be addressed. Many of the students who study in Shuafat come from other neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, mainly from the ShuaFat Refugee Camp and the nearby Ras Hamis and Dahiyat Al-Salam areas. As a result, there is a high demand for places in the neighborhood schools, which has led to overcrowded classrooms that exceed the recommended number of students. The Municipality is planning to build one hundred new classrooms in a gradual process, but the Community Administration believes that the planned process is inadequate to meet the needs.

The continuing accelerated growth of the population in the neighborhood will necessitate the establishment of additional schools and kindergartens in the coming years.



Leadership in the Neighborhood The Community Administration in ShuaFat, which is directed by Husam Watad, functions well and provides comprehensive social services to the residents. A Village Council composed of clan leaders is also active in the neighborhood, but it does not represent all the residents. The Village Council represents only the six original families that established the neighborhood and today comprise only a quarter of its residents.

The recommendation is to promote young leadership which could represent the interests of the residents vis a vis the authorities.



Transportation and Parking The Light Rail Train runs through the heart of the neighborhood, providing quality service and many advantages for the residents. It connects them quickly to the center of town and to many other areas. On the other hand, it has a negative effect on the businesses situated along the tracks on ShuaFat Road, since there are no longer any parking spots for private vehicles nearby the shops and businesses, as there were previously.

The recommendation is to build parking lots by the side of the main road and also to create designated, clearly-marked parking spots along the road. It is also proposed that the ShuaFat bypass road be paved so that public transportation will be able to operate inside the neighborhood.



Growth Engines: Commercial, Trade, and Industrial Services

Due to its strategic location in the north of the city, and due to its size, the neighborhood has the potential to develop commercial, tourism, and business sectors, especially along the major transportation arteries, on condition that parking is ensured as well as easy access. Today, most of the commerce in the neighborhood is concentrated along the Shuafat Road and at the new commercial center that was built in recent years.

The recommendation is to open a bank branch to provide services to the residents and merchants of Shuafat and Beit Hanina. A further recommendation is to develop an industrial area near the light rail power station.