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### **Green is the New Gold: Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Action in Jerusalem**

**“Jerusalem, a city surrounded by hills ... for present and future generations” Psalms 125:2**

Jerusalem is preparing itself for the future, with a strategic plan to incorporate environmental issues and develop sustainable and accessible infrastructure, in order to preserve its spiritual and historical heritage for future generations.

Naomi Tsur, Deputy Mayor, City of Jerusalem: “Urban systems should be integrated and managed in such a way that they minimize environmental impact and mitigate environmental harm”.

#### **The Jerusalem City Master Plan**

The City of Jerusalem is a unique capital comprised of a multitude of different communities, ethnic groups and religions, spread over diverse neighborhoods, old and new, ancient and modern, reflecting both eastern and western cultures, all weaving together an intricately complex human and urban tapestry. Few cities in the world can boast the multi-faceted and sensitive cultural fabric that is Jerusalem.

Sustainable development in Jerusalem must respect this mosaic of life, and act to improve the ties between different groups, in an effort to foster social justice through the provision of equal opportunities for communal and economic growth in all sectors of the population. Planning for the future of this distinctive city is an extremely complicated task. Jerusalem has invested more than a decade of work on a new master plan.

Based on principles of sustainable urban development, with the input of numerous stakeholders, the new master plan includes provisions to prevent urban sprawl with regulated guidelines for densification. In addition, new sustainability measures are included which stipulate standards for green building construction aimed at reducing carbon emissions and promoting the development of ecologically sound facilities for waste management and water recycling. These principles,

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along with the plan's emphasis on securing the status of open spaces and planning for the provision of affordable housing for young families, will help to assure a sustainable future for all of Jerusalem's residents. Although the plan has not reached final approval yet, it provides sustainable urban planning guidelines at both the local and regional levels.

Jerusalem is proud to be a member of the ICLEI global network (Local Governments for Sustainability), and is also one of 18 Israeli cities that have committed to reduce polluting emissions in accordance with the Kyoto Protocols. Within this framework Jerusalem is taking bold steps to reduce CO2 emissions by 20% by 2020.

### **Examples to date:**

#### Wastewater Treatment and Renewable Energy:

The commitments to the ICLEI global network and the Kyoto Protocols have directly influenced the development of breakthrough local scientific and entrepreneurial initiatives in renewable and alternative energy technologies, such as harvesting solar energy and reclaiming energy from waste. The GIHON, the largest local water company in Israel, engages in the regular supply of high quality drinkable water to Jerusalem's 840,000 residents, business and industrial facilities. It is responsible for the development, expansion, operation and maintenance of water, sewage and drainage networks in the city, the construction of pumping stations and pressure management installations. The company conducts strict inspections on water quality and assesses water consumption. Its subsidiary, MAVTI (Jerusalem Wastewater and Purification Enterprises, Ltd.), treats 40,000,000 cubic meters of wastewater a year in two purification plants, using advanced purification techniques enabling wastewater usage in agriculture. In the purification process, methane gas, emitted from sludge provides fuel to operate the plant, while surplus energy produced is fed back into the electrical grid. In addition, the company uses sludge to produce fertilizer, reducing the need for processing chemical fertilizers. The company is currently in the process of constructing an additional wastewater treatment plant in the southern part of the city that will use state-of-the art membrane method technology (MBR) to produce high quality treated effluent for irrigating local public parks and gardens, including the new metropolitan parks around the city.

New regulations in Israel encourage institutions and individuals to install solar roofs and to sell

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the energy generated back to the electric company at a very good price. The City of Jerusalem has taken advantage of this mechanism to install 100 solar roofs on schools throughout the city. The school children learn to monitor the energy production and benefit from an educational program funded from the profit of the electricity generated.

### Separation of Solid Waste and Recycling:

While recycling in Jerusalem is still in its early stages of development, the city is now embarking on a campaign to improve waste management infrastructure. In 2009, the city established a Municipal Recycling and Waste Separation Center. This facility was designed to collect and sort household refuse with the intention of significantly reducing and recycling solid waste. It enables separation of organic and non-organic waste, sorting of recyclable waste such as plastics, metal, glass, paper and cardboard, clothes, books, old furniture, as well as electronic waste. Batteries and other hazardous waste are collected separately. This important initiative has triggered the promotion of sustainable economic initiatives. Materials sorted at the recycling center are collected by companies that process them into new consumer goods. In addition, the center operates as an educational facility offering learning programs to schools and community centers, and to the public at large, aiming to promote environmental awareness and healthy sustainable living habits.

In 2011, two dozen mini-recycling centers were placed throughout the city. This has promoted an increase in recycling from 4% in 2009 to 15% in 2011. In cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, Jerusalem is in the process of closing down the poorly managed city dump in Abu Dis. It is hoped that by May 2013, the city dump at Abu Dis will no longer be used. The resulting high cost of dumping will oblige Jerusalem to ensure an annual increase of 5% in recycling. At this time plans are underway for a sophisticated sorting center for the treatment of waste that has not been separated at source. Educational programs encourage residents to recycle, and the city's economic advisors are examining mechanisms for rewarding residents who recycle diligently, while penalizing those who don't.

### Transport:

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Subsequent to approval of the Clean Air Act (which came into effect in January, 2011), Jerusalem has undertaken a review of its transport policy, adding the component of air pollution to traffic planning.

Jerusalem is well on the road to developing a state-of-the-art efficient and sustainable public transport system. The first line of the Jerusalem Light Rail began operating in August 2011, on a 14 km route, with 46 coaches, 23 stations, 3 major park-and-ride lots, and a sophisticated ticketing and control infrastructure. Incorporating designated lanes for high-grade eco-friendly “feeder” busses, the project has relieved traffic congestion and helped reduce noise and air-pollution, while stimulating rehabilitation, renewal and preservation of the historic downtown area. Pollution downtown is now close to 0%. There has been an increase of 10% of users on public transport (equivalent to about 10,000 people a day). The forecast for the light rail was 70,000 users during peak time, today it already amounts to 110,000 people during peak hours and 130,000 people during the festivals. (70,000 – 80,000 of these passengers used public transport in the past, showing an additional 30,000-40,000 new uses as a result of the improvements in the public transport system).

### Environmental issue information accessibility and transparency:

The City of Jerusalem is proud of its Geographic Information System that relays a huge range of topics of interest in map form and is easily accessible to the general public on the City of Jerusalem’s website. In addition, coordinated and produced by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), the Sustainable Jerusalem Green Map documents environmental and social sites and activities in the City of Jerusalem, enabling residents and tourists alike to experience the green side of the city in a new and exciting way. *See separate backgrounder for more information.*



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### Biodiversity in Jerusalem:

Projects have been undertaken in expanding the bio-diversity of the city. Please see information of Jerusalem's biodiversity efforts and the Jerusalem LAB (Local Action for Biodiversity). *See separate backgrounder for more information.*

Text from this information has been taken from Green Jerusalem – A sustainable Future, coordinated and produced by Helene Roumani, Jerusalem LAB.

For more information:

[http://greenpilgrimjerusalem.org/symposium2013/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/02/Green-Jerusalem\\_2nd-Ed\\_2012.pdf](http://greenpilgrimjerusalem.org/symposium2013/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/02/Green-Jerusalem_2nd-Ed_2012.pdf)

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