



## Recent Israeli Planning for Wadi aj-Joz, East Jerusalem: Eastern Business District & Silicon Wadi

The Wadi aj-Joz neighborhood in East Jerusalem – located between the Old City walls and Mount Scopus – has been undergoing planning by the Israeli authorities in recent years. Two major plans are underway. The first is for the area closer to the old city walls, also known as Bab as-Sahrah or the “Eastern Business District”. This is the Palestinian City-Center, which is interspersed with some 1000 housing units (approximately half of which are statutory). The second plan is for the northern part of the neighborhood where the well-known industrial street, now dubbed "Silicon Wadi", is located.

The plan for the Eastern Business District is more advanced and is expected to be deposited for public review (objections) in the near future. It has been in the making for more than a decade and has undergone many changes and phases along the way – each time cutting back the number of housing units included in the pool of mixed uses. Currently, the plan calls for the regularization of all existing units (including those non statutory units) but does not allow for any further residential development. If approved as is, approximately 80% of the development rights in the plan will be allotted for commercial, business and tourism use.

This ratio of mixed use is problematic because it does not address the housing crisis in Palestinian East Jerusalem, and moreover, it does not address the basic interest of city-center planning: the creation of a balanced mixed-use environment, in which housing development is generally considered as an important stimulus for development. In other parts of the Jerusalem today, along the route of the light rail, a 50-50 ratio is the accepted policy.

The second plan is at very early stages and it is being promoted as a Master Plan (a non-statutory policy document to which the public cannot object). The master plan tool is being used in order to avoid having to make binding decisions about housing units. From this master plan detailed statutory plans will be derived; the first one to be launched was the Silicon Wadi plan (june 2020); this plan is at its conceptual phase and little official data is therefore available.

The abovementioned plans, alongside other large scale plans currently under consideration for East Jerusalem (such as the plan for development alongside the American Road, see [here](#)), demonstrate the current Israeli Planning Policy in East Jerusalem: public uses are being addressed -- and huge areas are being allotted for commerce and business -- while residential needs are being left unanswered (if they are addressed they are generally unimplementable).

For more background on Wadi aj-Joz, see [here](#).