

URBAN Israel 2050 - Project

Background:

The Israeli government is preparing to draft a new national master plan (or an update to National Plan 35). Therefore, now is the time to prepare an integrated, alternative policy document, and to propose a plan, tools and ideas to foster real change in Israel's cities – to promote prosperity through quality of life and maximum accessibility to opportunities for all.

The social protest in the summer of 2011 was sparked by frustration over accessibility to housing and economic opportunities. It is the long-term result of a crisis in the planning policies that have been implemented over the past 60 years. The planning of Israel's settlements and their current situation are the product of this planning policy. Approved in 2005, National Master Plan 35 vowed to "provide for the state's construction and development needs whilst preserving its open spaces and land reserves for future generations," but it failed to live up to most of its goals.

Today, nearly 10 years later, Israel's existing cities continue to be neglected (there are approximately 600 neglected older neighborhoods in the centers of all the urban settlements). There is also a continuing lack of affordable housing in opportunity-accessible areas, and planning is largely geared toward the use of private vehicles, which prevents all of the settlement's inhabitants from gaining equal access to economic, social and cultural opportunities.

It is clear that today, Israel's government has no vision or blueprint for a country in which, (by the year 2030) will have to provide 11 million people with the means to live prosperously and enjoy a high quality of life.

MIU – The Movement for Israeli Urbanism – promotes a quality urban environment for the prosperity of society in Israel

Because over 90% of Israel's inhabitants live in urban settlements, we believe that 'cities are the solution'. Prosperous cities are a necessary condition for a healthy and prosperous society in Israel. What the country needs is a comprehensive and integrated policy, which focusses primarily on the renewal of existing cities and settlements, and which encourages sustainable growth and development while conserving the environment.

The proposed project:

Israel 2050 – Policy and tools for strengthening and developing Israeli cities as leverage for sustainable growth.

Project goals:

Drafting a policy document for presentation to the Israeli government in preparation for – and during – work on the new national master plan.

Preparing a plan of action that will lead to real change

Formulating a 'tool box' for the implementation of policy

Exposing the process of work on the new policy through the integration and cooperation of various experts and interested parties.

Promoting work that employs multiple sectors - authorities, networks and organizations, both private and governmental – all working towards consensus and implementation.

Work method:

Initiating and coordinating a process in which several organizations will cooperate in order to arrive at a single policy document, and at a plan based upon consensus between the various organizations that support urbanism as a tool for growth and conservation.

1. **"TOC – Theory of Change"**: A strategic thinking process for developing plans of action to implement changes that fulfill strategic goals. It thus connects the 'consolidation of strategy' phase of the process with the 'implementation planning' phase.
2. **"Charrette – Collaborative Planning"**: A process for engaging in inclusive creative and intensive planning, which employs both interested parties and a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, and which gathers all of the decision-makers in one place so that all of the people involved sit together and work for several days to prepare an implementable plan. The process is professional and multi-disciplinary, builds consensus, saves time, minimizes resistance and encourages creative solutions.

We recommend combining these two thought and planning processes for the purpose of preparing a policy that will lead to the changes necessary in Israel's development modes. The work will include the bulk of the experts and interested parties, and will therefore be highly implementable.

***MIU** has employed TOC strategic process twice, under the expert guidance and management of one of our members. Using it, we devised ways for stimulating change in Israeli urbanism, despite our organization's scant resources.

***MIU** learned to use the Charrette process in the U.S., and employed it to lead (two) cooperative planning projects in Kiryat Shemona, as well as others in Haifa, Marom Galil and Ofakim.

The process we propose will include the following stages:

1. Consolidating a strategy
 - Defining, documenting and identifying the problems
 - Identifying the main elements that are delaying solutions
 - These stages exist as background material collected by MIU and its fellow organizations, and will be reassessed as part of the process.
 - Consolidating a general strategic approach to solving the problems.
 - The products of this stage will probably become the policy/planning document that will be presented to the government.
2. TOC process – with the aim of developing a logical model for changing policy and including the following stages:
 - Defining the vision (why are we doing what we're doing)
 - Goals (what we hope to change)
 - Target population (who we hope to change)
 - Results (what are the enduring changes in the target population?)
 - Indicators (how we will recognize success)
 - Initiatives and reforms required to achieve results
 - Organizational capacity required for plan's success
 - Resources required to successfully implement the plan and build the necessary capacity.
3. Building a plan and tools based on the logical model
 - Preparing a detailed plan for working towards implementation.
 - Each of the above stages will be carried out using the Charrette method.
4. Test case:

To test the plan and tools, we propose taking Ashdod one as a test case to accompany the project throughout. to be joined later by settlements in the periphery – the Negev and the Galil.

Project team:

approx. 25 professionals from all aspects of urban design (public and private), academics, students, foreign experts.

Project collaborators:

government representatives (from Housing and Construction, Environmental Protection, Ministry of the Interior, Transportation, the Treasury); representatives of the municipality of Ashdod (later joined by representatives of other settlements), entrepreneurs, faculties of planning from all universities; civilian organizations like the Society of the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), Heshel Sustainability Center, Adam Teva V'Din, The Coalition for Affordable Housing, Transport Today and Tomorrow, the Transport Organizations Forum.