

Red, Green, and now Blue!

Jerusalem continues taking the lead in LRT in Israel with the planning of the Blue Line

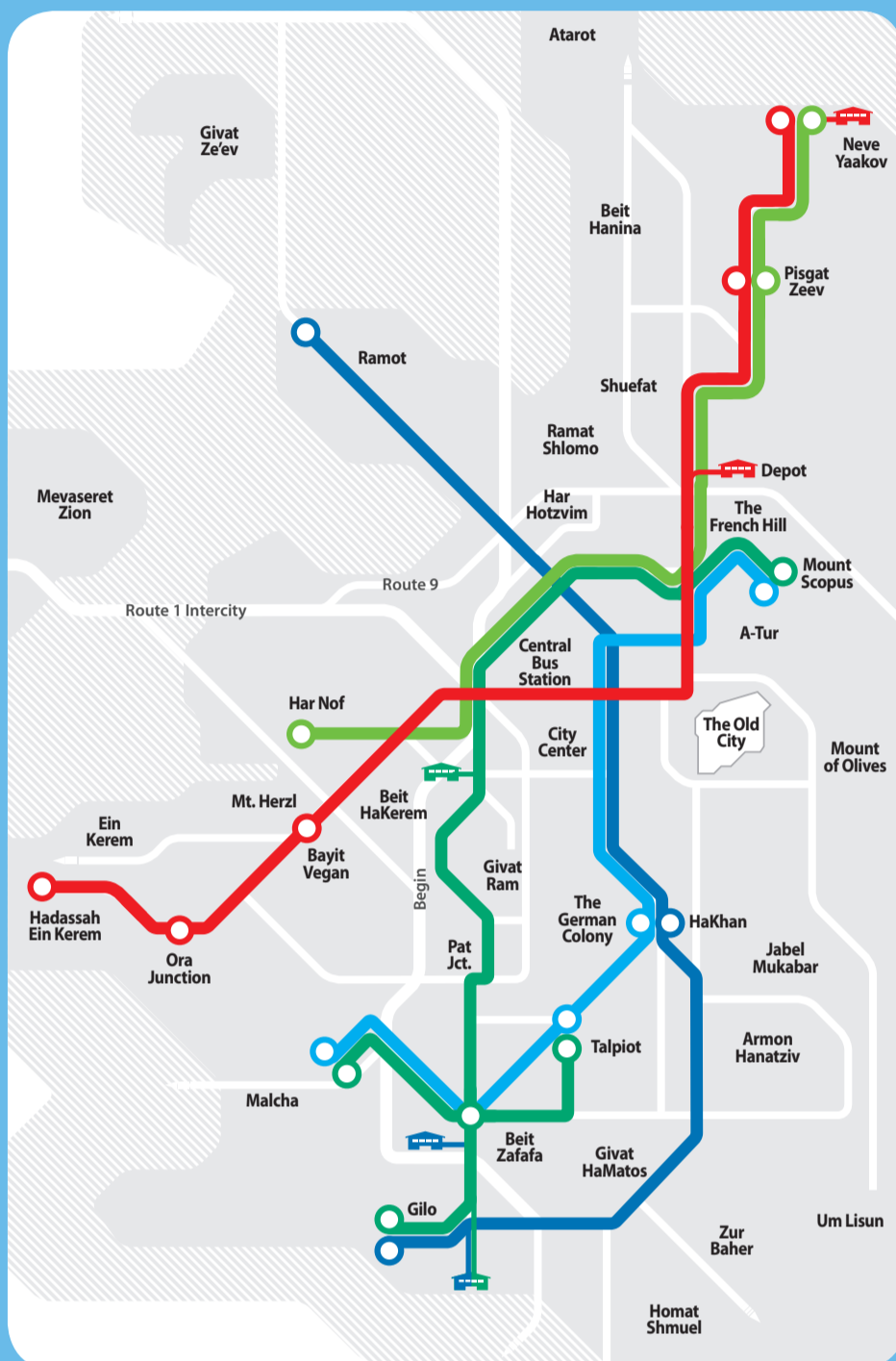
Israel has been undergoing a remarkable transportation revolution in recent years. Alongside the development of roads and the infrastructure for motorized transport, extensive resources have been allocated to LRT-based public transportation. Jerusalem has been at the forefront of a nationwide effort in this regard, and for the past five years its residents have had the benefit of a functioning LRT that will continue to expand and incorporate additional lines in the coming years.

In December 2016, the Jerusalem Transportation Masterplan Team (JTMT) submitted and deposited the new LRT Blue Line plan with the District Committee for objections. The line is expected to extend over a distance of 20 km and to undertake around 250,000 passenger journeys per day.

Following the approval of the plan, the State of Israel will proceed with a tender for the construction of the Blue Line. This will be incorporated into a future network which will include the Red and Green Lines.

The Blue Line: Facts and Figures

- * The work for the design of the Blue Line is being led by Systra Ltd. https://www.systra.com/IMG/pdf/tramway_jerusalem_en.pdf
- * The line's team for physical planning is being managed by the DEL Group. <http://www.del.co.il/english/>
- * This is the third line in the light rail transportation system in the city, following the Red and Green Lines, which together will constitute the first network of light rail lines in Israel.
- * 20 km of track, of which 2 km will be underground.
- * Expected number of stations: over 30
- * Adding 90 LRT carriages to the existing fleet.
- * Adding an additional terminal near the Arena in Malha.
- * An additional 250,000 daily users will be linked up to the existing network.
- * Upon completion, 600,000 Jerusalem residents and visitors are expected to leave their cars at home and travel anywhere in the city by light-rail. Added to this the existing highly developed bus network in the city will be adjusted to accommodate the new transportation arrangements.



The Blue Line route

According to the proposed plan, the Blue Line will set out from the Gilo neighborhood, travel along the Derech Hebron road to the Khan Theater, and from there proceed along Keren Hayesod and King George Streets. On Jaffa Street, it will cross the Red Line and enter a tunnel which will pass under Strauss and Yehezkel Streets and emerge after the Bar Ilan Street intersection. The line will then continue along the Golda Meir Boulevard close to Har Hotzvim, and from there up to the northern edge of the Ramot neighborhood.

In the other direction, and at its southern section, the line will split and branch off near the First Station compound, and proceed along Emek Refaim Street to the Oranim intersection, run parallel to the old rail track in the Gonenim (Katamonim) area until the Baram Bridge, and from there continue adjacent to the Elmaliah Garden into the Malha neighborhood around the mall, the Teddy stadium and the Arena.

Once the whole network is built, it will then be possible to create additional operating lines which combine and connect the existing lines, as passenger needs change over the years.

Government decision to advance public transportation in Jerusalem

The depositing of the plan with the District Committee is part of a joint strategic move by the Government of Israel, the Ministry of Transport, and the Jerusalem Municipality. The move adopts the Government decision of August 2016 which classifies the project as national infrastructure. The classification will be a major boon in the securing of budgetary approvals, as well as for prioritizing the planning and implementation of the Jerusalem light rail project.

Significant improvement in urban life in Israel's largest city

The Blue Line is the third line in the Jerusalem LRT network and will create new realities on the ground for transportation in Jerusalem, the environment, and, most importantly - for the mobility of the city's residents and visitors.

Today, after five years of the Red Line's operation in the city, the contribution of the LRT system to the city and its residents is clearly evident. In addition to a major improvement in the environment and the air quality in the city center, business owners in the streets that line the LRT system have attested to a major pick up in business, and 15% of residents along the route have said that they prefer leaving their cars at home and getting around by using the light rail.

Today, 150,000 people use the light rail system every day, with a steady increase of 10% a year, since the start of operation of the Red line.

With the operation of a network of three light rail lines, some 600,000 Jerusalem residents, visitors and tourists in the city are expected to benefit from a green, accessible and readily available public transportation network which affords rapid, comfortable and safe movement between all corners of the city: Neve Yaakov, Pisgat Zeev and Ramot to the north, Mount Scopus and Damascus Gate to the East, Gilo, Malha to the south and Kiryat Hayovel and Hadassah Ein Kerem to the west.

The three lines will connect centers of culture, sports, academia and leisure, as well as centers of employment in the city, for the benefit of the city's residents and visitors.