



Office of the State Comptroller
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Ministry of Transportation
and Road Safety

**Public Bus
Transportation in
Jerusalem**

Abstract

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Background

Jerusalem is the largest city in Israel. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem's population totaled about 919,400 residents at the end of 2018. In 2019, about 20-25% of the motorized transit within metropolitan Jerusalem for all purposes was via public transit (PT) by bus, and about 25% was by light rail.

Urban development and planning geared towards the use of PT is designed to increase the use of the PT network, thereby contributing to reductions in road congestion and air pollution. Increased PT use also reduces the need to allocate land for parking spaces for private vehicles in the city. In recent years, the Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety, in collaboration with the Jerusalem Municipality, has been taking action to improve the PT service in the city, such as by expanding the light rail lines and by constructing fast lanes.

Key figures

20% - 25%

of motor vehicle transit in metropolitan Jerusalem for all purposes is via PT

5.1%

nonperformed travels of PT lines in Jerusalem in 2018 (8.5% in 2017) compared to 2.4% nationwide

ILS2,642 per resident

cumulative investment in PT infrastructure in metropolitan Jerusalem, compared to ILS 7,600 in metropolitan Tel-Aviv and about ILS 6,700 in metropolitan Haifa

200 bus drivers

are lacking in Jerusalem to provide optimal PT services


1,355 overnight parking spaces

for buses need to be added in order to provide optimal PT services in 2030

30%



increase in passengers' complaints to the Ministry of Transportation in 2018 (3,943 complaints in 2017, compared to 5,106 complaints in 2018)

Audit actions

 From November 2018 to October 2019, the Office of the State Comptroller audited the level of service provided by PT bus service in Jerusalem and examined aspects impacting the quality of the service. The audit was conducted in the Ministry of Transportation and in the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team. Supplementary audit was conducted in the Jerusalem Municipality and in Egged Transit Company Ltd.

Key findings

-  **Strategic plans and master plans for the development of public transit in metropolitan Jerusalem** – in 2014, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Finance and the Jerusalem Municipality prepared a summarizing report on PT development in metropolitan Jerusalem. Since the report was published in 2014, an updated concentrated report of the relevant information over the years and with an overarching view has not been published, and the preparation of an updated comprehensive master plan for public transit in metropolitan Jerusalem, particularly regarding the aspects of tourism-related transportation, has not yet been completed.
-  **Jerusalem public transit service indicators** – according to the summary report of 2014, there are major gaps between the PT services in metropolitan Jerusalem and the PT services in developed metropolises around the world. The gaps are reflected in the number of kilometers that a public transit vehicle travels per resident per annum (34 km in Jerusalem compared to 45 km in Tel-Aviv and 100 km on average internationally); the average travel speed (16 km/h in Jerusalem compared to 17 km/h in Tel-Aviv and 25 km/h on average internationally); the number of PT boardings per resident per annum (103 boardings in Jerusalem compared to 111 boardings in Tel-Aviv and 250 boardings on average internationally), and more.
-  **PT-support infrastructure** – the quality of the PT services in Jerusalem is adversely affected by the shortage of support infrastructure – fast lanes, priority lanes, overnight bus parking spaces, operating terminals, passenger terminals, etc.
-  **Bus drivers** – there is a shortage of bus drivers, which raises a material obstacle to upgrading the PT services in Jerusalem, particularly at a time when the Ministry of Transportation is taking action to introduce new PT operators into the city.
-  **Planning of PT infrastructure in Jerusalem's neighborhoods** – some of the neighborhoods and streets in Jerusalem were built without any planning for PT infrastructures and therefore, there are shortages of PT services for residents in some of these localities.



-  **Public transit in East Jerusalem** – the transit infrastructure in East Jerusalem is deficient and does not enable PT service to be operated properly in many areas; the multiplicity of operators in the PT network in East Jerusalem impedes the development of efficient lines and, under such circumstances, passengers have to make many transfers between lines in order to reach their destinations.
-  **PT Tenders** – in December 2018, the Ministry of Transportation published two tenders for new operators to operate PT bus lines in Jerusalem. The Ministry of Transportation's inadequate preparedness in relation to various aspects, such as the shortages of drivers, PT infrastructure, priority lanes and fast lanes, may constrain the implementation of these tenders, thereby resulting in an adverse impact on the quality of the PT services in Jerusalem.



Activity to improve and organize the public transit system in Jerusalem – the Ministry of Transportation and the Jerusalem Municipality have been taking action in recent years to improve and augment the PT services in the city. These actions included expanding the bus services in the city and improving the transit system taking passengers to the Western Wall. In recent years, many efforts have also been exerted to organize the PT services in the eastern side of the city. Inter alia, enforcement actions were taken against unauthorized operators, which led to a significant reduction in their activities.

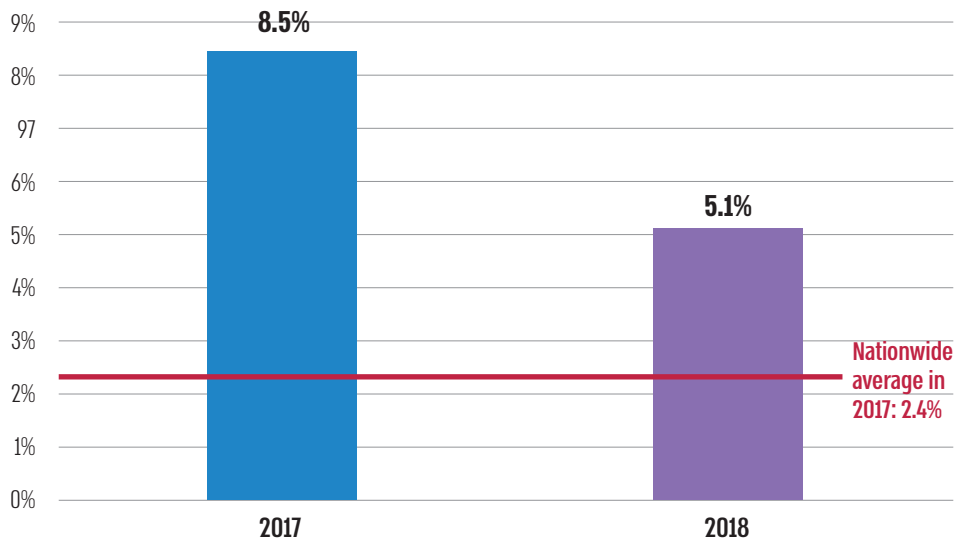
Implementation of electronic control over the activity of the Egged Bus Company – as of April 2019, the Ministry of Transportation has been operating electronic control over Egged to ascertain whether it is achieving the service levels stipulated in the agreement, including checks of nonperformed trips, delays and more. As opposed to the manual control that had been used up until then, which was based on spot checks and public complaints, the electronic control system is precise and more extensive and is at the rate of 100%, and it can contribute to improving the standards of service for passengers.

Key recommendations

-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation should complete its preparation of a comprehensive master action plan for metropolitan Jerusalem.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation should take action to construct the infrastructure facilities needed in order to expand the service in the bus lines. Without this expansion, the chances of improving the PT services in Jerusalem are low.

- It is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation should exercise its authority to increase the number of drivers in the economy in general and in metropolitan Jerusalem in particular, so that the PT operators will succeed in recruiting the number of drivers needed to provide and even expand the service.
- The Jerusalem Municipality should ensure that the planning of new neighborhoods will be PT-oriented planning, according to the principles and guidelines set by the Ministry of Transportation in 2016.
- It is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation, in collaboration with the Jerusalem Municipality and other relevant authorities, should continue its actions to improve the PT service in East Jerusalem and should consider various ways to improve it, including reorganization of the PT lines to serve additional destinations and new developed areas, increasing the enforcement against the pirate transit system and more.

Ratio of nonperformed travels¹ in Jerusalem in 2017 – 2018, compared to the national average in 2017



According to data from the Ministry of Transportation, processed by the Office of the State Comptroller.

¹ Ratio of trips not provided out of all trips stipulated in the line's license.



Summary

Improving the PT service in Jerusalem requires integrated planning activities by the Ministry of Transportation to provide a solution for the needs of all users of PT service in the city – residents of the city, residents of the suburbs, tourists and visitors of the city. The Ministry of Transportation and the Jerusalem Municipality should also take action to advance the many projects being planned in the city – from the construction of overnight parking lots, PT terminals and lanes, to the construction of the future light rail tracks – all with efficiency and persistence, while maintaining the public welfare and while conforming to the shortest possible timetable. Furthermore, the Ministry of Transportation, the Jerusalem Municipality and Egged should take action to make the PT services accessible to all neighborhoods in Jerusalem and to improve the PT service to the Western Wall.