

ני שמהש
לא נפתר

I
pledge!



Dear fellow residents of Beit shemesh,

I'd like to present to you a new urban vision and a strategic plan for the development of Beit shemesh. This vision and action plan touch upon a wide range of city services: education, social services, welfare, construction, infrastructure, environmental concerns, immigrant absorption, and more. With G-d's providence, upon my election as mayor, and with the help of many, I pledge to promote and expand city services and tailor them to the needs of the residents.

This vision for the city is the result of a months-long communal, grassroots effort that involved hundreds of local residents, volunteers, and professionals. A number of roundtable sessions were held on a wide range of issues to address the needs of all residents, and propose solutions to the various problems, needs and challenges faced by the many diverse

sectors and neighborhoods in the city. I believe this vision can only be implemented if the different sectors succeed in cooperating towards mutually beneficial goals. This is something I believe in deeply and commit to advance as mayor.

The essential points of this platform are:

- Professional management based on quantitative measures and transparency
- Continuous communication with residents to learn the different sectors' needs
- Responsive, convenient, and user-friendly services
- Quality-of-service and excellence in the various municipal departments
- Rebranding Beit shemesh in all realms: culture, education, multiculturalism, youth, and sport
- Forging partnerships and cooperation at both the local and national levels
- Recruiting and pooling resources both within the city and outside to advance the different programs

*Yours,
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f "אלי כהן לראשות העיר"



ביג שמש גוברג אגושים

הבית
היהודי

אלי
כהן

Below are the main areas and programs I pledge to advance on becoming mayor of Beit shemesh:

Education

The vision: The educational system of Beit shemesh will be outstanding and worthy of emulation, offering a diverse choice of educational frameworks so that every student can realize their own scholastic and creative potential.

The targets:

Create an institute for science, technology, and the arts that will serve every high-school student. The institute will broaden the matriculation choices for both the academic and vocational tracks, and will be run by a specialized and experienced professional staff. Open special education schools and kindergartens that will be accessible to everyone, including: a school for vocational training, an integrated school (similar to the 'Reishit' school in Gush Etzion), and the establishment of unique tracks for academic and vocational training, including those geared to the Haredi sector.

I pledge that by 2018 the educational system of Beit shemesh will be in the top ten percent in Israel.

City Infrastructure and Services

The vision: Beit shemesh will see a dramatic upgrade in infrastructure and in the provision of city services for the benefit of the residents.

The objectives:

Upgrade the traffic infrastructure: roads, sidewalks, and road safety measures, while limiting traffic of trucks and offroad vehicles. Initiate a phased upgrade of the infrastructure in the older parts of the city in partnership with National government revitalization plans for old Beit shemesh. Restore water and sewage systems, roads, parks for children, and public buildings.

Upgrade and fix infrastructure in the newer neighborhoods, increasing the size and number of green spaces, paving bicycle paths, installing city-wide, free WIFI accessibility, in keeping with a modern city.

Cleaning and sanitation: ensuring thorough and effective sanitation services, which will improve the city's appearance.

Enforce recognized standards of accountability and quality of service in all city services, such as sanitation, building permits, arnona collection, and signage.

I pledge that by 2017 the city's infrastructure will be upgraded in keeping with the goals we're setting

Youth

The vision: Beit shemesh will place the issue of our youth at the top of its list of priorities, and will positively promote the various areas that relate to youth in general, and in particular will address problems relating to children at risk.

Targets:

Develop quality programs for youth in all fields.

Promote intensive and rewarding activities both within schools and outside.

Increase the enforcement of law and order where appropriate. Create a network of youth coordinators who will create programs for the city's youth.

Establish a youth center, similar to those existing in many of the country's leading cities.

Open centers across the city that will be a second "home" for youth at risk who need special attention and a warm environment.

Strengthen the youth movements in the city by allocating

appropriate resources, both financial and institutional.

I pledge to establish by 2016 a variety of frameworks and recreational opportunities appropriate for our youth, of all ages and sectors.

Employment

The vision: Beit shemesh, owing to its strategic location in the country, will become a center for industry, factories, and leading companies and thus will offer thousands of jobs for the residents of Beit shemesh and its surrounding areas.

Targets:

Expand the existing industrial areas and technology parks and attract leading companies and factories in order to provide employment for all job seekers in a variety of fields. Create entrepreneurial incubators that will assist young entrepreneurs to actualize ideas from various fields as well as to encourage businesses to move to Beit shemesh.

Re-start the employment training centers and upgrade their activities so that city residents without professional training can acquire the skills needed to fit into the employment market. Establish distinctive employment solutions for the Haredi sector, so they can easily integrate into the job market and choose appropriate employment opportunities.

Expansion of the employment areas in the city is a vital economic tool for developing Beit shemesh by using the municipal taxes paid by businesses.

The increase in the places of employment in the city will be an important factor in attracting new residents and keeping young adults in the city.

I pledge that by 2018 new high-quality companies and factories will be established in the existing industrial areas so that the number of employed persons in Beit shemesh will increase dramatically.

Construction and Residency

The Vision: Beit shemesh, as a multicultural city, will be attractive for people from every sector of Israel's population who wish to reside here. Beit shemesh will offer housing options to all sectors in an equitable manner.

The objectives:

Absorb new residents from all sectors.

Tailor both existing and future plans to benefit the entire public, equitably.

Allocate land for construction while taking into consideration environmental and archaeological concerns, and giving preference to local residents.

Create a range of housing options for the public, allocating land for private homes, senior residences, and rental accommodations.

I pledge that by the year 2016 Beit shemesh will see an influx of more than 10,000 new residents.

Higher Education

The vision: Beit shemesh will become a center of higher education for local residents and students from outside the city.

The targets:

Significantly increase the number of college and university students residing in the city by providing aid programs, such as scholarships, mentoring, and guidance.

Create financial incentives and overall support to encourage students to study in the city and thus to establish their homes and develop their careers in their home town.

Establish a reputable academic college that will draw young adults to the city (similar to the college in Ashqelon) and enable the local population to acquire a higher education at the highest levels, in coordination with the Council for Higher Education and the Education Ministry.

I pledge that by 2017 the construction of a Beit shemesh College for higher education will begin and a plan will be formulated to offer assistance and financial aid to the city's residents.

Multicultural Population

The vision: We will foster a multicultural atmosphere that will enable the entire population to take part in city life and its growth. Beit shemesh will be a shining example in Israel of tolerance and mutual respect between the Dati, Chiloni, and Haredi sectors.

Targets:

Create frameworks of joint ventures between communities in the city, by way of roundtables, meetings and joint activities to promote common interests.

Encourage cooperation, dialogue, and friendship between communities while maintaining the distinctive nature and uniqueness of each community.

I pledge that by 2015 a framework for cooperative activities will be run for the benefit of our different communities and sectors, with the purpose of fostering mutual understanding and learning about how to conduct a proper and enriching multicultural communal life.

Absorbing Aliyah

The vision: Beit shemesh will return to being a preferred destination for new immigrants, where they will enjoy comfortable absorption. We will also improve the living conditions of Olim who have already made their homes in the City.

Targets:

Establish a support network that will include the running of a City absorption department, the creation of Hebrew ulpans, suitable frameworks for children of Olim, referrals of Olim to employment opportunities which suit their professional training, planning for future Aliyah and its blending into the fabric of our urban life.

Significantly increase the annual number of Olim who arrive in Beit shemesh, in cooperation with the National Institutions.

Encourage Aliyah in general and in Beit shemesh in particular.

I pledge that by 2017 the percentage of Olim who choose to make Beit shemesh their home will increase by 30 percent, and the manner in which the City deals with Olim will improve.

The Environment

The vision: Beit shemesh will become a leader in sustainability and will adopt an overall strategy for improving environmental quality, and as a result its residents will enjoy an improved quality of life.

Targets:

Build sensible and sustainable development in new areas and in the upgrading and redevelopment of the older areas.

Teach environmental issues as part of the curriculum in our schools in order to develop a generation that cares for their environment and acts responsibly.

Develop and care for our own environmental assets by establishing a National Park.

Upgrade our environmental infrastructure based on modern standards in the fields of air pollution, waste treatment, garbage separation and recycling, deployment of cellular antennas, evening noise disturbance, and more.

I pledge that by 2018 Beit shemesh will join the list of leading cities in the field of environmental quality.

Culture

The vision: Beit shemesh will become a multi-faceted cultural focal point for the residents and will draw a variety of leading artists.

Targets:

Build a municipal cultural center together with a city library and conservatory.

Cultivate local cultural talent, advance local theater companies, musicians, and choirs.

Revitalize the old city center to provide a stage for street theater, art exhibits, and outdoor concerts.

Provide incentives and an infrastructure to draw artists to establish their homes and studios here, where they can draw inspiration from the beautiful surrounding scenery.

Attract cultural entrepreneurs to Beit shemesh who will provide entertainment and culture for the entire range of the city's residents of all age groups: children's plays, theater, film, and more.

Reinforce the cultural infrastructure around the historic roots of the city, the natural surroundings and the extensive local archaeological treasures, establish a museum to portray the city's beginnings as a maabarah, and the promotion of Tanach based tours and enterprises.

I pledge that by 2016 the municipal cultural center will be built which will bring to Beit shemesh artists and will promote artistic growth among our talented local youth

Sports

The vision: Beit shemesh will allow each resident to fulfill their aspirations in the field of sports and physical activity, and appropriate athletic facilities will be built for their enjoyment and benefit.

Targets:

Develop a range of athletic frameworks in the city that will enable all citizens, young and old alike, to fulfill their potential in this area.

Build a variety of appropriate sports facilities that will be available throughout the city.

Encourage achievement-oriented and competitive sports that will place the city and its residents on the national sports landscape.

I pledge to establish by 2016 a series of sites on which a variety of quality athletic facilities will be built for the benefit of Beit shemesh citizens.