



Vision for Tsfat in 2021

Prosperity & Resilience in a National and World Heritage Site

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Introduction

This document outlines the vision of the city of Tsfat in 2021, as well as the deriving principles of operation and urgent operational tasks. It is the outcome of a strategic process led by Tsfat's Mayor Mr. Ilan Shochat on July 18, 2011, with a small group of his senior staff and advisors, which was led by the Reut Institute.

The Vision: Rapid Growth, Inclusiveness and Resilience

- **Tsfat's socio-economic profile and the quality of life of all of its citizens will leap from the third to the sixth cohort according to Israel's Central Bureau for Statistics' Index.** The leap will be achieved by attracting upper-middle-class families to live in Tsfat, as well as by improving the socio-economic condition of the current population. Hence, **Tsfat's population will grow moderately to 45,000 residents**, and the city will expand by 2,500 new units built at a high-standard, with the complimentary infrastructure;
- **Tsfat will be 'the Capital of the Galilee'** and the most populated city of the Upper Galilee, providing basic services to its surroundings in the realms of health, welfare, education, culture, art, sports and leisure;
- **The Old City of Tsfat will be recognized as a 'World Heritage Site' and become an international tourist destination**, connected to other world cities that have a unique heritage in the realms of spirituality and Judaism;
- **Tsfat will become the global center of Jewish spirituality and culture** based on its 16th century legacy of shaping modern Jewish practices and traditions of prayer, Shabbat and holidays, as well as in the realms of mysticism and Kabbalah;



Yiddish culture, Eastern European musical tradition; and Jewish religious art and craftsmanship;

- **Tsfat will be a leading national center for family and community medicine**, based on the new Medical School and research institute that will be built in the city. The quality of medical and health services for the residents of Tsfat and the entire northern region will rise significantly;
- **Tsfat will be a model of local resilience in Israel and around the world** based on a network of organizations and individuals, residents of the city and its surroundings, who are committed to ensuring a 'culture of preparedness' during crises such as natural disasters or wars;
- **Tsfat will be a model for a city with green and healthy living**, which promotes socio-economic development, while protecting natural resources for future generations;
- **The community institutions in Tsfat will be overhauled** – Community centers (*Matnasim*) in Tsfat will be upgraded and expanded in order to provide social, educational and cultural content and activities to all citizens of the city by developing sports, recreation and leisure facilities. These community institutions will connect a network of neighborhoods and promote public spaces that are safe, clean, and vibrant;
- **Tsfat's municipality will be financially independent and fiscally balanced.**

Unique Assets: The Old City and the Medical School

A 'unique local asset' is a quality that cannot be transferred or replicated elsewhere, since it is rooted in geography, demography, climate, history, tradition, environmental or physical infrastructure. If such a unique asset synergizes with a powerful and consistent global trend, it may become an engine of social and economic development. For example, while an Old City that is a world heritage site may be a unique asset, an industrial plant or a festival are not since these assets can be relocated.



1. **The City of Tsfat has two 'unique assets':**

- **The Old City of Tsfat, which is associated with spirituality and Jewish Kabbalah**, has been inhabited continuously for 4,000 years, and was home to a Jewish community that dates back twenty one centuries. In the 16th century, Tsfat has gained recognition for its influence on modern Jewish traditions of prayer, holydays and rituals of Shabbat. In recent years,



there has been growing interest in spirituality and Jewish Kabbalah around the world, with celebrities such as Madonna or Donna Karen, as well as millions of other people, embracing its principles in Kabbalah Centers around the world. Against this backdrop, evidently, Tsfat's brand and its potential as a destination and a tourism attraction has yet to be reached: 1.2 million tourists visit the city annually, while only about 100,000 (8.7%) stay overnight.

- **Medical School and Research Center** – The Israeli government decided to establish a medical school and research center in Tsfat and pledged a total investment of \$400 million, to be financed equally by the government, as well as local and international philanthropists. The Medical School will officially open in October 2011 and should eventually include laboratories, research and teaching facilities, dormitories and sport facilities. It is expected to attract a vibrant community of academics and practitioners, as well as students, interns, and other healthcare professionals.

In this context, the **Tsfat College** is an additional development engine that has recently doubled its student population to 2,100 students.

2. **Tsfat's unique assets are linked to other unique assets in the region and across Israel**, which can strengthen Tsfat's development engine:

- **Tzadikim (righteous) graves** – The surrounding area of Tsfat houses many righteous graves, like that of Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai, known as RASHBI, that attracts tens of thousands of visitors and pilgrims;
- **Other world heritage towns in northern Israel** – The unique assets of Tsfat tie the city to other ancient towns in the Galilee, primarily Acre, which has already been declared a World Heritage Site, Nazareth and Tiberias, as well as Peki'in and Shfaram;
- **Holy Jewish cities** – Tsfat is one of the four biblical holy cities in the Land of Israel, in addition to Tiberias, Hebron and Jerusalem;
- **Jewish spirituality and art** – Tsfat has unique assets and traditions in the realms of Jewish spirituality and art such as: Kleizmer music, Yiddish culture, mysticism and the legacy of Shabbat. Also, Tsfat has assets associated with the legacy of Hungarian Jewry. As such, Tsfat may connect to institutions such as *Beit Hatfutsot* (the Museum of the Jewish People – formerly the Diaspora Museum) or Yad Vashem;
- **The Galilee is the focus of Israel's wellness and lifestyle industries** due to the herbs and the many spices that have grown in the region for thousands of years, as well as for its air quality;
- **Ethics and medicine** – the field of ethical medicine is becoming more complex due to the implications of new scientific developments, such as stem cell research. The combination of the wellness and lifestyle industries



that characterize the Galilee, with Tsfat's assets in the areas of spirituality and religion, in addition to the development of the Medical School, may create a unique opportunity to become an international center in the area of ethics and medicine for members of all faiths.

The Challenges: Inclusiveness and Resilience

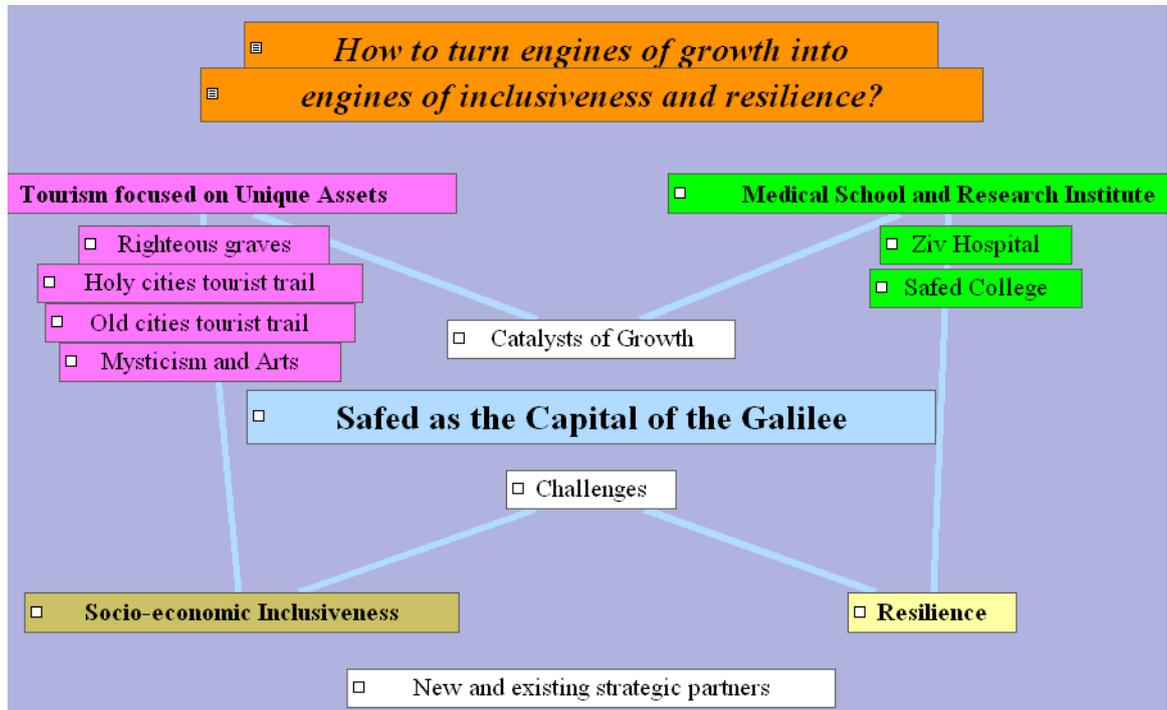
3. Tsfat faces two major challenges:

- **Resilience: ensuring a 'culture of preparedness' and mobilizing a civil network for local resilience** – Tsfat must be prepared to experience a severe crisis twice a decade due to war (the presence of IDF's Northern Command in the city turns Tsfat into a prime target in times of war). In addition, Tsfat is located on an active geological fault line, which generates strong earthquakes roughly once a century, with the last one taking place in 1928. Hence, a 'culture of preparedness' must be integral to life in Tsfat and embedded in the social fabric of the city;
- **Inclusiveness: raising the average income and improving social services** – Tsfat faces complex socio-economic challenges: 40% of its residents are supported by the welfare system and 10% are unemployed. Its population is made-up of distinct and separate communities: an ultra-orthodox community that is not fully integrated into the work force; Arab residents; immigrants from the former USSR; traditional and secular families mostly from the lower-middle class; and new immigrants from Ethiopia.

This reality highlights the challenge of inclusiveness, i.e. of raising incomes through job creation and increased productivity, improving healthcare, welfare, education, culture, art and music activities and services, as well as offering sports and recreation activities for all. Non-inclusive growth may subject Tsfat to the danger of having two isolated and 'gated' 'pockets of wealth' around the Medical School and the Old City amidst an area of poverty. Such a scenario will prevent the Medical School from improving the quality of life of residents in Tsfat and across northern Israel.

The Challenges: Inclusive Development that Increases Resilience

4. **The challenge facing the Government of Israel and the City of Tsfat is to ensure that the engines of growth will promote inclusiveness and strengthen resilience** – The objective must be to raise the levels of income for residents of the city by taking advantage of the engines of growth that have been identified above, while ensuring that all growth initiatives are inclusive and promote resilience.



5. **How can the Medical School contribute to inclusiveness in Tsfat?** – In addition to areas where the medical school's contribution to the development of the city and the region may be obvious – such as by attracting professional and middle-class families, creating new jobs, and upgrading the medical services in the region – the school may contribute to inclusiveness in the following ways:

- **Specializing in community, family and preventative medicine** – The level of medical services in Tsfat and its surroundings, as well as in other areas in Israel's geographic periphery, is lower than in the center of Israel. Partial remedy will be offered by a new governmental program that builds specialized capabilities in the main hospitals in the north, (Tiberius, Tsfat, Nazareth, Afula and Nahariya) in areas such as oncology or cardiology.

Another approach to significantly improve the medical services in the area would be to focus the new Medical School on family, community and preventative medicine and to encourage students and faculty to become involved in the health care centers (*Kupot Holim*), community centers, and early childhood centers (*Tipot Halav*) across the region;

- **Specializing in alternative and holistic medicine** – While spirituality can be a trademark of Tsfat and one of its unique assets, the field of wellness and healthy lifestyle is a unique asset of the Galilee region, where Tsfat is located. Therefore, specialization in these areas may enhance and integrate these regional assets;
- **Specializing in emergency medicine**, and turning Tsfat into the regional center in this area, through cooperation with the IDF, in order to increase



increase the resilience of Tsfat's community in crisis situations. This could be done by transferring the military paramedic school to Tsfat, establishing a regional rehabilitation center, or by locating the regional center of MADA in Tsfat;

- **Strengthening Tsfat College** – The Medical School and Tsfat College can become mutually reinforcing entities in the following ways:
 - The college could focus on programs in fields such as physiotherapy, medical law, nursing, training of paramedics, laboratories, wellness, or therapy for children with disabilities;
 - Dormitories, sports facilities and other major infrastructure of the college and the Medical School could be shared;
 - **Strengthening Ziv Hospital;**
 - **Designing the sport facilities at the Medical School to serve all residents of the city** – Tsfat does not have a single modern multi-purpose sports center. Hence, the sport facilities of the Medical School may also serve the city if designed, expanded and upgraded to do so;
 - **Access to university facilities such as an auditorium or library to all residents of the city;**
 - **Promoting student volunteer programs (such as *Perach*)** in which students from the Medical School and Tsfat College offer support to children in the areas of math, science or English, as well as first aid courses to youth and adults. Mastery of the English language is also important for the tourism industry in Tsfat;
 - **Developing health training programs for underprivileged populations** – The demographic makeup of Tsfat requires specialized training programs to empower citizens in the areas of medicine, nursing, occupational therapy and more, primarily within the ultra-orthodox community;
 - **Establishing greenhouses for innovation** in order to promote the application of patents in the field of bio-medicine, with an emphasis on the link between technology and community and family medicine, as well as in the wellness industry;
 - **Establishing a high school for Arts and Sciences adjacent to the Medical School** that will become the leading educational center in the region.
6. **How can the development of the Old City contribute to inclusiveness?** – Tsfat should commit to avoid the 'Atlantic City syndrome', where there was a gap between the low socio-economic profile of the residents and the shiny touristic appearance of the city. This could be achieved through the following:
- **Encouraging entrepreneurship among the ultra-Orthodox, especially in the area of tourism and hospitality** – The ultra-orthodox population can be



a major driving force for the tourism industry in the city due to being anchored in spirituality, Jewish heritage and craftsmanship, Jewish music and Yiddish culture. Special training programs in the restoration of buildings, Judaica, Jewish Art (scribe) or music (klezmer), can be developed to increase the participation of this community in the workforce;

- **Training young people to become hosts / tour guides** – Outstanding high school students or senior citizens could be trained as tour guides and hosts in order to meet the peak seasonal demands;
- **Integrating the Tsfat College in the development of tourism** – the Tsfat college can run training programs for tourist guides; programs in rehabilitation, restoration and preservation of buildings, as well as programs that are related to the wellness industry such as in holistic medicine or sports medicine;
- **Integrating the Medical School in the development of tourism** – the school could provide health services for tourists, including in holistic medicine;
- **Providing incentives to entrepreneurs to establish businesses that reinforce the city's unique assets**, such as in the fields of Judaica (jewelers) or music (klezmer);
- **Promote health and sports tourism that connects tourism, the vision of a healthy city and the region's unique assets in the area of wellness.** Examples include: bicycle touring and racing, cross-country hiking trails and family trips across the Blue Valley, the Canaan Park and the forests and mountains around Tsfat;
- **Creating a local sense of pride for Tsfat's unique story** – Many of Tsfat's residents do not identify with or take pride in the city due to its poor image. Building a leading brand for Tsfat in combination with increased tourism may change this image. The education system could be harnessed to create this renewed local identity.

7. **How can the tourism industry and the Medical School enhance Tsfat's preparedness for crisis?** – As mentioned above, the cultivation of Tsfat's resilience must be an integral part of the city's fabric in the following ways:

- **Including students from Tsfat college and the Medical School in the emergency response plans of the city** – In an emergency situation, students of medicine, social work and paramedical professions, who are not part of the reserve forces of the IDF, can be part of Tsfat's medical response force – if this expectation is communicated in advance. Pre-existing personal association between these volunteers and community centers (MATNASIM) and early childhood center (*Tipot Chalav*) are essential in this context;



- **Maintaining contact with tourists that could help the city in a crisis and building a website specializing in selling products online** – Tourists who visited the city, primarily Jews, can help Tsfat transcend a crisis especially through continued support of local businesses;
- **Preparing businesses to continue to function during emergency.** Those who live in the city are most likely to continue to run their businesses during a crisis and thus will contribute to resilience.

Community Institutions

8. **Redesigning existing urban platforms** (community institutions) is a necessary condition to fulfill the growth potential of Tsfat, strengthen its resilience, and improve the quality of life for all its residents:

- **A bustling community center in every neighborhood** – A thriving network of community centers is the basis for prosperous community life and local resilience. Thus, the three existing community centers need to be upgraded, and three new ones need to be established.

Therefore, Tsfat's vision includes a network of community centers which: (1) actively offer and promote all aspects of community-based services for residents of all ages in culture, arts, sports, vocational training, welfare, community healthcare and resilience, as well as, provide for citizen participation in decision-making; (2) serve as platforms for empowering local leaders; (3) cooperate with other local institutions, such as the Youth Center and the Business Development Center (*MATI*), to provide integrated vocational training and employment for the adult population of Tsfat; (4) serve as music and art centers.

- **Strengthening existing youth movements and establishing a new one for the ultra-Orthodox sector** – Tsfat's vision views thriving youth movements as key to improving quality of life in the city; to strengthening resilience and training the emergency response force; to developing Tsfat as a tourist destination by offering guidance and hospitality; and to promoting Tsfat's vision of a 'healthy city';
- **Tsfat as a 'musical city' / annual international Klezmer festival** – As Klezmer music is central to Tsfat's identity and unique assets, Eastern European Jewish music should also be an integral part of the fabric of life for all residents. Therefore, Tsfat's vision includes: (1) establishing **music centers** that will inculcate musical skills (classical and Jewish) **among amateurs**, especially youth in conjunction with the community centers; (2) continuing and expanding the annual international Klezmer festival; (3) establishing **a music center and conservatory for professional musicians** that specializes in the areas that are unique to Tsfat; and (4) **integrating Ethiopian musicians and music into this effort**;



- **Sport and healthy lifestyle** are central to quality of life in Tsfat. Thus the vision for the city emphasizes full access for all residents to amateur and competitive sports activities. To this end, Tsfat must build the following major sports centers: (1) the sport center of the Medical School should serve as the major sports arena; (2) a professional pool; (3) an additional sport center to serve the old neighborhoods; and (4) Tsfat will offer walking and running paths, sport and recreation facilities in public gardens, as well as biking routes across the city;
- **Family health, special needs, early childhood, and social services** – The vision of Tsfat includes high-quality services in general and community healthcare, individual care for people with special needs, and dental health accessible to all residents. Hence, Tsfat must develop the following: (1) family health clinics in new neighborhoods; (2) access to healthcare services for people with special needs from low socio-economic backgrounds and; (3) early childhood services in every neighborhood. As such, the goal is to build three health centers, one in every neighborhood in order to ensure high-quality services.
- **Culture** – Tsfat does not have a single proper cultural center. Tsfat's vision includes three cultural anchors: (1) a cultural center that will serve residents from the whole Galilee region; (2) a leisure and business center, which includes a movie theater; and (3) Yad La'banim – a memorial hall for fallen soldiers (possibly as part of the cultural center mentioned above).

Existing and New Partnerships around Tsfat's Unique Assets

9. Tsfat has an array of relationships with government officials such as the Ministries of Finance, Interior, Industry, Trade and Labor, of Construction and Housing, Education, Tourism, Development of the Negev and Galilee, Transport, Culture and Sport, as well as with agencies such as the Israel Land Administration, the Antiquities Authority, the Israel Association of Community Centers, Mekorot (Israel's National Water Authority), 'Peleg of the Galilee' Water Company, Israel Electric Corporation and with neighboring municipalities and non-governmental organizations such as Elka.
10. Notwithstanding the above, Tsfat may strive to enhance cooperation with the following organizations to exploit its unique assets and address its unique challenges:
 - **IDF's Northern Command** – The presence of IDF's Northern Command in the city enhances the threat to its residents. Moreover, the Second Lebanon War in 2006 has taught that Israel's ability to succeed in a future conflict depends on the resilience of its society. Hence, as Tsfat's resilience is critical to success in future conflicts, the Ministry of Defense, the IDF and more specifically, the IDF Northern Command, should give special attention to



Tsfat, as they did in Sderot in the past, to help the city develop its emergency response organizations.

Ideas for substantiating such collaboration include: directing military and civilian infrastructure to the city; prioritizing the recruitment of Tsfat's ultra-Orthodox residents to the IDF's specially designated programs such as *Shachar*; encouraging the Northern Command to purchase services and products from local suppliers; directing military recreation programs to Tsfat; allocating teacher-soldiers to strengthen the education system; creating a permanent connection between the Home Front Command of the IDF and the community centers in the city; building permanent housing for families of military personnel in Tsfat; and relocating IDF's training centers to Tsfat, with focus on emergency medicine;

- **Bar-Ilan University** is one of Tsfat's strategic partners in establishing the Medical School. In addition, Bar-Ilan University oversees the activities of Tsfat College. This document outlines multiple ideas for developing this strategic relationship;
- **Beit Hatfutsot / the Museum of the Jewish People (formerly known as the Diaspora Museum)**, may become Tsfat's strategic partner in the fields of Jewish art and culture (Yiddish language, klezmer music, craftsmanship, etc.) and the legacy of Hungarian Jewry. One of the options for partnership would be to establish a branch of the museum in Tsfat;
- **Cultivating a Network of Friends of Tsfat** that are committed to the city's prosperity and resilience;
- **Birthright Israel** could bring fifty thousand young Jews to Tsfat and create the basis for an international network of friends of Tsfat in the Jewish world;
- **The Jewish National Fund (JNF)** – Tsfat could promote cooperation with the JNF pursuing the vision of a green and sustainable city, developing public spaces and eco-tourism trails;
- **Spirituality, specifically Jewish spirituality:** Tsfat can cooperate with: the **College of Kiryat Ono** (in the field of inter-religious studies), the **Shalom Hartman Institute**, the **European Union** (to promote inter-religious programs, and programs on spirituality and philosophy of religion), the international **Kabbalah Center**, **Aish HaTorah** institutions, and other organizations that promote Jewish spirituality such as **Bina – the Center for Jewish Identity and Hebrew Culture**;
- **Twin cities** – Tsfat could aim at developing close cooperation with international cities that are well-known for their legacy of spirituality or Jewish heritage such as the city of Cordoba in Spain, Prague in the Czech Republic, Krakow in Poland or Budapest in Hungary.



Primary Strategic Initiatives

- **Formally approving the Vision for Tsfat 2021 document, updating the municipal master plan accordingly, and establishing the institutions that are necessary for a leapfrog** in quality of life of Tsfat's residents (such as the Tsfat Economic Development Authority);
- **Lobbying for a formal decision by the Government of Israel** to recognize Tsfat as a *national asset* and to support several of the projects that were identified as crucial to its vision within the coming decade. The Israeli government's financial support could be leveraged by philanthropic resources;
- **Creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Bar-Ilan University**, which lists the different projects by which the Medical School will contribute to a leapfrog in quality of life of Tsfat's residents and to promote Inclusiveness;
- **Creating an MOU with the security establishment / IDF Northern Command / Home Front Command** that lists the initiatives where cooperation is possible, in order to contribute to a leapfrog in the quality of life of Tsfat's residents and to strengthen their resilience;
- **Creating partnerships in the field of tourism** especially in the context of: holy cities, historical cities, Tzadikim graves, and wine tasting in the Galilee;
- **Establishing the Tsfat Development Fund to strengthen the city's relationships with existing partners** such as Partnership Together of the Jewish Agency (formerly Partnership 2000), the RASHI Foundation, the I.D.B Foundation, JDC-Israel; Birthright Israel; as well as to develop new partnerships with Beit HaTfutsot, twin cities, or Jewish communities around the world that have an historical connection to Tsfat;
- **Preventing the monopolization of Tsfat's economic assets** by upgrading the legislation and regulation to ensure that all residents of Tsfat will be able to enjoy the 'fruits' of the city's economic assets, particularly in regards to the Old City;
- **Building a New Tsfat** – The physical planning of the new neighborhoods of Tsfat should target middle-class families, in order to strengthen the demographic make-up of the city (attracting families in which both parents work, and belong to a socio-economic level of 7-8 according to Israel's Bureau of Statistics);
- **Establishing a national center for sustainability** in Tsfat, offering consulting services in research, development, education and training, while promoting the development of start-ups and greenhouses in the Cleantech industry.

End.