

Publication of Tender for Construction of the central section of Road 531 Project

Minister Katz: Road 531 will create an unbroken and speedy link between Sharon cities and the Tel Aviv metropolis, and an east-west road, and is one of the largest and most important projects ever undertaken in Israel. The cost is estimated to total 3.7 billion NIS.

An important step to alleviate traffic congestion in the central region. Israel National Roads Company published a tender for the construction of the central section of Road 531, connecting Ranana, Kefar Saba and Herzliya to the Tel Aviv metropolis and Israel's north-south roads – the Coastal highway, Geah highway, Trans-Israel highway and Netivei Ayalon highway. Minister of Transport and Road Safety, **Israel Katz**, announced the tender's publication today.

Minister Katz said that Road 531 will be one of the central east-west roads in the Sharon area, and will connect traffic from Coastal highway to the Trans-Israel highway via Netivei Ayalon. The road will be 17 kilometers long. As part of the project, Netivei Ayalon will be extended northward to the Shefayim area. "Road 531 is one of the largest and most important projects ever undertaken in Israel" added Minister Katz.

General Manager of Israel National Roads Company, architect **Shai Baras** indicated that publication of the tenders for construction of the east-west highway between Ranana, Kefar Saba and Herzliya and the Tel Aviv metropolis was made possible after Minister Katz assigned responsibility for project implementation to the Israel National Roads Company.

The Minister of Transport stated that the project integrates highway and railway construction, including 11 interchanges, 36 bridges and tunnels. The road will have four to six lanes in each direction. The driving speed will be 110 KPH. The project cost is estimated to total 3.7 billion NIS, and construction will take four years.

The Minister of Transport revealed that alongside the new road, a railway will be built, and two new train stations. The Sharon line will connect to the

national railway network through the Coastal line (Tel Aviv – Haifa) and will provide Sharon residents with rapid rail access to Tel Aviv as well.

The project will be implemented using the Design Build method, requiring the companies that win the tender to design and construct the road and railway sections according to predefined schedules.

Minister Katz said that the central part of the road, that is four kilometers long, will provide an additional transport solution for traffic flowing from Herzliya and Raanana. This road section includes part of the Bus rapid transit system (BRT) that will be implemented in the Sharon. The road, the majority of which will be a long underpass, also includes construction of the new **Raanana West** train station.

The previous tender for the Raanana South interchange included construction of a three level interchange. In the upper level, road 531 will be elevated and will cross over existing Road 4. In the lower level, a 1.8 kilometer long tunnel will be dug, railway tracks will be laid and a passenger station will be built.

Architect Shai Baras noted: "The new road will offer drivers a convenient transportation alternative for driving between Sharon towns and from these towns to the Tel Aviv region. Train passengers will also enjoy a convenient alternative through the construction of two new passenger stations and the Sharon rail line".

Chairman of the Israel National Roads Company, **Micha Goldman**: "The road 531 project was designed, first and foremost, so as to provide a solution for pedestrians, drivers and public transportation passengers in the Sharon region. Upon its completion, we anticipate relief and reduction of congestion in the existing roads that serve the region's population".

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