

Hof Hasharon Regional Council

- The Hof Hasharon Regional Council is located in the center of the Sharon, an area also known as the Mediterranean coastal plain.
- There are 13 communities in the regional council: six moshavim, five kibbutzim, and two *yishuvim kehilati'im* (community settlements) as well as a residential area that is not located within the bounds of a community. In addition, there is a youth village and facility for pensioners within its jurisdiction.
- The regional council has a population of approximately 13,000 people.
- Area of jurisdiction: Some 50,000 dunams (12,500 acres) that extend from the Mediterranean Sea westward to Route 4 and Even Yehuda in the east and between Kfar Shemaryahu, Herzliya, and Ra'anana in the south and Netanya in the north. One community, Kibbutz Glil Yam, is not contiguous to the other communities in the regional council; it is located between Herzliya and Ramat Hasharon.
- There are 10 nature reserves within the council's jurisdiction.

About the Region and the Council

Text:

The name Sharon is derived from the Akkadian word, "Sharan," which means forest. This makes sense since until Ottoman times, a dense forest of Mount Tabor oaks covered the Sharon region. When Turkish authorities ruled the area, the trees were chopped down to provide wood to power train engines and make railway ties. The few remaining oaks in the area are protected by law today.

Farmers using traditional agricultural methods found it difficult to cope with the poor quality of soils and drainage in the Sharon as well as to tap into the deep groundwater. In the past, the adjacent sea provided the region with its main economic base: harbors for exporting agricultural products, mainly watermelon. During the British Mandate Period, in the early 1900s, Jewish pioneers began to tap the potential of the groundwater and develop the area. The citrus-growing industry developed quickly and became the main economic factor that shaped settlement patterns and the landscape.

Until the beginning of this century, agriculture remained at the heart of economic activities in the Hof Hasharon communities. Due to the water crisis, which led to a rise in water prices, and other economic changes that reduced agriculture's profitability, citrus growing was slowly phased out and many veteran farmers underwent professional retraining. In recent years, the agricultural industry in the region has diversified in a bid to meet changing needs and respond to the new economic reality. Since the 1960s, efforts have been made to develop industry in the region, mainly at the kibbutzim and at the convalescent home at Shfayim, which began operating in the 1940s and was central to initiatives to develop recreation and tourism in the region in the 1970s. The hotel at Shfayim has been joined by attractions such as the water park at Shfayim, the spa and golf club at Ga'ash, event halls, cafes and restaurants, shops of artists and artisans, and more.

At the start of this century, efforts began to develop zones with employment opportunities in the area of the train station in Bet Yehoshu'a, the Europark compound at Kibbutz Yakum, and the Netter Industrial Park in Kfar Netter. The Ahuzat Poleg retirement village also was constructed on Kibbutz Tel Yits'hak's land then.

The Hof Hasharon Regional Council was established in 1948 and received municipal status in 1949. It initially included the eight existing communities within its jurisdiction. Additional communities were added to it as they were established. The council's offices are located at Kibbutz Shfayim.