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## In goodwill gesture, Israel okays paving of road to new Palestinian city

**Rawabi, north of Ramallah, is in Area A, which is under complete Palestinian control, but the original planned access road was to pass through Area C, which is under full Israeli control.**

By Chaim Levinson

The Civil Administration is set to approve the paving of a road to the planned Palestinian city of Rawabi, after officials tweaked the relevant planning regulations to stave off opposition by the right.

The move is being seen as a goodwill gesture to the Palestinian Authority ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's trip to the United States.

Rawabi, north of Ramallah, is located in Area A, which is under complete Palestinian control, but the original planned access road was to pass through Area C, which is under full Israeli control.

With settlers likely to pose numerous objections during the permit application process, the PA had asked to reroute the road so that it would only pass through areas A and B, which are under its civil control.

The Israel Defense Forces agreed, but MKs and groups from the right continued to exert pressure to scuttle the plan.

Officials were able to create a loophole in advance of a meeting tomorrow by the Judea and Samaria planning council by creating a clause allowing for temporary roads to be paved without a permit as long as the owners of the land involved agree.

The clause was carefully worded to keep Jewish landowners from paving roads in the West Bank: They are seen as unlikely to waste their land on a road.

Despite its permanent nature, the Rawabi access road will be declared a "temporary" road, the landowners - the Rawabi developers - will agree to its construction, and the road will be able to go forward.

The Civil Administration refused to comment.

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