

# PORT VILA CBD VISION AND CONCEPT PLAN



Earthquake Recovery and Rebuilding - 2035 and Beyond  
JULY 2025





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**Disclaimer:**

This report has been prepared based on the best available information obtained through online research for the preliminary development of a vision plan. While efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, completeness cannot be guaranteed. The project team has not verified the completeness or accuracy of such information. The proposed components' positions depicted herein are indicative only; users are advised to conduct further detailed surveys and technical studies for validation. Such information nor any liability in connection with the implementation of any advice or proposals contained in this report insofar as they are based upon, or are derived from such information.

# **FOREWORD**



### Foreword

The December 2024 earthquake marked a pivotal moment in Vanuatu’s history, bringing both immense challenges and unprecedented opportunities. As Minister of Internal Affairs, I am proud to present this Concept Plan and Vision for the redevelopment of the Port Vila Central Business District (CBD), developed through the joint effort of the Government of Vanuatu, led by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) and Port Vila City Council (PVCC), in close collaboration with the private sector, civil society, public and development partners

This Port Vila CBD Redevelopment Concept Plan and Vision reflects the voices of the residents of Port Vila, the people of Shefa Province and Vanuatu as whole and as well as will and commitment of the Government of Vanuatu, businesses and private property owners to rebuild back and better. This Concept Plan and Vision represents ideas and projects, and is a key milestone in our national recovery journey—one that emphasizes resilience, inclusivity, sustainability, and the unique cultural character of our capital city.

I extend my gratitude to all those who contributed to this process—from government officials and local authorities to community members, businesses, and development partners. The extensive consultations and technical assessments captured in this Concept Plan and Vision form a strong foundation for our long-term vision of Port Vila as a liveable, vibrant, and resilient city—truly the heart of Vanuatu.

As we move forward with the implementation of this plan, let us remain united in our efforts to restore, transform, and elevate Port Vila for current and future generations.

Hon. Andrew Solomon Napuat  
Minister of Internal Affairs  
Republic of Vanuatu





(Photo credit: Paul Walter, 2022)

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

This Vision and Concept Plan for recovery and rebuilding of Port Vila's central business district (CBD) was prepared following the 7.3 magnitude earthquake that struck Efate Province in Vanuatu on December 17, 2024. The CBD is an economic, cultural, and tourism hub for the city and nation, and faced a massive shock after the earthquake caused a complete closure of the CBD for nearly four months, resulted in the demolition of 25 buildings.

The destruction and disruptions of the earthquake have had significant impacts on nearly all aspects of daily life and commerce for Port Vila's residents and visitors. What's more, the constant threats of future seismic events and other natural hazards such as tropical cyclones, storm surge, tsunami and flooding places the city at a crossroads: The CBD could suffer from another major disaster and long-term urban decay that can result from the loss of employment, investment and activity. Alternatively, this post-earthquake period could be a time of reinvention and renewal, where persistent challenges to climate and disaster risk such as localised flooding; traffic congestion and fragmented mobility networks; and standard service provisions, could be resolved and put the CBD on a more sustainable, vibrant and resilient development pathway.

The Government of Vanuatu (GoV) is currently implementing its post-2024 earthquake recovery activities. The earthquake recovery aims at reconstruction of physical assets and restoration of the socio-economic conditions and livelihoods to pre-disaster levels and incorporating principles of building back better and greener. The principles set out in Vanuatu's National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), the Greater Port Vila Zoning and Development Control Plan and the Physical Planning Guideline form the basis for rebuilding areas with significant impacts, such as the CBD.

This Vision and Concept Plan is intended to inform and support decision-making for a range of private, public and institutional actors in order to build back better. It includes a spatial plan that considers redevelopment of vacant sites following building demolition, preservation of open spaces in strategic locations and where the risk of rebuilding is too high, and investment proposals to improve overall mobility, greening, inclusivity and identity, and economic development. The Vision and Concept Plan incorporates site observations, best practices in urban planning, and expert insights, including historical and local knowledge from residents who have observed the town's growth and development since pre-independence in 1980. It identifies and proposes key priority projects - both short-term and long-term - and legacy and post-earthquake challenges within the

CBD and its immediate surroundings that should be prioritised for implementation, particularly in areas most affected by the earthquake and other strategic areas. All design concepts incorporate principles of risk-informed redevelopment, incorporation of Port Vila's natural features and tropical climate, linking with existing planning concepts and recovery activities within and around Port Vila, enhancing tourist economy opportunities, creating a vibrant business environment, cultural celebration and identity, addressing poor traffic circulation and improving pedestrian access. These principles also reflect the views of all stakeholders consulted during the planning process.

The exercise was led by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA), and Port Vila City Council (PVCC), with technical support from the World Bank and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities and Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industries (VCCI) Since May 2025, DUAP, PVCC and VCCI have been conducting an intensive consultation program with government agencies, civil society, private sector, and development partners which informs the design principles, concepts and the approach and project ideas in the Vision and Concept Plan.



(Photo credit: Paul Walter, 2025)

# **2 SITUATION ANALYSIS**

## PORT VILA



Port Vila is Vanuatu's capital city, primary population centre, and main economic hub. Driven by significant in-migration from the outer islands, Port Vila's urbanisation is outpacing infrastructure, services and housing provision. In an environment of overstretched institutional capacity and resource constraints, unplanned and unregulated development is resulting in urban sprawl in Port Vila's periphery, as well as a proliferation of informal settlements in marginalised and hazard-prone areas. A key challenge for Port Vila's growth and resilience is to curb the current trajectory of costly sprawl and encourage more economic and compact urbanisation, which places redevelopment of the CBD as a critical issue for the city's future development.

Port Vila's CBD holds a distinctive place in Vanuatu's national landscape. It lies at the centre of the country's oldest and largest town, playing a fundamental role shaping the identity of the nation as a place of commerce, ceremony and celebration. The CBD is home to the historic building where Vanuatu's National Constitution was signed, and is closely connected with the country's primary harbour and wharfs for international trade and inter-island shipping services. In recent years Port Vila has also become an increasingly attractive international tourism destination, receiving around 300,000 visitors in 2023<sup>1</sup>.

Port Vila CBD has inherent qualities of diversity, density and layers of history that position it as an exemplary urban centre. The CBD has an exceptional produce market, a fine-grained street structure with excellent access to its beautiful waterfront park and foreshore promenade. Before the 2024 earthquake, there was a great mix of government offices, private businesses, banks, trade stores, hotels, and restaurants.

<sup>1</sup> Refer: IVA\_12\_December\_2023.pdf

## ABOUT THE PORT VILA CBD

The 7.3 magnitude earthquake that struck Efate Province on December 17, 2024 caused a tragic loss of lives, damaged infrastructure, and had its most pronounced impacts on the Port Vila CBD. The event caused 14 fatalities and affected at least 80,000 people across Vanuatu.<sup>2</sup> The results of the GRADE<sup>3</sup> assessment indicate that the total direct economic damages to physical assets are estimated at USD 197 million, or equivalent to approximately 17 percent of Vanuatu's 2023 gross domestic product (GDP). Physical damages are nearly entirely restricted to the Shefa province, where Port Vila is located.

An estimated 245 houses and 200 businesses in the CBD have been partially or fully destroyed with a loss 900 jobs to date.<sup>4</sup> Twenty-five buildings in and around the CBD require total demolition, which at the time of this report has been carried out for 20. Due to safety reasons, the CBD was temporarily closed until April 2025 for the removal of debris, vehicles and demolition of damaged buildings, which resulted in hundreds of businesses and offices relocating elsewhere. This affected access to critical public markets for fifty five percent of households in the Efate Province.<sup>5</sup>

Today, sections of the CBD remain closed, but businesses are slowly coming back. The Government has paused all construction activities until the amendment to the Building Code and a concept plan for redevelopment of the CBD are approved by the Council of Ministers (COM).

Preliminary findings of geotechnical investigations following the earthquake provide confidence in the reconstruction of the CBD area. While many businesses and government departments are moving to other emerging centres where land is available and affordable, the CBD remains a strategic location given its attractive harbour frontage, infrastructure and services, and its rich and interwoven history to Vanuatu's nationhood and its socio-economic development



(Photo credit: Armando Guzman, 2025)

Before the earthquake the market was a central place in people's economic and social lives.



(Photo credit: World Bank, 2025)



(Photo credit: World Bank, 2025)

<sup>2</sup> IOM. (2024) Vanuatu Earthquake, Efate. Situation Report No. 2 | 19 December 2024, 2300 hrs.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank 2025 Global Rapid Post-Disaster Damage Estimation (GRADE) Report

<sup>4</sup> Department of Labour and Employment Services and Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industries. (2025).

<sup>5</sup> World Bank; High Frequency Phone Surveys, 2025.

## CBD TOPOGRAPHY

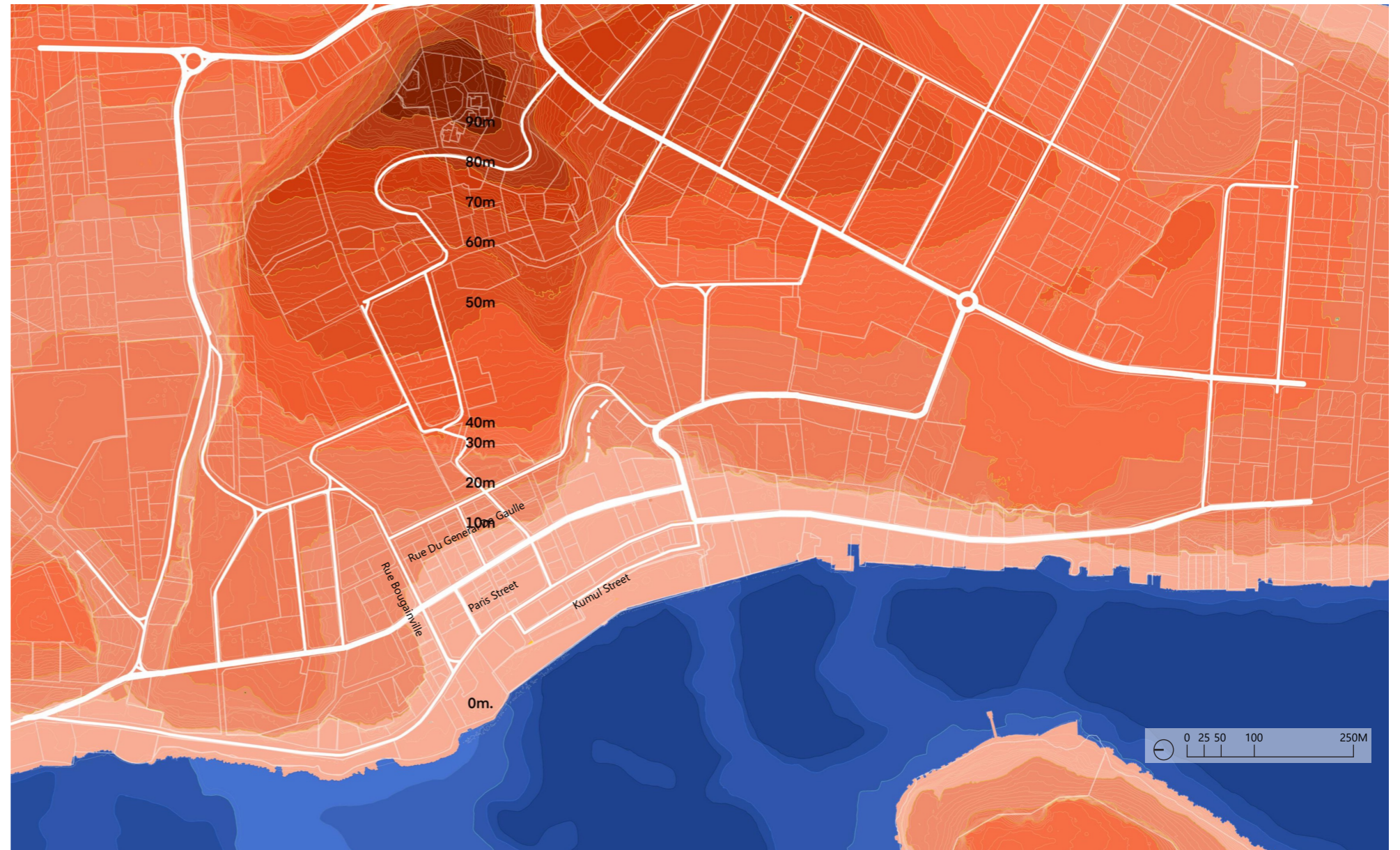
The CBD is defined and contained by its topography. It occupies a narrow strip close to sea level and is backed by a steeply rising landform. The government precinct of 'Top Town' sits on the plateau to the east.

At the northern and southern parts of the CBD, the coastal strip is very narrow, being only one block wide (around 100m). The central part of the CBD is slightly wider at around 250m and three blocks deep.



(Photo credit: Paul Walter, 2025)

Pedestrian steps from the CBD to the upper town are well-used and add to the green character of the city.



(Photo credit: Paul Walter, 2022)

The dramatic topography has been used to create special places with extensive views.

## CHALLENGES

While the Port Vila CBD has many strengths, stakeholders also noted a set of persistent problems that affect the quality of the environment and the CBD's core functions. Some of the key challenges relate to infrastructure, others relate to urban management:

### Congestion and poor traffic circulation

- Traffic is slow and congested on approaches to the CBD
- Narrow streets are congested with traffic in conflict with pedestrians
- Chaotic buses that lack defined routes, standing areas, and discipline
- Circulation, one-way pair in CBD core, uncontrolled parking and loading
- The vehicular circulation around Independence Park is unresolved

### Unfriendly environment for pedestrians

- Footpaths are broken and incomplete in the CBD and the approaches
- Foreshore pedestrian access abruptly stops beyond the CBD core area

### Transit access and connectivity

- Small boat access and connection from the ferry and liner wharfs are limited
- The area around Independence Park lacks bus stops and parking

### Limited green space

- Very limited street trees and few shade trees in the waterfront park near the market

### Vacant land

- Demolished buildings following the earthquake result in "missing teeth" in the urban fabric from newly vacant lots

**Post-earthquake recovery efforts are an important opportunity to overcome these challenges in order to "Build Back Better."**



Left: Buses drive on the footpath to drop off/ pick up passengers.

Right: Footpaths in the CBD are discontinuous and often blocked by vehicles.

# EARTHQUAKE DISTURBANCE

The magnitude 7.3 earthquake created two fault lines as shown in the diagram. The northern line (line A) coincides with a set of landslides that occurred on a steep bank consisting of unconsolidated volcanic material.

The limestone escarpment behind the CBD is a more stable material and did not experience landslides. However, the line of disturbance that runs through the CBD (line B) did result in damage to structures along the line, and a shift in the ground level occurred along this line.

Preliminary assessments indicated that, north of line B, the limestone is just beneath the surface. South of the line, sediments underlie the surface to a depth of around 20m. The earthquake caused the southern part near the coastline to settle by some tens of centimetres, while the northern part did not. This led to a surface crack that appeared, and several buildings in the area required demolition due to severe damages.

Geotechnical investigations, including boreholes, are ongoing in 2025. These studies will provide more information and a greater degree of confidence about the nature of seismic hazard in the area.

The provisional approach adopted by the CBD Vision and Concept Plan outlined in the next section is to leave the properties impacted along the line of disturbance as open space in the form of a public square and green space. The key assumption is that the other demolished sites are capable of redevelopment, subject to appropriate site investigation and design.



(Photo credit: Paul Walter, 2025)

Disturbance Line B runs inland through the old petrol Station, Mamas Market and the National Bank sites.



(Photo credit: Tevi Obed, 2025)

Demolition in the CBD

(Photo credit: Tevi Obed, 2025)

Demolition in the CBD

## STRENGTHS

Stakeholders highlighted Port Vila's CBD significant strengths on several levels, including the physical location, land ownership, culture, beauty and commerce. It was described as:

*The most-beautiful town in the Pacific, a vibrant city and the economic and cultural heart of Vanuatu.*

Port Vila's key strengths provide a strong foundation for selecting appropriate measures in the CBD's recovery. These include:

**Planned structure:** Genuine port-town built character with fine-grained and well-planned urban block structure

**Civic gestures:** public art, street trees, parklets and memorials

**Land-sea orientation:** Excellent foreshore park and esplanade

**Concentration of mixed uses:** Civic, commercial, cultural and government

**Strong identity:** History and shared memory as a place of celebration

**Vibrant market:** Port Vila's thriving produce and flower market is a center for locals and tourists

**Strategic sites:** Major private sites are owned by capable developers



Independence Park serves as an important place for formal events, also informal recreation.



Public access along the foreshore is a defining quality of the city.



The main market food preparation area was demolished following the earthquake, but will be rebuilt. Bring life back to the water front.

## OPPORTUNITY SITES

While the earthquake's damages in the CBD were considerable, the disturbance areas, vacant sites following demolition, and the CBD's existing strengths can be harnessed into new opportunities for transformation to achieve the recovery and renewal vision. An opportunities assessment was carried out that identified both specific sites and more general strategies, which are shown in the opportunities diagram.

Key opportunities include:

### Public spaces

**Central plaza:** Create a central public plaza with space for events, markets, and gatherings. **Pocket Parks:** Develop small pocket parks throughout the CBD to provide green spaces for relaxation.

**Water features:** Incorporate water features, such as fountains or reflecting pools, to enhance the ambience.

**Cultural art installations:** Public art installations that celebrate Vanuatu's cultural heritage. **Outdoor Market Areas:** Create designated outdoor market areas for local vendors and artisans.

### Business and retail

**Mixed-use buildings:** Encourage the development of mixed-use buildings with retail on the ground floor and residential or commercial spaces above.

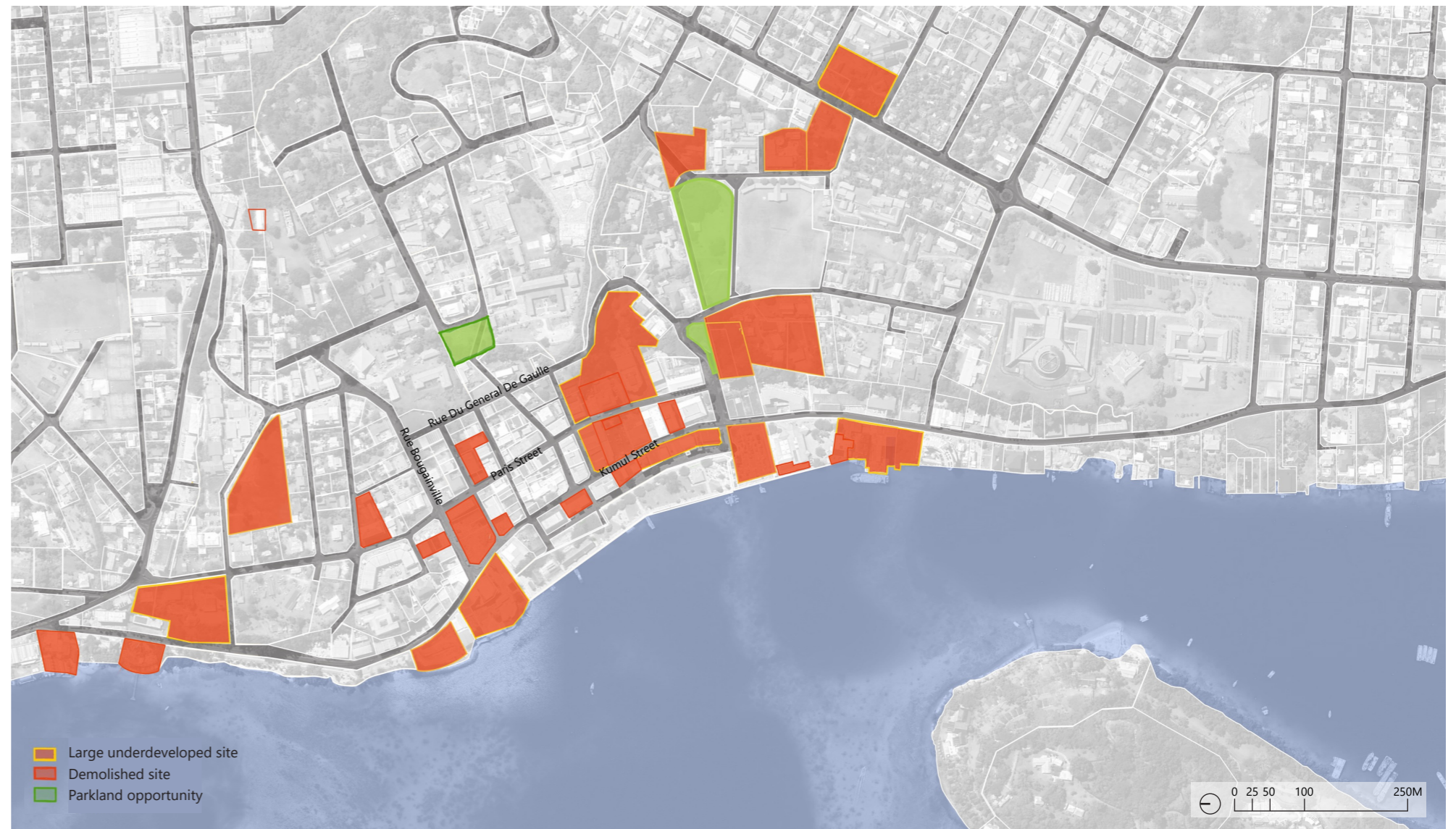
**Incentives for local businesses:** Provide incentives for local businesses and entrepreneurs to establish themselves in the CBD.

**Pop-up shops and markets:** Create opportunities for pop-up shops and markets to showcase local products and talent.

**Outdoor dining:** Encourage restaurants and cafes to provide outdoor dining areas.

**Facade improvements:** Implement a program to improve the facades of existing buildings.

For the specific sites that have been identified in the diagram, in some cases landowners indicated their intention to redevelop sites. In other cases, the sites may be underdeveloped. Collectively, these sites represent a significant portion of the whole CBD.



Town Square drone view

# **3 PORT VILA CBD VISION AND CONCEPT PLAN**

## VISION FOR THE CBD'S RECOVERY AND REBUILDING - 2035 AND BEYOND

Considering the Port Vila CBD's strengths, challenges, impacts of the 2024 earthquake, and hazards, stakeholders worked together to develop a vision and set of opportunities for the CBD's renewal.

The overarching vision is to **Transform Port Vila's CBD into** a dynamic, pedestrian-friendly hub that celebrates its cultural diversity, fosters economic growth, and prioritises sustainability.

A Concept Plan for the recovery and renewal of the CBD was then developed to align with this vision. A set of design principles emerged

from themes during the stakeholder consultations, which inform the development concept and reflect sound urban planning practices:

**Pedestrian priority:** Prioritise pedestrian movement while maintaining functional vehicular traffic

**Mixed-use development:** Encourage a mix of retail accommodation, residential, and commercial spaces

**Green infrastructure:** Integrate green spaces, shade trees, and permeable surfaces

**Cultural integration:** Celebrate traditional culture and Port Vila's urban and architectural history

**Accessibility:** Ensure universal access for all users

**Sustainability:** Implement sustainable design practices, including water and energy efficiency

**Phased implementation:** Break down the implementation into manageable phases

## THE HEART OF PORT VILA

Central to the recovery and renewal Concept Plan is redeveloping the fault lines cutting across the CBD which can no longer be safely built upon. The demolished petrol station and surrounding parcels as a

new civic square linking to the waterfront park. This will serve as the "heart of Port Vila," creating new public spaces, upgrading the vibrant Mama's Market, and creating a green, pedestrian friendly city centre

that is well connect to multiple modes of transportation. This will also enhance the resilience of Port Vila, reclaiming an area of seismic hazard as open space.



Existing view of the Town Square site



Indicative redevelopment proposal as civic square, connecting with the existing waterfront park and adding new green space, pedestrianisation, and cultural assets.

# RECOVERY AND RENEWAL CONCEPT PLAN

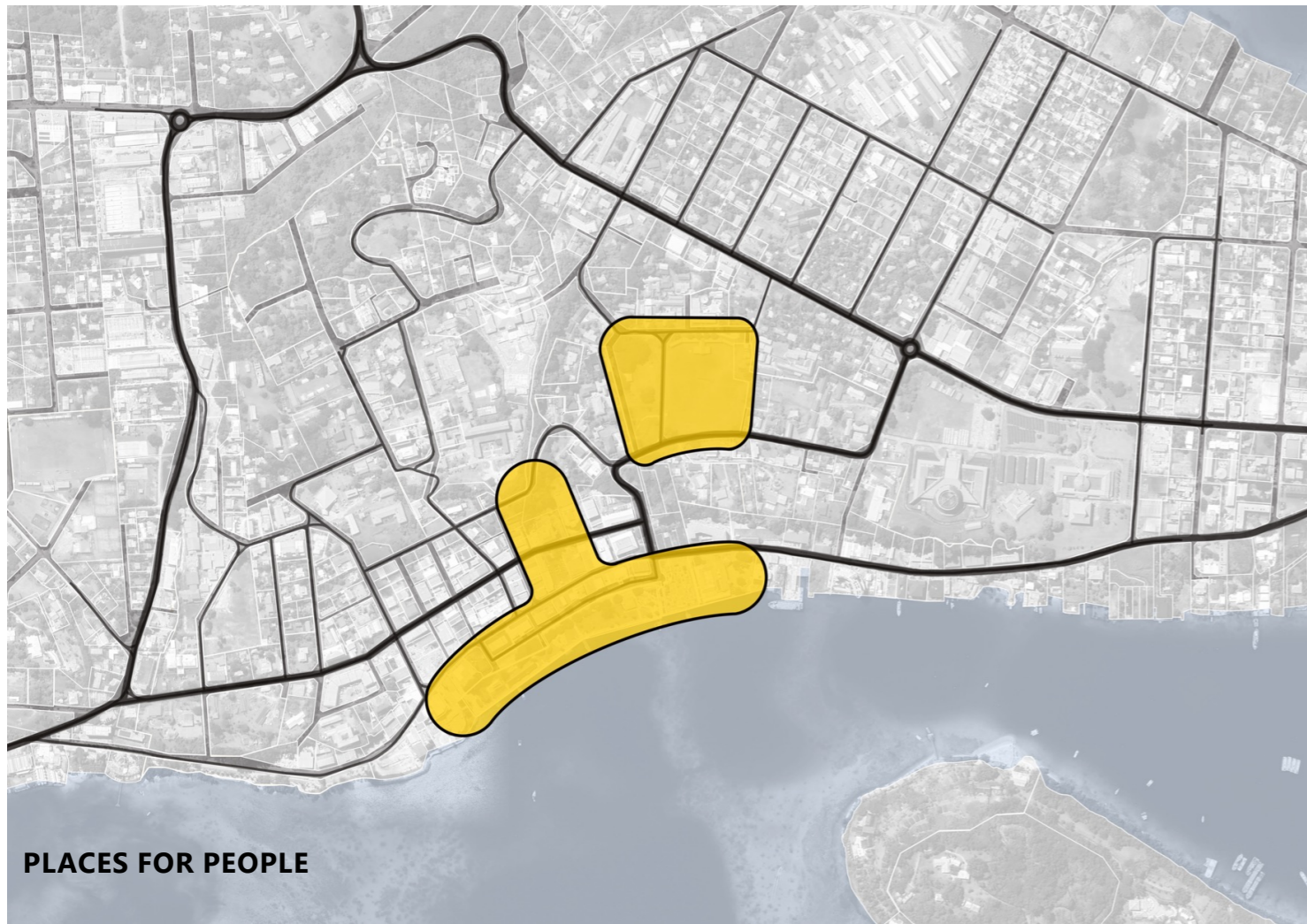
Based on broad consultations, analytical work, and best practices, the Concept Plan for recovery and renewal of the CBD proposes strategic projects for four precincts: CBD North, Centrepoint, Independence, and Market precincts. Together these projects will support redevelopment of vacant or underdeveloped sites to harness the CBD opportunities, ensure the guiding design principles are followed, and will support the vision. The diagram shows key projects that will green the CBD, create new vibrant public spaces and amenities, and overcome transportation challenges by improving mobility for all users.

To overcome the CBD's considerable mobility challenges from congestion, fragmentation, and disorganisation. The concept proposes a mobility strategy including a range of possible projects, that should be investigated and assessed as soon as possible as part of a holistic mobility strategy for the CBD and its connections to the wider city. As Port Vila grows and expands, improved mobility and reducing congestion in the CBD will aid in the overall city's economic competitiveness, boost the local economy, and help to attract residents and visitors.

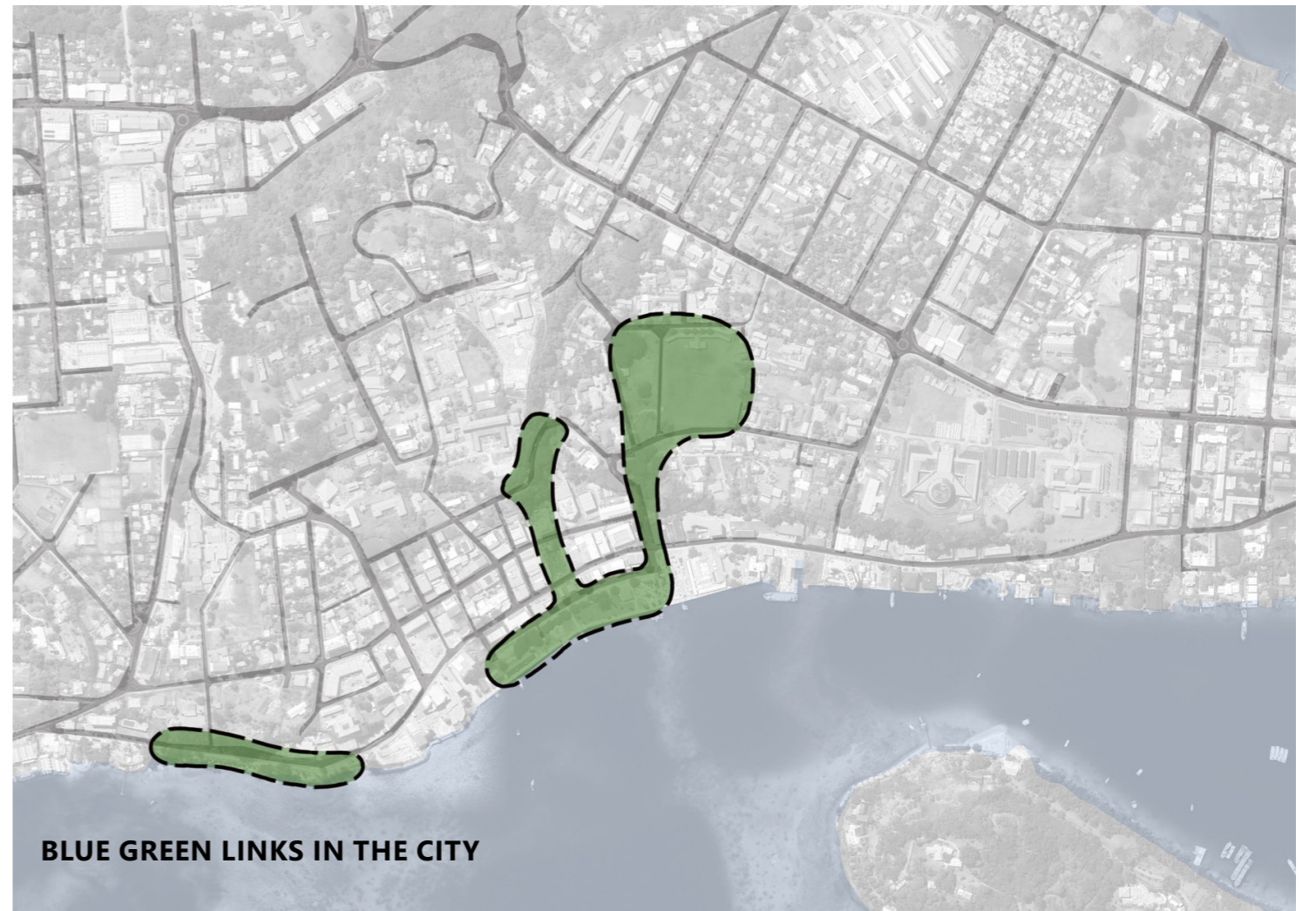


(Photo credit: Vois Blong Vila Port Vila Town Community and Business Consultation report, 2025)

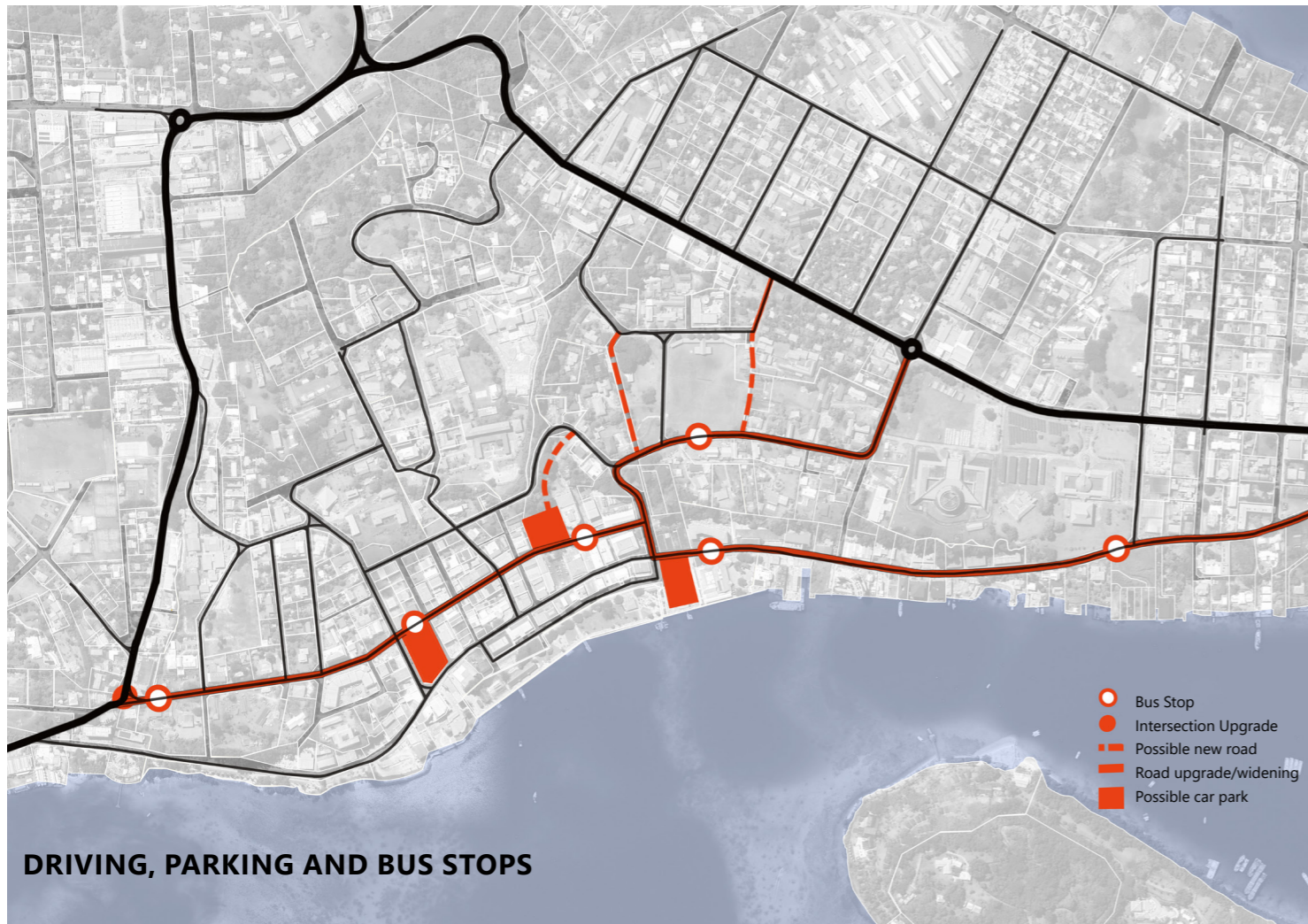
Vois Blong Vila consultation



**PLACES FOR PEOPLE**

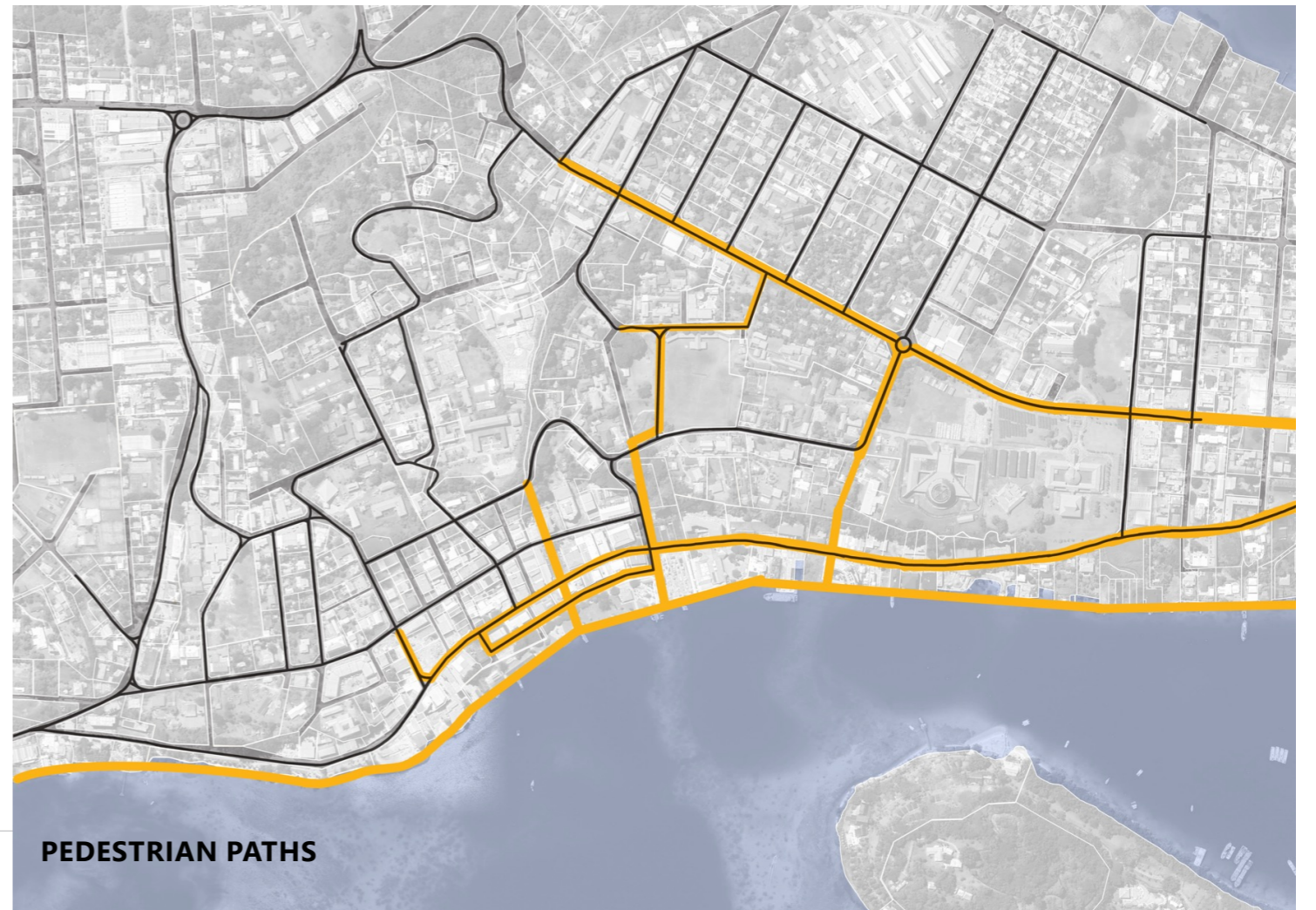


**BLUE GREEN LINKS IN THE CITY**



**DRIVING, PARKING AND BUS STOPS**

- Bus Stop
- Intersection Upgrade
- - - Possible new road
- Road upgrade/widening
- Possible car park

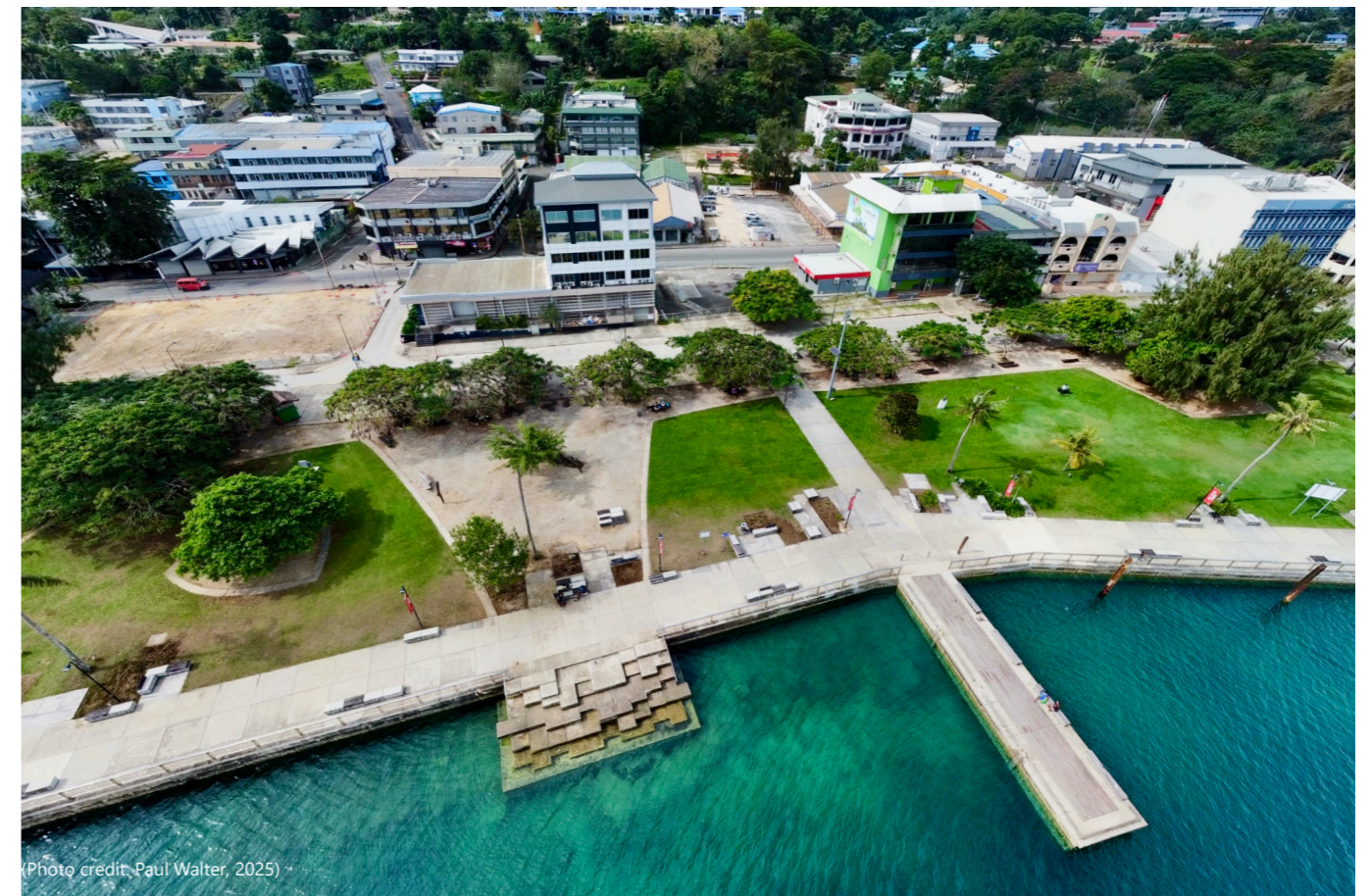


**PEDESTRIAN PATHS**

## KEY PROJECTS



INDEPENDENCE PARK PRECINCT Project	Description
Independence Garden	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New garden to celebrate Vanuatu's history with cultural planting and artwork</li> <li>2. Water features to manage stormwater</li> <li>3. Road extension past Department of Agriculture (DoA) to Churchill Avenue</li> <li>4. New Bus Stop</li> </ol>
Independence Park	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. New and improved parking</li> <li>6. Upgrade landscape and plant trees</li> <li>7. Possible new road</li> <li>8. Upgrade avenue of flags</li> </ol>
Strategic Site	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. High profile building site on axis with Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) and with excellent views over CBD and harbour</li> <li>10. Improve stairs and pocket park</li> <li>11. Improve foot path and vehicle access</li> </ol>



(Photo credit, Paul Walter, 2025)

## KEY PROJECTS

CENTRAL PRECINCT Project	Description
Vila Harbour Plaza (formerly petrol Station)	12. Secure the lease and remove the petrol station New paving, seating and tree planting Pop-up food bar (Short-term)
Mamma's Market Plaza (site owned by VNPF)	13. New paving, seating and tree planting Shade structures (until trees grow) Upgrade & beautify existing buildings Signage and lighting Grassy bank/amphitheater
Centre Point Car Park (Site owned by VNPF)	14. New 100-car surface carpark with trees
Link Road - Centrepont Carpark to De Gaulle Road. (Site owned by VNPF)	15. Construct a new road and footpath from Paris Street to De Gaulle Road. Road design to incorporate footpaths and drainage
Giant Staircase – Centre Point to Vila Bay Lookout	16. Upgrade the lookout. New staircase with landings, information panels and art.
Pontoon – Temporary embarking facility for cruise ships	17. Landing Pontoon to disembark ocean liner passengers. Available for public access when not loading. This Public Works Project is ongoing.
Kalsakau Drive activation strategy	18. Create incentives to address ground level shops and restaurants toward Feiawa Park and harbour front

MARKET PRECINCT Project	Description
Northern Vacant site	19. Pavements design and tree planting for flexible-use open space, supporting market and transport: Bus standing and loading, surface car park, market stalls, laydown, and special events.
Southern Site (including demolished Au Bon Marche', shipyard quay and vacant site)	20. Explore options for temporary activation and uses Masterplan whole site for integrated development (either consolidated or complimentary development parcels) 21. Extend the foreshore walking path southward.
Kumul Street frontage	22. Review design of road way, bus stops and improve pedestrian connectivity along Kumul Street 23. Review the goods loading function location and timing
Foreshore	24. Incorporate shade trees 25. Renew market foreshore food preparation and dining area 26. Provide additional small-boat berths



(Photo credit: Paul Walter, 2025)

## KEY PROJECTS

NORTHERN PRECINCT Project	Description
Strategic Site (Former Olympic Hotel)	1. Possible mixed use development site with modern supermarket and hotel or apartments Activate frontages Car park and loading from Paris Street Possible Structured car park
Strategic Site / Historic Site. Former President's Residence	2. Retain and restore historic building(s) Visitor information / Tourist Attraction Boutique Hotel, Restaurant or Bistro Development partner worldwide EOI
Paris Street Improvements	3. Intersection upgrade at Teoma Street to favour Paris Street Street widening on Paris Street Street tree planting and underground power lines
Bus Holding and Utility Zone	4. Street Widening around (former) President's residence, Provincial Admin. Possible bus standing and holding area
Water activity zone	5. Tidal swimming pool 6. Constructed sandy beach 7. Reef-walk or possible boardwalk
Recreational Walking Path	8. Extend foreshore pathway around Fatumaru Bay Incorporating educational signage 9. Boardwalk with educational signage through mangroves at the head of the bay 10. New stairway beside former president's residence
Earthquake Public Memorial	11. Public artwork with plaque to commemorate the 2024 Earthquake loss of life. Located near the corner of old Billabong store and Olympic Hotel Sites



## KEY PROJECTS

### INFRASTRUCTURE, POLICY & MANAGEMENT

Project	Description
TROPICAL DESIGN EXCELLENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design integrity review ongoing steward</li> <li>• Architectural character tropical excellence</li> <li>• Landscape excellence in the public domain</li> </ul>
CIRCULATION AND ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review circulation differentiate CBD streets</li> <li>• Street widening land acquisitions</li> <li>• Kumul Street pedestrian priority</li> <li>• Paris Street vehicle &amp; access priority</li> <li>• Extend walking paths along the waterfront</li> <li>• Increase consolidated CBD Car Parking</li> <li>• Discourage CBD through-running traffic</li> <li>• Create Bus holding areas outside the CBD</li> <li>• Discourage prolonged CBD Bus standing</li> <li>• Review and improve CBD tsunami evacuation strategy</li> </ul>
INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebuild public domain throughout the CBD</li> <li>• Earthworks BEFORE rebuilding streets</li> <li>• Stormwater drainage design</li> <li>• Wastewater &amp; sewer CBD design</li> <li>• Review water reticulation design</li> </ul>
PLACE MANAGEMENT AND WAYFINDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and consistent CBD signage</li> <li>• Place and street naming review</li> <li>• Events management calendar</li> </ul>
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT AND STAGING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify &amp; secure strategic CBD sites</li> <li>• Temporary decant functions to nearby sites</li> <li>• Manage construction to minimise impact</li> </ul>
IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY POLICY INCENTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triage 'policy roadblocks'</li> <li>• Seek incentives opportunities</li> <li>• Identify implementing agencies</li> </ul>

In addition to the specific proposals to improve Port Vila’s traffic circulation and mobility, the following general objectives should be applied to projects and investments in the CBD:

### **PRIORITISING PEDESTRIANS**

#### **Widened pedestrian pathways**

Expand footpaths to create comfortable and safe walking spaces.

#### **Pedestrian-friendly paving**

Use durable and visually appealing “permeable” paving materials, e.g. concrete cobble or blocks, fired clay bricks, limestone blocks, etc.

#### **Pedestrian crossings**

Implement raised crosswalks and paving cues to enhance safety.

### **STREET DESIGN**

#### **Safer, more seamless intersections**

Consider options to improve the function of intersections, including those for pedestrians.

#### **Traffic calming measures**

Consider traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds.

#### **Shared zones**

Introduce landscape design to modify driver behaviour and direct drivers onto preferred routes.

### **IMPROVED AMENITIES**

#### **Shade structures and trees**

Plant shade trees and install shade structures for relief from the sun.

#### **Street furniture**

Install comfortable seating, public art, and wayfinding signage.

#### **Improve wayfinding**

Design for clear orientation, street and place names and signage.

#### **Improve lighting**

Implement appealing “solar powered” street lighting to enhance safety and visibility.

#### **Improve facilities**

Provide water fountains and toilets.

### **ENCOURAGING MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORT**

#### **Consolidate bus stops**

Create bus holding areas and consolidate bus stops to reduce the time buses spend in the CBD.

#### **Improve car parking**

Seek to establish consolidated car parking areas so that visitors can park and walk into the CBD.

#### **Improve land-sea links**

Create pontoons for small and medium-sized vessel access.

#### **Facilitate bicycle links**

Seek opportunities for bicycle connections.

# **4 IMPLEMENTATION**

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) has the legal mandate for overseeing rollout of the Recovery and Renewal Concept through Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) and Port Vila City Council (PVCC) through provisions established under the *Recovery and Resilience Act of 2024*, *Physical Planning (Amendment) Act No. 26 of 2021* and the *Municipality Act*. The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MoLNR), the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities (MIPU), and Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) along with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM), have the respective mandates for land management, public infrastructure development, resilience building and resource mobilization for the rollout of the Concept.

Under the framework established by the Recovery and Resilience Act, the Housing and Urban Planning Sub-Committee was activated to oversee physical planning activities in declared physical planning areas, including the CBD, and housing reconstruction following the earthquake. The Port Vila CBD Recovery and Renewal Concept is a crucial component of the recovery efforts.

MoIA will make arrangements to establish a Project Management Unit (PMU) under DUAP to have coordination oversight over programs currently implemented by the Ministry. The PMU will also manage reconstruction activities and have management and coordination oversight of the implementation of the Concept in close collaboration with MFEM, MoLNR, MIPU, MoCC and other government agencies, as well as the private sector. The PMU will also support related reforms necessary for enhancing recovery and building back better. This includes expanding the concept planning activity to cover the greater Port Vila area, and developing the Zoning Design Policy, as well as the processes and systems for implementing the updated Building Code and the National Housing Policy.



(Photo credit: Armando Guzman, 2025)

## INITIATIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATELY-OWNED SITES CATALYTIC INVESTMENTS

Most of the development sites in the CBD are in private hands. The two main criteria are (i) timeliness, in that it is preferable for sites to redevelop rather than stand vacant or undeveloped, and (ii) design quality including aesthetic quality, activated frontage, well-resolved vehicle access and site servicing, land use mix, building massing and scale.

Some potential initiatives to achieve excellent design and incentivise private investment include:

- **Ensuring design quality of strategic sites.** As strategic sites for redevelopment are limited, steps need to be taken to ensure design quality. This will be done through PVCC's mandate to prepare site-specific design guidelines, and also influencing the design of buildings early in the conceptual design stage (Pre-Development Application) with support of an urban design expert when developers come forward with their designs and building permit applications. The review process will also ensure compliance with resilience building standards.
- **Public domain works adjacent to redevelopment sites.** Timed to coincide with the completion of the build, so a new or renovated building benefits from the new public domain.

Other programs to support the rebuilding efforts will be explored during implementation. This may include incentives for private developers or investors to meet an objective of the Vision and Concept Plan.

Some potential investments and incentives that can support activation and catalyse further investments in the CBD include:

- Upgrading and improving basic infrastructure including roads, drainage and bus stops
- Providing temporary spaces for retail shops, eateries, cafes, etc. to bring back footfall and activity to the CBD
- A place manager role could be created to serve as a coordinator of events or other initiatives. This person could become an important advocate for all other initiatives.
- Public toilets are often out of order or not functioning, and a concerted effort to keep them functional and clean would improve the experience for visitors.
- Tsunami evacuation routes and warning systems should be checked and, if necessary, updated.
- A CBD way-finding, signage, and place-naming initiative would improve place recognition for locals and visitors.
- Provide public toilets and include water fountains near bus stops.





(Photo credit: Paul Walter, 2022)

