



VANG VIENG TOWN & ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE

Lao PDR - Second Greater Mekong Subregion:
Tourism Masterplanning Support

ADB Grant No. 0599-LAO

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for **Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Laos**

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- Mr Vila Chanthavong (National Tourism Destination Development and Management Specialist, TIIGP2), and
- Ms Phongsith Davading (National Tourism Specialist, Deputy Team Leader, TIIGP2).

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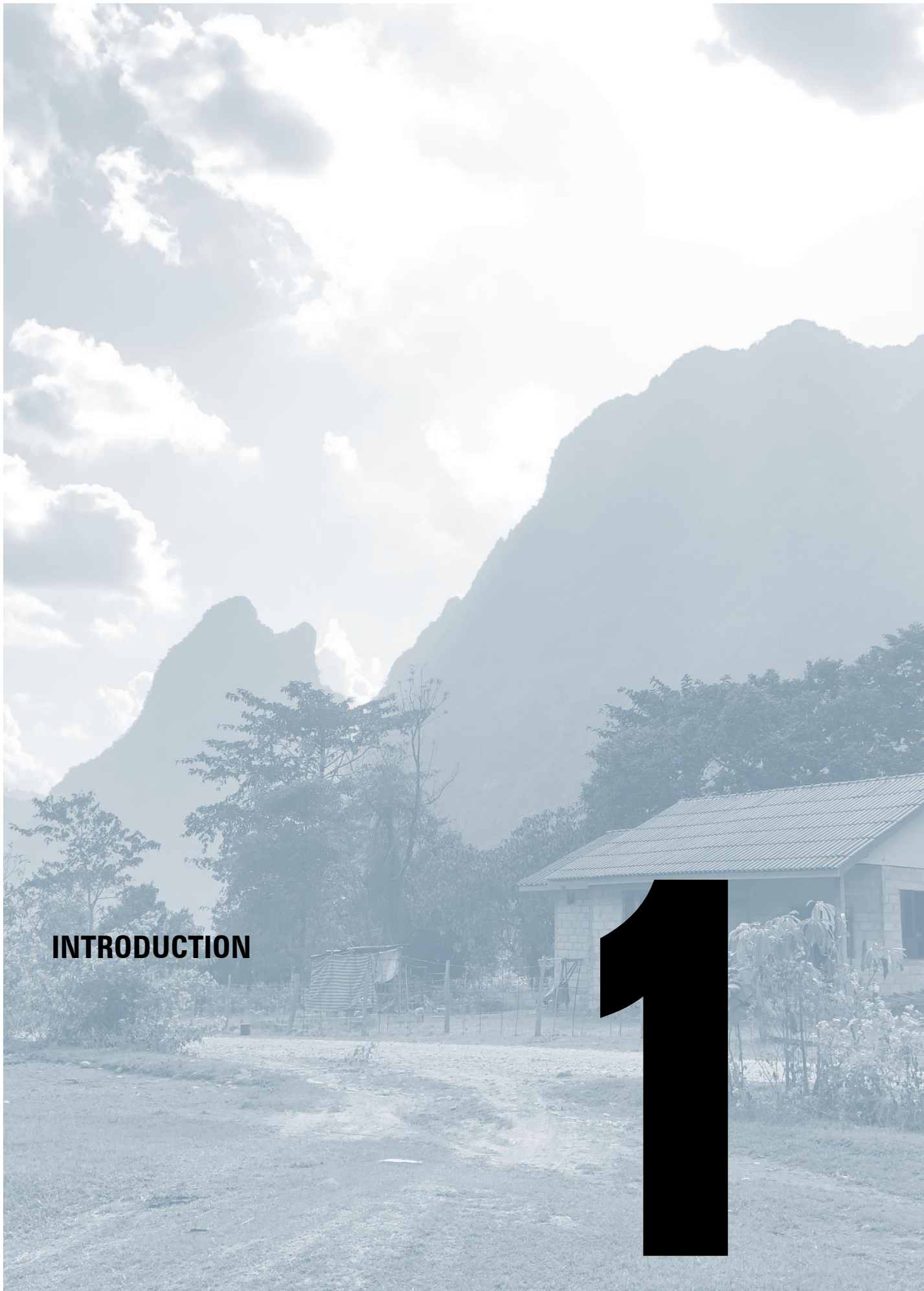
- Ms. Phonemaly Inthaphome (Director General of the Tourism Development Department, Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism).

The project team included a collaboration of both International and National Experts as follows:

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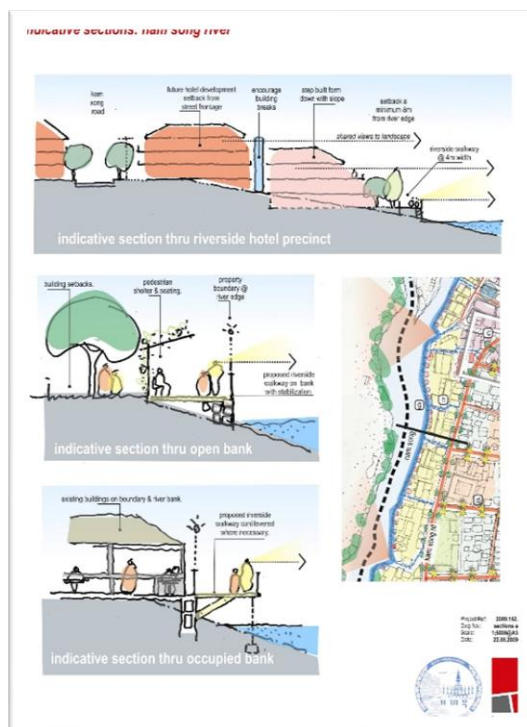
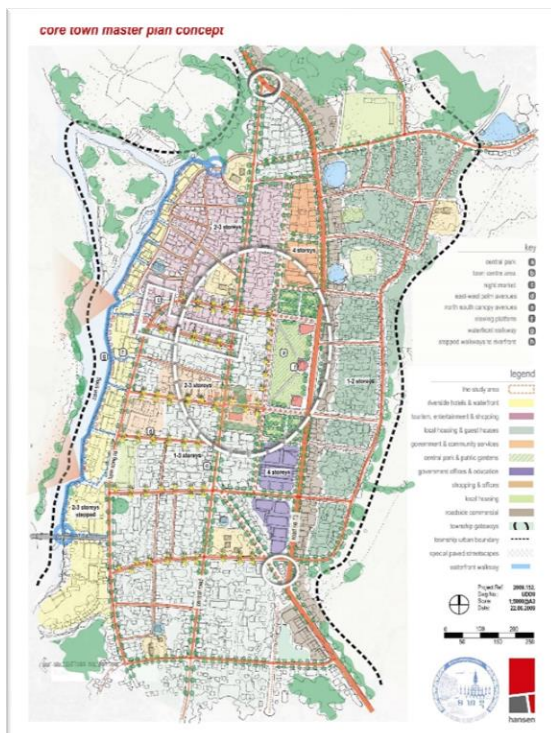
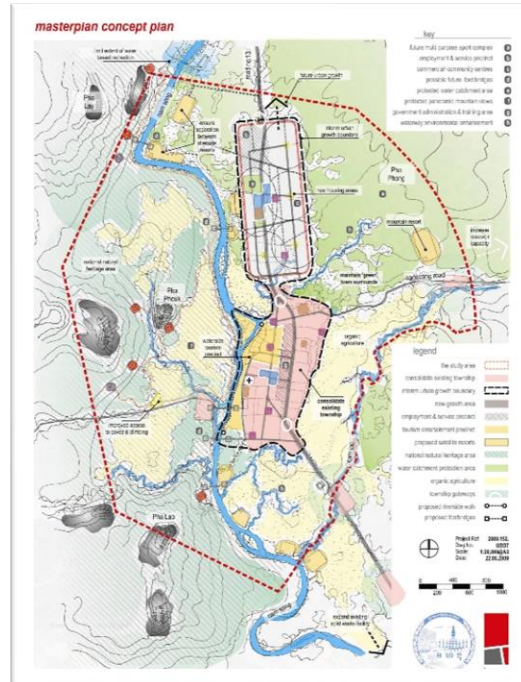
Nam Song River (2022)



INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

This report is the scheduled update of the Vang Vieng Town and Environs Tourism Master Plan (for the period 2023-2033). It has been prepared for the Lao PDR Ministry of Information Tourism and Culture (MICT) and funded under the ADB's Second Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth Project (TIIGP2). The goal of the TIIGP2 is to implement programs and projects which contribute towards 'economically inclusive, competitive tourism destinations by improving transport infrastructure, urban environmental services, and capacity to sustainably manage tourism growth'. This report supersedes the earlier Master Plan (2010-2020).



The 2010-2020 Master Plan

1.1 The Objectives of the Updated Master Plan

The Vang Vieng Town and Environs Tourism Master Plan (2023-2033) represents the next important step in orderly urban planning and tourism management of the area, building upon the foundation of the earlier adopted Master Plan (2009). The overarching objective of both preceding and contemporary work is defined below:

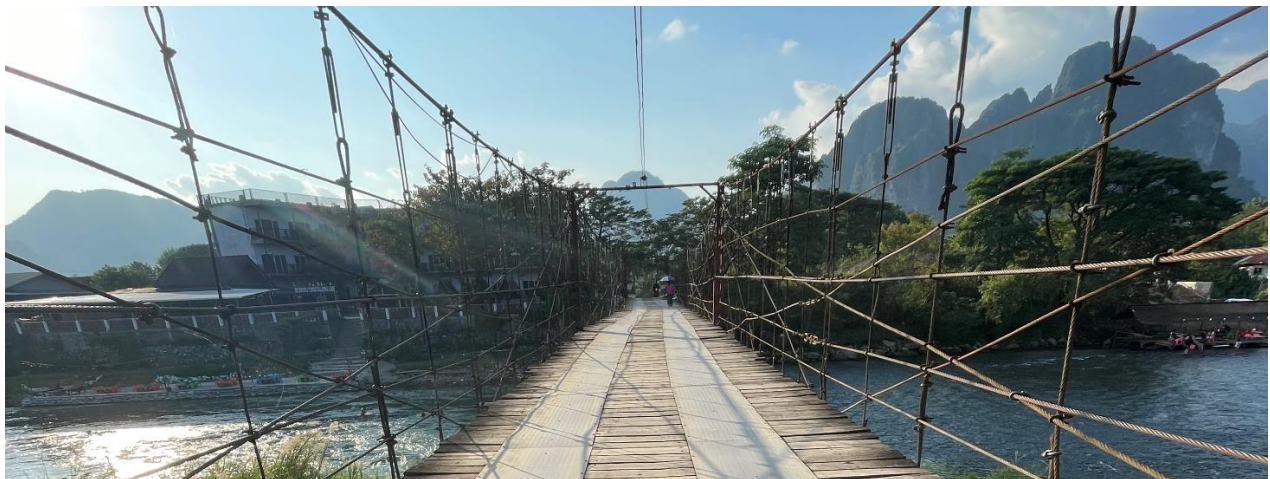
The Master Plan for Vang Vieng Town and Environs will provide the necessary planning and development framework within which to ensure the protection and enhancement of both the natural landscape and cultural elements in and around the town and plan for its growth in an orderly manner. In essence the Master Plan will:

- *Maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits of further growth and development for the local and district communities;*
- *Attract appropriate investment to the town from local, national and international developers;*
- *Encourage diversification within the tourism sector as well as a more robust and prosperous economy; and*
- *Integrate social and physical infrastructure into the town in a cost-efficient and coordinated manner.*

A focus of the 2023-2033 Master Plan is improved integration between urban planning and tourism development management across a wider geographical area, encapsulating the recognized Vang Vieng Township and an expanded Environs with capacity for tourism growth, given the significant changes which have occurred in the last decade.

Sub-objectives of the Master Plan are to:

- Determine the scope and potential for urban and tourism development within and around Vang Vieng to 2033 given the notable global, national, and local changes since 2010.
- Devise an agreed vision for Vang Vieng and its surroundings to 2033 that supports the strategic ambitions for social, economic, and environmental progress within the district.
- Define the strategic direction for tourism consolidation and growth within the setting to 2033 and indicate future investigation opportunities beyond 2033.
- Establish clear design and development regulations (for both public and private land and assets) in and around Vang Vieng enabling better development control and improved public amenity.
- Ensure development planning and design for Vang Vieng and surrounds to 2033 includes urban resilience and risk management given the emerging influence of climate change.
- Provide guidance to decision makers regarding investment propositions and development concessions in and around Vang Vieng, relative to the above findings.



Nam Song Wooden Bridge



CONTEXT

2. Context

2.1 Provincial & District Context

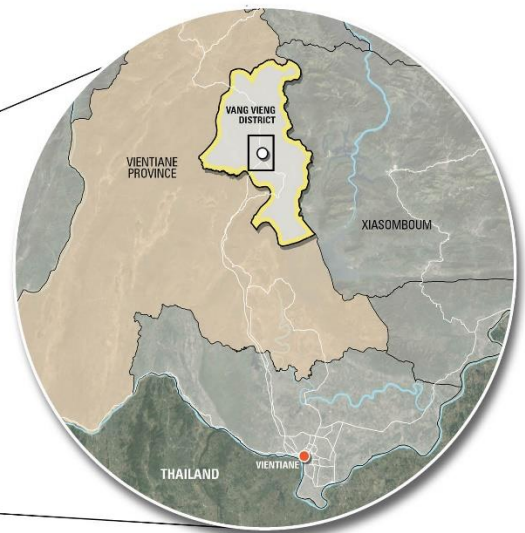
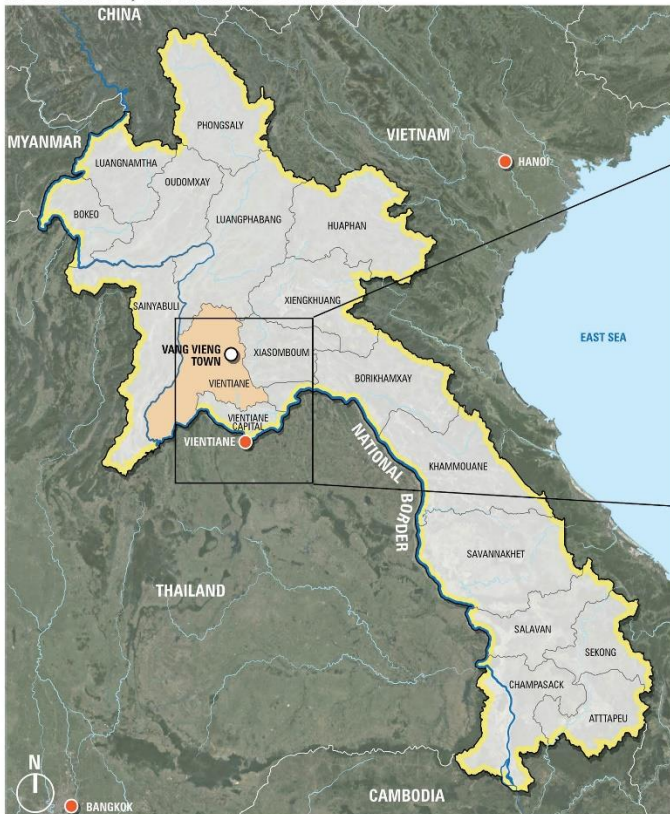
The town of Vang Vieng is located in Vang Vieng District in the Province of Vientiane and is approximately 150km north of the Lao PDR National Capital Vientiane. As shown in Figure 1, Vientiane Province is within the Central Region of Lao PDR with its provincial capital at Phonhong.

Vang Vieng District is one of 13 districts in Vientiane Province and covers a land area of 1,679.5 km². The total population in 2021 of Vang Vieng District was 64,511 persons, increasing from 51,671 persons in 2008. There were a total of 11,526 households in the district as of 2021.

Vang Vieng Town is located along the Route 13 highway being the main road connecting the National Capital of Lao PDR, Vientiane with the UNESCO World Heritage listed town of Luang Prabang to the north. The Town itself is nestled in the Nam Song River valley with a stunning limestone karst landscape to the west and a heavily forested sandstone mountain range to the east. Rich farmland surrounds the Town with the Nam Song River forming a natural boundary to the western edge of the existing urban area.

The strategic location of Vang Vieng Town almost midway between two very popular tourist destinations, coupled with its stunning natural features and cultural attributes, has resulted in the town functioning not only as a tourist service point or stopover but as a destination in its own right. Tourism volumes to the Town grew annually at an average of 13% per annum between 2010 and 2019. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, visitors number fell by 62% on average during the 26 months of border closure (March 2020-May 2022). Since lifting quarantine requirements and fully opening of all borders in May 2022, visitor numbers to Vang Vieng have started to pick up from previously 48,345 visitors in 2021 to 119,279 in 2022 with domestic visitors accounting for about 76%.

REGIONAL / NATIONAL CONTEXT



PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Figure 1. Province and District Context Map

Improved access by road and rail will continue to influence the tourism landscape of Vang Vieng. In December 2020, the National Expressway connecting Vientiane and Vang Vieng was opened, which has cut travel time down to just 1 hour from previously 3-4 hours. As a result, Vang Vieng has seen an increase in day-trippers from Vientiane, arriving late morning in time for lunch with return home in the evening after participating in a few short activities. A year after the Expressway was opened, in December of 2021 the high-speed Lao-China Railway was in operation, providing additional transport alternatives across Laos and to the Town. The immediate impact of both the Expressway and Rail is an increase in daytrip and ‘MICE’ visitors (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) mainly from Vientiane.

It is expected that visitor numbers will continue to grow, and the tourism economy may rapidly recover from the impacts of the Global Pandemic. The highly anticipated Chinese tourist market started to appear in greater numbers as the Chinese Government opened its borders during the first quarter of 2023.

With the anticipated growth in the tourism sector, it is inevitable the Town and its Environs will experience further development pressure. This pressure will not only focus on tourist accommodation and tourist related services catering for the needs of domestic and international tourists, but will also have implications for how development meets the needs of local and district communities, particularly in the service sector. Coupled with this are lingering impacts still evident from the Global Pandemic, including staff and skill shortages, lower than usual service standards, delayed investment in infrastructure and business growth that has been severely constrained over the last three years.

Boten–Vientiane Railway

Connecting with Kunming in China, the Boten–Vientiane railway runs 409 km (254 miles) through landlocked Laos.



Recent Infrastructure Investment & Delivery

2.2 Spatial Extent

In 1997 a Town Plan for Vang Vieng was prepared and subsequently adopted by Government (See Figure 2 for Study Area). However, this was largely a Zoning Plan addressing broad land use and development in and around the Town, including identification of areas nominated for urban expansion.

The 2010-2020 Master Plan for the Vang Vieng Town and Environs addressed a study area of around 1,817ha comprising both the urban core of Vang Vieng, a northern growth area and substantial scenic landscape surroundings flanking the Nam Song River. The Master Plan was different to that typically prepared by National Government Departments (Ministry of Public Works and Transport) which normally serve as regulatory spatial plans with associated land use, infrastructure, and related services provision. Accordingly, the Master Plan was subsequently translated by MPWT into a further Regulatory Urban Master Plan (2010) comprising a wider study area of some 4062ha.

The spatial extent adopted within the 2023-2033 Master Plan is:

- A **Strategic Tourism Study Area** of 23,456ha comprising Vang Vieng Town and surrounding landscape along the Nam Song valley, inclusive of the defining mountain ranges and valleys that define the place. The Strategic Tourism Study Area includes the wider landscape context of the western valley leading to Nampae and the northern extension of the Nam Song aligned with Route 13 to Phahom. It is also contained to the south by mountain ranges, and confined along the Route 13 highway corridor without extending deep into the area around the Ngam Num Reservoir.
- A **Town and Environs Study Area** of 6,553ha (noting that the 2010-2020 Master Plan area is 1,817ha) encompassing the ‘visual landscape’ that encircles Vang Vieng Town, including the adjoining mountain ranges. The Town and Environs Study Area covers an area beyond growth areas and the new railway station, reaching as far north as Pakpo, and southward along Route 13 to Houayngam. It also includes both sides of the Nam Song River, inclusive of adjoining villages leading eastward up to the Kaeng Nyui waterfall.
- An **Urban Core Area** of approximately 185ha, noting that the extent of this area was established in the earlier 2010-2020 Master Plan. The 2023-2033 Master Plan will focus on the established urban core to the south of the Route 13 Highway and Central Road junction.

The study areas competently sit inside those areas envisaged for broader Provincial Strategic Planning.

Figures 3, 4 and 5 illustrate the extent and basic features of the 3 defined Study Areas for the purposes of the Project - confirmed through a process of review and comment by Government and key stakeholders.

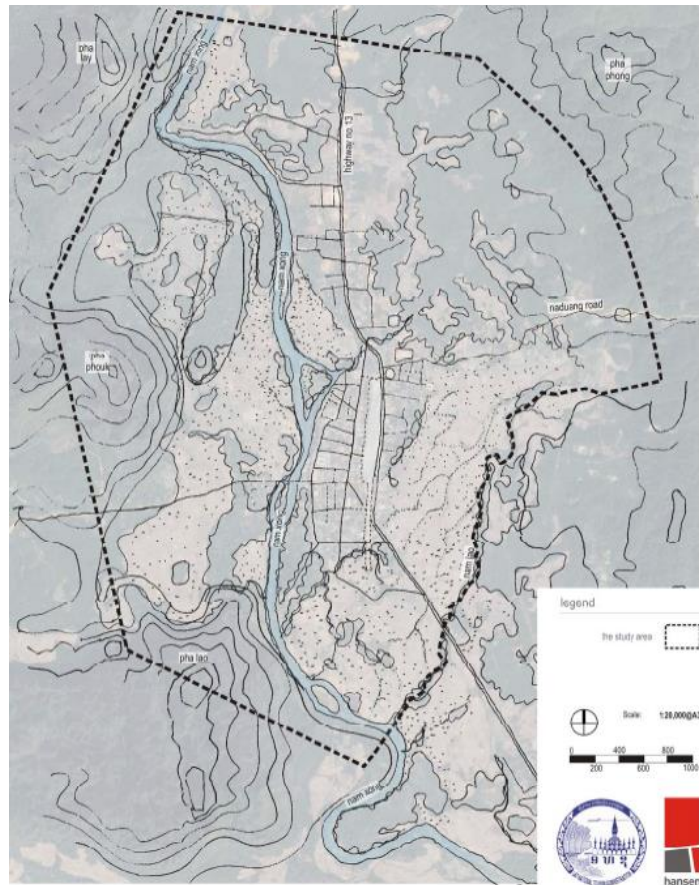
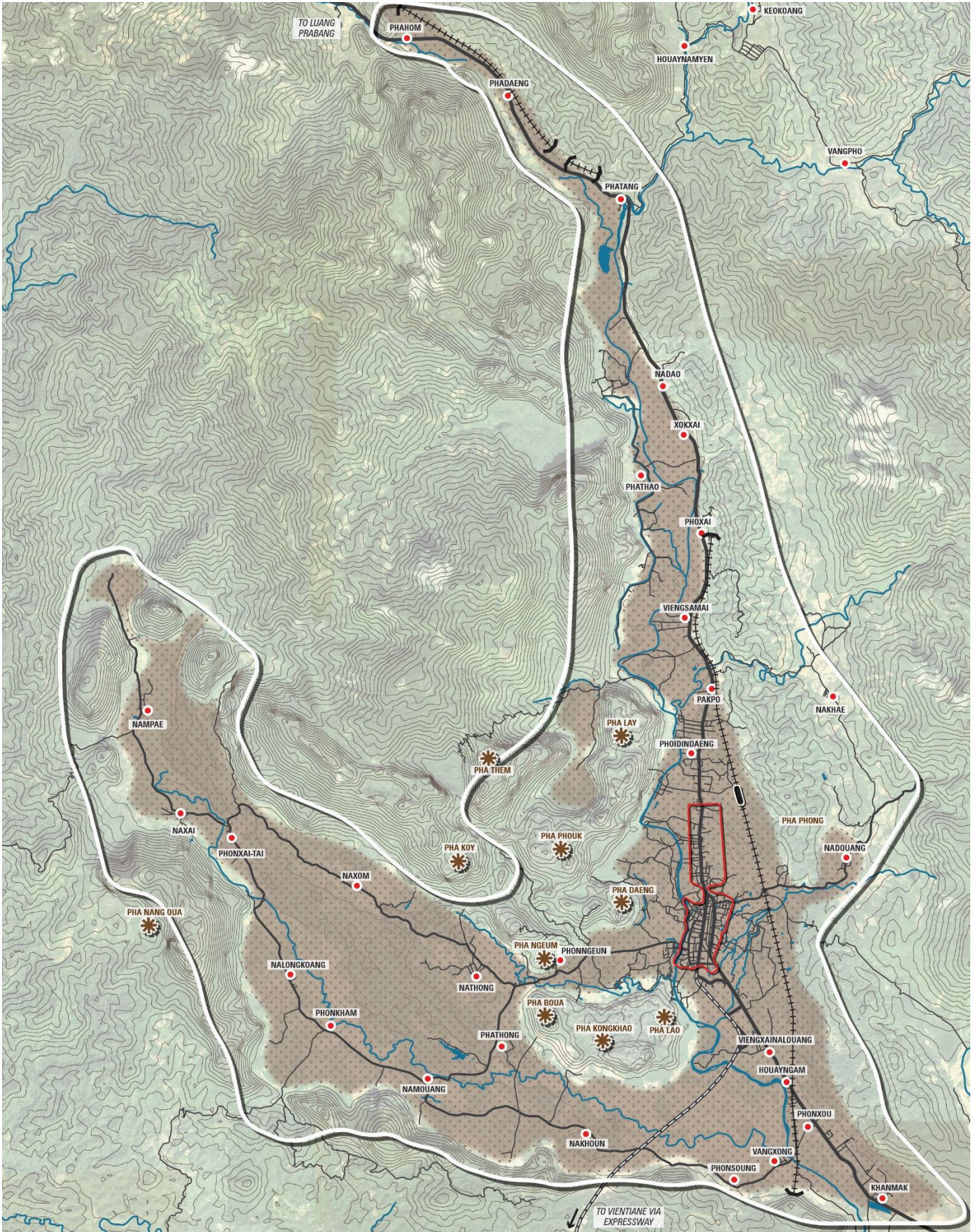


Figure 2. 2010-2020 Master Plan Study Area

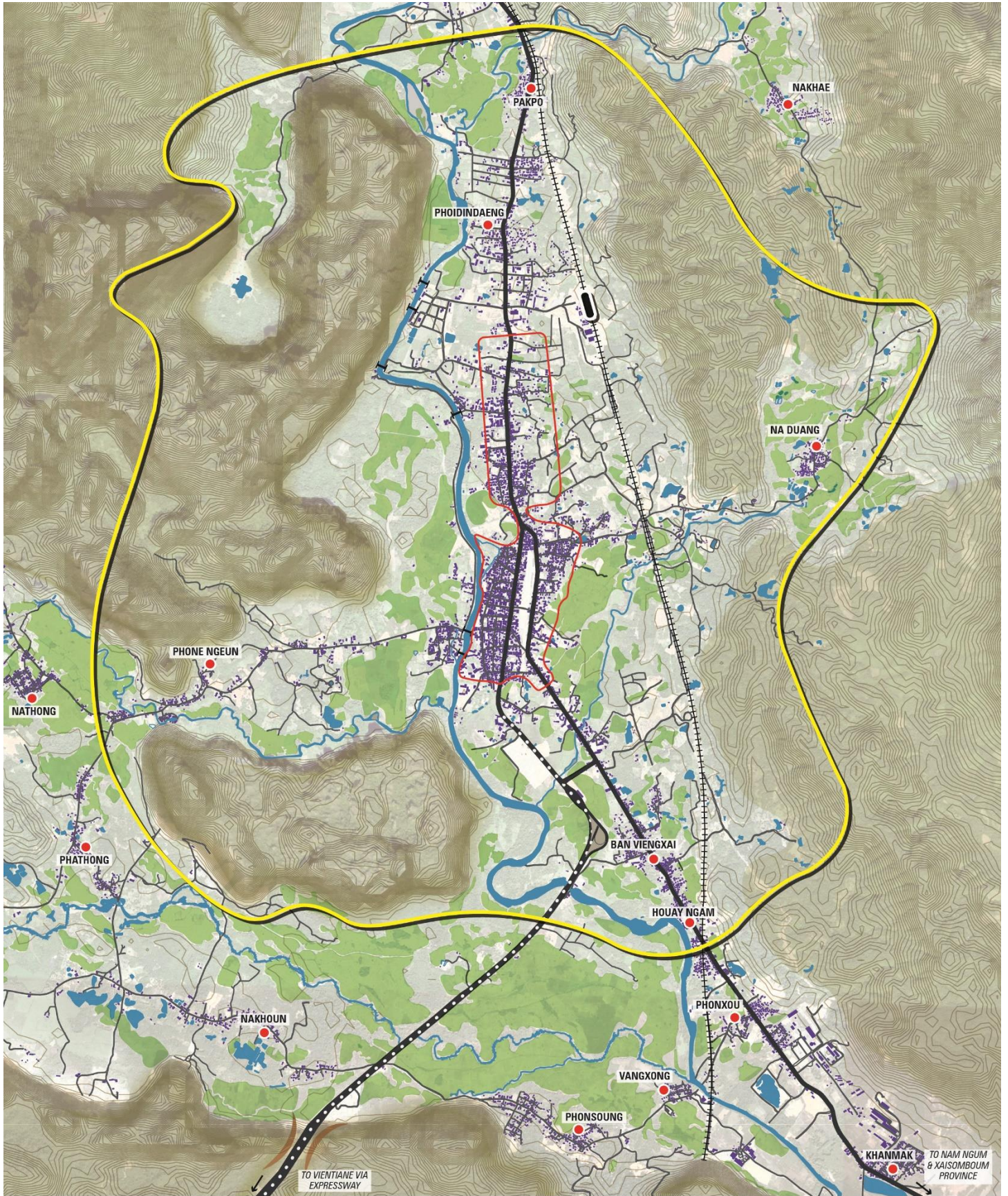
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Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033
 Figure 3. Strategic Tourism Area

Legend	
Urban Area	
Strategic Tourism Area	
Main road	
Secondary road	
Expressway	
Railway line	
Waterway	
Village centre	
Contours	
Train station	
Valley Floor	
Key limestone karsts	

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Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

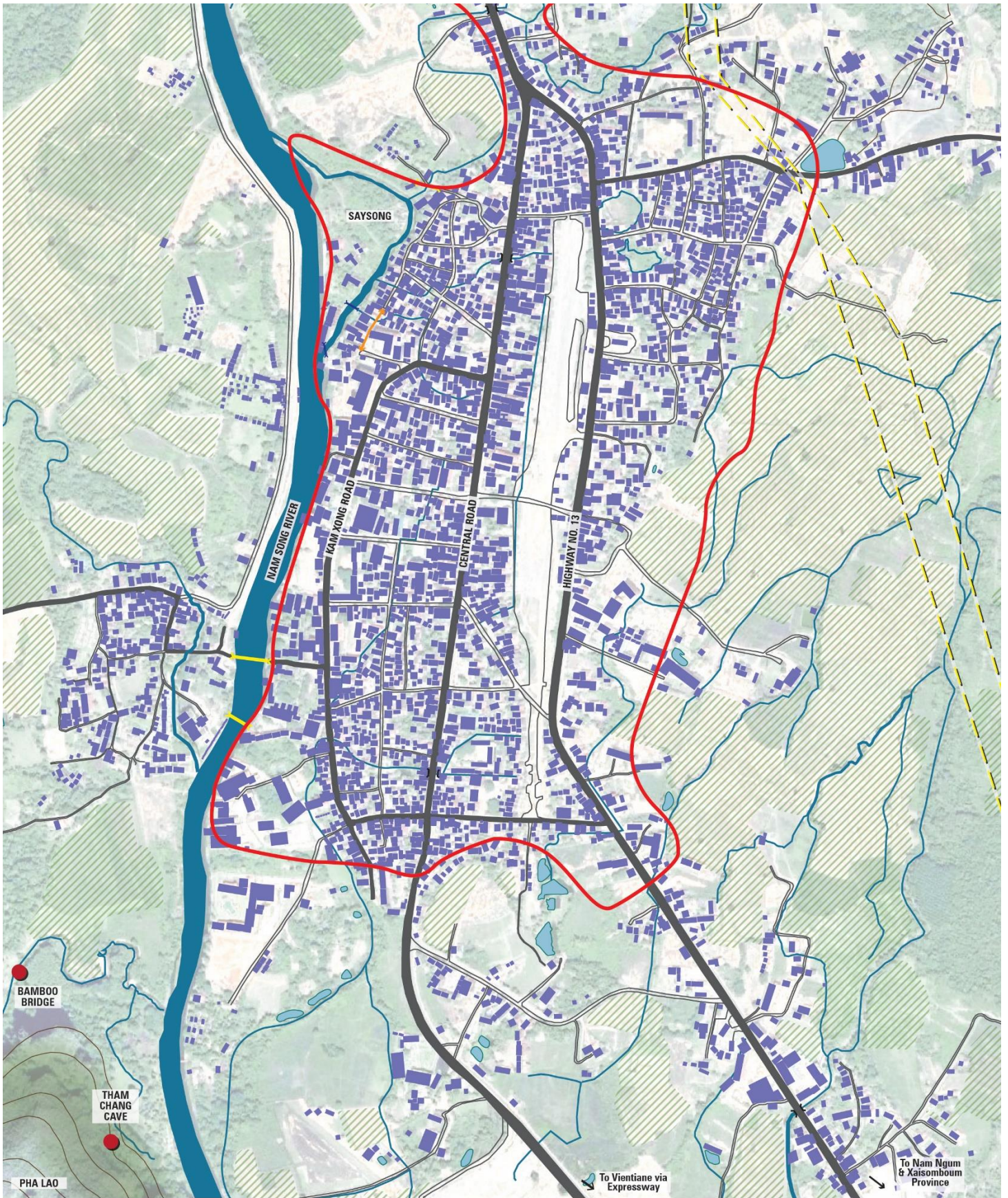
Figure 4. The Town & Environs

Legend

Urban Area		Railway line		Expressway	
Town & Environs Area		Train station		Existing Bridges	
2020 Built form		Waterways			
Main road		Ponds			
Secondary road		Contours			
		Agricultural use			



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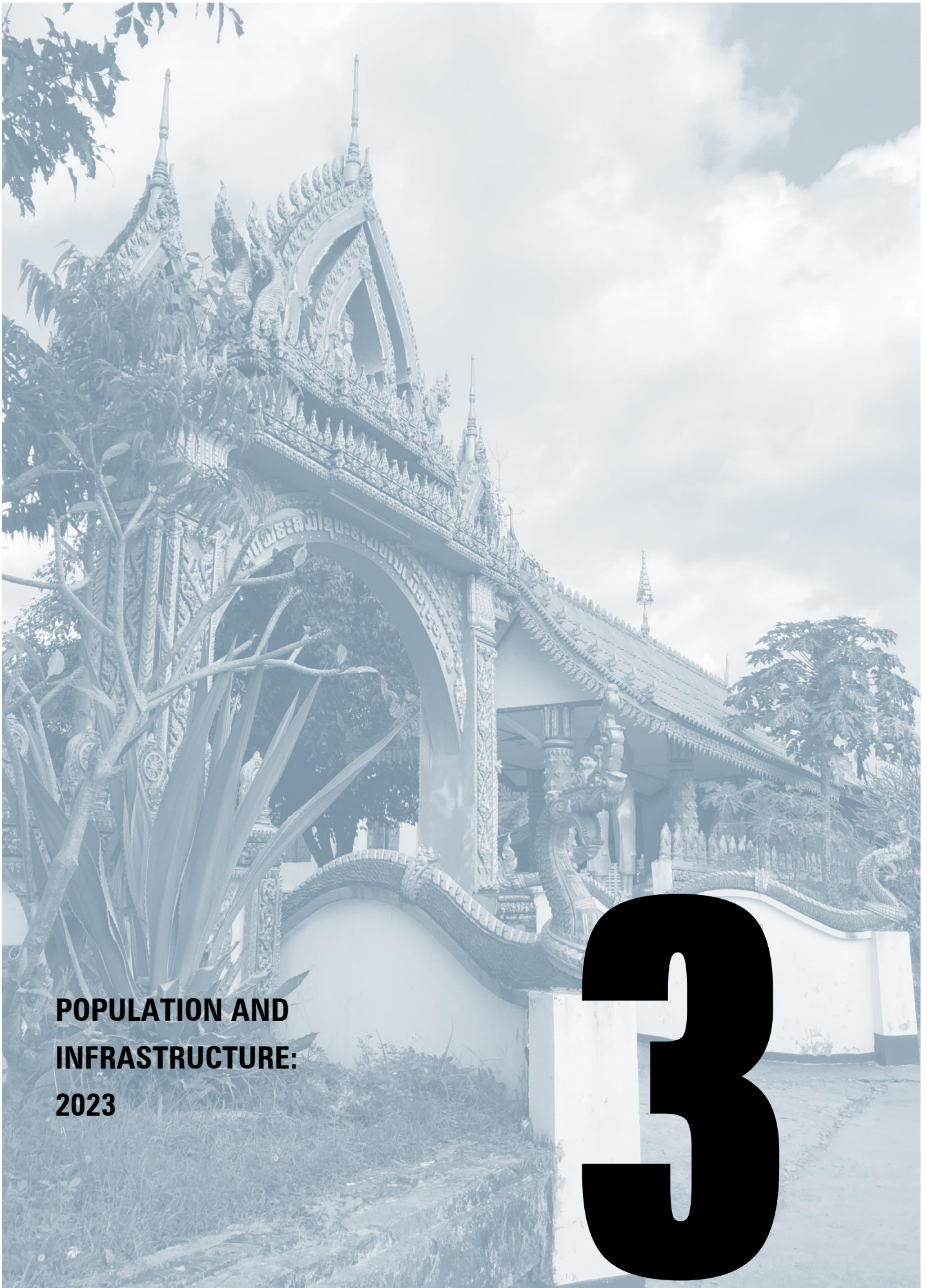
Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

Figure 5. Vang Vieng The Urban Core

Legend

Urban Core Study Area		Vehicle & Pedestrian Bridge		Agricultural use	
2020 Built form		Pedestrian Bridge		Tourism destination	
Main road		Connect Road		Electric network	
Secondary road		Waterways			
Contours		Ponds			

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**POPULATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE:
2023**

3. Population and Infrastructure: 2023

3.1 Population and Household Numbers

The Town and Environs Study Area comprises some 13 villages, noting that a number of village boundaries extend outside its curtilage (and therefore this number excludes Phathong and Nakhoun).

The 13 villages are Pakpo, Phoudindaeng, Na Duang, Huay Sa Ngao, Vung Vieng, Phon Pheng, Savang, Vieng Keo, Mueng Song, Huay Yae, Huay Ngam, Viengxay and Phon Nguen. A map of village areas is provided at Figure 8. The urban core of Vang Vieng, including its traditional grid and northern growth area comprise 5 villages.

The existing population (as of 2022) within these villages was 17,098 and includes some 3,298 households. This equates to an average household size of approximately 5.184.

Each village operates as an important social and administrative unit with a village head responsible for liaising with members of the community and with Government Agencies at the District level on various matters. The village structure also provides an important 'grass roots' entity to undertake Government sponsored programs requiring community input and assistance.

In regard to the 'tourist' population, it is noted that the number of yearly tourist arrivals in Vang Vieng in 2019 (a pre-pandemic reference point) reached 362,666.

3.2 Introduction to Infrastructure

There are two types of infrastructure in urban areas. They are:

- Soft Infrastructure – social and community facilities and services such as schools, hospitals, community meeting halls, libraries, sporting, and recreational facilities etc; and
- Hard Infrastructure – roads and bridges, drainage, water supply, electricity supply, solid waste collection and disposal, sewerage collection and treatment, telecommunications etc.

The provision of both 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure is critical to the functioning of Vang Vieng. In the context (of the population size) of the Vang Vieng Township, it is relatively well endowed with community facilities and services, as well as utility services such as water and power. Further growth and development of Vang Vieng will however inevitably place pressure on these services to meet the community's needs and cater for the growing number of domestic and international tourists.

Figures 6 and 7 identify the location of key soft and hard infrastructure across the study area.

3.3 Soft Infrastructure

Relatively limited change was observed in relation to soft infrastructure across Vang Vieng and surrounds since publication of the 2010-2020 Master Plan.

The social and community facilities available to the people of Vang Vieng Town and surrounds include a hospital, a number of primary schools, a secondary school, a teaching training facility, a community hall, post office, bus terminal, markets (including the morning market) and the Kaysone Memorial Park.

There are very few public recreation facilities within Vang Vieng and surrounds. A playing field is located on the grounds of Vang Vieng High School. New (and likely privately run) soccer fields are located to the south and east of the township.

Fifteen Temples operate within Vang Vieng Town and environs, being important places of worship and, in some cases, significant cultural heritage places. The Temple complexes are often complemented by spacious and attractive grounds. Of particular note is Wat Si Vieng Xong (Wat That) which is set on elevated and well landscaped ground, with frontage to Central Road.

A number of Government Offices are located in Vang Vieng and environs, accommodating the following District agencies:

- Urban Development Authority
- Land Management
- District Administration
- Water Resources and Environment
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Public Works and Transport
- Planning and Investment
- Office of Finance
- Trade
- Industry and Commercial
- Information and Culture
- Tourism
- Education

The strong Government presence within Vang Vieng continues to serve not only as an important source of employment, but also provides a wide range of services to the wider community.

3.4 Hard Infrastructure

Vang Vieng is now serviced by new rail infrastructure in the form of the China-Lao Railway line, which is aligned to the east of the township and includes a new train station to the north-east.

Road infrastructure in the Town and its environs continues to include both sealed and unsealed roads. The Route 13 Highway is the main road running north-south through the Town, with Central Road and Nam Song Road running parallel and to the west. East west cross streets and smaller lanes enhance the local access system.

Significant road-related infrastructure has been constructed in the study area since the 2010-2020 Master Plan. The new road infrastructure includes:

- The Vientiane - Vang Vieng Expressway (which currently terminates to the south of the Town and is accessed via a toll booth entry point).
- A new Bridge was constructed to the north of the township and provides improved vehicle access to the western side of the Nam Song River.
- A new road is constructed to the west bank of the Nam Song.

In addition, the Kaeng Yui Waterfall Access Improvements Road Project and the Western Loop Project, (funded under the ADBs TIIGP2 Programme) is under construction.

A By-pass road was proposed to the east of Route 13 and mentioned in the 2010 Master Plan, but does not appear to have eventuated. This road however may be superseded by a possible expressway extension towards Luang Prabang.

Regarding traffic flow, congestion continues to occur along main roads (including Route 13, Central Road and Nam Song Road) at different times. Disparate car parking methods continue to contribute to this problem on some roads. Recently, this has included the parking of caravans on roadsides.

Provision of access to the land to the west of the Nam Song River has been improved via a new bridge ('red metal bridge') to the north of the township. The wooden suspension bridge located south of the urban core appears to be now used only by motorcycles and pedestrians for access to the western side of the river.

Historically, mini-buses stopped on the Route13 highway adjacent to the former airstrip and passengers traversed the strip by foot or tuk-tuk to reach the main commercial area. Whilst this passage of access continues many tourists arriving by bus now commence their journey into Town from the north, or from the new access road linking the new Expressway interchange to the southern part of the township. Arrivals from the newly constructed train station enter town from the north, typically arriving via taxi, tuk-tuk or informal motorbike service.

Some of the sealed roads include street lighting and provision of footpaths. It is unclear whether all existing lights are in operation at all times. Paved footpaths flank both the northern and central stretches of Central Road and Nam Song Road, and some footpaths exist in conjunction with the closed drainage system along selected east-west connector roads. These generally remain in reasonable condition, however as highlighted in the 2010-2020 Master Plan, some drainage covers, which double as footpath space, continue to be in a state of disrepair and unsafe for pedestrian traffic. Where no defined footpaths exist, pedestrians share the same space set aside also for motorbikes, bicycles, and cars.

Formal covered drainage systems for stormwater exist along the main north-south roads namely Central Road and Kam Song Road, and some east-west roads, while open drains generally operate within the outlying roads. All stormwater drains into the Nam Song River, and currently it is unclear if any pollutant traps have been installed since the 2010-2020 Master Plan.

The sources of water for consumption in Vang Vieng include the Nam Song River supplemented by the existing Kaeng Yui and Houay Gueang stream sources, which are the raw water source for the existing water treatment plant near Ban Nadouang. The Song River is a mid-sized river with variable year-round flow and turbidity. The Kaeng Yui and Houay Gueang sources are mountain streams, and the water quality is considered to be quite good, but high and short lived turbidity peaks are expected during rain events. A new water treatment plant has been proposed for Vang Vieng.

Most homes have water meters and pay monthly for the amount of water they use.

The Town remains without a reticulated sewage system, with a reliance on either septic tanks or pit latrines (many of which are operating in the rural areas around the Urban Core) continuing.

In the context of increasing of tourists coming to visit Vang Vieng, and the expansion of restaurants and business along the Song River, it is understood that restaurants and hotels/guest houses are now required to build their own wastewater treatment facilities. Some small and medium sizes business have however not managed to do this, and instead discharge their wastewater into the river. The expansion of riverside businesses has resulted in litter/garbage entering the Song river. The cleaning of vehicles near the river is another source of river contamination. Currently, water quality monitoring occurs every month.

No concerns have been identified with the quality of the electricity supply in Vang Vieng by the project team.

Solid waste management in Vang Vieng is executed by two entities: the UDAA and licenced collection and transportation companies. By year 2033, based on a population growth rate of 1.5% (UDAA 2021), the solid waste amount generated across Vang Vieng will be approximately 23 tons/day. The ADB has funded the upgrading of the existing Vang Vieng landfill facility (located to the south-east of the town, and beyond the cement production plants), and the improvement of holistic solid waste management in the town and surrounding areas. Completion of improvements to the landfill facility are expected in April 2023. The landfill facility will be able to accommodate waste up to 2033.

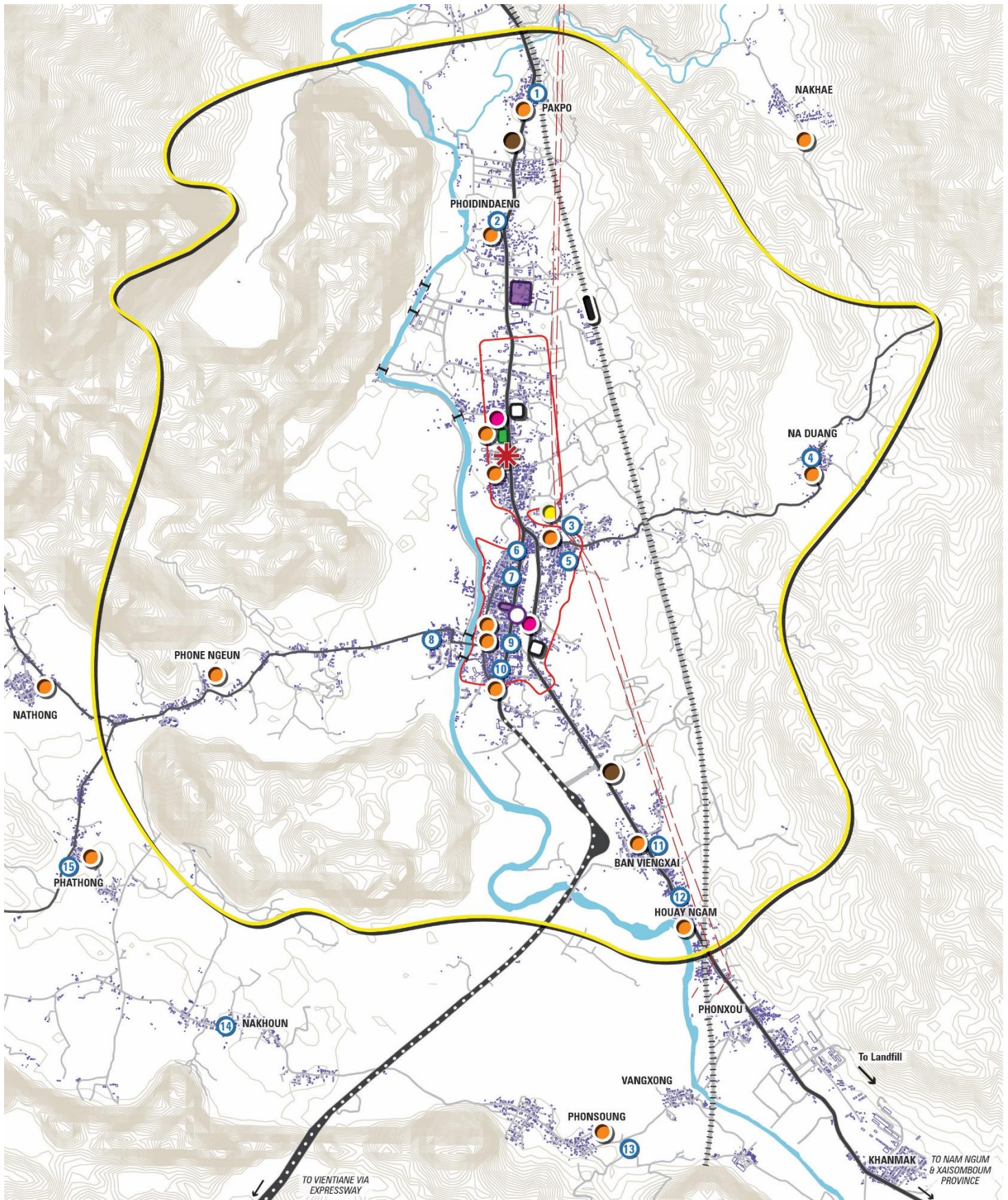


Vang Vieng landfill



Pedestrian, cycle and motorcycle bridge

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Figure 6. Infrastructure in the Environs

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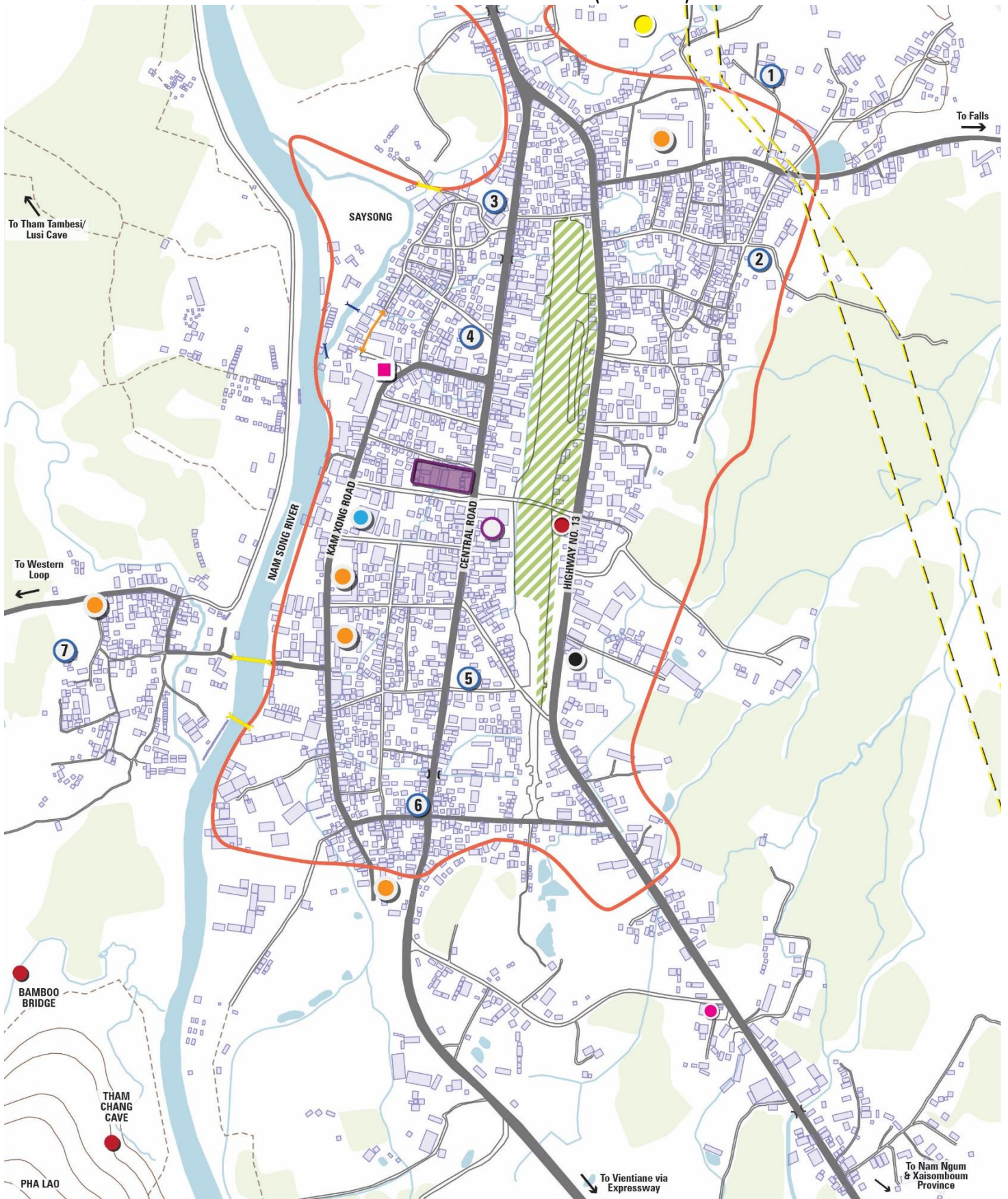
Urban Area		Railway line		Schools		Government office	
Town & Environs Area		Train station		Temples		Stadium	
2020 Built form		Waterways		Market		Kaysone Memorial Park	
Main road		Contours		Bus terminal		Electric substation	
Secondary road		Existing Bridges		Cemetery		Electric network	
Expressway				Community Hall			

List of Temples

Wat Thathphoun		Wat Keng		Wat Phonxang	
Wat Huay Shango		Wat Sisoumang		Wat Nakoun	
Vang Vieng Church		Wat Simixay Yaram		Wat Nalong Kuang	
Wat Naxay Yaram		Wat Ketkeo			
Wat Phone Pheng		Wat Phone Xay			
Wat That		Wat Huay Shango			

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Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

Figure 7. Urban Core Infrastructure

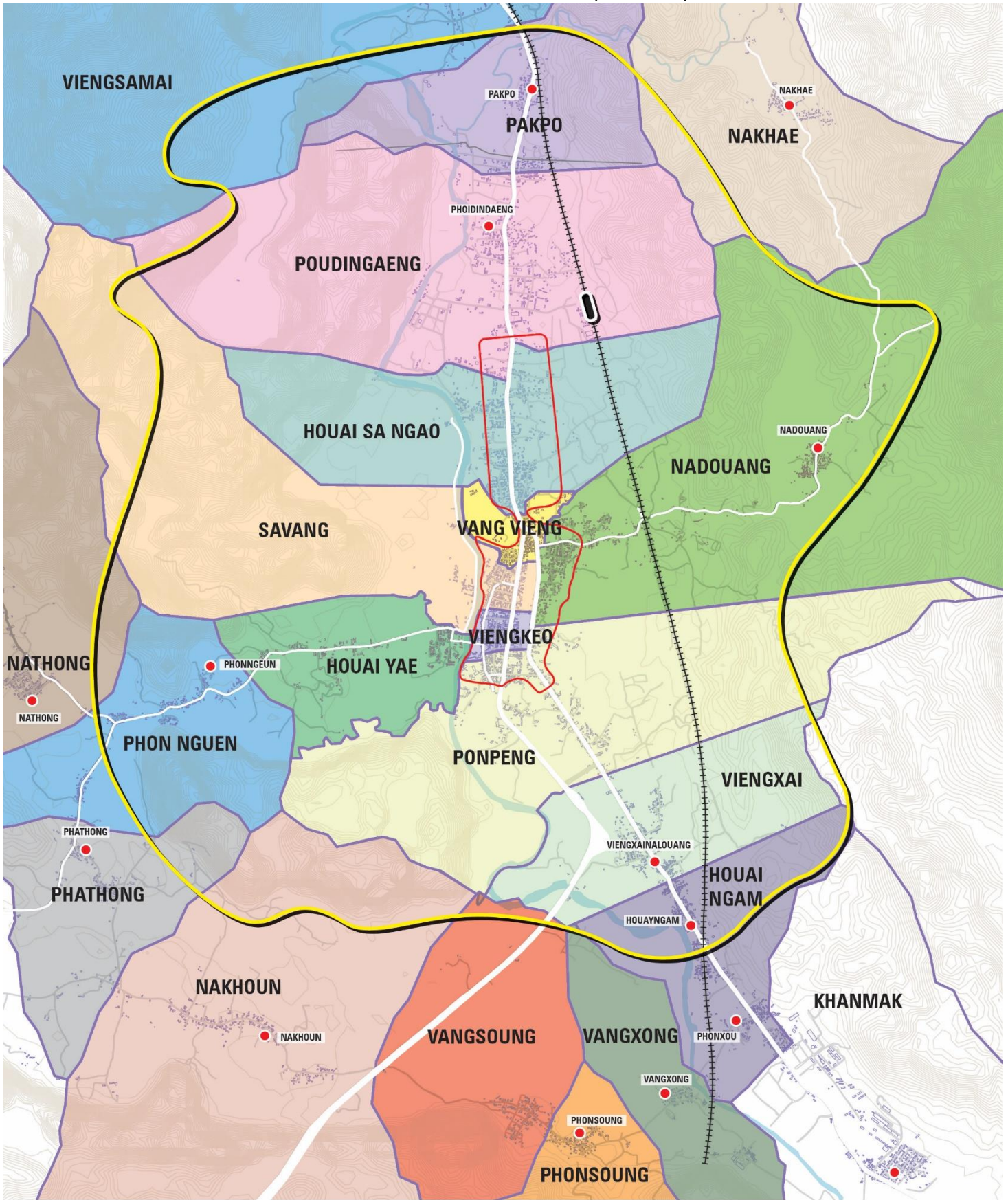
Legend

Urban Area	Contours	Recreation/community gathering space	Electric network
2020 Built form	Schools	Government office	Vehicle & Pedestrian Bridge
Main road	Community hall	Bus terminal	Pedestrian Bridge
Secondary road	Hospital and health	Tourism destinations	Connect Road
Railway line	Post office	Fresh Market	
Agricultural use	Electrical substation	Town Market	

List of Temples

Vang Vieng Church	①	Wat Ketkeo	⑦
Wat Phone Pheng	②		
Wat That	③		
Wat Kang	④		
Wat Sisoumang	⑤		
Wat Simxay Yaram	⑥		

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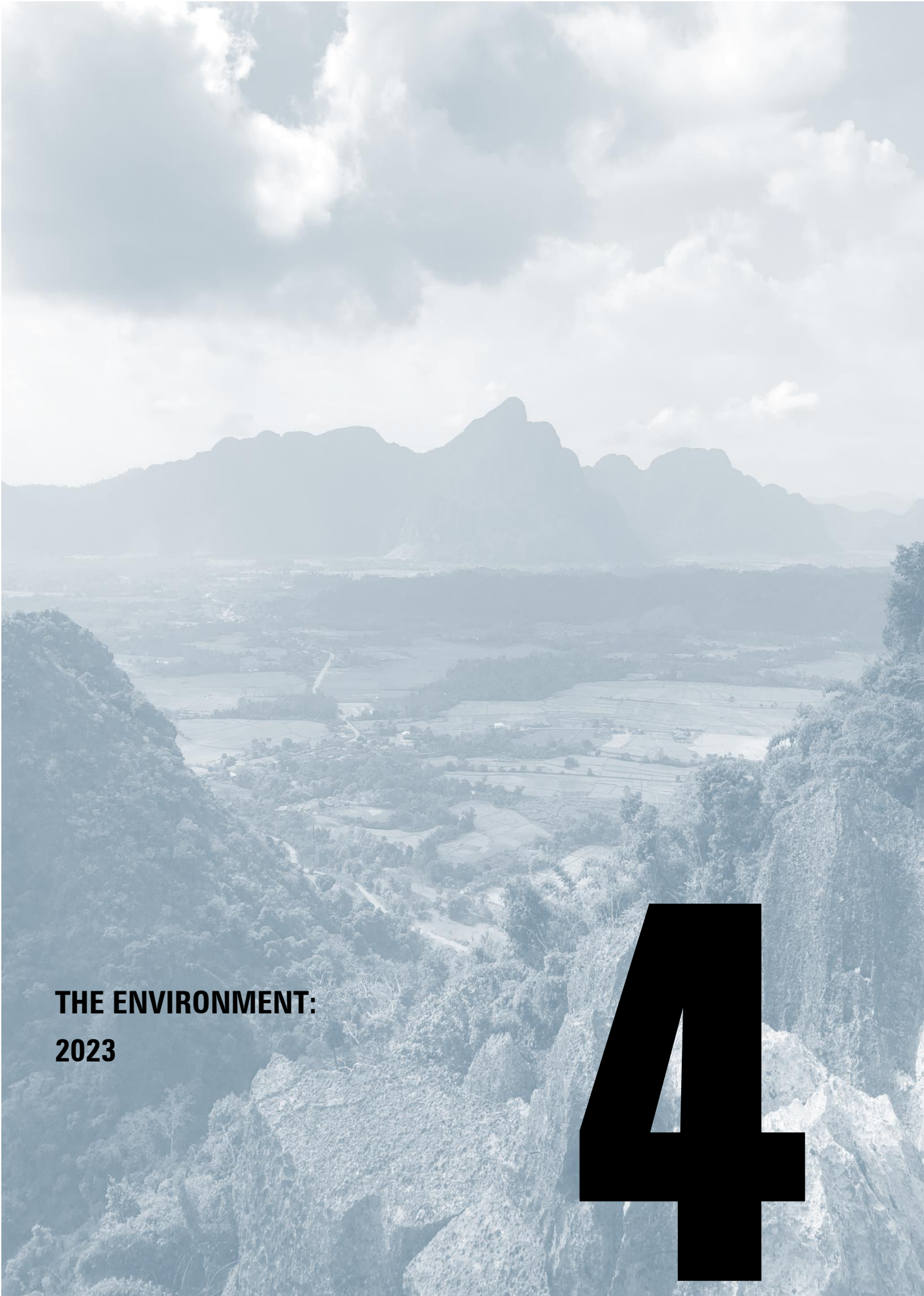
Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

Figure 8. Villages Map

Legend

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Urban Core Study Area | | Railway line | |
| Town & Environs Area | | Train station | |
| 2020 Built form | | Waterways | |
| Main road | | Village boundary | |
| Secondary road | | Village centre | |

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**THE ENVIRONMENT:
2023**

4. The Environment: 2023

The character of Vang Vieng Town is embedded within its environmental, cultural, and historical values. Nestled within a mountainous and forested backdrop, the township itself has a strong physical and functional association with the Nam Song River. Agricultural land, characterised by rice fields and orchards, generally encircles the town, providing a lush green setting. The town also contains important Buddhist temples and associated grounds, key historic buildings exhibiting French colonial architecture and some good examples of Lao vernacular domestic architecture.

The key environmental qualities of Vang Vieng and environs are summarised in the sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 below.

Figure 9 indicates the environmental features of the Strategic Context.

Figure 10 indicates the environmental features of the Town and Environs.

Figure 11 indicates the environmental features of the Urban Core.

4.1 Natural Landscape

The stunning limestone karst mountains with numerous unexplored caves and tunnels is characterised by sheer cliff faces draped with lush vegetation. This natural setting of natural beauty and scenic splendour is complemented by well maintained paddy fields and the Nam Song River.

To the south and east of the town is another mountain range which is characterised by dense forest and shifting cultivation practices within undulating sandstone hills. The base of this mountain range forms part of the Nam Song River basin and is farmed mainly with rice production, orchards, and timber plantations.

Concerningly, limestone mining and cuts into the mountain topography have occurred in the southern mountain ranges (as is evident in the exposed opening of the Expressway into the Nam Song valley), with long-distance visibility of these impacts.

The Nam Song River valley is highly susceptible to frequent seasonal flooding, which materially affects the town and its surrounds.

The Nam Song, which meanders along to the west of Vang Vieng's Urban Core, enhances the landscape and environmental qualities of the area. The river itself is intensively utilised for recreation with varying forms of boating and leisure – both east and west banks increasingly occupied by formal and informal bars and restaurants. Noise and pollution of the river is a critical design and management issue.

The riparian zone directly adjacent to the township has been largely altered, and urban development very close to the riverbanks has caused problems in terms of erosion, stormwater runoff and effluent seepage into the waterway. Works to the western bank were underway as of December 2022. There remains very limited public open space abutting the river frontage due to urban encroachment.

Numerous tributaries within Vang Vieng environs such as the Nam Lao River also contribute to the natural landscape as well as providing a source of water for farming activities and domestic use by outlying villages.

The 'Nam Song Sub- River Basin Profile' draft report¹ noted that:

'Riverine and floodplain wetland habitats sustain aquatic biodiversity and provide important areas for fish breeding and other aquatic ecosystems processes and links. There is little known about the wetland in the Nam Song River Basin (NXRB). Studies are required to understand the importance and extent of wetland habitat existing and lost in the basin. Many of the wetland and swamps in the basin have been drained and used for rice cultivation.' (Page 49)

¹ Nam Song Sub-River Basin draft report (June 2009), Department of Water Resource and Environment Administration, Prime Minister's Office, Lao PDR – prepared under the Nam Ngu, River Basin Development Sector Project supported by ADB (Loan 1933-LAO) and AFD (Grant CLA 1048 01H)

The draft report notes that the natural aquatic conditions of the Nam Song Basin are not only constantly changing but that water quality of the river system is becoming a significant issue, particularly during the dry season around urban settlements, and the 'current status of many native species (aquatic) is said to be declining in both size and distribution.' (Page 58).

That report acknowledged the need for more investigations into the biodiversity values of the Nam Song Basin to inform economic, social and environmental management decisions by government.

Whilst there is limited information about the biodiversity values and quality of the natural landscape surrounding the Town, it is anticipated that the landscape has moderate biodiversity value, especially given its riverine and forested contexts.

The nearest conservation forest to Vang Vieng is the Phu Hong – Phu Ban District Conservation Forest area at the Kaeng Yui waterfall - which is approximately 10 km to the east, and is inside the master plan area. In addition, there are two main types of Forest zone to the West and North side of Vang Vieng old town namely: Protected Forest zone and Conservative Forest zone, which are known as the Song River Upper Stream Protected Forest area. Apart from these zones, there are also some areas of Mixed Deciduous Forest.

There are many private gardens within the town itself which grow fruit and vegetables for household consumption adding to the overall landscape quality of the town. There remains a clear lack of street tree planting across the township, and it is understood that street trees initially existed but were removed for the provision of the closed drainage system.

The environment in the wider strategic context features the western valley, rolling forested western hills, and the northern Nam Song corridor (refer to Figure 9).



Natural Environs west of Vang Vieng

4.2 Built Form

The layout of Vang Vieng Town is characterised by two main north-south roads – Route 13 and Central Road - crossed by a network of mainly sealed east-west local roads. Subdivision patterns favour average residential allotments of approximately 200 square metres in area noting that there are smaller allotments within the commercial area.

A former US airfield remains as a large asphalt expanse devoid of trees and grass between Route 13 and the majority of existing urban development to the west. The airfield was historically used during the Second Indo-China War for ingoing and outgoing aircraft and for storage purposes. It is now a largely informal open space area, used for community events, recreation, car parking and includes some scattered shops.

The predominant residential built form in Vang Vieng Town is 1 and 2 storey detached housing complemented by private gardens. Pitched roof forms, regular fenestration, small porch, or veranda areas and, on occasions a small retail use such as a shop or roadside café accommodated within temporary structures, are common elements. External materials and finishes generally include a range of locally sourced materials such as timber, stone, woven bamboo, and concrete, and other materials sourced outside the Town such as red bricks, roof tiles, corrugated iron roof, sand, glass, and steel. Some of the more traditional houses are on stilts to enhance natural ventilation and avoid flooding.

A more modern form of new housing is evident across the Town and environs. These are more substantial brick and painted rendered 2 storey dwellings with tiled pitched roofs and space for parking of cars and motorcycles.

The built form within the main commercial area is often attached, constructed to the street alignment with shopfronts, cafés, restaurants and tourist related businesses and dwellings to the rear or in an upper storey. Most restaurants and bars are open fronted to the street. Buildings exhibit metal and timber cladding, with pitched tiled or corrugated iron roofs. A concentration of signage and lighting is present within this strip. The commercial area is mainly one and two storey in height (except for larger hotel developments), with sealed footpaths or grassed verges.

Over recent years a series of notable new accommodation and tourism facilities have been built within the core of the town, which impede visual access to the mountains to the west. These and a number of other partly constructed higher density buildings appear to exceed the height parameters recommended by the 2010-2020 Vang Vieng Town and Environs Master Plan. Built form has essentially ‘privatised’ the river frontage along the eastern bank of the Song River adjacent to the urban core, as a result of a lack of adequate setbacks to the river edge.

The Kaysone Memorial Park situated to the north of the main Urban Core offers an attractive public space in Vang Vieng, while other areas such as the Town’s Morning Market and Bus terminal (located north of the Urban Core), lack landscaping in terms of shade and greenery.

Other key buildings that provide landscaped open space include government offices such as the Land Management Office and the Urban Development Administrative Authority office which is a French colonial building of cultural heritage value. The schools located within Vang Vieng, and its environs also typically display open spaces and treed areas which contribute to the overall landscape quality of the area.



Recent built form across Vang Vieng town centre



Built Form Examples across Vang Vieng

4.3 Key Views and 'Gateways'

The natural beauty and scenic qualities of the area contribute to the 'sense of place' of Vang Vieng Town. The ability to appreciate the beautiful setting of the Town of Vang Vieng is facilitated by a number of key views and vistas located on the edge and within the Town itself. These include panoramic views of the surrounding mountains to the west and east, as well as direct corridor views along roads terminated by components of the natural landscape or built form. The key views and vistas are shown in Figure 11.

Views are also gained from within and along the banks of the Nam Song River, which is particularly important given the increasing number of tourism activities locating within the river corridor. There are also views of the distant mountains from other vantage points within the Town, particularly between gaps in the built form abutting the river's edge. A panoramic view is also noted at the point at which the new expressway cuts through the mountain range and enters the valley floor.

Often a visitor's first impressions of a town are influenced by the 'sense of arrival' or entry into the urban area. These entry points or 'gateways' provide opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of the town using such techniques as particular tree planting, archways, signage, and other structures which inform the public that they are entering a specific town. Figure 11 identifies the old town gateway at the southern entry to Vang Vieng and a 'township gateway' from the north, near where the Route 13 highway and Central Road meet. The end of the new expressway represents a new arrival point to the township. Further consideration needs to be given as to how to reinforce gateway points having regard for their immediate context.



Arriving at Vang Vieng on the new Expressway

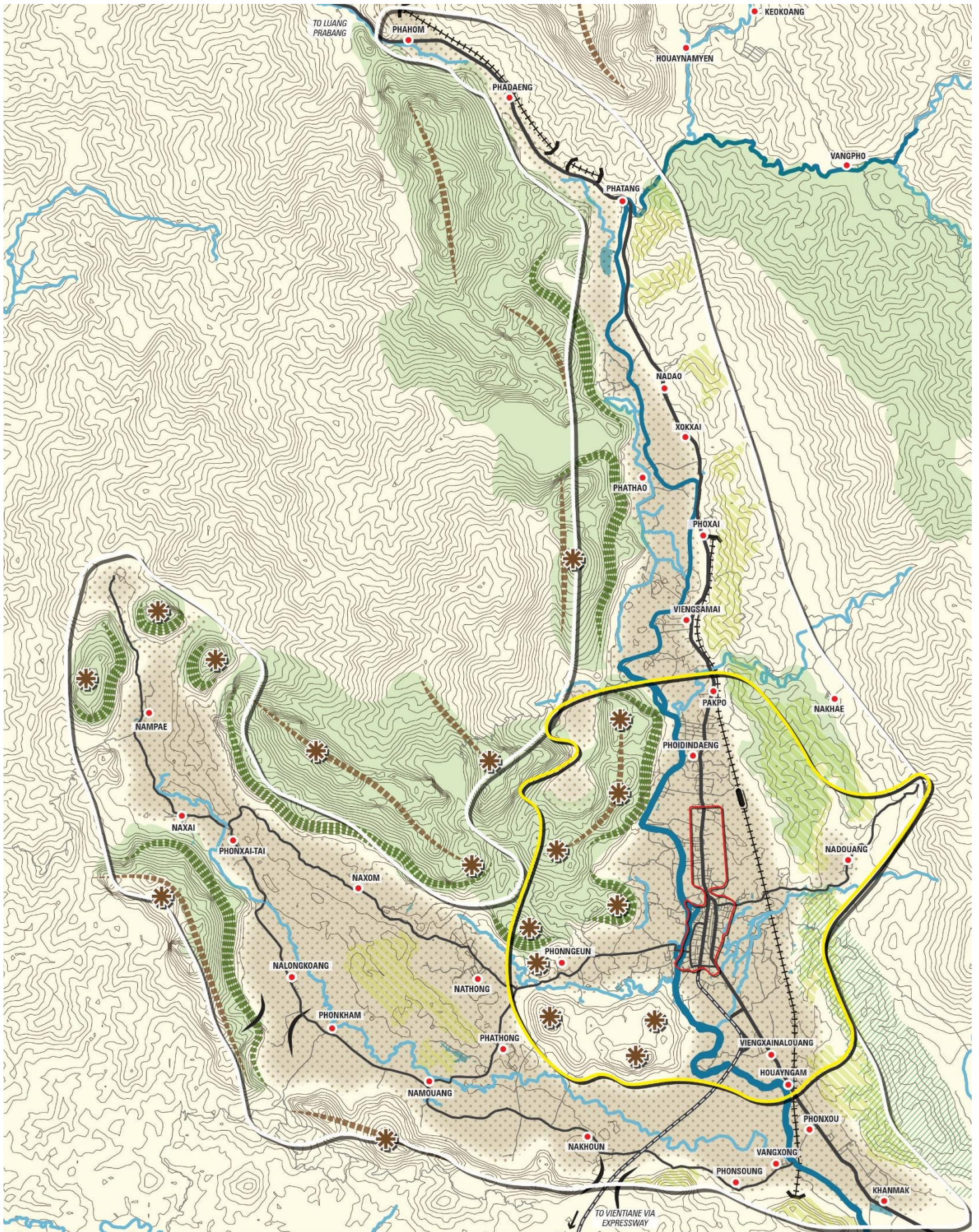


Views towards Western Loop



View to mountains from town centre

VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

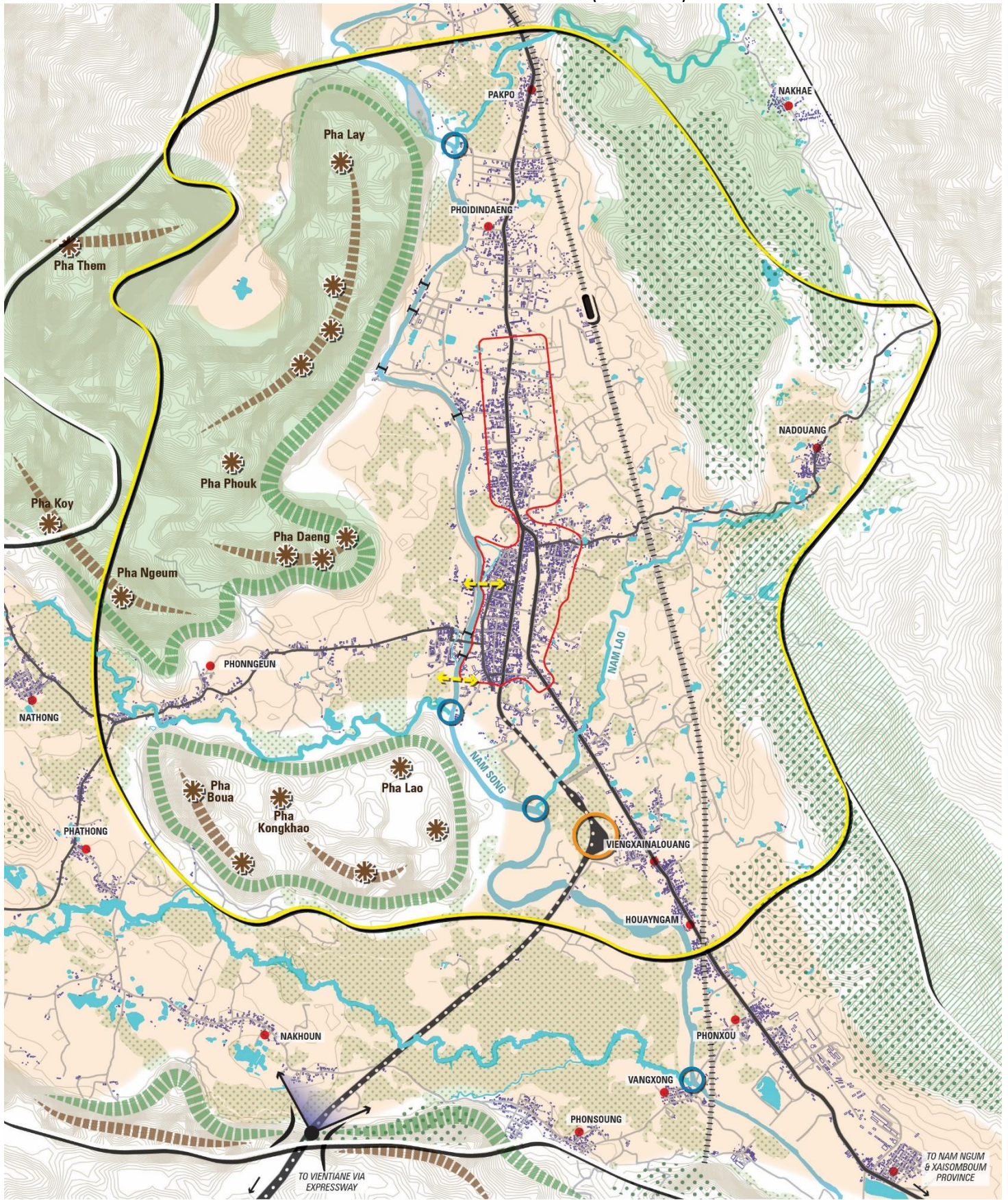
Figure 9. Environment of the Strategic Context

Legend

Urban Area	Main road	Waterway	Mixed Deciduous Forest	Key Limestone Kasts
Town & Environs Area	Secondary road	Ponds	Protected Forest	Ridge lines
Strategic Tourism Area	Railway line	Village centre	Conservation Forest	Escarpments
Expressway	Train station	Contours	Valley Floor	

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VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

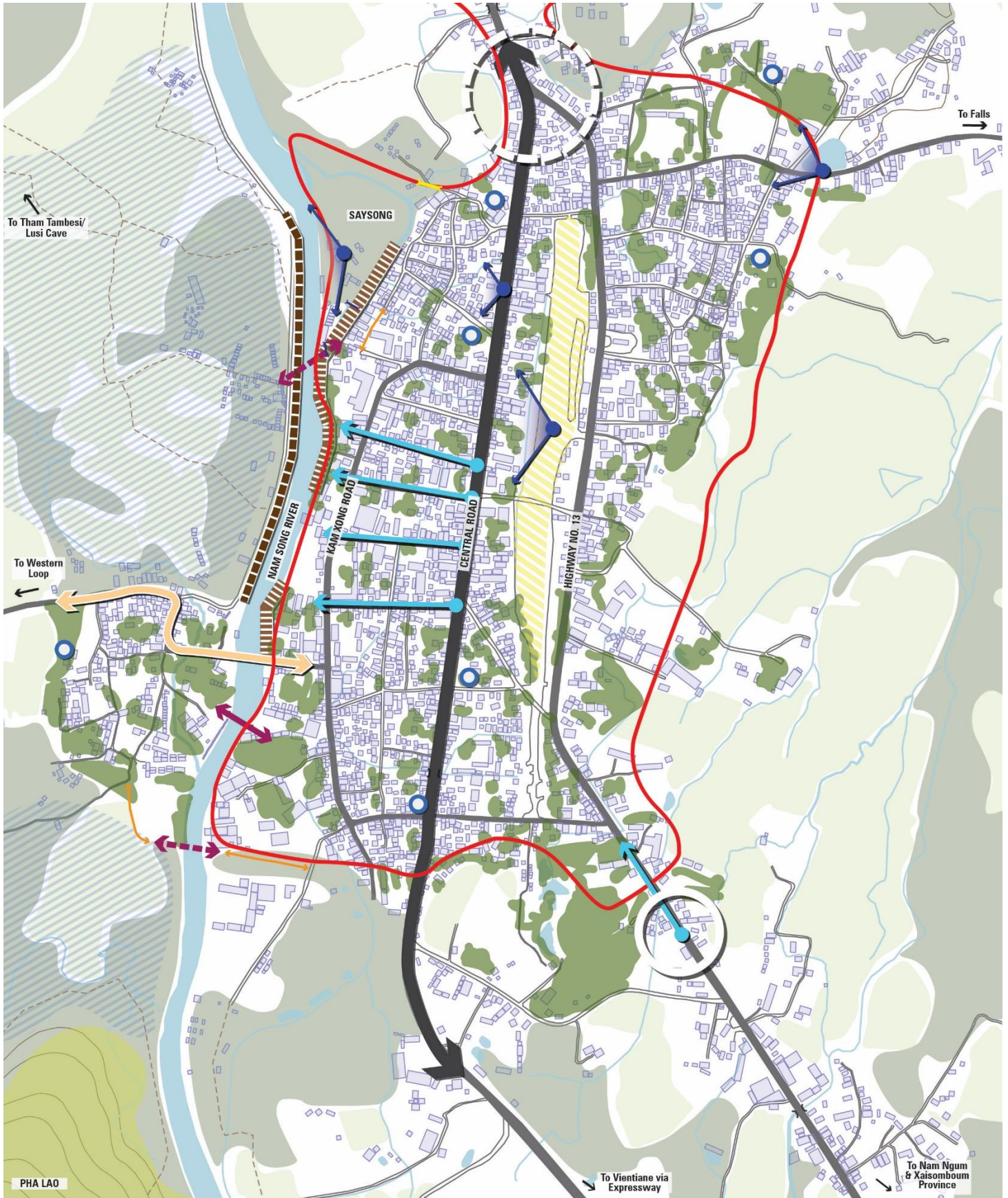
Figure 10. Environment of the Towns & Environs

Legend

Urban Area		Railway line		Main Limestone Karst Peaks		Panoramic View		Existing Bridges	
Town & Environs Area		Train station		Ridge line		Mixed Deciduous Forest			
Strategic Tourism Area		Waterways		Proposed Bridge		Protected Forest			
2020 Built form		Contours		Mountain Interface		Conservation Forest			
Main road		Village centre		Expressway junction		Agricultural use			
Secondary road		Expressway		River confluence		Valley Floor			

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VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



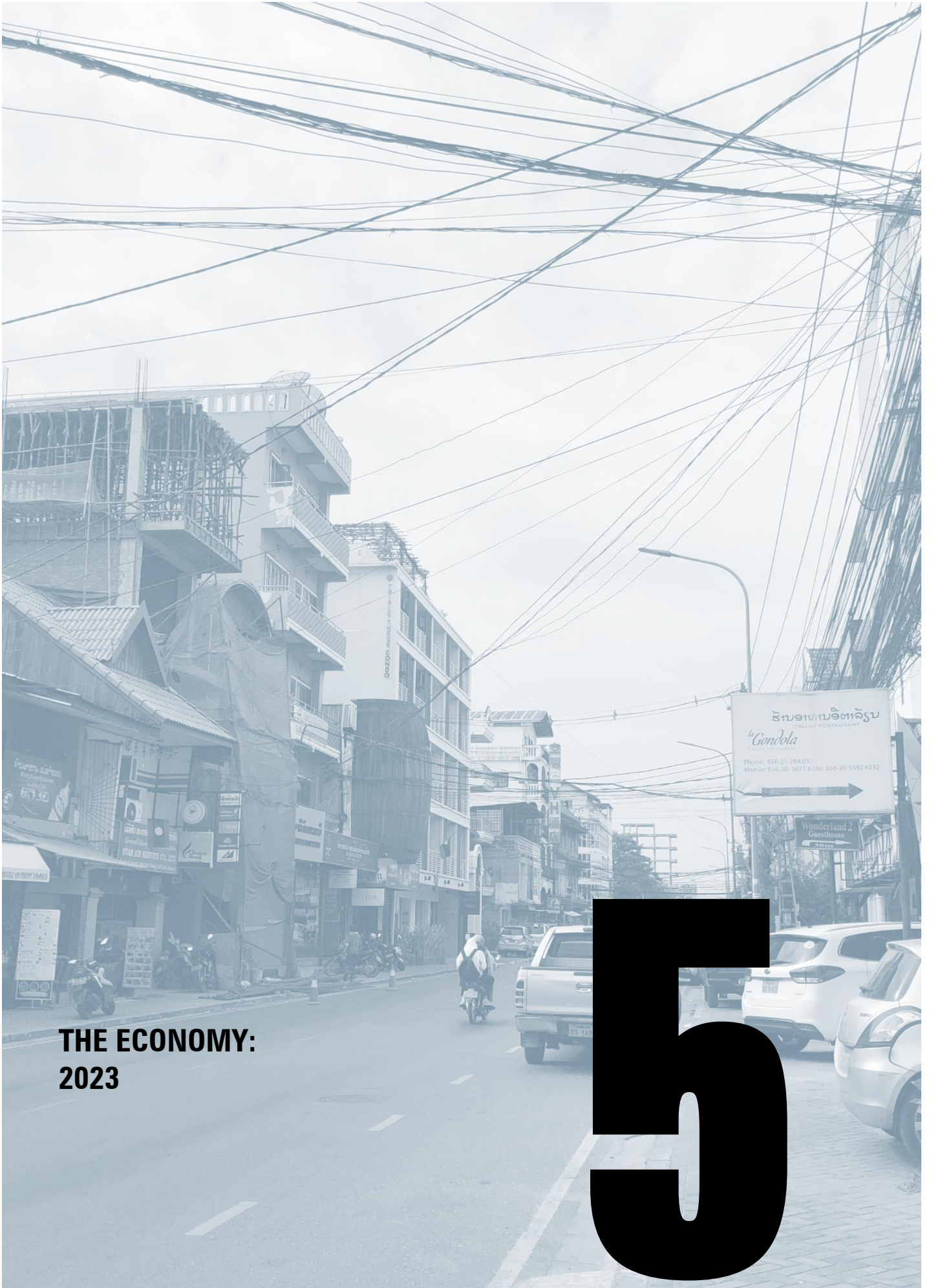
Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

Figure 11. Environment of the Urban Core

Legend

Urban Area	Waterways	Township Gateway	Pedestrian Bridge	West Bank Floodplain	Connect Road
2020 Built form	Ponds	Old Town Gateway	Wide River Bank	Temples	
Main road	Contours	Pedestrian & motor / cyclist link to western loop	Steep & Narrow River Bank	Maintain Aspect West	
Secondary road	Agricultural use	Small Footbridge	Open Views	Forest	
Bridge		Proposed Bridge	Main Corridor Views	Existing Vegetation	
		Vehicle & Pedestrian Bridge	Town Entry to Expressway	Limestone Mountain	

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**THE ECONOMY:
2023**

5. The Economy: 2023

5.1 Land Uses

Prior to the pandemic, tourism contributed approximately 35% towards the Gross Domestic Product of Vang Vieng District, more than any other sector. The growth in guesthouse accommodation and, more recently in multi storey hotels and bungalow style resorts, has not only created jobs for locals living in the Town and surrounding villages, but fostered close links with agriculture given that most of the food being consumed by tourists is locally sourced. The economic benefits of tourism also extend to the sale of local handicrafts although, (and as indicated in the 2010-2020 Master Plan), there continues to be scope for more handicrafts to be sold to tourists based on the skills and traditions of the villages within and beyond the town boundaries.

In terms of tourism sector growth, an estimated 107,238 tourists visited Vang Vieng Town in 2008 (42% domestic and 58% international tourists) representing a doubling of tourist numbers over the period of 2001-2008. By 2019, tourist arrivals had grown to 362,666 made up of 32% domestic and 68% international visitors. Growth scenarios used in this Master Plan (refer to section 7.2) forecast up to 741,535 total visitors by 2033, generating just over an estimated \$75 million in direct expenditure. This would see the GDP contribution being higher than what it was in 2019 (around 35% to 40% due to a greater number of visitors and higher spending), which in-turn could be generating in the order of 4,500 direct jobs in the tourism sector. Growth in tourist arrivals to Vang Vieng will require the provision of new tourist accommodation, which would require adequately serviced land on which to place that accommodation.

In addition, other sectors within the economy will undergo growth due to the direct and indirect benefits of tourism growth, resulting in increased in-migration of workers and their families from elsewhere in the province and beyond to the town seeking jobs, schooling etc coupled with natural growth of the existing residential population. It is anticipated that the service sector will undergo significant growth in employment opportunities and, to a lesser degree, growth in agricultural related ventures such as food processing, manufacturing of tourist related goods and souvenirs as well as the building and construction sector. However, it is anticipated that within the urban areas the primary source of income and investment will be in the tourist sector with agriculture retaining its primacy in the surrounding area outside the town boundaries.

The arrangement of land uses and functions within Vang Vieng has not substantially shifted between 2010 to 2020. Comparative mapping of the footprint in 2010 and 2020 suggests new buildings have been built principally in clusters along Route 13 to the north and south, and on the southern edge of town to either side of the Nam Song.

The main commercial core comprising shops, cafés, restaurants, bars and other tourist related services is relatively compact, and is flanked by established housing to the north and south and more intense tourist accommodation to the west adjacent to the Nam Song River. The riverside tourist development has taken place in a densely developed manner with new hotels up to around 8 storeys in height constructed very close to one another, and with minimal landscaping. Some disparate tourism and commercial ventures have now occurred on the West Bank of the Nam Song River aligned along to the recently constructed road on along the western bank.

Residential areas remain largely located within the southern and northern portions of the Urban Core, and to the east of Route 13. These areas are generally interspersed with small guesthouse accommodation and community facilities such as primary schools and temples.

Government offices are mainly in and around the Central Road and Crossroad No.3 intersection creating a government services precinct which is highly accessible and well defined, however it is understood that a number of Government services and administration buildings have also been relocated to the northern growth area, (positioned to the east side of the Route 13 highway and north of the new Railway Station). Community facilities and social infrastructure are dispersed throughout the Urban Core with a small cluster along Kam Song Road for the hospital and a primary school.

There are also several small villages within the rural environs of the Town on the Western Loop Road.

Two of the large concrete producing plants to the south-east of the Town have ceased production and there are plans to redevelop the facilities into a tourist attraction. The Town's solid waste landfill facility is located at the south-eastern edge of strategic tourism area for this Master Plan.



Commercial uses within the town core



Agricultural land uses surrounding the Town

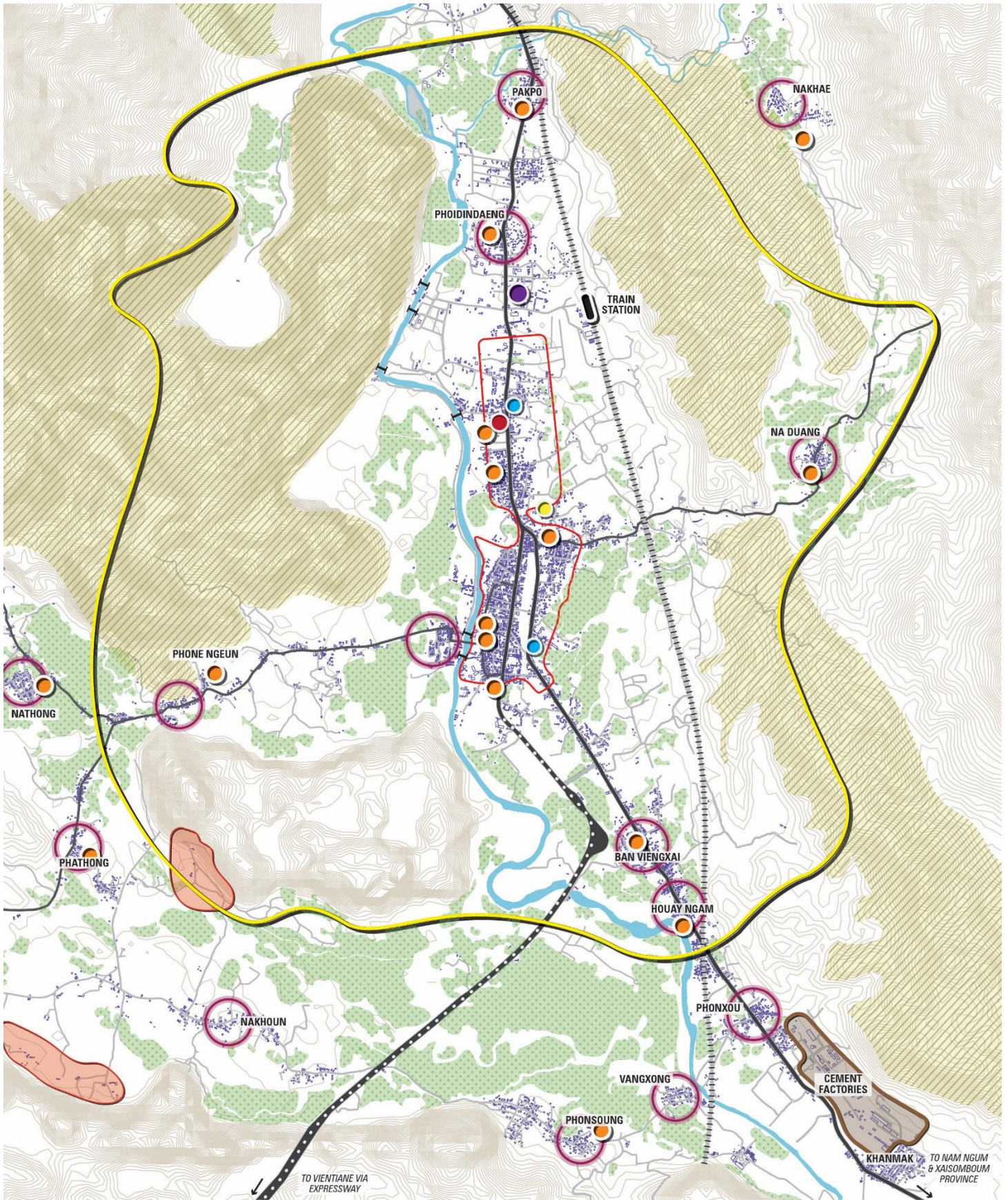


Hotel development and other activities flanking the east and west banks of the Nam Song River



Figure 12 highlights the land uses across the Town and Environs.

Figure 13 highlights the dominant land uses in the Urban Core.



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

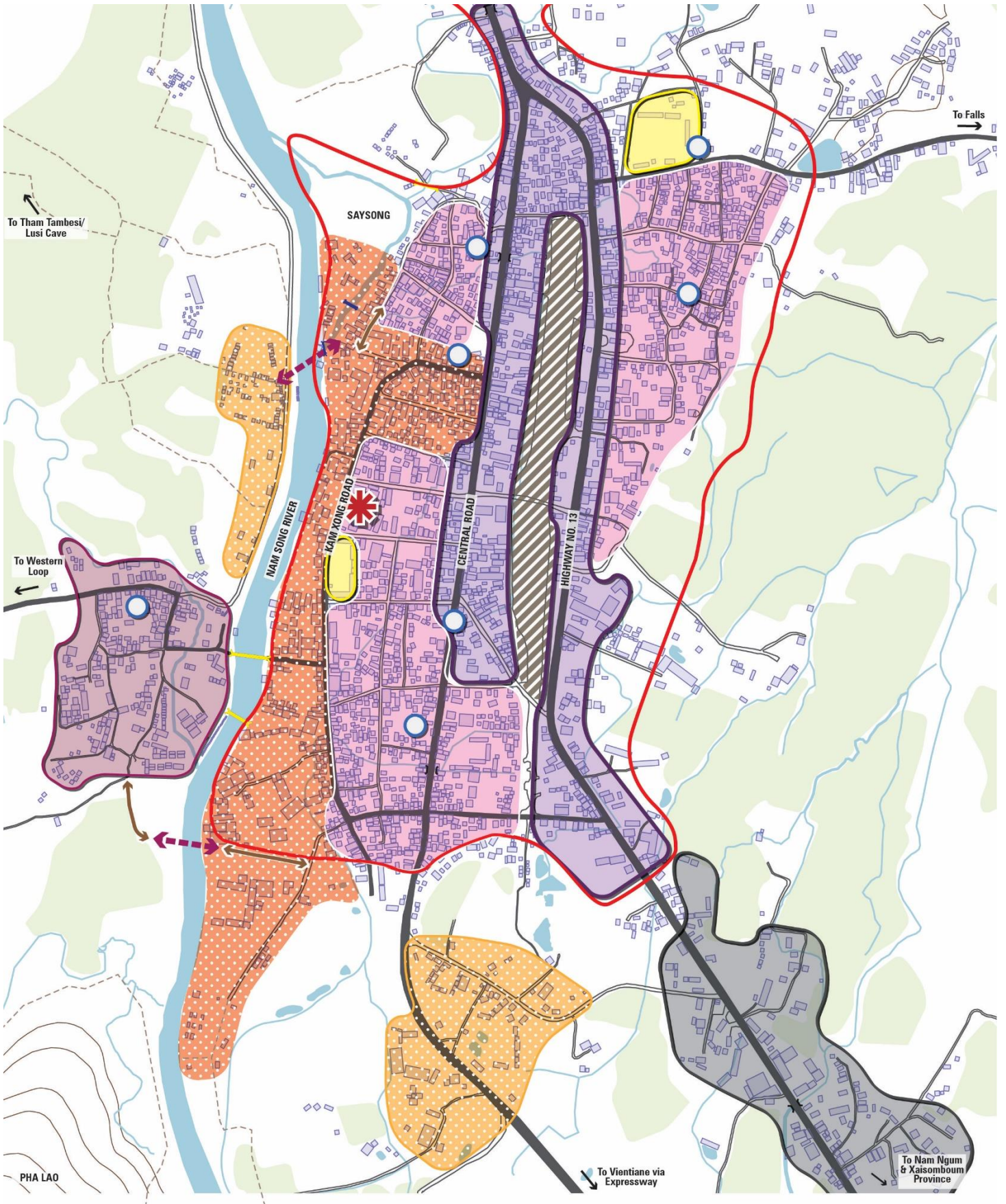
Figure 12. Town & Environs Land Use

Legend

Urban Area		Railway line		Surrounding villages		Bus terminal	
Town & Environs Area		Train station		Employment use		Government offices	
2020 Built form		Waterways		Quarry		Electric substation	
Main road		Contours		Town market		Existing Bridges	
Secondary road		Agricultural use		Schools			
Expressway		Conservative and protected forest					

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VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

Figure 13. Land Use in the Urban Core

Legend

Urban Area		Ponds		Roadside Commercial		Vacant		Proposed Bridge	
2020 Built form		Contours		Mixed housing and commercial		School		Connect Road	
Main road		Agricultural use		Tourism & Leisure		Hospital			
Secondary road				Freestanding Tourism		Temple			
Bridge				Employment		Vehicle & Pedestrian Bridge			
Waterways				Existing village		Pedestrian Bridge			

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5.2 Tourism

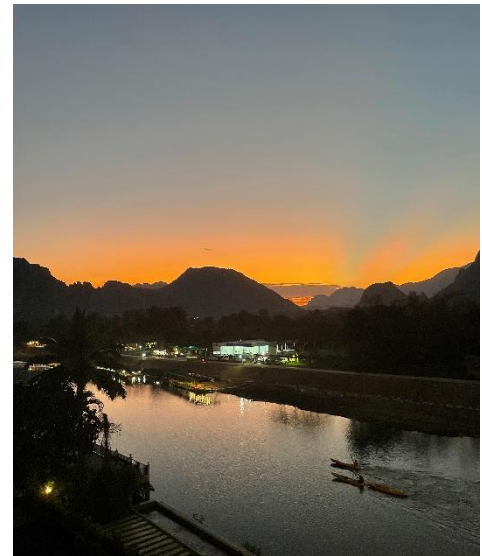
Vang Vieng has established itself as the leading destination in Laos for nature, adventure and discover. No other destination in Laos has the concentration of adventure activities in one location, surrounded by such a stunning limestone karst setting. It has good potential to strengthen existing activities and attractions and add new experiences that are compatible with the natural and cultural values of the landscape.

Positive aspects easily seen with its growth over the last decade include more sophisticated, boutique and upscale accommodation better suited to the needs of the mid-income markets in Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea and China. Between 2010 and 2020, the total number of accommodation establishments increased from 102 to 191 properties supplying approximately 4,250 rooms and 6,062 beds. Growth has also occurred in bike hire, walks to stunning viewpoints and waterfalls, day treks, ziplines, hot air ballooning, cave tours, rock climbing, paragliding, boat and kayak trips on the Nam Song River and self-drive off-road buggy tours. The Western Loop area has become increasingly popular for many of these activities and as a result, small-scale bungalow and boutique accommodation has emerged to the west of the Town. Popular swimming holes such as Blue Lagoon 1 have expanded up to 5 ‘Blue Lagoons’, all accessible via bike, scooter or car from the upgraded Western Loop Road.

These developments have occurred organically and for the most part, are owned and managed by local or Vientiane-based businesses. They are of a scale that is generally compatible with the surrounding landscape, although building heights and some other guidelines set in the earlier Master Plan have not been followed.

Adverse aspects associated with tourism sector growth over the last decade include:

- An over reliance on the cheaper-end/ low-spending western backpacker markets leading to Vang Vieng still have the reputation as a ‘party town’, where some local businesses enable inappropriate and outlandish behaviour by young, drunken visitors (noise and inappropriate behaviour is still an issue along the Nam Song River and is totally at-odds with other visitor markets who typically stay longer and spend more).
- A lack of adherence to zoning and building regulations and guidelines.
- Inadequate use of safety systems and a lack of compliance with industry standards generally (this is mainly an issue with adventure activity operators and especially those offering tubing trips down the Nam Song River).
- A Town Centre that appears ‘unloved’ and not cared for.
- A lack of cohesion amongst tourism operators, although some in the accommodation sector work well together.



Unregulated development on west bank

In consultation with government, community and industry stakeholders, there appears general agreement to lift the standard of attractions and activities on offer, target higher-spending middle income markets from ASEAN and elsewhere, develop further quality hotel and boutique resort-style accommodation, diversify food and beverage with better quality service and choice and improve industry safety standards. Industry, community and government need to work more collaboratively to move away from the bottom-end of the western backpacker market which continues to give Vang Vieng a bad reputation.

Figure 14 identifies the main tourism destinations in the Strategic Tourism area.

Figure 15 identifies the main tourism destinations in the Town and Environs area.

Figure 16 identifies the main tourism destinations in the Urban Core.

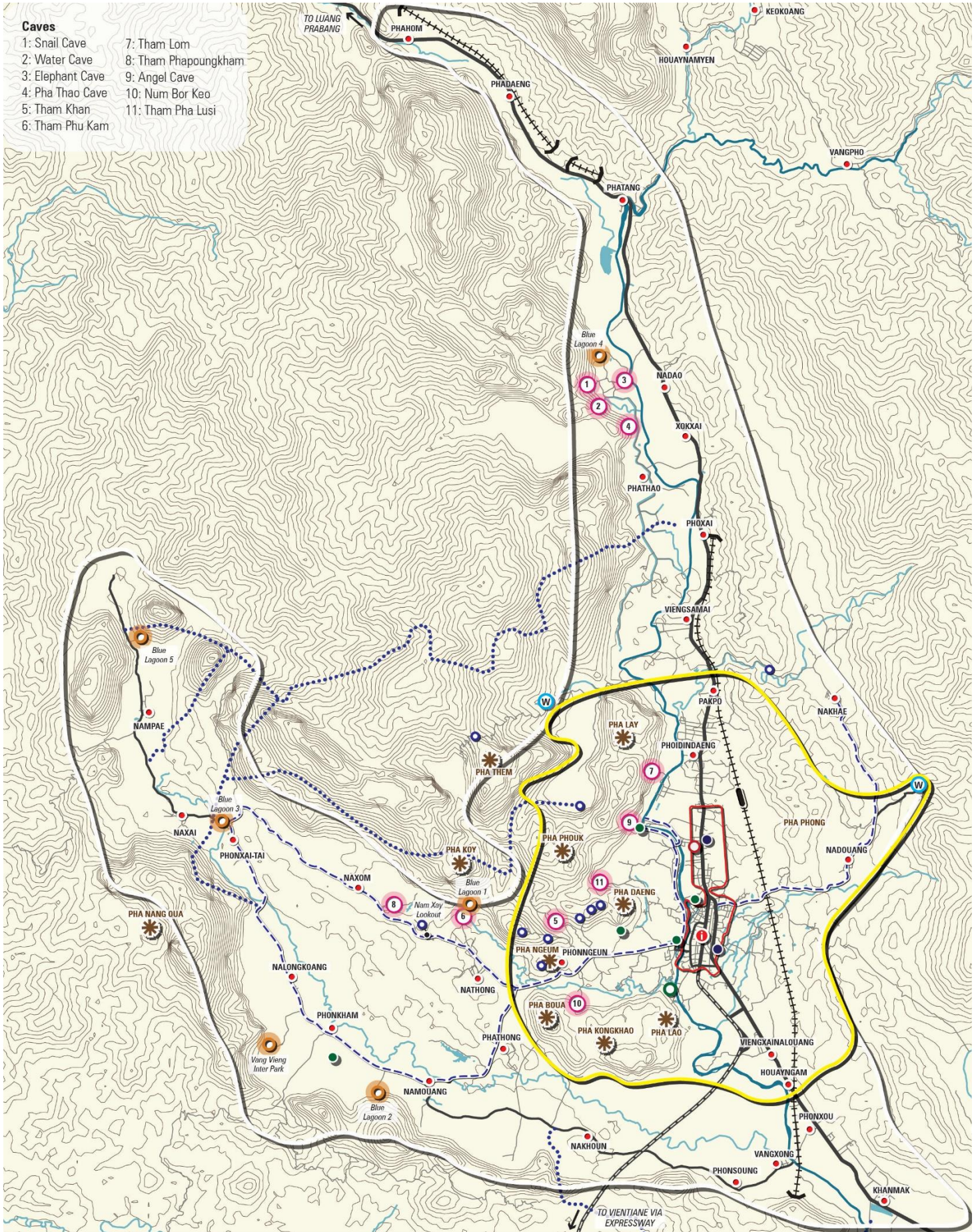


Tourism Attractions and Accommodation: A collection of Images

VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE

Caves

- 1: Snail Cave
- 2: Water Cave
- 3: Elephant Cave
- 4: Pha Thao Cave
- 5: Tham Khan
- 6: Tham Phu Kam
- 7: Tham Lom
- 8: Tham Phapoungkham
- 9: Angel Cave
- 10: Num Bor Keo
- 11: Tham Pha Lusi



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

Figure 14. Main Tourism Attractions in the Strategic Area

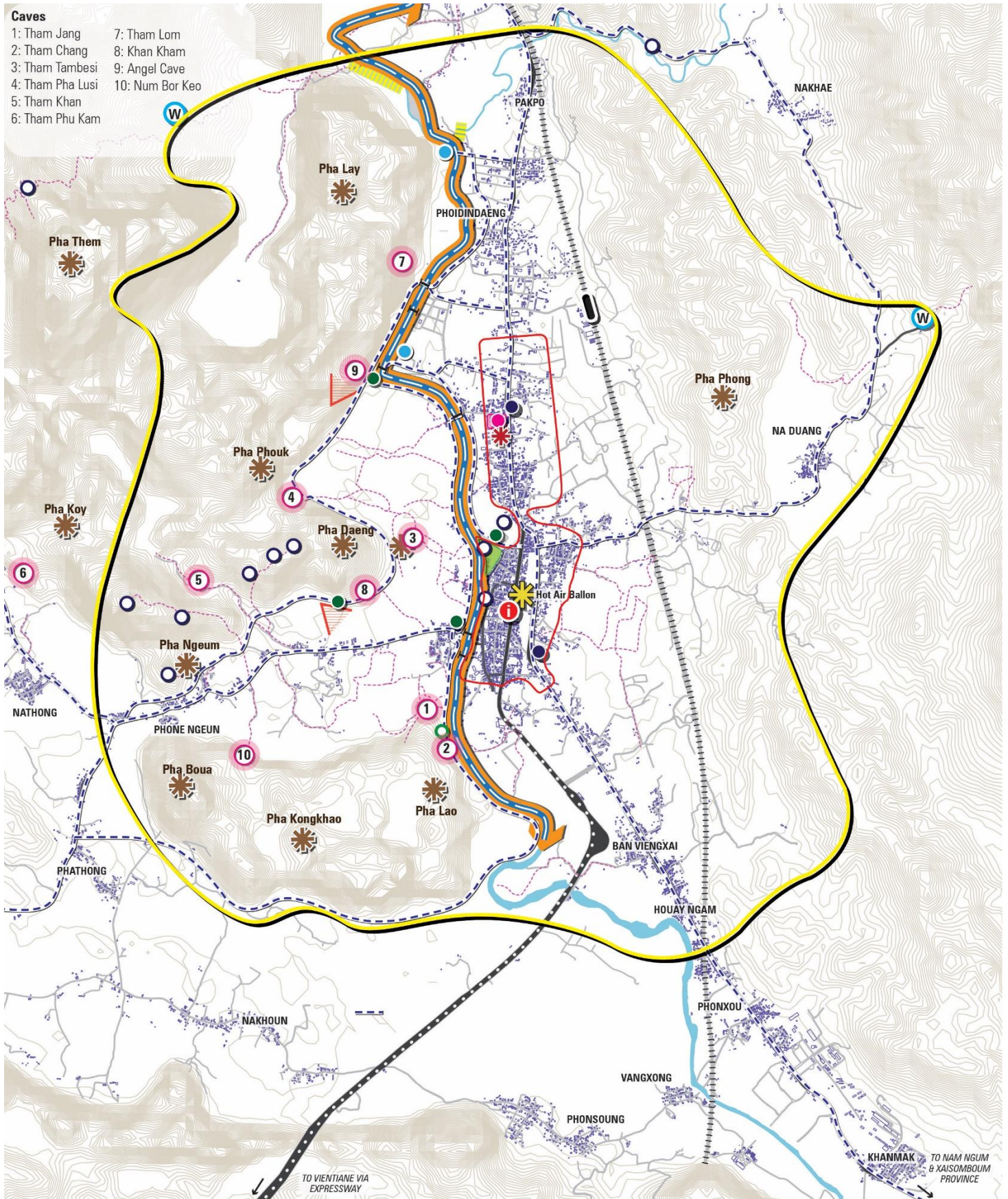
Legend

Urban Area	Main road	Village centre	Picnic	Key limestone karsts	Bike route
Town & Environs Area	Secondary road	Contours	Look out	Market	Tourism adventure trails (hiking/cycling)
Strategic Tourism Area	Railway line and station	Cave site	Waterfall	Attractions	
Expressway	Waterway	Camp site	Information Centre	Bus terminal	

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VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE

- Caves**
- 1: Tham Jang
 - 2: Tham Chang
 - 3: Tham Tambesi
 - 4: Tham Pha Lusi
 - 5: Tham Khan
 - 6: Tham Phu Kam
 - 7: Tham Lom
 - 8: Khan Kham
 - 9: Angel Cave
 - 10: Num Bor Keo



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

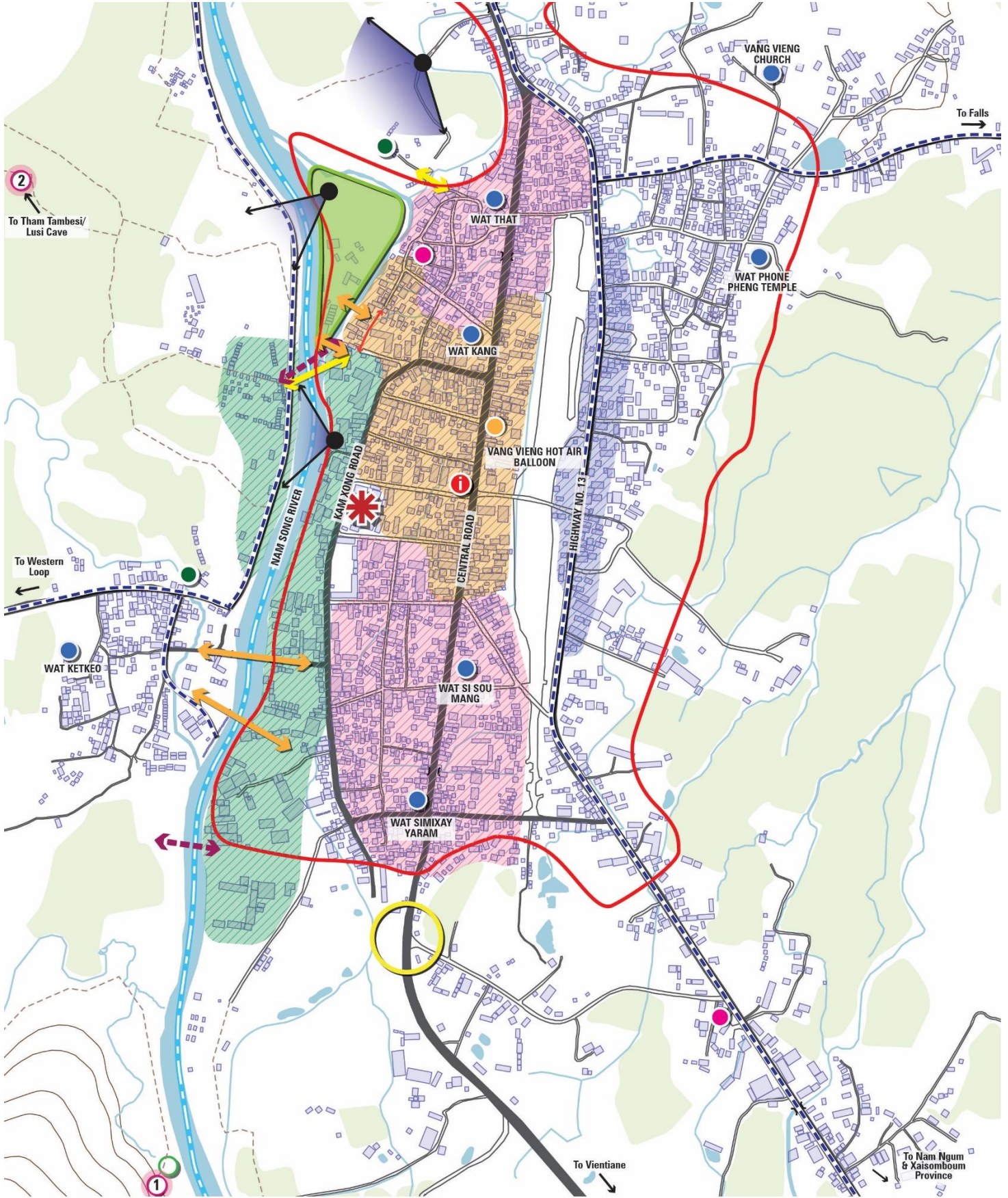
Figure 15. Main Tourism Attractions in The Town & Environs

Legend

Urban Area	Railway line	Cave site	Picnic	Waterfall	Information Centre
Town & Environs Area	Train station	Rock climbing	Look out	Bike route	
Expressway	Waterways	Don khang island	Key limestone karsts	Trails	
2020 Built form	Contours	Waterfront corridor	Town Market	Attractions	
Main road		Boating & Kayaking Route	Kaystone memorial park	River access	
Secondary road		Camp site	Water Activities	Bus terminal	

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VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE

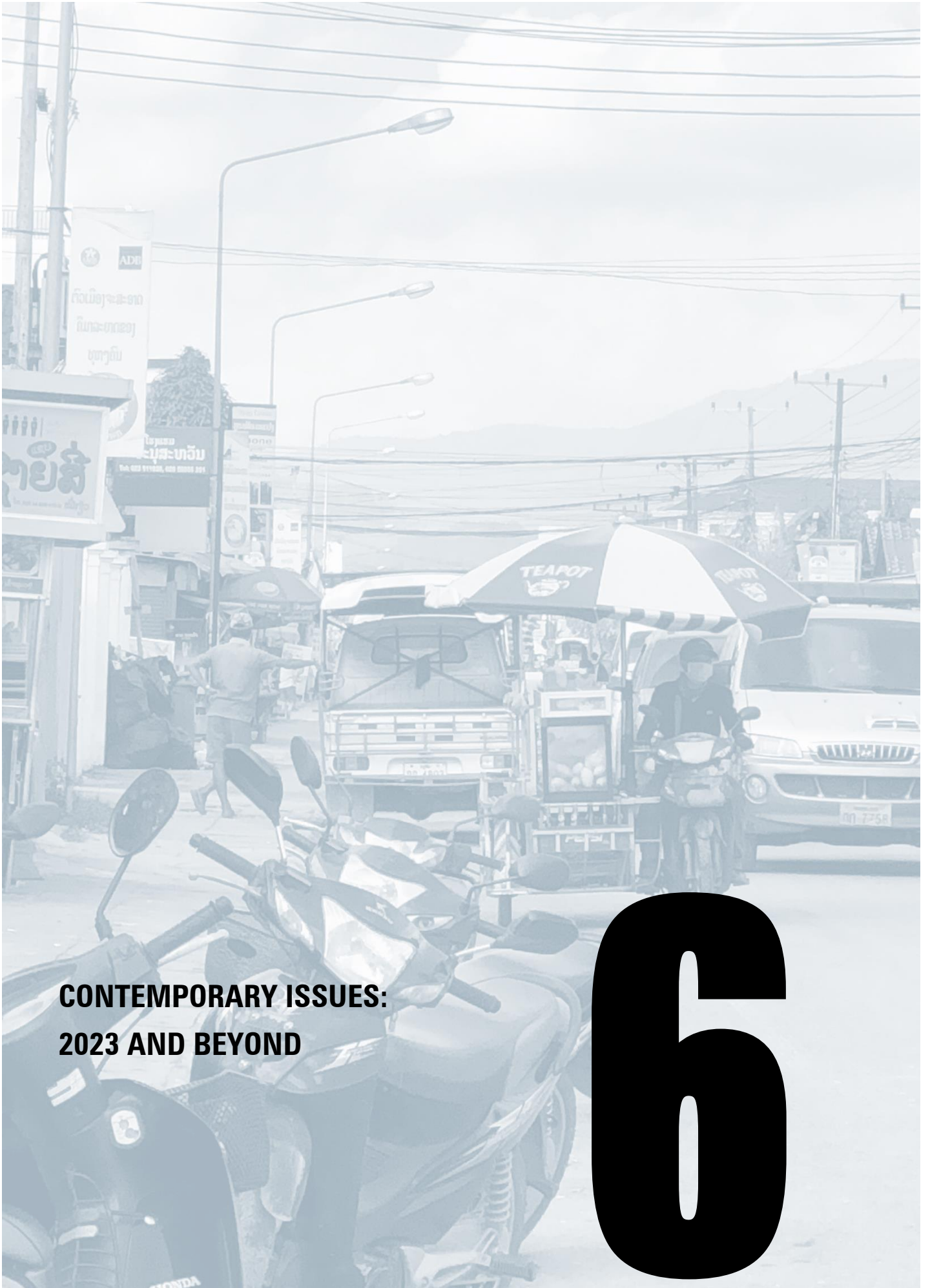


Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033
 Figure 16. Main Tourism Attractions in the Urban Core

Legend

Urban Area	Agricultural use	Don Khang Island	Cave Entry	Waterfront, hotel & leisure
2020 Built form	Water Activities	Views	Temples	Neighbourhood, guest houses, scattered hotels
Main road	Bike Route	Expressway junction	Picnic Spots	Roadside commercial, trade/ tourism
Secondary road	Existing Bridge	Hospital	Camp Sites	Tourism and commercial, leisure, dining
Waterways	Existing Footbridge	Information Centre	Attraction	Tham Jang/Cheng Cave
Ponds	Connect Road		Fresh Market	Tham Tambesi/Lusi Cave

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**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES:
2023 AND BEYOND**

6

6. Contemporary Issues: 2023 and Beyond

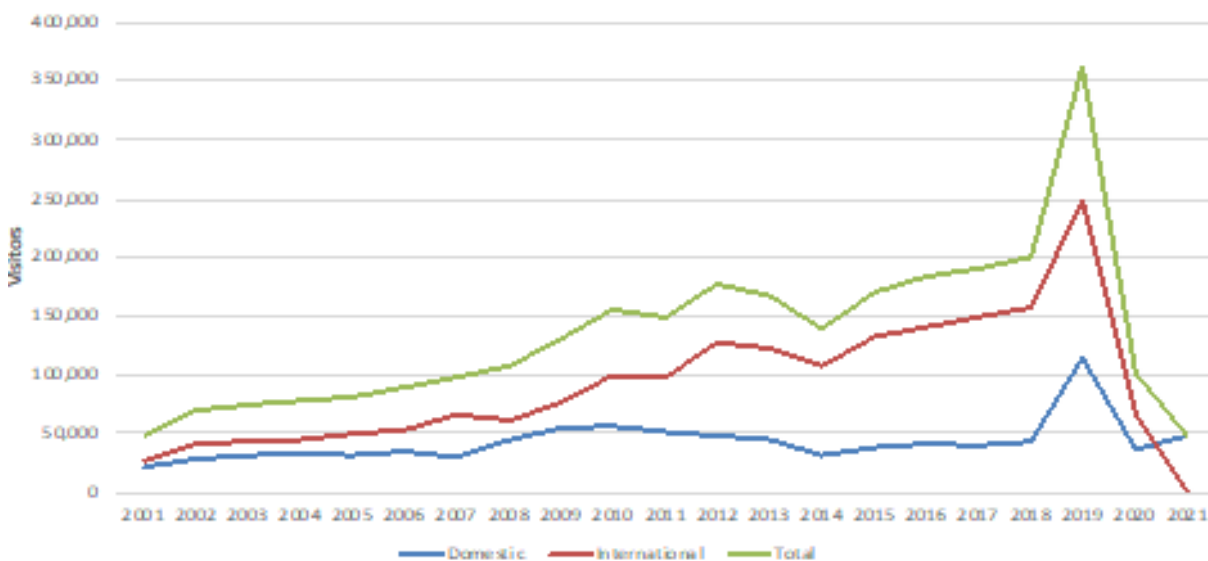
6.1 Global Issues

Pandemic Recovery

The impact of the Global Pandemic (Covid 19) on Vang Vieng has been considerable, principally due to the township’s long reliance on National and International tourism. As a result of the WHO declared pandemic, Laos closed all land and air borders on April 1, 2020 - limiting international arrivals for over 2 years until May 9, 2022. Despite Laos incurring relatively few cases and deaths during this period, strict National lockdowns and enduring international visitor absence has resulted in the closure of many commercial (tourism) enterprises and a recalibration of services and facilities to support a changing visitor market. Prior to the pandemic outbreak in March 2020, visitor arrivals to Vang Vieng were recorded as 362,666 made up of 114,930 domestic and 247,736 international visitors (refer to Figure below). At the end of 2021, visitor arrivals had fell to 48,345 (made up of 47,453 domestic and 892 international visitors). This has reduced tourism business activity and employment by 70% to 80% over the period 2020 – 2021.

Most international tourism destinations in Southeast Asia during this time have suffered severely, with the closure of businesses, dispersal of employees (often back to home premises) and a requisite diminishing investment in tourism development infrastructure and facilities (expectedly given the necessary funding for health measures). The progressive relaxation of Provincial lockdowns – and opportunities for National tourism across Laos has improved seasonal tourism activity within the township, with the slow arrival of international visitors in recent times. Clearly, the tourism growth trajectory for Vang Vieng has been affected by the global pandemic, and it is assumed that a return to pre-pandemic visitations may take 5 to 8 years. There are therefore very serious questions in relation to the designated ‘demand’ for tourism growth (both accommodation, services and facilities) within the next decade – despite the improved infrastructure of rail and road access to the township.

The global pandemic has also enabled governments and communities to ‘stand back’ and appraise the influence that unbridled tourism development and change has on places like Vang Vieng. The tourism development hiatus provides an opportunity for stakeholders to carefully plot a future for the township’s evolution – and its tourism offer that can be sustainable (in terms of its capacity to accommodate for disruptions), equitable (in terms of the opportunity for all visitors to enjoy) and respectful (to both the culture of the place and its very special landscape context). The global pandemic has temporarily limited the pace of substantial growth within Vang Vieng, albeit substantially enhanced by the introduction of improved access infrastructure. Planning and design of the township and its services and facilities must be prepared for further and/or ongoing disruptions of this kind.



Visitor Arrivals Vang Vieng 2001-2021 Source: DICT, Vang Vieng District, Official Tourist Statistics

Environment and Climate Change

The implications of climate change and other environmental changes are increasingly evident and influential across Laos. The effects of climate change can have serious impacts on the livelihoods and living conditions of people in Laos. Floods and storms can destruct infrastructure by washing away streets, damaging buildings or interrupting electricity supply. Floods and droughts can cause crop failure, a lack of drinking and irrigation water or waterborne diseases and infectious diseases such as malaria or dengue.

Vang Vieng is positioned within the Nam Song River valley and is highly susceptible to frequent flooding and inundation of the surrounding floodplains. Based on the recent frequency of floods (or Typhoon impacts such as in 2021), it is obvious that inundation is the greatest threat to the viability of Vang Vieng. This has to date resulted in constraints to the recently constructed Vientiane – Vang Vieng Expressway and has the capacity also to impact rail services. While the core township grid (and northern growth area) to the east of the Nam Song River are generally elevated above the floodplain, vast areas of the valley to the west are low lying and therefore constrained with regard to their capacity for tourism growth (noting development impacts which worsen flood outcomes and requisite issues with regard to community and visitor safety and egress).

The vulnerability of Vang Vieng (and Laos in general) in terms of other natural disasters is relatively confined, however community resilience and the capacity to absorb environmental phenomena depends substantially on national infrastructure, risk mitigation and preparedness. At this juncture, Vang Vieng and its surroundings are not well-positioned to absorb considerable threats of this kind.



Western Valley near Nampe



Nam Song Flood (Video Source 2021)

6.2 Regional Issues

Infrastructure Initiatives

Boten - Vientiane Railway Line and Vang Vieng Railway Station

The Boten to Vientiane Railway line was completed in 2021, after construction commenced in 2016. The railway line is constructed as an electric single line which provides for both passenger services (with a design speed of approximately 160km/h) and freight transport (up to approximately 120km/h) from the Laotian capital to Boten. From Boten the line provides a link with rail services in China, via the line from Mohan to Yuxi, and the line from Yuxi to Kunming. The railway line forms part of one of six economic corridors under China's Belt and Road Initiative. As part of the Boten-Vientiane railway line, a new station (accepting passengers and cargo) has been constructed at Vang Vieng, around 2-3kms to the north-east of the township.

The construction of this railway line and Station has had a significant impact on the accessibility of Vang Vieng. In terms of domestic access, whereas travel between Vientiane and Vang Vieng previously took around 4 hours (via road), the railway line reduces this travel time to approximately 1 hour. The Railway line also enables easier access from China - with the potential to help facilitate the arrival of a greater number of tourists to the town. Increased tourist numbers would have implications for the future planning of Vang Vieng and surrounding villages by influencing the demand for tourist accommodation and associated facilities (as evidenced by the suite of speculative tourism projects under consideration). The location of the railway station is also expected to be influential; both in terms of how it shapes transport patterns across the township (i.e. movement to/from the station to/from the township and accommodation areas), and how land adjacent to the station is used and developed.

Vientiane - Vang Expressway (and future expressway corridor)

The Vientiane – Vang Vieng Expressway was opened in December 2020, and provides for reduced travel time between the capital and Vang Vieng compared with the existing Route 13 highway. The expressway is tolled and forms the first part of the proposed Vientiane – Boten Expressway project, with sections between Vang Vieng to Boten yet to be constructed. The expressway arrives at Vang Vieng to the west of Route 13 after crossing the Nam Song River. Vehicles arrive at/ depart from Vang Vieng via an interchange and large toll booth gates. While the expressway connects with Route 13, a new road running directly from the Toll Booth Gates into Vang Vieng has also been constructed, which consequently, has also provided road access to a large area of land south of the township.

The future corridor for the expressway beyond the current end point is yet to be confirmed. It may cross over Route 13 and run parallel to the railway corridor. Additional interchanges may also be constructed at other points surrounding Vang Vieng. The finalised location of the corridor may influence the availability of some areas for future development.



View of new Railway Station



Toll Booth Gates

6.3 Local Issues

Road and Access Initiatives

A number of ADB funded road and access initiatives are also either proposed or underway, as follows:

Kaeng Yui Waterfall Access Improvements

The Kaeng Yui Waterfall is located approximately 6km east of the Vang Vieng township. It is accessed via a dirt road linked to the Route 13 highway. The waterfall is near Ban Nadouang. This project involves the upgrading of access roads and parking areas, improvements to footpaths and small suspension bridges, and improved kiosks for vendors at the Kaeng Yui waterfall.

Western Loop Rural Access Road and Bridge Improvements

This project involves the upgrading of 26km of Loop Road west of Vang Vieng to unlock access and opportunities in the western valley, and the construction of a 2-lane 80m road bridge across the Song River, with a feeder road connecting to the Loop Road. It also includes improvements to the 1.1km footpath/cycle track which extends north along the western side of the Song River, from Huay Yae Village.



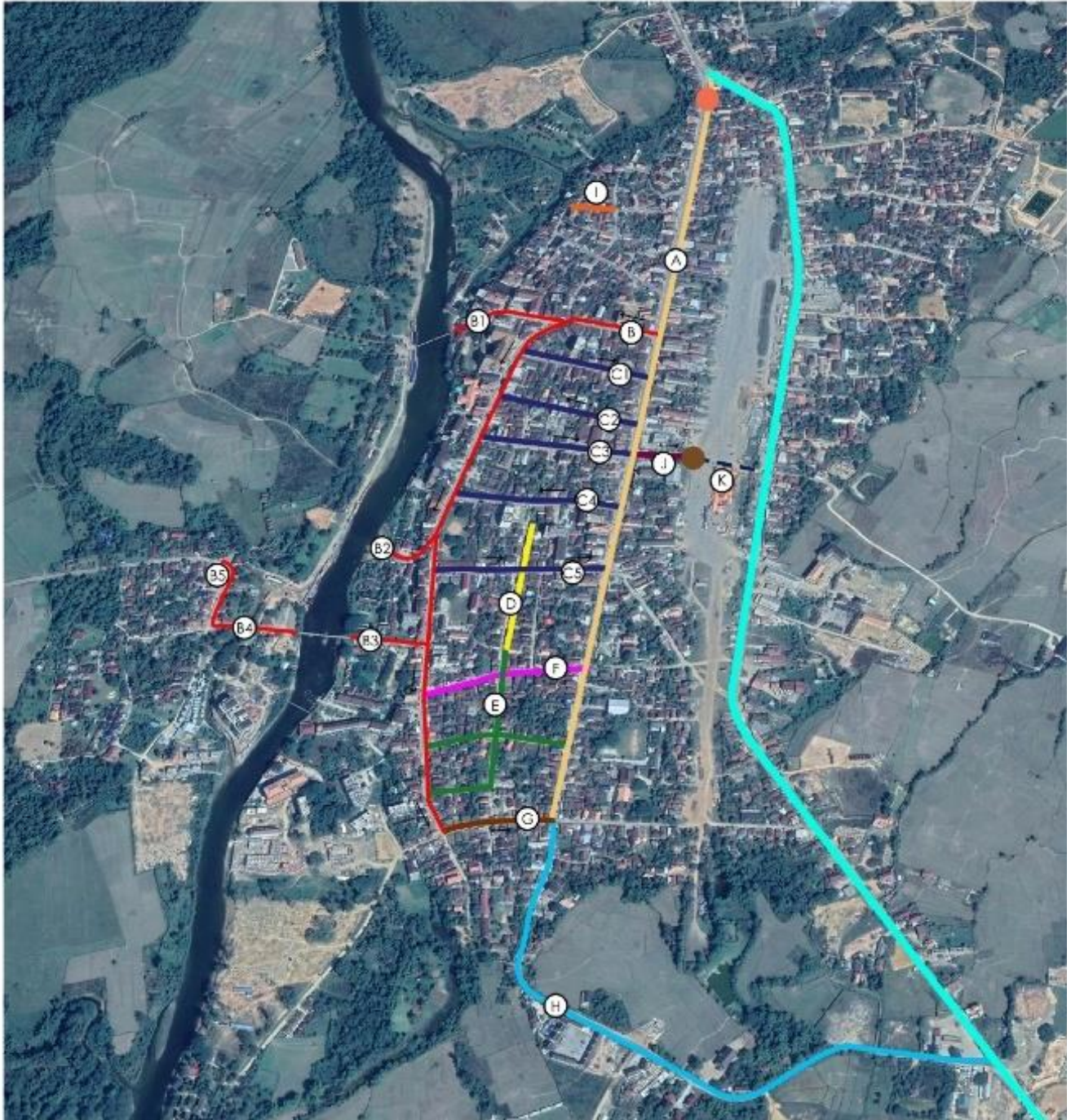
Location of Western Loop Rural Access Roads Improvements Projects (Source: Ramboll)



Location of Bridge Improvements (Source: Ramboll) and Kaeng Yui Waterfall Access Improvements Project (Source: Ramboll)

Vang Vieng Urban Renewal

This project involves the upgrading of roads, drainage, lighting, and footpaths across the Vang Vieng township, as identified on the image below.



- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — A : Two way road, street lighting, Footpath rehabilitation - 1.45 Km — B : One way traffic footpath rehabilitation, alternate tree and parking bays @ 20 m spacing, street light - 1.25 Km — C : One way traffic footpath rehabilitation, alternate tree and parking bays @ 20 m spacing, street light - 1.23 Km — D : Drain rehabilitation - 270.70 m — E : New side Drains - 600 m | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — F : Footpath and side Drains - 700 m — G : Lighting - 170 m — H : Drain and lighting - 950 m — I : DBST road, side drains — J : Two way road, street lighting, footpath rehabilitation. — Road 13 North - - - K: TWo way DBST road, street lighting , footpaths, side drains,trees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↔ Two way ← One way ● Gate 1 ● Gate 2 |
|--|--|---|

Urban Renewal Project Location (Ramboll)

Proposed Development Projects

A suite of significant development projects have been proposed across Vang Vieng and surrounding areas. These projects (where not lapsed) are considered as part of this Master Plan. The projects (in no particular order) are:

1. 22 Villages Tourism Development Project (Vang Vieng New Area Development Project) – A special economic zone in the Western Valley and Loop Road area, across 5 phases (and across approximately 7,500ha). Current Project Status: Pending (MOU, Ministry Level 2018, and EIA process).
2. Vang Vieng Paradise - A 10 Village Tourism and development project to the North of Vang Vieng, beside the Route 13 highway corridor (approximately 2063ha). Current Project status: Pending (MOU/ Conceptual Design).
3. Golf Course and Resorts Thong Thong Natural Tourism and Golf Course Project – A mixed-use golf course/ resort project on the west side of the Nam Song River, north of Vang Vieng (approximately 246ha). Current Project Status: Pending (MOU).
4. Vang Vieng Airport Development Project (Old Airport Development Project) – A company had previously negotiated with the Lao government to develop the defunct airport area as a complex entertainment zone including luxury hotels, shopping centres, restaurants, nightclubs, and public parks after the Vang Vieng 2010 Master Plan had been approved (approximately 20.25ha). Current Project Status: Lapsed
5. Nam Song Embankment Improvement Project – Infrastructure and Tourism Development on Song Riverbanks, Vang Vieng (approximately 12ha). Current Project Status: Pending (Conceptual Design).
6. Railway Surrounds Development Project - New Development (typology yet to be determined), adjacent to and associated with the new Vang Vieng Railway Station. Current Project Status: Pending.
7. Naduang Mountain Cable Car Project: Cable car and linked project to eastern hills overlooking Vang Vieng and near Waterfall. Current Project Status: Cancelled.
8. Vang Vieng Waterpark Project: Recreational project. Current Project status: Cancelled.
9. Light Aircraft and Ballooning Site Project - Destination Facilities and services in support of Air/Joy flight and ballooning. Current Project status: Cancelled.
10. Tha Heua Village Agro-Tourism Project - Large Tourism Project abutting Nam Ngum Reservoir. Current Project status: Unknown.
11. Nam and Loup Cave Attraction Project: Improved Services and Facilities to Caves. Current Project Status: Pending.



Presentation for the 22 Village Project 2022

6.4 Stakeholder Feedback

The project team held the following formal stakeholder consultation sessions in Vang Vieng:

- A **Community meeting** on 9 December 2022 with leaders and representatives of the local community at the Xomview Convention Hall in Vang Vieng.
- A **Tourism Business meeting** on 9 December 2022 with local Tourism Business Owners and Operators at the Urban Development Administrative Authority building in Vang Vieng.

A **Government meeting** on 12 December 2022 attended by the National Steering Committee for updating Vang Vieng Tourism Master Plan (Ministry Level), Provincial Steering Committee for Updating Vang Vieng Tourism Master Plan (Provincial Level), Vang Vieng District Authorities (including the District Governor), Business Sector representatives, and PIU Vang Vieng, at the Xomview Convention Hall in Vang Vieng.

A summary of the responses received during the stakeholder consultation sessions is provided as at Appendix A.



Fieldwork and Engagement, July 2022



Community Meeting 9 December 2022



Government Meeting 12 December 2022



6.5 Summary of Issues and Opportunities

The following table provides a summary of **key issues and opportunities** that have been identified for the ‘urban core’, the broader ‘town and environs’ area, and also specifically for tourism. The table includes issues and opportunities identified by the project team through a review of the 2010-2020 Master Plan and the process of developing strategic directions, and by stakeholders in consultation sessions.

The Urban Core
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Breaches in building heights by some new hotel and tourism development. Reflects issues with enforcement and compliance with existing regulations. ▪ Littering observed in public places, waste and wastewater management issues. ▪ High levels of vehicle traffic on key thoroughfares at certain times. ▪ Vehicle congestion associated with on-streetcar parking and drop-off areas. ▪ Unequal allocation of street to users. Motorcycle, cars, buses and trucks parking on footpaths. ▪ Despite the previous intention for walking streets within the central core area grid, these are yet to be established on a permanent basis (evening walking streets and night market in place). ▪ Lack of street trees. ▪ The Central Airstrip remains undeveloped and a blight on the presentation of the township. ▪ Limited tourism activity is now observed on Saysong Island (relative to earlier periods), ▪ Privatisation of space and encroachment of riverbank prevents better water access and the development of a riverside walkway on the eastern side of the Nam Song Riverbank. ▪ Compromised river image and amenity along Nam Song adjacent to the Urban Core. ▪ Growth in visitor arrivals and population require suitable areas for this growth to be accommodated in. ▪ An opportunity for a connected network of green walking streets, links and waterfront promenades. ▪ The image of the key thoroughfares of the Route 13 highway, the Central Road and the Kam Song Road could be enhanced. ▪ New arrival/entry from expressway opportunity for improved gateway treatment and beautification. ▪ The Central Airstrip continues to present an opportunity for mixed-use development and open space. ▪ Opportunity to direct further tourism and population growth to urban core, and tourism growth to appropriate locations immediately surrounding core. ▪ Opportunity to improve regulations/compliance and provided more improved (including clearer) guidance on preferred development outcomes.
The Town and Environs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential impacts of climate change. Vang Vieng is positioned within the Nam Song River valley and is highly susceptible to frequent flooding and inundation of the surrounding floodplains. ▪ The establishment of a new high-speed railway alignment to the east of Vang Vieng, and a new Vang Vieng station located to the north-east has a significant bearing on access to and from the town. ▪ Scattered tourism development on the western side of the Nam Song, has the potential to impact on views of the surrounding landscape and agricultural production. ▪ Poorly designed and located tourism development (via development concessions) has the potential to impact on the natural landscape, agricultural activities and in the environs. ▪ High levels of vehicle traffic on key thoroughfares at certain times.

- Road condition is poor to the north of existing urban area.
- Growth in visitor arrivals and population would require identifying suitable areas for growth to be located.
- Opportunity to direct new growth to appropriately sited growth areas to the north and south of the town.
- Opportunity to encourage new development around the new station.
- Opportunity to protect and enhance the vulnerable Nam Song floodplain and mountain surrounds.
- Opportunity to allow tourism development in some discrete outlying nodes (if sensitively designed in accordance with guidelines), and ensure new development does not significantly impact upon agricultural land.

Tourism

- The protection of the special mountain and valley landscape features around Vang Vieng is a key issue. Magnificent views, karst formations and the associated natural ecosystems are the key drawcards for visitors to Vang Vieng and these need effective protection.
- Applying the ASEAN Tourism Standards to Vang Vieng could lift the appearance and functioning of Vang Vieng as a tourist town, raise service standards across the accommodation, food and beverage sectors and significantly improve community - based tourism operations.
- The operation of some tourism activities impacts upon the amenity of the study area. Loud music, drunken behaviour from western backpackers and less-than-safe hire of 4WD buggies and inner tubes was an issue 10 years ago and still is today.
- Signature activities such as the long-tail boat rides up and down the Nam Song River are quickly becoming outdated. The loud noise is a deterrent to other visitors wishing to enjoy the spectacular scenery and does little to convince people that Laos is adapting to climate change or new technology. Now that quiet electric boat engines are in use on the Mekong, Vang Vieng has a great opportunity to apply the same technology to the boats on the Nam Song River.
- A Destination Management Network (DMN) was established for Vang Vieng as a way for government, community and the private sector to work together in order to manage the destination. The DMN is perhaps the best way to lead the management of Vang Vieng as a destination, yet has not been particularly active of late. With completion of this Master Plan Update and other associated plans, there is an important opportunity to strengthen the functioning and effectiveness of the DMN.
- Many tourism development actions from the previous Master Plan have not been implemented. A lot of the 'basics' still require attention. Investing in these actions will produce positive benefits in future, including but not limited to (i) targeting higher-spending visitors (ii) enforcing regulations to minimise disruption and reputational risk from low-spending, western backpacker markets (iii) upgrading walking trails to view points (iv) providing better trails and hire operations for mountain biking (v) improving safety standards across all adventure activities (vi) growing the value of adventure racing events and (vii) investing in new technologies to improve iconic experiences such as the long-tail boat trips on the Nam Song River.
- Improved access to Vang Vieng by road and now the Lao-China Railway will lead to steady growth in annual visitor arrivals. Investment proposals are picking up, meaning there is an urgent need to clarify zoning regulations and the criteria by which development proposals will be assessed. There may be a need to identify investigation areas for tourism growth in the longer term.



**FUTURE GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTIONS**

7. Future Growth and Development Projections

7.1 Population Projections

From a base population of 17,098 persons, 3 population growth scenarios have been explored based on different annual growth rates over a ten-year period (2023 to 2033). These range from the rate of 1.3% p.a (current growth rate) to 1.5% p.a (managed growth rate) to 4.5% p.a (optimistic growth rate).

Year	Population (1.3% growth)	Population (1.5% growth)	Population (4.5% growth)
2023	17,098	17,098	17,098
2024	17,032	17,354	17,867
2025	17,545	17,615	18,761
2026	17,774	17,879	19,512
2027	18,005	18,147	20,389
2028	18,239	18,419	21,307
2029	18,476	18,696	22,266
2030	18,716	18,976	23,268
2031	18,959	19,261	24,315
2032	19,206	19,550	25,409
2033	19,455	19,843	26,553
Additional population from 2023-2033	2,357	2,745	9,455

Source: Official Government Statistics for base figure

To estimate the number of households to house additional population, an assumption has been made using an average household size of 5.184. This figure is based on the current population figure divided by the current number of households.

	1.3% Growth Scenario	1.5% Growth Scenario	4.5% Growth Scenario
Additional households by 2033	454.668 households (rounded to 455)	529.514 households (rounded to 530)	1823.881 households (rounded to 1824)



Urban Zoned land to the north of Vang Vieng, yet to be developed

7.2 Tourist Arrivals Projections

Three different scenarios have also been considered in relation to estimating yearly tourist arrivals over the decade. These are a ‘managed growth’ scenario, a ‘high growth’ scenario, and an ‘optimistic growth’ scenario.

Year	Managed Growth	High Growth	Optimistic Growth
2023	150,000	150,000	200,000
2024	169,200	169,500	227,000
2025	190,884	191,535	257,660
2026	215,377	216,435	292,478
2027	243,047	244,571	332,021
2028	274,312	276,365	376,933
2029	309,643	312,293	427,946
2030	349,576	359,137	490,981
2031	394,717	413,007	563,310
2032	431,189	474,958	646,303
2033	471,166	546,202	741,535

Source: Estimates by Ross Corbett based on Official DICT data and various assumptions.

As a reference figure, it is noted that 4,499 accommodation rooms (comprising a mix of 2,237 hotel rooms, 402 resort rooms, 1,574 guesthouse rooms, and 286 bungalow rooms) were required in Vang Vieng as of 2021. Those rooms were spread across 192 ‘accommodation units’ (comprising 42 hotels, 17 resorts, 116 guesthouses and 17 bungalows).

The split of accommodation types for each of the tourist arrival scenarios has been estimated as follows:

	Managed Growth	High Growth	Optimistic Growth
Additional Rooms	1,351	2,249	4,700
Additional Accommodation Units	45	69	164
Hotel Rooms	800	1,463	2,763
Hotels	11	20	37
Resorts Rooms	100	198	297
Resorts	4	8	12
Guesthouse Rooms	300	524	1426
Guesthouses	21	37	102
Bungalow Rooms	151	64	214
Bungalows	9	4	13

Source: Estimates by Ross Corbett in consultation with Hansen Partnership

7.3 Land Use Requirements to the Year 2023

Land required to accommodate population growth.

To estimate the land required to house additional population, the number of households required to accommodate the different levels of population growth (rounded up to a whole household) is multiplied by the average housing allotment size of 200sqm in area. The allotment size is based on the figure used in the 2009-2010 Master Plan.

	Population (1.3% growth)	Population (1.5% growth)	Population (4.5% growth)
Estimate of Land Required	9.1ha (91,000sqm)	10.6ha (106,000sqm)	36.48ha (364,800sqm)

Note: Any potential land requirements associated with accommodating the additional workforce in the tourism sector has been absorbed into the above estimates.

Land for Roads and Community Infrastructure associated with population growth.

Additional land will also be required for roads and community infrastructure. This is calculated using a figure of 30% of the amount of land required for housing for each scenario.

	Population (1.3% growth)	Population (1.5% growth)	Population (4.5% growth)
Estimate of Land Required	2.73ha (27,300sqm)	3.18ha (31,800sqm)	10.944ha (109,440sqm)

Land requirements for extra Tourism Accommodation

To calculate the land requirements associated with projected additional tourist accommodation, land area assumptions of 6ha for resorts, 2ha for hotels, 2ha for bungalow-style accommodation and 0ha (absorbed) for guesthouses, have been utilised.

	Managed Growth	High Growth	Optimistic Growth
Estimate of Land Required	64ha (11 hotels, 4 resorts, 21 guesthouses and 9 bungalows)	96ha (20 hotels, 8 resorts, 37 guesthouses and 4 bungalows)	172ha (37 hotels, 12 resorts, 102 guesthouses and 13 bungalows)

Note: Any potential land requirements associated with additional tourist services and other tourist-related commercial uses, have been absorbed into the land requirement figures for extra tourist accommodation, given the potential for multiple uses to be provided by a single building/ space.

Land required for growth in Other Uses

In addition to tourist accommodation and new housing to accommodate population growth, there is also likely to be a demand for urban land for a growth in government offices, and other employment activities related to service businesses, logistics, and light industry. An additional 5ha of land is assumed to be required for Government Offices and an additional 12ha for service businesses/ employment uses. These figures are based on generally similar figures used in the 2010-2020 master plan over a 10-year period. There may be other activities seeking land within the Town over the next 10 years which serve the wider District’s needs and a further 10 ha. of land is provided for these opportunities (based on the figure used in the 2010-2020 master plan over a 10-year period). This could include new higher order community facilities and services such as training colleges, new medical facilities, and other important urban functions.

Summary and Adopted Scenario

The summary of land budget findings for the three scenarios are as follows:

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Population Growth Rate	1.3%	1.5%	4.5%
Additional Population to 2033	2357	2745	9455
Total Population	19,455	19,843	26,553
Land Required to house population	9.1ha	10.6ha	36.48ha
Roads and Community Infrastructure	2.73ha	3.18ha	10.944ha
Tourist Arrivals	471,166	546,202	741,535
Land required to accommodate extra Tourist Arrivals	64ha	96ha	172ha
Growth in Government Offices	5ha	5ha	5ha
Service businesses/ Employment Uses (light industry)	12ha	12ha	12ha
Other Uses – Servicing wider district	10ha	10ha	10ha
Total (ha) - approximate	102.83ha	136.78ha	246.42ha

The project team decided to adopt Scenario 3 which assumes a total of **246.42ha** of land required (rounded up to **250ha**) for the Master Plan period. This decision to adopt this scenario was a collective decision made by the project team and was informed by consultation with stakeholders.

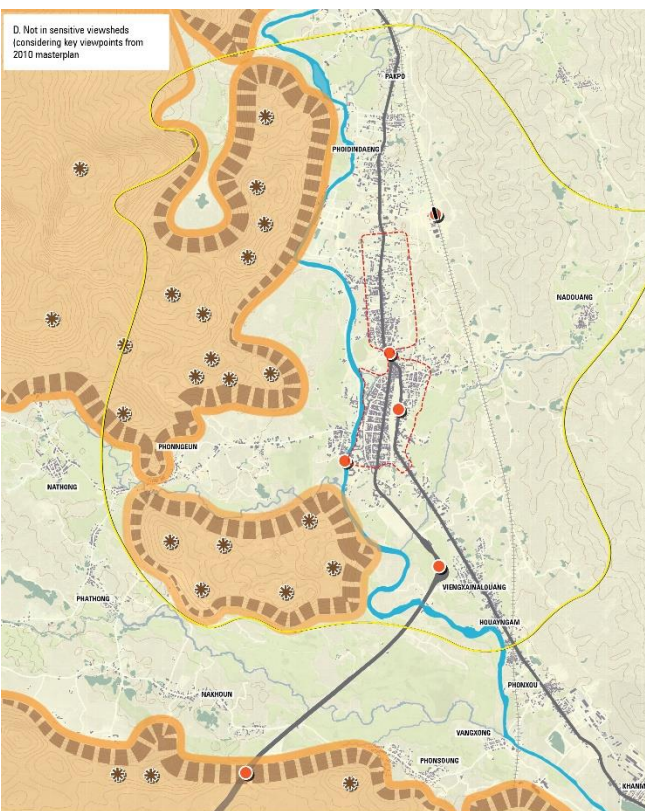
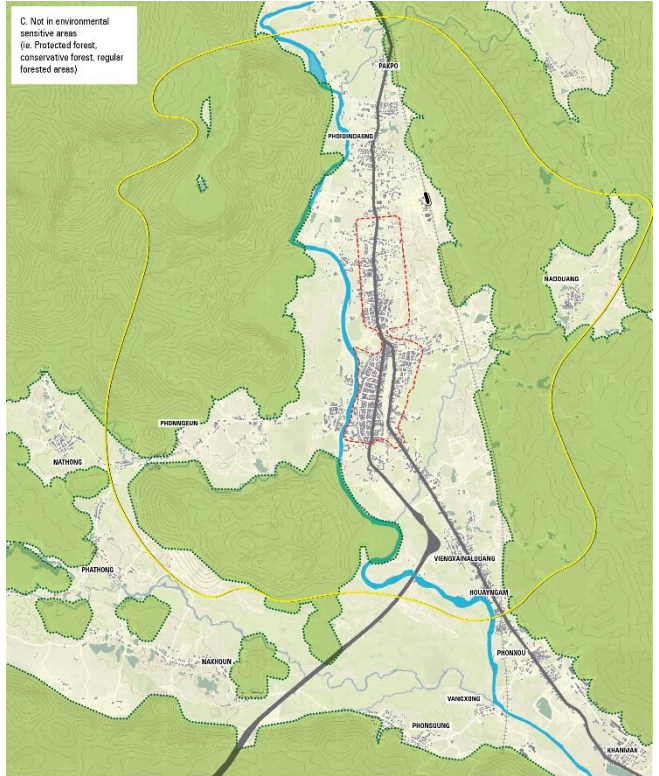
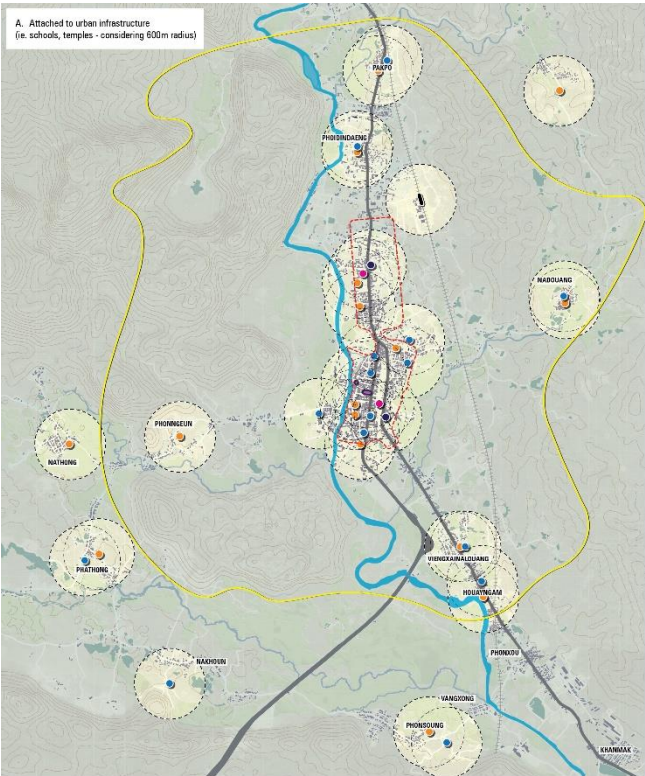
7.4 Allocation of New Development with Vang Vieng and Environs

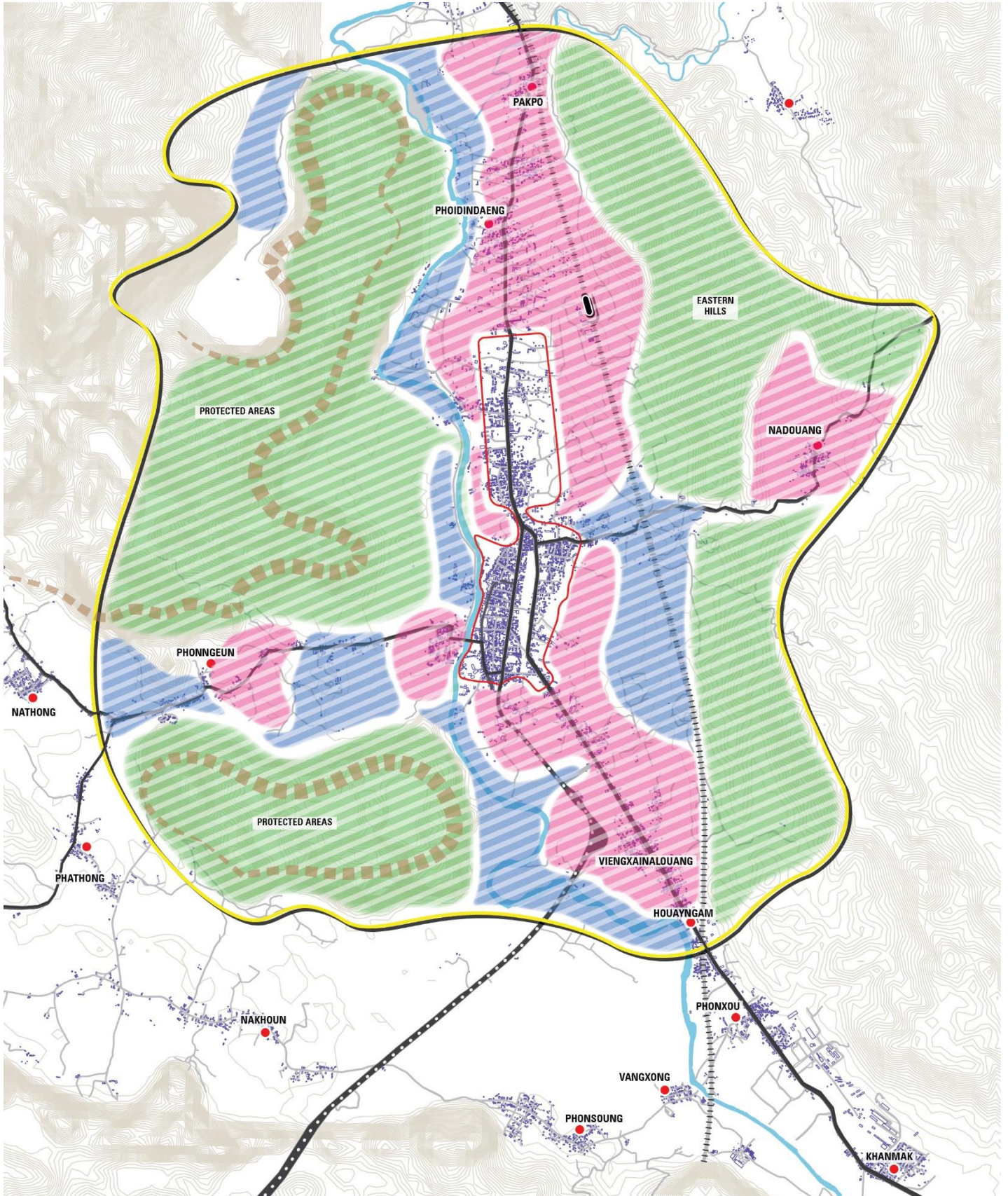
It is difficult to accurately estimate the potential of the existing urban areas and villages of Vang Vieng to accommodate the 250ha additional land to 2033. A certain amount of new development will be able to be accommodated in the urban core and existing built-up areas, however much tourism development can be absorbed at the edge of town in defined ‘tourism nodes.’

A **land capability approach** was utilised to examine how and where future land take up (urban and tourism accommodation growth) may be sensibly located.

The following parameters were considered to define which areas are more suitable for future development as illustrated overleaf:

VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE





Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

Figure 17. Land Capability

Legend	
Urban Core Study Area	
Town & Environs Area	
2020 Built form	
Main road	
Secondary road	
Railway line	
Train station	
Waterways	
Contours	
Mountain Interface	
A - Vulnerability < 1,377ha	
B - Vulnerability - 902ha	
C - Vulnerability >	

Project Ref: 20220025
 Dwg No.: UDD-001
 Scale: NTS @A3
 Date: 19.01.23
 Revision: D

Applying the parameters on the previous page helped to identify a number of potential growth areas.

These areas were further refined by the project team into the following areas amounting to approximately 250ha:

- Southern Urban/ Tourism Growth Areas:
 - Southern Growth Area 1 (SGA1) – 40ha approx.
 - Southern Growth Area 2 (SGA2) – 20ha approx.
- Northern Village Growth Area:
 - Northern Village Growth Area (NGA1) – 80ha approx.
 - Northern Village Growth Area (NGA2) – 40ha approx.
- Transit Oriented Development Cells:
 - Cell for Possible Tourism Growth (west of the Route 13 Highway) – 70ha approx.
 - Cell for commercial, industrial, logistic and transit facilities (east of Route 13 Highway) – This area has been excluded from the calculation of 250ha of growth areas, as it will be dedicated for purposes other than tourism.

Figure 19. 'Town & Environs Strategic Tourism Directions' identifies the location of the above areas.

The Transit-oriented Development cells include a precinct (or cells) providing for new employment, logistics and tourism related functions.

The cell of land to the west of the new train station (and east of Route 13) has also been identified as land that can accommodate new growth; however, it has not been included in above calculation of 250ha of growth areas.

In addition, an 'Urban Growth Boundary' (or 'Ultimate Development Boundary' – UDB), has been identified. Land within that boundary amounts to approximately 2,000ha. It includes some conservation and protected areas.

Beyond this long-term boundary, development may occur in ribbons along road corridors, and at tourism nodes.





FUTURE DIRECTIONS

8. Future Directions

8.1 Vision Statement

The establishment of an agreed vision is a fundamental step in Master Planning. It is a collective picture of a community’s environmental, social, and economic future which is underpinned by core values and long-term outcomes, reflective of different stakeholder interests and aspirations and, adopts new ways of planning the future for the long-term wellbeing of the community.

The 2010-2020 Vision Statement has been adjusted to reflect the new phase of the master plan (2023-2033), the updated designation of areas where growth should be accommodated, and to consider the need for Vang Vieng to be able to withstand future shocks and stressors.

The Vision Statement for the Master Plan is as follows:

Vision Statement
<p><i>In 2033, Vang Vieng will be a diverse tourist destination offering experiences in adventure and recreation pursuits, as well as an appreciation of the area’s natural and cultural heritage by international and domestic visitors and the community who live and work in the town and its environs.</i></p>
<p><i>Located in a beautiful landscape of karst limestone mountains, sandstone ridges, and rich farmland, the town will promote its image of clean, green, and safe living. Growth will be accommodated within the existing urban core and surrounding areas, the existing and new growth areas to the north and south, and discrete tourism nodes in outlying areas.</i></p>
<p><i>Vang Vieng will reinforce its role as a thriving trade and service centre meeting the varied needs of the residential community and tourists. The town and its environs will develop in a sustainable and integrated manner, celebrating its past, enhancing its town character and responsibly managing its future. The town will develop the capacity to successfully respond and adapt to a variety of shocks and stressors, including the impacts of climate change.</i></p>

8.2 Principles Underpinning the Vision

Five principles have been identified for the Vang Vieng Town and Environs Master Plan.

<u>Town Character</u>	<i>Vang Vieng and Environs will be a green, clean, safe, and welcoming Town.</i>
<u>Urban Growth</u>	<i>Vang Vieng and Environs will develop in an integrated and sustainable manner.</i>
<u>Environment</u>	<i>Vang Vieng and Environs will conserve, protect, and enhance its landscapes and natural attributes.</i>
<u>Tourism Development</u>	<i>Vang Vieng and Environs will develop as a diverse National Tourism Destination.</i>
<u>Urban Resilience</u>	<i>Vang Vieng and Environs will be able to accommodate further impacts of climate change and other emerging threats.</i>

8.3 Tourism Positioning

The following 'Tourism Position Statement' has been developed for Vang Vieng:

Tourism Positioning Statement

"Vang Vieng – A Premier Adventure Tourism Destination: Nature – Adventure – Discovery".

"A Tourism Offer that can:

- *Deliver high standard adventure.*
- *Add more activities based on local food, health and wellbeing, rural lifestyle.*
- *Quality local handicrafts.*
- *Good supply of food grown locally, supplied to hotels and restaurants.*
- *Olis, soaps, coffee, lotions, chocolate grown and made locally.*

A Township Offer that can:

- *Reflects the outstanding natural setting in which it is located!*
- *Green, friendly, easy to get around.*
- *Family-friendly with 'park-like' open space.*
- *Stunning views protected.*
- *Better dining, pleasant shop fronts and a sense that locals care."*

Detailed guidance and planning on the future of Tourism in Vang Vieng and surrounds is provided in the Tourism Growth Analysis, identified as a separable volume of this Master Plan.



8.4 The Master Plan for Vang Vieng and Environs to 2033

The culmination of the 5 principles underpinning the Master Plan are illustrated over the following 3 pages. These 3 Figures overlay each of the principles across the Master Plan area for the Strategic Tourism Area, Town and Environs, and Urban Core. The following Master Plan 'Statement of Intent' encapsulates the key gestures and ambitions:

The Master Plan for Vang Vieng and its surrounds to 2033 seeks to reinforce the settings established in the approved 2010 regulations and respond proactively to significant new infrastructure and emerging development and environmental pressures.

The Master Plan acknowledges that the value of Vang Vieng as a place to live and visit is strongly aligned with the 'natural' qualities of the Nam Song Valley the flanking limestone mountains and open agricultural plains. As such, the updated masterplan will concurrently 'contain and control' the extent of urban and tourism development growth and also 'protect' the environmental attributes of the river, mountains and floodplains as the Town's environmental context.

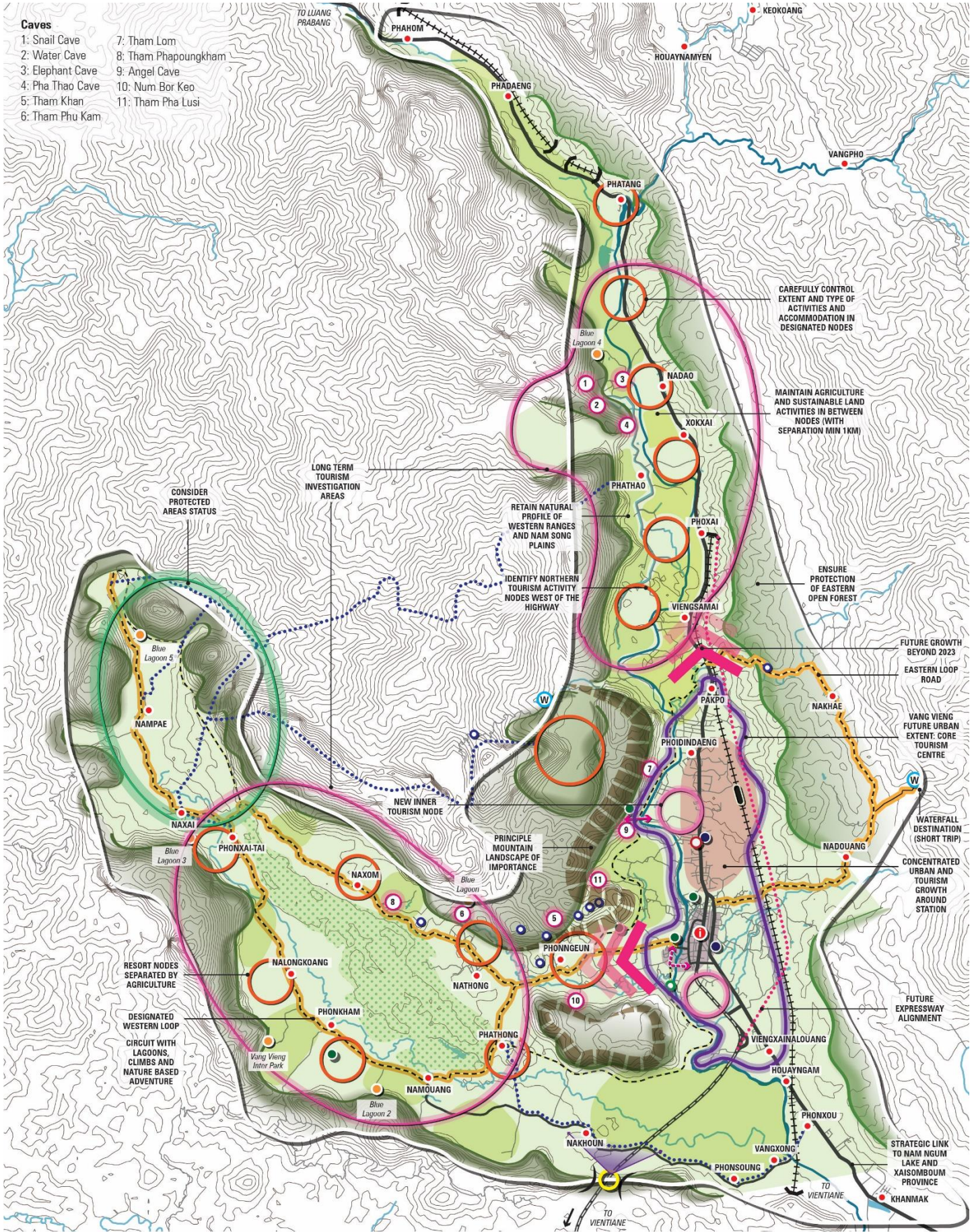
Significant new transport infrastructure (new Expressway, new rail and new local roads) has transformed accessibility to and around Vang Vieng and unlocked opportunity for new urban and tourism development within a revised Township 'extent' - to be confirmed within a new 'urban growth boundary' or UGB. This boundary should be secured within legislation and serve as the limit to urban and tourism growth well beyond 2033 as an integrated environmental, economic and resilience safeguard. Within this UGB, new urban or tourism development can occur in clearly defined cells to the north and south of the existing settlement with potential for new 'transit oriented' business functions around the new Station. Urban growth will also be absorbed as infill (or renewal) within the existing (traditional) township grid along the Nam Song banks (within definitive building heights of 5 storeys with gaps for views through) supported by green and pedestrian amenity improvements to the town's streets, parks and public spaces.

Some tourism development 'outside' the UGB may be contemplated, but will be subject to strict rules on its extent, densities, and building scale so as not to damage the sensitive environmental quality of the mountains and plains. Consideration of local host community influence and capacity will also be an important consideration. Any such outlying tourism development projects should be integrated into the landscape and permitted only on a limited staged basis.

A priority for tourism activation in Vang Vieng is improved convenient accessibility to a wealth of high quality existing (and future) nature based and adventure destinations/experiences (with improved roads, trails and information) embedded within and around Vang Vieng's spectacular mountain, valley and plain landscape. The 3 themes of 'nature, adventure and discovery' underpin the user experience in Vang Vieng. While this is readily achieved in the natural surroundings, significant improvements to the township's image and amenity are required (both existing urban areas and new growth precincts) to meet this ambition.

It must be appreciated that it is often very difficult to accurately correlate the land area requirements with new growth and development, just as it is difficult to accurately predict future growth and development rates. Invariably market forces will favour some locations over others and the rates of development and investment will also be influenced by factors external to local, provincial and national circumstances such as the impacts of global economic factors. Therefore, the growth and urban land allocation projections in the Master Plan will need to be regularly monitored and possible adjustments made to the Master Plan as deemed fit by government.

VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



- Caves**
- 1: Snail Cave
 - 2: Water Cave
 - 3: Elephant Cave
 - 4: Pha Thao Cave
 - 5: Tham Khan
 - 6: Tham Phu Kam
 - 7: Tham Lom
 - 8: Tham Phapoungkham
 - 9: Angel Cave
 - 10: Num Bor Keo
 - 11: Tham Pha Lusi

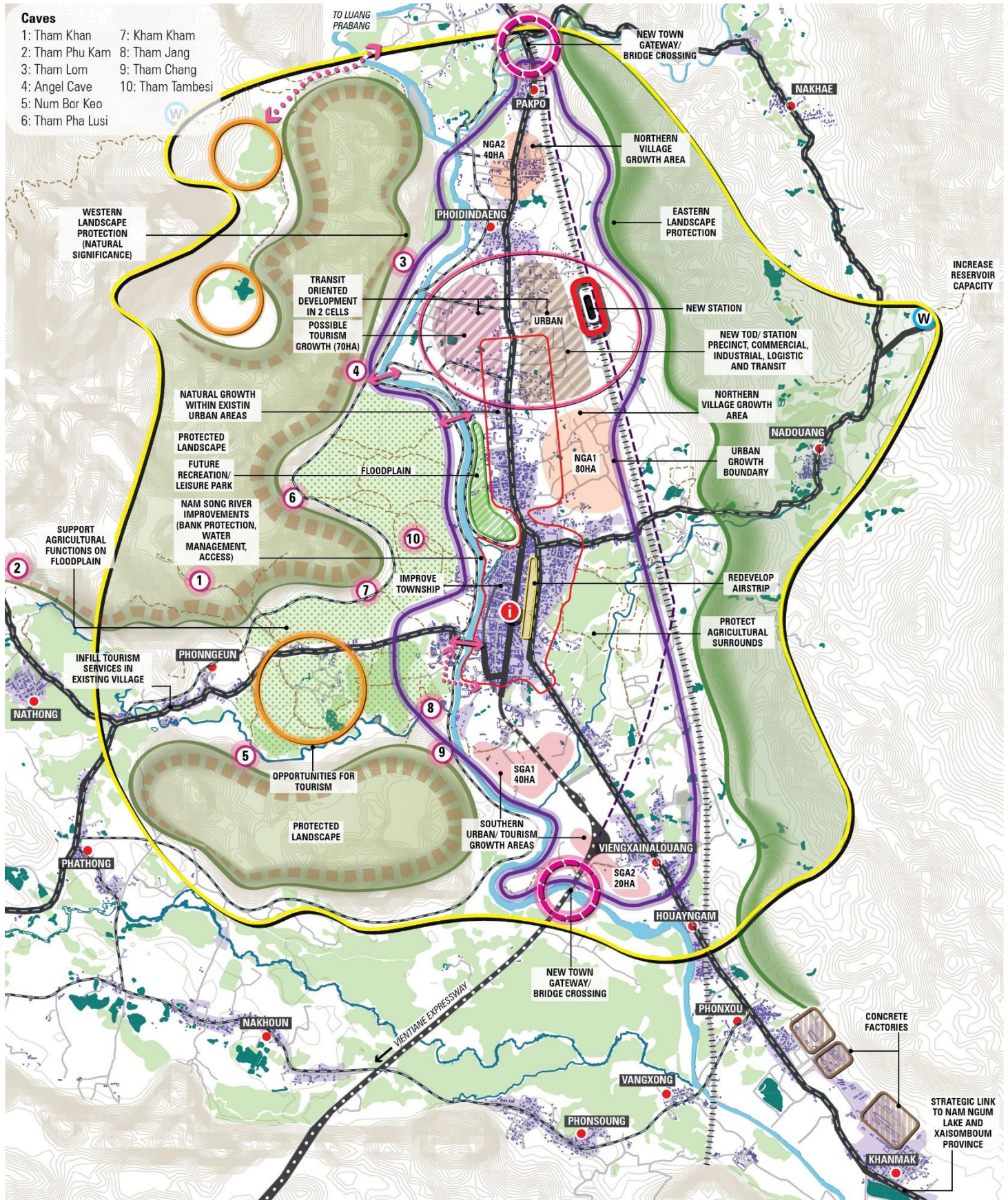
Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033
 Figure 18.
 Strategic Tourism Directions

Legend

Strategic Tourism Area	Main road	Camp site	Attractions	Surrounding mountain ranges	New tourism nodes	Concentrated urban growth
Expressway	Secondary road	Picnic	Bus terminal	Ongoing agriculture	Possible outlying tourism nodes	Urban Development Boundary
Village centre	Railway line and station	Look out	Tourism routes	Forested area	Valley gateway	
Contours	Information Centre	Waterfall	Bike routes	Prominent mountain ranges	Future tourism investigation areas	
Waterway	Cave site	Market	Tourism adventure trails (hiking/cycling)	Panoramic views	Established urban core	

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VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



- Caves**
- 1: Tham Khan
 - 2: Tham Phu Kam
 - 3: Tham Lom
 - 4: Angel Cave
 - 5: Num Bor Keo
 - 6: Tham Pha Lusi
 - 7: Kham Kham
 - 8: Tham Jang
 - 9: Tham Chang
 - 10: Tham Tambesi

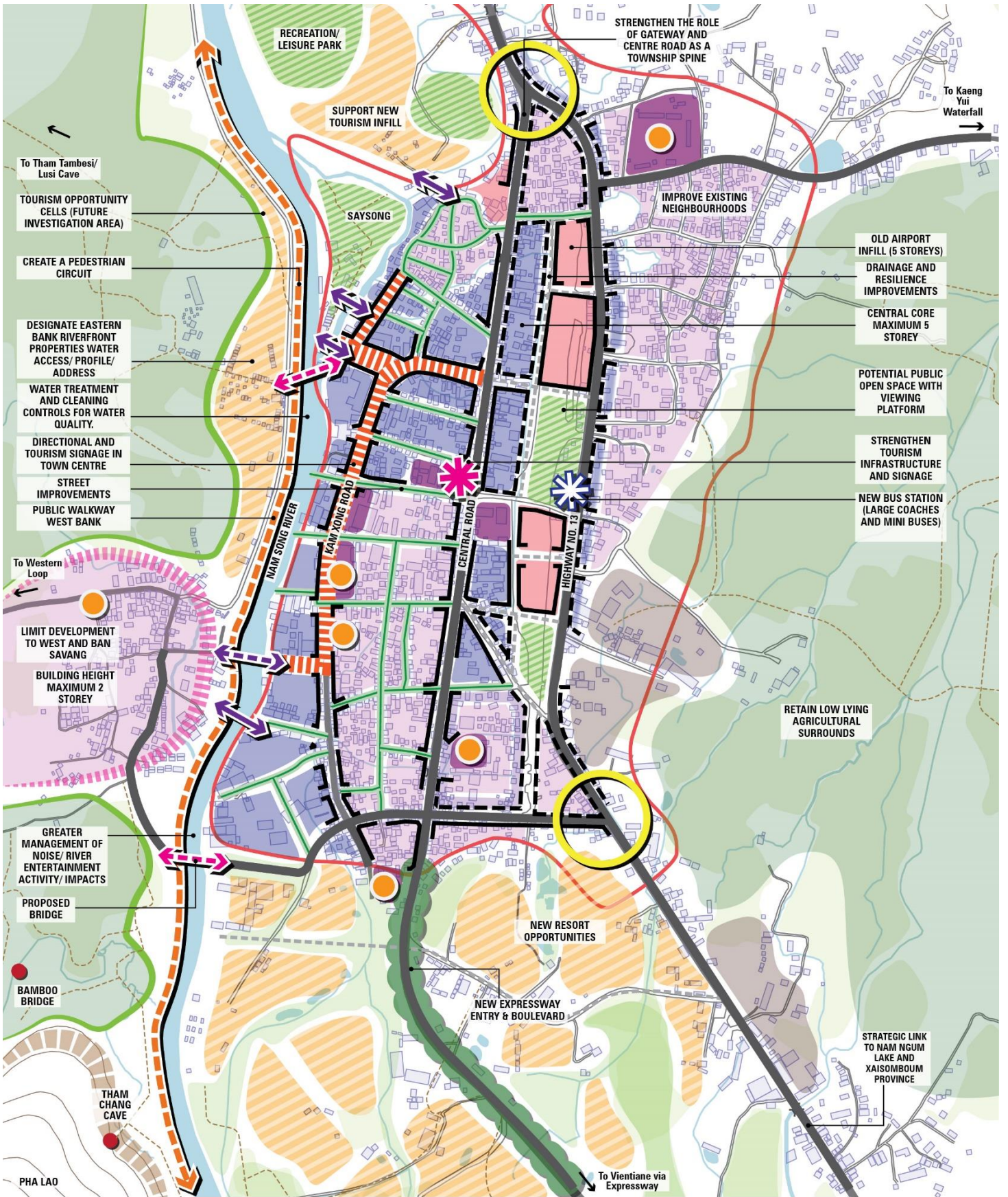
Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033

Figure 19. Town & Environs Tourism Directions

Legend

Urban Area	Railway line	2020 Growth areas	Urban Development Boundary	Possible Outlying Tourism Nodes	Existing Bridge
Town & Environs Area	Train station	Northern Village Growth Areas	TOD Boundary	Gateway	New Bridge
Expressway	Waterways	Southern Village Growth Areas	Naturally Significant Areas	Information Centre	Cycling routes
2020 Built form	Ponds	TOD - Urban Consolidation	Vulnerable Floodplain	Waterfall	
Roads	Contours	TOD - Urban Consolidation & Tourism	Limestone Mountains	Factories	
Agricultural use		Recreation	View points	Cave site	

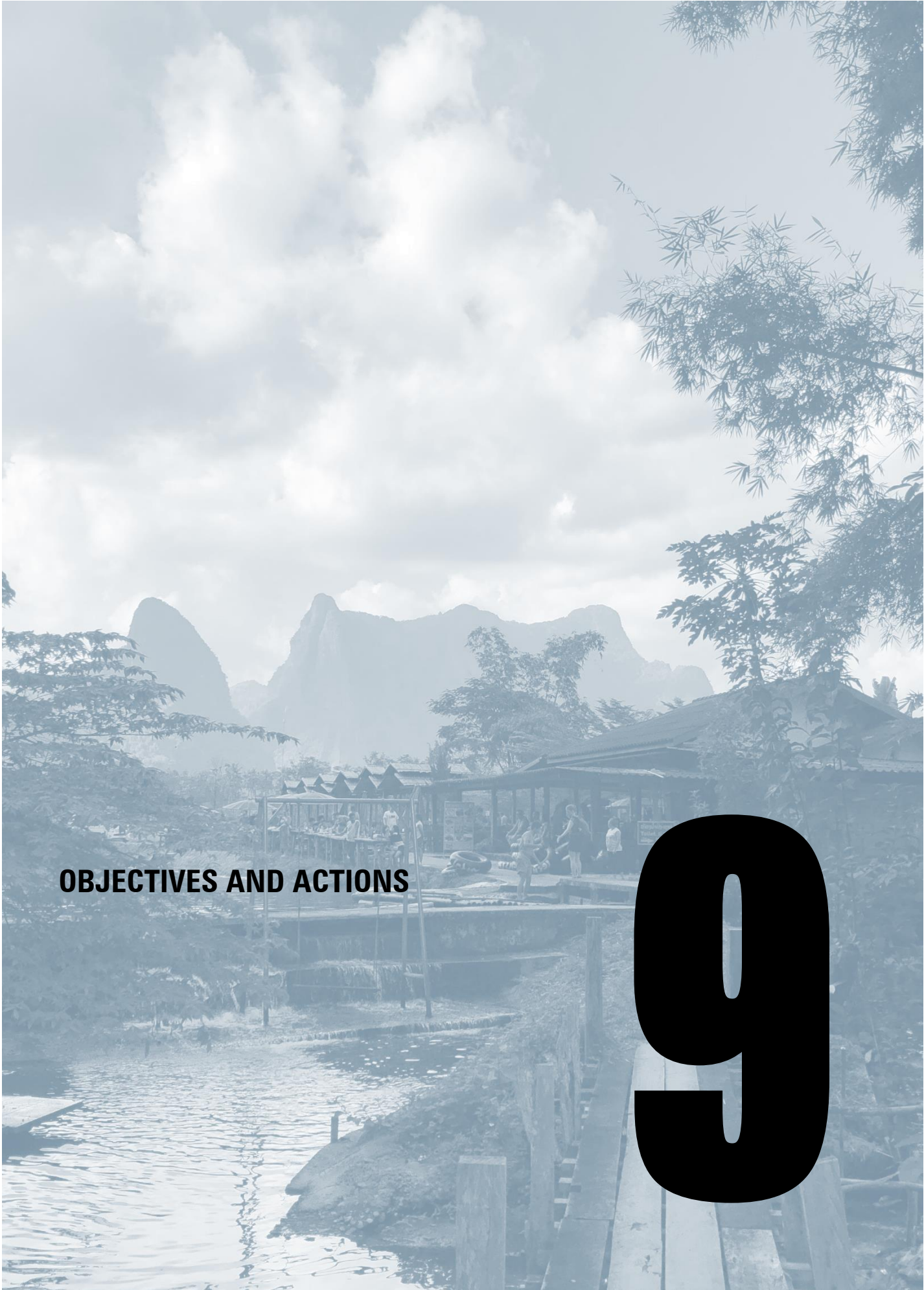
VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033
Figure 20. Urban Core Tourism Directions

Legend

Urban Area	Core Tourism & Commercial	Civic / Community	Green Streets with Long Views	Village Tourism Development Node
2020 Built form	Mixed Use	Strong built edge	Boulevard	Limestone Karst Mountains
Main road	Existing Neighbourhood	Strengthen & Consolidate Main Road Edges	Bridges	Open Space / Agriculture
Secondary road	Tourism Fringe	Core Town Gateway	Future bridges	
Key Pedestrian Zone	Leisure & Recreation	Tourism Information Centre	Bridge to be upgraded	
Waterfront Walkway	Service & Employment	Schools	Walking routes	



OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

9

9.0 Objectives and Actions

For the Master Plan Principles to be applied in a co-ordinated and integrated manner, it is necessary to formulate Objectives and Actions for each Principle. This approach ensures that the links between implementation of the Master Plan and the Vision Statement are maintained throughout the life of the Plan.

Many of these Actions will rely upon close collaboration between National and Provincial Government Agencies, between the public and private sectors, and between government and the community.

Some Actions will take longer than others to implement due to issues associated with funding, current government regulations or time for pre-construction investigations. Every effort needs to be made to ensure that eventually all of these actions are implemented or at least commenced in the next 10-year period.

9.1 Town Character

The appearance, amenity, and quality of Vang Vieng’s urban environment will strongly influence its appeal to investors and new arrivals seeking to live and work in the town. The town’s character will also have an impact on the tourism sector, not only in terms of tourist numbers each year, but how long tourists stay in the town to enjoy its many and varied experiences and activities. Liveability includes factors such as fresh air, clean water, a safe and secure environment, friendly and hospitable behaviour from its citizens, greenery and attractive public spaces, a rich cultural life etc.

The following **Objectives** apply to the Town Character of Vang Vieng as it develops and grows:

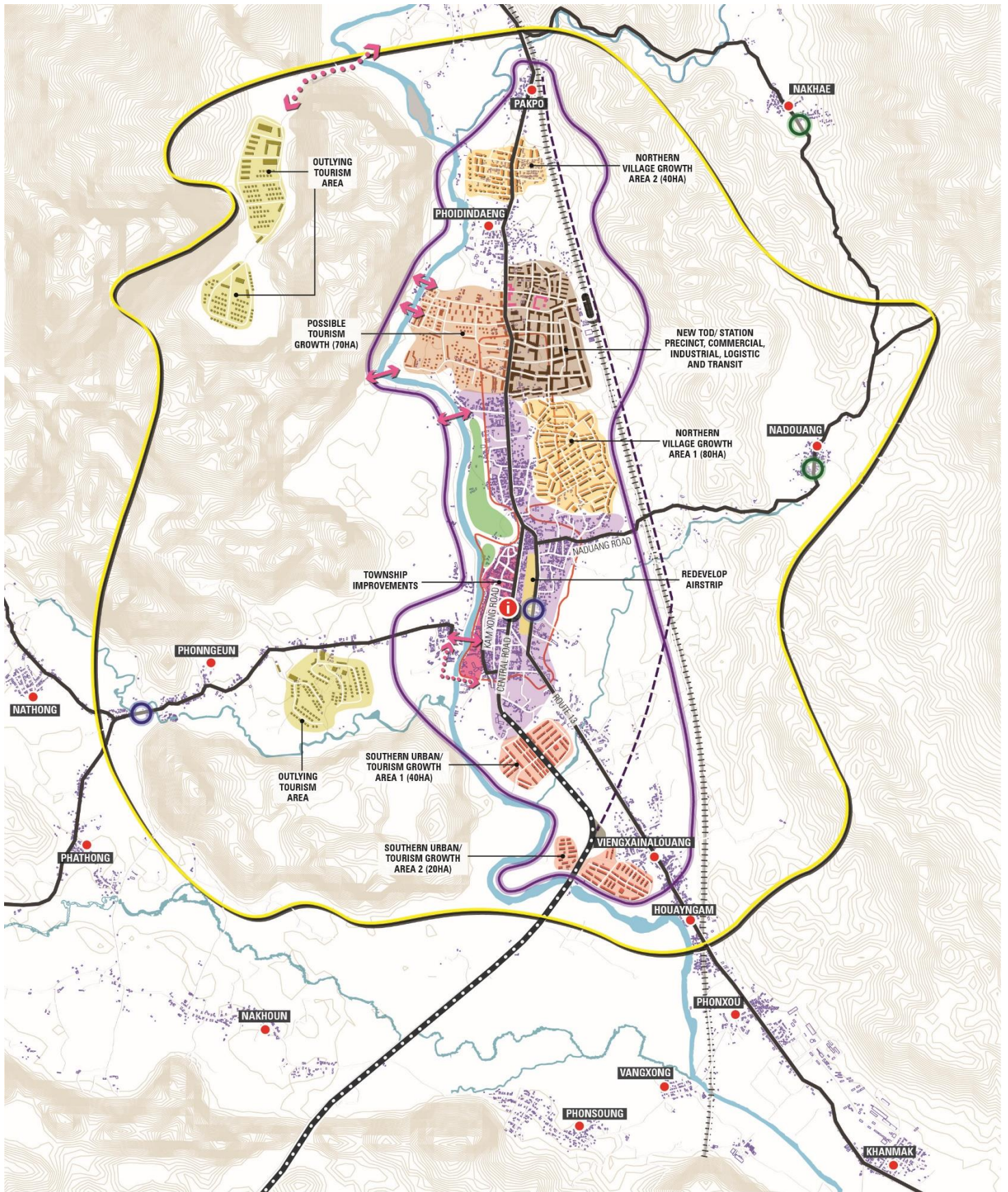
Town Character	
Principle: Vang Vieng and Environs will be a green, clean, safe and welcoming Town.	
Objective 1	Promote Vang Vieng as a clean, green, safe and friendly Town that is easy to move around.
Objective 2	Manage new development in the core Township and growth areas in a sustainable and integrated manner.
Objective 3	Retain and celebrate the traditions, customs and culture of the Town and the surrounding villages.
Objective 4	Establish and protect public open spaces that will improve Vang Vieng as a place to live and visit.



The **Actions** identified for achieving the Town Character Objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: Promote Vang Vieng as a clean, green, safe and friendly Town that is easy to move around.	
TC1	Implement a 'green shared streets' approach to parts of the urban core.
TC2	Improve accessibility across the Nam Song River, with a public walkway/path on the western side of the river, and a new bridge to the north near Saysong Island, to complete the 'Nam Song Loop'.
TC3	Improve directional and tourist signage based on a town logo and colour scheme that is consistently applied across all aspects of town identification and marketing. Ensure the signage supports wayfinding.
TC4	Undertake drainage improvements within established areas and ensure the installation of adequate drainage systems in growth areas and tourism nodes.
TC5	Improve access from major points of entry to the town (such as the Train Station) to the town core and key destinations. Implement a transport hub at the town core (Airstrip location).
Objective 2: Manage new development in the core Township and growth areas in a sustainable and integrated manner.	
TC6	Implement updated design and development guidelines for the core township and growth areas, addressing building heights, river setbacks, and landscape impact considerations.
TC7	Amend the current construction regulations to ensure incorporation of sustainability (solar panels, water tanks, household and business recycling programs).
Objective 3: Retain and celebrate the traditions, customs and culture of the Town and the surrounding villages.	
TC8	Improve existing halls, temples and places that promote traditions and culture, and require protection of traditions and culture in new development proposals.
TC9	Establish a yearly calendar of festivals and celebrations of traditional Lao culture. Update annually and promote these activities to the wider community and tourists planning to visit Vang Vieng Town.
Objective 4: Establish and protect public open spaces that will improve Vang Vieng as a place to live and visit.	
TC10	Convert part of the former airstrip within the township to a public park (or parks), with viewing platform, public amenities and spaces for recreation, ceremonies, festivals and other important gatherings.
TC11	Require new development in growth areas to contribute a percentage of the site to public open space, where applicable.
TC12	Establish a public recreation and leisure park to the east of Nam Song River and north of Saysong Island as identified in the Town and Environs and Urban Core plans of the Master Plan.

VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Masterplan 2023-2033
 Figure 21.
 Town & Environs Tourism Directions: Urban Structure & Land Use

Legend			
Urban Area	Railway line	Waterfront tourism precinct	Airstrip Redevelopment
Town & Environs Area	Train station	Consolidated Township	Possible Outlying Tourism Nodes
Urban Development Boundary	Waterways	Northern Village Growth Areas	Recreation
Expressway	Ponds	Southern Village Growth Areas	Village Centre
2020 Built form	Contours	TOD - Urban Consolidation	Van Amenity Node
Main Roads	Agricultural use	TOD - Urban Consolidation & Tourism	Van Amenity Node with Camping
			Information Centre
			Existing Bridge
			New Bridge

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9.2 Urban Growth

The following **Objectives** apply to the Urban Growth of Vang Vieng and environs to 2033:

Urban Growth	
Principle: Vang Vieng and Environs will develop in an integrated and sustainable manner.	
Objective 1	Consolidate development within the established Urban Core and designated Urban Growth Areas and Cells to 2033.
Objective 2	Facilitate orderly development in growth areas, with adequate services and infrastructure.
Objective 3	Attract and establish new employment, logistics, tourism and related functions around the new (High Speed Rail) Station node supported by strong regional and international linkages.

The **Actions** identified for achieving the Urban Growth Objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: Consolidate development within an established Urban Core & designated Urban Growth Cells to 2033.	
UG1	Implement a clear urban growth boundary (Ultimate Development Boundary) to prevent sprawl/expansion.
UG2	Direct development to the urban core (existing urban zoned area) and new urban growth cells (designated as SGA1, SGA2, NGA1, NGA2, and TOD)
UG3	Develop part of the old airstrip land as a Mixed-Use precinct.
UG4	Enable limited new 'outlying' tourism development subject to strict controls and evaluation criteria.
Objective 2: Facilitate orderly development in growth areas, with adequate community services and infrastructure.	
UG5	Apply a 'growth area neighbourhood development model' for newly developing cells, which includes new community infrastructure (such as new schools, medical centres and other community-based facilities).
UG6	Undertake the following infrastructure improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrade the existing solid waste landfill facility and implement holistic solid waste management. ▪ Improve the capacity of the existing water supply to meet current and future needs. ▪ Commence planning for the installation of a reticulated wastewater treatment plant.
UG7	Provide sustainable transport infrastructure and services in locations designated to accommodate future growth, such as cycling paths and local bus services.
Objective 3: Attract and establish new employment, logistics, tourism and related functions around the new (High Speed Rail) Station node supported by strong regional and international linkages.	
UG8	Facilitate development of an employment, logistics and tourism precinct near Vang Vieng train station.

9.3 Environment

The environment of Vang Vieng Town and Environs is reflected in its built form – buildings and streetscapes – as well as its natural landscape and highly cultivated farmland. The natural setting of Vang Vieng is a significant feature, which contributes to the ambience, appearance, and character of the town, and is a principal tourism attractor. Protecting and enhancing the environmental attributes of the Town and environs, whilst sensitively integrating new development into the landscape is fundamental to securing the role and function of Vang Vieng as a place not only for living and working but as a popular tourist destination.

The following **Objectives** apply to the environmental characteristics of Vang Vieng and Environs.

Environment	
Principle: Vang Vieng and Environs will conserve, protect and enhance its landscapes and natural attributes.	
Objective 1	Protect the natural setting of the Town including the limestone karst mountains, the Nam Song River, agricultural land and sandstone ridges.
Objective 2	Conserve and protect panoramic and corridor views of the surrounding natural landscape.
Objective 3	Improve air and water quality and reduce noise pollution.
Objective 4	Identify, conserve and protect sites of significant natural and cultural heritage.

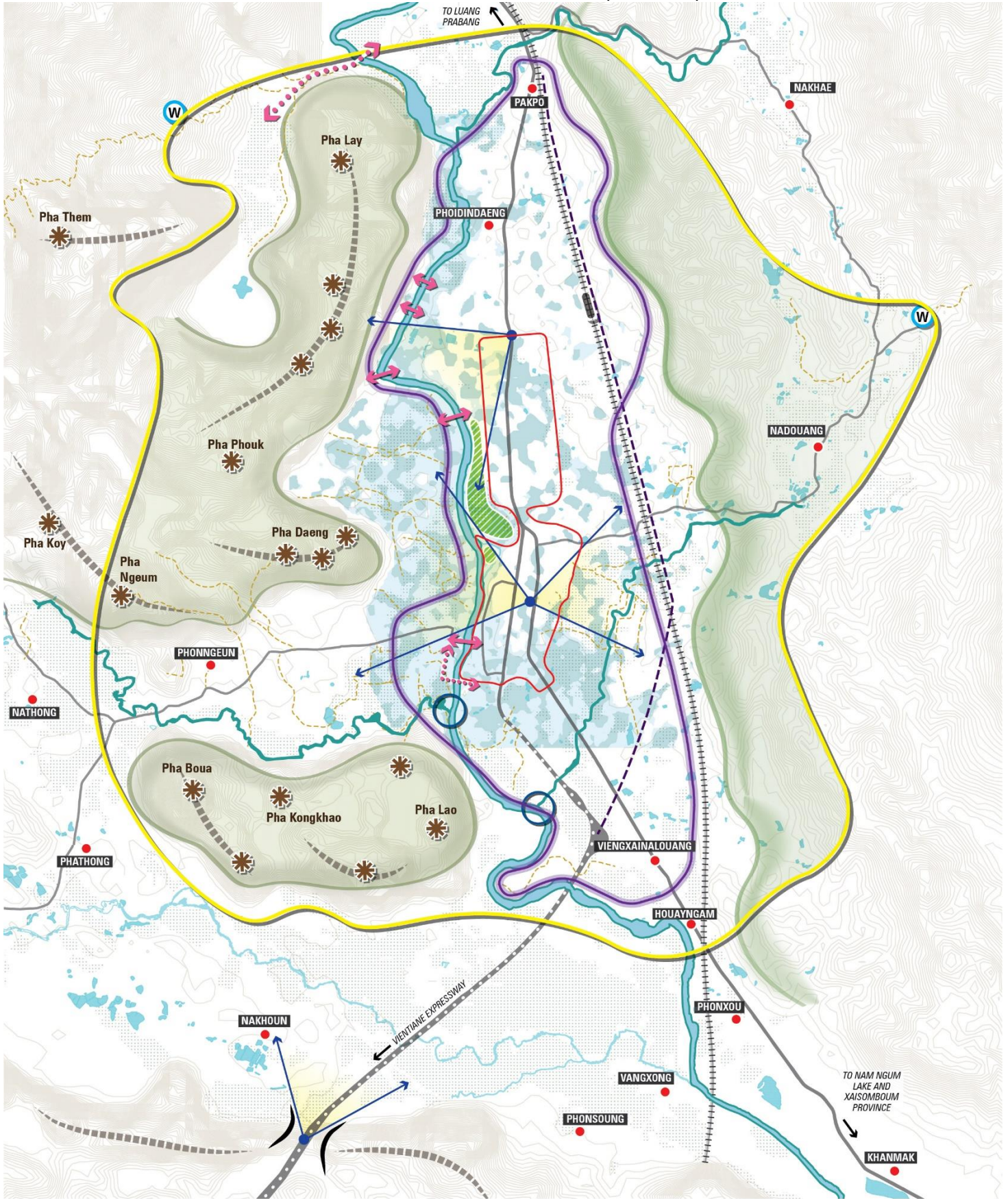
The **Actions** identified for achieving the Environment Objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: Protect the natural setting of the Town which includes the limestone karst mountains to the west, the Nam Song River, agricultural land and sandstone ridges to the east.	
E1	Establish clear boundaries for where development can be located, to protect the natural setting of the town (including the karst mountains, forest areas, agricultural land, and sandstone ridges).
E2	Ensure any tourism activities in the town’s natural surrounds do not negatively impact upon those areas.
E3	Undertake the necessary technical investigations into the natural and scenic values of the limestone karst mountains and the Nam Song River to support appropriate conservation and protection under relevant Lao PDR Law (where not already legally protected).
E4	Protect and improve the health of Nam Song River and other tributaries within the master plan area.
Objective 2: Conserve and protect panoramic and corridor views of the surrounding natural landscape.	
E5	Implement design and development guidelines that control building height and form of new development, and which specify appropriate development typologies for different locations.
E6	Implement design and development guidelines that protect views of the landscape features of the western valley and northern corridor.

Objective 3: Improve air and water quality and reduce noise pollution.	
E7	Regulate entertainment and tourism activities creating air, water, noise pollution and other amenity problems.
E8	Conduct regular monitoring of air quality, noise pollution, and water quality.
Objective 4: Identify, conserve and protect sites of significant natural and cultural heritage	
E9	Undertake investigations to identify sites of natural and cultural heritage across the town and environs that are not already legally protected. Proceed to protect these sites under the relevant legislation.
E10	Ensure sensitive design around cave environs in terms of signage and other structures.



VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033
Figure 22.
Town & Environs Tourism Directions: Environment

Legend

Urban Area		Potential alignment of expressway		Naturally Significant Areas		50 years flood prone areas		Improve health of Nam Song River and tributaries	
Town & Environs Area		Railway line		Agricultural use		100 years flood prone areas		Improve river confluence	
Urban Development Boundary		Train station		Limestone Karsts		Existing Bridge			
Expressway		Waterways		Ridges		New Bridge			
Roads		Ponds		Recreation		Walking Trails			
		Contours		Waterfall		Key landscape views			

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9.4 Tourism Development

Tourism is the backbone of the Vang Vieng economy. It generates jobs, creates wealth, places Vang Vieng on the international tourist trail and sustains numerous small businesses, many of which are owned by members of the local community.

The following **Objectives** apply to Tourism Development across Vang Vieng and Environs:

Tourism Development	
Principle: Vang Vieng and Environs will develop as a diverse National Tourism Destination.	
Objective 1	Improve the management and functions of the Town and its environs as a National Tourism Destination.
Objective 2	Build on the opportunity created by improved National and International access to Vang Vieng (by road-rail).
Objective 3	Strengthen the types of attractions, experiences and accommodation offered to international and domestic tourists to the Town and its outlying areas.

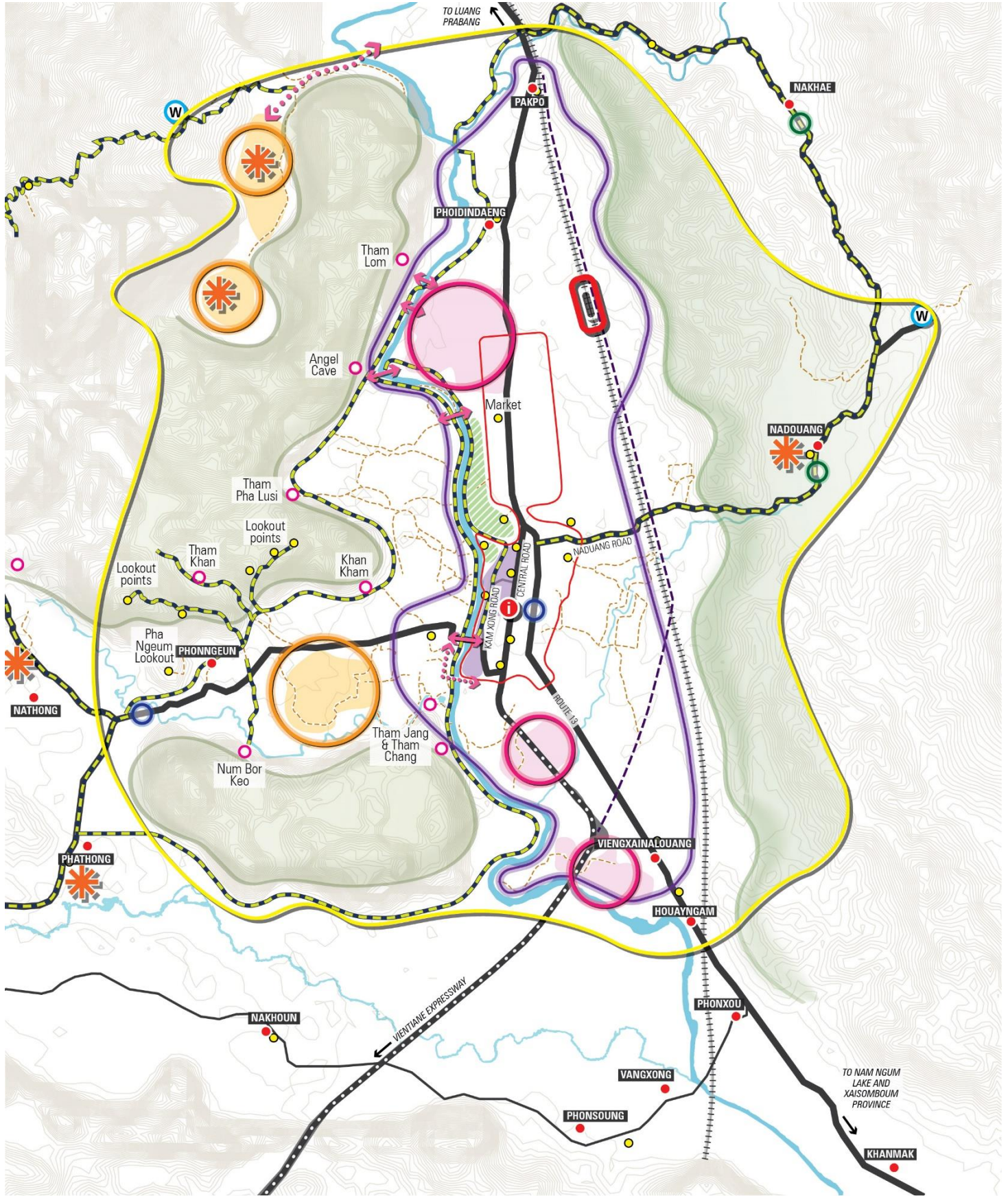
The **Actions** identified for achieving the Tourism Development Objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: Improve the management and functions of the Town and its environs as a National Tourism Destination	
TD1	Reactivate the Vang Vieng Destination Management Network (DMN) so that it provides leadership and direction for future growth and development.
TD2	Use the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Standard to guide upgrades to town facilities and services for visitors and apply for the ASEAN Clean Tourist City award by 2025.
TD3	Attract quality tourism investments to Vang Vieng by having clear criteria for assessing potential development proposals.
Objective 2: Build on the opportunity created by improved National and International access to Vang Vieng (by road-rail).	
TD4	Improve day use attractions and services, especially public spaces.
TD5	Implement ASEAN Tourism standards to improve service quality across accommodation, restaurant, spa and MICE venues.
TD6	Continue investing in tourism workforce training to meet changes in market demand and growth in the sector (new accommodation, activities, and attractions).

Objective 3: Strengthen the types of attractions, experiences and accommodation offered to international and domestic tourists to the Town and its outlying areas.	
TD7	Strengthen the community tourism supply chain by linking the existing community experiences such as rice farming, fruit plantations, and other traditional land uses.
TD8	Develop walking/hiking trails around the Western Loop.
TD9	Upgrade the quality and resiliency of walking tracks to Vang Veing viewpoints (recognised as best in Laos).
TD10	Market the Vang Vieng X-Trail challenge to International Visitors.
TD11	Improve and expand cycling routes so that Vang Vieng becomes known as having the best off-road mountain bike trails in Laos.
TD12	Establish camping grounds to accommodate camping enthusiasts and the emerging caravan market (a potential local private investment opportunity).
TD13	Encourage low impact (visual and environmental) accommodation development around the Western Loop.



VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033
 Figure 23. Town & Environs Tourism Directions: Tourism

Legend

Urban Area	Railway line	Recreation	Cave site	Existing Bridge
Town & Environs Area	Train station	Waterfront tourism precinct	Waterfall	New Bridge
Urban Development Boundary	Waterways	Tourism destination	Village centre	Van Amenity Node
2020 Built form	Ponds	Possible Outlying Tourism Nodes	Walking/ cycling circuits	Van Amenity Node with Camping
Main Roads	Contours	Tourism Nodes within UDB	Trails	Information Centre
Expressway	Naturally Significant Areas	Possible Outlying Resorts		

9.5 Urban Resilience

The threats posed by climate change, over-tourism, and other economic shocks (national, regional, or global) have a significant impact on the viable growth and management of Vang Vieng as a place to live and work and as a visitor destination. It is therefore important for careful planning to 'build-in' safeguards that mitigate against future risks while also supporting good urban and environmental (nature based) design and development. Planning plays an important role in securing a safe and sustainable future, through setting standards and benchmarks for development, using contemporary technologies and instructing stakeholders on rapid response.

The following **Objectives** relate to Urban Resilience across Vang Vieng and Environs:

Urban Resilience	
Principle: Vang Vieng and Environs will be able to accommodate further impacts of climate change and emerging threats.	
Objective 1	Plan for the vulnerable condition of the Nam Song flood plain and increasing inundation risks to 2032 and beyond.
Objective 2	Invest in public infrastructure that can help mitigate the potential for harm from climate change and like hazards.
Objective 3	Support the design of new developments in and around Vang Vieng that are fit for disaster and risk mitigation and control, and encourage the use of new technologies, information systems and data to support local and visitor community safety.

The **Actions** identified for achieving the Urban Resilience Objectives are as follows:

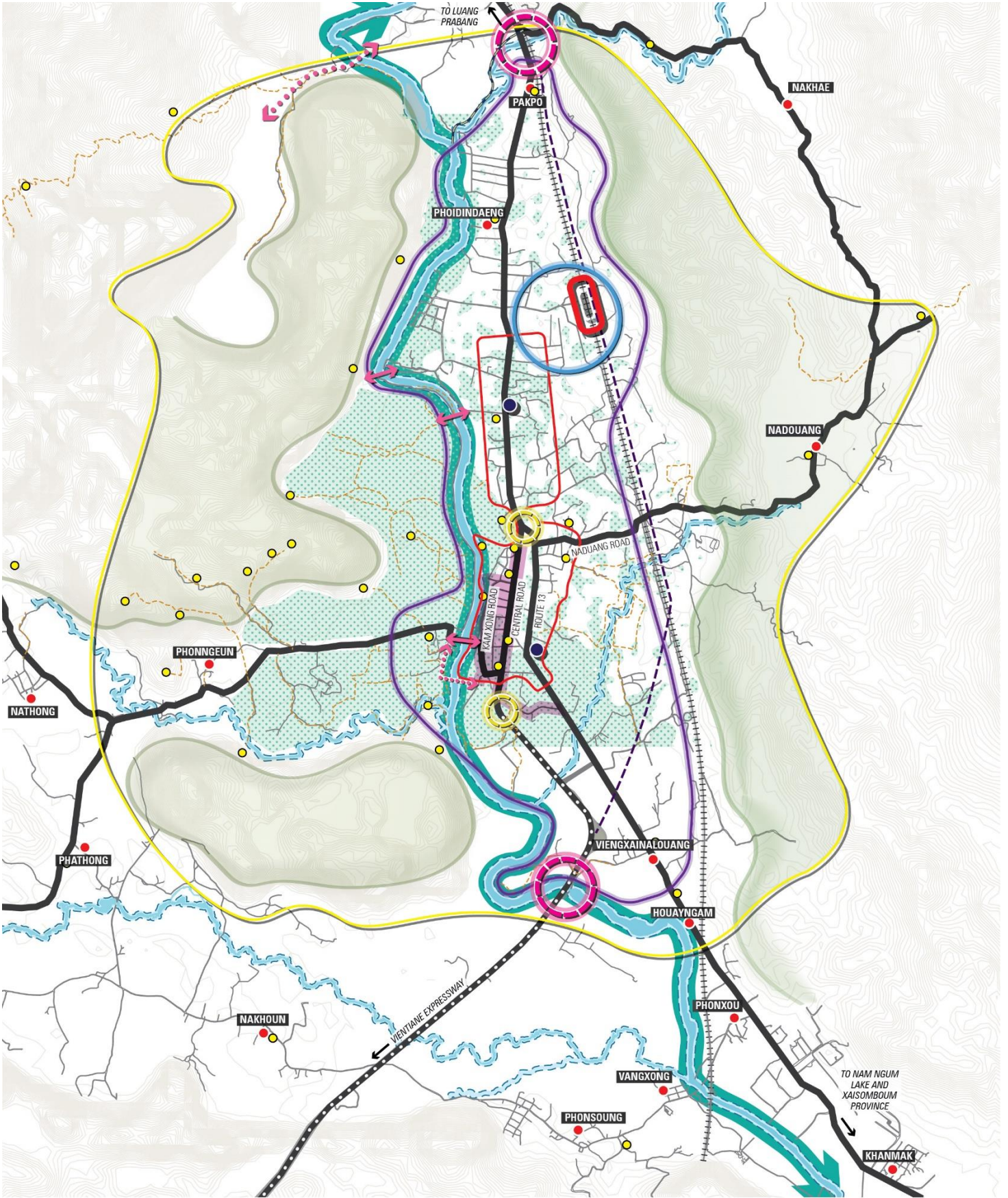
Objective 1: Plan for the vulnerable condition of the Nam Song flood plain and increasing inundation risks to 2032 and beyond.	
UR1	Restrict urban growth within 25 metres of the waterway edge.
UR2	Monitor the change in forecasted vulnerability of the flood plain to inundation risks.
UR3	Raise public awareness about the increasing inundation risks across the Nam Song flood plain. Implement an early warning system that can inform visitors and residents of imminent high-risk inundation events.
Objective 2: Invest in public infrastructure that can help mitigate the potential for harm from climate change and like hazards.	
UR4	Apply water sensitive urban design (WSUD) in the streets of Vang Vieng.
UR5	Ensure all new developments include on-site drainage and detention.

Objective 3: Support the design of new developments in and around Vang Vieng that are fit for disaster and risk mitigation and control, and encourage the use of new technologies, information systems and data to support local and visitor community safety.

UR6	Implement a disaster and risk mitigation regulatory plan (and/or standards) which must be used in the assessment of all new projects (both private and public).
UR7	<p>Support local community and visitor safety, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing an official destination app for Vang Vieng that provides information on attractions, services and safety. ▪ Legally require all adventure tourism operators to have safety plans and systems that meet national or international codes/ industry standards. ▪ Provide training and certification processes to lift the operating safety standards of adventure tourism businesses and their staff.



VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE

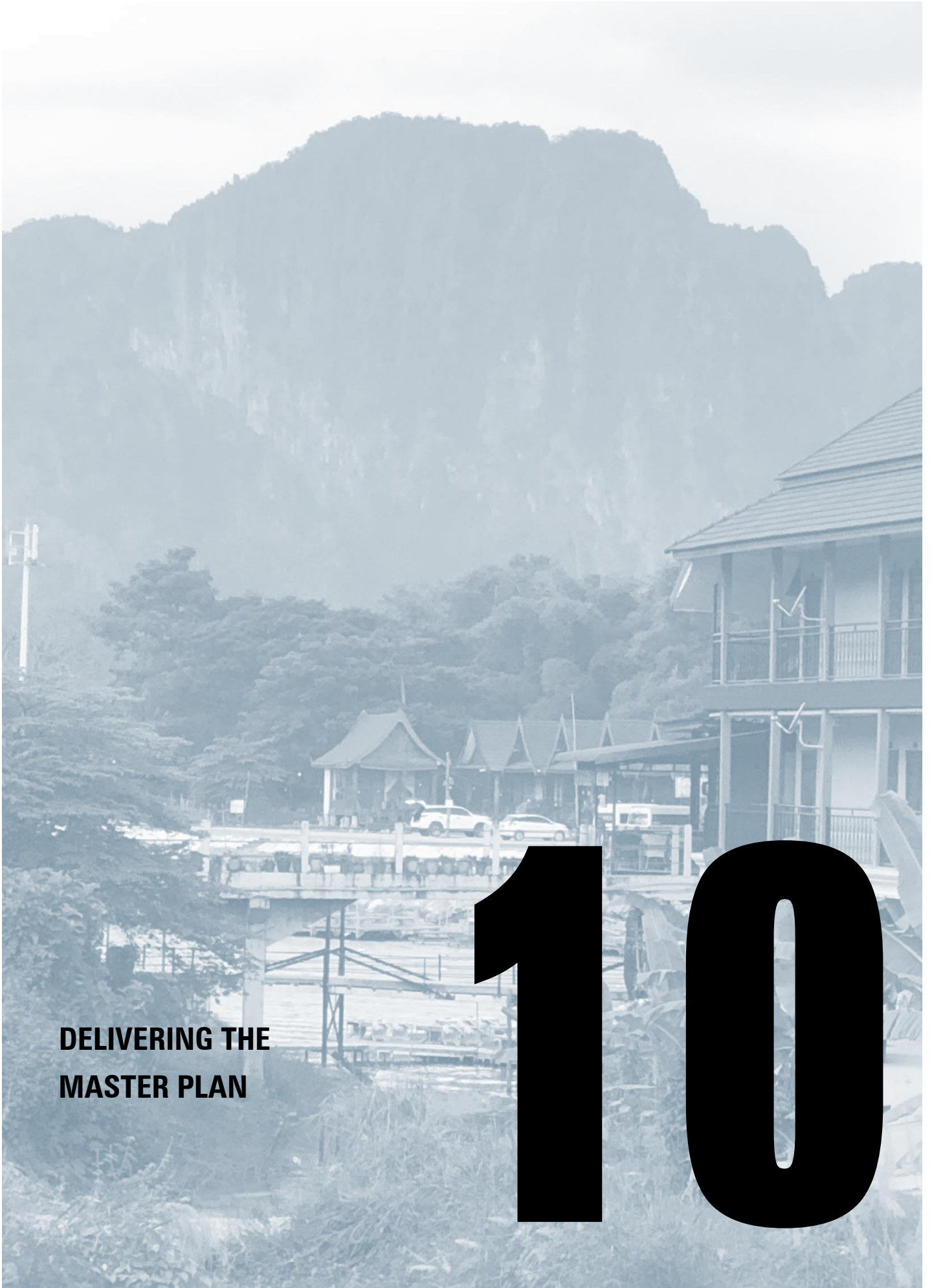


Vang Vieng Town & Environs Tourism Masterplan 2023-2033
Figure 24.
Town & Environs Tourism Directions: Resilience

Legend

Urban Area		Potential future expressway		Existing Bridge		Waterways		Safety zone	
Town & Environs Area		Railway line		New Bridge		Naturally Significant Areas		Embankment works to manage inundation risks along Nam Song	
Urban Development Boundary		Train station		Gateway		Wayerway flooding buffer (25m from waterway edge to river bank)		Plan for vulnerable flood prone areas	
2020 Built form		Bus terminus		Secondary Gateway					
Roads		Water Sensitive Urban Design initiatives in Urban Renewal Area		Trails					
Expressway				Tourism destinations					

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**DELIVERING THE
MASTER PLAN**

10

10 Delivering the Master Plan

10.1 Implementation program

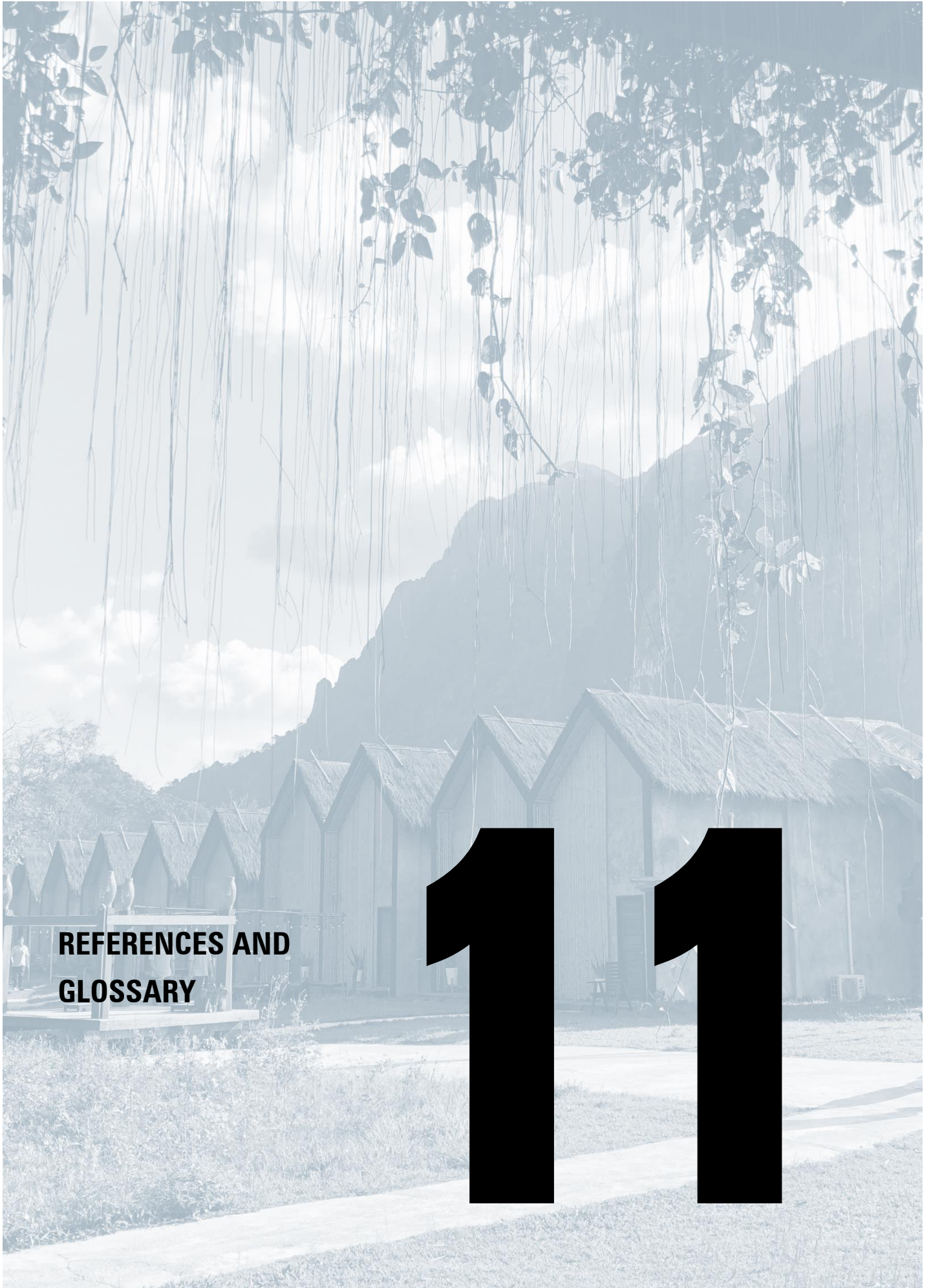
One of the key challenges when undertaking Master Planning for a Town such as Vang Vieng is to provide an Implementation Program which articulates clearly:

- The relative priority of each action.
- Who will be responsible for that action being implemented.
- The timeframe for implementing the action; and
- The likely cost of the activity.

The implementation of the Master Plan is to be guided by 4 key documents which stand as a separable volume beside this document – but which are critical to effective implementation. These include:

1. Action Plan (addressing the above elements), including Operational Guidelines.
2. Public Design Guidelines.
3. Private Development Guidelines.
4. Design References & Influences.

We encourage all relevant stakeholders to work together to support the implementation of the Master Plan.



**REFERENCES AND
GLOSSARY**

11

11.0 REFERENCES & GLOSSARY

11.1 REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department of Information Culture and Tourism, Vang Vieng District, Official Tourist Statistics

Department of Water Resource and Environment Administration, Prime Minister's Office, Lao PDR, draft June 2009 – *Nam Song Sub- River Basin Profile*

Lao PDR Government, Official Population Statistics

Lao PDR Prime Minister's Office, Department of Water Resources – Water Resources and Environment Administration, June 2009 (draft for consultation), *Nam Song Sub-River Basin Profile*, prepared under the Nam Ngum River Basin Development Sector Project.

11.2 ABBREVIATIONS

ADB Asian Development Bank

DICT Department of Information Culture and Tourism

DMN Destination Management Network

DPI Department of Planning and Investment

GDP Gross Domestic Product

Lao PDR Lao People's Democratic Republic

MICE Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions

MICT Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism

MPWT Ministry of Public Works and Transport

SME Small and Medium Enterprise

TIIGP2 Second Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth Project

UDAA Urban Development Administrative Authority

UGB Urban Growth Boundary

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

11.3 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Consolidation The intensification of development through higher density development and redevelopment of underdeveloped land within existing urban areas

Fenestration The design and placing of windows in a building.

Gateway A place or passage signifying the point of entry into an area, town or city which can be reinforced through the use of natural or man-made features e.g. The gateway into a town may be highlighted by an arch, a monument, a boulevard of trees, flags, or banners etc.

Grid configuration / grid subdivision A type of urban development layout in which streets run at right angles to each other, forming a grid pattern.

Hard infrastructure Basic physical services and facilities serving human settlements e.g., roads and bridges, drainage, water supply, solid waste collection and disposal, sewage collection and treatment, power, gas, telecommunications etc.

Key views and vistas Views are Important sight lines or outlooks of a landscape that are so attractive that they are worth protecting and enhancing. For example, panoramic views of a mountain range. Vistas relate to a distant view which may be terminated by a prominent natural or built form feature. For example, a large monument which is placed at the end of a road so that the human eye is drawn to that monument in the distance.

Karst limestone mountains A rugged landscape of mountains and pinnacles shaped by the dissolution of a soluble layer or layers of bedrock that consists of carbonate rich limestone. Such topography is usually characterised by numerous caves, sinkholes, and underground streams, and usually forms in regions of plentiful rainfall.

Panoramic A wide view of an area of land. For example, a wide view of a mountain range.

Reticulated sewage system A network to collect and treat sewage in an underground network of pipes leading to a treatment plant.

Setback The physical distance between a building and its allotment boundaries (front/street, side, and rear boundaries).

Soft infrastructure Social and community facilities and services such as schools, hospitals, community meeting halls, libraries, sporting, and recreational facilities etc

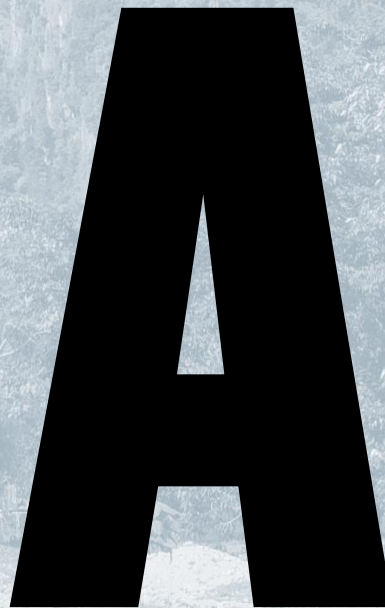
Stakeholder A person or group that has an investment, share or interest in something.

Streetscape A visual image of a street with its buildings, activities, infrastructure, landscaping etc.

Sustainable To provide the best outcomes for the human and natural environments both now and into the indefinite future.

APPENDIX A:

**Summary of
Stakeholder Consultation
Sessions**



Community Meeting

Summary of responses at the Community Meeting:

<p>Q1: What changes have you noticed in and around Vang Vieng over the last 10 years?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many new buildings constructed.& tourism have been developed. ▪ The number of tourists has increased. ▪ Roads and bridges have improved. ▪ Development is seen to cover empty lands. ▪ More pollution and debris ▪ Rivers are drying out.
<p>Q2a: What do you like or value about living and working in Vang Vieng today?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beautiful views and fresh air. ▪ The city is surrounded by beautiful landscapes with layers of mountains whilst having the Nam song running along. ▪ Good conditions of access roads allow for convenient travelling, and the city is not far from Vientiane.
<p>Q2b: What do you dislike about living and working in Vang Vieng today?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Littering in public places. ▪ Buildings constructed in protected areas along the roads and river. ▪ Congestion/ bad traffic/ more pollution. ▪ Some natural places have been destroyed.
<p>Q3: What makes Vang Vieng and it surroundings special as a place to visit?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nam Song crossing the city allows for many tourism activities. ▪ Each place is in close proximity to others, and near the city centre. ▪ Expressway and railway allow for convenient travelling. ▪ Traditional cuisines such as bamboo shoot, soup, riverweed lap, steamed small fish, and locally grown fruit-mandarins. ▪ Beautiful rice fields over a large area and stunning views. ▪ The friendliness and generosity of locals. ▪ Beautiful nature, clean water, many tourism places, and weather.
<p>Q4: In the future, how can we get visitors to stay longer and spend more in Vang Vieng?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve road condition and tourism places. ▪ Ensure accommodation is sufficient with good services and quality. ▪ Control price, taking into consideration the tourists' ability to pay. ▪ Improve service quality to please the tourists. ▪ Enhance environment by making it greener and cleaner. ▪ Support production of the local products unique to Vang Vieng
<p>Q5: What limits Vang Vieng's potential as a National Tourism Destination in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Road expansion, and designation of lands for agricultural production. ▪ Locals' knowledge about tourism is limited/ Poor services. ▪ Debris/ wastewater management. ▪ Animals wandering around the city. ▪ Inconsistent price of accommodation. ▪ Locals' lack of understanding the importance of benefits for all. ▪ Things being placed along the footpath and construction projects
<p>Q6: What limits Vang Vieng's potential as a Natural Tourism Destination in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage locals to preserve local traditions and cultures. ▪ Support locals to produce food locally to support tourism in the city. ▪ Encourage locals' honesty when providing services to tourists. ▪ Ensure younger generations are away from drugs. ▪ educate locals to protect the environment and natural heritage. ▪ facilitating work of homestay tourism and motorboats. ▪ Support the Government to implement regulations. ▪ Create sustainable tourism and protect the environment.
<p>Q7: How important is agriculture? Should there be regulations to retain it and/or control development?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agricultural land is importance to support tourism seasonal foods. ▪ Specific regulations to protect locals' benefits is of vital importance.

Tourism Business Meeting

Summary of responses at the Tourism Business Meeting:

<p>Questions used to prompt discussion with attendees:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>What growth do you want?</i> ▪ <i>Which markets?</i> ▪ <i>How much is spent per day?</i> ▪ <i>What will activities and attractions look like in 2032?</i> ▪ <i>Top 5 priorities.</i>
<p>Feedback from Attendees:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Importance of having a plan that everyone follows.</i> ▪ <i>The western areas should be protected as they are an asset for tourism. Industry, mining, factories are detrimental uses, especially mining (which shouldn't be allowed - It's polluting the environment).</i> ▪ <i>There are good zones/rules now. A problem with the current zoning plan is compliance with the zoning rules (both in terms of compliance by stakeholders and lack of enforcement by Government).</i> ▪ <i>How is the plan going to be implemented? What are the actions and how are they to be met? There is a need for simple and specific statements.</i> ▪ <i>There is a need for clearer regulation in relation to building heights and buffer distances. Need to be clear on what can be done, and what cannot be done.</i> ▪ <i>Growth is ad hoc currently. It needs to be strategic.</i> ▪ <i>There is also a need for clear criteria for development v/s protection of Vang Vieng.</i> ▪ <i>The private sector of tourism needs support/advice to improve capacity and bring quality over quantity.</i> ▪ <i>Need for more activities and attractions for people to stay more than one day in Vang Vieng.</i> ▪ <i>Precedent examples for Vang Vieng might include 'The Living Farm' (Luang Prabang), the Buffalo Dairy farm, and Elephant Sanctuary.</i> ▪ <i>Some fear of small operators being pushed out by big tourist operators and big tourism projects.</i> ▪ <i>Need to provide a broader range of tourism offer; beyond that provided for the backpacker visitor.</i> ▪ <i>What are the local souvenirs that Vang Vieng may offer?</i> ▪ <i>How can tourism support the different ethnic cultures?</i> ▪ <i>Possibility for access to further funding opportunities under specific adjacent topics (i.e.. Climate change, food security, resilience)</i> ▪ <i>In pre pandemic times, Vang Vieng was quite busy. It is seen as a positive to increase on those previous numbers in the future.</i>

Government Meeting

Summary of responses at the Government Meeting:

Attendee Sector/ Individual	Comment/ Feedback
Department of Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How can we develop tourism that will not squeeze locals' benefits?</i> ▪ <i>Environmental preservation should be prioritised, and locals should be financially benefit from the development.</i> ▪ <i>Propose encouraging tourism development in the southern parts of Vang Vieng to stop the spread of cement production factories.</i> ▪ <i>Can/should we build a walkway along the east of the Nam Song River?</i> ▪ <i>Maybe we can solve traffic congestion by installing more traffic signs, determining which road will be on/two ways, and stopping the trucks from passing through specific roads?</i>
District Administration Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Clear zoning is necessary for the appropriateness of development direction, and the areas around the headwaters should be protected and no project should be allowed to affect the quality of the water.</i> ▪ <i>The development of all new projects needs to comply with the masterplan.</i> ▪ <i>We should improve condition of all roads. Some may need expansion.</i>
Department of Public Works and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Development should expand towards the south and north part of the city.</i> ▪ <i>DPWT will consider projects in compliance with the new footprint.</i>
President of the Association of Hotels and Guesthouses in Vang Vieng	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Holistic development plan is there but lacks details governing the scheme of development of each zone. Things are not clear for what can/ cannot be done, creating gaps for circumventions.</i> ▪ <i>Industrial zone should be discretely designated.</i> ▪ <i>Regulate clearly where mining activities can be executed. Minimise such activities to protect nature (forests).</i> ▪ <i>Development should be expanded to the south of the city.</i> ▪ <i>Development in the north may have a negative impact on the river.</i> ▪ <i>We need to protect the SMEs. There is a concern that big investors will develop exclusive projects comprising all kinds of activities in one place. This may wipe out the locals' small businesses.</i>
Mr. Inthi Deuansavanh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Our selling point is nature.</i> ▪ <i>We do have plans and regulations, but are not efficient at enforcing them.</i> ▪ <i>Clear zoning designation is important.</i>
Mr. Bouangeun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>New development is only inside the core areas of the city. This creates problem with congestion.</i> ▪ <i>Northern part of the city may be designated as agricultural-themed tourism while the development of accommodation and conference premises should be in the southern part of the city.</i> ▪ <i>We should enhance access roads around the city.</i> ▪ <i>It may be difficult to control building style, but we need to at least control the heights of the buildings.</i>
MICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Focus on enhancing access roads.</i>
Department Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Develop strong transport connections to neighbouring destinations.</i>
Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Agreed with the scope of the masterplan development proposed. Development should also aim to link Vang Vieng to other places nearby such as Xaisomboun Province and Nam Ngum.</i>
Ms. Phonemaly Inthaphome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Clear zoning is important.</i> ▪ <i>We should also control the heights of buildings.</i>

APPENDIX B:

2010 Master Plan Review

B

Summary and Comment

The Van Vieng Town and Environs Masterplan 2010-2020 was prepared by Hansen Partnership in 2009 on behalf of the (then) Lao National tourism Association (LNTA) and funded via ADB's GMS Sustainable Tourism Development Project Grant. The project was undertaken by an International Team together with a supporting group of National and District Government Officials assisted by local administration support from the Vang Vieng Urban Management Authority (UMA). The team conducted fieldwork and consultations in June-July 2009 and final reporting delivered to LNTA in December 2009. The process of undertaking the masterplan was underpinned by 4 key stages as follows.

Stage 1: Understanding the Issues,

Stage 2: Identifying Future Directions,

Stage 3: Planning for future development within the Functional Elements of the Town, and

Stage 4: Implementation, Monitoring and Review of the Master Plan.

The key outputs of the Process were a:

1. Master Plan for Vang Vieng Town and Environs
2. Management and Monitoring Tool Kit
3. Evaluation Report in the Training Program and Stakeholder Consultation Workshops in Vang Vieng

The Master Plan for Vang Vieng Town and Environs addressed a study area of around 2,400ha comprising both the urban core of Vang Vieng, a northern growth area and substantial scenic landscape surroundings flanking the Nam Song River. The Masterplan was adopted by relevant Lao PDR government departments and serves as the overarching strategic directions basis for development within the defined study area. The masterplan is distinctive in the context of the Lao PDR planning regime given its attributes as a:

- Strategic planning and design document setting out the basis and rationale for key directions.
- Process derived document underpinned by multidisciplinary international and national inputs.
- Integrated approach to urban and tourism development and management.
- Growth strategy underpinned by demand derived forecasting and related spatial scenarios.
- Project informed by community and stakeholder engagement and government department inputs.

The masterplan identified a Vision Statement as follows:

In 2020 Vang Vieng will be a diverse tourist destination offering experiences in adventure and recreation pursuits, as well as an appreciation of the area's natural and cultural heritage by international and domestic visitors and the community who live and work in the town and its environs.

Located in a beautiful landscape of karst limestone mountains, sandstone ridges, and rich farmland, the town will promote its image of clean, green and safe living. Growth will be accommodated within the existing urban core and in the developing new areas to the north and east.

Vang Vieng will reinforce its role as a thriving trade and service centre meeting the varied needs of the residential community and tourists. The town and its environs will develop in a sustainable and integrated manner, celebrating its past, enhancing its town character and responsibly managing its future.

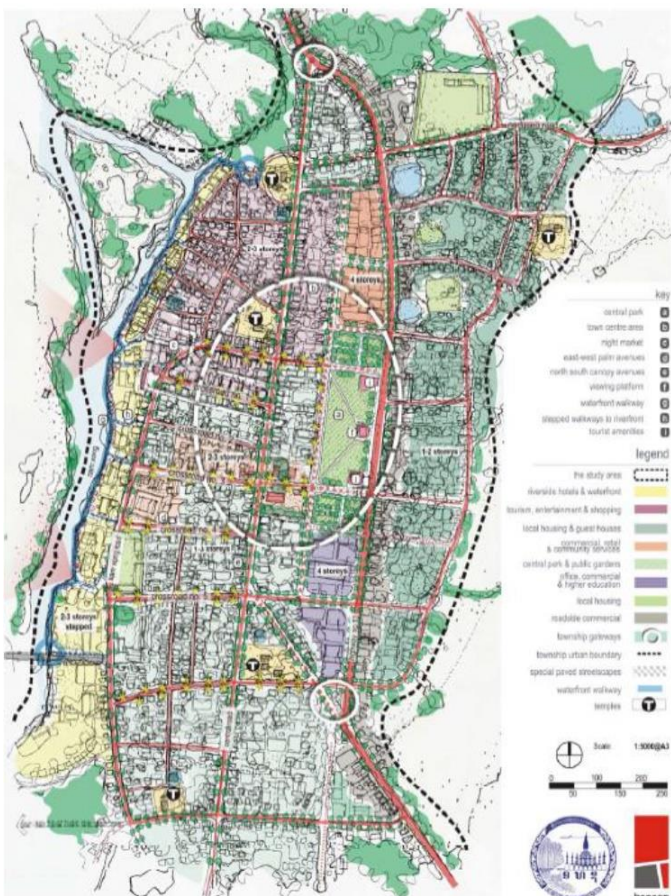
and 4 underpinning principles:

- **Town Character:** Vang Vieng and Environs will be a green, clean, safe and welcoming town.
- **Urban Growth:** Vang Vieng and Environs will develop in an integrated and sustainable manner.
- **Environment:** Vang Vieng and Environs will conserve, protect and enhance its landscapes.
- **Tourism:** Vang Vieng and Environs will develop as a diverse tourism destination

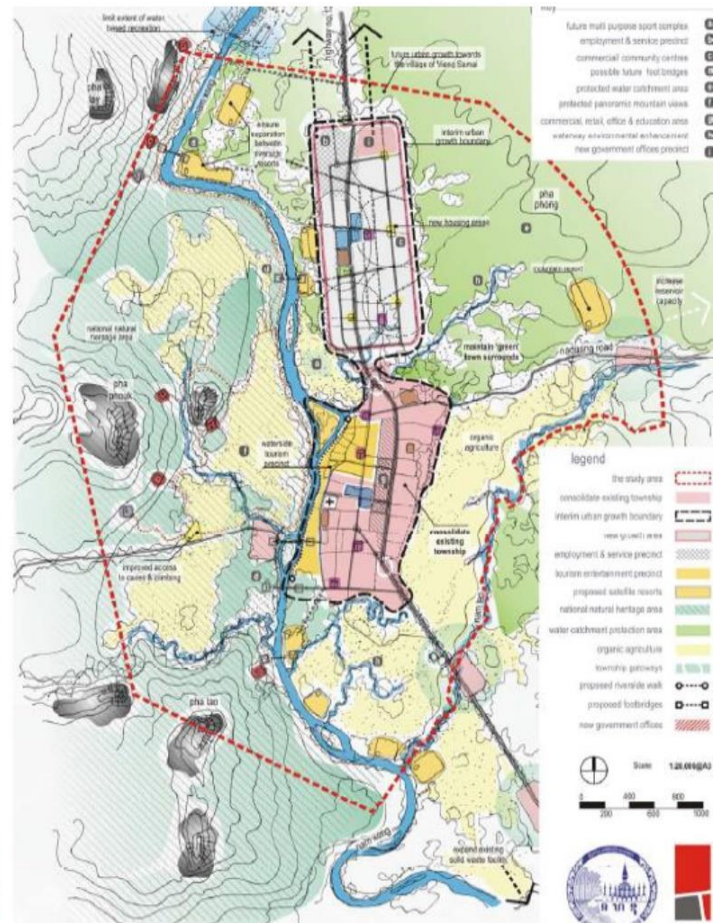
The Masterplan is different to that typically prepared by National Government Departments (Ministry of Public Works and Transport) which normally serve as regulatory spatial plans with associated Land Use Zone, Infrastructure and related Services provision. Indeed, the Masterplan (post adoption) was effectively translated by MPWT into a further Regulatory Urban Masterplan (2010) comprising a wider study area of some 4062ha. The 2010 Masterplan has been widely used as the Statutory instrument for control and management of growth in Vang Vieng since – it includes some 24 Maps and Diagrams that broadly align with the overarching Strategic Document. Based on our inspection of contemporary documents and mission one engagement with relevant stakeholders, we make the following comment:

- The conduct and process of completion of the 2010 masterplan is reliable as a replicable methodology for preparation of an urban vision to be adopted by government and as a basis for urban management. The conduct of fieldwork, community and stakeholder engagement, concept development and plan adoption are well regarded. Involvement of the then Vang Vieng Urban Management Authority (UMA) and other national inputs throughout is appropriate.
- The construct of the 2010 masterplan ‘inputs’, notably recording of infrastructure (soft and hard), the environment (natural and built) and the economy (urban and tourism) is an appropriate approach and one that is consistent with the Lao regulatory regime. It enables an integrated understanding of different urban and tourism functions within the precinct.
- The definition in the 2010 masterplan of an urban development growth scenario of 4.5% (Scenario 2) with a forecast land budget of approximately 32.3ha and approximately 480,000 visitors to 2020 is generally appropriate, however it has not been exceeded and is demonstrated to have been over ambitious. There is a need for any future planning to be judicious with respect to forecasting.
- The engagement processes undertaken and during the 2010 masterplan were well attended and recorded, with findings influencing the final and agreed outcome. The necessary separation of local voices (community representatives) and administration (government and agencies) is helpful in empowering a range of stakeholders with influence.
- The identified (4) development principles are an important foundation for the 2010 masterplan. These are suitably broken down into some 14 Masterplan Objectives and some 35 Actions. It is widely recognized that these are enduring, however new emphases in climate change and urban resilience, investment management and development control must be strengthened. This represents an opportunity for the masterplan update, with a new focus on resilience and development control in outlying areas.
- The overarching strategic concept of control and containment of urban and tourism development within Vang Vieng is agreed and has been introduced in to the 2010 regulatory regime. The conscious definition of a township boundary and a contained urban growth direction which to find a northern growth cell (as distinct from the existing Consolidated township) has been manifested in the last decade. Landscape protection of the surrounding mountain ranges is also highly regarded. Notably, some disparate tourism development projects have emerged on the west side of the Nam Song River, and to the south in areas previously recognized for protection.
- Fundamental and critical changes are noted in relation to regional accessibility, with the introduction of the Vientiane to Vang Vieng Expressway and the recently completed China – Lao railway line – with the new Vang Vieng station located to the north-east. These fundamental shifts in the townships (and regions) accessibility framework have significant bearing on the approach to and accessibility across the township.
- Despite major infrastructure investment and the introduction of select hotel and administrative development broadly within the urban boundary, limited other substantive change is evident in Vang Vieng today. Regrettably, there has been limited if any upgrade to public services and facilities and evidence of some development that has exceeded the development control regime (i.e. building heights) identified in 2010. This is a repercussion of limitations to masterplan implementation and development management.

- Given the 2010 masterplan has been effectively translated by MPWT into a further Regulatory Urban Masterplan (2010), the critical issue of concern is the capacity for the urban land manager to effectively manage and\all control investment propositions. There is evidence of investment initiatives that breach the locational and height parameters identified in both the strategic and statutory 2010 masterplan is. Implementation and policing of the masterplan therefore represents a critical constraint and an important ambition for the forthcoming project.
- Chapter 10 of the 2010 Masterplan includes a detailed approach to implementation of the masterplan (design guidelines and planning regulations, funding and management). Central to this concept was the establishment of the Vang Vieng masterplan coordination committee – a dedicated group with the responsibility to oversee implementation of both public and private initiatives. This has not been enacted.
- The 2010 Masterplan also highlighted a suite of important public realm improvements, including riverfront walkways, safety and amenity treatments and other public infrastructure to support enhanced resident and visitor experience. Limited if any such investments have been realised, however MICT have advanced a design for an improved streetscape condition. As yet unfunded). The commitment of suitable financial resources and skills (design, management, implementation) is imperative for the ongoing implementation of a masterplan.



Urban Core Master Plan Concept



Concept for Area surrounding urban core

Checklist of Proposed Actions

A **checklist** established within the 2010 masterplan set out the relative steps for implementation of the 35 identified actions, across the themes of Town Character, Urban Growth, Environment and Tourism. This demonstrates that some 10 actions (of 35) have been progressed (mainly partially) – with an outline of the rationale or understanding of such. Clearly, a focus of the forthcoming plan will be on instructive actions and small steps to enable its implementation over time.

Town Character Objectives and Actions	Progress	Explanation
Objective 1 – Promote Vang Vieng as a clean, green, safe and friendly town		
<i>TC1: Develop a network of 'Green Streets' by planting trees on all streets within urban areas and improving street lighting and footpaths.</i>	+ designed by Ramboll MICT	Awaiting Asian Development Bank (ADB) Funding to implement.
<i>TC2: Establish the Nam Xong River walkway (Stage 1 = 900m adjacent to river) commencing at a north point adjacent to Don Khang Island and extending south just beyond the main bridge connecting the town to Houyhnae Village with several east-west connecting points off Kam Song Road.</i>	- Not Achieved	Private development has encroached close to the riverbank (largely eastern side). Hotel encroachment on riverbanks on eastern side precludes development of a walkway. It is possible to construct a walkway on the western side only. A riverside enhancement and development concept plan is under preparation but still in draft form
<i>TC3: Establish attractive landscape and/or built form elements at the Inner Township and Outer Township 'Gateways' to Vang Vieng.</i>	- Not Achieved	While not achieved, remnant archway to south remains, and new Toll Booth Gate from the expressway serves as a new southern entry.
<i>TC4: Continue and complete drainage improvements program within the established Urban Core and install adequate drainage systems in newly developing areas to the north and east.</i>	- Not Achieved	No substantial change in trunk infrastructure.
<i>TC5: Improve all directional and tourist signage based on a Town logo and colour scheme which is applied in all aspects of town identification and marketing.</i>	+ Partly Achieved	Some additional private sector signage and branding, but none are notable for consistent public wayfinding. A tourist sign system is emerging although it is insufficient – signs lacking in detail and not enough signs in key places to direct visitors around the town and outlying areas. Limited resources of the UDA and possibly skills related to the design, installation and management of a sign network
<i>TC6: Establish a new Central Park with viewing platform on the old airstrip land and public amenities as a community space for recreation, ceremonies, festivals and other important gatherings.</i>	- Not Achieved	Land tenure issue, however, a lapsed MOU for development of the land is in place. This initiative in dire need given condition of the land.
Objective 2 – Manage new development in a sustainable and integrated manner		
<i>TC7: Amend the current construction regulations to ensure the incorporation of sustainability measures in all new development (private and public sector development) including solar panels, water tanks to collect rainwater for use in gardens and landscaped areas, household, and business recycling programs (paper, glass, plastic, aluminium, second hand timber).</i>	- Not Achieved	No known changes to the development regulatory regime, however the 2010 Masterplan has been implemented via the standard legislative regime. The key issue for management is Implementation.
Objective 3 – Retain and celebrate the traditions, customs and culture of the town and the surrounding villages.		
<i>TC8: Establish a yearly calendar of festivals and celebrations of traditional Lao culture, update annually and promote these activities to the wider community and tourists planning to visit Vang Vieng Town.</i>	- Partly Achieved	No place management or event coordination in place, however Vang Vieng remains a popular destination for events and seasonal festivals

Urban Growth Objectives and Actions	Progress	Explanation
Objective 1 – Contain and consolidate the town within the established Urban Core and new Urban Growth Area as defined by the Urban Growth Boundary for the town with potential, in the longer term (beyond 2020), to continue urban development further north towards the village of Vieng Samai.		
UG1: Establish a clear Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) around the Town to accommodate growth and development to the year 2020 and encourage new urban development within the identified precincts contained within the UGB.	- Not Achieved	No formal regulations applied – however growth is generally contained within this area.
UG4: Develop the old airstrip land to either side of the proposed Central Park as an office, commercial/business and higher education precinct based on an approved concept plan and include within this area a modern Tourist Information Centre	- Not Achieved	MOU for development in place.
UG6: Prepare and implement an appropriate growth area neighbourhood development model for the newly developing urban areas to the north and east of the Urban Core which incorporates land for new schools, medical centres and other community based facilities.	- Not Achieved	Somewhat ad-hoc urban development to the north in line with existing patterns.
Objective 2 – Facilitate orderly development accompanied by the provision of urban infrastructure and social services and facilities required by the community		
UG2: Upgrade and improve existing solid waste landfill facility to meet appropriate environmental standards and establish a low tech transfer station facility for recycling of waste within the 10 hectares of land set aside for solid waste disposal. Purchase another one, or possibly two garbage trucks to meet current and future needs. Instigate a waste recycling program for paper, glass, aluminium and second hand timber and administer at the village level for all households and businesses. Gradually introduce a 'no plastic bags' policy in all commercial businesses.	- Partly Achieved with the support of MICT	Formal landfill facility expanded to the south of Vang Vieng, with complementary vehicles for collection of septic waste.
UG3: Improve capacity of the existing water reservoir to meet current and future water needs of the community.	- Not Achieved	Township relies on private water provision.
UG7: Provide a well-designed multi-purpose sports and recreation facility for badminton, volleyball, football, tennis etc on the low lying flat land immediately north of Don Khang Island.	- Not Achieved	Land Tenure Issues and Funding.
UG8: Commence planning for the installation of a reticulated wastewater treatment plant (which is likely to be located to the south/ south-east of the Urban Core) and seek funding to construct this much needed facility on a staged basis as the town develops and expands.	- Not Achieved (See above on septic management)	This is a high priority measure and next in line following hard waste infrastructure. Resources/Funding limitations will constrain delivery
Objective 3- Improve the service, trade and production sectors to meet local and district needs.		
UG5: Establish a new Employment and Service Industry Precinct and a new Government Offices Precinct in the northern part of the Urban Expansion Area and provide safe road access to and from Highway No.13 to these new employment and government office areas.	- Not Achieved	Availability of resources and Government capacity

Environment Objectives and Actions	Progress	Explanation
Objective 1 – Protect the natural landscape setting of the town which includes the limestone karst mountains to the west, the Nam Xong River, the agricultural land, and the sandstone ridges to the east.		
<i>E2: Enforce existing regulations and introduce new regulations, where appropriate, to contain and control the riverside entertainment and water based recreational activities north of the proposed pedestrian bridge (between Tam Lom and Tam None).</i>	+ Partly Achieved by District Authority	Enforcement and policing of riverside entertainment has altered mix of services and facilities on the river. New issues emerging on water passage and safe access.
<i>E3: Undertake the necessary technical investigations into the natural and scenic values of the limestone karst mountains and the Nam Xong River to the west of the town and, based on these findings consider nominating these environmental features for appropriate conservation and protection under the Lao PDR Law on National Heritage.</i>	- Not Achieved	This requires further investigation to confirm. We understand that the Lao PDR Law on National Heritage is under review and revisions may enable the inclusion of sites such as Vang Vieng and Surrounds.
<i>E7: Protect and improve the health of Nam Xong River and other tributaries within the master plan area.</i>	- Not Achieved	No recognisable pollution control and/or monitoring in place. Informal river access, informal wastewater disposal and plastic waste remains.
<i>E8: Retain agricultural land (flood prone) to the north of Don Khang Island until such time as it is developed (in part) as a major multi-purpose recreational facility surrounded by farming.</i>	- Not Achieved	Requires PPP or MOU
<i>E11: Surround the town with organic agriculture activities compatible with the area’s natural setting.</i>	- Not Achieved	Agricultural activities continue around Vang Vieng however these are under threat due to both climate threats and impending tourism development ambitions.
Objective 2 – Conserve and protect panoramic and corridor views of the surrounding natural landscape.		
<i>E1: Introduce Design Guidelines and Building Height Controls for new development.</i>	- Not Achieved	Availability of resources and Government capacity
Objective 3 – Improve air and water quality and reduce noise pollution levels.		
<i>E5: Enforce existing regulations and, where appropriate, amend these regulations in respect to developments creating air, waste and noise pollution problems.</i>	- Not Achieved	Availability of resources and Government capacity
Objective 4 – Identify, conserve and protect sites of cultural heritage and environmental significance		
<i>E6: Identify places of cultural heritage importance within and around the Town and ensure adequate legal protection of these places e.g. Town graveyard, old village well at corner of Central Road and Crossroad No. 3 etc.</i>	+ Partly Achieved	The adoption of the 2010 Masterplan and its introduction into District Planning Regulation confirms places of significance – both MICT and Heritage Department to confirm
<i>E9: Establish network of walking trails to caves and other places of natural and cultural significance.</i>	+ Partly Achieved	Signage, monitoring and access trails to some outlying attractions in place, however these are incomplete and difficult to navigate.
<i>E10: Ensure sensitive design around cave environs in terms of signage and other structures.</i>	- Not Achieved	Mountains, caves and other sensitive sites have structures often attached to or embedded, thereby eroding values.
Objective 5 – Identify, conserve and protect the biodiversity values of the area.		
<i>E4: Undertake the necessary technical investigations to identify the biodiversity values of the area and, apply the appropriate laws and regulations to protect these values.</i>	- Not Achieved.	Availability of resources and Government capacity.

Tourism Objectives and Actions	Progress	Explanation
Objective 1 – Strengthen the role and functions of the Town and its environs as a popular tourist destination.		
<i>T1: Consolidate a special tourism entertainment precinct within the northern area of the Urban Core and undertake various public works improvements enhancing the appearance and amenity of this precinct.</i>	- Not Achieved	Limited resources and potentially stakeholder buy-in. Further explanation of public design and development concepts may be required.
<i>T5: Establish a tourism training and education precinct in the southern portion of the old airstrip land which aims to improve the standard of services in hospitality, food and beverage sector as well as other tourist related activities.</i>	+ Partly Achieved	Partly achieved but not as a precinct. A tourism hospitality training facility has been built and operating south of the main hotel precinct on Kam Xong Road, supported by LuxDev Tourism Skills.
<i>T6: Construct three new bridges across the Nam Xong River providing safe, easy and free access between the Urban Core and tourist attractions and villages to the west.</i>	+ Partly Achieved	2 bridges (one still under construction). Partly completed. New bridge under construction beside T Mark Resort, south of hotel precinct to replace old bridge nearby (beside Riverside Boutique Resort). ‘Orange Bridge’ constructed within last decade at northern end of town, near junction with road to Angel Cave.
Objective 2 – Diversify the types of attractions, experiences and accommodation offered to international and domestic tourists to the town.		
<i>T2: Operate a night bazaar/market in Crossroad No. 1 at specified times and eventually extend this activity into Kam Xong Road.</i>	+ Partly Achieved	A night market (Thurs-Sat) on walking streets is in place and has operated itinerantly, displaying local goods and products
<i>T8: Improve Nduang Road connecting visitors to the Keang Nyui Waterfall at Ban Duong.</i>	+ Partly Achieved (Project underway)	This project is underway and due for completion in 2023, funded through ADB TIIGP2 Project.
Objective 3 – Consolidate existing tourist accommodation and entertainment activities into well-defined, contained and responsibly managed tourist precincts.		
<i>T3: Consolidate and contain the riverside hotel precinct on the eastern side of the Nam Xong River within the parameters of no more than 3 storeys in height with landscaped setbacks to the Nam Xong River frontage.</i>	+ Partly Achieved	Part achievement although 3 – 4 riverside hotels exceed building height guidelines. Most hotel properties located within 10 metres of riverside. Potential inundation likely due to climate change. Lack of enforcement / compliance with guidelines.
<i>T4: Direct well designed new guesthouse development to the established guesthouse and residential area south of the Town’s commercial area.</i>	- Not Achieved	No evidence that this has occurred. Concept may not be fully understood by UDA and Guesthouse owners/investors.
<i>T7: Encourage well designed satellite eco-resort nodes outside the Vang Vieng Urban Core with farmland separating those nodes and the provision of appropriate local road access.</i>	+ Partly Achieved?	Growth occurring organically. Small clusters of accommodation, activities and food services located at Blue Lagoons 1 – 5. Vieng Ang Savanh Resort developed towards end of western loop road.

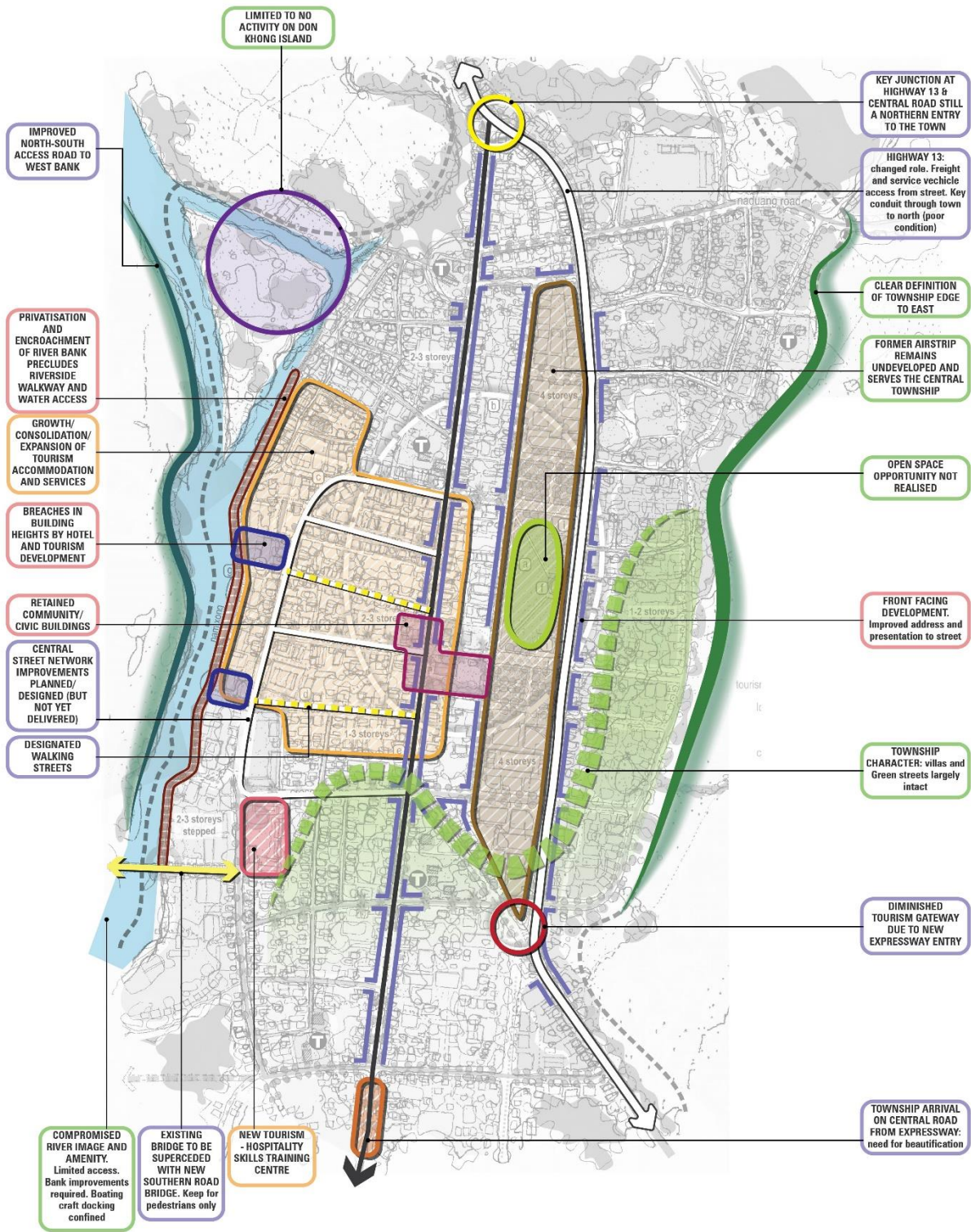
Opportunities and Constraints

The following opportunities and constraints analysis of the key figures within 2010 masterplan is provided to enable an understanding of the relevant shifts that have occurred (principally within the field of approved or constructed urban development, landscape impacts and/or soft and hard infrastructure) in the intervening period. These are illustrated below as annotated responses above the former Master Plan and listed (in no particular order).

Urban Core Area Master Plan

- The new Vientiane Expressway has changed the role and function of the Route 13 Highway (heavy vehicles).
- The junction of Highway 13 and Central Road to the north of the core town remains a township Gateway.
- The Southern entrance to town along Route 13 Highway is diminished in terms of its importance and profile.
- The new Vang Vieng Expressway turnoff (junction) is a significant point of demarcation in the town.
- A new road bridge across the Nam Song River west is under construction and will shift movement patterns.
- Despite the intention for walking streets within the central core area grid, these are yet to be established on a permanent basis (evening walking streets and markets in place).
- The Nam Song River waterfront (East Bank) is appropriated by private hotel frontages, limiting the capacity for a continuous public walkway.
- A series of new buildings overlooking the Nam Song River now exceed the designated building height limits identified in the earlier masterplan.
- An improved paved roadway on the Western bank of the Nam Song River assists in servicing low order tourism development.
- Older civic building's including the tourism office and community hall remain intact on Central Road.
- The former air strip remains undeveloped and is a blight on the township's presentation, with informal commercial trade, Highway side activities and bus parking occupying the land.
- The southern and eastern portions of the township remain intact as an attractive neighbourhood with green streets and detached dwellings and villas supporting a local population.
- The town's boundary to the east is well defined by low lying agricultural land, with aspect to rising eastern hills.
- A new tourism and hospitality training facility has been established within the town grid.
- Limited tourism activity is present on Saysong Island, with changes in the nature of water recreation activities – tubing, making way for passive kayaking and other boating recreation.
- Consolidation and improvement of tourism services and facilities (including hotels and conference facilities in the central grid in a concentrated area), with a proliferation of guesthouses, leisure and entertainment activities.
- The condition of the Nam Song River is variable with considerable issues including water quality, proliferation of rubbish and erosion as a result of informal access to the water's edge.
- Flooding and inundation of the Nam Song River in recent years occurs principally to the west leading to the base of the limestone mountains.

VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Vang Vieng Town & Environs Township Masterplan 2022-2032
Urban Core Issues and Opportunities

Legend

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Urban Area | Building frontage | Northern gateway | 1 URBAN GROWTH | 4 TOURISM INITIATIVES |
| 2020 Built form | Central street network | Bridge | 2 LANDSCAPE PROTECTION | |
| Main road | Designated walking streets | Expansion of tourism | 3 ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY | |
| Secondary road | Former air strip | | | |

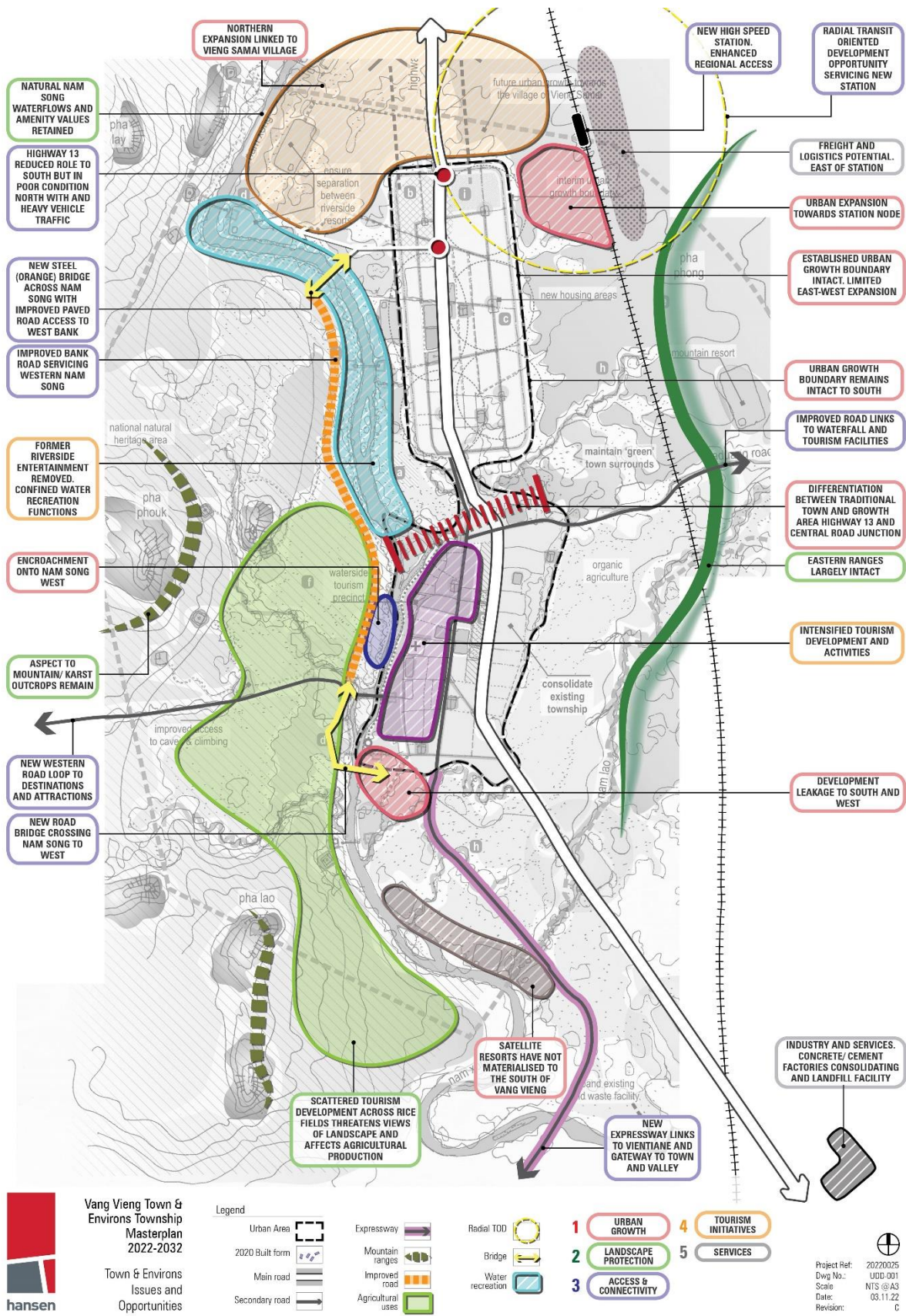
Project Ref: 20220025
Dwg No.: UDC-001
Scale: NTS @ A3
Date: 03.11.22
Revision: C

Urban Core Area Issues and Opportunities (November 2022)

Town and Environs Master Plan

- The arrival in Vang Vieng from Vientiane by Expressway has changed substantially – road users now arrive via a southern mountain cutting with aspect across the wider Nam Song Valley. A future extension to Luang Prabang is likely to be aligned to the east parallel to the railway line.
- Urban growth is somewhat limited to the north in the clusters (either side of the Route 13 Highway) leading to Vieng Samsai and Pakpo village.
- Limited urban growth has occurred to the east and west of the Route 13 Highway, beyond its immediate frontage, with the exception of civic buildings and the emerging China Laos railway precinct.
- A suite of new hotel, resort and like development projects are manifested to the south of the core town and enjoy an aspect across the Nam Song River, with aspect to the western mountains.
- The establishment of the new high speed railway alignment to the east of Vang Vieng, with a new Vang Vieng station located to the north-east, has a significant bearing on access to and from the township.
- New and improved road infrastructure has been advanced to the Western Valley, comprising a loop road facilitating access to a suite of natural attractions and destinations outside Vang Vieng.
- An eastern improved access is advanced to Nadouang Village and the Kaeng Yui Waterfall precinct.
- Scattered tourism development has occurred on the western side of the Nam Song River, including bungalows abutting the Western bank and other freestanding low-profile accommodation on and around the floodplain.
- The limestone Karst mountains to the west of Vang Vieng remain the strongest landscape feature.
- Improved bridge access across the Nam Song River to the north provides the opportunity for improved servicing and utilization of the wider landscape.
- The new China Laos Railway Station has a designated area of urban development to its west, which is understood to support new mixed-use functions – with the opportunity for freight and logistics to the east.
- The topographical conditions of the township, including the minor gully the northern fringe of the old township remains a point of differentiation between old and new Vang Vieng.
- Much of the entertainment and leisure services and facilities that fringed the Nam Song River to the north of the township have ceased – with recreation serviced from within the township.
- New recreation and leisure offerings, including hot air ballooning, buggy driving, other light aircraft adventure and hiking tend to be based outside of the township.

VANG VIENG TOWN AND ENVIRONS TOURISM MASTER PLAN (2023-2033) UPDATE



Town and Environs Issues and Opportunities (November 2022)