



MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

RESPONSE TO HON. SULIANO MATANITOBUA

**Parliament
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS**

**Tuesday, 17 August 2021
Question 163/2021**

Written Question

Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua to ask the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister update Parliament on the development of Navua Township?

Mr. Speaker I thank the Honourable member for the Written Question.

In this regard, I submit herein, my response.

The declaration of Navua as a “Town” has been a fundamental agenda of the Fijian Government in considering the growth of developments around the area.

The shift towards township comes with a number of benefits. Apart from encouraging infrastructural development, business investment and population growth in the satellite town, it provides an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of thousands of Fijians.

By establishing townships, we incentivise private developers, unlock land value around the area and provide growth opportunities which in turn create positive value

propositions and potential growth to the Fijian economy in its entirety.

The Local Government Committee, appointed by the Ministry of Local Government as per the Local Government Act 1972 (Act), has been tasked to work with the relevant stakeholders in completing the due process, prior to declaring the Navua District a Town in accordance with the Act.

Sections 5 and 7 of the Local Government Act clearly outline the process to be carried out in the declaration of towns and cities. It is worth noting, that the Local Government Committee has completed the necessary processes, as required by law.

This process includes consultation with relevant stakeholders and the preparation of the Navua Town boundary and legal description. The legal description of the Navua District boundary was gazetted on 18 September 2015. The Committee has also completed the proclamation plan and the advertisement of the proposed town boundaries in the local newspaper.

Before an area is declared a Town, it is important that the district has in place the appropriate infrastructure. As such, Navua needs to upgrade its infrastructure and/or construct infrastructure within its Business Centre Areas.

The Ministry of Local Government (Ministry) has been working with relevant stakeholders to upgrade the road conditions, footpath and streetlights, that will stimulate economic activities and financially support the administration cost.

To date, the following works have been completed:

- a) Road within the main Central Business District (CBD) has been upgraded;,,
- b) Maintenance work for the Navua market, including the stalls;
- c) Market has been newly painted;
- d) Market fence has been repaired;
- e) Waiting shed for those traveling to Beqa upgraded and painted; and

f) Public convenience has further been renovated.

The above are some of the infrastructure upgrades around Navua CBD areas that the Lami Town Council and the Ministry have been working on as preparatory works for the potential Navua Town.

It is extremely important for a Town to be economically sustainable and not be a burden public finance. Therefore, whilst the planning of Navua Town is ongoing, there is a need to thoroughly consider the factors that will assist the proposed town to be financially independent, in order to maintain and/or upgrade the developments around the town boundary.

A key change required is the relocation of the Navua Market, since the current structure is between the roadside and the Navua River. This leaves no space for any future expansions or redevelopments. However, this work is yet to commence, as the Lami Town Council needs to plan the relocation exercise. Therefore, this is a preliminary planning phase whilst the works on Advisory Plans are finalised by the Ministry.

a) Whether a Master Plan for the development of Navua Township is currently being or will be developed?

A Master plan covers a broader area in this case the master plan for Greater Suva being developed by the Singapore Enterprises Co-operation (SCE) will cover the Navua area. The Ministry does not have an approved Master Plan covering the area that is defined by the proposed Navua town boundary at present.

Advisory plan, on the other hand, is a more detailed plan which shows allocated land use and definition of each use for a particular area.

To control Development within the Navua Town Center and outskirts of the area, the Department of Town & Country Planning has in place an Advisory Plan for Navua

instead. This is a localized plan to guide development within Navua.

The Ministry of Local Government has carried out the initial phases of the processes involved in the proclamation of a Town under the Local Government Act 1972. All town boundary declarations and extensions are administered by the Ministry of Local Government by overseeing the declaration of town boundaries.

As earlier alluded, the Local Government Committee has carried out the necessary inspections and assessments of the Navua area. As a result, the Committee has recommended a proposed boundary for the district.

In 2001 the Ministry gazetted the proposed Navua town boundary, known as Proclamation Plan (PP) (507A), comprising the area around Navua Town Center and PP (507B) for areas within Pacific Harbor, Deuba.

The proposed Navua Town Boundary proclamation plans are available for public viewing at the Department of Lands. The Navua Town Boundary Plan marked as "**Annex 1**" is attached for ease of reference.

Prior to the definition of the town boundary, the Ministry in the year 2010 prepared an Advisory Plan for Navua. The areas included in the study were on both sides of the Suva-Nadi Highway including Tokotoko and Calia up to the Navua River.

The area across the river was not included, as it is mainly used for agricultural purposes and is best retained for farming. The Advisory Plan was prepared by the Ministry after an influx of development applications were received for the Navua area, particularly for the Suva-Nadi Highway before the turn-off to Navua Town Center. For ease of reference the Advisory plan for Navua marked as '**Annex 2**' is attached.

The intention of the Advisory Plan was to control development and ensure smooth transition for the benefit of the town administrators, after declaration of Township. The

preparation of an Advisory Plan is carried out with the intention to facilitate urban use that is well planned for its social, economic and environmental purpose.

While the Ministry is in the process of declaring Navua a Township, the Ministry is preparing an updated Advisory Plan for the area contained in the boundary to meet the current development needs and enable a smooth transition into a Township. There is also a need to update the Navua Town Center Plan to facilitate investors and developers who see and recognise Navua as a town with potential for growth especially, considering the proximity between the proposed Navua Town and Suva City.

The Ministry is also revising the Town Planning Act General Provisions 1999, which will be applicable to Navua. The enhanced General Provisions will provide developers more flexibility and create better returns on property investments. The new General Provisions will allow property owners to make better use of their land with reduced setbacks and better density allowances.

The updated Navua Advisory Plan will further allow for smaller lot sizes in unsewered rural areas, which will ensure the creation of more lots in new subdivisions. This will ultimately lead to reduced prices of lots; hence, making properties more affordable to the public at large.

b) How and when will the Ministry consult the people of Navua and stakeholders in the process of devising such a Master Plan?

Mr. Speaker Sir, when preparing the Town Planning Scheme Plans or Master Plans, it is mandatory to consult stakeholders, which includes property owners, and infrastructure and utility agencies provide services to the properties in a Town.

Consultations with stakeholders ensure that any grievances or recommendations are taken into consideration. This also provides an opportunity to take into account any existing policies for the benefit of everyone.

The Ministry had consulted the relevant stakeholders in the initial preparation of the Advisory Plan and intends to conduct further consultation when updating the Advisory Plan.

The appropriate agencies have been properly advised of the updated Advisory Plan and the intention of the plan. These stakeholders have been requested for their comments and recommendations on the said Plan. A meeting with the stakeholders will be held in due course to discuss a way forward and to incorporate in the updated Plan.

Considering the COVID-19 restrictions, the Ministry will conduct all stakeholder consultations virtually before finalising the updated Navua Advisory Plan.

c) Whether a Master Plan for the development of Navua Township is already in place and what is its current status.

Mr. Speaker Sir, a modern and up-to-date Master Plan is currently being formulated by the Singapore Corporation Enterprise (SCE), who has been engaged by the Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Economy, on behalf of the Fijian Government, to formulate Master Plans for the Greater Suva, Nadi and Lautoka areas. Navua is included in the Greater Suva area and forms part of the proposed Master Plan.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Greater Suva Master Plan is considered a broader policy document, which will guide the formulation of the Navua Town Planning Scheme. However, a Town Planning Scheme can only be prepared and enforced once Navua is declared a Township.

The ensuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and tropical cyclones since last year have caused considerable delays in the completion of the Master Plan by the SCE. The Plan is currently in its 4th stage, whereby 2 stages are yet to be completed. It is worth

noting that the Agreement between SCE and Ministry of Local Government & Ministry of Economy on 27 December 2018 and the works as per the Agreement commenced in 2019.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Department of Town Planning (DTCP) is currently enforcing the Navua Advisory Plan that was approved in 2010 to control developments in Navua. At the same time, the DTCP is also considering rezoning applications for the establishment of commercial and industrial businesses.

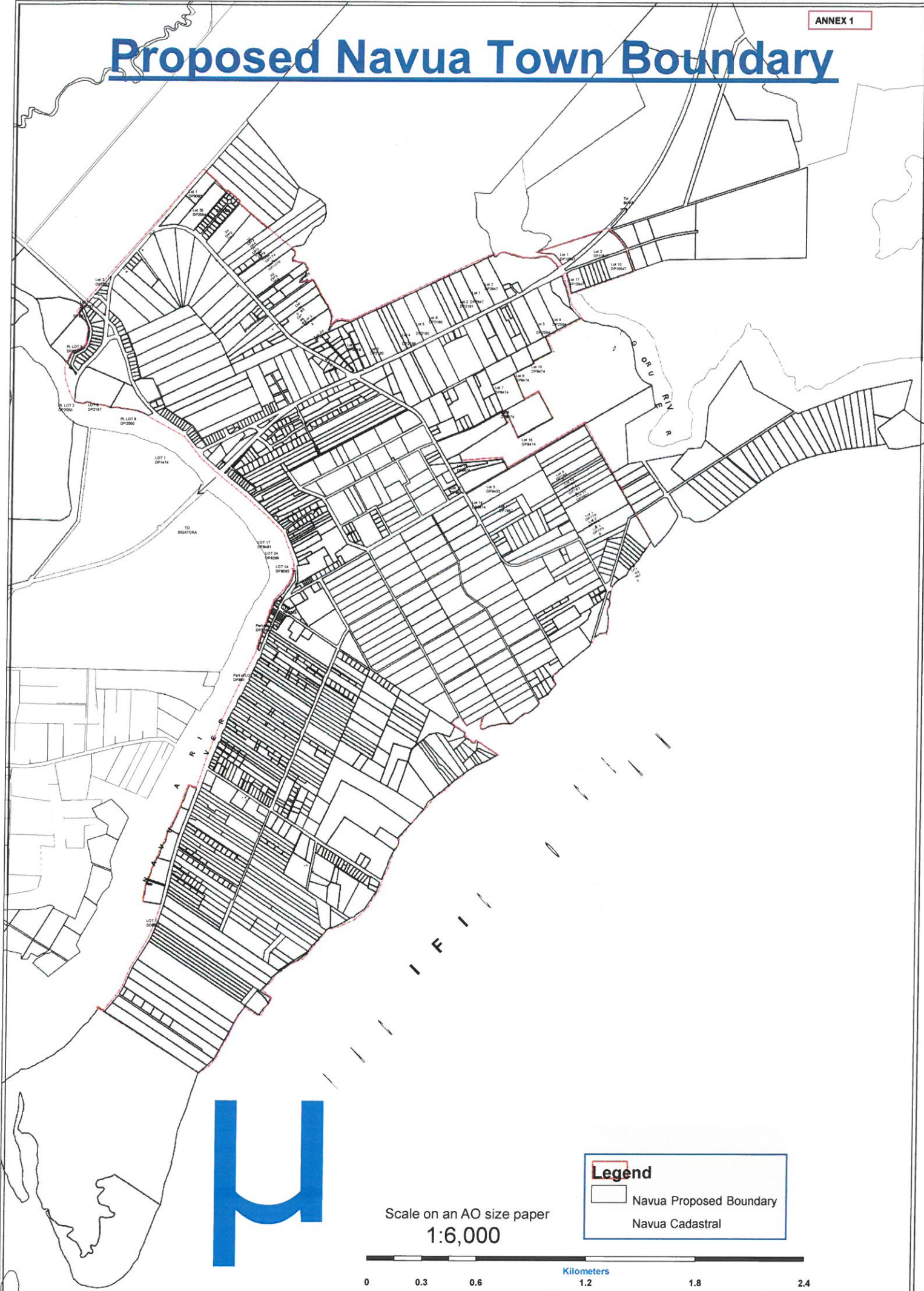
Mr. Speaker Sir, the DTCP intends to complete the revision of the Navua Advisory Plan within the next few months. This will then form the basis of the Navua Town Planning Scheme, once Navua is declared a Township.

Mr. Speaker Sir, while the Pandemic has adversely impacted the work of the Ministry, we are determined to complete pending activities as soon as practicable. In the meantime, the Ministry is carrying out the duty of managing and facilitating developments in Navua as per the Advisory Plan.

Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir.

END.

Proposed Navua Town Boundary



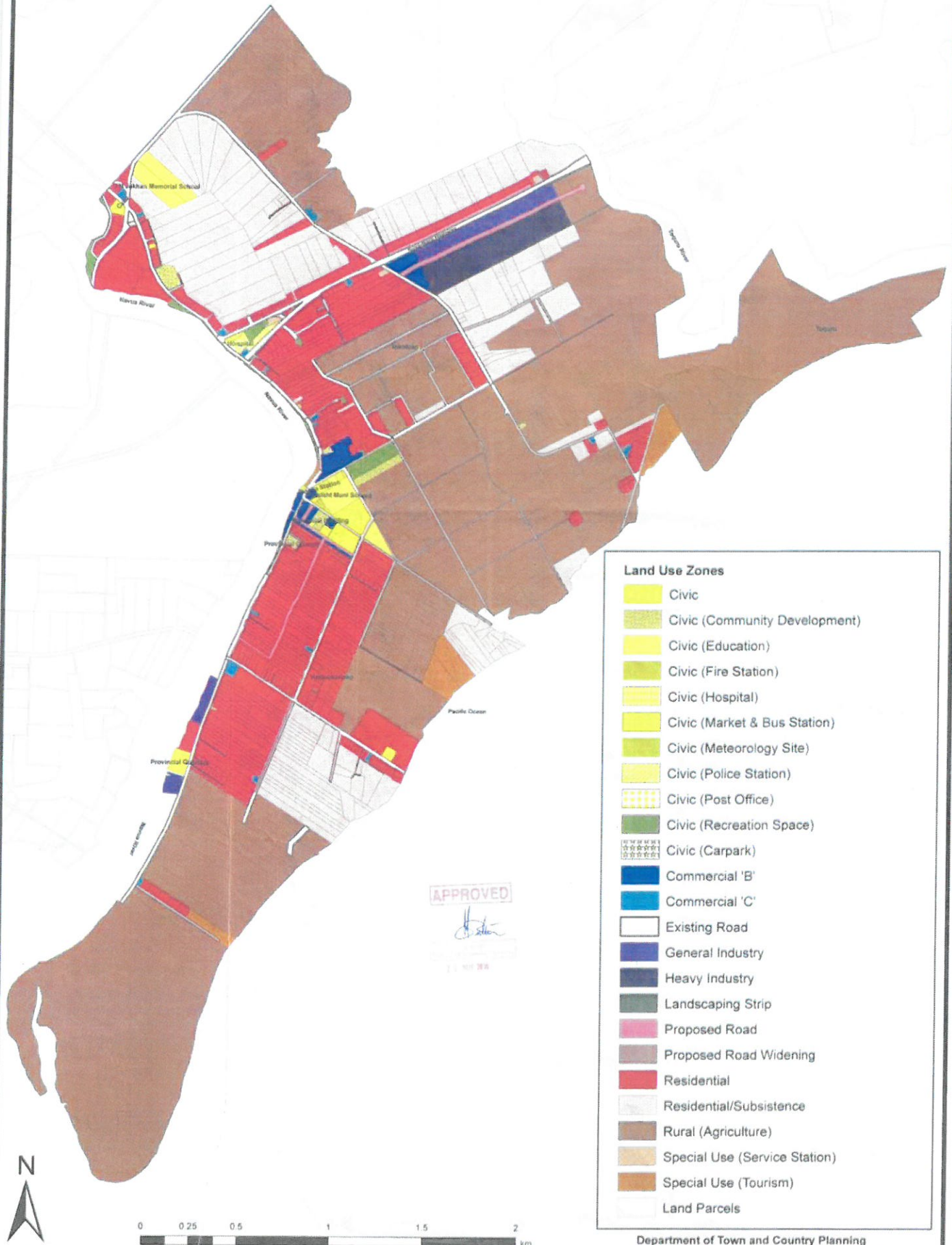
Legend

- Navua Proposed Boundary
- Navua Cadastral

Scale on an AO size paper
1:6,000



Navua Advisory Landuse Zoning Plan (2010 - 2020)



Land Use Zones

- Civic
- Civic (Community Development)
- Civic (Education)
- Civic (Fire Station)
- Civic (Hospital)
- Civic (Market & Bus Station)
- Civic (Meteorology Site)
- Civic (Police Station)
- Civic (Post Office)
- Civic (Recreation Space)
- Civic (Carpark)
- Commercial 'B'
- Commercial 'C'
- Existing Road
- General Industry
- Heavy Industry
- Landscaping Strip
- Proposed Road
- Proposed Road Widening
- Residential
- Residential/Subsistence
- Rural (Agriculture)
- Special Use (Service Station)
- Special Use (Tourism)
- Land Parcels