



Executive Summary

Department of Public Works' Village Streets Master Plan

OPA Report No. 26-02, February 2026

Our audit of the Department of Public Works' (DPW) Village Streets Master Plan (VSMP) found it has not been fully implemented and needs to be updated. Specifically, we found:

- a. Government Officials Not Aware of VSMP
- b. Road Priority Listing in the VSMP Needs to be Updated
- c. VSMP Does Not Cover Road Construction
- d. DPW and Village Mayors Lack a Unified Road Maintenance Process
- e. VSMP Lacks a Clear, Capable Funding Source

The 2009 Village Streets Master Plan (VSMP), approved by DPW in 2010, was intended to serve as its strategic roadmap to prioritize maintenance and repairs on village streets and ensure that taxpayer funds are used effectively to keep roads safe and accessible. However, we found that the VSMP has not been fully implemented for village street maintenance and has remained largely unchanged since it was developed in 2009. Although DPW continues to perform roadwork island-wide, the VSMP is not embedded in current planning, prioritization, or funding decisions. As a result, road maintenance activities are not consistently aligned with the plan's documented priorities. While some villages have addressed severely deteriorated streets, the absence of a consistent, preventive-maintenance approach has allowed minor defects to escalate into major failures. Small potholes, when left unaddressed, expand and eventually require full recutting and repaving, resulting in significantly higher repair costs. Without an updated and actively used VSMP with a designated funding source, DPW and the mayors lack a shared framework for prioritizing work, evaluating road conditions, and coordinating improvements across villages.

Government Officials Not Aware of VSMP

During our entrance conference, the DPW Director expressed uncertainty about the existence of the 2009 VSMP and stated that DPW carries out its road projects in conjunction with the mayors. However, interviews with four village mayors further demonstrated the lack of awareness and use of the VSMP. Three of the four mayors had never seen the 2009 plan and learned of it only when asked during our fieldwork. Our discussions with the Mayor's Council of Guam (MCOG) confirmed that no formal mechanism exists to regularly engage mayors in reviewing or updating road-priority needs. Instead, DPW periodically requests road lists from individual villages, without a standardized or collaborative framework. With the VSMP intending to serve as the plan to prioritize village street improvements, leadership's lack of awareness indicates the VSMP is not utilized or considered in current agency planning.

Given the constant cycle of new leadership in the MCOG and the lack of an institutionalized process to orient the plan to incoming mayors, awareness of the VSMP has diminished over time. Without formal integration into agency operations, the VSMP remains fairly unknown and unused by key stakeholders more than fifteen years after its publication.

Road Priority Listing in the VSMP Needs to be Updated

Since the village mayors weren't familiar with the VSMP, OPA showed copies of their respective village priority list to the President of the MCOG and provided copies to mayors interviewed for the audit. Upon their review, they noted that many of the listed priorities for their respective villages were outdated and described the current VSMP as obsolete in practice.

When the plan was first published, it stated that many of the existing roadways had deteriorated beyond general maintenance issues. We noted that 1,782 of 3,024 village roads (roughly 59 percent) listed in the plan were not assigned a priority grade, and the remaining grades likely no longer reflect current road conditions more than fifteen years later.

Mayors also noted inconsistencies in how the plan was applied, noting that work had been completed on some lower-priority or ungraded roads while higher-priority areas remained unattended. This is contrary to the VSMP, as it was intended to be a methodology to prioritize certain projects to make the best use of available funding.

Additionally, while DPW reported that no new roads have been constructed, mayors explained that land development and housing growth have resulted in roads being renamed and extended. In some cases, previously unpaved dirt or cascado (gravel) roads were later paved. These changes may have altered the road network over time, but are not reflected in the VSMP listings or DPW records. Because the VSMP has not been updated to reflect these modifications, its road inventory and priority listing no longer accurately represent current village conditions or needs.

VSMP Does Not Cover Road Construction

The VSMP primarily serves as a maintenance and improvement plan designed to prioritize repairs on existing village streets when funding is available. It lacks clear provisions for planning or constructing new infrastructure in areas without established roads. As such, the VSMP focuses on preserving existing infrastructure. The closest relevant category within the plan was "paving", which groups various work types, such as signing, drainage, and other appurtenances associated with a paving project for an unpaved road. Roads that were designated with this work type are assumed to have no infrastructure. However, the plan does not distinguish whether this category constitutes construction. The unclear distinction between what constitutes "maintenance" versus "construction" may complicate project planning and prioritization.

DPW and Village Mayors Lack a Unified Road Maintenance Process

While 5 GCA Chapter 40 outlines the mayor's responsibilities, including performing general minor repair and maintenance work, the practical application of these duties often extends beyond what the law prescribes. In practice, many mayors have assumed responsibility for tasks that should fall under DPW's purview (such as pothole patching, grass cutting, and installation of speed humps and signage), sometimes using village operational funds to address immediate needs. Typically, mayors initiate contact with DPW to request assistance for repairs, particularly on secondary and tertiary roads. Due to limited assistance from DPW, mayors sometimes need to allocate their operational funds to address road maintenance needs. The manner in which DPW responds to these requests is inconsistent and lacks a coordinated, standardized process with village leadership, contributing to road maintenance that is largely reactive rather than preventive.

VSMP Lacks a Clear, Capable Funding Source

While DPW has access to multiple funds for road-related projects, the VSMP itself lacks a dedicated and reliable funding source. Funding decisions for VSMP projects appear to rest largely at the agency's discretion. Originally, the VSMP was intended to help GovGuam to secure public grants, loans, and/or bonds to fund village street improvements. However, according to DPW, they have not received any. Per VSMP, \$2 million of Guam Liquid Fuel Tax revenue was to be allocated for village street improvements per year and distributed proportionately based on village needs. This amount falls far short of the estimated \$746 million total cost of projects identified in the 2009 VSMP, meaning it would take over 373 years to fund the plan fully at that rate. This disparity demonstrates that the funding level has not been sufficient to implement the plan as designed.

Between FY 2019 and FY 2025, about \$43.2 million was spent from the General Fund, GHF, and ARPA funds on highway and village street projects. Of this, an estimated \$7.7 million (about 18%) supported village street-related expenses, a little over \$1 million on average annually. This spending pattern highlights a stronger capability and prioritization toward highway and federally funded road projects compared to village street projects. Based on DPW's own assessment, consistent implementation of road maintenance activities for village streets would require an estimated \$9 to 10 million a year in funding.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Several factors have contributed to the VSMP's limited use and effectiveness. As the approved planning framework for prioritizing village street improvements, the VSMP was intended to guide DPW's scheduling, coordination, and resource allocation. However, many government officials, including DPW leadership and village mayors, were unaware of the plan or believed it had been superseded by other transportation documents, which our review determined none have formally replaced or updated the VSMP as the roadmap for village streets. The road priority list within the VSMP is significantly outdated, with many streets renamed, newly opened, or ungraded, and with no mechanism to revise priorities as village needs evolve. Without periodic updates, the plan's inventory and ranking system no longer reflect current conditions, limiting its usefulness as a decision-making tool.

Additionally, DPW and village mayors also lack a unified road maintenance process. With no clearly defined SOP existing to govern how DPW and mayors coordinate road work, the process results in inconsistent service levels and inefficient use of limited resources. The plan also does not include guidance for road construction, leaving residents in certain areas, particularly those experiencing growth or lacking basic paved access, without a pathway toward essential infrastructure. Compounding these issues is the absence of a dedicated funding source directly tied to the VSMP. While DPW uses a mix of the General Fund, Guam Highway Fund, and various special appropriations to support road-related work, these funding streams are not structured around the VSMP and do not ensure long-term support for planned village-street improvements.

Without an updated and actively implemented plan, supported by both clear operational procedures and a designated funding source, DPW and the mayors lack a shared framework for prioritizing work, evaluating road conditions, and coordinating improvements across villages. Therefore, we made the following recommendations:

1. DPW update the VSMP into a current, actionable, and collaborative maintenance plan and adopt it as the agency's primary scheduling tool for village-street work.
2. DPW and the Guam Legislature to establish a consistent, dedicated funding source strictly to the VSMP to allow DPW to plan and implement improvements effectively.

We acknowledge that DPW has indicated efforts are underway to address these matters, with the goal of improving village streets throughout the island of Guam.



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