

Byblos City Profile

Key Information

Political

- Mayor: ZiadHawat
- Date elected: 2010
- Length of term: 6 years with no term limits

Economic

- GDP per capita = 10,085 USD (Lebanon, data on Byblos not available)
- GDP growth = 2.5% (Lebanon)¹
- Unemployment = 20% and 22% for youth unemployment (Lebanon, using World Bank data, no census in Byblos)²

Demographic

- Major Religions: Christianity, Islam (Sunni and Chiite),
- Languages: Arabic and French. English and Armenian are also commonly understood.
Population: 27,250 - resident population
- Population Density: 2725 km²
- Population Growth: 0.9%
- Area: 10 km² - city limits³

Government Structure

Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic within the overall framework of confessionalism, a form of consociationalism in which the highest offices are proportionately reserved for representatives from certain religious communities

The mayor of Byblos is democratically elected every 6 years. During his term, he selects a team to support him, which joins the city government as part of the municipality council. The Mayor receives a salary during his term, council members do not.

Centralization of power

- Considerable legislative and budgetary power rests with the central government of Lebanon. Provincial and local governments have primarily administrative duties. This reduces Byblos's flexibility around its spending activities and its ability to conduct new initiatives.
- Proposed plans for decentralization of some municipal activities within Lebanon have been delayed due to regional instability and political pressures. It is hoped that decentralization offunding for public schools, institutions and healthcare would give city

¹Banque de Liban, 2013. <http://www.bdl.gov.lb/pages/index/1/119/Monetary-Overview.html>

²World Bank,

2014. http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/MNA/Mashreq/LEM_Spring_2014.pdf

³Based on Byblos municipality estimates.

and regional authorities more flexibility to make decisions, increase efficiency and growth and reduce corruption.

- The government of the city of Byblos is primarily responsible for funding and overseeing transportation systems and buildings and construction. It has co-responsibility for wastewater and rainwater and transportation police. The municipality also assiststhe national police to maintain security in the city.

City Revenues

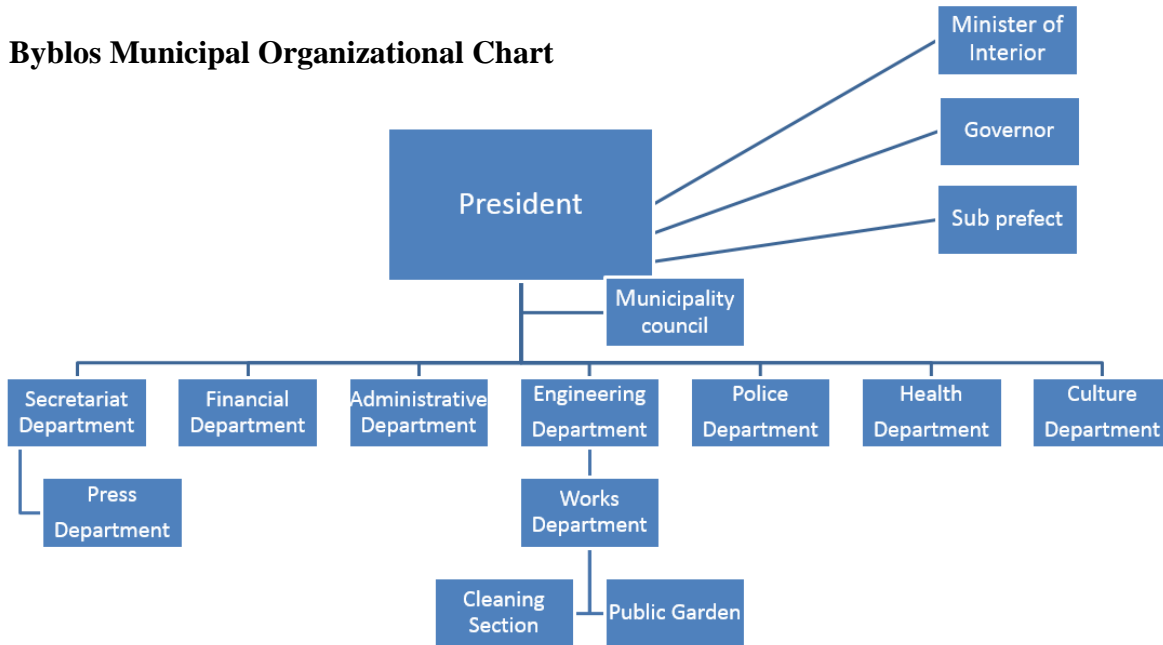
The city raises a number for taxes to generate revenue. The municipality has the authority to:

- Increase taxes on maritime tourism resorts and other high revenue businesses such as hotels
- Increase household taxes on waste collection
- Take a percentage for real estate transactions conducted
- Increase property tax and rental value tax
- Increase tax on polluters, rent of public spaces, installation of car park meters, execution of projects through BOT type contracts

City Budget:

- The current budget for the city of Byblos:8.3 Million USD
- Current size of government:
 - 100 Employees (30 Police Men, 40 Workers and 30 Administrative)

Byblos Municipal Organizational Chart



Current Political Context

- Mayor Hawat is an independent politician, unaffiliated to a political party

- The Mayor's key support comes from high net worth individuals in the private sector, various ministries in the public sector, citizens of the city, and connections with the Lebanese diaspora
- There are currently three key items on the Mayor's agenda:
 - Improvement of transportation infrastructure (Traffic Management)
 - Protection of cultural heritage sites
 - Improving data collection and synthesis
- Others themes being addressed by the Mayor include:
 - Improvement of solid waste collection and segregation
 - Master plan and organization of the construction in the city
 - Access to healthcare for low income citizens

Upcoming Elections –2016

- Changes in key leadership positions: the municipality recently appointed a director to oversee administrative work, a position that has been required for some time.

Current political stories relevant to resilience

- Major infrastructure projects
 - Improvement of solid waste collection and the creation of recycling stations
- Economic trends
 - Regeneration of the main souks façades has had a positive impact on the retail and hospitality (restaurants) and fuelled national tourism to the city

Societal Context

Key demographic dynamics

Migration patterns within and around the city:

- Urbanization is increasing with people tending to move from rural neighbouring areas to settle in the city.
- The educated youth tends to migrate towards the gulf region and western countries looking for opportunities
- The sectors experiencing the most growth are retail and banking commerce as well as construction, in particular residential and commercial (offices)
- Byblos is home to the Lebanese American University (LAU) which attracts students from around the country.

Current threats to social cohesion: Syrian migration of refugees

- More than 1.1 million of people are currently living in Lebanon as a result of the Syrian conflict, and many more are awaiting registration or thought to be in the country unofficially. The Syrian refugee population now makes up around a quarter of the Lebanon's total population, the highest per capita concentration of refugees anywhere in the world. In recent months, the Lebanese government has struggled to support the

swelling number of refugees and begun to tighten its borders and turn away some of those attempting to enter the country.

- Byblos has a peaceful history, largely escaping the effects of unrest in other parts of the region. The municipal authorities are currently concerned that instability may spill over into Byblos, putting additional pressure on its services and potentially leading to unrest.

Economic Context

Top 3 industries that drive the city economy:

- Tourism
- Retail
- Banking

Current initiatives underway to spur investment:

- Public gardens
- Sports and playing fields
- Main souks façades

Challenges to doing business in the city:

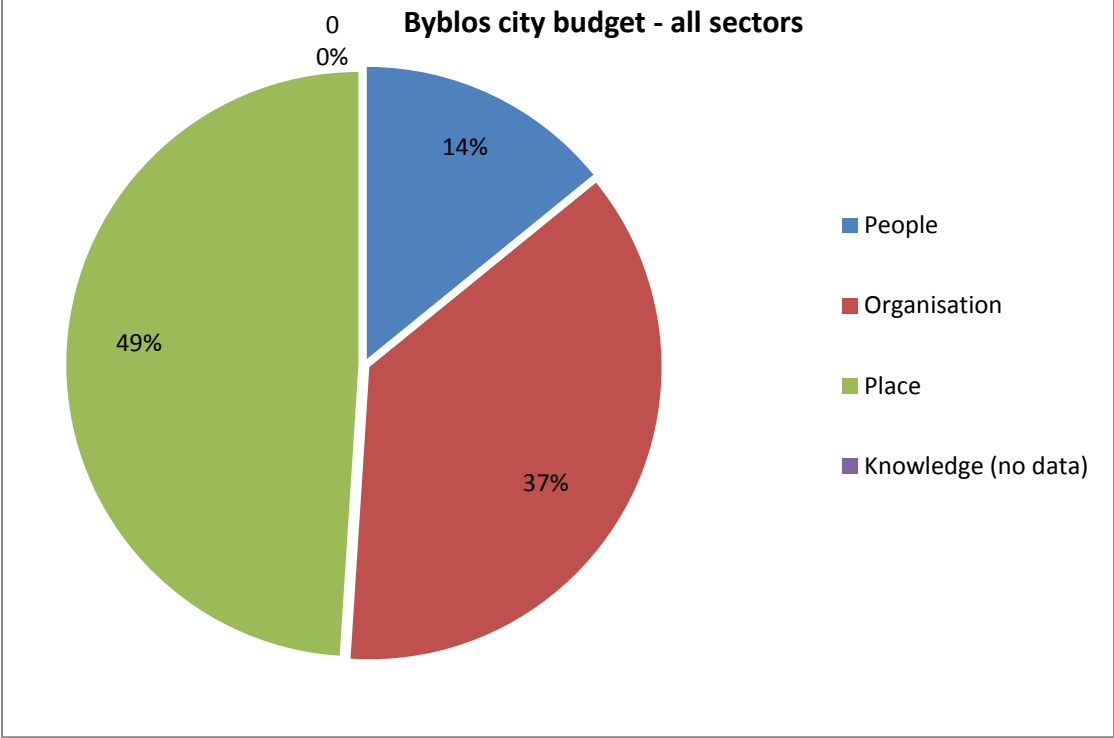
- Byblos is relatively far from Beirut and tends to benefit little from key investments from the capital.
- Planning is largely unregulated and regulations are frequently overlooked. Future planning is a challenge as a result.
- Since the city municipality does not own assets or run businesses, the main source of revenue is through tax.
- Byblos receives only a modest annual share of governmental budget from the Ministry of the Interior and occasionally receives funds from associations, NGOs, and international organizations. However, these are used to finance specific projects and are not counted as part of the city's general revenue.
- Growth in jobs and economic opportunities for the lower and middle class is slow due to lack of municipal funding for job creation.
- The recent influx of migrants from Syria and Iraq has affected the city's economy through impacts such as traffic congestion, risk of presence in the highways, congestion in supermarkets and pressure on services such as healthcare and schools. Official records are yet to reflect the exact impacts.

City Budget and Capital Plan

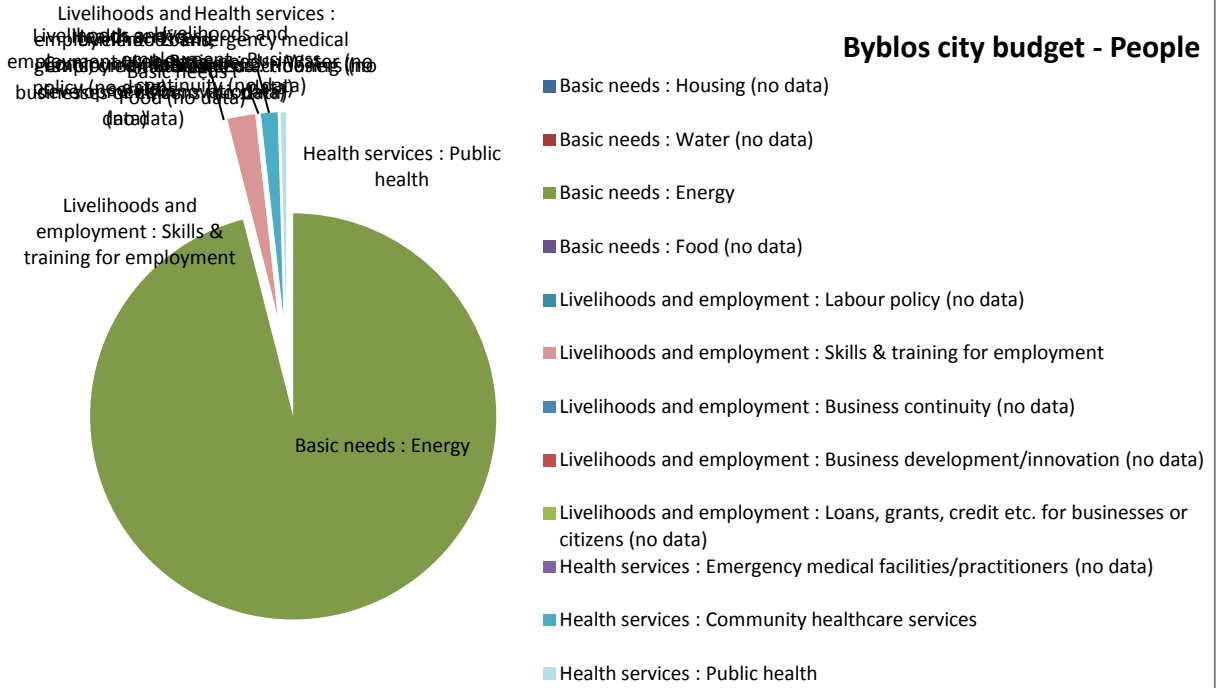
The city budget is split into four sections: People, Organisation, Place, and Knowledge. The charts below illustrate the breakdown of the budget between these sectors and then further, in each sector. The largest part of the city budget is allocated to 'Place' which is split between Natural and Manmade Assets, Service Continuity, and Communication and Mobility, with the latter making up the largest

portion of the overall budget and within that sector Transport Infrastructure (i.e. roads and railways) being the largest single recipient of funding (348 million Lebanese Pounds).

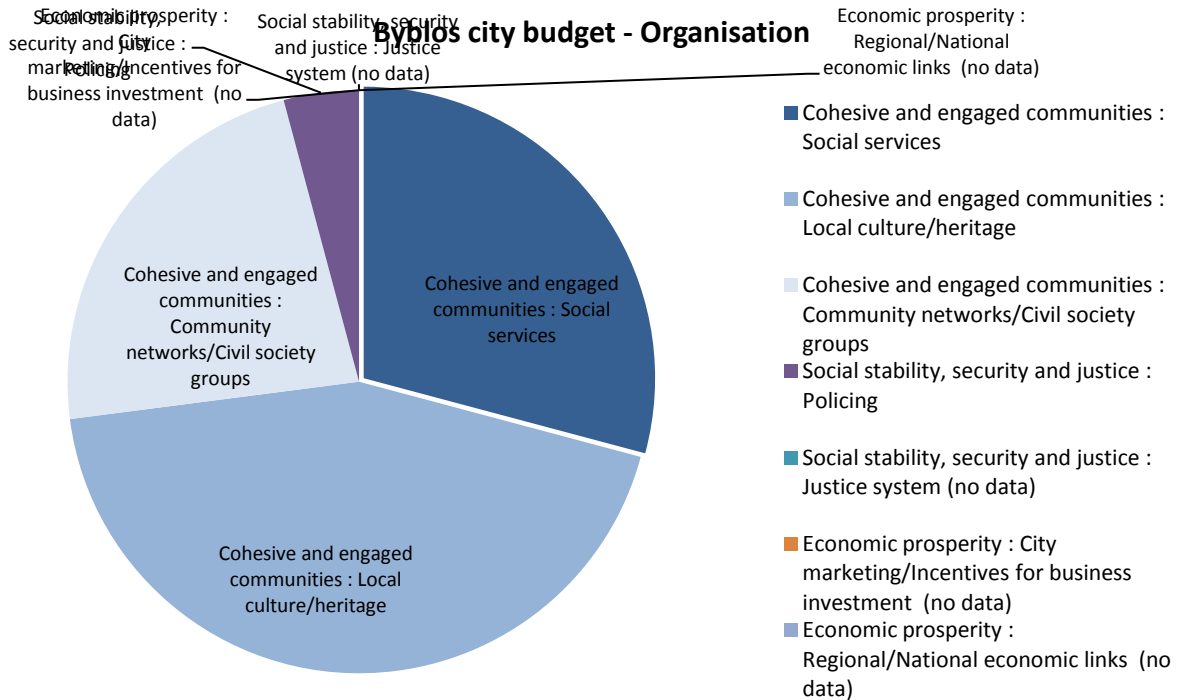
There is currently no data available in the area of 'Knowledge' and limited data available in several of the other sectors.

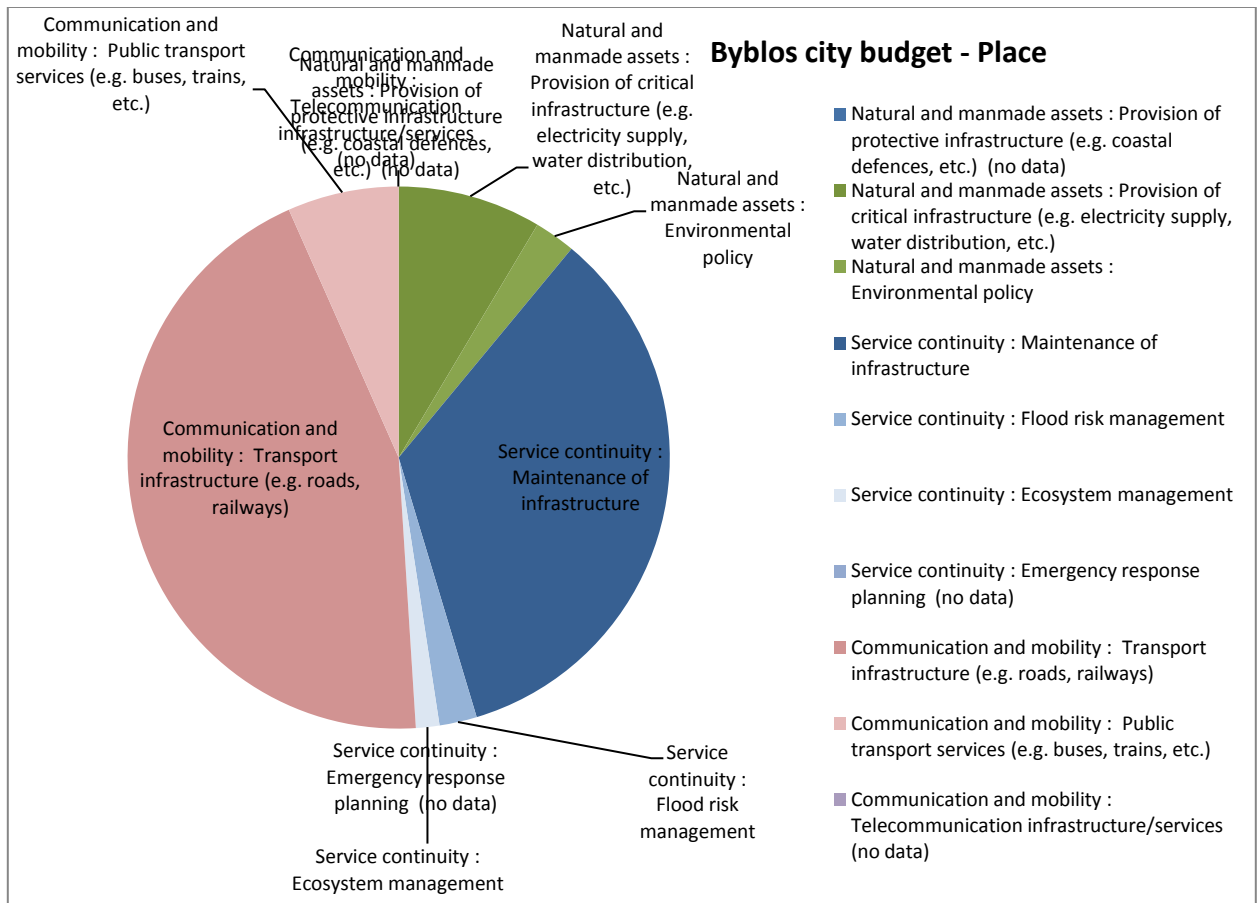


Byblos city budget - People



Byblos city budget - Organisation





Spatial/Environmental Context

The city of Byblos faces the following socio-economic and environmental challenges:

- Coastal erosion
- Sea level rise
- Water and air pollution
- Adherence to building codes and regulations
- Development pressures
- Urban planning challenges
- Pressures on green spaces
- Grid capacity pressures
- Informal communities and settlements
- In recent years, the city has experienced rapid population and migration growth, which have led to the construction of development sites where residential buildings are mixed with commercial ones. These are often built closely together, reducing green spaces and contravening building regulations and codes.
- Unregulated planning and construction poses a fire risk to the city, especially in areas where residential buildings adjoin warehouses and industrial buildings used to store hazardous materials.

- The municipality is currently attempting to tighten regulations and ensure they are upheld, which can be difficult due to resourcing challenges.
- Some of Byblos' ancient heritage sites are also at risk, both from climatic threats such as flooding but also as new buildings spring up around them, altering the historical aspect of the city.
- The city of Byblos is at risk from flooding due to exposure along its coast as well as clogging of river ways and storm water drains. A recent storm caused severe damage to the city's pier along the port.

Cultural/Historical Context

The ancient city of Byblos is reputed as being one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, with evidence of human settlements dating back more than 7,000 years. The city is located on the Mediterranean coast, around 30 kilometres north of Lebanon's capital, Beirut. Ancient Byblos was a major port and center of trade and learning; the founding of the modern alphabet by the Phoenicians earned the city its name - Byblos – which comes from the Greek for papyrus.

Over the years, successive civilizations have left their mark on the city which is now home to layer upon layer of archeologically significant sites and ruins constructed by Greek, Roman, Persian, Ottoman and other settlers and invaders. The invasion and domination of the city by various peoples through history has also left Byblos with a diversity of cultural and religious traditions which lend the modern city its distinctive character. Recognising its historic significance, the city earned status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984.

Today, the modern city of Byblos, also known as Jbeil, has 40,000 inhabitants and an economy based largely on tourism. The city also remains a key center of learning and is home to the internationally renowned Lebanese American University (LAU).

However, as a coastal city, Byblos is also vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the impacts of which have caused damage and deterioration to some of the city's ancient heritage sites and other assets and services. The challenges of mitigating climatic effects including flooding, storm surge and sea level rise are compounded by economic and social changes including the need to upgrade infrastructure and city assets such as utility services to meet the demands of a growing population, the result of internal and external factors.

Lebanon suffered a long civil war from 1975-1991 which had a significant impact on the internal relations of the country. Excluding small political incidents and struggles, the city of Byblos has largely been unaffected by unrest in other parts of the country. The ethnic and religious make-up of Byblos is mixed and the city is proud of its long tradition of multi-faith tolerance and co-existence.

However, there are now concerns that the current conflicts in Syria and Iraq may lead to an overall increase in the level of extremism in the region, which may create or exacerbate religious and ethnic tensions.

As a low lying coastal city, Byblos is subject to a wide range of natural hazards, some of the most severe being earthquakes and Tsunami as well as floods, forest fires, land-slides and drought. According to the UNISDR, the following factors exacerbate the risks of these events occurring:

- a) Limited presence of the government ministries in peripheral regions;
- b) Haphazard housing and unchecked urban expansion;
- c) Lack of enforcement of building codes;
- d) Lack of regulation of land use; and
- e) A range of environmental factors⁴

Resilience initiatives

Byblos has recently initiated a number of planning and development programmes and activities which will have positive impacts for

1. Multifunctional public park (1.8ha) for recreation & environmental management

- Background: the project is now complete and was awarded a landscape design prize in Barcelona
- Goals: to increase green space in the city, create a place where people can meet, interact, exercise, walk, read and bring their children.
- Strengths: the park helps support livelihoods, protects ecosystems and promotes cohesion, stability and economic prosperity.
- Weaknesses: the project needs a lot of funding for maintenance as it is not a self-sustaining project. Since the municipal budget is limited, there are competing demands for these funds.
- Opportunities and links to other sectors/city themes: the park promotes pedestrian identity and helps reduce traffic congestion
- Relevance to city masterplan: the park helps meet the target to increase green space under the Byblos 2025 plan.

2. Increasing transport capacity

- Background: the preliminary study was completed by the private company Connex and the city of Carcassonne in France
- Goals: to reduce traffic congestion and pollution
- Strengths: the project ensures faster access for emergency services, reduces fuel consumption, provides new employment opportunities, promotes cohesive communities, and provides access to transportation for elderly, mobility impaired and low income citizens. It also supports basic needs by increasing access to other city services, including

⁴UNISDR: <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/29207>

amenities, businesses, shops, hospitals and schools as well as increasing revenue to the city and fostering tourism.

- Weaknesses: the route still requires attention since city roads are tight and no specific route can be reserved for public buses. This creates an increased risk of traffic jams. The study that does not take into account congestion, other road users or the nature of the inner city roads; a comprehensive multi-modal approach is still required to address these issues.
- Opportunities and links to other sectors/city themes: improved transport capacity helps drive tourism, improves access to healthcare, and facilitates emergency evacuations
- Relevance to city masterplan: forms part of a city traffic management plan and helps integrate traffic management with the overall city plan

3. **Construction of sports complex for community use**

- Background: funded by the association of Carlos slim, the complex includes a gym, swimming pool, basketball and football court, and tennis and squash courts.
- Goals: to provide a range of sporting facilities available for use by all sectors and ages of population.
- Strengths: supports community cohesion, provides employment opportunities, entertainment for younger generations
- Weaknesses: the complex is still under construction due to funding challenges
- Opportunities and links to other sectors/city themes: since the tennis courts meet international standards, the city will hold international and national championships which will help foster tourism and grow the city's economy.
- Relevance to city masterplan: helps meet criteria relating to the provision of public facilities.

4. **Rehabilitation of the main souk façade, preserving cultural heritage**

- Background: financed by Byblos Bank, the \$2 million project includes two phases for renovating all the facades of the main street of Byblos.
- Goals: to preserve the historical heritage of the city, to reinforce the structure of the souk, and to encourage tourism and support the city economy.
- Strengths: supports businesses within the souk, promotes local identity and culture, fosters economic prosperity, safeguards and enhances infrastructure, conserves city heritage and assets and promotes long term planning.
- Weaknesses: the project is not yet completed; phase two is under way but progress has been slow and this only solves the esthetical aspect of the problem. The structural reinforcement is yet to be initiated.
- Opportunities and links to other sectors/city themes: encourages tourism, retail and commerce, and supports cultural heritage
- Relevance to city masterplan: supports goals related to the renovation of cultural heritage sites, recognising their importance to tourism and the economy.

5. **Engagement in activities focused on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**

- Background: simulation of a Tsunami, earthquake scenario

- Goals: training of different units to cooperate together under the stress of a disaster situation
 - Strengths: the activity helped improve response times and fostered cooperation between different departments of the city.
 - Weaknesses: the programme highlighted important difficulties including challenges dealing with evacuate quickly and problems preventing incoming traffic into the city. There was also a lack of police presence and weaknesses in communication.
 - Opportunities and links to other sectors/city themes: this was the first such opportunity at the city level and more than 300 people participated from different departments participated. The activity is due to be repeated and extended to schools to aid preparedness to disasters.
 - Relevance to city masterplan: proves the importance of improving public transportation in order to evacuate large numbers of people in the event of a disaster.
6. **Member city in the UNISDR ‘Making Cities Resilient’**
- Background: includes five Lebanese cities joining the DRR of the UNSDR
 - Goals: to increase preparedness to natural disasters and improve the city’s capacity to react and recover during and after such events.
 - Strengths: training facilitates preparedness and learning during times of no-stress.
 - Weaknesses: highlights the weakness of city’s infrastructure.
 - Opportunities and links to other sectors/city themes: facilitates cooperation between different groups and sectors of the city.
 - Relevance to city masterplan: the weaknesses shown by the risk assessment proves the importance of implementing a new master plan for the city.

Appendix

Ziad Hawat Biography (From <http://www.jbail-byblos.gov.lb/en/content.php?id=20018>)

In May 2010, Ziad Hawat was elected President of the Municipality of Jbail – Byblos, after garnering the highest number of votes in the history of Jbail’s municipal elections.

Throughout his years of service, President Hawat cooperated with foreign and local municipalities, academic institutions, universities and research institutes, in order to produce new development projects in the best interest of his beloved city Jbail. Identifying the needs of the citizens and developing programs to meet these needs have been a great challenge to President Hawat, and a unique adventure in the world of international affairs and social services.

In line with his commitment to social services and affairs, President Hawat is currently member of the International Association of Francophone Mayors – IAFM and also member of the Lebanese Maronite Association.

In 2013, President Hawat received the “Golden Medal of Merit” prize from The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) for his outstanding achievements throughout his years

of service, with a Certificate of Distinction presented to Jbail as “Best Touristic City in the Arab World for the Year 2013”.

In 2014, the President of the Lebanese Republic Michel Sleiman granted him the Silver Medal of Honor for his services to the city of Byblos.

President Hawat is currently Chairman of Hawat Trading Company - Lebanon / Importer and exporter of wood products in Lebanon and the Middle East; Chairman of Hawat Trading Company

– Nigeria; Chairman of ABM Company - Lebanon and also Chairman of Zinaline - Lebanon / Manufacturer of kitchens and all types of joinery.

President Hawat was born in Jbail, Lebanon in 1977. He graduated from Université Saint-Esprit De Kaslik (USEK) School of Business with a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration.

He is married to Mrs. Carine Hawat and has one son “Halim” and one daughter “Maria”. He lives in Jbail.