



A CALL TO MMDA FOR CONCERTED ACTION: REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AIR POLLUTION & MITIGATE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The recent smog blanketing a large part of Metro Manila emanating mainly from motor vehicle emission due to the increasing traffic congestion, and the intense summer heat followed by unrelenting rainstorms and extensive flooding --- manifestations of the climate crisis and more --- seriously affect public health and wellbeing, as well as impair the economy.

We call on the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), being responsible for the management of national roads, for strong and sustained action to moderate vehicular traffic congestion, curtail air pollution and greenhouse gas, and foster a green environment with the following measures:

1. Implement strictly the 2017 national transportation policy (NTP) of NEDA that prioritizes:
 - a.) people mobility through public transportation over vehicle mobility;
 - b.) allocation of road space for public transportation and other pro-people uses;
 - c.) reduction of vehicle volume on the road with effective travel demand and traffic management.
2. Preserve and expand the green canopy, public park system, greenbelts along streets and maintenance of forests in hills and mountains near the metropolis, and control the urban sprawl;

Accordingly, we urge decisive and sustained action on the enabling framework for the implementation of the foregoing measures by instituting:

1. paradigm shift in road management policy and practices from the long standing car-centric mode which inappropriately favors private vehicle mobility as manifested by the current allocation of 8 road lanes for private vehicles out of the total 10 lanes in both directions of EDSA while only 2 lanes are allocated for the busway, noting that previously, 4 lanes were allocated to the defunct yellow bus lanes; and instead, to adopt a more pro-people and commuter-friendly policy by restoring the 4 lanes for buses to enable the completion of the new inner-lane busway and bus stations with 2 lanes in each direction; reallocating road space for widening of the

narrow sidewalks and create green planting strips, bike lanes and on-street spaces for curbside dining or other community activities to enhance dynamism and economic activity in the neighborhood, particularly during this unrelenting pandemic;

2. more effective travel demand management system to decongest the private vehicle lanes through the imposition of a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) rule coupled with congestion charge to regulate the ever-increasing volume of private vehicles, whereby vehicles compliant with the prescribed HOV rule with at least 2 persons on board shall be allowed free access to the city center, while non-compliant vehicles shall be charged a congestion fee during peak travel hours. The color and number coding system had proven ineffective and should be replaced by this HOV system, which is being used in major cities abroad, notably Singapore and London.

Road space is a finite public resource that must be utilized efficiently to move people not vehicles. Road managers must be conscious of the “induced demand” phenomenon where more road space induces more motorists to drive on the road and shun public transport.

3. Better traffic management of chokepoints and effective flood control in flood-prone road sections to ensure smooth and continuous flow of vehicular traffic, particularly public buses during peak travel hours and heavy rains;
4. Intensify the drive against smoke belching vehicles with more effective method, while curbing known malpractices in the pursuit of the same, and support a meaningful and sustainable vehicle inspection system and the shift to a cleaner and greener public transportation;
5. Work with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to eliminate or modify structures, such as the EDSA-Tramo flyover to NAIA Road, that had been creating traffic chokepoints resulting in kilometric vehicular pileups during peak travel hours since its construction decades ago.
6. Develop a comprehensive green program to increase the green canopy with more trees and landscaping along city streets, expand the public park system for the teeming population of the metropolis and designate no-build zones for forest to grow in hills and mountains around the metropolis, and delineate the boundary for high density urban development to control the urban sprawl;

This call is issued in consonance with the Manifesto of the Green EDSA Movement affirmed by a group of organizations who stand ready to assist and support the MMDA in the pursuit of the foregoing measures.

Done this 2nd day of August, 2021

Green EDSA Movement (GEM)

Supported by business organizations, corporations, civic and non-government organizations, including, among others: (in alphabetical order)

Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP)

Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)

Filipino-Chinese Federation of Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Inc. (FFCCII)

Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (FINEX)

Guild of Real Estate Entrepreneurs and Professionals, Inc. (GREENPRO)

Makati Business Club (MBC)

Management Association of the Philippines (MAP)

Move As One Coalition

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)

Philippine Retailers Association (PRA)

Women's Business Council Philippines (WomenBizPh)

and other business, professional, civic and green organizations, and individuals who have affirmed the Manifesto of the Movement.