

PRESS RELEASE

MAP RECOMMENDATIONS IN ADDRESSING THE METRO MANILA TRAFFIC CRISIS

January 29, 2024

The **MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (MAP)** believes that a traffic crisis exists in Metro Manila (MM). The title of having the worst traffic in the world is affirmation of a known fact that has greatly cost the economy and damaged the welfare of the people.

The MAP, being the proponent of the Busway solution to the severe public bus transportation problem in EDSA, believes that the traffic crisis is not insurmountable. But there is no single silver bullet to slay this traffic monster, rather a holistic approach to this crisis is essential.

For starters, there must be a recognition that this traffic crisis is the result of a failure in traffic management, and a paradigm shift in road and traffic management policies and practices is essential. Policy must reflect the reality that road space is a finite public resource which must be judiciously and efficiently used to move people, instead of private vehicles. There must be a realization that high occupancy in conveyances and uninterrupted vehicle flow are the keys to higher commuter throughput. This was clearly proven to be correct in the new Busway with only 550 buses fielded, while the defunct yellow bus lanes proved that over 3,000 public buses only worsened traffic congestion. And that adding more road space for private vehicles proved counter-productive when two road lanes taken from the Busway only induced more vehicles to congest EDSA.

For this paradigm shift to happen, the MAP recommends, as a first step, the declaration of a traffic crisis and the appointment of a new traffic management team to be headed by a TRAFFIC CZAR appointed by the President and vested with full powers and authority to mobilize, direct and deploy existing relevant resources of the government, both national and local, during the exigency of this crisis.

Additionally, the MAP recommends that a holistic plan consisting of the following measures be adopted and implemented:

1. **ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION** – Organize MM into four (4) Traffic Management Zones to be headed by a qualified Zone Traffic Manager who shall be responsible for traffic management in their respective zone, and report and be accountable to the TRAFFIC CZAR.
2. **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT** – Revive the Mabuhay Lanes and optimize their use as alternate routes to relieve traffic congestion along major routes, such as EDSA, C4, C5 and radial roads and create new ones where none exists; clear the Lanes by disallowing parking during designated peak traffic hours in the morning and evening, subject to towing and impounding of violating vehicles; revise the direction of traffic flows along MM streets to minimize traffic conflicts at intersections by limiting LEFT TURNS and CROSSINGS; disallow U-TURNS, except only in suitable locations; create quick reaction force to clear choke points; require high-passenger occupancy vehicle (HOV) practices in high-density zones, such as schools and large event venues; require off-street drop-off and boarding lanes; and strictly enforce no parking, no loading and unloading rules along major routes where schools are located.
3. **MASS PUBLIC TRANSPORT** – Comply with the NEDA-formulated National Transport Plan (NTP) extant since 2017, particularly to prioritize mass public transport over private vehicles and for this purpose, prioritize allocation of road space for busways; enhance non-motorized mobility with the creation and expansion of sidewalks and cycling network; institute travel demand management through peak-hour travel pricing of public transport, such that non-peak hours shall have lower charges; implement road congestion charges on private vehicles in high-volume traffic routes

during peak travel hours; rationalize the jeepney and bus franchising system to institute a one-route, one-franchise system to optimize the efficiency and utilization of vital commuter corridors.

4. **BUSWAY SYSTEM** – Three years of pilot testing have proven the EDSA Busway to be the most cost-effective urban mass transit system. But this EDSA Busway remains uncompleted, and must urgently and expeditiously be privatized through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model and brought to world-class standards. The Unsolicited Proposal on hand should be processed soonest so that the next step, Swiss Challenge selection, can proceed soonest. The Busway System must be expanded and replicated to cover other major thoroughfares, such as Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon Avenue, Sucat Avenue, Alabang-Zapote Road and others.

Over the soonest medium-term, the awarded operator of the Busway System should implement a clean energy system; construct convenient Busway stations that are PWD-friendly, and bus transfer stations to interconnect the trunk line with feeder routes; institute multi-modal connectivity, particularly bus to PNR commuter rail, modern rolling stock including the introduction of high-capacity articulated bus trains on rubber wheels, “Park-and-Ride” facilities and “business class” service in bus and trains, and be required to attain globally recognized Gold Standard over the most vital and congested stretch, while conforming to globally accepted Busway and BRT standards and best practices for the rest of the line.

5. **MRT3 and LRT2 SYSTEMS** – Privatize the operation and maintenance of the MRT 3 and LRT 2, in order to improve and expand service capacity; reduce the headway or the gap between trains during peak travel hours to maximize commuter throughput without the need for additional heavy capital expenditures and compromising passenger safety.
6. **URBAN DISPERSAL TO DECONGEST MM** – Build a new government center and transfer all national offices to the New Clark City and impose a moratorium on building new government offices in MM, particularly in already congested central business districts, and a timeline be established for the phased construction of the new government center; develop satellite communities outside MM linked by rail through the NCR north and south commuter rail system; and adopt the live, work and play concept of development for walkable and self-sustaining communities that will not burden public transport system.
7. **EXPANSION OF NAUTICAL HIGHWAY** – Fully develop a Pasig River and Laguna Lake passenger ferry system with regular schedule and transfer stations for multi-modal connectivity to jeepneys and buses; construct and implement Ro-Ro ferry ship system for passenger and cargo across Manila Bay from Cavite to Bataan, to provide an alternate route to decongest C-5, Katipunan Road and North Expressway (NLEX) and thereby bypass MM.
8. **OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE MEASURES** – Construct more bridges over Pasig River to divert and relieve over-concentration of vehicles in the few existing bridges; provide more on and off-ramps for existing Skyways, while clearing ground-level traffic to enable vehicles to exit or access the ramps; provide more alternate exits and entry points to the NLEX and SLEX tollways to decongest existing tollgates; construct more effective and sustainable flood control measures, such as underground large diameter storm drainage tunnels to drain depressed intersections, such as at EDSA corner Ortigas Avenue and EDSA at Camp Crame and Camp Aguinaldo, to provide resiliency and avoid shutdowns; construct water interceptors and catchments to prevent rain water from cascading down from surrounding mountains to MM; and construct dedicated car parking buildings with tax exemptions and administrative incentives.

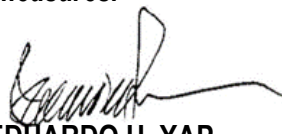
OTHER MEASURES – The MAP will encourage its members to consider, where appropriate, the adoption of telecommuting system or work from anywhere on certain days during the exigency of this crisis, and other practices that may be applicable, such as ride sharing or HOV practice.

CONCLUSION

This traffic crisis is highly detrimental to the people and the economy. No effort must be spared to expeditiously provide relief to our people and economy. The crisis can be mitigated with strong political will, competent management with resolute short, medium and long-term measures.



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