

Challenges of Urban Transport Development in Metro Manila: A Look Back at the Last 40 Years

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Abstract: There have several studies conducted in the past 40 years to guide the development of the urban transport in Metro Manila. However, despite the recommendations embodied in these studies and the complementary travel demand management measures implemented since the 1990s, urban transport system in Metro Manila is considered to be inefficient. This paper aims to provide an understanding of the efforts to better organize urban transport system in Metro Manila and identify enabling and hindering factors that impact on the formulation, implementation and enforcement of transport plans, policies and regulations through the review of past transport studies. Key findings indicate that although key reforms were effected as results of the studies, key missed opportunity is the development of an integrated and efficient transport system. Identified key factors for success include: strong champion for urban transport reforms, political will and strong private sector involvement in projects.

Keywords: Urban Transport, Political Economy, Transport History

1. INTRODUCTION

Metro Manila, the National Capital Region of the Philippines, is composed of 16 cities and 1 municipality. Although it is the smallest of all the 17 regions in the Philippines in terms of land area (636 sq. km.), it is the prime financial, commercial, educational, social, and cultural center of the Philippines. Based on the 2010 Census, it has a total population of almost 12 million. This number is estimated to swell to about 15 million during daytime when residents from the nearby areas of Rizal and Laguna travel to their places of employment within the Metropolis. About 2.2 million vehicles are estimated to traverse the major thoroughfares of Metro Manila daily, with private vehicles constituting 70% of the total volume (MMDA, 2012). On the other hand, the urban public transportation system which services about 70% of the total person-trips is beset with operational inefficiencies and remains largely disparate, with various the modes and lines operating as separate systems. With the current state of urban transportation, it is estimated that Metro Manila suffers financial and economic losses of PhP2.4 billion daily due to traffic congestion (JICA, 2014).

2. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is to provide an understanding of the efforts to better organize urban transport system in Metro Manila and identify enabling and hindering factors

that impact on the formulation, implementation and enforcement of transport plans, policies and regulations. It reviews transport studies undertaken in the last 40 years as well as past and current policy instruments (e.g., department or agency memos, etc.) and endeavors to distill lessons on past efforts to guide future policy formulation, implementation and enforcement will be determined from past studies.

3. KEY AGENCIES IN THE METRO MANILA URBAN TRANSPORT SECTOR

There are several agencies involved in the development, implementation, and management of the urban transportation sector in Metro Manila. However, based on mandate, the primary policy setting and planning agency for transportation systems development of the country is the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC). The other agencies involved and their corresponding functions are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Key Agencies involved in Metro Manila Urban Transport Sector

Agency	Function
Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC)	Primary body in policy setting and planning of transport systems development of the country; regulates transport operations and implements transport projects through its line agencies.
Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB)	Regulates and supervises motorized land-based public transportation services and implements fare control
Land Transportation Office (LTO)	Primarily responsible for driver licensing and registration of all motorized land-based transportation vehicles and for enforcing RA 4136
Philippine National Railways (PNR)/Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA)	Implements policies and manages the operations of heavy and light rail systems in the Metropolis, respectively.
Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)	Responsible for the planning, design, and construction of national roads and bridges
National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)	Social and economic development planning and policy coordinating body; Staff serves as Secretariat to NEDA-ICC; Headed by the President of the Philippines
Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB)	Plan and regulate housing and land use to ensure that communities are well-planned and self-reliant; reviews and ratifies the Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) of cities and municipalities in Metro Manila.
Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA)	Set policies concerning traffic in Metro Manila; Responsible for traffic management within Metro Manila.
Local Government Units (LGUs)	Responsible for construction and maintenance of City Streets; responsible for traffic management and regulation within the city/municipality.
Legislative Branch	Reviews and approves annual budget of national agencies; also influences infrastructure development through the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF)

4. URBAN TRANSPORT STUDIES FOR METRO MANILA

In the last 40 years, there have been several major studies undertaken on the urban transportation sector in Metro Manila. The proponents and recommendations of these studies

are described in the following sub-sections.

4.1 UTSMMA

The Urban Transport Study in Manila Metropolitan Area (UTSMMA) project was implemented from March 1971 to September 1973 with the assistance of the Government of Japan's Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (OTCA), the precursor of today's Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Being the first comprehensive study for a metropolitan area that was yet to be formally consolidated and called Metro Manila, UTSMMA set the stage for future transport studies for the metropolis.

Among the study's main recommendations is one proposing for a mass transit system restricted to railways. A Rapid Transit Railway (RTR) network was recommended in the form of subways in the inner area bound by EDSA, and elevated in the suburban areas. Figure 1 shows a map illustrating the recommended RTR network for the Manila Metropolitan area.

UTSMMA also recognized the important roles of buses and jeepneys in the future, and recommended that these be used for feeder services once the rail systems have been constructed and operational. As a result of the study, a Feasibility Study for the Manila Rapid Transit Railway Line No. 1 was conducted and completed in June 1976. The study, which was supported by JICA, noted that "the implementation should be initiated immediately" in light of the estimated heavy traffic demand along the corridor. This project could have been the first major transport project for Metro Manila if it had been implemented.

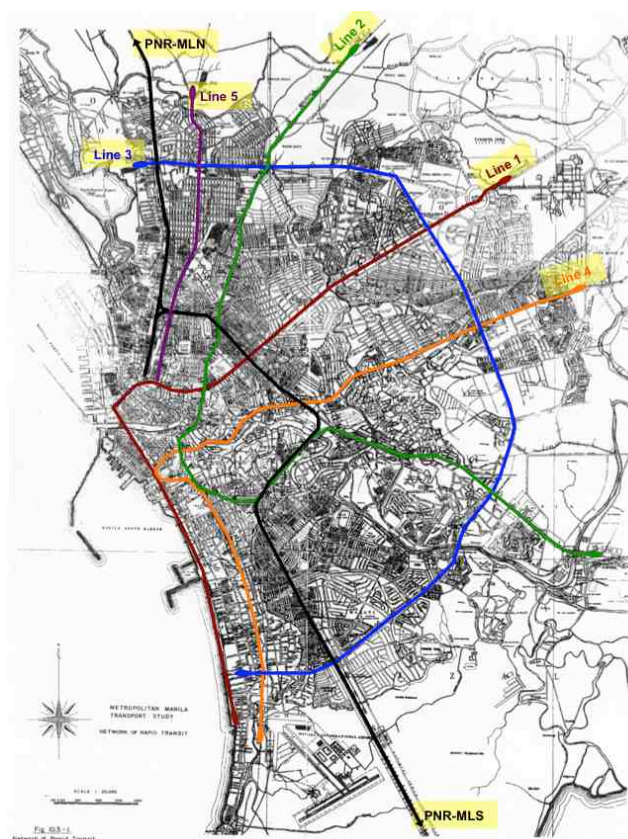


Figure 1. Proposed Rapid Transit Railway network for Manila Metropolitan Area (UTSMMA, 1973)

4.2 MMETROPLAN

The Metro Manila Transport, Land Use and Development Planning Project (MMETROPLAN) project was implemented from January 1976 to February 1977. The study is more expansive in terms of scope as it included components on land use and development planning for Metro Manila. It identified three main strategies to address issues on traffic congestion and public transport requirements, namely:

- Cordon pricing,
- Bus lanes, and
- LRT

Short-term recommendations focused on bus and jeepney operations, recommending that:

- Standard buses (non-airconditioned) be designed for more standing passengers and charge a fare affordable by the poor;
- Premium buses (including Love Bus) be designed for seated passengers and charge a higher fare; this may be used to cross-subsidize Standard bus operations;
- Metro Manila Transit Corporation (MMTC) bus operations should not be further expanded;
 - MMTC buses should operate missionary routes, which are generally unprofitable routes.
 - There should be no arbitrary exemption on franchises like in the case of MMTC.
- In reference to private bus companies, the project states that “properly regulated competition” provides best course of action for the foreseeable future
- Jeepneys are suited for low demand but high frequency service

MMETROPLAN also touched on the route structure for road public transport. However, its most far-reaching recommendations on road public transport concern the issuance of franchises for buses and jeepneys. The study recommended that franchises should be issued for a period of a few years instead of 25 years and to define a minimum LOS. The study cautioned against arbitrary restrictions on franchises for buses at the time while mentioning that there were already restrictions for jeepneys. MMETROPLAN further recommended the encouraging of small operators for both jeepneys and buses.

However, MMETROPLAN deviated from the recommendations of UTSMMA in that it struck down the proposal and plans for the Rapid Transit Rail (RTR) network for Metro Manila. The long-term recommendations and conclusions of the study show these and one particular recommendation that probably doomed heavy rail transport and the RTR network is quoted below:

“Heavy Rapid Transit (HRT) would provide public transport passengers with much faster journey, but by 1990 would attract only 2.5% of motorists and would have negligible impact on traffic congestion. Partly because of this and partly because of its very high capital cost, it would be hopelessly uneconomic: the annualized capital costs would be higher than the estimated benefits in 1990...passenger flows are not high enough to exploit its full capacity...and the large savings in time for public transport passengers are not given a high value in Manila, and are not high enough to persuade motorists to change mode.

These results are conclusive, and are unlikely to be changed by any circumstances or reasonable assumptions...it is clear that any other fully segregated public transport system, whether light rail or busway, would also be uneconomic. As such systems would require the appropriation of most, if not all, of the available funds for all transport (including highways) in Metro Manila for the foreseeable future, and as there is not other rationale for their implementation, they have been rejected from further consideration.” (MMETROPLAN, 1977)

The study also did not have good words for the PNR as it concluded that its “routes related poorly to the major demands for movement” and that it would be expensive to improve the PNR at the time. PNR costs were compared to buses and jeepneys with the further concluded that these road transport modes are preferred over an upgraded PNR.

MMETROPLAN assessed the LRT versus the Monorail in the context of cordon pricing and bus lane strategies. While the monorail was dismissed for reasons that included few monorail systems operating at the time, the study recommended for an LRT along Rizal Avenue, which was considered feasible.

4.3 MMUTIP

The Metro Manila Urban Transport Improvement Project (MMUTIP) was implemented from July 1980 to August 1981. MMUTIP recommended for a new franchising system to be adopted by the then Board of Transportation (BOT) with standards covering citizenship, route opening, operating performance and financial capability. It also called for the adoption of measures that will safeguard the integrity of franchise records and the speedy processing and better control of franchise applications.

Additional bus routes were identified by the study and recommended for 5,900 units for daily operations. The study estimated that as much as 1,870 additional units were required for Metro Manila. Meanwhile, the study found the MMTC operations unprofitable and stated that the government-run company has failed to define objectives and policies particularly in specifying the extent to which MMTC will render public service at the sacrifice of profit (note that MMTC was losing money in part because it was serving missionary routes so as to reduce direct competition with the private companies).

MMUTIP recommended for the control of entry and operation of jeepneys along major bus routes while at the same time calling for a deregulation of entry and operations outside major thoroughfares, which were served or are more suitable for buses. Further, the study called for encouraging tricycle services where bus and jeepney routes are scarce while also stating that these should be limited to local or feeder services. Then as now, tricycles are restricted from national roads.

4.4 MMUTSTRAP

The Metro Manila Urban Transportation Strategy and Planning Project (MMUTSTRAP) was conducted from November 1982 to April 1983. The study examined alternative futures on Metro Manila’s development and used these as the basis for formulating alternative futures for public transport modes. The latter futures did not mention the recommendations for an RTR but instead presented pessimistic, most likely and optimistic scenarios for PNR, LRT bus and jeepneys.

The study examined recommendations of past studies, most specifically the more recent MMETROPLAN and MMUTIP. MMUTSTRAP noted MMETROPLAN’s recommendations

to encourage the entry of new bus and jeepney operators rather than restricting or controlling these as it concluded that: “*deregulation is not a viable alternative for urban public transportation in Metro Manila.*” It further explained that deregulation is justified on the assumption that the main objective in urban public transport is simply to make it a profitable business. To the contrary, the study pointed out that there are other objectives such as adequate service to the public and safety, which should be placed above profitability.

The study explored strategies for traffic management and various travel demand management (TDM) measures including area traffic restraint similar to what Singapore had already implemented at the time. A significant output of MMUTSTRAP was a prioritization plan for transport projects and policies for Metro Manila. This included the ranking of projects for implementation in Metro Manila such as potential transit projects, terminal projects, and road projects.

4.5 JUMSUT 1

The Metro Manila Transportation Planning Study was more popularly known as the JICA Update on Manila Study on Urban Transport (JUMSUT), the project was conducted from November 1982 – March 1984 as a follow-up to MMUTSTRAP. JUMSUT focused on studies to support the implementation of the LRT Line 1 project along Rizal and Taft Avenues.

Recommendations of this study are mostly on the rerouting of public transport vehicles along LRT corridor and the traffic management required for the construction and eventual operation of the LRT Line 1. The rerouting is presented as a necessity to avoid unnecessary competition between LRT, bus and jeepney as well as to achieve balanced mode share among LRT, bus and jeepney along the corridor.

4.6 JUMSUT 2

The second phase of the JICA Update on Manila Study on Urban Transport (JUMSUT II) was conducted from June 1984 - March 1985. Similar to the previous study, recommendations focused on route structure planning and improvement for road public transport to avoid unnecessary competition between LRT, bus and jeepney. Recommendations for route structure planning included the modification of route schemes for the central eastern sector of Metro Manila mainly to alleviate traffic congestion and improve schedules. The study reiterated the recommendations of Phase I.

4.7 Metro Manila Urban Transport Development Plan (1990-2000) Project (UTDP)

Implemented from 1990, The UTDP is an inter-agency collaboration among the DOTC, DPWH, MMA (precursor of the MMDA), NEDA, CHPG (Constabulary Highway Patrol Group of the Philippine National Police) and MTPC. These consist of various studies undertaken to determine what projects can be implemented to improve urban transport in Metro Manila towards the turn of the century.

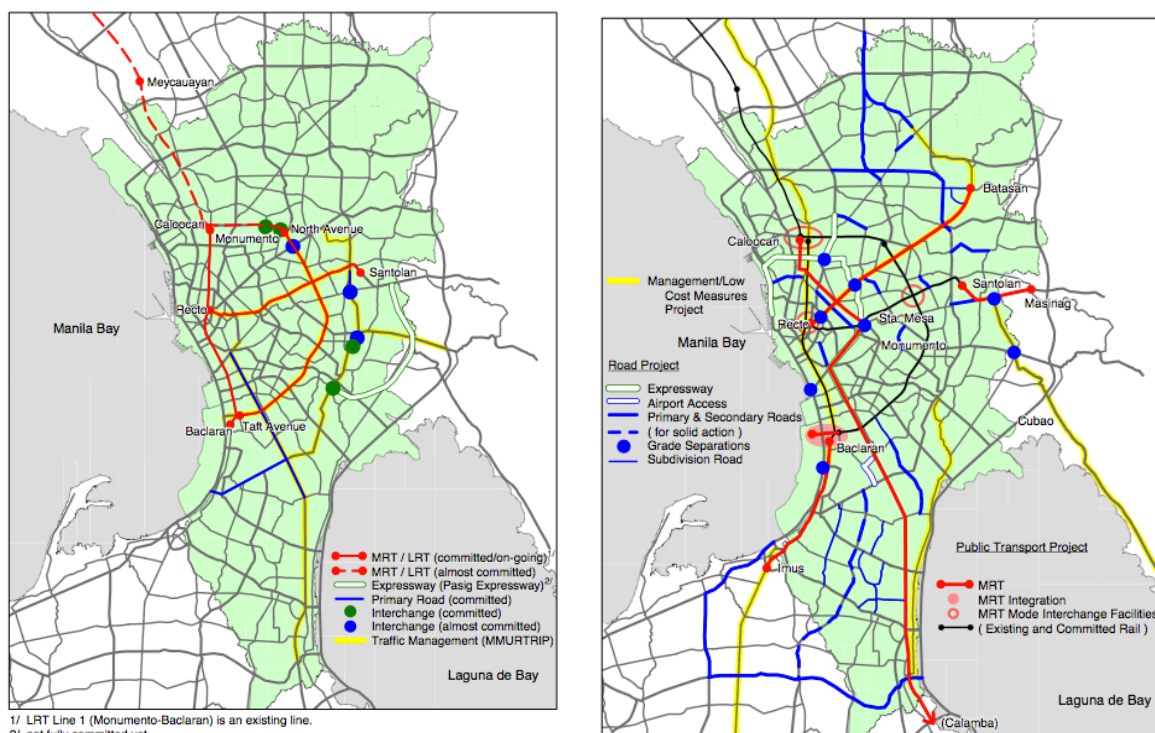
Among the most relevant studies conducted was the comparison of proposals for a mass transit system along EDSA. The two proposals compared were the Philtrak and Street-level LRT. The Philtrak option is quite intriguing because its description is very much like the present BRT but there is no reference to bus systems already operating abroad at the time. The study concluded that the Philtrak was preferable to the LRT along EDSA.

4.8 MMUTIS

The Metro Manila Urban Transportation Integration Study (MMUTIS) is the last comprehensive study conducted for Metro Manila. It was implemented 1996 – 1999 and came up with many recommendations to improve transport and traffic in Metro Manila, particularly a master plan for implementation in the next 15 years. Public transport projects identified under MMUTIS include the following:

- 1) MRT Integration
- 2) MRT Modal Interchange Facilities
- 3) MRT Line 2 Extension [*which was unusual given that Line 2 was not yet under construction at the time and could have been constructed all the way to Masing in Antipolo City*]
- 4) MRT Line 4 – to serve the corridor between Recto and Batasan (and eventually Novaliches), which consists of Espana Avenue, Quezon Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue [*now known by two other lines MRT 7, along Commonwealth, and MRT 9, along Espana and Quezon Ave.*]
- 5) MRT Line 6 – to provide mass transit system between the center of Metro Manila and Cavite, by laying a MRT line between Baclaran and Imus (and eventually Dasmariñas) [*now known as the LRT Line 1 Extension project*]
- 6) PNR Commuter Improvement/Manila Calabarzon Express (MCX) – to serve the strong north-south transport demand along the PNR ROW in the south and connecting with the proposed NorthRail.

Figure 2 shows the committed and proposed public transport projects for what the MMUTIS defined as the medium term (1999 – 2004).



a. Committed projects

b. Proposed projects

Figure 2. MMUTIS committed and proposed public transport projects for 1999-2004

Recommendations of this study focused mainly on strengthening metropolitan governance, recognizing that this is the critical success factor for transport development and management in the study area. As such, most of the study's recommendations specifically mention the need to strengthen the MMDA in terms of both its capacity and capability to undertake transport planning and traffic management in Metro Manila. Among the recommendations of MMUTIS are:

- Strengthening and improvement of the practice of land-use zoning and development permit issuance to guide private sector investments based on the updated zoning plan and development standards/guidelines.
- Establishment of a transport and development planning process based on an updated database, planning procedures and investment criteria.
- Coordination of mega projects, such as MRT, expressways, arterial roads, and major terminals.
- Improvement of traffic management
- Introduction of other TDM measures
- Promotion of public involvement.

On public transport, the following recommendations were made:

- Promotion of rail transit system as the center of the public transport system of the metropolitan area through the participation of the private sector, effective use of ODA and integrated urban development.
- Establishment of an improved basis for private sector participation in MRT projects including termination of unsolicited proposal method, government commitment at least to shoulder the infrastructure component and competitive bidding for the operation component by the private sector.
- Promotion of transport terminal development.
- Improvement of public transport regulatory process to promote adequate modal split especially between bus and jeepney, and mass rail transit.
- Improvement of pedestrian environment including sidewalk, crossings, street lighting, trees, and shade.

Other relevant recommendations affecting public transport included the identification of supportive measures that should be expanded to accelerate infrastructure development:

- Incorporation of major transport infrastructure with city planning institution.
- Government-led planning to protect and balance public interest.
- Establishment of clear rules/guidelines on private sector involvement, particularly on BOT projects.
- Introduction of project development schemes such as integrated development, land readjustment, etc.
- Strategic use of ODA (e.g., from short-term project loan to long-term program loan, urban rail development fund).

MMUTIS emphasized the need to secure new sources of funding for transport infrastructure as well as implementing expanded demand management (i.e., on top of or to replace UVVRP and the truck ban) through the following:

- Shift from physical restraints to pricing measures such as road pricing, Area Licensing System (ALS), parking pricing, etc.; and
- Increase in car sales tax, registration fee and fuel tax.

4.9 Metro Manila BRT Study

A Pre-Feasibility Study for a Bus Rapid Transit in the Greater Metro Manila Area was completed in July 2007 with support from the USAID and examined alternative corridors to determine suitability for bus rapid transit (BRT). The study outcomes were influenced by several restrictions as the DOTC articulated its reservation of the Commonwealth Avenue corridor for a proposed MRT Line 7 and the MMDA reserved EDSA for its OBR and other traffic schemes. The Pre-FS recommended for BRT lines along the Ortigas Avenue and Circumferential Road 5 corridors. Figure 3 shows the corridors evaluated for the Metro Manila BRT.

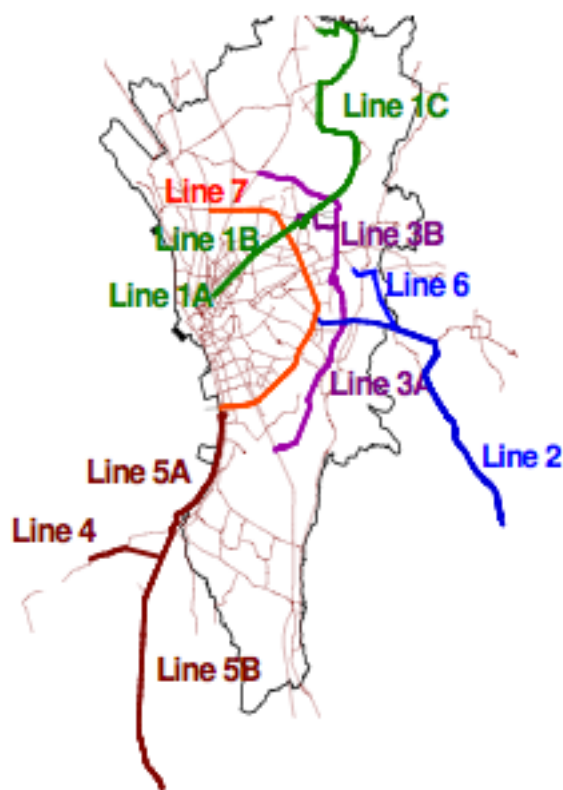


Figure 3. Corridors examined for the Metro Manila BRT Pre-FS

The Metro Manila BRT Pre-FS was presented in various forums in other Philippine cities, most notably Cebu City where it inspired the initiatives for the Cebu BRT. Currently, another major metropolitan area in the southern Philippines, Davao City, is also considering the BRT as a public transport option after studies conducted by the ADB to promote sustainable transport in that region.

4.10 EDSA Bus Revalidation Survey

Completed in January 2006, the JICA study focused on the assessment of bus operations along EDSA where majority of bus routes in Metro Manila converge or overlap. Public transport surveys were conducted to determine public transport operational characteristics such as travel times, turnaround times and passenger load profiles for the various routes passing through EDSA. Findings included the estimated oversupply of bus units along the section where routes overlapped. The study recommended for simplifying the routes in order to reduce the number of buses along EDSA as well as to examine the possibility of introducing BRT along EDSA.

4.11 MMPTS

The Mega Manila Public Transport Study (MMPTS) was a JICA funded project for the DOTC implemented from November 2006 to April 2007 as a follow-up to the EDSA Bus Revalidation Survey. The study reviewed issues pertaining to the current policies on franchising (i.e., new routes/franchises and applications for additional franchises along existing routes). It examined public transport network development, transport supply-demand rationalization, service competition as well as the operating rules and the role of public transport in traffic restraint.

Integration of public transport franchise and vehicle records was noted as an issue where cases wherein LTFRB and LTO records do not match have been mentioned as problematic in terms of franchise verification and the proliferation of “colorum” or illegal bus, jeepney and UV express units. As such, a recommendation was the computerization and interconnectivity among the LTFRB and LTO databases.

The study cited the ineffectiveness of the Route Measured Capacity (RMC) formulas. This was based on the outcomes of surveys along bus and jeepney routes in Metro Manila, which showed many cases of excess number of units (i.e., excess supply). In the end, the MMPTS called for more studies particularly towards the objective of supply-demand rationalization and also to assess the possibility of introducing varied types of services to enhance public transport in the metropolis and adjacent areas (e.g., express, limited stop, etc.).

4.12 MMPTPSS

The Development of a Mega Manila Public Transport Planning Support System (MMPTPSS) study was implemented from 2010 to May 2012 and was the first government-to-government project to be conducted under a memorandum of agreement between the DOTC and the University of the Philippines Diliman. The project’s main objective was to develop a planning support system that can be used by both the DOTC and the LTFRB in The MMPTPSS reiterated the need to change the basis for determining the number of bus or jeepney units serving particular routes. Instead of the simple RMC that is not sensitive to dynamics of overlapping routes and the traffic impacts of public transport, the study recommended for a network based approach employing transport models to assess the impacts of additional units to existing routes or the introduction of new routes.

MMPTPSS further recommended that in terms of passenger demand, routes and modes may be classified and prioritized as follows:

- Routes with Very High Passenger Demand [$>160,000$ passengers per day] – shall be served by high capacity modes such as rail-based transit or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT);

- Routes with High Passenger Demand [100,000 to 160,000 passengers per day] – shall be served by high capacity vehicles such as Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT);
- Routes with Medium Passenger Demand [10,000 to 100,000 passengers per day] – shall be served by PUVs with 60 or less passengers/seats but not less than 22 passengers (excluding driver) such as buses, CLRVs with more than 22 passengers/seats (including driver), or with 90 passengers/seats in the case of double decker or articulated buses;
- Routes with Low Passenger Demand [not exceeding 10,000 passengers per day] – shall be served by PUVs with less than 22 passengers/seats (including driver) such as jeepneys and other paratransit modes.

5. POLICIES

There were also several travel demand management measures implemented in Metro Manila since the early 1990s. These include:

5.1 Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program

The Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP), more popularly known as the number coding scheme, is a vehicle restraint program designed to reduce the volume of vehicles. It started as the Odd-Even Scheme in 1995 and evolved into much of its present form in 1996. The scheme was partly formulated to address traffic congestion brought about by the construction of many transport infrastructure projects around Metro Manila during the 1990's including the MRT-3 and various flyover projects. Table 1 shows the evolution of the UVVRP from 1995 to the present.

Table 1. Evolution of the UVVRP

Year	Evolution of the scheme
1995	Odd-Even Scheme – for private vehicles with less than 3 passengers; major roads only; <u>7:00-9:00 AM and 5:00 – 7:00 PM</u> (Odd – banned T, Th, Sa; Even – banned M, W, F)
Feb 1996	Modified Odd-Even Scheme – included public transport and trucks (Banned: M-1,2; T-3,4; W-5,6; Th-7,8; F-9,0)
Jun 1996	UVVRP – all roads, <u>7:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.</u> , but not including public transport (Banned: M-1,2; T-3,4; W-5,6; Th-7,8; F-9,0)
2003	Modified UVVRP – <u>window = 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.</u> (Banned: M-1,2; T-3,4; W-5,6; Th-7,8; F-9,0)
2010	Modified UVVRP including public transport vehicles like buses, jeepneys and taxis

Source: MMDA, 2011

It is interesting to note that this vehicle restrain scheme now includes public transport vehicles. As such, there is a perception that the extension of the scheme to cover PUVs in effect sends the wrong signal in terms of favoring private transport over public transport.

5.2 Bus management schemes

The MMDA first implemented the Organized Bus Route (OBR) scheme in 2003 with the main and original objective of controlling bus frequency along EDSA by imposing a common dispatching service. Under the scheme, the MMDA set up five control points and eight checkpoints, through which it could monitor and regulate the flow of buses along the routes that ultimately overlap along EDSA. Stickers were affixed on buses with the objective of weeding out “colorum” (illegal) units. The agency then issued “Q” cards to buses in order to manage headways. This manual method was not successful due mainly to operational factors such as the flawed dispatching and slow processing of violations.

The MMDA embarked on upgrading the OBR scheme, this time with the aid of technology in the form of RFID units, which were installed on buses. RFID readers were also installed at the control points along EDSA. The installation of RFID units on buses was again supposed to identify legitimate franchises from illegal units but did not involve the LTFRB, which had the data on the franchises. This initiative was mainly to address the shortcomings of the manual system, in a way automating the OBR scheme. In addition, the MMDA required all buses to paint their license plate numbers on the front, sides and top of the units for easy identification.

A later version of the OBR in 2009 included carbon reduction and the claiming of carbon credits as objectives. A study was commissioned by the MMDA to assess the OBR and the prospect of the carbon reduction. The study also stated among the objectives air pollution and greenhouse gas reductions on top of alleviating traffic congestion and improving the efficiency of bus transport services.

The current scheme is called Bus Management and Dispatch System (BMDS) and is being implemented applies a segregation system that also checks for outstanding traffic violations by bus drivers, utilizing biometrics as a tool for “tagging” drivers. Dispatching is currently conducted at 4 points in Alabang (Muntinlupa), Baclaran (Pasay), Fairview (Quezon City) and Navotas. However, checks for driver violations are currently being conducted only at Fairview and Navotas. Bus drivers found to have outstanding violations are not allowed to travel until they have cleared their cases.

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Missed Opportunity for Timely Development of a Mass Transit System

A review of the past studies indicates that even as early as 1971 there were already recommendations for the implementation of mass transportation system along the major thoroughfares. In fact, as a result of the UTSMMA Study, Manila Rapid Transit Railway Line (RTR) Line 1 was subjected to a feasibility study completed in June 1976. However, despite a favorable assessment in this study, the proposed RTR Line 1 was not implemented after a contrary assessment by a subsequent study, MMETROPLAN. Subsequent studies also recommended the implementation of several light railway transit and a bus-based mass transit system along EDSA. However, despite these recommendations, the EDSA MRT was constructed, instead of a bus-based system. It is likewise noteworthy that despite all these recommendations, there is still no definitive plan for an integrated and efficient transportation system in Metro Manila.

6.2 Key Reforms Arising from the Past Studies

Several recommended policy reforms have been undertaken and sustained. These include:

- Reduction of the validity of the Certificates of Public Convenience (CPCs) from 25 years to several years (MMETROPLAN)
- Implementation of new franchising system with standards covering: 1) citizenship, 2) route opening, 3) operating performance, and 4) financial capability. Route opening was rationalization through the adoption of the Route Measured Capacity (JUMSUT2)
- Reduction of competition between PUBs and PUJs by controlling entry of the latter in bus routes (MMUTIP)
- Number coding scheme (which has been sustained through the years)

One recommended travel demand management scheme, cordon pricing, has remained a plan.

6.3 Political Economy in Transport Reforms

Despite the recommendations from numerous studies for urban transportation development, the urban transportation system in Metro Manila, particularly its mass transportation, has remained underdeveloped. Based on the empirical evidence gleaned from the past Studies and validation through discussions with key informants, the failure to implement transport reforms may be attributed:

1) Inherent weaknesses in key government agencies:

For DOTC, these have been identified as:

- Ineffective Operational Structure to Enforce Transport Plans and Programs
The agency has not taken ownership of the major recommendations of the past transport studies in Metro Manila. Thus, there is no existing comprehensive blue print for transport development. Thus, with every change of administration, it tends to re-invent the wheel so to speak. It is perceived as an agency, which constantly commissions studies with no corresponding effective implementation plan.
- Fragmented planning of urban transport due to its modal organizational set-up

For MMDA, these weaknesses include:

- Failure to command respect from the member-LGUs;
- Lack of human resource and professional expertise to properly and effectively deliver on its mandates;
- Has been reduced to doing mostly mere coordinative work rather than actual delivery of metro-wide services due to overlapping mandates with other agencies. Although this is slowly shifting, with MMDA taking more initiatives;
- Limited powers and budget compared to its seventeen (17) member-LGUs whose powers are guaranteed by the 1987 Philippine Constitution and the Local Government Code of 1991;

2) Inter-agency politics

Apart from these internal weaknesses, coordination between the pertinent agencies is

also hampered by their need to protect their territories. Penchant for this action of these agencies can spring from two motivations: perceived encroachment on the agency's mandate and competition for dominance in implementing 'legacy projects'.

3) Inter-administration Politics

Heads of national agencies are appointed by the President of the Philippines and serve at his/her pleasure for the duration of the Presidential term. Experience has shown that when a new Secretary/Head assumes office, the strategic direction of the agency changes, in accordance with the thrust of the new administration and the predisposition of the new head and the President. Thus, without a clear agency wide blueprint for urban transportation development, reforms cannot be sustained beyond the political term of a president.

Another arena when inter-administration politics is played out is between local chief executives of Metro Manila.

7. CONCLUSION

This Study has demonstrated that plans that have been recommended through Studies are not enough to effect urban transport reforms in Metro Manila. Therefore, in moving forward with urban transport reforms, it is critical to ask: How will Metro Manila move to an era of modern transport that should be equitable, inclusive, and environment-friendly?

This paper puts forward several potential key elements for the successful implementation of urban transport projects and programs:

- a) Strong leadership and competent institutions – to sustain urban reforms beyond politics, it is critical to strengthen the capacities of lead agencies, particularly DOTC and MMDA, in putting together a comprehensive blueprint for urban transport development in the Metropolis to ensure continuity of efforts.
- b) Strong political champion – personal commitments of national and local officials and their relationships play a dominant factor in ensure the selection and implementation of projects favored by these officials.
- c) Political will of local chief executives – urban transport reforms in Metro Manila will most likely cover several local government units. Strong political will of local chief executives is seen to be a critical factor in moving urban transport reforms forward.

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