


STIMULUS AND SOCIAL AMELIORATION FOR THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY


On 14 April 2020, Move Metro Manila together with the Mobility Coalition¹ issued a statement and recommendations regarding the provision of public transportation services once conditions permit a partial resumption of economic activity, particularly in major metropolitan areas.


One of the key recommendations is for **road-based transport (buses, minibuses, modern jeepneys and vans) to be contracted and paid for by government and provided for free** (until cashless fare collection can be introduced). Contracting and paying transport operators to provide services will avoid cash handling (which can spread the virus), eliminate incentives for overcrowding, ensure proper hygienic measures, and enable centrally coordinated operations. Because of physical distancing and limits on passenger loading (DOTr has indicated possibly a limit of only 30% of the normal capacity for buses and trains), public transport services will not be viable unless they are contracted to provide the services, regardless of ridership. A budget should be provided urgently so that DOTr and concerned local government units will have sufficient resources to charter the public utility vehicles needed to maintain adequate public transport services.

To implement this proposal, a stimulus package for transportation worth PhP 25.1 Billion is earnestly sought. The proposed financing package has two parts: (a) a budget to enable national and local authorities to contract for public transport services; and (b) a budget for technical assistance and capacity building of national and local officials involved in implementing this transformative program. For details, please see **Annex A**. Further details on the operationalization of the proposal is in **Annex B**.

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¹ Move Metro Manila is an informal coalition of mobility advocates in Metro Manila. It organizes consultations and dialogues with transportation experts, stakeholders, and policy makers to contribute to the discourse on and improvement of people mobility. Move Metro Manila is a member of the Mobility Coalition, composed of interest/advocacy groups and civil society organizations that share a vision of inclusive and environmentally sustainable mobility in the Philippines.

Annex A

PROPOSED PROVISIONS ON TRANSPORTATION FOR THE STIMULUS BILL

WHEREAS, the prevailing business model for delivery of road-based public transport services, with many uncoordinated transport operators reliant on farebox revenues and engaged in on-street competition for passengers, is not appropriate in a situation where strict passenger loading limits and sanitary measures are required;

WHEREAS, the increase in operating costs and the reduction in the carrying capacity of public transport vehicles, due to requirements for physical distancing and sanitary measures, may render many forms of public transportation services financially unviable;

WHEREAS, public transportation, as an essential service, needs to remain in operation with hygienic and physical distancing measures and the flexibility to assign vehicles to routes where they are most needed;

WHEREAS, the pressures for greater private motor vehicle use in urban areas will need to be aggressively resisted by increasing the attractiveness and convenience of the efficient and environmentally sustainable travel modes;

WHEREAS, national government funding to sustain public transport services will not only help to address urgent mobility needs, but will also provide employment in places that have experienced major job losses and enable the transportation industry to avoid a costly and irreversible contraction;

PROPOSED TEXT FOR SECTION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

CHAPTER ____ MEASURES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

SEC. _____. *Ensuring Mobility in Metropolitan Areas and Cities*--The sum of twenty five billion one hundred million pesos (Php 25,100,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated to supplement the Fiscal Year 2020 budget under the Republic Act No. 11465, or the General Appropriations Act of 2020 towards the following:

- a) Twenty-five billion (Php 25,000,000,000.00) for contracting by national and local authorities of buses and other public utility vehicles (PUVs) to provide public transportation services in the National Capital Region, in Cebu City and its surrounding local government units (LGUs), and in other Philippine cities, to be administered by the Department of Transportation (DOTr); and

- b) One hundred million pesos (Php 100,000,000.00) for the design and delivery of technical support and capacity building programs to enable DOTr and LGUs to monitor, control and manage the contracted operations of buses and other PUVs, to be administered by DOTr.

Provided further that concerned national agencies and LGUs will be guided by the following principles in the planning and operationalization of the abovementioned transportation modes:

- i. That DOTr will provide guidance and support to other government agencies and LGUs in the contracting of public transport services, including but not limited to, template contracts, contracting procedures and training for both LGUs and transport operators;
- ii. That public transport operators contracted to provide transportation services by national agencies or local government units will be issued without delay appropriate franchises to operate by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB);
- iii. That traffic control measures and the management of road space in cities will give highest priority to public transportation, pedestrians and bicycles, given that these modes are able to move larger numbers of people with greater efficiency than private motor vehicles;
- iv. That the design and utilization of all road and bridge infrastructure in cities will be guided by the objective of moving the greatest number of people, rather than objectives, targets or performance measures that focus on increasing the throughput or speed of motor vehicles;
- v. That development and improvement of public transportation facilities and pedestrian infrastructure will be in accordance with universal accessibility design principles, as required under BP Blg. 344, RA 7277 as amended, RA 10028 and with any relevant issuances of the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA);
- vi. That DOTr will move as soon as possible to establish an integrated system for cashless fare collection in all cities so that fares can be collected on the abovementioned contracted public transport services with maximum convenience for commuters; and
- vii. That national and local authorities institute measures to enable the contracted PUVs to achieve faster travel times by providing them, where possible, with exclusive lanes, introducing “car-free” corridors and/or

window hours, implementing road de-congestion charging schemes, and offering PUVs traffic signal priority at intersections.

The DOTr, the DBM and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall jointly issue the rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this Chapter.

Annex B

CONTRACTING OF ROAD-BASED PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES

Road-based Public Transport Should Be Safe, Hygienic, Integrated and Reliable.²

For road-based public transport, contracting and paying transport operators to provide services will avoid cash handling (which can spread the virus), enable central coordination of transport services, and eliminate incentives to overload vehicles with passengers. During the MCQ period, and until cashless fare collection can be organized for road-based public transport, a budget will need to be provided by the national government to DOTr and LGUs to cover the cost of these contracts. For Metro Manila, contracting about 3,000 buses and 10,000 vans/modern jeepneys to provide public transport services will require a budget of about P4 billion per month³. The budget should be appropriated and funds disbursed to DOTr and LGUs to allow them to contract for transport services as soon as possible.

1. ***By chartering or contracting bus, minibus, and van services, government can control the availability of public transport services and deploy spare capacity to where it is most needed.*** Government cannot leave the supply of public transport to the discretion of individual transport operators. Physical distancing requirements will not permit a return to the traditional approach of having many fragmented transport operators and drivers collecting farebox revenues and competing for passengers. The use of service contracts, with real time monitoring and incentives for performance, would enable transport operators to deliver services in the absence of fare collection.
2. ***High-volume “trunk” services are best organized by DOTr, while the “feeder or branch” bus/mini-bus/modern jeepney/van services can be organized by LGUs.*** High-volume corridors should be served by buses contracted and paid for by the Department of Transportation (DOTr). Within Metro Manila, about 3,000 buses can serve about 8-12 mass transit corridors or “trunk” routes. “Feeder or branch” route services, using contracted buses/minibuses/modern jeepneys⁴/vans, can bring passengers closer to their destinations. These services are best organized by local government units (LGUs) or other government agencies. Within Metro Manila LGUs, 10,000 vehicles (say, 100 routes with an average of 100 vehicles each) could be mobilized for the “feeder or branch” services.

² Earlier there were suggestions that perhaps private enterprises should just organize the transportation for their own workers. It would neither be practical nor efficient for the government to leave each organization or private enterprise to contract its own employee shuttle services. This would only result in the largest firms capturing most of the available transportation capacity for their own needs, leaving smaller enterprises unserved.

³ This assumes a daily charter cost of P20,000 per 11-13-meter bus for 2 shifts of drivers and operating for 16 hours daily for a distance of up to 300 kms; and a daily charter cost of P6,000 for a van (L300 or Grandia type), coaster or modern jeepney for 2 shifts of drivers and operating for 16 hours and for a distance of up to 300 kms.

3. ***Ideally, there should be one contract for each public transport corridor or route with a single transport operator (the single contract can include vehicles from the operator’s own fleet plus vehicles and drivers subcontracted from other operators).*** In each corridor or route, a coordinating public transport operator, one with technical capability to serve as corridor fleet manager (such as IT systems to monitor and direct all vehicles on the same corridor in real time), would be contracted to deliver public transport services. The coordinating public utility vehicle (PUV) operator shall be responsible for consolidating and subcontracting other operators under the same contract. The contracts should be flexible enough to enable DOTr or LGUs to shift vehicles from one route/corridor to another in order to augment services in other areas when needed.
4. ***To manage physical distancing at bus stops, train stations and terminals, enforcement staff of LTO, MMDA, and LGUs should be deployed as “Physical Distancing Ambassadors”.*** “Physical Distancing Ambassadors” should be assigned at each bus stop and train station platform to prevent people from entering buses or trains when the safe limits have been reached; they should also help to manage physical distancing for the queues at bus stops, terminals and stations. At the same time, while people are in queues prior to entering a train station or a bus, the “Physical Distancing Ambassadors” can help to measure body temperature and check identification documents to ensure that the person traveling is authorized to travel. With proper identification checks prior to boarding the vehicles, each PUV should be permitted to move through checkpoints without stopping, so that faster travel speeds can be maintained.
5. ***Contracts for PUV operators should include physical distancing and sanitary measures; LGU, DOTr and LTFRB roles will be to check on compliance.*** Passenger load on each vehicle should not exceed 50% of the vehicle’s capacity (including driver and conductor); passengers should be seated one seat apart; no standing passengers should be allowed. Drivers and passengers will need to wear masks at all times. Vehicles are to be disinfected twice daily with all surfaces (especially seats, armrests, handles) wiped down with disinfecting agent. Where possible, the driver compartment should be sealed off from the passenger area using non-permeable, transparent material. There should be a health and temperature check of all drivers prior to vehicle dispatch. Transport company offices and depots should be subject to strict physical distancing and sanitary measures. LGU, LTFRB and DOTr roles will include checking on operator compliance with these rules.
6. ***Public transport will require priority in the use of road space; “Car-free window hours” on major roads are strongly recommended.*** To increase public transport capacities, it will be important to assign exclusive lanes for public utility

vehicles wherever possible and to give public utility vehicles (PUVs) priority at every traffic signal intersection (e.g., public utility vehicles are offered a “green light” ahead of the lanes for private motor vehicles). By enabling buses and other PUVs to move faster and have more round trips, we can create “additional” capacity in the transportation system so that PUVs carry more passengers in the course of a day even with physical distancing and limiting the number of passengers per trip. One measure could be to have a “PUV, shuttle buses, taxis, walking and cycling only” window hours for major urban roads during peak periods (6:00 am to 9:00 am; 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm); cars would be permitted on major roads outside of these window hours.