

# Cagayan de Oro City:

## REVIVAL OF THE CITY CENTER



### Background

Cagayan de Oro City is the capital city of the province of Misamis Oriental. It has a total land area of 48,885 hectares. It is located along the central coast of Northern Mindanao. It is bordered in the south by Bukidnon Province, the food basket of Mindanao, in the west by the Municipality of Opol, Misamis Oriental, and to the east by Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental. It is connected to Iligan City, touted to be the Industrial Center of the South, through the 187-kilometer Cagayan-Iligan Corridor (CIC).

### Socio-Demographic Profile of Citizens

According to the 2000 census, there are 470,000 individuals in 200,000 households in the city. 44% of the population is composed of young people aged 0-17 years. It is ranked 9<sup>th</sup> most populous city in the country with an average population growth rate of 4.45%, much higher than the regional average of 2.32%. An estimated 94% of the population resides in urban *barangays*.

Forty-four percent (44%) of the population in the City classify themselves as Bisaya, 22.15% Cebuano, 4.38% Boholano, and 28.07% as other ethnic groups. The city's major languages are Cebuano/Visayan, English and Tagalog. Cebuano and Visayan are the main dialects used in everyday transactions. Literacy rate is pegged at 98.74%, much higher than the regional average of 85%.

Although the presence of women in the workforce has increased from 40.94% in 1990 to 45% in 1995, men still dominate the workforce at 55%. The Cagayan de Oro City Comprehensive Land Use Plan

for 2000-2010 (CLUP 2000) estimates a 30,000-strong workforce available in the City. Its manpower is considered by the City as one of its major strengths. Figure 13 shows the population of the city from 1970 to 2000.

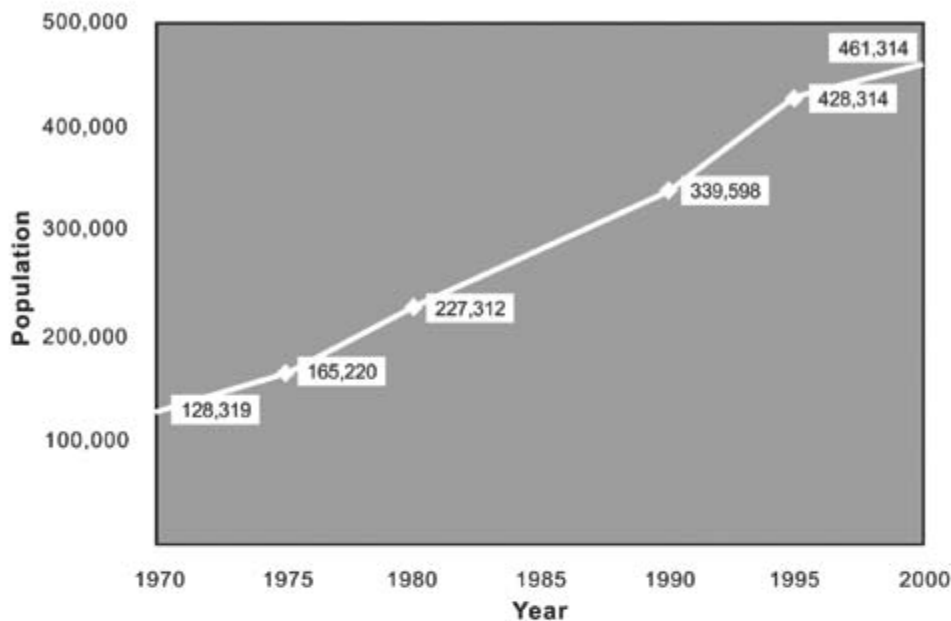


Figure 13. Population of Cagayan de Oro City, 1970-2000

### Development Challenges

The vision of Cagayan de Oro City as stated in CLUP 2000 is to become *“A peaceful, orderly, livable city with a modern trading and services center where there are equal opportunities for its disciplined citizens to develop and prosper in a clean and healthy environment”* by 2010.

Cagayan de Oro City is strategically located between two major corridors in Northern Mindanao connecting major growth areas. These are the Iligan-Cagayan-Butuan Highway and the Bukidnon-Davao Highway. As such, it serves as a transshipment point as well as an agro-industrial and trading center. The CIC Master Plan of 1991 as stated in the CLUP 2000 envisions that through the development of the CIC, Cagayan de Oro will serve as the service center that will support and complement the development of the other towns and cities of Northern Mindanao.

The city's development potential is heightened by the fact that Northern Mindanao is a principal stakeholder of the North Coast Economic Growth Cluster of Mindanao. It has two Area Development Zones (ADZs): the CIC and the Panguil Bay-Mt. Malindang ADZ.

One of the challenges for transport development in Cagayan de Oro is the presence of seven rivers, with Cagayan de Oro River being the main tributary cutting through it. As such, the role in trade of transport infrastructures like bridges is very important. The number of registered motor vehicles increased by 67% between 1990 and 1998 and resulted to the inadequacy of the existing road system and the two bridges (Kagay-an and Maharlika) to handle traffic.

Another problem identified by local stakeholders is the narrow roads with mostly asphalt pavement or overlay in the city central area. These roads also have heavily built-up sections alongside the existing road network. Inadequate parking spaces and encroachment of sidewalk vendors in the central business

district (CBD) also reduce the capacity of the existing road system. Consequently, it also degrades the appearance of the city as a trade and services center. In some areas, transportation infrastructure development is delayed due to conflicts in road right-of-way (ROW).

**Key Transport and Environment Issues**

**Transport**

Based on the concerns articulated by the stakeholders during the Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Conference in Cagayan de Oro City, transport problems in the City are caused by the following:

- Rapid increase of vehicles plying the city (PUVs/Private)

**Table 13.** Comparison of Vehicle Registration in Cagayan de O between Years 1998 and 2006

Type of Vehicle	Year		
	1998	2006	
<b>Cars</b>	6,209	5,765	-7.15
<b>UV</b>	13,136	14,883	13.30
<b>SUV</b>	-	1,618	na
<b>Trucks</b>	3,136	3,397	8.32
<b>Buses</b>	1,152	435	-62.24
<b>MC</b>	9,301	12,334	32.61
<b>Trailers</b>	284	121	-57.39
<b>Total</b>	33,218	38,553	16.06

- Narrow roads with poor pavement conditions

Cagayan de Oro City’s existing road system is constricted by built-up areas in most areas. As of 1999, 83.32% of the city roads are unpaved. National roads passing through the City, which runs for 81.181 kilometers, are only 89.69% paved.

**Table 14.** City Roads by Category (1999)

Road Category	Length (in kilometer)	Percentage (%)
1.) Concrete	102.589	27.08
2.) Asphalt	27.529	7.26
3.) Gravel	239.866	83.32
4.) Earth	8.802	2.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>378.786</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 15. National Roads within Cagayan de Oro City (1999)

Road Category	Length (in kilometer)	Percentage (%)
1.) Concrete	39.636	48.82
2.) Asphalt	33.181	40.87
3.) Gravel	8.371	10.31
Total	81.185	100.00

- Limited physical connection between East and West districts

One of the main causes of traffic congestion in the City was the lack of bridges. For a long time there were only two bridges connecting the east and west districts: the Kagayan Bridge in Carmen and Maharlika Bridge along the National Highway.

- Number of PUVs exceeds the demand for available passengers
- Presence of unauthorized/illegal terminals and stalled vehicles along restricted streets
- Presence of vendors and stockpiles in the street and alleys/walk-ways/shoulder of the road and in front of establishments
- Presence of out-of-line and off-route PUJs, *motorelas* (motorcycles with side cars) and *tricycad* (bicycles with side cars)
- Duplicated lines or service routes of *motorelas*
- Lack of traffic lights, traffic signs and road/street markings/directional signs in some parts
- Lack of discipline and education among drivers, motorists, conductors, riding public and pedestrians as manifested in indiscriminate loading and unloading.

### Environment

According to the data collected by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) in cooperation with Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro's Total Suspended Particles (TSP) exceeded the standard set by the DENR. This was observed in the monitoring station located near the transport terminal in Agora Market in Lapasan. It was also monitored that SO<sub>2</sub> concentration was within the standard. The environmental condition, specifically air quality, is considered to be generally good. Figure 14 shows the concentrations of air pollutants.



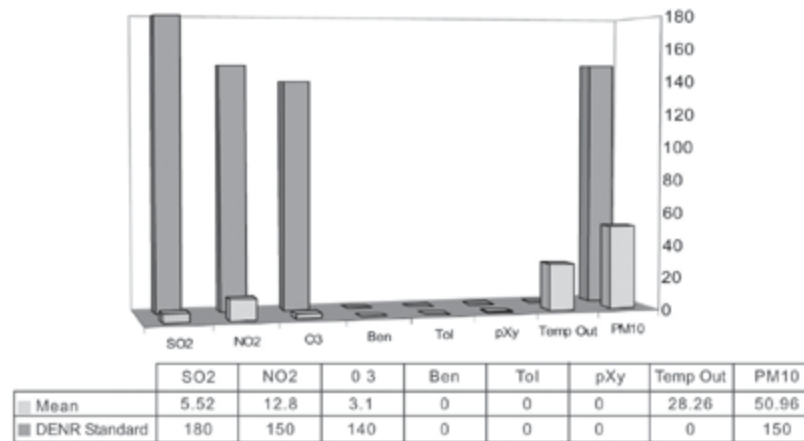


Figure 14. Inventory of Air Pollutants in the City

### Transport and Environment Management Context

The local government of Cagayan de Oro City acknowledges the importance of an efficient traffic management in economic development. It created the Roads and Traffic Administration through Ordinance No. 6535-98. It has also diligently prepared a comprehensive land use plan for 2000-2010. It is set to revise the aforementioned plan by 2008. Before the CLUP, physical framework plans were used to guide transportation infrastructure development. However, it was also very dependent on foreign funding. Thus, it can be surmised that the management context of the city is a combination of conscious planning in the part of the local government unit and availability of grants. Projects with foreign funding are implemented faster.

#### Specific Programs and Initiatives

To address urban transportation issues, the following programs and initiatives are being pursued by the local government unit:

##### *Land Use Strategy to Decongest the CBD*

Based on the 2000 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, apart from the Central Business District (CBD), there are also four secondary urban growth centers envisioned to support the vision of Cagayan de Oro City as a trade and services center. One is the western urban expansion area is located in Barangays Bulua and Bayabas covering 220 hectares. It serves as one of the main loading points for goods, people and transport movements to and from the Western part of Mindanao, including Iligan City. To be developed in the area are the Intergrated Bus and Jeepney Terminal and a 100-hectare commercial complex to decongest the CBD. Another is the West-Uptown Urban Expansion Area located in Barangays Carmen and Canitoan near the Lumbia Airport. This area is to be developed into a low density residential and business area. To date, there are two major developments in the area, the Pueblo de Oro Township, a golf course cum residential development, and Xavier Estate. Third is the East-Uptown Urban Expansion Area comprised of Barangays Camaman-an and Indahag. It will be the site of the proposed 100-hectare high-end residential area to be developed by Fil Estate Development. Last is the Eastern Urban Growth Area comprised of Barangays Agusan, Puerto and Bugo. This is the regional industrial center adjoining the eastern portion of the city. Nestle Philippines, Pepsi Bottling Company, Legaspi Oil, Del Monte Philippines, Inc. and Vitarich are located in this area. About 15% of the population of the City resides in this area and it constitutes the labor force for the aforementioned companies. To facilitate development, the International Containerized Port Terminal will be constructed. This area is linked to other major cities in Mindanao such as of Davao and Butuan.

### *Terminal Development*

In line with the identified urban growth areas, terminals have also been strategically positioned to handle inter-city traffic. The West Bound Integrated Terminal located in Barangay Bulua handles traffic from Iligan City and other urban growth centers in Western Mindanao. The East Bound Integrated Terminal in Barangay Gusa handles traffic from nearby municipalities and the cities of Davao and Butuan.

### *Revitalization of the Divisoria Area*

Mayor Constantino Jaraula signed Executive Order 2007 CGJ 018 ordering, among others, the clearing of the sidewalks along Gen. Capistrano Street leading to St. Augustine Metropolitan Cathedral and around Gaston Park. This initiative has revitalized Divisoria, the traditional CBD where most businesses and financing institutions are concentrated. The City also started the practice of closing the roads in this area during Friday nights for the Night Café where the citizens of the City join in a night of food and music. According to discussions with the City Planning and Development Office, it is envisioned that the Divisoria area will become a pedestrian-friendly area in the future.

The City is serious in its intent to create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Part of its plan is the construction of the Golden Mile connecting the City Hall area to Divisoria and onwards.

### *Professionalization of the Road Traffic Administration (RTA)*

The Road Traffic Administration (RTA) was created through Codified Ordinance No. 4373-94 as the Traffic Management and Enforcement Bureau (TMEB). The ordinance provides that TMEB is to be supported by a Traffic Management Board (TMB) which includes the Land Transportation Office (LTO) Regional Director, Philippine National Police City Director and Land Transportation Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB) Director. Although the functions of TMEB were identified, there were no complimentary positions created. The subsequent Ordinance No. 6535-98 renaming TMEB to Roads and Traffic Administration (RTA) likewise did not have provisions for positions.

This oversight was addressed by Ordinance No. 8019-2002 which created the organizational chart of the RTA. However, there are still no permanent positions existing for the RTA to date. All employees are either from other units of the local government offices detailed to RTA or contractual workers. The proposal by the current head of RTA is to professionalize the organization in line with its operational and administrative systems. There are two components of the proposal: 1) organizational transformation which would entail the establishment of standards for recruitment, promotion and salary; and 2) operational transformation, including a system for recruiting volunteers to augment RTA workforce at lower cost to the government and setting up of an environmental-friendly traffic system.

### *RTA Comprehensive Traffic System Program*

One of the programs of the RTA is the Comprehensive Traffic System Program, which hopes to address transport woes through the use of education and enforcement. Strategies under this program include dismantling of illegal terminals, removal of stalled vehicles, towing of illegally parked vehicles, sidewalk clearing, apprehension of out-of-line public transport modes, removal of barkers and smokers and education and discipline of drivers, commuters, and pedestrians.

### *River taxi*

Taking advantage of the fact that the main tributary of the Cagayan de Oro River passes through the heart of the City, the local government unit intends to open a river taxi along the rivers banks that separate the city's east and west districts. This is in coordination with the general aim of decentralizing the transportation haywire that begets the city proper.



### *Bridge Development*

Because of the City's topography, bridge development is of paramount importance. There are now three new bridges connecting the east and west parts of the city: Ysalina Bridge, Kauswagan Bridge, and South Diversion-Pelaez Bridge. This brings to five the total number of bridges servicing the City.

### **Successes Achieved**

The relocation of bus terminals to outside the Central Business District resulted to a decrease in the number of buses when the west and east integrated terminals were constructed and operated.

Moreover, the program of revitalizing the Central Business District (Divisoria) through the clearing of sidewalks and the Night Café increased urban amenities and private sector participation. The local government officials have noticed the eagerness of the private sector to participate and contribute to the re-development of the area.

### **Lessons Learned**

The terminal system has shown relative success and the following issues still needs to be resolved:

- Although the infrastructure is now in place, there are still operational concerns that must be addressed such as the presence of barkers and undisciplined drivers and operators
- Government subsidy for the project
- Sanitation in the area
- Choice of a strategic location

### **Future directions**

There are several best practices in the city under consideration. These are:

- Construction of Integrated Terminals at the main entry points to the city to handle inter-city traffic movement
- Institutionalization of the Roads and Traffic Administration
- Openness of the local government unit and the universities to cooperate with one another, bringing the possibility of a research-based planning

To enhance the successes achieved, the challenges for Cagayan de Oro are:

- To develop a clear integrated plan for the city which would include transport infrastructure as well as soft mobility measures
- Continue the strong political will of the government
- Elicit strong support from the civil society and private sector
- Training of manpower to strengthen capability to pursue programs geared towards promoting EST

### **References**

Cagayan de Oro Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2000 (covering the period 2000-2010)

Presentations during the EST Seminar Workshop in Cagayan de Oro City, September 20, 2007

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