

# Local Public Transport Route Plan

By EnP. Joemier D. Pontawe

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ON BEHALF of Department of Transportation (DOTr), the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), I will be focusing my presentation on the Local Public Transport Route Plan (LPTRP). Traditionally, the determination of public transportation routes that will be granted franchise has solely rested on the Road Transport Planning Division of the DOTr, composed of inter-agency personnel from the road sector. The route assessments are based on request from private operators. Imagine a national government unit going to the regions and evaluating these proposals just for financial viability and a quick assessment on how they interact with existing public transport routes. More often than not, the approved routes are not integrated nor interconnected with one another due to different interests. These requests from private operators also require local government unit (LGU) endorsements before getting approved. This is the main reason why in 2017, alongside the implementation of Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP), the DILG and DOTr signed JMC 001, Series of 2017 to institutionalize the LPTRP.

LPTRP is basically a detailed plan route network with specific modes of transportation and required number of units per mode for delivering land transport services. This is the basis now in the minimum requirement prescribed for the issuance of PUV franchises. We integrate the local transport masterplan or even the comprehensive land use plan (CLUP) and comprehensive develop plan (CDP) of LGUs. Also, the LPTRP envisions to make the routes more responsive to demand, since LGUs now have the authority to propose routes based on local demands. It also

envisions to assign appropriate vehicle type depending on demand, road hierarchy, and configuration. LGUs need to come up with evidence-based recommendations and plans since we also have prescribed passenger per hour per direction for each specific mode of transportation. So an LGU cannot just propose without an evidence based on passenger demand and plan public transport reforms, considering the local situation and goals.

We acknowledge that local governments are in a better position to identify local public transport requirements because they are also in-charge of formulating the CLUP, zoning plans, and traffic management plans, among other local plans. Based on the JMC, these are the jurisdictions of the local governments. They are in-charge of intra-city and intra-municipality routes. We acknowledge that most cities and municipalities do not have intra-city routes and that is why we are asking them to submit existing plans to just mention that they do not have intra-city routes for tricycles. With that, we will be issuing special notices of compliance. Our focus now is with the provincial governments, since they are in-charge of inter-city and inter-municipality routes and the public transport routes nationwide within the jurisdiction of provincial governments. And for the DOTr through the LTFRB, we are in-charge of the inter-provincial and the inter-regional routes, the routes between and among independent component cities, intercity and inter-municipal routes within the MUCEP area (Metro Manila and some adjacent cities and municipalities in Rizal, Laguna, Cavite and Bulacan).

This is the LPTRP process (Figure 1). Before we required the LPTRP in 2018 for the submission, we conducted capacity building

activities. These are month-long capacity building activities per LGU, so it was not just DOTr and LTFRB releasing the manual. We went to their specific locations. The one-month capacity building activities were inclusive of service on the ground. And at the end of the month-long trainings, 95% of LGUs who attended the training were required to present their draft LPTRPs. Suffice to say, at the end of all these trainings from February to November 2018, all of those who attended the trainings already have their drafts. So we expected LGUs to formulate their plans. Then for LTFRB and DOTr, depending on the type of LGU, we did an evaluation of the route plans. After successful evaluation, a notice of compliance will be issued by the board of the LTFRB to be adopted by the LGU into a local ordinance. This adoption will ensure the institutionalization of the LPTRP. Then after the adoption of the LPTRP and ordinance is implementation, wherein LTFRB will conduct the transparent operator selection process, primarily based on

the adopted LPTRP.

For a quick status update, as of November 12, 2021, around 749 LGUs have already submitted their plans. Of these 749 LGUs, 65 are already approved and given notices of compliance and special NOC. We can see the huge gap between the submitted and the approved LPTRPs. This was primarily due to the Covid-19 pandemic. LGUs were more focused on Covid-19 response. We did not have more of that back and forth coordination for the revision. We went directly to the LGUs or conducted online workshops with them to revise the plans and right there and then, approved the LPTRPs. Of these 65 LPTRPs that are with NOCs, 21 already passed an ordinance adopting the approved routes.

One of the key challenges as well was the trainings were held in February-November of 2018 and elections were held in May 2019, so a significant percentage of people who were

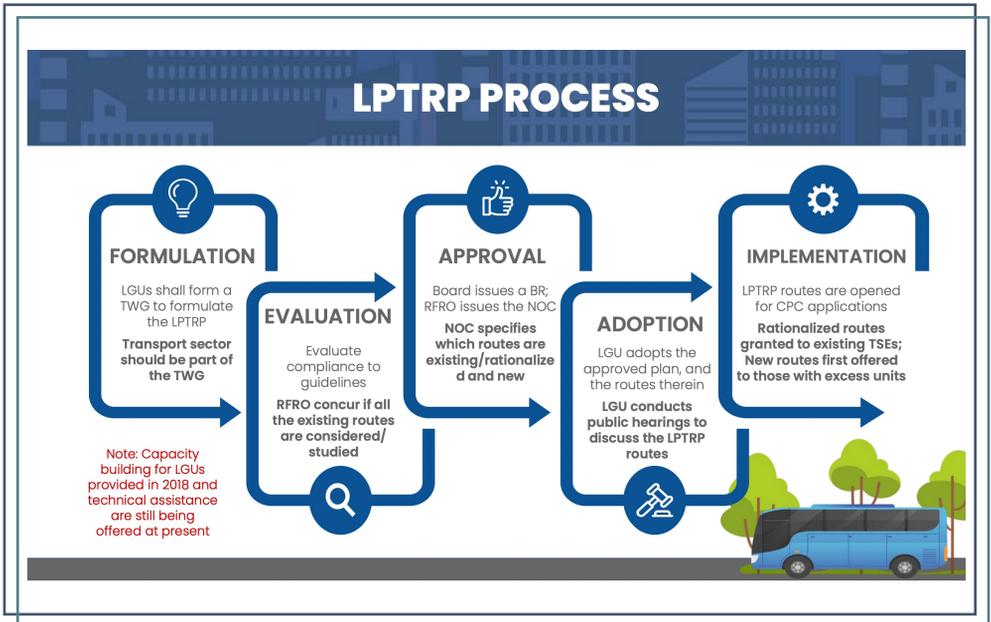


Figure 1. LPTRP Process

trained and who were in charge of doing the LPTRPs transferred to other government agencies after the elections. The institutional memory for LPTRP facilitation was also a challenge during that time.

Here are some key policies that were institutionalized for the LPTRP: First, the DOTr Department Order 2017-11, or the Omnibus Franchising Guidelines (OFG) that layouts the LPTRP requirement for franchise issuance. Second, the DOTr-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 001 Series of 2017 that was signed the same day with the OFG. Third is the Memorandum Circular No. 2018-60 which highlights the need for LGUs to attend the capacity building activities. This is also the only document which has a penalty clause for non-compliance with the LPTRP requirement for LGUs. And lastly, just this year, DILG issued a memorandum to LGUs to ensure full support on the implementation of the PUV Modernization Program and the immediate submission of the LPTRP manual.

We acknowledge in the department the challenges. in the implementation of the program. In the succeeding weeks or months, LTFRB will release its revised timelines for the implementation of PUVMP. We acknowledge the challenges with the 2022 target, so we came up with a more realistic timeline for PUV modernization, for consolidation, and even for the LPTRP requirement. We will be updating the public as soon as we have this timeline approved. Thank you very much and I will be answering a few questions during the open forum later.

# About the Speaker

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EnP. Joemier Pontawe is a PhD candidate in Urban Planning at the School of Architecture and Planning of the University of Auckland. He is a licensed Environmental (Urban) Planner. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, magna cum laude, and Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of the Philippines Diliman. He is also currently connected with the Department of Transportation as the Program Manager of the PUV Modernization Program.

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