

## **Redesigning Philippine Land Transport Governance Towards Improving Commuter Service Quality**

Ramir Seraphim Llarinas ANGELES<sup>a</sup>, Nicole Anne Alvarillo COBARRUBIAS<sup>b</sup>,  
Reycel Hyacenth Nacario BENDANA<sup>c</sup>, Kenneth Isaiah Ibasco ABANTE<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a,b,c</sup> *Transport Governance Research Team, Move As One Coalition*

<sup>a</sup>*E-mail: ramir.angeles@gmail.com*

<sup>b</sup>*E-mail: nicoleannecobarrubias@gmail.com*

<sup>c</sup>*Fellow, WeSolve Foundation; Coordinator, Move As One Coalition; E-mail: hyabendana@gmail.com*

<sup>d</sup>*Research Faculty, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Ateneo de Manila University; President, WeSolve Foundation; E-mail: kabante@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** The Philippine transportation system is characterized by systemic challenges, having some of the world's worst traffic congestion, poor public transport quality, and among the least walkable cities. The study investigates the root causes of the country's land transport issues associated with transport governance. Through a review of local and international transport governance policies and practices, and consultations with government, civil society, and academe, issues in Philippine land transport governance are explored at the institutional level. The following issues in Philippine land transport governance were revealed: poor institutionalization of people-oriented transport policies and programs; and inconsistent transport policy, project development and implementation related to fragmented coordination between government agencies. The research proposes two recommendations that attempt to reform Philippine land transport governance by rationalizing existing national transport institutions and empowering local transport governance, as well as exploring the establishment of a unified national transportation institution similar to those practiced by neighboring developed countries.

**Keywords:** land transport governance, Philippine transport, transport service quality, commuter metrics, transport policy

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine transportation system is characterized by systemic challenges, with Philippine cities under the pressures of worsening traffic congestion (GIZ, 2019) and an increasing number of road crashes per day (MMDA, 2023). Mass transport systems have been perceived by Filipino commuters to be inaccessible, unsafe, and costly – making them less preferable to private vehicles (Mayo and Taboada, 2021). The root causes of this deterioration of Philippine urban transport systems point towards limitations and insufficiencies of transport planning, public budgeting, design, data, and policy, among many others (GIZ 2019; Suzara, Abante, et al. 2021). This paper investigates another root cause: **a fragmented and car-centric land transport governance structure.**

## 1.1. OVERVIEW OF PHILIPPINE LAND TRANSPORT GOVERNANCE

Philippine land-based transport governance is characterized by a highly centralized structure, where the majority of responsibilities lie with national government agencies (Romero et al., 2014). The Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) play pivotal roles in formulating transport policies, planning infrastructure development, and coordinating national transport initiatives. NEDA, in particular, leads in setting overarching national transportation policies and guides major projects through bodies like the INFRACOM and Investment Coordination Committee (ICC). Meanwhile, the DOTr oversees regional and intra-city public transport planning, ensuring alignment with broader socio economic goals outlined in the Philippine Development Plan and National Transport Policy.

At the operational level, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) assumes a critical role in designing and maintaining the national highway network and other transport infrastructure (Romero et al., 2014). This includes urban and regional roads crucial for national connectivity. The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), under the DOTr, regulates public transport operations nationwide, employing a franchising system to manage routes and ensure compliance with safety and service standards. Despite this centralized framework, local governments (LGUs) have significant responsibilities under the Local Government Code of 1991, focusing on local transport planning and infrastructure maintenance. LGUs develop Local Public Transport Route Plans as mandated by the DOTr and LTFRB, particularly for intra-city transport needs. However, challenges persist, impacting overall transport efficiency and accessibility, such as fragmented infrastructure, safety concerns, and varying levels of urban mobility integration.

Table 1 shows the main land transport objectives and mandates of national government transport institutions.

**Table 1. National government transport institutions and functions**

Road transport objectives and components	National Government Agency responsible
(1) Policy formulation	DOTr, NEDA, DPWH
(2) Transport development planning	DOTr, NEDA, DPWH
(3) Infrastructure development and engineering	DOTr, DPWH
(4) Industry regulation of public transport	LTFRB
(5) Traffic law enforcement	LTO
(6) Data collection and monitoring	DOTr, DPWH

Overall, while the mandates and functions of Philippine transport related government agencies are well-defined in terms of formal policy, it begs the question of how the country's transport problems relate to institutional linkages and interrelationships of agencies and transport institutions.

## 1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

This paper aims to explore underlying issues in Philippine land transport governance that exist at the institutional level that contribute to the country's transport woes. Such challenges heavily impact the way Filipino commuters experience the *service quality* of land transport, which is defined as how well a service is delivered to its end users (Ramya, et al., 2019). In this context, service quality would pertain to how well land transport services such as public transport and access to active transport modes such as walking and cycling are delivered to the commuting public. In this research, we attempt to answer the research question: **How might we redesign our transport institutions to make them accountable to improving service quality towards safe, humane, and inclusive road transport and mobility?** This paper then attempts to come up with policy recommendations that may address transport governance issues faced by the government across the national and local levels.

Firstly, the paper discusses Philippine transportation policies and land transport governance literature, diving into the interorganizational structure and relationships of Philippine national and local transport agencies. Stakeholder consultations and analysis was conducted to gather insights from the multitude of stakeholders representing the public and active transport sectors. Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with representatives from government, academe, and civil society were conducted. To develop potential policy recommendations for redesigning Philippine transport institutions, the paper draws upon learnings from land transport governance policies of neighboring Asian countries, combining international "best practices" with local stakeholder inputs to develop policy interventions suited to the Philippine context.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes stakeholder analysis to capture the insights of multisectoral actors in land transport governance. The stakeholders consulted include National Government Agencies (NGAs), civil society organizations, and members of the academe. KIIs were conducted with representatives of National Government Agencies, either as online semi-structured interviews, or as responses from a questionnaire if the NGA preferred. Online FGDs were conducted with representatives from academe and civil society organizations from the Move As One Coalition, representing public transportation and active transport sectors. Discussion questions focused on the perceived barriers and opportunities of government agencies in achieving national transport policy goals, interrelationships with other NGAs and LGUs, and insights into how government transport institutions can be redesigned to address their aforementioned transport governance issues. KIIs and FGDs were conducted between 29 February and 15 March 2024. Participants of the KIIs and FGDs are as follows:

- 1) National Government Agencies
  - a) National Economic and Development Authority
  - b) Department of Transportation - Active Transport Project Office (DOTr ATPO)
  - c) Department of Interior and Local Government - Bureau of Local Government Supervision (DILG BLGS)

- d) Department of Health - Health Promotion Bureau (DOH HPB)
- 2) Academe: FGD with Philippine transport researchers from the University of the Philippines - National Center of Transportation Studies (UP NCTS), Science Engineering and Management Research Institute (SEMRI) of the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P), Shared-Use Mobility Center (based in Chicago, USA), and the University of Auckland
- 3) Civil Society
  - a) Public transport sector: FGD with 6 participants
  - b) Active transport sector: FGD with 4 participants

### 3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

**Table 2. NGA Barriers and Opportunities towards achieving National Transport Policy Goals**

Government Agency	Barriers	Opportunities
NEDA	<p>NEDA can input or comment on other NGAs' plans or projects, but do not serve as approving body;</p> <p>NEDA's role in implementation and operation of major transport projects and programs is limited</p>	<p>The NTP and its IRR enables transport policies and programs to be more streamlined and cohesive, serving as a guide for both NGAs and LGUs.</p>
DOTr ATPO	<p>There is hesitancy within some public and private agencies to implement national AT policies.</p> <p>There are overlapping mandates and conflicts with other agencies which results in inconsistent implementation of AT projects.</p> <p>DOTr has no regional offices resulting in poor linkages with regions.</p> <p>Requirement to coordinate with and have projects approved by DPWH and LGUs significantly delays projects.</p>	<p>Appreciation and support from many public and private agencies offer opportunities for more involvement in AT programs and promotion of AT.</p> <p>LGUs are positive linkages since they can initiate their own AT programs and projects.</p> <p>Presence of several coordinating mechanisms such as the IATWG-AT and the Multi-sectoral Governance Committee on Service Contracting which can serve as coordinating bodies to engage users and resolve conflicting mandates.</p>
DILG BLGS	<p>Transport data is not utilized well as metrics for policy and project outcomes,</p> <p>Lack of funding for activities towards LGU transport capacity and policy development;</p> <p>Absence of a dedicated office for transport-related functions results in disjointed handling of transport initiatives and difficulties in coordination; lack of technical capacity limits the ability to monitor public and active transport policy compliance of LGUs</p>	<p>DILG's role in reaching LGUs for transport and other sectors is still significant as the link between the national and local government;</p> <p>Improved funding of DILG programs can improve nationwide rollout, better technical support for monitoring through more stringent requirements, incentives for LGUs to comply with national transport policies, and enable DILG to conduct better capacity building activities with LGUs</p>

Government Agency	Barriers	Opportunities
DOH	There is resistance of stakeholders to AT policies and programs; Paradigm shift is needed in planning roads, public spaces, and cities	DOH facilitates active coordination with transport agencies as secretariat to the IATWG-AT which presents various opportunities for multisectoral collaboration between agencies and with civil society;  Even with the absence of a law institutionalizing the promotion of AT, DOH was able to institutionalize AT through the AT Playbook and template ordinance for select LGUs, and provide technical assistance for capacity building and other health promotion interventions for AT;

**Table 3. Redesigning Transport Institutions NGA KIIs**

Government Agency	Redesigning Philippine Transport Institutions
NEDA	At national level, an oversight transportation agency is beneficial in setting the direction of the transport sector and its alignment with national objectives.  The NTP-IRR directs LGUs to establish a transport and traffic management unit, which should coordinate with the national transport agency in all aspects of public transport network development.
DOTr ATPO	Active transport should have the same level of management within the DOTr as other modes such as car transport and public transport. AT development needs to be clearly stated in the mandate of DOTr.
DILG BLGS	There is a need for local transport/traffic management offices with technical staff especially for AT. There needs to be improvements in the coordination of technical transport staff with local planning offices.  Mandates of NGAs need to be delineated for transportation functions e.g. infrastructure maintenance;  Provincial governments need to be empowered and provided support for transport; Explore role of provincial planning office in integrating transport plans, supporting programs with funding and capacity development, and project implementation.
DOH	The establishment of LGU Active Mobility Committees shall lead the development of the Active Transport Lanes Network Master Plan. Planning, implementation, and overall governance of active transport in localities will be overseen by the Committee to ensure effective implementation of policy goals. These include developing the local active transport plan and network, budgeting, monitoring, and initiating IEC campaigns.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The government has been making steps towards people-oriented land transport over recent years. However, they have often been as results of ad hoc programs and projects and not as results of mandated long term planning and policies. While transport related government agencies have their own specific mandates and functions, many transport programs, projects, and policies are not institutionalized into agency mandates and thus risk being unsustainable in long term implementation.

#### **4.1 Institutional barriers towards achieving policy goals**

A major issue encountered in stakeholder analysis is that many government programs and projects are not tied to formal legislation, long-term government plans, and agencies' regular budgets. This means that otherwise promising transport programs have unpredictable funding allocations and are dependent on annual prioritization instead of being part of long term development plans with established funding. Inconsistent prioritization at both national and local government levels often means that newer people-centered transport policies, which deviate from traditional car-centric development practice, are not widely implemented throughout all regions of the country.

The ad hoc nature of national transport programs and projects is also reflected in the offices responsible for their planning and implementation. These offices often come in the form of project offices or project management offices which are, in essence, disconnected from formal sections of their department. Employees of these ad hoc offices are often hired as contract-of-service or job order personnel, unlike those of formal offices under the department in which permanent or *plantilla* positions are available. The lack of permanent personnel in these ad hoc offices often means that there is a high employee turnover rate, which results in decreased overall institutional capacity and experience in current personnel. The lack of technical transport capacity and personnel in the national government, which most LGUs rely on for transport development, often results in transport programs and services that have a slow rate of implementation, to the detriment of the public. On the other hand, the presence of transport planners and engineers in LGUs can directly affect how transport policies and plans are developed and implemented: LGUs lacking in technical personnel tend to lag behind LGUs with better capacity to undertake comprehensive transport planning.

#### **4.2. Institutional barriers in Public Transport Governance**

The DOTr and LTFRB primarily oversee road-based public transport development and operations. Local intra-city public transport planning was delegated to LGUs in the 2017 OFG, but beyond tricycle transport and traffic enforcement, LGUs lack mandates for public transport operations. Thus, they rely on the national government for broader system improvements, despite DOTr and LTFRB's limited national capacity. Accountability in public transport is unclear due the absence of performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Many LGUs lack capacity to develop LPTRPs, while LTFRB and DOTr face challenges in reviewing submitted plans. DILG merely checks LPTRP presence in LGUs, and there is inadequate system performance review, resulting in unchecked inconsistent public transport service, irregular intervals, trip cutting, and insufficient supply—all to the detriment of the commuting public.

Aside from LTFRB, there are no institutional systems that regulate, monitor, and evaluate the operations of public transport. There are notable examples of LGUs developing and operating a limited number of intracity public transport routes to introduce an improved level of public transport management, such as Quezon City and Pasig City in Metro Manila. However, the extent as to how much an LGU can operate public transport is critically limited

by LTFRB's franchising regulation policies, which are primarily set up for privately-run transport service entities.

During the pandemic, the national government implemented gross service contracting, popularly called as *Libreng Sakay*, to provide free rides to commuters who have to go to work and to pay transport workers struggling with income from low ridership. This was funded in the Bayanihan 2 Act under the Department of Transportation budget, which was then distributed to different local government units in the country, particularly cities with high risk of COVID infection. However, four years into its implementation, there remains no clear mechanism from LTFRB that allows LGUs to fund their own local public transport operations through the collection of passenger fares.

### **4.3. Institutional barriers in Active Transport Governance**

National agencies coordinate active transport issues through the Inter-agency Technical Working Group on Active Transport (IATWG-AT), led by DOTr's Active Transport Project Office (ATPO). The Department of Health (DOH) serves as the IATWG-AT secretariat, facilitating agency collaboration, communication, and leading policy and advocacy efforts. Active transport infrastructure projects are jointly managed by DOTr and DPWH in partnership with LGUs. However, DOTr faces challenges due to its lack of regional offices, relying heavily on DPWH regional offices and LGUs for project implementation. This new coordination paradigm between the national government and LGUs results in varying levels of support and inconsistent implementation of active transport policies. Moreover, DOTr ATPO highlights concerns that excessive focus on local coordination with LGUs may hinder the development of broader intercity or regional active transport networks, limiting initiatives to local routes rather than expansive corridors spanning multiple LGUs.

While DPWH is DOTr's primary construction arm in implementing road transport infrastructure projects, LGUs—through their city/municipal engineering offices—overlap with the infrastructure development functions of DPWH. In practice, DOTr—which leads active transport development through its Active Transport Project Office—coordinates with both DPWH and LGUs to implement projects. For national roads, DPWH has jurisdiction over infrastructure developments and requires approval for projects that get implemented, including bike lanes. The requirement to perform multiple stages of coordination and approval with DPWH and LGUs often significantly delays project implementation. Both DPWH and LGUs are also able to plan and build cycling infrastructure on their own, without the need for approval from the DOTr ATPO.

The lack of coordination among agencies to harmonize project planning and implementation often results in project outcomes deviating or violating overarching national transport policies, such as poor bike lane design implementation or downgrading of protected bike lanes. According to our consultation with NEDA, national government agencies (NGAs), including DPWH, and LGUs are not explicitly required to harmonize and align their transport development plans with the NTP and PDP. Furthermore, there are no performance measurement metrics in place that monitor the compliance of projects with national policy goals. This has resulted in only a handful of cities and municipalities being proactive in developing cycling infrastructure and bicycle-friendly programs. According to the DOTr ATPO, many LGUs support the implementation of projects consistent with national active transport policies, but there are also LGUs that hesitate or resist active transport project development, even with the availability of funding and support from the national government. This inconsistency in local

practice is further amplified when LGUs create and enact local transport policies but have neighboring LGUs that do not have similar local policies. In practice, this can result in bike lanes that do not extend past city boundaries, or inconsistent bike lane-related policy enforcement that leads to confusion from road users. The national government, through the IATWG-AT, has created an annual National Bike Day Bike Lane Awards to recognize LGUs that lead the development of bike lanes and bicycle facilities in their cities and municipalities. However, participation in the awards is not mandatory for LGUs, and there is no significant incentive system in place to encourage LGUs to participate and compete in the awards.

#### **4.4 Opportunities towards achieving policy goals**

The presence of overarching national transport policies in the National Transport Policy and Philippine Development Plan offers opportunities for holistic transport planning and development, serving as policy basis on which agency mandates or local government policies can build upon. The existence of several ad hoc program offices and project management offices for public and active transport, including regional-level offices, means that there are also opportunities to reorganize and improve the institutional structure of transport agencies, and better align transport agency mandates with national transport policies. Furthermore, there are attempts to include civil society and actual transport users in the governance of these programs, such as the Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on Active Transport (IATWG-AT) and the Multisectoral Governance Committee for Service Contracting, where Move As One Coalition serves as the official civil society representative.

Progressive people-oriented transport policies and programs still receive support and appreciation from both national agencies and LGUs. This signals that there are many opportunities to improve collaboration, build awareness, enhance capacity development, and build on current projects and programs across government bodies—all towards achieving policy goals, especially if funding is made available for these endeavors.

### **5. LESSONS FROM INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES IN TRANSPORT GOVERNANCE**

Through stakeholder consultations and analysis about Philippine transport institutions and governance, the barriers in achieving national transport policy goals were identified as: (1) poor institutionalization of people-oriented transport policies and programs; (2) overlapping and conflicting mandates resulting to inconsistent project development and implementation across national and local government agencies; (3) fragmented coordination among government agencies; and (4) lack of technical expertise at both national and local government levels. Opportunities to improve transport governance include better approaches in aligning transport-related government agency mandates with people-oriented national transport policies, enhancing collaboration between agencies at both national and local levels, and boosting capacity development and technical competence.

In attempting to address the encountered transport governance issues, the study also reviewed the transport governance frameworks of countries considered to have highly effective transport institutions and transport systems. Respondents have specifically identified Japan, South Korea, and Singapore as examples of transport governance models which can potentially offer solutions to identified issues in Philippine land transport governance.



## 5.1 Lessons from Japan

According to a review of Japan's transport planning at the national level by Shibayama (2017), the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism (MLIT) is Japan's transport and land development ministry. The MLIT undertakes long term spatial and regional planning through its National Land Formation Plan (NLFP). The NLFP serves as an overarching transport masterplan which indicates general goals of transport infrastructure development—containing locations and routes of important railway lines, expressways, ports, and airports to be constructed or upgraded within the next ten years. Major transport infrastructure projects are incorporated into the Priority Plan for Infrastructure Development, which is also led by MLIT in coordination with local governments. Local governments at the prefecture and city level develop local transportation plans aligned with national plans and tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by their regions.

## 5.2 Lessons from South Korea

South Korea has a primary transport governance institution similar to Japan, with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) in charge of both urban policy and transport policy. According to the OECD report on *Urban Transport Governance and Inclusive Development in Korea*, both central and local governments in Korea are moving away from a concept of mobility focused on high-speed, individual car-based transport to a new notion of transport as an enabler of access to opportunities. MOLIT prepares a 20-year strategic plan for the development of the territory including urban areas, and a 5-year Public Transport Master Plan. Based on these national plans, each city government then develops both a city masterplan and a local public transport plan covering the same time span.

## 5.3 Lessons from Singapore

Singapore's Ministry of Transport (MOT) is responsible for developing policies, with implementation and day-to-day operations handled by their statutory boards: The Land Transport Authority (LTA) and the Public Transport Council (PTC). LTA is responsible for transport systems and infrastructure, including public transport and active transport. LTA develops long term policy goals and plans through the Land Transport Master Plan (LTMP), first launched in 2008, with the current LTMP for the year 2040 launched in 2019. The PTC regulates public transport fares and ticket payment services. The PTC advises MOT on public transport matters but it is primarily a regulatory body, with LTA being responsible for the public transport system and its operations.

## 5.4 Lessons for Philippine Transport Governance

The examples of Japan, South Korea, and Singapore transport institutions show highly centralized transport governance with the presence of long term transport plans and policies, developed by their main transport policy and planning institutions. The delineation of transport-related functions and capacity between central and local institutions is also clear, with the national transport institution responsible for overarching national transport policy and master plans, with local governments developing transport plans and policies consistent with the national government. This clear delineation of tasks streamlines the development and implementation of national and local plans.

For the Philippines, the obvious main body to undertake a similar long term planning and policy endeavor is DOTr. Current plans to develop a Philippine Transport System Master

Plan (PTSMP) reflect the country's efforts to do the same transport planning and development practices of its developed neighbors. However, the mandates of the national transport planning institution must be clear, and their offices properly funded and supported, to aid in the implementation of national plans. Similarly, LGUs need to be funded and capacitated to be able to perform local transport planning as well, in order to develop local plans aligned to DOTr's.

To better align transport agency performance to policy goals, a comprehensive performance evaluation and monitoring system is required. Accountability measures should also be established so that successes in policy outcomes are rewarded through an incentive system, while failures in policy outcomes may be addressed and rectified in an organized manner. This would be more effective than the tendency of agencies to point fingers at one another on whom to blame, which does not bring improvements and results in a series of delays or lack of needed actions being done.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The paper proposes the following recommendations that redesign and reform Philippine transport governance and institutions with considerations in both the ideal potential political constraints of each option:

### **6.1 Option A. Government rationalizes existing national transport institutions and empowers local government units for LGU-level transport governance.**

This option does not require the passage of a new legislation and works within the country's current political framework. Here, the President issues an Executive Order to rationalize and delineate the functions of transport agencies, support the creation of Local Transport and Mobility Offices (LTMOs) within local government units, and shift performance and success metrics of agencies to people- and nature-centered metrics.

This also urges Congress to pass a special provision for a Local Transport Capacity Support Fund under the existing Local Government Support Fund to empower local government units and their LTMOs to have the capacity to plan, operate, and manage local public transport. Lastly, in this option, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the DOTr shall incentivize the said LTMOs through the integration of mobility metrics in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) Awards and the development of a certification and accreditation program for local mobility and transport officers.

### **6.2 Option B. Unifying transport institutions and establishing new institutions, offices, and functions to fill in the gaps in governance from current legal and political frameworks.**

This option challenges the current legal and political frameworks in the country to bridge the gaps among our transport institutions. Here, the Congress passes new legislation that redesigns Philippine land transportation governance by consolidating national transport-related agencies under one major institution. Major changes here include the merging of DOTr and DPWH's transport infrastructure development capacity, the reorganization of LTO and LTRFB through transferring their functions to DOTr under a new Land Transportation Sector (LTS), and the establishment of provincial transport authorities (PTA) to strengthen LTMOs and LGUs in managing transport operations within their cities and municipalities.

This option also establishes different people-oriented policy and development offices under the Department of Transportation to ensure that the policies, programs, and infrastructure

of the department focus on meeting the needs of people rather than on the movement of vehicles. Some of these offices include:

- Transport Workers Welfare Office,
- (Public Transport) Stop and Stations Planning and Development Office,
- Pedestrian Mobility Office,
- Cycling and Active Mobility Office,
- Inclusive Mobility & Accessibility Office,
- Transportation Information and Wayfinding Office, and
- Road Safety Office

The functions of these are discussed in detail in the Recommendations section of this paper.

Lastly, this option also creates a funded and dedicated Transport Institute towards people-oriented metrics to standardize and harmonize transport data collection and processing across bureaucracy, establish information systems, and conduct evidence-based research on the collected data to ensure that transport and mobility policies are based on relevant and timely data.

Further discussed in detail in the Appendix is an action plan outlining the necessary steps to be taken in the short term, medium term, and long term by the Office of the President, House of Representatives, Department of Transportation, Department of Interior and Local Government, and Local Government Units (LGUs). This action plan maps out how these recommended options may be used by stakeholders across varying levels of authority to implement such policy reforms.

Although different in approach, both options to redesign Philippine transport institutions attempt to resolve transport governance issues by rationalizing mandates across agencies, bridging the gaps and conflicts across government departments and local government units, and ensuring that, no matter the structure, our transport institutions are better equipped to deliver people-oriented transport programs and policies at both local and national levels. Institutional changes in land transport governance require binding legislative and/or executive policies that will be followed by both NGAs and LGUs. Legislators and policymakers can take guidance from the discussion and recommendations of this study, and pursue further policy and stakeholder analyses, as well as feasibility and cost-benefit analyses so that policy interventions are supported by stakeholder inputs and evidence-based metrics.

## REFERENCES

- Aranas, J. (2024). ICSC to MMDA: Removal of EDSA bicycle lanes derails progress. *ICSC / Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities*. Retrieved May 9, 2024, from <https://icsc.ngo/reactive-icsc-to-mmda-removal-of-edsa-bicycle-lanes-derails-progress/>
- Barter, P. (2007). *Wanted—An Ambitious Vision for Public Transport. 2.*
- Barter, P., & Dotson, E. (2013). *Urban Transport Institutions and Governance and Integrated Land Use and Transport, Singapore.*
- Braceras, C. M., Tally, R. F., Proctor, G., Bremmer, D., Hank, L. E., & Hayse, J. (2010). *Linking Transportation Performance and Accountability.*
- Brinkerhoff, D. W. (1996). Coordination issues in policy implementation networks: An illustration from Madagascar's Environmental Action Plan. *World Development*, 24(9), 1497–1510. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(96\)00046-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(96)00046-0)
- Cabrera, R. (2024). *PUVMP consolidation rate reaches 81% – LTFRB*. Philstar.Com. Retrieved May 9, 2024, from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/05/02/2351930/puvmp-consolidation-rate-reaches-81-ltfrb>
- Chang, K., Abante, K., Mariano, P., Sevilla, J., Siy, R., & Ugay, J. (2021). *The Systemic Shortage in Philippine Public Transportation: The Impact of the Infrastructure Flagship Project Pipeline on the Mobility Needs of the Greater Capital Region and Recommendations to Bridge the Gap*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22505.62563>
- Chang, K., Benito, D. J. P., Abante, K., & Bendaña, H. (2022). *Towards a People-Centric Mobility Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System in the Philippines*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.32965.73443>
- Department of Budget and Management (2021). *FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Mandanas-Garcia SC Ruling As of November 9, 2021*. Retrieved from <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/Mandanas-Garcia-Case/IEC-Materials/FAQs-Mandanas-Garcia-Ruling.pdf>
- Department of Public Works and Highways (n.d.). *About DPWH | Department of Public Works and Highways*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://www.dpwh.gov.ph/dpwh/content/about-dpwh>
- Department of Transportation (n.d.). *DOTr—CALLING ALL INTERESTED CONSULTING FIRMS!* Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://dotr.gov.ph/55-dotrnews/5039-2024-03-18-07-03-15.html>
- Department of Transportation (n.d.). *DOTr—DOTr Mandate and Functions*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://dotr.gov.ph/18-transparency/166-dotc-mandate.html#agency-s-mandate-and-functions>
- Department of Transportation (n.d.). *DOTr List of Officials*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://dotr.gov.ph/transparency/18-transparency/352-dotr-list-of-officials.html>
- Department of Transportation (n.d.). *Road Sector*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://dotr.gov.ph/data-sets/road-sector.html>
- Gijre, V., & Gupta, S. (2020). Urban Transport Governance Practice and Challenges in an Emerging Economy – Case Study of India. *Transportation Research Procedia*, 48, 2435–2445. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trpro.2020.08.293>
- GIZ (2019). *Philippine Urban Mobility Programme*. Retrieved from <https://www.mobiliseyourcity.net/national-urban-mobility-programme-philippines>
- JICA (2019). *FOLLOW-UP SURVEY ON ROADMAP FOR TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FOR GREATER CAPITAL REGION*

- (GCR) FINAL REPORT SUMMARY. Retrieved from [https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000041638\\_03.pdf](https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000041638_03.pdf)
- Land Transport Authority (n.d.). *LTA / Who We Are*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from [https://www.lta.gov.sg/content/ltagov/en/who\\_we\\_are.html/#our\\_organisation](https://www.lta.gov.sg/content/ltagov/en/who_we_are.html/#our_organisation)
- Land Transport Franchising and Regulatory Board (2003). Memorandum Circular Number 2003-025. Retrieved from <https://ltfrb.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/Memorandum%20Circular/2003/2003-025.pdf>
- Land Transport Franchising and Regulatory Board (2003). Memorandum Circular Number 2003-028. Retrieved from <https://ltfrb.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/Memorandum%20Circular/2004/2004-005.pdf>
- Land Transport Franchising and Regulatory Board (2004). *Memorandum Circular Number 2004-005*. Retrieved from <https://ltfrb.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/Memorandum%20Circular/2004/2004-005.pdf>
- Land Transport Franchising and Regulatory Board (n.d.). *LTFRB Functions / LTFRB*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://ltfrb.gov.ph/about/ltfrb-functions/>
- Land Transport Franchising and Regulatory Board (n.d.). *PUV Modernization Program*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://ltfrb.gov.ph/puv-modernization-program/>
- Land Transport Franchising and Regulatory Board (n.d.). *PUV Service Contracting Program*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://ltfrb.gov.ph/puv-service-contracting-program/>
- Land Transportation Office (n.d.). *Mandate and Functions*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://lto.gov.ph/mandate-and-functions/>
- Land Transportation Office (2023) *RA 11697 EVIDA Law: Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act Philippines*. LTO Portal PH. <https://ltoportal.ph/evida-law-electric-vehicle-industry-development-act/>
- Mayo, F.L. & Taboada, E.B. (2020). Ranking factors affecting public transport mode choice of commuters in an urban city of a developing country using analytic hierarchy process: The case of Metro Cebu, Philippines. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 4, 1000078. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2019.100078>
- Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. (n.d.). Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/>
- Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (n.d.). *MMDA's Scope of Services, its Functions and Powers*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://mmda.gov.ph/10-transparency/6-mmda-s-scope-of-services-its-functions-and-powers.html>
- Ministry of Transport (n.d.). *MOT Singapore – Gain new perspectives on land, sea & air transport*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <http://www.mot.gov.sg/who-we-are/overview>
- MMDA (2024). *MMDA Prohibits E-Vehicles on National Roads: Penalties for Violators Set*. Retrieved May 7, 2024, from <https://mmda.gov.ph/100-news/news-2024/7256-february-19-2024-mmda-prohibits-e-vehicles-on-national-roads-penalties-for-violators-set.html>
- MMDA-TEC-Road Safety Unit (2022). *MMARAS Annual Report*. Retrieved from [https://mmda.gov.ph/images/Home/FOI/MMARAS/MMARAS\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2022.pdf](https://mmda.gov.ph/images/Home/FOI/MMARAS/MMARAS_Annual_Report_2022.pdf)
- MMDA-TEC-Road Safety Unit (2023). *MMARAS Annual Report*. Retrieved from [https://mmda.gov.ph/images/Home/FOI/MMARAS/MMARAS\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2023.pdf](https://mmda.gov.ph/images/Home/FOI/MMARAS/MMARAS_Annual_Report_2023.pdf)
- Move As One Coalition Vision 2030 (2024)*. Written by Move As One Coalition's Transport Institutions team: Reycel Hyacenth Nacario Bendaña, Paula Britta Castro Apines, Felicity Tan, Benjamin dela Pena, Honey de Peralta, Christian Rojo, Lou Gepuela,

- Ayb Sysiangco, Azisah Domado, Carlo Lopa, Giorgino Naval, Gybel Agregado, Jose Rueda, Patricia Mariano; Facilitated by: WeSolve Foundation, Inc. and Agile City Partners (2020-2021). Illustrations by: Eli Estella (2022). Compiled by: Nicole Anne Alvarillo Cobarrubias and Kenneth Isaiah Ibasco Abante (2024).  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380781879\\_Move\\_As\\_One\\_Coalition\\_Vision\\_2030](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380781879_Move_As_One_Coalition_Vision_2030)
- National Economic and Development Authority (n.d.). *About NEDA*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://neda.gov.ph/about-neda/>
- National Economic and Development Authority (2020). *NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY and its Implementing Rules and Regulations*. Retrieved from [neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NTP-IRR-Final.pdf](https://neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NTP-IRR-Final.pdf)
- National Economic and Development Authority (n.d.). *NEDA Board*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://neda.gov.ph/neda-board/>
- National Economic and Development Authority (2017). *NEDA Board Resolution No. 5 (s. 2017)*.
- Nogueira, A., & Diaz, C. E. (2023). Evaluating public transport accessibility and walkability in Pasig City (Philippines) and their correlation to socioeconomic factors at the Barangay level. *Asian Transport Studies*, 9, 100117. [doi.org/10.1016/j.eastsj.2023.100117](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eastsj.2023.100117)
- Norton, H. (2024). The world's most walkable cities. *The Burrow*. Retrieved from <https://www.comparethemarket.com.au/home-loans/features/most-walkable-cities/>
- OECD (2017). *Urban Transport Governance and Inclusive Development in Korea | READ online*. [Oecd-Ilibrary.Org](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/urban-transport-governance-and-inclusive-development-in-korea_9789264272637-en). Retrieved April 19, 2024, from [read.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/urban-transport-governance-and-inclusive-development-in-korea\\_9789264272637-en](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/urban-transport-governance-and-inclusive-development-in-korea_9789264272637-en)
- Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines (1964). *Republic Act No. 4136* <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1964/06/20/republic-act-no-4136/>
- PCIJ (2021). *Terminal: The constant agony of commuting amid the pandemic — a photo essay*. Retrieved from <http://pcij.org/2021/05/18/terminal/>
- Philippine Statistics Authority (n.d.). *PHILIPPINE STANDARD GEOGRAPHIC CODE*. Retrieved May 9, 2024, from <https://psa.gov.ph/classification/psgc/regions>
- PNA (2023). *DOTr to expand protected bike lanes to 2,400 km by 2028*. Retrieved May 7, 2024, from <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1201933>
- Romero, S. E., Guillen, D., Cordova, L., & Gatarin, G. (2014). *Land-Based Transport Governance in the Philippines: Focus on Metro Manila*.
- Public Transport Council (n.d.). *Overview*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://www.ptc.gov.sg/about/overview>
- Ramya, N., Kowsalya, A., & Dharanipriya, K. (2019). Service Quality and Its Dimensions. *EPRA International Journal of Research & Development*, 4(2), 39-41. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333058377\\_SERVICE\\_QUALITY\\_AND\\_ITS\\_DIMENSIONS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333058377_SERVICE_QUALITY_AND_ITS_DIMENSIONS)
- DOTr says 500-km bike lane network done within June. (2021, June 1). *RAPPLER*. <https://www.rappler.com/business/dotr-bicycle-lane-network-completion-target-june-2021/>
- Rappler (2024). *How bike-friendly is Metro Manila? We rode 120 kilometers to investigate*. Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/investigative/how-bike-friendly-metro-manila/>
- Rappler (2024). *Metro Manila has world's worst metro area traffic in 2023. What can we learn?* Retrieved April 19, 2024, from <https://www.rappler.com/business/>

[manila-world-worst-metro-area-traffic-2023/](#)

- Reuters (2022). *Dutch gov't to spend 7.5 bln euros on transport, Amsterdam-Schiphol metro*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/dutch-govt-spend-75-bln-euros-transport-amsterdam-schiphol-metro-2022-11-14/>
- P.S. RES. NO. 1246, Sixteenth Congress of the Republic of the Philippines, Second Regular Session (2015). <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lisdata/2080217901!.pdf>
- Shibayama, T. (2017). Japan's transport planning at national level, natural disasters, and their interplays. *European Transport Research Review*, 9(3), 44. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12544-017-0255-7>
- Suzara, Z.N., Abante, K., Chang, K., Encarnacion, A., Naval, G., Rojo, C.J., Daos, J.G., & Tanganco, L. (2021). *Move People, Not Just Cars: Correcting the systemic underfunding in national road-based public transport in the Philippines (2010 - 2021)*. <http://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29216.51208>
- THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES*. (1991).
- Varvasovszky, Z., & Brugha, R. (2000). Stakeholder analysis. *Health Policy and Planning*, 15, 338–345. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/15.3.338>
- Zako, R. & Lewis, R. (2017). *Improving Accountability & Transparency in Transportation Decision-Making*. Transportation Research and Education Center. <https://doi.org/10.15760/trec.184>

## Annex A. Action Plan to Reform Philippine Transport Governance

---

### Short Term (3-6 months)

1. **The President** to issue an Executive Order:
  - a. Creating the Inter-Agency Task Force on Comprehensive Transportation Reform (**IATF-COMMUTr**), clarifying and delineating the functions of the DOTr, DPWH, MMDA, LTFRB, LTO, DILG, NEDA, and including the Public-private Partnership (PPP) Center; with the DOTr Secretary as Chairperson and DOTr as the Secretariat; and mandating the IATF to adhere to people- and nature-oriented transport planning standards under the Philippine Development Plan, National Transport Policy, and the Philippine Road Safety Action Plan;
  - b. Creating the DOTr-DILG-DBM Joint Project Management Office for the creation of the Local Transport and Mobility Offices, funded by the Local Transport Capacity Support Fund under the Local Government Support Fund; and requiring civil society participation in its governance body.
  - c. Requiring the approval of the Secretary of Transportation for national road infrastructure projects currently covered by the DPWH and MMDA: to check for inclusion criteria for persons with disabilities under the Accessibility Law, and to align project approval over success metrics detailed below; and
  - d. Requiring the IATF-COMMUTr agencies to shift their performance and success metrics from the current car-centric metrics to those that adhere to the vision of “*a safe, secure, reliable, efficient, integrated, intermodal, affordable, cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, and people-oriented national transport system that ensures improved quality of life of the people*” as detailed and prioritized in **the Appendix**.
2. The **Department of Transportation** to issue a Department Order that encourages and enables local government units to provide public transport services. The policy can include granting LGUs the power to collect fares.
3. **Congress** to pass a special provision for a Local Transport Capacity Support Fund under the Local Government Support Fund, jointly administered by a Project Management Office managed by the DOTr, DILG, and DBM, to fund and support the creation of Local Transport and Mobility Offices (TMOs) to plan and operate local public transport, phased over a few years for priority LGUs. The estimated budget is P202.9 million in year 1 to around P20.3 billion in year 5.

The following special provision is suggested for the first year of implementation:

***Local Transport Capacity Support Fund.*** *The amount appropriated herein includes Two Hundred Two Million and Nine Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 202,900,000) for financial assistance to LGUs to support the creation, staffing, and capacity building of their local transport and mobility offices, in line with the National Transport Policy to prioritize the movement of people over vehicles, and in line with national programs on active transport, service contracting, and accessible pedestrian infrastructure.*

*The Department of Transportation shall work with Local Government Units in drafting model regulations for the creation of such local mobility and transport offices, based on existing good practices by LGUs, and people- and nature-centered transport and mobility success indicators.*

*Local Government Units shall apply to the fund based on rules set by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Budget and Management, in consultation with Local Government Units.*

---



---

**Medium Term (1 - 3 years)**

4. **Local government units (LGUs)** to formally establish Local Transport and Mobility Offices (LTMOs) with financial and technical assistance from a Joint DOTr-DILG-DBM PMO in developing local public transport master plans and service standards to improve the welfare of commuters and ensure just transition for transport workers in the locality. Specifically, the LTMOs shall have the following functions and mandates:
  - a. Local transport planning, policy-making, and transport infrastructure design and development, emphasizing capacity for inclusive, people-oriented, and sustainable transport development within their localities;
  - b. Management of public transport operations and services, especially for intra-city routes, with corresponding route timetables, formal stops and stations to be developed as well as standard designs and guidelines for commuter accessibility, safety, and comfort; and
  - c. Collection of fares to support the sustained financial viability of delivering quality commuter service to the general public through the establishment of public transport enterprises as local economic enterprises (LEE).
5. **The Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Transportation** to incentivize LTMOs in developing their programs, policies, and projects in line with the national transport policy through the following measures:
  - a. Integration of people-centered metrics (see Appendix) in the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) awards and other mechanisms that will progressively monitor the performance of LTMOs and award them with corresponding funding.

Part of these metrics is the inclusion and engagement of civil society representatives such as commuters, transport workers, persons with disabilities, students, the elderly, pregnant women, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users in designing mobility programs, policies, and projects;
  - b. Development of a certification and accreditation program for local mobility and transport officers to enhance and develop the knowledge and skills of local personnel, similar to the Certification Program for Local Treasurers of the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF), in collaboration with the Philippine Tax Academy (PTA) under the Department of Finance (DOF)
6. **Congress** to fund and support the creation of a dedicated transport institute towards people-centered metrics agenda to do the following functions:
  - a. Standardization and harmonization of data collection and processing across the bureaucracy to ensure quality data;
  - b. Establishing information systems needed for automated, timely and efficient collection; and
  - c. Conducting analysis and research on the collected data.

**Longer Term (More than 3 years)**

7. **Congress** to pass legislation to redesign Philippine land transport institutions by consolidating national transport-related agencies under one major institution with the following changes:
    - a. Merging of DOTr and DPWH's transport infrastructure development capacity under the former to streamline policy, planning, and implementation under common leadership;
-

- b. Reorganization of LTO and LTFRB through transferring their functions to the DOTr under a new Land Transportation Sector (LTS);
- c. Establishment of the LTS for planning and design of land transport systems covering private vehicle transport, public transport which covers rail and road transport modes, and active transport covering cycling, walking, and accessibility for persons with disabilities; and
- d. Establishment of provincial transport authorities (PTAs) and LTMOs to oversee and manage transport within cities and municipalities (see Action Plan Item #8).

8. **Department of Transportation** to establish people-centered offices whose main mandate is ensuring that the policies, programs, and infrastructure of the department focus on meeting the needs of people rather than on the movement of vehicles. The organizational chart for a new DOTr is in **Figure 1**.

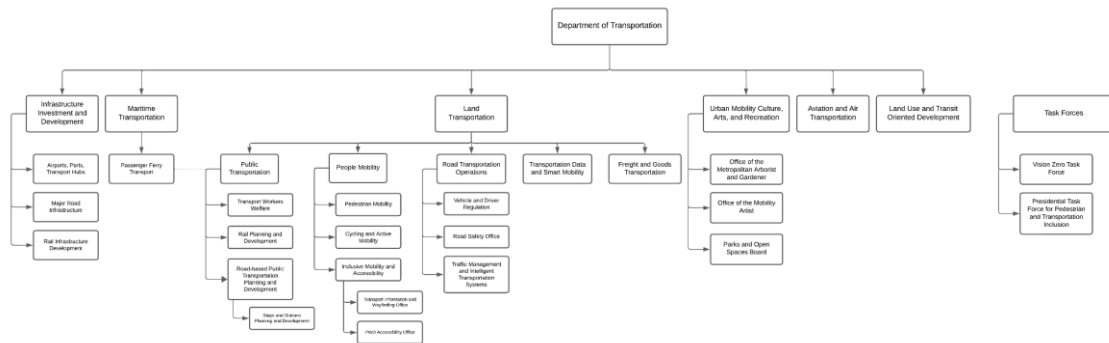


Figure 1. Proposed organizational chart for the redesigned DOTr

- a. The Undersecretary for Land Transportation shall oversee the sector and supervise the following offices:
  - i. Under the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Transportation:
    1. Transport Workers Welfare Office that ensures fair compensation, just transition, and humane labor conditions for workers in the industry through social security benefits, welfare programs, and policies such as service contracting; and
    2. Stop and Stations Planning and Development Office that ensures pedestrians are protected from weather conditions, accessibility standards are followed, and transfer routes are interconnected.

- 
- ii. Under the Office of the Assistant Secretary for People Mobility:
    - 1. Pedestrian Mobility Office that ensures comfort, system continuity, visual attractiveness, and infrastructure quality of walking pathways;
    - 2. Cycling and Active Mobility Office that enforces the establishment of people's streets, protected bike lane networks, cycling facilities, parks, and other related infrastructures;
    - 3. Inclusive Mobility and Accessibility Office that ensures that all infrastructures—stops and stations, pedestrian pathways, public transport vehicle units, public comfort rooms in terminals, among others—follow accessibility standards; and
    - 4. Transport Information and Wayfinding Office that ensures information such as route and system maps, schedules, expected travel times, real-time arrival times, ridership procedures, fare costs, among others are communicated in a clear and simple manner.
  - iii. Under the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Road Transport Operations:
    - 1. Road Safety Office that actively promotes policies and interventions to reduce road crash deaths and minimize casualties to zero.
    - 2. Other offices are: Vehicle and Driver Regulation Office and the Traffic Management and Intelligent Transportation Systems Office
  - iv. The Assistant Secretary for Transportation Data and Smart Mobility, which may also concurrently lead the National Transportation Institute
  - v. The Assistant Secretary for Freight and Goods Transportation
- b. The other Undersecretaries in the Department of Transportation System will include:
- i. The Undersecretary for Urban Mobility, Culture, Arts, and Recreation, which supervises the Office of the Metropolitan Arbolist and Gardener, Office of the Mobility Artist, and Parks and Open Spaces Board
  - ii. The Undersecretary for Aviation and Air Transportation
  - iii. The Undersecretary for Land Use and Transit Oriented Development
  - iv. The Undersecretary for Infrastructure Investment and Development (Airports, Ports, Transport Hubs; Major Road Infrastructure; Rail Infrastructure Development)
  - v. The Undersecretary for Maritime Transportation (including Passenger Ferry Transport)
9. **Local government units** establish provincial transport authorities (PTAs) to perform local transport planning and policy, transport operations, transport infrastructure development, and traffic management within the cities and municipalities of the province. Part of its mandates include:
- a. Strengthening the transport and mobility offices (TMOs) of cities and municipalities under it through technical and financing support;
  - b. Aligning local transport policies to the NTP through working with the local TMOs and the regional offices of the Department of Transportation;
  - c. Convening a multisectoral committee of commuters, transport workers, persons with disabilities, students, the elderly, pregnant women, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users
-

---

in the PTA board to co-design policies, programs, and infrastructure in cities and municipalities within the province; and

- d. Managing transport operations and collecting fares to ensure sustainability of quality public transport service to commuters.
-