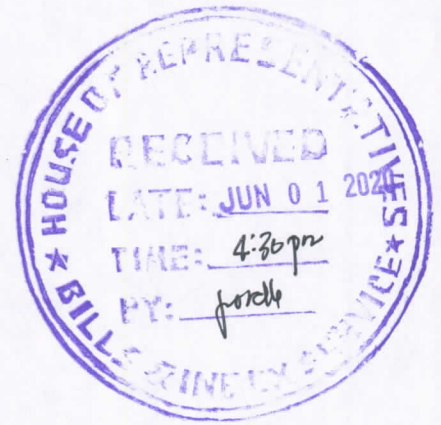


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6905



Introduced by Representative Roman T. Romulo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic truly serves as a wake-up call to all Filipinos. There is merit in saying that many of the shortcomings of our overall response to this national emergency can be traced to societal problems which have long been identified. These could have been addressed prior to the onset of a crisis, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. And, truly, doing so would have prevented the incalculable loss of lives, resources, and mitigated the damages to our society, economy, and the personal security of our people. However, regardless of how we arrived at this juncture, we must now take the opportunity to enact, with passionate haste, quality laws and programs which have for their purpose the protection and betterment of the lives of every Filipino.

The Constitution mandates that the State shall protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature, and to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Action Plan Against COVID-19 provides that the State shall mitigate the consequences and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the social, economic, and personal security of the Filipino people.


The complex issue of transportation, amidst the necessary call of physical distancing, stands as one of the biggest obstacles which we have to overcome. Many of our frontliners have already taken the initiative of solving this problem by moving towards alternative modes of transportation which, at the same time, are environmentally friendly. The autocentric model of our cities is hostile

to commuters and far from conducive to walking, biking, and the like. The onus is now on us to ensure the safety of the public, most of which are frontliners, while encouraging a desirable behavior such as this. We must acknowledge that there is a need for infrastructure to accommodate alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles, and to provide safe and convenient pathways for pedestrians and non-motorized travel.

Furthermore, there are numerous environmental, health, and socio-economic benefits which persuades us to do so. Prioritizing walking, biking, and the use of non-motorized vehicles will result in reduced carbon emissions and less use of energy and resources. Public health is promoted in encouraging movement, thereby reducing chronic illnesses and obesity.¹ It also encourages social interaction, reduces crime, and strengthens and develops community cohesion.² Lastly, the rate of walkability is directly correlated to economic growth, including basic mobility, consumer cost savings, public cost savings (reduced external costs), efficient land use, community livability, improved fitness and public health, economic development, and support for equity objectives.³ However, no reason is as relevant today as the urgency of this need during the COVID-19 pandemic, given the limited forms of transportation available to frontliners and essential workers for so long as there is reduced mobility.

Notwithstanding the fact that we are far from the ideal of creating truly walkable cities, the proposed measure is a right step towards that direction. Let us move away from autocentric sprawls and redraw our cities to accommodate pedestrians and non-motorized transportation.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


ROMAN T. ROMULO
Lone District, Pasig City

¹ Zapata-Diomed, B., Boulangé, C., Giles-Corti, B. et al. Physical activity-related health and economic benefits of building walkable neighbourhoods: a modelled comparison between brownfield and greenfield developments. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act* 16, 11 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-019-0775-8>

² Iris Glas, Godfried Engbersen & Erik Snel (2019) The street level and beyond: The impact of ethnic diversity on neighborhood cohesion and fear of crime among Dutch natives and nonnatives, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 41:6, 737-755, DOI: 10.1080/07352166.2018.1533379

³ Litman, Todd. (2003). Economic Value of Walkability. *Transportation Research Record*. 1828. 3-11. 10.3141/1828-01.

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HOUSE BILL NO. 6905

Introduced by Roman T. Romulo

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-UP BICYCLE LANES AND FOR USE DURING
THE DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Safe Pathways Act*”.

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature, and to protect and promote the right to health of the people instilling health consciousness among them.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic the State shall mitigate the consequences and impact of the pandemic to the social, economic, and personal security of the Filipino people.⁴

⁴ Section A (4), Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF) Resolution No. 15, 24 March 2020.

The State acknowledges the need for infrastructure and a change in mindset to encourage and accommodate alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles, and to provide safe and convenient pathways for pedestrians and non-motorized travel. It also recognizes the urgency of this need during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure physical distancing and given the limited forms of transportation available to frontliners and essential workers for so long as there is reduced mobility.

Sec. 3. Definition of Terms –

a. “Bicycle Lanes” shall mean dedicated lanes to be used by non-motorized vehicle riders.

b. “Non-Motorized Vehicles” shall mean to include all forms of travel that do not rely on an engine or motor for movement. This includes, but is not limited to, bicycles, and small-wheeled non-motorized transport, such as, skates, skateboards, push scooters and hand carts).

c. “Safe Pathways” shall mean lanes along major and minor roads for exclusive use of non-motorized vehicles.

Sec. 4. Safe Pathways Network. – Immediately upon the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and in coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs), shall identify and prioritize the creation of a network of pop-up bicycle lanes that may be used during the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pop-up bicycle lanes shall be exclusive, and shall connect users to essential destinations such as medical facilities, wet and dry markets, schools, public and private facilities frequented by people and other similar places that may be identified. The lanes may be marked with removable tapes and mobile signs, which can easily be placed and removed as necessary. Other physical barriers may also be used.

The pop-up bicycle lanes must have the necessary space to accommodate the expected increase of users and the need for physical distancing at least one (1) meter apart.

To complement the network of pop-up bicycle lanes, LGUs shall create a designated network of pathways along local roads that will provide pedestrians and bicycle users safe and convenient access to frequented destinations by restricting motorized vehicle passage in these pathways during peak hours. The pathways shall be clearly marked with signage containing restrictions.

Sec. 5. Non-Motorized Vehicle Parking Spaces. – All public places, government offices, schools, places of work and major commercial establishments, including malls, banks, hospitals, and the like, shall provide adequate parking spaces for non-motorized vehicles as far as practicable.

Sec. 6. Role of the Public and Private Sectors. – Both the public and private sectors shall promote walking and the use of non-motorized vehicles as an alternative means of travel. They shall develop the necessary infrastructure, facilities and programs for its implementation, including showers and changing areas and shall continue following physical distancing measures during travel.

Sec. 6. Permanent Adoption of Safe Pathways Network. – The DOTr and DPWH, in coordination with the appropriate agencies, shall prepare to permanently adopt the established pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle pathways, as may be appropriate, once the COVID-19 is no longer a threat as declared by the proper authorities. Pursuant to this, non-motorized parking spaces and other infrastructure shall also be made permanent as may be appropriate and practicable.

Sec. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOTr and the DPWH shall promulgate and issue the necessary guidelines for the effective implementation of this Act. The implementing rules and

regulations issued pursuant to this Section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Sec. 8. *Appropriations.* – The funds necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the DOTr, DPWH, and LGUs as needed. Thereafter, funding shall be included in the budget of the DOTr and DPWH under the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

Sec. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, other issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,