

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4025

Introduced by **HON. ROZZANO RUFINO B. BIAZON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Improving mobility propels economic growth and reduces inequality. Mobility allows access to food, water, healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. The lack of proper connectivity is therefore more than an issue of congestion or inaccessibility. It limits opportunities and stunts growth, especially for those who are already marginalized and disadvantaged.

Unfortunately, Filipinos have long suffered mobility issues. This disproportionately affects the most vulnerable in the country: the young and the elderly, the women, the poor, the working class, and the persons-with-disabilities who mostly rely on public transportation and active transport in every part of the country whether in urban or rural areas.

In Metro Manila alone, the inequality in mobility can be seen in the number of registered vehicles and the amount of road space given to public transport vis a vis the travel mode used by everyday Filipinos. While 80% of daily trips are made either through public transport or walking (JICA, 2014), public transport is only given 20% of the road space (Regidor and Javier, 2015). These data clearly reveal that private vehicle owners are prioritized over the majority who are commuters.

This prioritization, seen in the current land use model throughout the country, is not sustainable. The private vehicle is not the transport mode of the majority, it contributes greatly to pollution and emissions, and its low passenger capacity ultimately leads to more congestion. Based on the recent 2019 elections, only 6% of voters come from ABC socio-economic bracket while 94% of voters come from the DE socio-economic bracket, for whom mobility is most inconvenient and for whom every working hour is crucial.

This inequality is further exacerbated by poor infrastructure planning and operations. Travelling by private motorized vehicle is an inefficient use of scarce public space compared to more sustainable modes such as the high-occupancy public transport or the space-efficient walking and cycling.

Road transport services (i.e. buses and jeepneys) are still operating individually in a boundary and commission-based revenue system. This business model force drivers to compete



for passengers and follow unsafe driving practices. For the commuter, this means increased travel times, stress, and safety risks.

What little pedestrian and cycling facilities are provided are usually either in poor conditions or lacking, especially for persons-with-disabilities. At least thirty-two (32) people are dying every day due to road crashes (PSA, 2016), a huge percentage of which are pedestrians. In addition, landscapes, townscapes, and natural resources are exploited and destroyed to make way for highways.

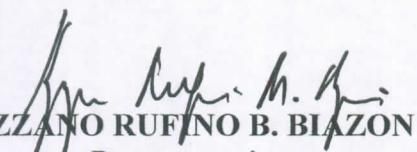
Air quality is also worsening due to the increase in cars. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2018), there were about 45.3 deaths per 100,000 individuals due to outdoor air pollution in the Philippines, ranking third worldwide. Additionally, the transport sector produces 23% of global energy-related CO₂ emissions and is the fastest-growing sector in terms of greenhouse gas emissions (International Energy Agency, 2016).

All of these issues point to the urgent need to improve the welfare and lives of commuters. Hence, this Magna Carta for Commuters.

The proposed bill aims to enumerate and uphold the rights of the commuting public. These rights range from public transportation services to safe and accessible infrastructure to clean air during travel and to commuter representation and participation.

Ultimately, this Magna Carta calls for a shift from car-centric public policy and infrastructure to sustainable transport and mobility, one that provides safe access and mobility to all, promotes economic development, protects and preserves the environment, and uplifts the life of the Filipino commuter.

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



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**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA OF COMMUTERS**

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

**CHAPTER 1
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Magna Carta of Commuters*”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the declared policy of the State to guarantee the rights of all sectors, including the commuter sector to participate in the policy and decision-making processes affecting their rights, welfare, and privileges. Mobility is a basic human need. Commuters have rights to travel safely, conveniently, and reliably. Without mobility, citizens are unable to access basic services such as healthcare and education or enjoy fundamental freedoms. Moreover, mobility should be enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities, gender, and economic status, not only by those who are physically fit, with private motor vehicles or with financial means.

To attain the foregoing policy, the State shall provide the necessary mechanisms, human and financial resources, and legal measures to enable its citizens to enjoy fully the rights embodied in this Act. The State also reaffirms the right of all citizens to participate in the policy formulation, planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of all institutions, programs, projects and services related to upholding the rights of commuters.

In all decisions related to the provision of mobility infrastructure and transportation services, the welfare of the commuter shall be the paramount objective. While the interests of the transportation industry, private motor vehicle users, and other stakeholders should also be considered in any decision, these interests should be secondary to the welfare of the commuting public.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF TERMS

SEC. 3. *Definitions.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. “Active Transport” refers to non-motorized means of travel, including walking or using a bicycle.
- b. “Activity Center” refers to a place in a city or municipality where people gather regularly for work, worship, education, social events, trade, exercise, leisure or other common interests and purposes.
- c. “Advance Notice” refers to the provision of early information regarding any consultations with stakeholders, for which the period from the announcement or delivery of the invitation to the consultation event will be a minimum of ten (10) working days.
- d. “Commuter” refers to a person that needs to travel from one place to another, often using a combination of transportation modes to get to his/her destination.
- e. “Greenway” refers to a road, street, or path with ample greenery and shade where private motorized transport is not allowed, that also serves as recreational space or a public park, in order to welcome and encourage environmentally sustainable transportation modes, especially walking and cycling.
- f. “High-Volume Transport Corridor” refers to walkways, paths, roads, bridges, streets or mass transportation terminals where the flow of people is at least two thousand (2,000) persons per hour per direction during peak travel periods.
- g. “Micromobility” refers to travel using electronic or non-motorized vehicles weighing not more than 100 kilograms.
- h. “Mobility” refers to the ability of a person to travel from one place to another to conduct daily and extraordinary activities and business.
- i. “Mobility Infrastructure” refers to physical facilities, such as foot paths, bicycle lanes, roads, public utility vehicle (PUV) loading and unloading bays, PUV terminals, and public transport systems, that support and enhance a person’s mobility.
- j. “Private Motorized Transport” refers to motorized vehicles weighing more than 100 kilograms.
- k. “Public Transport” refers to public sector and franchised private sector services that transport people over land or water, including jeepneys, utility vehicles (UVs), buses, minibuses, railways, ferries, taxis and tricycles.

1. “Urbanized Municipality” refers to a municipality in the Philippines where the aggregate area in the municipality zoned as residential, commercial or industrial exceeds 40% of the total land area of the municipality.

CHAPTER III **RIGHTS OF COMMUTERS**

SEC. 4. Right to Public Transportation Services that Satisfy Commuters' Mobility Requirements. – The State shall ensure that adequate public transportation services are available to meet the needs of its citizens. Public transportation services and infrastructure plans and programs should be prepared and updated on an annual basis in order to satisfy the evolving mobility requirements in our communities, especially in urban areas.

It will be the responsibility of metropolitan authorities and local government units to measure, analyze and update the mobility requirements in each locality and to develop plans and programs to address the mobility requirements of their citizens.

The State shall ensure that:

- a. Every town and municipality will have a community-wide network of safe sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and roads to enable travel around the city entirely by foot, bicycle or by other forms of light mobility;
- b. Public Transport services are available within a 500-meter walk from any residence or activity center in a city;
- c. Public Transport services are connected to another public service within a 300-meter walk to promote seamless connectivity;
- d. Public Transport services are in sufficient quantity and frequency so that commuter waiting time at stops and terminals do not exceed 10 minutes during peak demand periods;
- e. Public Transport is accorded priority in the use of road space and traffic signal operation so that it is able to traverse 15 kilometers within 1 hour, including all scheduled stops;
- f. Public Transport services are supported by properly equipped, adequately-sized and well-maintained terminals and stops, with attention to the safety and comfort of commuters;
- g. Every road with a speed limit of over 20 kph and under 60 kph shall feature dedicated pedestrian infrastructure, in the form of an unobstructed walking path of at least 2.5 meters wide in each direction; and
- h. Every road with a speed limit of under 60 kph shall feature dedicated bike lanes which are wide enough to comfortably accommodate at least two bikes side by side.

The State will ensure that transport services are inclusive, so that they are accessible to persons of all ages and abilities. Public Transport infrastructure and vehicles shall be designed and implemented so that persons with disabilities or special needs are not excluded from their use.

The State shall ensure that in all renovations of existing infrastructure or construction of new infrastructure, preserving or improving the travel time impact on Public Transport,

bicycles, and pedestrians shall be prioritized over preserving or improving travel time impact on private motorized transport. The State shall generally avoid the implementation of projects that produce a positive impact on the travel time of users of private motorized modes at large expense to Public Transport, bicycles, and pedestrians.

SEC. 5. Right to Safe, Convenient and Affordable Public Transport Services. – The State shall ensure that Public Transport services are safe, dignified, convenient, comfortable and reliable, while remaining affordable to the general public.

Concessional or discounted fares shall be offered for disadvantaged or special groups (i.e., students, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, poor households). The State shall provide subsidies to compensate for discounts offered to special or disadvantaged groups.

The State shall reward the use of Public Transport via financial and non-financial incentives to promote the frequent use of Public Transport. The State shall ensure that it is more economical for commuters to use Public Transport more frequently rather than less frequently.

The State shall apply financial and non-financial disincentives to reduce the use of private motorized transport. Funding earned from such disincentives must be utilized for funding of Mobility Infrastructure in favor of Active Transport and Public Transport. The State shall ensure that it is more economical for commuters to use Active Transport or Public Transport more frequently than to use private motorized transport.

During periods when transportation services are deficient, the State shall employ alternative approaches for enabling additional mobility options for its citizens, including through the use of public resources to fill temporary gaps in services, such as through government-owned vehicles or through the government charter or lease of private vehicles.

The State will promote safe and efficient driving behavior by Public Transport drivers through mandatory trainings and more stringent licensing. All Public Transport vehicles will be required to install electronic vehicle tracking devices and closed circuit televisions (CCTV) that will enable concerned authorities to conduct real-time monitoring of vehicle location, vehicle speed, and driver status. Dangerous on-street competition and behavior among Public Transport drivers shall be eliminated through the removal of any incentive for drivers that is related to ridership or fare revenue. Streets must be designed in accordance with international best practices in road safety design to reduce the occurrence of dangerous driving behavior.

SEC. 6. Right to Infrastructure for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Persons with Disabilities. – The State shall accord priority to the development of adequate sidewalks and networks of bicycle lanes that encourage Active Transport and that provide safe and direct access to priority destinations such as housing, education, and business centers as well as Public Transport nodes.

The State shall ensure that all Public Transport stops are accessible to persons with disabilities and impaired movement. The State shall ensure that ease of access by pedestrians especially at Public Transport stops and government facilities is prioritized over mobility of private motorized transport.

The State shall ensure that safe and adequate walking and cycling infrastructure is incorporated in the design and implementation of road transport projects at national and local government levels. The State shall ensure that the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of every city includes the development of a city-wide network of safe sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and roads

lanes to enable travel around the city entirely by foot, bicycle or by other forms of light mobility.

The State shall ensure that travel by walking or cycling is no less direct to destinations than travel by private motorized transport. No commuter shall be made to travel above or below street level to cross any street or intersection if it is possible to implement an at-grade crossing. No commuter, when traveling by walking or cycling, shall be made to diverge from his or her route of travel if a commuter traveling by private motorized vehicle would have enjoyed a more direct trip.

In cities and urbanized municipalities, the State shall ensure that the infrastructure of each barangay includes:

- a. Safe foot paths or sidewalks, free of obstructions, well-protected from automobiles, compliant with universal design guidelines, and accessible by pregnant women, elderly, and persons with strollers or wheelchairs;
- b. Networks of greenways to encourage active transport modes (walking and cycling);
- c. Proper lighting on all roads and footpaths to allow safe travel even after dark;
- d. Tactile paving on sidewalks of high-volume transport corridors for the benefit of pedestrians who are blind;
- e. Bicycle racks in every transportation hub or terminal and in every commercial, community and activity center. Such racks shall be provided at street level if possible, and at most one level above or below the street; and

Safe intersections and pedestrian crossings shall be ensured through the provision of raised pedestrian platforms, highly visible advance warning signages, adequate street lighting, mid crossing refuges, traffic calming for motorized vehicles and kerb outstands to reduce road pavement crossing width.

The State shall not require parking for cars to be built in any buildings, and shall encourage commercial development and the built environment to accommodate non-car travel. The State shall promote light mobility by requiring that buildings provide bicycle racks that can accommodate ten percent (10%) of the anticipated users of any building.

The State shall adopt the Vision Zero in road safety and ensure that road crashes are eliminated particularly those of vulnerable road users. The State shall implement a comprehensive road safety program and shall allocate funding to implement activities under the five pillars of the Philippine Road Safety Action Plan namely Road Safety Management, Safer Roads, Safer Vehicles, Safer Road Users, and Post-Crash Response.

SEC. 7. Right to a Fair Share of Public Road Space. – The State shall ensure that public road space is used in a manner that delivers the greatest socio-economic benefit. The safety of road users, especially non-motorized and vulnerable users, shall be prioritized over the mobility of motorized modes of transport. The design, engineering and operation of road infrastructure shall be done in order to achieve the goal of road safety and access for non-motorized and vulnerable users.

Road space shall be prioritized for modes of travel that move more people and maximize the productivity and social benefit of the public asset. The planning and design of roads must prioritize the needs of pedestrians, micro-mobility users, and Public Transport users above the needs of private motor vehicles. Public Transport shall have priority use of road space over private motor vehicles.

No public road space and foot paths shall be allocated for private parking, commerce or other activities that will restrict public use of, or access to, the road.

SEC. 8. Right to Breathe Clean Air During Travel. – The State shall take measures to ensure that commuters are able to travel using Public Transport or active transport without compromising their health.

The State shall ensure that all Public Transport vehicles comply with the emission standards set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and/or the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), whichever is more stringent.

Programs to reduce the volume of motorized vehicles shall be formulated to reduce vehicle-related pollution emissions. The State shall also provide facilities and programs which support and incentivize the use of cleaner alternative fuels. Recognizing that non-exhaust emissions make up a significant portion of total pollutant emissions and that the levels of such emissions are dependent on vehicle weight, the State shall provide programs that encourage the reduction of average vehicle weight and encourage citizens to commute using cycling or other lighter vehicles.

The State shall measure air quality along the major transport corridors in all cities and other major urban centers and provide this information to the public in real time. When air quality exceeds safe levels according to internationally-accepted standards the State shall activate emergency procedures with the aim of reducing the exposure of the public, especially the young and the elderly, to unclean air.

SEC. 9. Right to Information for Efficient and Convenient Travel. – The State will provide timely and adequate information so that commuters are able to make good travel plans and choices about modes and routes. The government shall ensure that information on all Public Transport services, including route maps, fares, schedules, and real time vehicle location and availability, shall be accessible and available at all times for the convenience of commuters. The State shall ensure that such information is prominently displayed at all stops of public transport services and at other locations deemed necessary or beneficial to commuters.

Technical standards and regulations shall be established for the display of street maps at strategic locations in each neighborhood, for the reference of residents and visitors.

A twenty-four hour information and assistance counter shall be available at all ports, airports, and terminals to serve the needs of travelers.

SEC. 10. Right to Special Attention During Service Breakdowns and to Compensation for Deficiencies in Service. – Notwithstanding the provisions of DOTC-DTI Joint Administrative Order No. 1, s. 2012, (Providing for A Bill of Rights for Air Passengers and Carrier Obligations), passengers shall be entitled to receive from any transport operator a full

refund of the fare and assistance in securing onward journeys in case of a breakdown in a Public Transport service,

Stranded passengers shall be informed in a timely manner about how they will be redirected to their final destination. If onward journeys are unavailable for more than one (1) hour, the transport operator shall provide food, water, and access to a waiting area with restrooms and ventilation.

Any student or employee should not be penalized for arriving late by their school or employer if the reason for their tardiness was a disruption in a Public Transport service.

SEC. 11. Right to Representation and Participation. -- The State shall ensure that the welfare and interest of commuters are considered in all decision-making related to mobility and transportation services. To this end, commuters have a right to advance notice and information on any proposed policy, regulation, project or service at local or national level that affect their mobility, including full details on how they will be affected by the proposed initiative. Affected commuters have a right to provide their comments and suggestions of the proposed initiative. Affected commuters must receive a response to such comments from the concerned public official within twenty (20) working days.

If a public consultation will be held regarding any initiative affecting the mobility of commuters, the consultation meeting shall be held at a time, even on a weekend or after office hours, and at a convenient and accessible venue that will maximize the participation and feedback from affected commuters. In parallel, commuter feedback shall be solicited through social media and other channels for information exchange.

CHAPTER III INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

SEC. 12. Office of Commuter Affairs. – An Office of Commuter Affairs shall be established in the Department of Transportation (DOTr). It shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- a. Coordinate with other DOTr agencies as well as law enforcement agencies dealing with road, rail, air and maritime transportation to ensure safe, efficient and comfortable travel of commuters;
- b. Operate help desks for the riding public;
- c. Assist the commuters whenever the safety and efficiency of travel is compromised;
- d. Undertake massive commuter education programs for the traveling public to know their rights and responsibilities;
- e. Ensure legal assistance for commuters, when the need arises; and
- f. Ensure adequate representation of commuters in any public consultation that will impact on the welfare and interest of commuters;

SEC. 13. *Office of National Transport Data and Planning Center.* – An Office of National Transport Data and Planning Center (ONTDPC) shall be established under the DOTr. It shall be primarily responsible for the collection and processing of mobility data for evidence-based transport planning which can quickly adapt to the evolving mobility requirements in our communities.

SEC. 14. *Implementing Agencies.* – The DOTr, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), DENR, DTI, and concerned local government units shall be the implementors of this Act.

As the lead implementing agency, The DOTr shall be responsible for coordinating and monitoring all implementation activities under this Act. It shall ensure that:

- a. The core concepts of this framework are integrated in the annual government budget process;
- b. Compliance with the provisions of this Act are included in the annual performance targets of all relevant national and local government agencies;
- c. The other implementing departments and agencies will annually be allocated budget to strengthen organizational capacities; and
- d. Relevant technical standards, guidelines, and manuals of national and local agencies are amended to incorporate all requirements under this Act.

SEC. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one hundred and eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOTr in coordination with the other implementing agencies and in consultation with all stakeholders, shall prepare the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 16. *Penal Provisions.* – Any person who violates any provision of this Act shall be penalized with a fine not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (PhP50,000.00) but not more than Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP200,000). If the offender is a public official, said official shall be dismissed from government service, in addition to the penalties above stated.

If the violator is a government department or agency, it shall indemnify the complainant with an amount not less than Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP200,000.00) but not more than One Million Pesos (PhP1,000,000.00)

SEC. 17. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act be subsequently declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not so declared and not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, issuances, orders, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 19. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,