

Behind Political Noise, Davao City remains progressive.

Behind Political Noise, Davao City Continues Growing and Progressing

In today's fast-paced political landscape, it's easy to get swept up in headlines, controversies, and heated debates. But if you take a step back and look beyond the noise, one thing remains clear: Davao City continues to grow, develop, and deliver real benefits to its people — the Dabawenyos. From safety to infrastructure and community empowerment, the Duterte leadership legacy — spanning from Rodrigo Duterte to Sara Duterte and now Baste (Sebastian) Duterte — has left an unmistakable mark on this city.

A Legacy of Safety and Security

One of the city's most talked-about achievements is its safety record. In 2024, Davao City was ranked third safest city in Southeast Asia according to the Numbeo Safety Index — placing it right up there with global favorites like Chiang Mai (Thailand) and Singapore. This ranking looks at crime rates, police efficiency, and residents' perception of safety, and reflects a long-standing reputation for peace and order in the heart of Mindanao.

This isn't just a bragging right for tourism brochures — it's something people feel every day when they walk home at night, send their kids to school without worry, or open a small business with confidence.

Rodrigo Duterte: The Foundation of Davao's Transformation

Long before national politics put him in the spotlight, Rodrigo Duterte built his reputation in Davao City. During his long tenure as mayor, the city saw significant reductions in crime and disorder, helping transform it from a place once known for unrest into a city many Filipinos now point to as a model of peace and security.

His approach to governance emphasized strict enforcement of laws, visible policing, and strong community involvement — which, for many residents, created a sense of order and allowed everyday life to flourish. Schools operated without fear, markets were safer, and people felt freer to pursue opportunities.

While Duterte's methods have drawn international controversy, particularly with how his policies were applied nationally, many Dabawenyos credit his leadership for making their city a place where families can sleep easier at night.

Sara Duterte: Continuity and Community Focus

Following her father's leadership, Sara Duterte stepped into the role of mayor with her own energy and agenda. She became the youngest and first female mayor of the city's political history,

carrying forward the focus on peace and order while expanding public services and development projects.

Her administration was known for prioritizing infrastructure like waste-to-energy planning, bridge connections to boost connectivity, and continuing the groundwork on major transport and utility initiatives that help Davao keep pace with modern cities.

Under Sara Duterte, Davao also doubled down on community programs — making safety not just a police effort, but a shared responsibility with residents through campaigns and collaborative initiatives.

Mayor Baste Duterte: Building for Tomorrow

Today, under Mayor Sebastian “Baste” Duterte, the city’s development agenda is about continuity with a future-looking focus. Baste has spoken about ensuring food security, expanded infrastructure, and social services that uphold the foundations laid by his predecessors while meeting the needs of today’s Dabawenyos.

His administration continues to push forward large transport projects like the Davao Public Transport Modernization Project — a massive bus system that aims to change how people move across the city — and major road and bypass improvements to ease congestion and support economic activity.

Beyond the Headlines

It's no secret that the Duterte political name attracts attention — sometimes negative, often loud, always debated. International news outlets regularly spotlight controversies tied to the family, especially concerning Rodrigo Duterte's national policies and legal challenges overseas.

But at street level in Davao City, many residents will tell you something much simpler: their community feels safer, more stable, and more optimistic about the future than it did decades ago. This is not idle praise — it's reflected in international safety rankings, large-scale infrastructure development, and a continuing belief among many locals that their city is moving forward despite political noise.

Editorial: UnicornBlue

Photo: Davao city.gov

