

Traffic! Traffic! Traffic!

- **Opinion**

by [Marco Fernando L. Ng](#) - October 19, 2015

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Marco Fernando L. Ng

DEBIT CREDIT

Since time immemorial, Metro Manila has been experiencing daily heavy traffic, especially in its major roads (Edsa, España, C-5, Quezon Avenue, to name a few). Right now, it seems that this is achingly a way of life for all residents in the metropolis.

I could still remember that five years ago, traffic was just limited to rush hours (from 7 to 9 a.m. and 6 to 8 p.m.), but from my recent one-week stay in Metro Manila, daily trips going to Makati City from Cubao, you would need to at least one-and-a-half hours for the trip! Worse, during my one-week stay in the city, the traffic is not only heavy during rush hours, but all throughout the day. If there's a thunderstorm, traffic will grind to a halt, literally making Edsa a huge parking lot for all kinds of vehicles.

Imagine the loss of unproductive time whenever we get stuck in traffic. For us accountants, this means loss of chargeable hours, delayed submission of work, more overtime, loss of clients, etc. The list can go on and on, but the intangible and most important loss here is the loss for our personal time for our love ones and ourselves.

Even if we implement strict time management, traffic in Metro Manila is already out of control.

Cause and cost

Traffic in Metro Manila is caused by several factors that need government attention. Among the major causes of traffic are:

- Inefficient and ineffective mass transportation;
- Poorly maintained roads;
- Overpopulation of urban areas in Mega Manila;
- Rapid development of major cities in Mega Manila;
- No alternative mode of private transportation (e.g. bikes, carpools);
- Increasing growth of private car usage (including ownership);
- Lack of or no strict implementation of traffic laws (no enforcement of the law).

Based on the study done by Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), estimated traffic cost per day for Metro Manila could stand at P2.5 billion. The amount would increase to P6 billion per day in 2030 if the government fails to act to improve the current transport infrastructure.

Right path, right plan

In September 2014 the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) approved the “Roadmap for Transport Infrastructure Development for Metro Manila and Its Surrounding

Areas.” http://www.jica.go.jp/philippine/english/office/topics/news/c8h0vm00008wr871-att/140902_01.pdf

This study narrates the need to expand the current road connection of Mega Manila around its neighboring regions, i.e., Region 3 and Region 4A. By expanding this connection, developments on those regions will expand and some of the major causes of traffic in the Mega Manila area would be substantially resolved.

In addition, modernization of the traffic management system and discipline in traffic rules will be implemented to ensure that traffic logjam in Metro Manila will be reduced. Improvements on mass transit and road widening and repairs will also be needed to alleviate the worsening traffic in Metro Manila.

Change

By implementing this plan, economic growth within Mega Manila will be sustained, and in addition, economic growth and increase in investments in outer parts of Mega Manila will be experienced. If this comes to fruition, accountants within and outside Mega Manila will also experience a booming business.

With the Asean integration just around the corner, the Philippine government needs to put its act together to create the needed change. The funny thing about the current mantra of the government’s “Daang Matuwid” refers to a straight path

for government services. Maybe it's high time for them to really put this mantra into action and start implementing these economic plans.

Marco Fernando L. Ng is currently the managing partner of M. Ng & T. Lopez partnership firm, one of the boutique firms in Metro Angeles. Prior to establishing the firm, he had work for three years in New York City with one of the largest auditing firm there that focuses on hedge funds and private equity funds. He had worked with two of the largest auditing firms in the Philippines wherein he was under their respective fraud investigation and dispute services and Assurance services, handling corporate accounts and listed companies.