

Metro Manila is the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines with 2007 Census revealed that the population was around 11,547,959 people. With a land area of 636 square kilometres (about 0.2 percent of the total Philippines land area), the population is estimated to reach 13.4 million by the year of 2020. Metro Manila is situated in the lowlands of south-western Luzon Island and it is composed of 17 cities and municipalities including City of Manila which functions as the capital of the Philippines.



Figure 1: Location of Manila

Figure 2: Cities of Metropolitan Manila

► *Administrative arrangement and planning fabric*

The local government administrative system in the Philippines is multi-layered with three tiers of public administration: (1) provinces and highly urbanized cities, (2) cities and municipalities, and (3) *barangay* (smallest administrative unit). In 1995, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) was founded. The primary roles of the authority are formulating, co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of plans and programs within Metro Manila. It also has other responsibilities related to development planning; transport and traffic management; solid waste disposal and management; flood control and sewerage management; urban renewal, zoning, land use planning and shelter services; and health and sanitation, urban protection and pollution control; and public safety. Then, the first spatial planning document was prepared which is being referred as ‘The Physical Framework Plan for Metropolitan Manila, 1996-2016’. It is scheduled to be reviewed once in every 10 years, but to date, no review has occurred.

► *Urban identity and some critical issues*

In 2007, Metro Manila had a population density of 18,157 persons per sq. km., 62 times the national average of 295 persons per sq. km. The top three cities, as measured by the terms of highest population, are more evident in Quezon City, City of Manila and Caloocan City. Urban development and investment in the city has transformed a primarily agricultural area into a thriving residential, commercial and industrial centre with high level of competitiveness between cities within Metro Manila. However, the inadequacy in transportation system associated with the segregation process between commercial and industrial centres where the

decentralization of industries from older inner-city parts to the outer urban fringe which have been promoted by MMDA; the situation has not only resulted to traffic congestion in daily travel, but also increased the environmental risks of the city. In 2009, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the National Capital Region (NCR) reached PHP465.69 billion (at constant 1985 prices) respectively. NCR continued to account for the largest share in the total economy's GDP. However, it went down from 33% share in 2008 to 32.5% share in 2009. It appears that the economic growth rate of NCR has suffered a reversal from positive 4.7% in 2008 to negative 0.4% in 2009. The situation could perhaps be due to the fact that it was brought about by the slump in the industry sector and the deceleration of the service sector.

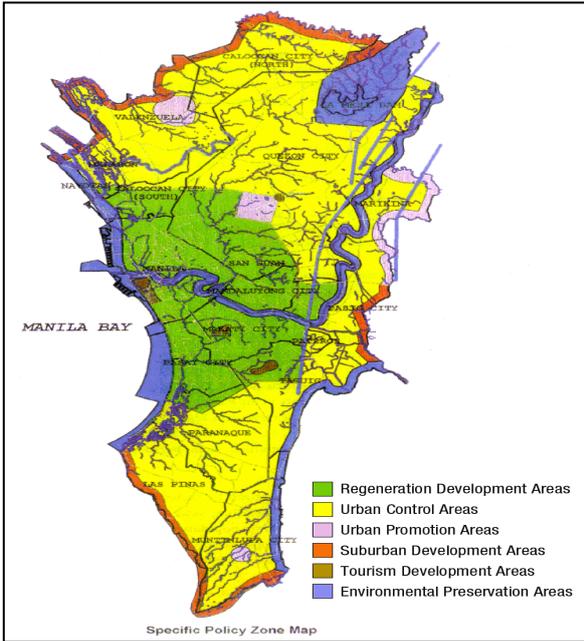


Figure 3: Metro Manila Specific Policy Zone Map

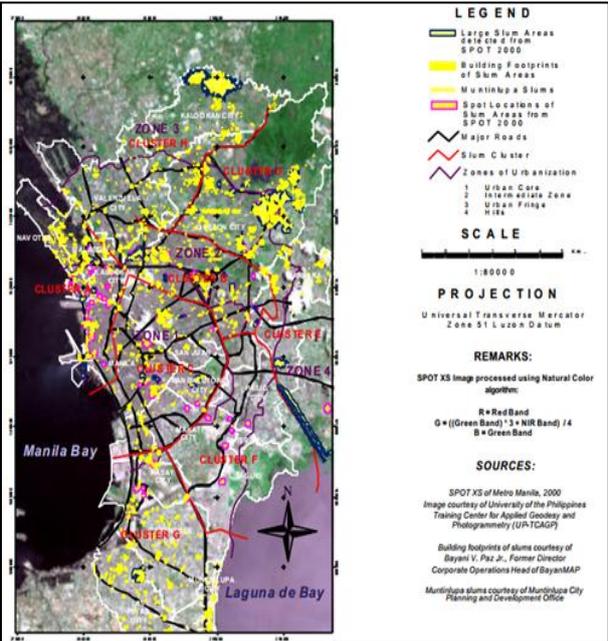


Figure 4: Aggregate Map of Informal Settlers

The squatting problem and urban poverty became a national issue and it needs to be improved from the macroeconomic aspect by creating better employment prospect in other regions as a measure to limit in-migration which would only contribute to city's congestion. It was reported that total number of informal settlers in Metro Manila reached an amount of 726,908 families in July 2002. Asian Development Bank stated that more than 20% of Metro Manila's population fall below the poverty line, and 35% live in informal settlements. Transportation system depends mainly on the road network where Metro Manila is well-known for its traffic congestion and environmental pollution problems. Traffic volume in major roads is being dominated not only by private cars and buses, but also by jeepneys which is proved to be a famous choice for shared taxi because it is inexpensive and efficient.

► **Urban evolution and growth story**

The policy makers recognize the challenges that are currently being faced by the region and aim to implement an integrated development plan within 17 political units of the region. The plan is characterized by unity of purpose, innovation, resiliency, sustainability, disaster prevention and many more. In March 2012, the formulation of a 20 year long-term strategy named Metro Manila Greenprint 2030 has been launched through cooperation between MMDA, government agencies and local government units with a strong support from World Bank, Australian Agency For International Development and the Japanese Government

