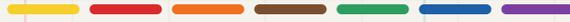


MBT



MANILA BUSWAY TRANSIT · METRO MANILA · VERSION 3

Connecting every Juan, wherever in Metro Manila.

2019

A commute challenge that started everything.

In October 2019, then-Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo publicly challenged critics of Metro Manila's traffic situation to simply commute to work.^[1] The challenge — meant to deflect — had the opposite effect. It forced a direct confrontation with the daily reality of being a commuter in this city.

What began as a response became a years-long research effort: studying routes, reviewing data, mapping corridors, building a proposal from the ground up. Multiple attempts were made to submit this to government agencies. Some replied. Most did not.

Regardless of whether this is appreciated at the time of writing or ever — it will be written anyway.

Because the core belief has not changed: mass public transportation is not a convenience — it is a right.

₱3.5B

LOST DAILY TO METRO MANILA TRAFFIC CONGESTION — JICA 2017 SURVEY

₱5.4B

PROJECTED DAILY COST BY 2035 IF NO INTERVENTION — JICA^[3]

3 lines

RAIL COVERAGE FOR 13.4M DAILY COMMUTERS IN METRO MANILA

2032

EARLIEST EXPECTED PARTIAL OPERATIONS OF METRO MANILA SUBWAY — DOTR^[4]

Now

BRT CAN BE BUILT ON ROADS THAT ALREADY EXIST — NO NEW TUNNELS, NO DECADE-LONG CONSTRUCTION

THE PHILOSOPHY

"We want people to move — not buses to adjust to individuals. The safety and efficiency of the many must take priority over the convenience of some."

THE HONEST FRAMING

Manila is not behind — it is just earlier.

Comparing Metro Manila to Taipei or London is a mismatch. Those cities are decades ahead. But comparing to Seoul — roughly the same land area, similar density, similar urban challenges — is the right benchmark. Seoul simply chose to prioritize its railway system earlier.

Of all cities, *Seoul is the most useful reference*. Not London (far larger and with 150 years of underground history), not Singapore (smaller, less dense, different urban model). Seoul got where it is through deliberate, sustained investment. Manila is capable of the same.

CITY	LAND AREA ^[5]	POPULATION ^[6]	SUBWAY / MRT STATIONS ^[7]
Seoul	605 km ²	~10M	624 (23 lines, 2023)
Singapore	735 km ²	~6M	~130
Taipei	272 km ²	~2.6M	~131
Metro Manila	636 km ²	13.4M (2020)	0 subway*

* Metro Manila Subway is under construction. Partial operations expected no earlier than 2032 per DOTr.^[4] MRT 3, LRT 1, and LRT 2 are elevated rail lines, not underground subway systems.

WHY BRT, NOT SUBWAY — YET

The bus as a bridge, not a final destination.

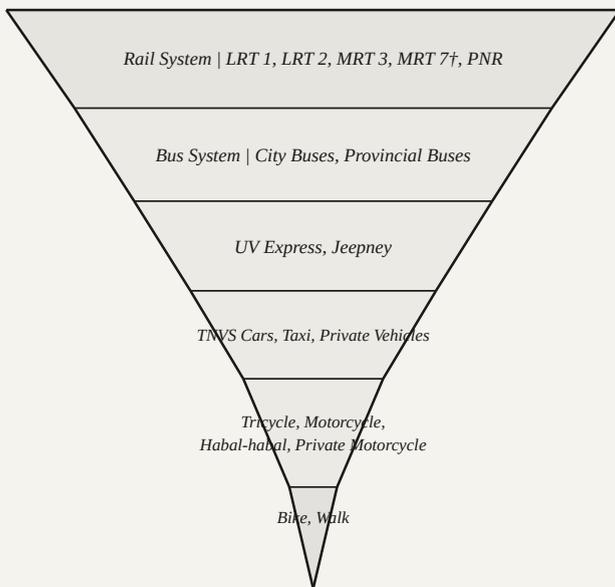
MBT does not claim to be the permanent answer. The real answer is more railways. But building one rail line takes a full administration — sometimes two. The Metro Manila Subway, first announced in the Duterte years, now has partial operations targeted for 2032 at the earliest.^[4] Time is not our friend as the population keeps growing.

Cities like Bogotá, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Bangkok — geographically and culturally closer to Manila — have all shown BRT works in tropical, high-density, car-dominated environments. When the subway eventually arrives, MBT does not disappear. It becomes the feeder network that makes the subway actually useful to the last mile.

Ride-hailing apps are not the answer either. Singapore, Tokyo, and London do not run on Grab. They run on railways — because

they invested in them. Manila cannot let ride-hailing fill the gap that public infrastructure should occupy.

FIGURE 1.1 — INVERTED HIERARCHY OF TRANSPORTATION



Widest = highest people-carrying capacity per unit of road

† MRT 7 is an elevated rail line, not a subway. Partial operations expected 2025–2026.

The inverted pyramid reframes the conversation. At the widest top tier — the mode that carries the most people per unit of road space — sits the rail system. At the narrowest tip: the individual cyclist or pedestrian.

Today, Metro Manila's road allocation is *effectively upside-down*. Private vehicles sit in the middle tiers of this hierarchy, yet they occupy the vast majority of road width. The top two tiers — rail and bus — are squeezed into what little remains.

MBT does not propose eliminating private vehicles. It proposes correcting the allocation — giving the highest-capacity modes the road priority they need to function at capacity. One BRT lane moves more people than four car lanes.

The LTFRB model: operators propose, government reacts.

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board was established on June 19, 1987, under Executive Order No. 125 during the Corazon Aquino administration.^[8] Its mandate: to regulate public land transportation services, grant franchises, and approve bus and jeepney routes.

The process works like this: a private operator identifies a route they believe is commercially viable, files an application for a Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC), and LTFRB evaluates it through hearings before approving or denying it.^[9]

This model made sense in 1987. Metro Manila in the late '80s still had large pockets of undeveloped land. New residential areas needed new routes. An operator-proposes, government-reacts model was at least responsive to where people were actually going.

That logic no longer holds. Today, the entire footprint of Metro Manila — 636 km² — is effectively built-up, a continuous mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land.

THE STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

Routes are created by business logic, not commuter need. An operator proposes a route because it generates revenue — not because it fills a gap in the network. The result is route oversupply on profitable corridors and chronic underservice on others.

LTFRB is ministerial by design — not strategic. It approves or denies what operators submit. It does not plan, it does not commission routes, and it does not maintain a network map. There is no central authority asking "what does the city need?" before a single route is approved.

Over-franchising has become its own problem. By mid-2010s, over 100,000 jeepney and bus franchises had been issued.^[10] Route oversupply on key corridors meant operators competed destructively — cutting corners on safety, stopping anywhere to pick up passengers, and contributing to the very congestion they were meant to relieve.

The system hasn't kept pace with the city's growth. Metro Manila's population has grown from roughly 7 million in 1987 to 13.4 million in 2020. The LTFRB framework governing how buses are routed has not fundamentally changed in that time.

There are no undiscovered corridors. Every major road already has people on it.

WHAT MBT PROPOSES INSTEAD

*A network built from the demand up — not from the operator's balance sheet out.
Routes should serve the city. The city should not serve the routes.*

The EDSA Carousel is Line 1. It already works.

The EDSA Busway, launched in June 2020, is a live demonstration of MBT's core argument.^[11]

When buses are given a dedicated lane, separated from mixed traffic, with median boarding stations — they work. Travel times drop. Ridership climbs.

MBT's Yellow Main Line (EDSA Line) closely mirrors the existing Carousel, with two key differences: the terminus points shift to Navotas Terminal in the north and SM Mall of Asia in the south — both more logical anchors — and a refined stop list that eliminates redundant loading points in favor of structured transfer nodes.

The lesson is simple: *BRT is not experimental in Manila. It is already operating.* The question is why only one of the seven proposed corridors has been built.

16.7

km of dedicated
median bus lane,
Monumento to PITX^[11]

33

Bus stations along the
EDSA Busway at
launch^[11]

370K+

Estimated daily
passengers served^[11]

24

Proposed MBT stop
count for Yellow Line —
same number, refined
alignment

Why roads fail commuters

Metro Manila ranked worst in traffic globally in 2023 per TomTom Traffic Index — beating 386 cities across 55 countries.

[12]

- **Private vehicles dominate public road space**
Car travel accounts for 30% of person-km traveled in Metro Manila but constitutes 72% of road traffic by vehicle count. [13] A single bus carries 80–150 people in the space of 2–3 cars. The road is a shared resource — its allocation does not reflect that.
- **Buses operate in the same gridlock they're meant to solve**
Without dedicated lanes or signal priority, buses are stuck in the same traffic as private vehicles. They stop anywhere, follow no fixed schedule, and offer no reliability advantage over driving — removing the main reason a commuter would choose them.
- **Rail is limited and slow to expand**
LRT and MRT serve important corridors but leave entire cities underserved. The Metro Manila Subway — which would be the city's first true underground system — has partial operations now targeted for 2032. [4] That is not a plan for today's commuters.
- **Routes are built for operators, not commuters**
Under the LTFRB franchise model, routes exist because an operator found them profitable — not because a planner found them necessary. There is no network map, no unified logic, and no single authority accountable for the whole. The system has not been fundamentally redesigned since 1987. [8]

"If building a subway takes a generation, we need a solution that works in this one."

Bus Rapid Transit is not a compromise — it is a deliberate choice. The major components of a railway: a station, a dedicated track, a high-capacity vehicle. BRT mirrors this exactly — median platforms, exclusive bus lanes, articulated buses. Cities like Bogotá (TransMilenio), Curitiba (RIT), Jakarta (TransJakarta), and Bangkok have all proven that BRT delivers rail-level capacity on roads that already exist. Manila already proved it on EDSA. The question is when — not if — the other six corridors follow.

Faster to deploy

BRT uses existing roads with lane reconfiguration, median platforms, and dedicated signals — a fraction of the timeline and cost of underground rail. Implementation in months, not decades.

Rail-comparable capacity

Articulated buses carry 140–150 passengers. A BRT corridor with signal priority can move 20,000+ passengers per hour per direction — comparable to light rail at a fraction of the infrastructure cost.

Designed to connect, not compete

MBT eliminates duplicate stops where LRT and MRT already operate. One beep card. One network. It extends existing rail — and when the subway arrives, it becomes its feeder system.



01

A network that thinks like a city

MBT is not a set of bus routes — it is a layered system. Main lines form the spine. Feeder lines connect neighborhoods. Tertiary lines fill the gaps. Every part serves the whole, with a numbering logic that makes the system self-explaining.



02

Roads are public infrastructure

Dedicating one center lane to buses is not a loss for drivers — it is a reallocation of public space toward its most efficient public use. Private vehicles remain on shared lanes. The road serves everyone, better.



03

Legible to anyone, on day one

A color-coded map. A single beep card. A route code system that tells you the line's hierarchy from its number alone. First-time rider or daily commuter — the network should be navigable in sixty seconds.

Rail lines in Metro Manila each have dedicated governing bodies — LRTA, PNR, DOTr-MRT3 — with clear mandates. The bus system is split between LTO (driver licensing) and LTFRB (franchising and routes). This creates accountability gaps that no single agency currently owns.

GAP — ACCOUNTABILITY

Who is responsible for driver conduct?

Bus drivers carry dozens of lives per trip but fall under the same LTO framework as private license holders. The elevated duty of care has no corresponding regulatory structure — a gray area that has persisted since 1987.

GRAY AREA

GAP — INFRASTRUCTURE

Who maintains the stations?

MMDA led the EDSA Carousel station improvements. But can it sustain maintenance across an expanded network? Should stations fall under MMDA or each LGU? Neither has formally answered this. Without a clear owner, stations degrade.

GRAY AREA

GAP — PUBLIC SERVICE

Why don't operators reinvest?

Bus operators collect fares but bear no obligation to improve the infrastructure they operate on. Rail revenues cycle back into the system. Bus revenues do not. If the bus system is a public service, it should be governed like one.

GRAY AREA

MBT'S ROLE

MBT is not just routes — it is a governing entity.

Modeled on the structure that governs rail, MBT consolidates bus system oversight under a single authority — replacing fragmented private operators with unified public management and closing the accountability gaps that have persisted since 1987.

Driver & conductor management

Code of conduct, salary, benefits, HMO coverage — a unified employment framework replacing individual operator arrangements.

MBT RESPONSIBILITY

Operations & citizens' charter

Route maintenance, security, service improvement — one body accountable to the public, not to franchise holders.

MBT RESPONSIBILITY

Fleet, roads & payment

Bus acquisition, road maintenance, route lighting, unified beep card fare collection — removing the operator-by-operator patchwork.

MBT RESPONSIBILITY

TIER 1
Main Lines
 7 BRT corridors

Center-lane Bus Rapid Transit — 24/7 operation

The backbone. Seven BRT corridors occupy one dedicated median lane of major roads, physically separated from mixed traffic. No other buses, jeepneys, UV Express, or P2P services are permitted in these lanes. Private vehicles and bicycles remain on shared lanes. Articulated buses run frequent, scheduled service around the clock — connecting every LRT/MRT station and eliminating duplicate stops where rail already operates.

ARTICULATED BUSES · MEDIAN LANES · 24 HOURS

TIER 2
Feeder Lines
 73+ routes

Neighborhood connectors — no dedicated lane required

Secondary routes branching from BRT stations into surrounding streets and barangays. No median dedication needed. Their purpose is to feed the main corridors. Most of these routes already exist in some form — MBT gives them structure, numbering, and a place within the network logic rather than leaving them to individual operator discretion.

CITY TRANSIT BUSES · CURB LANES · SCHEDULED HOURS

TIER 3
Tertiary Lines
 Cross-connectors

Cross-connectors and last-mile support

Tertiary lines connect main and feeder lines laterally and provide last-mile coverage for areas neither tier fully reaches. Traditional jeepneys are integrated here — preserving a culturally significant mode while giving it a defined, structured role in the network rather than operating in conflict with it.

JEEPNEYS · FLEXIBLE FREQUENCY

L1 YELLOW EDSA Line · 9 feeder lines · 2 tertiary lines

SECONDARY (FEEDER) LINES

- 10 A. Mabini – Taft Avenue Line
- 11 MacArthur Highway Line
- 12 Balintawak Station – Valenzuela Gateway Complex Line
- 13 A. Bonifacio – Blumentritt Line
- 14 Fernando Poe Jr. Avenue Line
- 15 West Avenue Line
- 16 Mindanao Avenue Line
- 17 Cubao – Recto Station Line
- 18 Antonio Arnaiz Avenue Line

TERTIARY LINES

- 100 Del Monte Avenue Line
- 101 Aurora Boulevard, Pasay Line

L2 RED Quezon Ave. Line · 9 feeder lines · 1 tertiary line

SECONDARY (FEEDER) LINES

- 20 Quirino Highway – Angat Line
- 21 Mindanao Avenue West & East Line
- 22 Batasan Road Line
- 23 Luzon Avenue – Congressional Avenue Line
- 24 Katipunan Avenue – White Plains Avenue Line
- 25 Tandang Sora Avenue Line
- 26 North Avenue Line
- 27 East Avenue – Timog Avenue Line
- 28 G. Araneta Avenue – 5th Avenue Line

TERTIARY LINES

- 200 Batasan – San Mateo Road Line

L3 ORANGE C5 Line · 9 feeder lines · 1 tertiary line

SECONDARY (FEEDER) LINES

- 30 Doña Juliana Vargas Avenue Line
- 31 Pasig Boulevard Extension – C. Raymundo Avenue Line
- 32 Pasig Boulevard – Shaw Boulevard Line
- 33 Kalayaan Avenue – Buendia Avenue Line
- 34 Katipunan Avenue – M. Conception Avenue Line
- 35 26th Street Line
- 36 Upper McKinley Road Line
- 37 Levi B. Mariano Avenue Line
- 38 Cuasay Road – MRT Avenue Line

TERTIARY LINES

- 300 Pioneer Street – Boni Avenue Line

L4 BROWN Osmeña Line · 5 feeder lines · 3 tertiary lines

SECONDARY (FEEDER) LINES

- 40 Sales Road – Lawton Avenue Line
- 41 C5 Road Extension – Dr. Arcadio Santos Avenue Line
- 42 Doña Soledad Avenue – General Santos Avenue Line
- 43 Dr. Arcadio Santos Avenue – NAIA Road Line
- 44 Alabang – Zapote Road Line

TERTIARY LINES

- 400 Daang-Hari Road Line
- 401 Commerce Avenue Line
- 402 Marcos Alvarez Avenue Line

L5 GREEN Roxas Blvd. Line · 9 feeder lines · 3 tertiary lines

SECONDARY (FEEDER) LINES

- 50 Lapu-Lapu Avenue – Dagat-Dagatan Avenue Line
- 51 C3 – Sgt. Rivera Street Line
- 52 Capulong Street – Quirino Avenue Line
- 53 Rizal Avenue Extension – Recto Avenue Line
- 54 Padre Burgos Avenue – Legarda Street Line
- 55 United Nations Avenue – Quirino Avenue Extension Line
- 56 Pedro Gil Street Line
- 57 Seaside Drive – NAIA Road Line
- 58 Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard Line

TERTIARY LINES

- 500 Abad Santos Avenue Line
- 501 Tejeron Street – B. Morcilla Street Line
- 502 J.W. Diokno Boulevard – Pacific Avenue Line

L6 BLUE Aurora Blvd. Line · 5 feeder lines · 1 tertiary line

SECONDARY (FEEDER) LINES

- 60 E. Rodriguez Avenue Sr. Line
- 61 A. Bonifacio Avenue – Sen. L. Sumulong Memorial Circle Line
- 62 FVR Road – Col. Bonny Serrano Avenue Line
- 63 Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Avenue Line
- 64 Felix Avenue Line

TERTIARY LINES

- 600 J.P. Rizal Street Line

SECONDARY (FEEDER) LINES

- 70 N. Domingo Street – Old Santa Mesa Street Line
- 71 ADB Avenue – San Miguel Avenue Line
- 72 Meralco Avenue Line
- 73 Dr. Sixto Antonio Avenue Line

TERTIARY LINES

- 700 F. Blumentritt Street – New Panaderos Street Line

ROUTE IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

1

Single digit — Main corridor

A single digit from 1 to 7 identifies a main BRT corridor.

One number, one line, no ambiguity.

1 = Yellow · EDSA Line

17

Two digits — Feeder line

First digit is the parent main corridor. Second digit is the sequence of the feeder within that corridor.

17 = feeds Yellow · Cubao–Recto

100

Three digits — Tertiary line

First digit is still the parent main corridor. Trailing digits identify the specific tertiary route. Three-digit code signals last-mile function.

100 = Yellow tertiary · Del Monte

HOW TO READ ROUTE CODES ALOUD

1

Say: "Line One"

Yellow · EDSA Line

17

Say: "One-Seven"

Not "seventeen" — each digit is read individually so riders immediately know it feeds Line 1

100

Say: "One-Zero-Zero"

Not "one hundred" — the digit-by-digit reading preserves the parent corridor identity at all times

The digit-by-digit convention matters in practice. A rider who hears "one-seven" instantly knows they are on a Yellow Line feeder. "Seventeen" loses that connection entirely. Signage, announcements, and apps should all follow this standard.

THE 7 MAIN LINES

L1 — YELLOW EDSA Line Navotas Terminal → SM Mall of Asia	L2 — RED Quezon Ave. Line LTO Novaliches → Lawton	L3 — ORANGE C5 Line Libis Terminal → Osmeña Highway	L4 — BROWN Osmeña Line P. Quirino Ave. → Muntinlupa
L5 — GREEN Roxas Blvd. Line Navotas Terminal → PITX	L6 — BLUE Aurora Blvd. Line Cubao → Antipolo	L7 — VIOLET Ortigas Ave. Line Gilmore → Taytay Rotonda	

Each line carries a number, a color, and a geographic corridor name. The number provides an accessible fallback for riders with color vision deficiency (~1 in 12 men). All three identifiers appear together on signage and maps.

WHY THESE CORRIDORS

L1 YELLOW

EDSA Line

Navotas → Mall of Asia

EDSA — extended to where it actually starts.

Everyone knows EDSA. But the Yellow Line goes further — passing through the cities of Malabon and Navotas before reaching the familiar EDSA stretch. That northward extension is deliberate: Navotas Terminal is one of the most strategically important nodes in the entire MBT network. It is the shared terminus with the Green Line (L5), meaning a commuter from Cavite, Batangas, or Laguna arriving at PITX can ride the Green Line all the way up the coast and connect directly into the EDSA corridor — no transfer chaos, no guesswork. At the southern end, SM Mall of Asia anchors a major commercial and transit hub. The Yellow Line is the network's spine, and EDSA already proved it works.

L2 RED

Quezon Ave. Line

Novaliches → Lawton

From UP to España — no transfer needed.

The Red Line runs along Commonwealth Avenue and Quezon Avenue — connecting the northern residential communities of Novaliches and Fairview all the way down through the UP Campus in Quezon City, and continuing into the España corridor in Manila. For students and workers living on the northern side of QC, this is a direct, uninterrupted ride into the heart of Manila City without changing lines. No transfer, dedicated lane. The Red Line also complements MRT 7 along Commonwealth and connects at the southern end into LRT 1 — ensuring that riders transitioning between systems have a clear, logical path forward.

L3 ORANGE

C5 Line

Libis → Osmeña Highway

EDSA's alter ego on the east side.

If EDSA is the main artery of the west, C5 is its counterpart on the east — and yet it has no dedicated public transit to match its traffic volume. The Orange Line addresses that directly, improving movement through Pasig City, Bonifacio Global City, and the eastern districts of Quezon City. For the workers and residents of these rapidly growing corridors, the Orange Line provides what EDSA commuters have had for years: a bus lane that is actually fast.

L4 BROWN

Osmeña Line

P. Quirino Ave. → Muntinlupa

Maximizing SLEX — south to the heart of Manila.

The Brown Line runs along Osmeña Highway, connecting Manila City southward to the borders of Muntinlupa — maximizing the SLEX corridor that many commuters from the south already travel. For those coming from or heading toward the southern edge of the metro, this line moves them all the way into the heart of Manila City without having to navigate multiple transfers. It is the line that anchors the south.

L5 GREEN

Roxas Blvd. Line

Navotas → PITX

Cavite to northern Manila — along the bay.

The Green Line connects Metro Manila to the provinces — starting at PITX, the gateway terminal for commuters arriving from Cavite, Batangas, and Laguna, and running northward along the coast of Manila Bay all the way up to Navotas Terminal. By following the bay route, it creates an entirely separate north-south corridor from EDSA, giving commuters a genuine alternative path. For the densely populated bayside communities of Manila, Navotas, and Malabon, this line is not just convenient — it is the primary link to the rest of the network.

L6 BLUE

Aurora Blvd. Line

Cubao → Antipolo

East to Cubao — connecting Marikina, Antipolo, and Rizal.

The Blue Line moves people from the east — Marikina, Antipolo, and the residential communities of Rizal province — into the heart of Cubao, one of Metro Manila's most significant transit hubs. At Cubao, riders connect into LRT 2 and MRT 3, and access Araneta Center. The Blue Line effectively makes Rizal part of the Metro Manila transit network — bridging the gap between those who live outside the city boundary and the rail infrastructure that stops at the edge of it.

L7 VIOLET

Ortigas Ave. Line

Gilmore → Taytay Rotonda

Rizal to Pasig to Gilmore — the east's second path in.

The Violet Line complements the Blue Line for the east side — but runs a different path. Starting at Taytay Rotonda in Rizal and moving through Pasig City, it terminates at Gilmore in Quezon City, serving a distinct corridor of commuters who do not sit on the Aurora Boulevard alignment. Critically, the Violet Line intersects with the Orange Line (L3) at the C5/Ortigas junction and connects into the Yellow Line (L1/EDSA) at Gilmore — making it one of the key cross-connectors in the entire network, linking the east, the center, and the spine in one continuous ride.

Provincial buses should not enter Metro Manila. MBT is why.

One of the less visible but consequential implications of MBT is what it means for provincial bus operations. Today, buses from Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Cavite, Batangas, and Laguna travel deep into Metro Manila — to Cubao, Pasay, or scattered terminals along EDSA — fighting the same traffic they were supposed to bypass.

MBT changes this logic entirely. If the internal network is strong enough — if a commuter arriving from the north or south can immediately board a main line and reach any point in the metro efficiently — then there is no longer a reason for provincial buses to enter the city at all. They stop at the gateway. MBT takes over from there.

This is not a new concept — the MMDA attempted to implement a provincial bus ban on EDSA as early as 2018, designating VGC as the northern gateway and PITX as the southern one.^[14] The ban stalled because the internal network wasn't ready to absorb the transfer. MBT is the internal network that makes the gateway model actually work.

WHY THE EAST NEEDS NO GATEWAY

Look at a map of Metro Manila. The north and south boundaries are where major expressways — NLEX and SLEX — feed large volumes of provincial traffic into the metro. A gateway at each end is the natural solution.

The east is different. Rizal and the eastern provinces connect to Metro Manila along a largely horizontal axis — through Marikina, Antipolo, and the roads that L6 Blue and L7 Violet already run on. There is no major expressway funneling high-volume provincial buses from the east. The eastern boundary is more of a gradual merge than a gate — and the MBT lines already handle it.

Two gateways cover the city. The east takes care of itself.

NORTHERN GATEWAY

N

Valenzuela Gateway Complex

VGC · Paso de Blas, Valenzuela City

Built in 2018 as the designated terminal for buses arriving from Central and Northern Luzon — covering Bulacan, Bataan, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Baguio, Ilocos, and Cagayan Valley provinces.^[14] Situated adjacent to the North Luzon Expressway at Paso de Blas, VGC is the logical final stop for northbound provincial buses entering Metro Manila.

MBT CONNECTIONS FROM VGC

-  L1 Yellow — EDSA Line via Balintawak corridor
-  Line 12 — Balintawak Station · Valenzuela Gateway Complex (Feeder)

SOUTHERN GATEWAY

S

Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange

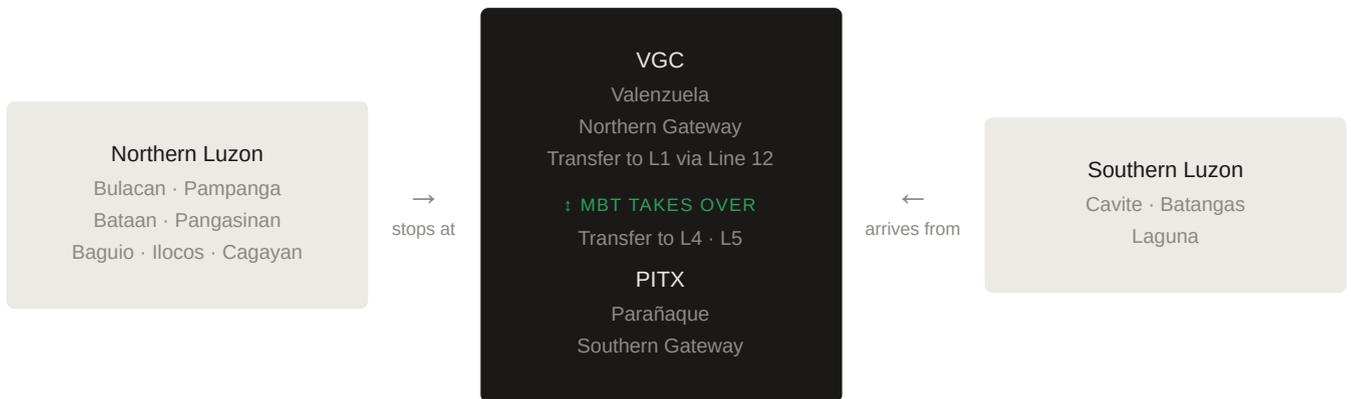
PITX · Dr. A. Santos Ave., Parañaque City

The southern gateway for buses arriving from Cavite, Batangas, and Laguna. PITX was purpose-built as an intermodal exchange — receiving provincial buses and redistributing passengers into the metro via internal connections. In MBT, it is the southern terminus of the Green Line (L5) and a key node in the Brown Line (L4).

MBT CONNECTIONS FROM PITX

-  L5 Green — Roxas Blvd. Line northbound to Navotas
-  L4 Brown — Osmeña Line northbound to Manila

GATEWAY LOGIC — HOW PROVINCIAL ROUTES CONNECT TO MBT



East side: Rizal and eastern provinces connect naturally along a horizontal axis through Marikina and Antipolo — the same roads that L6 Blue and L7 Violet already run on. No dedicated gateway is needed because the boundary is gradual, not a funnel point.



Articulated Bus

48 seated + 1 operator
 98 standing · Multiple median-side doors
 Already operating on EDSA

MAIN LINES ONLY



City Transit Bus

29 seated + 1 operator
 76 standing · Introduced via EDSA
 Carousel

MAIN & FEEDER LINES



Traditional Jeepney

18–22 seated · Last-mile integration
 Fixed schedule, structured role

TERTIARY LINES

The jeepney's inclusion is intentional — the most effective transit systems work with the culture they serve, not against it. Given a structured role and a fixed schedule, the jeepney becomes an asset to the network rather than a source of congestion.

"The jeepney is not a transit problem. It is a cultural institution that has been put in the wrong place."

The current push to phase out traditional jeepneys frames the vehicle as the villain — old, polluting, unsafe. But the jeepney is not the problem. Where it operates is the problem.

A traditional jeepney does not belong on EDSA. It does not belong on Commonwealth Avenue, C5, or Roxas Boulevard. It was never designed for highways or major arterial roads — and putting it there, mixed with buses, trucks, and private vehicles at speed, is where the safety and congestion issues come from.

Remove the jeepney from those roads — not by banning it, but by giving those roads to BRT — and the jeepney finds its natural home: the barangay streets, the narrow collectors, the last-mile corridors where no articulated bus can go.

THE CULTURAL ARGUMENT

Celebrate it. Don't erase it.

The jeepney is one of the most recognizable symbols of Filipino identity in the world. The hand-painted murals, the chrome horses, the names of children and saints along the side — these are not decoration. They are a living folk art tradition, a reflection of Filipino creativity and resourcefulness that emerged from repurposed WWII military vehicles and became something entirely our own.

Manufacturers like Sarao Motors built an industry around the jeepney. The craftsmen who paint them, the mechanics who maintain them, the operators whose livelihoods depend on them — these are not inconveniences to be managed out of existence. They are part of the city's fabric.

The so-called e-jeepney, frankly, is a different vehicle entirely — closer to a mini-bus or coaster in form and function. It does not look like a jeepney, it does not feel like a jeepney, and calling it one is more marketing than heritage. If operators choose to modernize their fleet independently, that is their right. But it should never be the state's mandate to force that transition under threat of losing a franchise.

What MBT opposes

A blanket phaseout that eliminates traditional jeepneys regardless of route, regardless of operator circumstances, and with no acknowledgment of the cultural loss it represents.

OPPOSED

What MBT proposes

Route rationalization — jeepneys off highways and major arterials (which BRT now serves), but retained and integrated as Tier 3 tertiary lines on narrow collectors and last-mile streets where buses cannot operate.

SUPPORTED

On e-jeepneys

The e-jeepney is not really a jeepney — it is a mini-bus or coaster in a different body. What the traditional jeepney actually needs is not replacement, but proper enforcement of safety and road standards, and assignment to appropriate routes. Regulated well, the traditional jeepney is perfectly suited for the narrow, last-mile streets it was always meant to serve.

REGULATE, DON'T
REPLACE

Metro Manila's roads are as creative as its people. There are streets in Cubao, in Tondo, in Sampaloc — narrow, winding, dense with life — where no articulated bus will ever fit. The jeepney was made for those streets. *Let it work there, celebrated and properly routed, while BRT handles everything it was never suited for.*

REFERENCE MODEL

Hong Kong — KMB & Citybus

Hong Kong's bus fleet is the most practical reference point for MBT. The city runs a high-density, high-frequency urban bus network across mixed terrain — elevated roads, tunnels, tight urban streets — in a tropical climate with heavy rainfall. Sound familiar?

KMB (Kowloon Motor Bus) and Citybus operate double-deckers and single-deck city buses on fixed, numbered routes with real-time arrival information and contactless payment. What makes HK buses instructive for Manila is not the double-decker format specifically — it is the discipline: fixed stops, no loading outside designated bays, scheduled departure times, and operators held to service-level agreements. That operational model is exactly what MBT proposes to impose on Metro Manila's bus system.

Key parallel: HK buses operate in a city where road space is scarce and demand is intense — exactly the conditions MBT is designed for.

ASPIRATION MODEL

Singapore — SBS Transit & Tower Transit

Singapore's bus system is the dream — not because of the buses themselves, but because of the system behind them. Every route has a published schedule. Every stop has a real-time display. Every bus runs clean, air-conditioned, and on time. Operators are contracted by the Land Transport Authority under a government-funded model where the state owns the buses and infrastructure, and private operators are paid to run them to a standard.

That structure is what MBT's governance framework points toward. The SG model resolves exactly the gray areas that currently plague Manila's bus system — accountability for service quality, infrastructure maintenance, and driver conduct all sit with one authority, not scattered across LTO, LTFRB, and dozens of private operators.

Singapore is a smaller, wealthier city — the gap is acknowledged. But the model is replicable at Philippine scale, progressively.

Hybrid buses — the realistic path to a greener Metro Manila

Full electrification of a bus fleet the size MBT requires is an ambitious long-term goal — but the charging infrastructure, grid capacity, and capital cost make it a decade-away proposition for Metro Manila. Hybrid buses are the realistic bridge.

Diesel-electric hybrid articulated buses — already deployed in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Jakarta — reduce fuel consumption by 25–35% compared to conventional diesel buses, with significant reductions in particulate emissions. In a city where air quality is a documented public health concern, that improvement is meaningful from day one of operation.

Phase 1 — Hybrid fleet

Deploy diesel-electric hybrid articulated buses on all 7 main BRT corridors. Lower emissions, lower fuel cost per km, same passenger capacity.

Phase 2 — Electrification of feeder lines

Feeder and tertiary routes (shorter distances, depot-based charging feasible) transition to full electric. Lower operating cost offsets capital investment over time.

Phase 3 — Full electric main lines

As grid capacity and charging infrastructure matures, replace hybrid main line fleet with full-electric articulated buses. Metro Manila achieves a zero-emission BRT network.

BALLPARK COST & ECONOMIC CASE — ILLUSTRATIVE ESTIMATES ONLY

A full BRT implementation is dramatically cheaper than rail. For reference, the Metro Manila Subway is estimated at over ₱355 billion for a 33km line. A comparable-length BRT corridor typically costs 5–15% of that figure — primarily because it uses existing road surface rather than requiring tunneling or elevated structure.

The figures below are rough order-of-magnitude estimates for planning discussion only. They are not engineering quotes. Actual costs depend on detailed surveys, land acquisition needs, station design, and fleet procurement scale.

These are citizen-level estimates based on comparable BRT implementations in Southeast Asia, not official cost studies. They should be treated as a starting point for conversation, not a budget proposal.

BRT infrastructure per km Median lane conversion, stations, signals	₱50–150M
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7 main corridors (est. ~150km total) Infrastructure only, rough estimate	₱8–22B
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Hybrid articulated bus unit cost Per bus, imported, rough estimate	₱25–40M
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Fleet for 7 main lines (~350 buses) Articulated hybrid, rough estimate	₱9–14B
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Total rough ballpark (Phase 1) Infrastructure + main line fleet combined	₱17–36B
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Compare: Metro Manila Subway = est. ₱355B+ for 33km. MBT Phase 1 covers ~150km of corridor at roughly 5–10% of that cost.

THE ECONOMIC CASE

₱3.5B

LOST DAILY TO TRAFFIC —
JICA 2017

Every day MBT is not operational is another ₱3.5 billion lost to congestion. The entire Phase 1 investment could be recovered in under two weeks of avoided losses — if those losses were fully captured.

370K+

DAILY RIDERS ON EDSA
CAROUSEL ALONE

One BRT corridor already moves 370,000+ people daily. Seven corridors — conservatively — could move 2–3 million daily riders, directly replacing private vehicle trips and reducing road congestion system-wide.

25–35%

FUEL SAVINGS WITH HYBRID
FLEET

Hybrid buses reduce operating costs over time. Lower fuel bills reduce subsidy requirements and improve financial sustainability of the system — making MBT more viable as a long-term public service, not just an infrastructure project.

7

BRT MAIN CORRIDORS

73+

FEEDER & TERTIARY ROUTES

24/7

MAIN LINE OPERATION

1

UNIFIED BEEP CARD NETWORK



Concept rendering — illustrative only

A BRT corridor with dedicated median lanes, city transit buses, pedestrian-priority footpaths, and urban greening — imagined in a Manila intersection. This closely resembles what the Red Line (L2) Quezon Avenue corridor through Morayta and España, Manila could look like under MBT.

Image credit: AltMobilityPH ([@AltMobilityPH on X, May 2021](#)). Used for illustrative, non-commercial advocacy purposes only. Carlo I. Corcuera and MBT are not affiliated with AltMobilityPH. All rights to the original image belong to AltMobilityPH. If you are the rights holder and wish this image removed, please contact carlo@mbt.ph.

A note on intent — before anything else.

This proposal is not written to point fingers. It is not here to publicly shame any government agency, humiliate any official, or assign blame for the state of Metro Manila's public transportation. That is not the purpose, and it has never been the purpose — not in 2019 when this began, and not now.

What this is, plainly, is a call for discussion. A call for timeliness in the executive rulings and orders that concern public transportation. A call to take seriously what every Filipino commuter already lives — the daily reality of a city that moves 14 million people during the day and 12 million at night, mostly on systems that have not fundamentally changed since the 1980s.

There are no political colors here. No drama. No agenda beyond this: *we can do better, and we should start now.*

Metro Manila's commuters are not a statistic. They are students getting to school, workers supporting families, entrepreneurs building things, caregivers crossing the city to take care of people they love. They deserve a system that respects their time and their dignity. That is all this is about.

Filipino love for this city — and for the 14 million people moving through it every single day — is the only agenda behind every page of this proposal.

Carlo I. Corcuera

CITIZEN · TRANSIT ADVOCATE · DEVELOPER

MBT began in 2019 as a response to a public commute challenge that forced a direct confrontation with Metro Manila's transit reality. Multiple attempts were made to submit this proposal to government agencies and officials. Some replied. Most did not.

This is not affiliated with any government agency, transport authority, or political group. It is the ongoing work of one person who believes a better city is possible — and that putting it on paper, version after version, is the first step toward making it real.

This document is for research and advocacy purposes only. Not for sale. Not for political use.

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BUILT WITH AI ASSISTANCE

The research, writing, structure, and visual design of this proposal were developed with the help of two AI tools — Claude by Anthropic, and ChatGPT by OpenAI. Both were used as thinking and drafting partners throughout the process.

Claude

Anthropic · Used for research synthesis, writing refinement, visual HTML layout, citation structure, and iterative document building across multiple sessions.

ChatGPT

OpenAI · Used in earlier research phases (2023) for data gathering, comparative city analysis, and drafting the initial proposal structure and objectives.

All ideas, route planning, network logic, corridor selection, the three-tier hierarchy, the governance argument, the provincial gateway model, the LTFRB analysis, and every strategic position in this document are the author's own — developed and iterated since 2019. AI tools assisted with language and structure, not with the thinking.

VERSION HISTORY

V1 — Initial concept	2019
V2 — ChatGPT-assisted research expansion	June 2023
V3 — Full proposal with governance framework	July 2025
V3.1 — Claude-assisted HTML build	2026

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DISCLAIMER — LIVING DOCUMENT

This proposal is a starting point, not a final answer.

All routes, corridors, stop locations, line designations, and feeder configurations presented in this document are proposals subject to revision. Routes may be added, modified, or removed depending on actual commuter demand, road conditions, right-of-way constraints, interagency coordination, and the evolving needs of Metro Manila's residents.

This plan has been built from observation, research, and citizen-level analysis — not from engineering surveys, traffic count data, or official feasibility studies. It is intended to promote discussion and serve as a framework, not a blueprint. Any actual implementation would require rigorous technical study, public consultation, and formal planning processes.

The commuter is at the center of this proposal. If the data says a route should move, it moves. If the people say a corridor is missing, it gets added. *This network belongs to Metro Manila — and Metro Manila will always have the final say.*

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