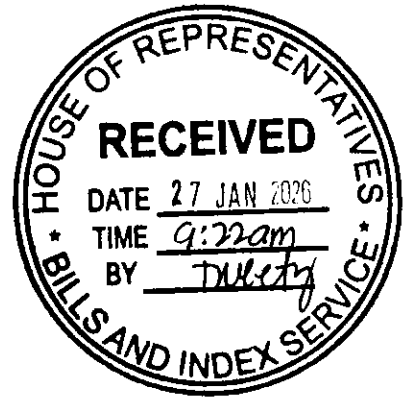




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7381

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE GERALD CLOYD ALEXIS V. GALANG

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The implementation of transport and mobility restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic forced many people to either walk from their homes to their workplaces and vice versa, or purchase budget-friendly vehicles such as bicycles. While these options promote physical and ecological health, major thoroughfares were not ready to accommodate the wave of new road users. Years after the pandemic, people continued using these alternative modes of transportation after seeing their benefits to physical health and financial aspects.

The Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 included among its Legislative Agenda to Expand and Upgrade Infrastructure the "Enactment of a law institutionalizing the use of bicycles and other active and sustainable modes of transportation, including updating standards for accessible and safe pathways, and green open spaces." The proposed measure is envisioned "to shift the role of bicycles and other forms of non-motorized and active transportation, from being an "alternative mode" toward an institutionalized mode of transport that is integrated in the transportation network of the country. This will be done by providing the necessary infrastructure and support services, establishing safety and design standards for universally accessible and safe pathways and green open spaces, and increasing public awareness on road safety and road sharing among motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians." ¹

The "Urban Walkability and Safe Pathways Standards Act" seeks to establish a Safe Pathways Network which is composed of bicycle lanes, walkways, and slow streets. To ensure safety and responsibility, all users of non-motorized vehicles and electric personal mobility devices must comply with traffic laws, rules, and regulations.

Once passed into law, both the public and private sectors shall promote active transport as a sustainable and healthy means of transportation and develop the Safe Pathways Network by setting up the necessary infrastructure facilities and programs such as multi-use racks and other end-of-trip facilities.

The immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


GERALD GALANG
2nd Legislative District, City of Valenzuela

¹ <https://pdp.depdev.gov.ph/philippine-development-plan-2023-2028/>



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Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE GERALD CLOYD ALEXIS V. GALANG**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING URBAN WALKABILITY AND SAFE PATHWAYS STANDARDS
NATIONWIDE, MANDATING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE IN
ALL NEW BRIDGE AND TOLL ROAD PROJECTS, PROVIDING FOR A PHASED
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFE PATHWAYS NETWORK, CREATING THE
NATIONAL TRANSPORT AWARDS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Urban Walkability and Safe Pathways Standards Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to promote safe, inclusive, sustainable, and health-conscious mobility for all. The State shall institutionalize active transport infrastructure, ensure the safety and accessibility of pedestrians and cyclists, and align national and local transport development with climate goals, urban livability, and the right to mobility.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act:

- (a) *Active transport* - refers to physical activity undertaken as a means of transport, such as walking, cycling, or using other non-motorized vehicles;
- (b) *Bicycle lanes* - refer to designated lanes on roads or separate infrastructure for the exclusive or prioritized use of bicycles and other similar non-motorized or electric personal mobility devices;
- (c) *Electric personal mobility devices* - refer to electric motorized devices used for individual transport, including electric bicycles and electric kick scooters, but excluding motorcycles, tricycles, and similar vehicles;
- (d) *End-of-trip facilities* - refer to infrastructure supporting active transport users at their destinations, such as bicycle parking, showers, changing rooms, lockers, and repair stations;
- (e) *Non-motorized vehicles* - include all forms of transportation not powered by an engine or motor, such as bicycles, push scooters, skateboards, and similar equipment;
- (f) *Slow streets* - refer to local roads where motor vehicle access, speed, or use is limited to prioritize pedestrians, cyclists, and non-motorized users, with restrictions determined by the concerned local government unit(LGU);
- (g) *Bridge infrastructure projects* - refer to new bridge construction projects funded through the General Appropriations Act, Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) arrangements, or Official Development Assistance (ODA); and

- (h) *Major urban areas* - refer to metropolitan or highly urbanized cities with a population exceeding five hundred thousand (500,000) or those designated as regional capitals.

SEC. 4. Establishment of the Safe Pathways Network. - A nationwide Safe Pathways Network shall be established, consisting of:

- (a) Bicycle lanes that are connected, protected, and accessible
- (b) Pedestrian walkways that are wide, continuous, and shaded; and
- (c) Slow streets that prioritize non-motorized users.

The Department of Transportation (DOTr), in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and LGUs, shall issue design standards and implementation guidelines consistent with international best practices.

SEC. 5. Phased Implementation. - The establishment of the Safe Pathways Network shall follow the following phased schedule:

- (a) *Phase 1 - Major Urban Areas:* Within two (2) years, all metropolitan and regional capital cities shall implement core pathway networks;
- (b) *Phase 2 - Intermediate Cities and First-Class Municipalities:* Within four (4) years, all first-class LGUs shall complete their active transport corridors; and
- (c) *Phase 3 - All Other LGUs:* Within six (6) years, remaining LGUs shall establish at least one functional pedestrian and cycling corridor.

National government agencies shall prioritize technical and financial assistance according to the above phases.

SEC. 6. Mandatory Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure in New Bridges. - All newly constructed national and local bridges shall include:

- (a) Pedestrian walkways of not less than one and a half (1.5) meters per direction; and
- (b) Dedicated bicycle lanes of not less than two (2) meters per direction; both physically separated from motor vehicle lanes, and designed in accordance with safety standards issued by the DPWH and the DOTr.

Provided, that exemptions from these minimum design standards may be granted only if the implementing agency determines that the inclusion of such facilities is technically unfeasible or would pose safety risks, based on engineering studies and safety assessments.

In such cases, the implementing agency must:

- 1) Submit a detailed justification to the DPWH and DOTr, supported by independent technical evaluation; and
- 2) Propose alternative safe access routes or adjacent infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists within reasonable proximity of the bridge. For bridge projects requiring ICC approval, including those funded through the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law or Official Development Assistance (ODA), at least two percent (2%) of the total project cost shall be allocated to non-motorized transport infrastructure, unless 28 another internationally accepted standard applies.

The DPWH, in coordination with the NEDA and DOTr, shall revise its bridge design manuals and project evaluation templates accordingly and ensure these standards are reflected in the Investment Coordination Committee's appraisal process.

SEC. 7. Pedestrian and Bicycle Service Lanes in Toll Roads. - All new toll road projects shall include separated service lanes for pedestrians and cyclists, subject to the following:

- (a) Service lanes must be physically separated and comply with the minimum widths of 1.5 meters for pedestrians and 2 meters for cyclists per direction; and

- (b) Exemptions may be granted only if the implementing agency determines that the construction of such service lanes is technically unfeasible or would pose safety risks, based on engineering or environmental constraints.

In such cases, the implementing agency must:

- 1) Submit a detailed justification to the TRB, DPWH, and DOTr, supported by technical assessments; and
- 2) Provide an alternative safe, nearby route for pedestrian and cyclist use.
- 3) The Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), in coordination with the DPWH and DOTr, shall issue design standards and implementation rules for this purpose within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Retrofitting and Upgrading of Existing Infrastructure.* - All existing national roads, bridges, and major public transport corridors that lack dedicated walkways and bicycle lanes shall be subject to a progressive upgrade plan by the implementing agencies, subject to technical feasibility and funding availability.

- (a) The DPWH and DOTr, in coordination with LCDs and relevant authorities, shall conduct a nationwide audit of existing infrastructure within twelve (12) months from the effectivity of this Act, identifying gaps in active transport facilities;
- (b) Based on the audit, each agency shall prepare a five-year implementation roadmap to retrofit priority segments, beginning with:
 - 1) Roads and bridges near schools, hospitals, commercial centers, and high-foot-traffic areas;
 - 2) National highways within urban centers;
 - 3) High-accident corridors for pedestrians and cyclists.
- (c) Retrofitting shall follow the same minimum width and safety standards as new projects, or provide alternative configurations based on available space; and
- (d) Retrofitting plans shall be integrated into agency work programs, investment plans, and the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. *Institutional Facilities and End-of-Trip Amenities.* - Public places, government buildings, schools, mass transit terminals, and commercial establishments shall, as far as practicable, provide secure bicycle racks and other end-of-trip facilities to support active transport

SEC. 10. *National Transport Awards.* - To recognize innovation and leadership in transport development, the DOTr shall administer an annual National Transport Awards, with the following categories:

- (a) Best Urban Commuting Program (LGUs);
- (b) Outstanding Transit-Oriented Development (Private Developers);
- (c) Excellence in Active Transport Infrastructure;
- (d) Best Transport Innovation (Technology & Operators); and
- (e) Sustainable Transport Leadership Award (LGUs and Developers).

Awardees may receive priority access to transport-related funding, tax incentives, and technical assistance. DOTr shall issue detailed criteria and convene an independent selection body.

SEC. 11. *Design Manual Reforms.* - The DPWH, in coordination with DOTr and DILG, shall revise all road and bridge design manuals within one (1) year from effectivity to reflect non-motorized transport standards and safety principles.

SEC. 12. *Applicability to Private Developments.* - Private entities undertaking public-use infrastructure projects such as commercial centers, transport terminals, transit-oriented developments (TODs), or mixed-use estates that connect to public roads, stations, or transport corridors are encouraged to adopt the standards and principles under this Act.

The DOTr and relevant national agencies shall issue guidelines for incentivizing compliance, integration, and coordination with local government active transport plans.

SEC. 13. *Monitoring and Reportorial Requirements.* - The DOTr shall submit an annual report to Congress containing:

- (a) A national map of Safe Pathways Networks;
- (b) Compliance status by LGU and implementing agencies;
- (c) Usage data for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; and
- (d) Results and impact of the National Transport Awards.

LGUs shall submit annual data to DOTr to support reporting.

To ensure transparency and encourage compliance, the DOTr shall annually publish a Safe Pathways Scorecard, summarizing LGU and agency performance, coverage, retrofitting progress, and implementation outcomes, accessible to the public through digital platforms.

SEC. 14. *Funding Sources.* - The implementation of this Act shall be financed primarily through the Special Road Fund created under Republic Act No. 8794, as amended, which collects the Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC).

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), in coordination with the Department of Transportation (DOTr), shall allocate a dedicated share of the MVUC to support:

- (a) Construction of walkways and bike lanes in new and existing infrastructure;
- (b) Retrofitting of roads and bridges;
- (c) End-of-trip facilities; and
- (d) Incentives under the National Transport Awards.

The annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) may provide additional support, especially for retrofitting efforts in LGUs with limited fiscal capacity. Other sources may include local infrastructure funds, official development assistance (ODA), and public-private partnerships (PPP), as authorized by law.

No new road or bridge project funded under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) or the Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC) shall be considered fully compliant for funding release unless it includes the required walkways and bicycle lanes in the proposed design, feasibility study, or project proposal, in accordance with Sections 6 and 7 of this Act, or unless a valid exemption has been granted.

SEC. 15. *Implementing Rules and Institutional Oversight* - The Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), through the Infrastructure Committee (INFRACOM), shall convene the DOTr, DPWH, DILG, TRB, and other relevant agencies to promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

INFRACOM may also issue supplemental circulars or guidelines to harmonize this Act with national development priorities, investment frameworks, and urban policy thrusts.

SEC. 16. *Separability Clause.*- If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 17. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly

SEC. 18. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,