

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*First Regular Session* )



**SENATE**

**S. No. 19**

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Introduced by Senator **PIA S. CAYETANO**

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**AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING A SAFE PATHWAYS NETWORK OF BICYCLE LANES AND  
SLOW STREETS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

As pre-pandemic activities return after months of lockdowns and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, physical distancing has become more difficult to implement as people are allowed to go out, return to onsite work and go back to face-to-face classes, visit commercial places, attend large-scale gatherings, and travel to other locations. Public transportation, which was already terribly congested prior to COVID-19, cannot accommodate physical distancing measures with the crowds of people that use them. During the Enhanced Community Quarantine, at the height of the pandemic, health workers and other essential workers were forced to explore other means of getting to and from their places of work due to the lack of public transportation options.

More recently, the global oil price hike has caused fuel prices to soar, and has disincentivized the use of private vehicles. Some jeepney drivers no longer want to ply their routes and are opting for other sources of income, as they cannot keep up with the fuel price surge.<sup>1</sup> This can only negatively affect the country's public transport supply, already unable to keep up with demand especially in Metro Manila. As the Move as One Coalition states, "public transport supply is collapsing. More commuters

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<sup>1</sup> Ong, G. (2022, June 14). Fewer cars on EDSA as fuel prices soar – MMDA. <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2022/06/14/2188169/fewer-cars-edsa-fuel-prices-soar-mmda>

are experiencing long lines, waiting times, and crowded commutes in enclosed spaces, and are at-risk for COVID-19.”<sup>2</sup>

The above premises make it imperative for the State to promote other modes of travel to avoid future spikes in COVID-19 cases and to accommodate the need for other modes of transportation that are not reliant on fuel.

To address these urgent needs, alternatives such as walking and biking must be promoted. Walking is free and the cost of buying and maintaining a bike is very low compared to owning a private vehicle and even commuting. They promote physical and mental health in a time of high anxiety, and physical distancing is easy to implement. Further, they use less resources and will raise air quality due to reduced motorized vehicle use, lessening air toxins which are a leading cause of respiratory infection.<sup>3</sup> Other non-motorized vehicles also offer the same advantages.

The World Health Organization recognizes the benefits of walking and biking in its technical guidance on moving around during the pandemic, so people can “reach workplaces when possible, meet essential daily needs, or provide assistance to vulnerable people.”<sup>4</sup> Other countries have adopted these modes of travel long before the Philippines has, and have embraced them further during the pandemic — urban cycling networks surged in countries like China, Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Atienza, K.A. (2022). Public transport system on brink of 'collapse' due to high fuel prices. <https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2022/06/14/455032/public-transport-system-on-brink-of-collapse-due-to-high-fuel-prices/>; Abante, Dayao, and Siy. (2022). Fighting Transport Inflation: A Ten-Point Agenda (Move As One Policy Paper). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361268506\\_Fighting\\_Transport\\_Inflation\\_A\\_Ten-Point\\_Agenda\\_Move\\_As\\_One\\_Policy\\_Paper](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361268506_Fighting_Transport_Inflation_A_Ten-Point_Agenda_Move_As_One_Policy_Paper)

<sup>3</sup> “Air Pollution.” World Health Organization, World Health Organization, 15 Aug. 2017, [www.who.int/ceh/risks/cehair/en/](http://www.who.int/ceh/risks/cehair/en/)

<sup>4</sup> Harker, J. (2020, April 21). "Consider Bicycles" During Covid-19 Outbreak, says World Health Organisation. Retrieved from <https://cyclingindustry.news/consider-bicycles-during-covid-19-outbreak-says-world-health-organisation/>

<sup>5</sup> Schwedhelm, A., Li, W., Harms, L., & Adriaola-Steil, C. (2020, April 23). Biking Provides a Critical Lifeline During the Coronavirus Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/04/coronavirus-biking-critical-in-cities>

First filed in the 18th Congress by the undersigned as the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking, which was then approved on third reading in the Senate with amendments from then-Minority Leader Senator Franklin M. Drilon, this measure seeks to create a network of bicycle lanes and slow streets that are people-oriented and pedestrian-friendly, which shall connect users to essential destinations such as work, school, medical facilities, and other similar places that may be identified. This network may then be adopted permanently even after the pandemic, as may be appropriate, as a solution to congested roads, volatilities in oil prices, and the pollution plaguing the country even before the pandemic.<sup>6</sup>

This bill also recognizes the importance of slow streets in a community, which are designed to limit motorized vehicle use on certain local streets, as may be determined by the concerned local government units, and allow them to be used as a shared space for people traveling by foot, by bicycle, or by other non-motorized means.<sup>7</sup>

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is urgently sought.

*Pia S. Cayetano*  
PIA S. CAYETANO

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<sup>6</sup> Schwedhelm, A., Li, W., Harms, L., & Adriazola-Steil, C. (2020, April 23). Biking Provides a Critical Lifeline During the Coronavirus Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/04/coronavirus-biking-critical-in-cities>.

<sup>7</sup> Slow Streets Program. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.sfmta.com/projects/slow-streets-program>.

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**AN ACT**  
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**SLOW STREETS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

1           Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Safe Pathways*  
2 *Network Act*".

3           Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The Constitution mandates the State to protect  
4 and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in  
5 accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature, to protect and promote the right to  
6 health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

7           The State recognizes the urgent need to safeguard the public's health during  
8 the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic by promoting physical distancing. It acknowledges  
9 that the current transportation system compromises the safety of health workers,  
10 other essential workers, and commuters.

11           The State also affirms the need for infrastructure and a change in mindset to  
12 encourage and accommodate sustainable and healthy modes of transportation such  
13 as walking, biking, and the use of other non-motorized vehicles and to provide safe  
14 and convenient pathways for commuters. It further acknowledges the need to  
15 provide a quick solution to mobility issues brought to light by this pandemic and that  
16 may arise again in other emergency situations.

17           Prioritizing walking, biking, and the use of non-motorized vehicles will result in  
18 reduced carbon emissions, less use of energy and resources, as well as less

1 dependence on oil, lightening the impact of oil price shocks. It will also provide  
2 multiple health benefits and increase quality of life.

3 These are also in line with the State's commitment to the Sustainable  
4 Development Goals (SDGs), in particular: SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being); SDG  
5 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy); SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure);  
6 SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); SDG 13 (Climate Action); and SDG 17  
7 (Partnerships for the Goals).

8 *Sec. 3. Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, these terms are defined  
9 as follows:

- 10 a. *Electric personal mobility devices* refer to any electric motorized device  
11 exclusively used for transporting an individual. This includes electric  
12 bicycles and electric kick scooters, excluding motorcycles, tricycles, and  
13 other similar modes of transport;
- 14 b. *Non-motorized vehicles* refer to all forms of transportation that do not  
15 rely on an engine or motor for movement, including, but not limited to,  
16 bicycles and small wheeled non-motorized transport such as  
17 skateboards, push scooters, and handcarts; and
- 18 c. *Slow streets* refer to local roads providing safe and convenient access  
19 to frequented destinations by restricting motor vehicle access, use, or  
20 speed limits on certain days or hours in the day, as may be determined  
21 by the concerned local government unit (LGU), and prioritizing access  
22 and use by pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized vehicle users.

23 *Sec. 4. Safe Pathways Network.* – Immediately upon the effectivity of this Act,  
24 the Safe Pathways Network shall be established for the use of non-motorized  
25 vehicles: *Provided*, That the use of electric personal mobility devices may be allowed  
26 subject to the guidelines set by the LGUs, in consultation with the Department of  
27 Transportation (DOTr).

28 The Safe Pathways Network shall consist of the following:

- 29 a. *Bicycle lanes.* LGUs, in consultation with the DOTr and the Department  
30 of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), shall identify and create a  
31 network of bicycle lanes, which may be temporary or permanent in  
32 nature. The temporary lanes alternatively known as pop-up lanes shall

1 be set up, whenever possible, during the COVID-19 pandemic or  
2 whenever other emergency situations may arise: *Provided*, That along  
3 national roads in Metro Manila, the DOTr, in coordination with the Metro  
4 Manila Development Authority (MMDA), shall be the lead implementing  
5 agency.

6 Pop-up bicycle lanes may be marked with removable tapes and  
7 mobile signs, which can easily be placed and removed as necessary.  
8 Other physical barriers may also be used.

9 The bicycle lanes shall, as much as practicable, directly connect  
10 users to essential destinations, such as medical facilities, public and  
11 private facilities frequented by people, schools, and other similar places  
12 that may be identified. Motorcycles, tricycles, and other similar modes  
13 of transport, whether powered by gas or electricity, are prohibited from  
14 using the bicycle lanes; and

- 15 b. *Slow streets*. To complement the network of bicycle lanes, LGUs shall  
16 create a designated network of people-oriented slow streets, which may  
17 be temporary or permanent, along local roads that will provide  
18 pedestrians and non-motorized vehicle users safe and convenient  
19 access to frequented destinations. Speed limits and access on certain  
20 days or hours in the day by motorized vehicles in slow streets shall be  
21 determined by the concerned LGU. Motor vehicles of residents, delivery  
22 and trash collection vehicles servicing the area of the slow streets, and  
23 emergency services shall have access to slow streets subject to  
24 restrictions to be imposed by the LGU.

25 Slow streets shall be clearly marked with signage specifying the  
26 restrictions. The DOTr and DPWH shall identify priority areas for  
27 implementation.

28 *Sec. 5. Health Facilities Loop.* – LGUs shall coordinate with health facilities  
29 within their jurisdiction to establish pop-up bicycle lanes and slow streets that can  
30 connect and provide safe access for healthcare workers to hospitals and other health  
31 centers.

32 Health facilities loops may be permanently adopted, as far as practicable.

1           Sec. 6. *Traffic Laws, Rules and Regulations.* – All users of non-motorized  
2 vehicles and electric personal mobility devices shall obey traffic laws, rules and  
3 regulations and shall be subject to existing penalties for violation.

4           The LGUs, in consultation with DOTr and other appropriate agencies, shall  
5 issue guidelines for the safe use of bicycle lanes and the use of non-motorized  
6 vehicles and electric personal mobility devices.

7           Sec. 7. *Bicycle Racks and other End-of-Trip Facilities.* – All public places,  
8 government offices, schools, places of work, and commercial establishments,  
9 including but is not limited to malls, banks, and hospitals, shall provide, as far as  
10 practicable, bicycle or multi-use racks and other end-of-trip facilities, as needed.

11           Sec. 8. *Role of Public and Private Sectors.* – Both the public and private sectors  
12 shall promote walking and the use of bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles as a  
13 sustainable and healthy means of transportation. They shall develop the Safe  
14 Pathways Network by putting up the necessary infrastructure facilities and programs  
15 as provided by this Act. They shall also provide, as far as practicable, additional  
16 support, benefits, subsidies, and training that will promote walking, biking, and the  
17 use of other non-motorized vehicles.

18           LGUs shall incorporate the creation of the Safe Pathways Network and their  
19 corresponding infrastructure in their local development plans.

20           Sec. 9. *Information Campaign.* – The DOTr, in coordination with other  
21 government agencies and the private sector, shall establish an information campaign  
22 on the importance of a shift to a sustainable and healthy mode of transportation, and  
23 the establishment and use of the Safe Pathways Network. The program shall be  
24 designed for traffic enforcers, motorists, non-motorized vehicle and electric personal  
25 mobility device users, the commuting public, and the community in general.

26           Sec. 10. *Design and Construction of Permanent Bicycle Lanes.* – The DPWH,  
27 in coordination with LGUs, shall revise its manuals and guidelines for road design and  
28 construction to include non-motorized vehicles and electric personal mobility devices  
29 in the allocation of road space on national and local roads, and to promote the safety  
30 of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicle and electric personal mobility device users.  
31 Permanent bicycle lanes shall be constructed with safety as the paramount concern.  
32 As much as practicable, permanent bicycle lanes shall be physically separated from

1 the main road through physical barriers, or shall be elevated or otherwise constructed  
2 separately from the main road. Painted road markers may also be used for roads with  
3 limited space.

4       Sec. 11. *Sources of Funding.* – The funds necessary for the implementation of  
5 this Act shall be sourced from the appropriations of the DOTr and DPWH under the  
6 General Appropriations Act and the Local Road Support Fund from the Motor Vehicle  
7 User’s Charge as provided under Republic Act No. 8794, as amended.

8       Sec. 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared  
9 unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be  
10 affected thereby.

11       Sec. 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, decrees, orders, rules and  
12 regulations, other issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this  
13 Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

14       Sec. 14. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
15 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*