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The Development Of Davao City

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Chairman, Technical Panel

Davao City is the premier city of the "South". It is the largest city in the world having a territorial scope of 244,000 hectares. It has the largest population growth rate in the country at 5.5%. Its Gross Regional Product has registered 10% growth rate for the past ten years. Davao City is the terminus of the Japan-Philippine Friendship Highway. It is the transportation node and commercial center for Mindanao. Roads leading to other regions in the island radiate from the City. These include the Davao-General Santos-South Cotabato highway, the Davao-Cotabato Road; the Davao-Bukidnon Road; Davao-Agusan and Davao-Surigao roads. All these principal arteries link other provinces of the island. It has a trunkline airport soon to be converted into an international airport. It has a domestic port and a marginal wharf for ocean-going vessels.

Agriculture is the city's predominant economic activity. Davao City has a rich volcanic soil. Roughly 130,000 hectares are crop producing, mostly of the export variety. These include copra, banana, coffee, cacao, and citrus fruits. Livestock production is more than sufficient and is exported to other areas of the country. Roughly 60,000 hectares of fertile arable lands remain unproductive. Only 30% of the whole area is urbanized.

Despite development efforts in the past, Davao City administration is confronted with the following problems:

1. High population growth rate
2. Inadequate services
3. Inadequate infrastructures

As pointed out the city's population growth rate is 5.5% of which 3.2% is attributed to fertility and 2.3% to migration. The BCS places the population of the city for 1974 at 485,000; nonetheless, actual count may register roughly 800,000, considering the influx of refugees from nearby provinces.

A recent demographic and

economic survey of sample areas in the city revealed the following situation:

Population characteristics, very young; Rate of production to dependent population, 1.2; Income distribution: below P250.00, 67%; above P250.00 and below P800.00, 28%; above P800.00, 5%; Population doubling period, 12.5 years; No. of squatter families, 17,000; Labor force, 17,500; Unemployment, 4%; Under-employment, 12%; Family income mean, P356.00/month.

Officially based on the BSC figures of population, the city has the following statistics on Services:

Student-population ratio, 5.1%; Student-classroom ratio, 1.15%; Student-teacher ratio, 1.17%; Hospital Bed to production ratio, 1.509%; Police to population ratio, 1.500%; Population Density, 178/sq. nm.; Road to area ratio, 1 km. a4 sq. km.

Statistics would reveal that Davao City could compare with the best in the country. Nonetheless, considering population actual count and the doubling up period, the city administration has greater future oriented problems than its counterparts in other regions.

To provide direction to cope up with developmental requirements, Mayor Luis T. Santos,

upon his assumption to the ³ mayorship, organized the Davao City Development Advisory Council and its workhorse, the Technical Panel. The body is a cross-section of the city's representative segments and members of his official family. It is headed by Dean Cesar Concio, internationally noted Environmental Planner.

The Technical Panel on ⁴ the other hand, evolves plans and cause their effectuation in accordance with the priorities set by the DCDAC, the Mayor and the City Council. It is headed by Engr. Vicente C. Garcia, Jr. and is composed of men of various discipline and expertise both from the government service and the private sector.

Making use of indicative framework studies conducted by previous administrations and other planning bodies as the MDA, UNMRDP, Davao Research Foundation and the NE-DA, the DCDAC and the Technical Panel took to task the revision of the 1939 Zoning Ordinance and the Development framework plan of the city which was enacted into law in 1972. This activity is considered on-going by the body and studies to further revise and expand both the framework plan and the revised one to contend with the past changes witnessed in the city is in the making. Having solved the felt-need problems of the police reform and peace and order situation, water supply problem, administrative reforms and modernization of transactions (Computerization Program) and the improvement of recreational facilities and initial development of the tourist trade, the city, in line with Presidential Decree 144 as implemented by the DLGCD Circular 74-20 mandated into law, the legal existence of the City's Planning and Development Board as a fulltime organization.

The Technical Panel on the other hand shall be reinforced to fully cope with the planning activity expected of it. Meanwhile, it has devised a 5-year Development Plan including, as said earlier, the revision of the Zoning and Development framework plan of the City.

The 5-Year Development Plan shall cause a major revamp of the city's expenditure of its general fund. Henceforth 20% shall be devoted to Capital Improvement Programs which will include a massive infrastructure program.

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The infrastructure program of which 60% shall be allotted to transport materials shall cause the construction of a secondary road to the Paquibato Area (a cultural minority area) which will provide transportation and communication venue to roughly 40,000 hectares of arable lands hitherto untapped for crop production. It shall link 5 barrios to the central business district and provide another route to Davao Province and possibly branch with the Davao-Bukidnon highway. This secondary road requires the extension of the existing Tigatto road by roughly 30 km. Some 100 kms. of feeder, barrio and farm to market roads complete the road network program. The transport network project will cause the development of settlements which may reduce population lease-line to the central business districts and relieve the burgeoning hous-

ing problem.

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The Infrastructure Program calls for the construction of additional health centers and transitory 10-bed hospitals. These will in effect secure a more objective service distribution and re-define the hierarchy of service. Considering that the city's hospital beds are not only catering to city residents by the more sophisticated medical needs of the whole region, the establishment of more health centers shall in effect fill health needs which could be attended in the lower category services. The program shall cause extensive preventive health services including family planning activities intended to penetrate the remotest barrio by the extension of mobile services.

Educational infrastructure is

statistically satisfactory. 8 The problem hinges on special distribution. Average residence to school walking distance in the city is 7 km. The program calls for the installation of school houses not only in densely populated areas but likewise in potential growth centers, thus reducing said walking distance.

The city's recreational resources are numerous. It is imbued with miles of long palm-fringed beaches and a few kilometers away, high rise terrain exist for the panoramic viewing of the majestic Apo and the lowland settlements. However, all these natural attractions are barely developed.

The 5-Year plan envisions the development of a mountain resort town about 30 minutes ride from the central business district rising some 300 feet above sea level. The project requires national government sanction for the release of 5,000 hectares of the Mt. Apo National Reservation.

Other plans include the increase in number of public markets, including the full development and rehabilitation of existing markets, the establishment of an automated abattoir and fish landing complex, the full development of the Panacan relocation site, including the search for new adoptable sites that shall be developed to relieve government lands now squatted, the reclamation of the Ipil and Piapi areas to convert 400 hectares of shoreline into a civic and cultural center and commercial zone; the establishment of modern overland transportation terminals on the main approaches to the city and the intensive exploration and development of potential tourist attractions.