



Manila: Rich and Poor

BASIC INFORMATION: 2005		Similar To
Urban Area Population (1)	16,750,000	Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto, Delhi, Cairo
Urban Land Area: Square Miles	515	Cairo, Delhi, Shenzhen
Urban Land Area: Square Kilometers	1,330	
Population per Square Mile	32,500	Karachi, Lagos, Kolkata
Population per Square Kilometer	12,450	
Metropolitan Area Population (2)	19,300,000	Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto
(1) Continuously built up area.		
(2) National Capital Region (NCR) plus the provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal.		

16 February 2007

It is always preferable to end the first visit with some affection for an urban area and even a desire to stay longer. This is the feeling that I have had in leaving most urban areas. In only one case was no affection developed for the urban area, which is described in the Kolkata Rental Car Tour. In others, an attraction developed, but there was no reluctance to leave, such as in Mumbai. Manila is in the majority --- an affection was developed and I would have preferred to stay longer.

Arriving at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport evokes a sense of history more than most. The airport is named for Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino, the opposition leader who was assassinated at the airport upon his return to the Philippines in 1983. Events led eventually to stolen election (by President Ferdinand Marcos), his deposition, a peaceful revolution and the installation of Corazon Aquino, wife of Ninoy Aquino as president of the Philippines. The main thoroughfare of the urban area, EDSA (below) was the site of this peaceful revolution and another in 2001.

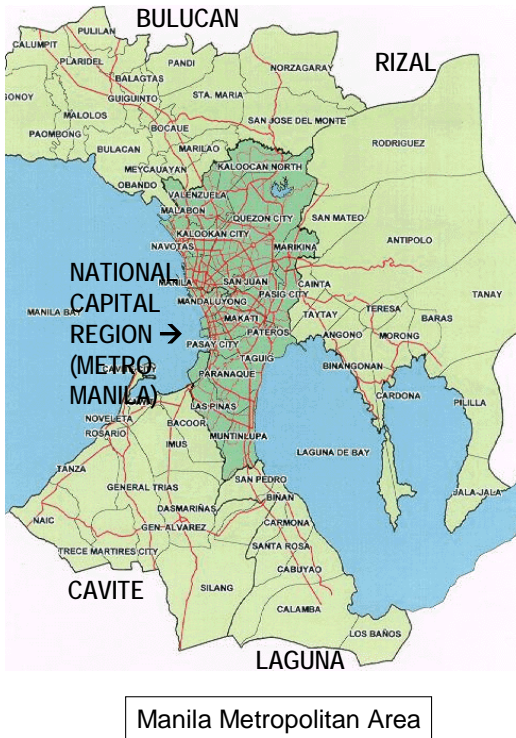
The Urban Form

Manila is located on Luzon Island and the central city of Manila is the capital of the Philippines.

The Urban Area: Manila is the world's 10th largest urban area, with a population of 16,750,000 (2005) and is larger than Los Angeles. The Manila urban area is growing rapidly and is projected to near a population of 20,000,000 by 2015, becoming the 7th largest in the world (very likely passing Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto). The urban area covers approximately 515 square miles (1,330 square kilometers) and is one of the most dense large urban areas in the world at 32,500 persons per square mile (12,450 persons per square kilometer). Manila is nearly as densely populated as Kolkata and more than twice as dense as Jakarta (Jabotabek) Manila is ten times as dense as density-envious Portland, Oregon.

The National Capital Region: The National Capital Region was established in 1976. It encompasses 17 municipalities, including the central city of Manila. Nearly 9.3 million people

live outside Manila in the National Capital Region. The population of the National Capital Region is nearly 10,800,000. The National Capital Region has a population density of 44,000 per square mile (15,500 per square kilometer).



City of Manila: The city of Manila is the capital of the Philippines. It has a population of over 1,500,000 but has been losing population. The city reached a peak population of 1,650,000 in 1995. Nonetheless, Manila remains exceedingly dense, at more than 100,000 persons per square mile (nearly 40,000 persons per square kilometer). Manila is geographically small, covering only 15 square miles (39 square kilometers). Despite its high density, Manila is principally a low-rise city. There are a number of high rise residential buildings, but most of the city’s residential development is one or two stories. The core of Manila is Rizal Park, a long rectangular green space with business and government buildings on three sides. Like most national capitals, Manila has not escaped the visual

desecration of modern architecture. The Philippine Cultural Center (Photograph 52) is an uninspiring slab of exhibiting the usual beauty of faded, dirty concrete by which the architectural trade has all too often expressed its contempt for good taste

Quezon City: The largest city in the National Capital Region and the nation is Quezon City, with more than 2,000,000 persons. Quezon City was established by President Manuel Quezon to be the new capital of the Philippines. After achieving independence from the United States, the capital of the Philippines was moved to Quezon City in 1948. Quezon City remained the capital until it was moved back to Manila in 1976 by President Ferdinand Marcos. Quezon City, therefore, may be the only new national capital city that has seen that function abandoned.

Outside the National Capital Region: The suburbs outside the National Capital Region have a population of nearly 6,000,000. They are located in Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal provinces. These are among the most dense suburbs in the world, with 22,000 persons per square mile (8,500 persons per square kilometer).

The Metropolitan Area: The labor market area, or metropolitan area, includes a population of approximately 19,300,000, approximately the same size as Mexico City and Sao Paulo. A number of sources indicate a much smaller population for both the Manila metropolitan and urban areas. This is because some analysts mistake the regional jurisdiction popularly called “Metro Manila” (officially the National Capital Region) for the metropolitan area. Like Toronto’s Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, Metro Manila is only a part of a much larger metropolitan area. Both the urban area and the metropolitan area extend far outside the boundaries of the National Capital Region or Metro Manila. The metropolitan area includes the provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal (Figure: Manila Metropolitan Area), while the urban area contains parts of these provinces (Table).

Manila Urban Area and Metropolitan Area: 2005					
Sector	Population	Land Area (Square Miles)	Density	Land Area (Square KM)	Density
City of Manila	1,525,000	15	101,276	39	39,103

Balance of National Capital Region	9,262,000	231	40,182	597	15,514
National Capital Region	10,787,000	246	43,928	636	16,961
Suburbs Outside NCR	5,963,000	269	22,131	698	8,545
Urban Area	16,750,000	515	32,524	1,334	12,558
Outside Urban Area	2,550,000				
Metropolitan Area	19,300,000				

Business Districts

Manila may be unique in having seen its principal business district displaced at least one and perhaps two new central business districts. The largest business district in the metropolitan area is no longer in Manila, but is now in Makati City. Like other Asian urban areas, such as Bangkok and Shanghai, Manila has considerable dispersion of large commercial buildings. This includes other large commercial centers, which in western parlance would be called edge cities, such as Ortigas Center, a few kilometers north of Makati City (Photographs 81-82, 83 and 107). Ortigas Center also appears to be larger than downtown Manila, which has been relegated to the status of an edge city. The *A1 Metro Manila Citiatlas* has large inset maps of the Makati City business center and Ortigas Center, but not downtown Manila.

There are also major high rise edge cities in Quezon City and two in Multinlupa City (Filinvest Center and Alabang Town Center). A panorama of Manila, including the largest business centers is illustrated in Photographs 88-99, from the top of a building in Makati City. Makati City, the largest of the business centers, is illustrated in Photographs 43-47 and 84-99.

Shopping

Manila has a number of large shopping malls or mega malls. Perhaps the largest is the Mall of Asia (Photographs 132 & 133) in Pasay City. This mall is on a large plot of land adjacent to Manila Bay, with ample land to the east for additional development. There are also mega malls other locations, such as Makati City and Quezon City, Ortigas Center and smaller malls in other locations.

Housing

As in virtually all urban areas of the world, the dream of home ownership is apparent in Manila.

This is indicated by the considerable amount of new housing development, both single-family detached housing and high-rise units. Large new detached housing developments will be found in the suburbs outside the National Capital District. Most have security that makes it nearly impossible to obtain photographs from the inside (Photographs 3, 4, 13-17). As the airplane was descending to land, a number of areas were noted with streets completed ready for housing construction to begin (Photographs 1 & 2).

Even older middle-income neighborhoods are protected by security and generally inaccessible to outsiders. In Quezon City, protective walls were seen that were considerably higher than are generally found in Johannesburg or Mexico City (Photograph 143), while the detached housing neighborhoods of Makati City are also behind security (Photograph 48).

Informal Settlements: Manila has a large number of informal dwellings. It has been estimated that in the National Capital Region alone, more than 2.5 million people live in these settlements. Generally, the informal settlements are not large and sprawling as in Mumbai or Rio de Janeiro. They tend, rather, to be stretched along waterway and transportation corridors, especially railways. There is a small informal settlement adjacent to a runway at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Photographs 7, 8, 17, 28, 64-66, 121-125, 135-139).

I once had the unfortunate experience of encountering a Philippine urban planner at a United States Department of State conference. He was most concerned about how people developed informal settlements along the banks of rivers and indicated an interest in removing them. He had no appreciation for the fact that this was the best life these people could manage and that, as bad as conditions are in the slums of Manila, the residents are better off than they were in the poorer, rural areas of the country. Around the world the same

attitude is often found among urban planners. Little matters to them except a one-dimensional view of the city that seeks to obtain architectural gratification and a strange view that it is better for the environment for people to be even more poorly housed. This is a principal difficulty with today's urban planning fraternity, which seeks design purity at the cost of all other values, including people's quality of life.

Walkable Manila

In the northern part of the city of Manila is one of the world's most walkable neighborhoods (Photographs 71-78). Saturday morning revealed crowds of people walking on the street. There were many motorcycles, tricycles and bicycles.

It was clear, however, that this area did not enjoy the affluence that planners like to associate with "walkable neighborhoods" as they market the concept in high-income world nations.

Driving in Manila

Manila, like Jakarta and Bangkok, has some of the worst traffic congestion in the world (Photographs 1 and 146). There are two principal causes --- its high density (above) and an inadequately planned and designed road system. The traffic is at least as intense as that of Jakarta, though it is likely to get much worse because the share of travel by car at this point is relatively small in Manila. As automobile travel increases, traffic will get much worse because of Manila's extraordinarily high population density. The so-called "gridlock" that is attributed to some urban areas in the United States or Western Europe is mild by comparison. Manila's improving affluence is, as in Jakarta, indicated by the substantial share of large sport utility vehicles (especially Japanese brands).

There are few freeways.¹ The most important is "EDSA" (Epifanio de Los Santos Avenue), which is called "Edsa" (rather than the acronym E-D-S-A) by local citizens. EDSA is really the inner ring road, which begins at Manila Bay to the south of downtown, continues eastward and then turns north, passing by Makati City, Ortigas and Quezon City, where it turns west. Through much of its alignment, especially the north-south section, EDSA is a freeway of from six lanes to ten lanes.

In most areas there is a yellow striped lane on the right that is reserved for buses. EDSA also has the distinction of being a venue for revolution. The peaceful demonstrations that led to the fall of President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 occurred on EDSA as did the similarly peaceful demonstrations that led to the fall of President Estrada in 2001 (Photographs 108-114, 126-129, 146).

The other freeways serve principally a suburban and exurban function. Examples are the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), which heads north from EDSA into Bulacan province and beyond. NLEX is a tollway of high standards, with eight lanes of traffic for perhaps the first 15 miles, where it is reduced to six lanes. The South Superhighway extends from west of Makati City through the southern part of the National Capital Region, into the suburbs of the province of Laguna and beyond. The Southern Superhighway is also a toll road, with six lanes through most of the National Capital Region, then being reduced to four lanes. A major construction project is underway to expand the six lane configuration further south.

The Manila-Cavite Coastal Road is a short freeway, on which tolls are also charged. The coastal road is a continuation of Aguinaldo Boulevard, the coastal highway that runs the city of Manila to Paranaque City. The Manila-Cavite Coastal Road runs to Bacoor, in Cavite province.

Manila's arterial street system and freeway system are poorly planned, suffering from considerable discontinuity and insufficient capacity.

Manila Drivers: Manila's impossible traffic may have imposed a courteous discipline on its drivers. Despite the challenging conditions, comparatively few horns are heard and there is little evidence of aggressive behavior --- probably because the experienced Manila driver realizes that fighting congestion is a hopeless pursuit. On a scale of one to 10, where Japan's drivers are the most courteous (at 10) and Italy's the most aggressive (at 1), Filipino drivers rate at least a nine. For any in need of training in defensive driving, Manila is the place to go. If one accepts the inevitable congestion, driving can actually be a relaxing pastime in Manila (especially if you are a tourist with no pressing need to get anywhere fast).

The ultimate was the writer's planned 45 minute trip of six miles (10 kilometers) from Quezon City to Makati City on a Saturday morning. The first 0.6 miles (one kilometer) took one hour. Fortunately, traffic on ESDA cleared, where it had been constricted to one lane by a working crew, and the scheduled airport departure was not missed.

Breathing in Manila

Like other large developing world urban areas, Manila has a serious air pollution (smog) problem. This is evident not only from viewing the horizon (Photographs 100-105), but also from the number of people that wear masks to protect themselves from breathing the foul air. The principal difficulty is that, as in all dense urban areas, automobile use is highly concentrated and, in consequence, so is air pollution.

Public Transport in Manila: Near Automobile Competitive

According to data in the UITP Millennium Cities database (1995), Manila has the highest intensity of public transport service in the world (vehicle miles per square mile of urbanization). This is the result of a markedly different approach to public transport --- the Jeepney (Photographs 29-35). Jeepneys are small public transport vehicles that were originally based upon military jeeps left behind by the United States Army after World War II. Jeepneys are a work of art, intensely decorated by their owner-operators.

The Jeepney-Tricycle System: Jeepneys seat up to 19 passengers and provide frequent service along major streets. Manila's public transport service intensity was approximately twice that of second ranking Hong Kong, 10 times Zurich, 20 times Tokyo, 30 times Paris and 90 times New York. It is estimated that there were 57,000 Jeepneys in the National Capital Region alone in 1999.

There is considerable pressure to remove Jeepneys from the streets. Typically, their air pollution levels, lack of air conditioning and the traffic congestion created by so many vehicles are cited. But there is also a sense that Jeepneys are an inferior mode of public transport, especially compared to the so-called "world-class" modes of Metros and light rail. The pollution problem is simply a matter of

technology, though the traffic problem is less easy to solve. Nonetheless, if the jeepneys were removed, there would be even more pressure to expand automobile use, since any replacement public transport system would not be likely to provide the same level of mobility.

A professor at a local business school, Dennis Berino, called the jeepney public transport system "unsustainable," apparently ignoring the fact that it has been sustained now for more than 60 years. His solution was more conventional public transport, of the type that typically serves only urban cores with any frequency (especially metros and light rail) and is characterized by leaving large demand gaps.²

The Jeepney system is supplemented by another relatively unique form of urban transport --- the tricycle, which is similar to an Indian auto-rickshaw or an Indonesian bejaj (Photograph 20). These are motorcycle based vehicles that take up to three riders in side compartments. Tricycles account for nearly as much ridership as buses. It has been estimated that there were 60,000 tricycles serving the National Capital Region in 1996. The combined Jeepney, tricycle system accounted for more than 50 percent of motorized trips in the National Capital Region in 1996.

However, despite its lack of political correctness, it seems likely that the Jeepney system with the supplemental tricycles comes the closest to providing automobile competitive mobility of any public transport system in the world. It seems inconceivable that any other form of public transport could provide riders with the frequency and coverage that is provided by the Jeepneys. Surely there are no models at this point. A good starting point would be the establishment of criteria for any replacement system. At a minimum, any replacement system should:

- Provide at least the same level of mobility and access (service frequency and area coverage) for all of the passengers using the present system.
- Impose no greater cost on the public or passengers than the present system.

Metros and Buses: Supplementing the Jeepney-Tricycle System: The public transport literature is filled with suggestions that Manila needs a “world class” public transport system (as referenced above), which means urban rail, especially light rail and metros. In fact, however, such a system can only supplement the Jeepney-Tricycle system, which accounts for at least 70 percent of public transport travel.

Manila has three Metro lines, which are operated with light rail type vehicles. Since the system is fully grade separated, it is properly considered as a Metro. The three lines provide access to less than two percent of the urban area (based upon the international standard of a 400 meter or one-quarter square mile walking distance from stations). The covered stations are often dimly lit during the daytime or not lit at all. Ridership is now approximately 800,000 per day, representing slightly more than two percent of trips in the metropolitan region.

There is also a publicly sponsored large bus system, which had approximately 10,000 buses in 1996. It, however, charges higher fares and does not provide the service coverage of the Jeepneys. Buses carry about one-third the ridership of Jeepneys, according to a 1996 travel survey.

These systems provide conventional public transit mobility in Manila, which leaves most trips outside their scope. The Jeepneys and tricycles, however, combined with the Metro and buses are an

effective public transport system that provides comprehensive mobility throughout the urban area, something generally not available in other major urban areas of the high-income, middle-income or low-income world.

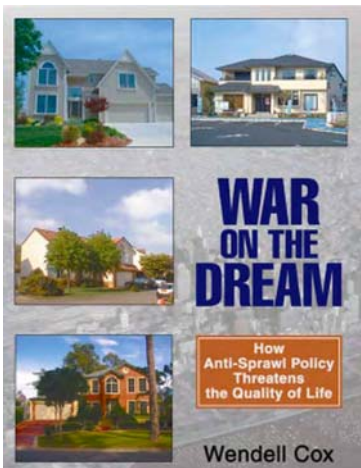
The extent to which the Metro and buses improve the effectiveness of the Jeepney-Tricycle system or mobility in general is not known. This is because most research efforts in public transport start from a presumption that Metros and buses are inherently virtuous. In addition, there does not appear to be a useful analysis covering the costs and benefits of these more expensive public transport modes.

Manila: Rich and Poor

Like all large developing world urban areas, Manila has a large number of poor residents. There are also many middle income and higher income residents. Manila thus gives an impression of both prosperity and poverty. The informal settlements provide a constant reminder of the poverty, riddled as they are throughout the entire community. On the other hand, the high-rise office buildings, high-rise residential buildings and the detached housing developments in the suburbs and exurbs give an impression of prosperity. Manila appears to be making substantial progress and resembles Shanghai or Bangkok much more than, say, Jakarta. Generally, my impression of Manila is that much of it is closer to first world status than Mexico City or Rio de Janeiro, despite being less affluent.

¹ In this series, the term freeway refers to any controlled access highway (highway on which there is neither cross-traffic nor signals). A freeway may or may not have tolls.

² <http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2006/june/06/yehey/business/20060606bus13.html>.



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Urban Tours by Rental Car: About the Series

Urban Tours by Rental Car offers perspectives on urban development obtained by automobile tours through urban areas. Rental cars are not the favored method for visiting cities, especially those outside one's own country. Instead, tourists and urban planners favor packaged tours or local public transport systems. Both are splendid ways for seeing the city as it used to be --- the very reason for most tourist visits. The historical core areas contain monuments, prime government and religious edifices and quaint neighborhoods that are often centuries old. This is particularly important to tourists from the newer urban areas of the American, Canadian or Australian West, where history extends not far before World War II. It is further understandable that few tourists travel thousands of miles to see the newer suburban areas that look very much like home. But most tourists do not profess to be students of the urban area.

For the urban planner interested in understanding the whole urban area, it is not enough to study the core alone, regardless of its architectural attractiveness, romanticism, history or affirmation of an individually preferred life style. No one, regardless of the depth of their education can develop reliable conceptions from an unrepresentative sample, and urban cores are the very essence of unrepresentative samples. Both public transport and packaged tours miss the larger part --- the expanse of sprawling residential and business development that rings virtually all major urban areas. They may be of little interest to many urban planners, but they should be.

Stripping away regional architectural facades, one might as well be in the suburbs of Phoenix, Portland, Perth or Paris. Here, the automobile is king, because no public transport system has been developed that can effectively serve destinations outside the core (at least at a price any society can afford). While public transport market shares are higher in European suburban areas than in the New World, much of the difference is attributable to lower incomes and less automobile access. Indeed, public transport's principal weakness, lack of automobile competitiveness, is itself a contributing factor to the rising motorization occurring from the suburbs of Copenhagen and Nagoya to the suburbs of Lagos and Mumbai. To oversimplify this phenomenon as being a "love affair with the automobile" is the equivalent of saying that Singaporeans or Brazilians have a love affair with air conditioning. Human beings prefer comfort to discomfort and they prefer free time to time over which they have no control.

It is no wonder that tourists return to the United States thinking that all Paris looks like the second arrondissement (less than one percent does) and that urban planners think all of Milan looks like the architectural treasures that surround the Cathedral. In fact, the sprawling suburbs of Europe, Japan, Canada and Connecticut resemble one another in many ways. For any seeking to study the urban area in its entirety --- not just the favored haunts of core-dwelling elites --- there is no alternative to "getting behind the wheel." Thus, *Urban Tours by Rental Car*



Preparing for Residential Development: Laguna

1



Preparing for Residential Development: Laguna

2



Preparing for Residential Development: Cavite

3



New Residential Development: Cavite

4



Cavite (Province)

5



Las Pinas (NCR)

6



Informal Settlements Along Waterway, Las Pinas (NCR)

7



Informal Dwellings Adjacent to Airport

8



Pasay City (NCR)

9



South Superhighway

10



House Advertisement

11



Expanding the South Superhighway

12



New Houses, Binan, Laguna Province

13



New Houses, Binan, Laguna Province

14



New Houses, Binan, Laguna Province

15



New Houses, Binan, Laguna Province

16



The Philippine Dream: New Houses, Binan, Laguna Province

17



San Pedro, Laguna Province

18



San Pedro, Laguna Province

19



San Pedro, Laguna Province

20



Informal Settlement Along Highway

21



Filinvest Center, Muntinlupa City (NCR)

22



Filinvest Center, Muntinlupa City (NCR)

23



Filinvest Center, Muntinlupa City (NCR)

24



Alabang Town Center, Muntinlupa City (NCR)

25



Alabang Town Center, Muntinlupa City (NCR)

26



Informal Settlement, Muntinlupa City (NCR)

27



Informal Settlement, Muntinlupa City (NCR)

28



Jeepneys under South Superhighway

29



Jeepneys

30



Jeepneys

31



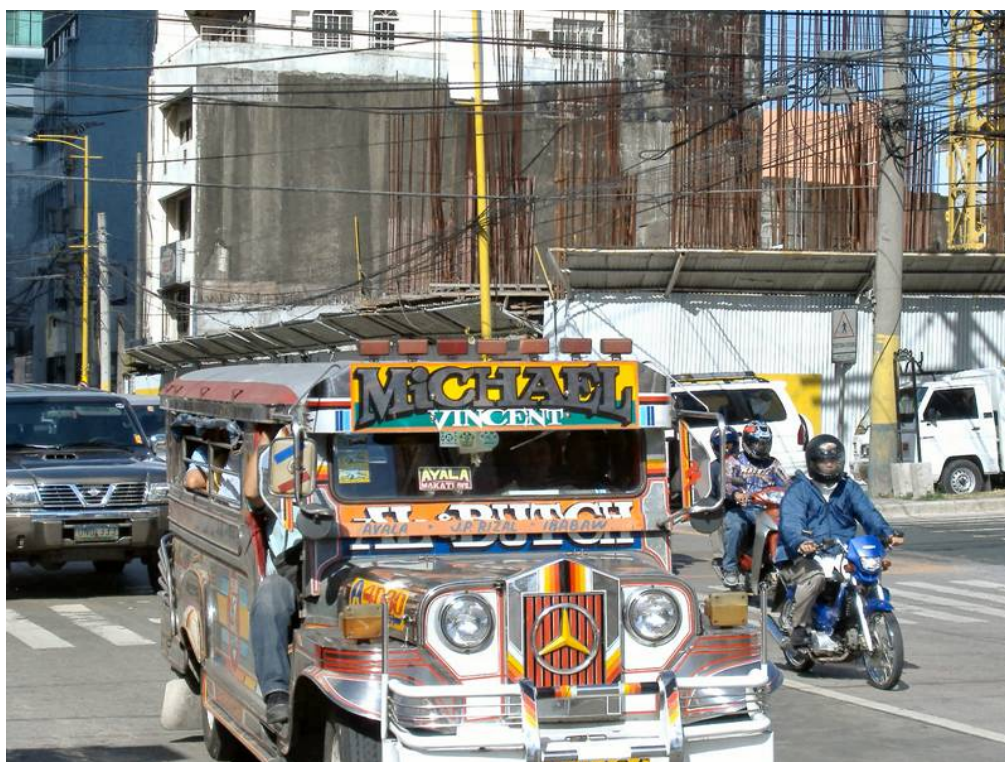
Jeepneys

32



Jeepneys

33



Jeepney

34



Jeepneys

35



Development Along South Superhighway

36

Makati City
(NCR)



37



16 Lane South Superhighway & Skyway: Makati City (NCR)

38



Makati City (NCR)

39



Skyway, Makati City (NCR)

40



Makati City (NCR)

41



Skyway, Makati City (NCR)

42



Makati City (NCR)

43



Makati City (NCR)

44



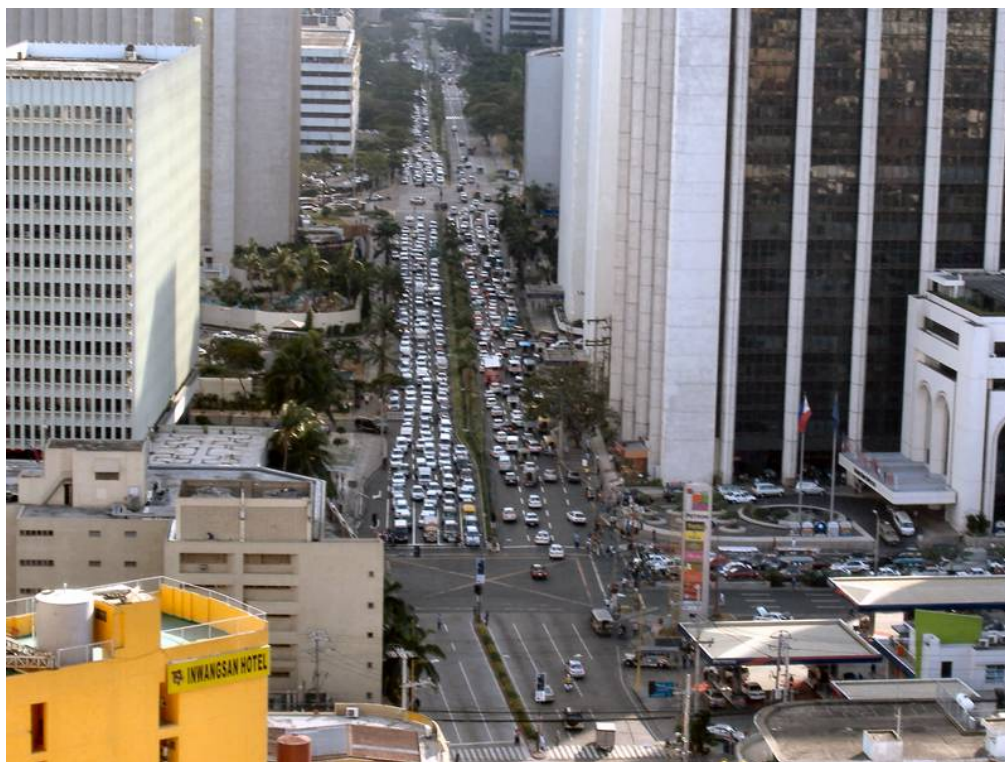
Makati City (NCR)

45



Makati City, NCR

46



Makati City (NCR)

47



Makati City (NCR)

48



Makati City (NCR)

49



Makati City (NCR)

50



Manila (NCR)

51



Philippine Cultural Center, Manila (NCR)

52



Manila (NCR)

53



Manila (NCR)

54



Manila (NCR)

55



Manila, NCR

56



Manila (NCR)

57



Manila (NCR)

58



Manila (NCR)

59



Manila (NCR)

60



Philippine Railway Train, Manila (NCR)

61



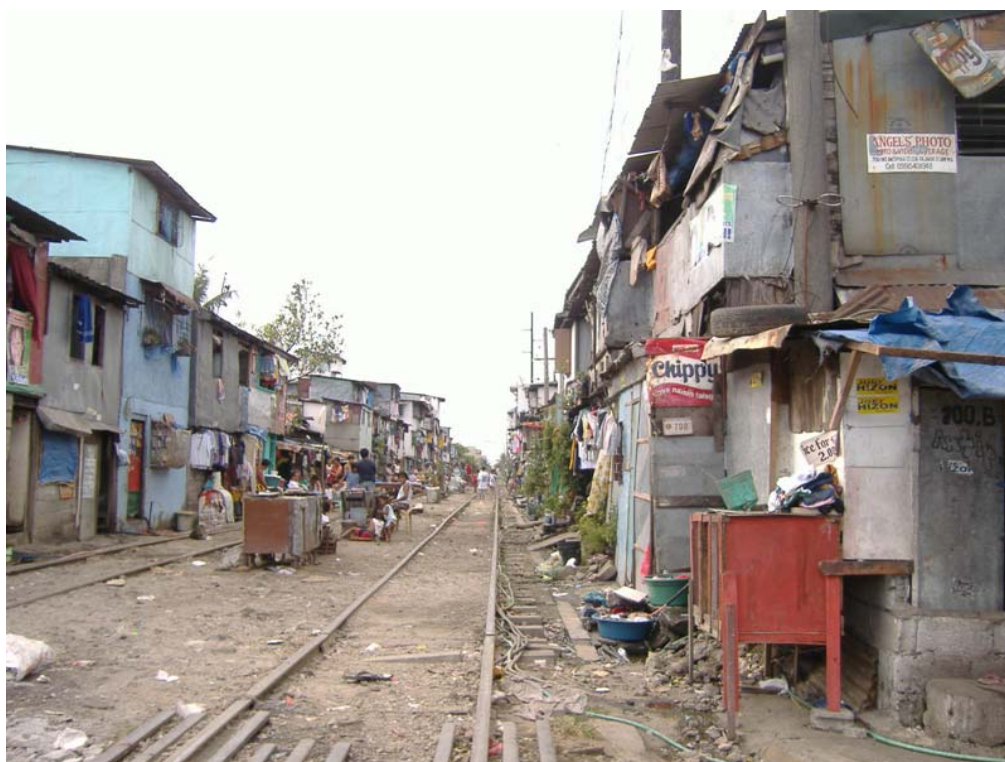
Manila (NCR)

62



Manila (NCR)

63



Informal Settlement Along Railway, Manila (NCR)

64



Informal Settlement Along Railway, Manila (NCR)

65



Informal Settlement Along Railway, Manila (NCR)

66



Metro Line 1 Station: Manila (NCR)

67



Manila (NCR)

68



Rizal Park, Manila (NCR)

69



Jeepney & Metro Line 1, Manila (NCR)

70



Manila (NCR)

71



Manila (NCR)

72



Manila (NCR)

73



Manila (NCR)

74



Manila (NCR)

75



Manila (NCR)

76



Manila (NCR)

77



Manila (NCR)

78



Quezon City (NCR)

79



Quezon City (NCR)

80



Ortigas Center (NCR)

81



Ortigas Center (NCR)

82



EDSA, Pasig City (NCR)

83



Makati City & Ortigas Center (in the distance)

84



Toward Manila from Makati City (NCR)

85



Toward Manila from Makati City (NCR)

86



Toward Manila from Makati City (NCR)

87



Toward Manila from Makati City (NCR)

88



Toward Manila from Makati City (NCR)

89



Toward Mandaluyong City from Makati City (NCR)

90



Toward Ortigas, Pasig City from Makati City (NCR)

91



Toward Ortigas, Pasig City from Makati City (NCR)

92



Toward Ortigas, Pasig City from Makati City (NCR)

93



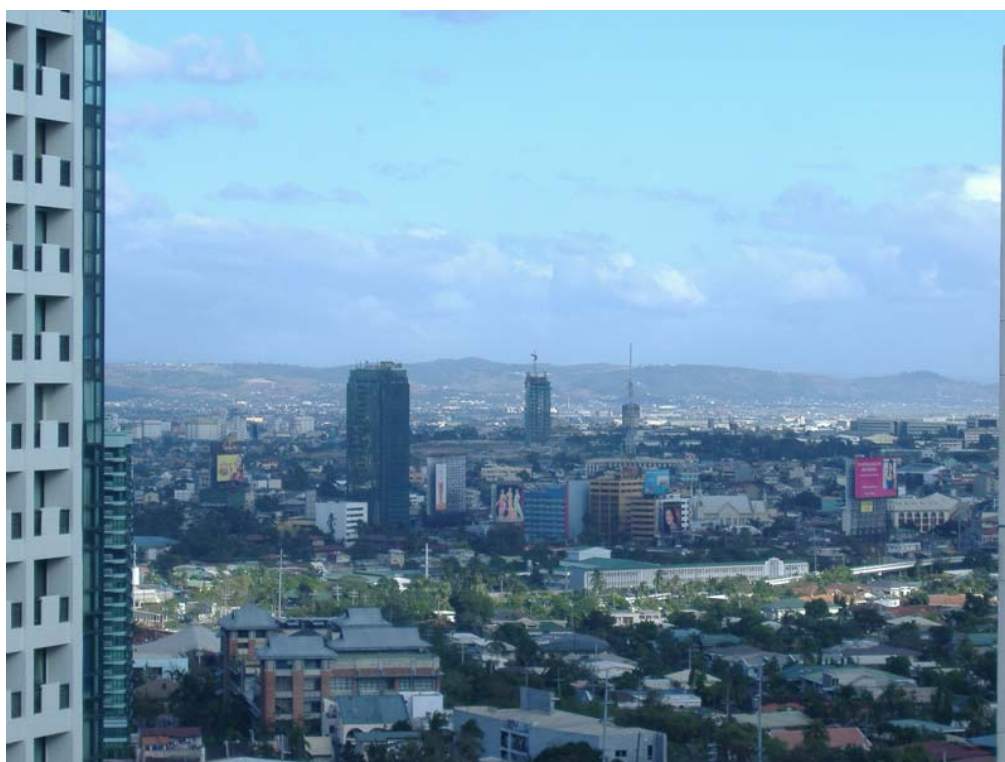
Toward Ortigas, Pasig City from Makati City (NCR)

94



Toward Ortigas, Pasig City from Makati City (NCR)

95



Toward Southeast from Makati City (NCR)

96



Toward Southeast from Makati City (NCR)

97



Toward Northwest from Makati City (NCR)

98



Toward Northwest from Makati City (NCR)

99



Morning Smog: Toward the Northwest from Makati City (NCR)

100



Morning Smog: Toward Ortigas Center from Makati City (NCR)

101



Morning Smog: Toward Ortigas Center from Makati City (NCR)

102



Morning Smog: Toward Ortigas Center from Makati City (NCR)

103



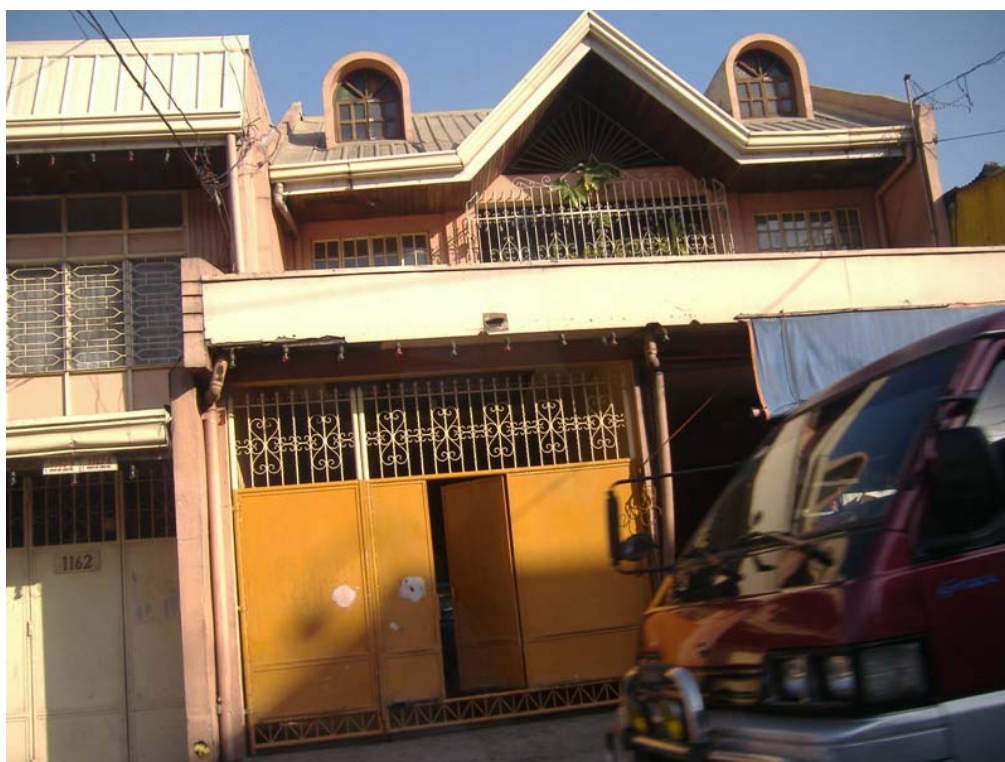
Morning Smog: Toward South, Makati City (NCR)

104



Morning Smog: Toward Southeast from Makati City (NCR)

105



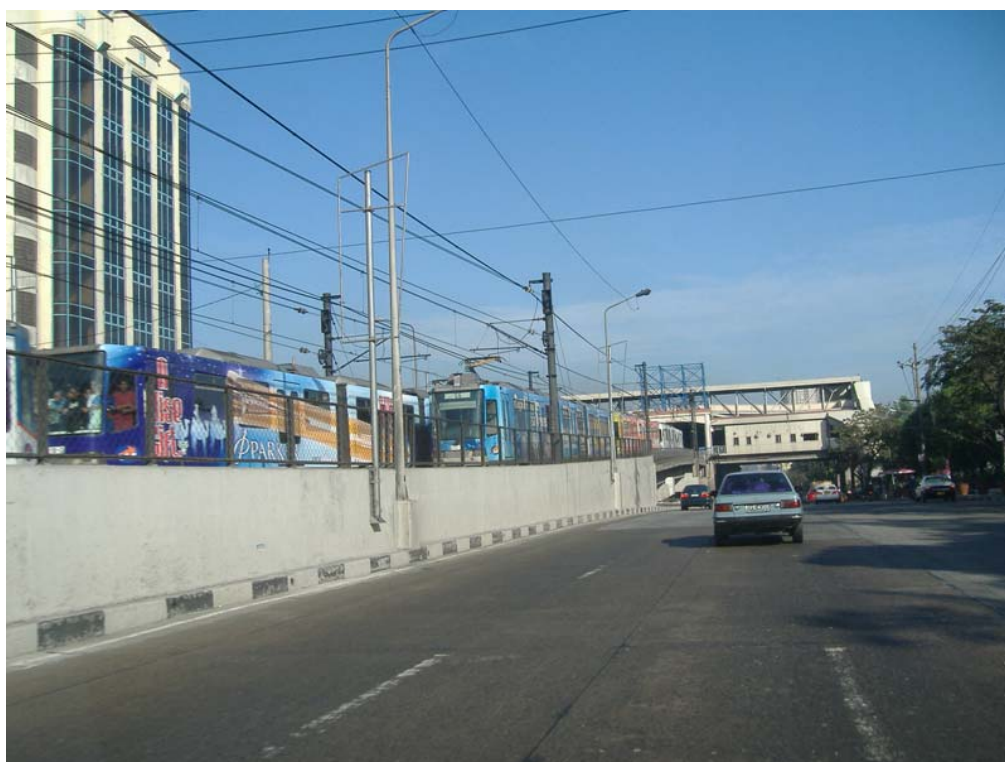
Mandaluyong City (NCR)

106



107

Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City & Pasay City (NCR)



108

EDSA with MRT Line 3



EDSA

109



EDSA

110



EDSA

111



Advertisement for High Rise Residence Building

112



EDSA (Northeast)

113



EDSA (Northeast)

114



NLEX (North Luzon Expressway)

115



Maycauayan, Bulacan Province)

116



Maycauayan, Bulacan Province)

117



Church, Bulacan Province)

118



Shopping Center, Valenzuela City (NCR)

119



Shopping Center, Valenzuela City (NCR)

120



121

Informal Settlement along River: Valenzuela City (NCR)



122

Informal Settlement along River: Valenzuela City (NCR)



Informal Settlement along River: Valenzuela City (NCR)

123



Informal Settlement along River: Valenzuela City (NCR)

124



125

Informal Settlement along River: Valenzuela City (NCR)



126

EDSA (Northeast)



Church, EDSA

127



EDSA with Metro Line 3 Station

128



EDSA

129



Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City & Pasay City (NCR)

130



Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City & Pasay City (NCR)

131



Mall of Asia, North Section: Pasay City (NCR)

132



Mall of Asia, South Section: Pasay City (NCR)

133



High Rise Units: Paranaque City (NCR)

134



Informal Settlement: Coastal Road: Las Pinas (NCR)

135



Informal Settlement: Coastal Road: Las Pinas (NCR)

136



Informal Settlement: Coastal Road: Las Pinas (NCR)

137



Informal Settlement: Coastal Road: Las Pinas (NCR)

138



Informal Settlement: Coastal Road: Las Pinas (NCR)

139



Transfer Between Metro Lines 1 & 3: Pasay City (NCR)

140



Makati City (NCR)

141



Santo Domingo Church: Quezon City (NCR)

142



Quezon City (NCR)

143



Quezon Memorial: Quezon City(NCR)

144



Elliptical Road Around Quezon Memorial

145



Traffic on EDSA

146



Quezon City (NCR)

147



Manila (NCR)

148



Manila (NCR)

149



Manila (NCR)

150