

## **“THE SKYWAY-STAIRWAY TO PROGRESS”**

Only some years ago, Citra was one of the most despised, maybe even hated, companies in the Philippines. This was especially true for those who travelled to and from south of Makati. More so for the residents of Muntinlupa and the villages within its boundaries who experienced some of the worst traffic jams in Philippine history. With reason, the skyway system was even described by some as the biggest parking lot in the world.

Today, that has all changed. All is forgiven and forgotten and CITRA (CMMTC) is admired, maybe even loved, by those who reside south of Makati for the convenience and speed of travel via the Skyway, rapid development, and, most of all, the very noticeable increase in real estate values. However, traffic is still a nagging problem and must be addressed.

Over the years, much time, effort and resources have been spent to ease traffic in the metropolis. Of course traffic flow would improve for a while. But not long after, it's back to gridlocks. Some solutions like the LRT, the MRT and C5 have provided some relief but both are insufficient and temporary.

It is a reality that no more new surface roads can be added to those that exist and those that exist can no longer be widened or expanded, yet the Metropolis still badly needs additional space for the ever growing population and the vehicles needed to move them. The Metro Manila Development Authority recently cited that, everyday 2.4 million vehicles run on EDSA alone, with a 20% increase in number on Fridays. The result is very painful, agonizing and very costly to the pocket and to our emotional equilibrium.

In recognition of the inevitable, to add road capacity, and respond to the growing transport needs of Metro Manila then, the government approved in 1995 the implementation of the 30-kilometer Metro Manila Skyway Project (MMSP) in 3 stages. The MMSP involved the development and construction of a seamless elevated toll road from Alabang to Balintawak and the rehabilitation of the Magallanes-Alabang section of SLEX, now known as the at-grade section of Skyway System. The project would not only connect South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) with North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), decongest EDSA and other roads but would also facilitate and make easy travel to and from Makati to Parañaque, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas and other destinations south of Alabang all the way to Calamba.

Of the project that was undertaken by the Philippine National Construction Corporation and the Citra Group of Indonesia. Stage 1 of the project which consists of 9.5-kilometers of elevated toll road from Buendia to Bicutan and 13.5-kilometers of upgraded and modernized at-grade road from

Magallanes to Alabang was started in 1996 became fully operational in mid-1999. Meanwhile, Stage 2, the 7-km extension of the elevated tollway from Bicutan to Alabang was constructed in 22 months – starting with mobilization in May 2009 and finishing in March 2011, opening to traffic on April 4, 2011.

Very soon, again Citra and PNCC, and this time backed by San Miguel Holdings, Inc. or SMHI, will start the construction of Stage 3 – a 14.2-kilometer elevated tollway which will further extend the existing Skyway System from Buendia to Balintawak passing through Central Manila in order to decongest EDSA, with eight strategic access points to accommodate the travel patterns of motorists and commuters who have varying origin and destination points. This stage will also allow travel from the SLEX to the NLEX without passing through EDSA or Manila traffic via a totally elevated Skyway and at minimal expense.

The audio-visual presentation that we will now play will illustrate the unique advantages of the MMSP from various points of view – from the point of view of the regular motorist or commuter, from point of view of business, and in general, economic gains.

However, before we run the AVP, we would like to add that, in addition to MMSP, the government has also approved the implementation of the Metro Manila Tollway, or the C6 expressway in 1995.

(Playback AVP)

(After AVP...)

If we are given the time, I will be more than glad to answer your questions.

Although often assumed to be so, the development and improvement of our nation's structural foundation can no longer be totally the responsibility of the government. But since government cannot deliver the quality of infrastructure required by the ever-growing traffic demand because of its many critical national concerns where government resources can better be used and more needed, the building and maintaining of some highways is a task now relegated to the private sector, with the government simply exercising regulatory functions.

Citra and PNCC, in cooperation with SMHI, are prepared to take on this task. The infrastructure projects that they have signified interest in undertaking affirm this continuing commitment to help the country to be globally competitive and contribute to our government's nation building effort. #