

# MRT 7 DEVELOPER MAY REDESIGN QC PARK STATION AFTER MAYOR HALTS CONSTRUCTION

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Food, drinks and infrastructure conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC) is open to re-designing part of the Metro Rail Transit Line 7 (MRT 7) after the Quezon City government ordered the suspension of construction activities at a landmark site.



In a statement on Wednesday, SMC called for the speedy resolution of the concern of Mayor Joy Belmonte, who said that construction of the MRT 7's Quezon Memorial Circle station would “affect the landmark's identity as a national heritage park.”

The MRT 7 is a 23-kilometer railway line that will link San Jose del Monte in Bulacan to North Avenue in Quezon City and cut the usual two-hour travel time by car to about 30 minutes. Expected to be completed in 2022, it will serve around 850,000 commuters. Part of the MRT 7's alignment passes through Quezon Memorial Circle. While most of the construction will take place underground, SMC said it was finalizing designs for an aboveground railway station.

SMC president Ramon S. Ang said they were hoping the Department of Transportation (DOTr) would soon resolve the issue.

“For us, while the order is a setback, we will do everything we can to make sure we keep to the timetable, and at the same time take into account the mayor's concerns. This includes revisions to the design,” he added.

For his part, Transport Secretary Arthur Tugade said they would respond to Belmonte's concerns.

On Tuesday, Belmonte ordered work on the MRT 7 Quezon Memorial Circle station temporarily halted, saying it had exceeded by more than five times the agreed area of construction of 4,997 square meters.

“We want to look for a winwin solution that will protect our open spaces while advancing the welfare of thousands of commuters who will benefit from the mass transport project,” she said.

Home to a 66-meter art deco-themed shrine of former President Manuel L. Quezon and other historical structures, the city government considers the park its most famous heritage site.

Belmonte said she also wanted the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Quezon-avancena family, the descendants of the late president, to have a say on the matter.