

- Mayor, Vice Mayor

MRT-7 QC Memorial Circle station redesign to be presented Friday

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THE Department of Transportation (DoTr) said that it will meet with the Quezon City government and holders of the Metro Rail Transit Line 7 (MRT-7) concession on Feb. 28 after the city suspended construction of a station of the commuter rail line near the Quezon City Memorial Circle (QCMC).

“Yung concern na ni-raise ng Quezon City... is currently being addressed both by our concessionaire, San Miguel (Corp.) and the DoTr. In fact, sa Feb. 28, sa Friday, we are expecting 'yung initial proposal ng concessionaire natin on how to address those concerns (Quezon City's concerns are being addressed by San Miguel Corp. and the DoTr. In fact, San Miguel will present its initial proposals on the station redesign on Friday, Feb. 28,” Undersecretary Timothy John R. Batan told reporters on the sidelines of a House hearing Wednesday.

Mr. Batan said that the department will need to review the additional cost of changing the design of the station. The initially-proposed design has raised concerns it will unduly interfere with the Quezon City Memorial Circle, a monument and city landmark as well as a public park.

“Itong additional cost is something that we will review as the proposal comes in. Siguro we will update you na lang once the plans are more definite (We will review the cost as the proposal comes in. We will update you once the plans are more definite),” he said.

“We absolutely agree that there's a cost to delaying projects. Unfortunately, malaki po talaga yung naging delay sa MRT-7 (The delays to MRT-7 are really significant),” Mr. Batan said, adding that the main concern of the redesign is to ensure that reductions to system capacity are minimized.

He said that the redesigned station should be large enough to handle expected passenger volumes.

“We have to make sure po na upfront, especially po if it's an underground structure... ay sapat po yung kapasidad natin in terms of floor area and in terms po of yung mga circulation area (We need to ensure upfront that the underground structure is sufficient in capacity in terms of floor area and circulation area),” Mr. Batan said.

Mr. Batan said that the “win-win” solution in the MRT-7 case would be to “reduce the footprint” and to avoid disrupting the public’s use of the QCMC monument and park. “Ayaw naman nating matakpan ’yung vista ’nun. And at the same time, to the extent na kayang underground yung mga... facilities natin, we will do that (We don’t want to block any views. At the same time, to the extent that we can build facilities underground, we will do that),” he said.

He said MRT-7 construction is “still on track” for partial operability by the end of 2021.

The city government issued a temporary cease-and-desist order against the “above-ground construction” of the MRT-7 station at QCMC, saying that “environmentalists and historians pointed out that the station was encroaching on the integrity” of the site.

Separately, Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) spokesman Hernando T. Cabrera assured that repairs on the LRT-2 line will be completed on or before June.

“We’re confident that in June or even prior to June we can complete the repair and (start) provisional operations,” he said.

Mr. Cabrera also noted that the LRTA board decided to engage a third-party expert to assist in the restoration of the damaged railways.

“The board decided to get a thirdparty expert to validate the findings of the LRTA engineering team and also to validate prices as well as to assist in the implementation and the interface of the different systems,” he said..

“The bids and awards committee has completed the bidding process and made its recommendation to the board last Friday. It was reported during the board meeting and the board has required time to evaluate the findings. And we’ll soon be coming out with the approval of the recommendations for award,” he added.

The next activity for the restoration of LRT-2 is procurement of the project’s power, telecommunications and signaling equipment, Mr. Cabrera said. —