

QC lifts cease-and-desist order against MRT-7 project

Manila Bulletin · 1 Mar 2020 · 4 · By ALEXANDRIA SAN JUAN, CHITO A. CHAVEZ, and EMMIE V. ABADILLA

The Quezon City government has lifted the cease and desist (CDO) order it had earlier issued on the construction of the MRT-7 Quezon Memorial Circle (QMC) station following approval of its new design.

“Ni-lift na po ng city government ang cease-and-desist order ngayon dahil natuwa naman po kami na binigyang-halaga ang aming concerns (The city government has lifted the cease and desist order today because we are glad that our concerns have been heard),” Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte said Friday.

In a statement from the Department of Transportation (DOTr), it said that Quezon City officials and its stakeholders, including officials from the National Housing Authority, have approved the new design of the QMC Station presented by developer San Miguel Corporation (SMC) and contractor EEI Corporation.

Belmonte issued last week a temporary CDO on the station’s aboveground construction, citing review of environmentalists and historians that the MRT-7 station located in QMC, the city's most famous landmark and a heritage site, was “encroaching on the park's integrity.”

The local government was apprehensive that the project would “affect the landmark’s identity as a national heritage park” and called for a “win-win” solution to protect open spaces and advance the welfare of commuters.

SMC assured the LGU that it will “cooperate with stakeholders to deliver the project with minimal delays, even with a possible redesign of the station’s above-ground structure, which will be finalized with the DOTr (Department of Transportation)”.

“Today, we are happy we succeeded in preserving our park and ensured that our people will have adequate mass transportation at the same time,” Belmonte said.

“When the national government, local government, and the private sector work together for transparency and development, things will be solved swiftly,”

Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade remarked.

“In one week, we have resolved the issue due to the collaboration of all sectors involved,” noted DOTr Undersecretary for Railways Timothy John Batan.

Concerned parties have also settled the issue on the project size after the Quezon City local government unit discovered that it has greatly exceeded the agreed area for construction.

Batan said that from the initial design of 11,000 square meters above ground, it has been agreed that the final design will just be a 426-square meter above ground structure, with a height of only six to seven meters.

MRT-7 already 55% complete

Batan assured that the construction works for the MRT-7 project is on track and is almost 55 percent complete, with partial operability expected next year, and full revenue service by 2022.

“Currently, almost 55 percent complete na tayo. Lahat ng mga tren, lahat ng mga bagon, tapos na, na-test na at ready na i-ship from [South] Korea. Makikita natin na yung mga viaducts ay halos patapos na rin at ang stations ay tinatapos na (Currently, we are almost 55 percent complete. All trains were already tested and ready to ship from [South] Korea. The viaducts and stations are almost complete),”

official said.

“Yung depot natin na tinatawag ay nasolusyunan na rin, kung kaya on track tayo doon sa commitment ng DOTr, galing sa ating concessionaire na maging partially operable by 2021 (The depot has been resolved, so we are on track with DOTr's commitment, from our concessionaire of being partially operable by 2021),” he assures. Once completed by 2022, the DOTr boasted that the MRT-7 will cut travel time from Manila to Bulacan from two hours to just 34 minutes.

The railway is composed of 14 stations from North Avenue in Quezon City to San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan and is expected to serve 850,000 commuters daily once operational.