

More than bike lanes, QC eyes facilities for urban cyclists

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THE Quezon City Council has expressed its support for safe cycling in the city through the QC Safe Cycling and Active Transport Ordinance.

Authored by District 2 Councilor Fernando Miguel “Mikey” Belmonte, the ordinance aims to boost the plan to put up more than just bike lanes, but also to provide hydration and repair stations, including shower facilities for bikers to use in their travels, as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to greatly reduce the capacity of public transportation options, particularly in Metro Manila.

“We want to go the extra mile for Quezon City’s residents by promoting cycling as a convenient alternative. Cycling as an activity doesn’t just address the current problem of limited availability in transportation; it also promotes fitness and reduces pollution to protect the city,” Belmonte said in a news statement.

Belmonte who is serving his first term as a member of the city council underscored the need for institutional policies to support alternative transportation.

The new ordinance will create a Bicycle and Active Transport Section (BATS) under the Department of Public Order and Safety- Green Transport Office. BATS will spearhead the identification and establishment of a network of cycling lanes and walking paths in order to create a comprehensive plan to include infrastructure and traffic engineering solutions to support active transport in the city.

According to Belmonte, a major provision of the ordinance includes laying down around 90 kilometers of bike lanes throughout the city. These bike lanes will be strategically placed for easier access to vital establishments, such as hospitals, markets, transport terminals, educational institutions, and government offices.

Hydration facilities, as well as green rest and repair stations with tools can be found along these routes.

The ordinance, which has been approved on third reading, also proposes dedicated parking stations for all modes of active transportation including e-bikes and e-kick scooters.

These will be located in city- managed offices, MRT and LRT terminals, and major business establishments such as malls, restaurants, banks, and grocery stores.

Changing rooms and shower facilities will also be established.

“City Hall employees will be the first to benefit from the shower stations because we want them to set an example for other QC residents,” Belmonte added.

“The number of City Hall employees that have taken up cycling as their method of getting to work has significantly increased, and with the establishment of these facilities, we know that they will continue to grow,” he said.

To maximize the use of technology, an app is also currently being developed to assist cyclists on the best bike lane routes they can use to navigate to their destination within the city.

In writing the proposal, the councilor shared that the city’s legislative body worked with various cycling groups.

“We wanted to take a more holistic approach by working closely with cycling groups such as Cycling Matters, Electric Kick Scooter PH, United Bikers’ Marshalls, Greenpeace Philippines, and Kalyetista to develop these plans and be able to address the issues that our cycling citizens have been facing during their daily rides,” Belmonte said.

“We see this as the beginning of a new era for the city. We know it will take years for many of these changes to be enforced but we’re confident that promoting active transport will be beneficial to commuters, cyclists, and all of Quezon City,” he added.