

QC opens 5-km 'GORA' lane for pedestrians

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QUEZON City Mayor Josefina “Joy” Belmonte on Friday led the opening of the 5-kilometer pedestrian corridor called Green, Open, Renewable, Access (GORA) lane.

A first of its kind in the city, the GORA lane, which passes through Doña Hemady Avenue, Scout Tobias Street and Mother Ignacia Avenue, provides residents with access to three major roads, namely Aurora Boulevard, Quezon Avenue and EDSA.

The 5.39-km GORA lane aims to encourage citizens to walk and ‘go places’ by providing mobility and access through a network of sustainable, walkable, safe, accessible and beautiful streets, according to the mayor.

“We’re glad this project turned out to be a success. We hope our citizens will find this lane not only beautiful but also useful to them and that they will favor walking to their last-mile destinations, if possible, [rather] than riding their vehicles,” said Belmonte, who admitted they had a hard time convincing the affected residents about the benefits of the project.

“Now, for sure they will like it because they have found it beneficial as a whole as we make the city walkable,” she told The Manila Times.

The project includes the creation of wider sidewalks and pocket parks with better lighting, way-finding signages, planting strips and public art installations that will make the streets more walkable and attractive for the public, the city’s Public Affairs and Information Service Department (PAISD) said.

It will also connect major transportation lines, namely, Light Railway Transit 2-Gilmore Station, Metro Rail Transit-3-GMA Kamuning Station and MRT3-Quezon Avenue Station, PAISD added.

“Our residents deserve more open space than ever and our recovery will come to life on these streets,” Belmonte said as she cited the importance of active modes of transport such as walking amidst the limited public transportation and mobility due to the pandemic.

Likewise, the development is expected to boost economic activity by connecting commercial areas such as Gilmore, Robinsons Magnolia, Tomas Morato and Timog.

PAISD said the completion of the GORA lane project, which was funded by the Department of Budget and Management, contributes to the realization of Belmonte’s 14-point agenda, specifically agenda item 10, which is to build a livable, green and sustainable city.

Before commencing with the project in 2018, the city government first met with the stakeholders and addressed all their concerns.

The local government had another round of meetings sometime in November 2020, where they ironed out additional issues regarding the project, including the installation of additional safety barriers and traffic warning devices during construction.

The city chief executive has dismissed fears of traffic congestion since the width of roads is well within the highway design standard of the Department of Public Works and Highways of at least 3.35 meters per lane.