SPARK
Sparking active mobility actions for climate-friendly cities

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Enabling Tactical Urbanism through Policy Pathways & Institutional Capacities in the Philippines

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Introduction

Tactical urbanism (TU) refers to a set of planning and design strategies that implement low-cost, adaptable modifications to urban spaces with the goal of enhancing accessibility, safety, and public use.

These strategies include interventions such as pedestrian priority zones, sidewalk extensions, protected bike lanes, and curb management schemes that demonstrate how street space can be reorganized to support inclusive mobility and community use.

Illustration of Tactical Urbanism interventions for the Spark Project Pilot along Maginhawa street

In the Philippines, TU has gained traction as a practical strategy to address longstanding issues in street design, particularly in dense urban areas where vulnerable road users face heightened risks. The country records approximately 9.7 road traffic deaths per 100,000 people,[11] and most road networks lack infrastructure that meets basic safety and accessibility standards for pedestrians and cyclists. In response, several national policy instruments now support people-centered approaches to mobility. The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023–2028 encourages local governments to adopt infrastructure for walking and cycling while the National Transport Policy (2017) promotes street design

1 World Health Organization [WHO] (2025). Road traffic mortality rate (per 100 000 population) [Indicator]. WHO Data. Retrieved August 27, 2025, from https://data.who.int/indicators/i/B9D9E6A/D6176E2.

that prioritizes active transport and public transit. Local governments have begun aligning with these policy shifts. Quezon City has developed 94 kilometers of bike lanes, and Pasig City has introduced 35 kilometers of new routes, both integrated into broader urban sustainability agendas. Within this context, TU functions as a method for piloting and refining street-level improvements that respond to mobility demands while remaining compatible with longer-term development goals.

This policy brief aims to present actionable insights for policymakers and local government units (LGUs) on mainstreaming TU to support active mobility in the Philippines. The objectives of the policy brief are to:

01 Define TU and its rationale in the Philippine context, including alignment with national plans and urban development goals.

02 Highlight on-ground experiences from recent TU pilot interventions (the SPARK project in Quezon City and Pasig City), summarizing what was done, the challenges they faced, and the results achieved.

03 Examine the policy and legal landscape for active transport and urban development, identifying key policies, alignment with TU principles, and gaps or conflicts affecting LGU initiatives.

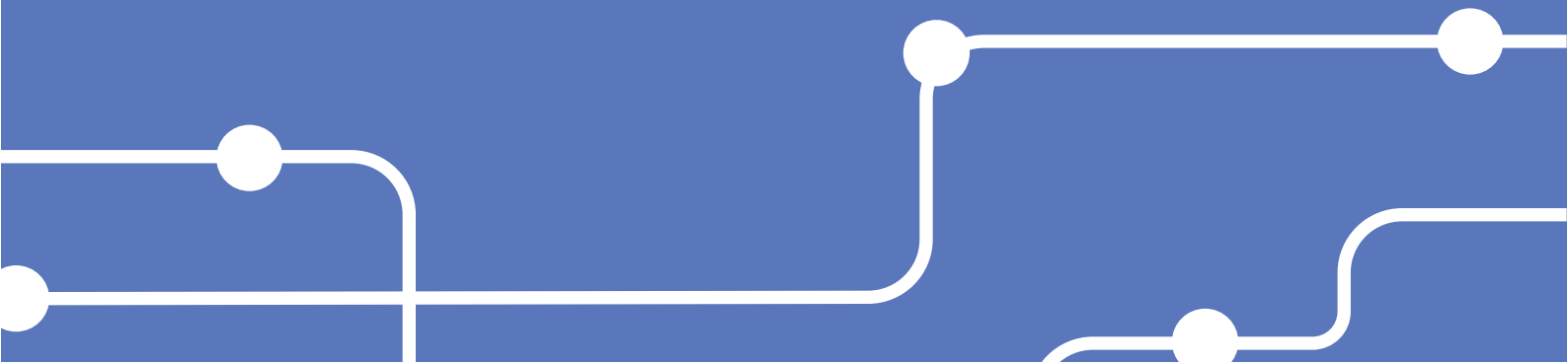
04 Map the institutional roles of national agencies, alongside LGUs and barangays, to clarify mandates and coordination pathways for implementing TU projects.

05 Present policy options for LGUs, including ways to resolve overlapping mandates, the appropriate level of implementation, and potential updates to agency mandates.

This brief presents a structured, evidence-informed analysis intended to support policy discussions on urban mobility in the Philippines. Rather than relying on abstract concepts or general statements, it draws from grounded observations and practical cases to examine how TU contributes to current planning and mobility goals at the national and local levels. The focus remains on how specific interventions can support national strategies for improving road safety and inclusive access to public space.

Spark Project pilot along Maginhawa, Quezon City

Tactical Urbanism in Practice



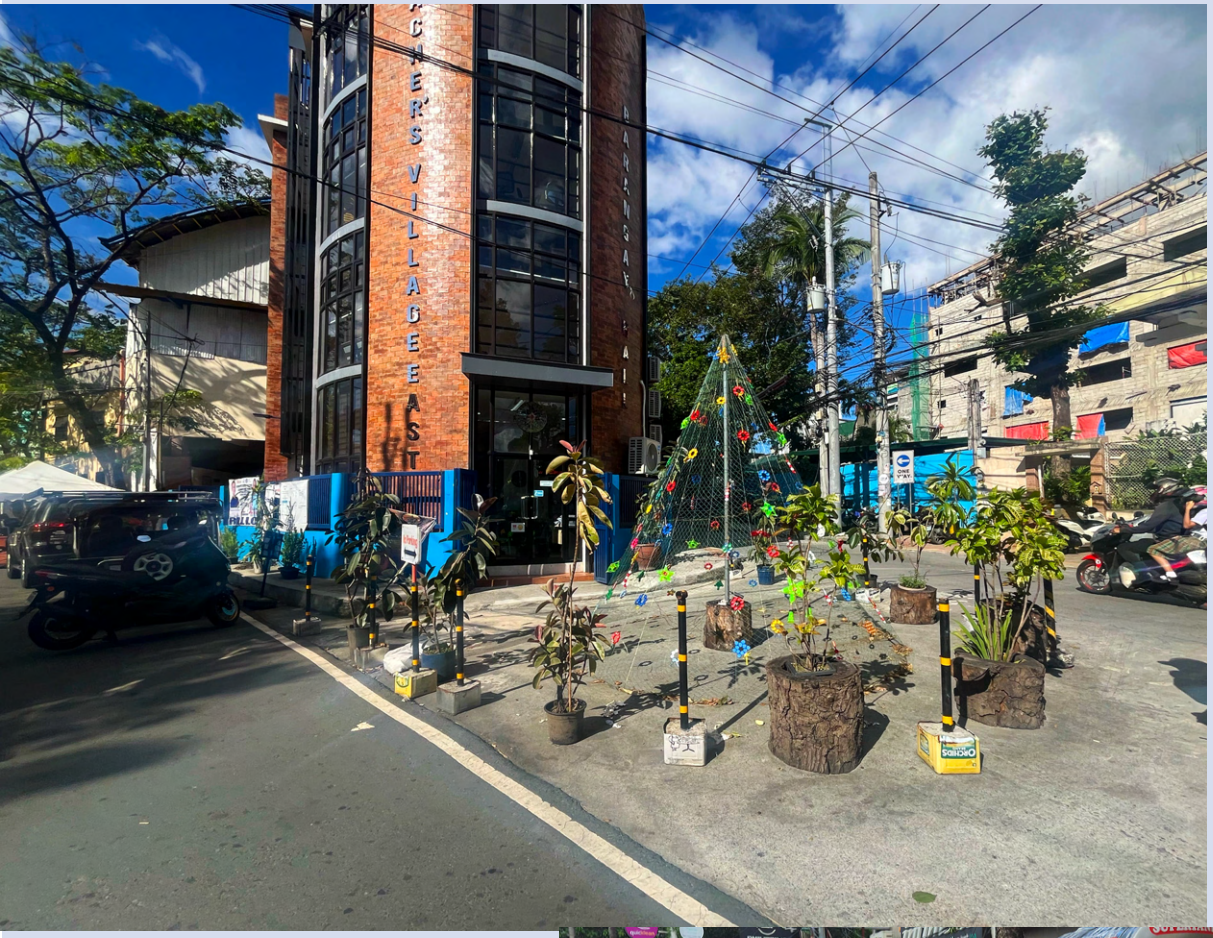
Several cities in the Philippines have adopted TU to improve walkability and public space use. What began as occasional weekend events have evolved into more regular programs.

In Metro Manila, Marikina closes part of Gil Fernando Avenue on Sundays for biking and jogging while Quezon City and Manila enforce car-free hours on Tomas Morato and Roxas Boulevard, respectively. Similar efforts are visible in Makati, Taguig, Mandaluyong, Cebu, Iloilo, and Baguio City.

Cyclists for 'Car-Free, Carefree Tomas Morato Sundays'

Photo by Quezon City Government on Facebook

Many of these initiatives began during the COVID-19 pandemic, when emergency bike lanes and open streets were rapidly deployed to address public transport limitations. These quick interventions showed how street environments could be reconfigured quickly, but they also highlighted difficulties in maintaining such changes over time. While the adoption of TU is increasing, it remains largely project-based and reliant on local leadership or partnerships. The following section presents the SPARK project as a case study of how these cities approached this strategy in practice.



▲ Street view of Maginhawa street before pilot test of the Spark project

➤ Volunteers painting an area of Maginhawa street for the pilot test

Spark project team during the launch of the Maginhawa pilot test

Case 1: Maginhawa Street, Quezon City

A TU pilot was implemented on Maginhawa Street, a well-known dining and arts strip in Quezon City, under the SPARK project (Sparking Active Mobility Actions for Climate-Friendly Cities) in late 2024. Following a series of community consultations and participatory workshops, the city temporarily reduced vehicle lanes to create protected bike paths and expanded pedestrian space in selected parts of the street using low-cost materials.

More than 140 volunteers contributed by painting murals, placing planters, and organizing street activities. For about two months (December 2024 to February 2025), the street operated as a semi-pedestrian zone, offering wider sidewalks and space for community events such as bike clinics, outdoor fitness, and local fairs. While many pedestrians welcomed the changes, concerns emerged from other groups. Some tricycle drivers reported difficulties with access and longer routes while business owners raised issues about customer drop-offs and limited prior consultation. In the absence of public hearings or economic assessments, these concerns remained unresolved during the pilot. Survey data showed that over 60% of pedestrians found walking conditions satisfactory throughout the period, indicating consistent user satisfaction. Nevertheless, a portion of the public remained opposed, contributing to the decision not to extend the intervention.

The pilot ended as scheduled in early 2025, with no immediate move toward permanent installation. The case points to both the feasibility of temporary reallocation of road space and the importance of early engagement, as well as conflict resolution mechanisms, and policy continuity for longer-term adoption.

Road murals and historical displays along A. Mabini street

Case 2: A. Mabini Street, Pasig City

A second SPARK project pilot was carried out in early 2025 along A. Mabini Street in Pasig City's historic downtown. Located beside Plaza Familia and the city cathedral, the street previously prioritized vehicle flow and had limited space for pedestrians.

Starting in February 2025, over 60 volunteers participated in redesigning the corridor. They painted road murals and crosswalks, placed benches and planters, and added traffic-calming signage. By late March, A. Mabini was formally opened as a shared street designed to support walking, cycling, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. The intervention introduced continuous pedestrian and cycling paths, wheelchair-accessible routes, and a small park extension at Plaza Familia, which included historical displays about Pasig's heritage. Planning was led by the City Transport Development and Management Office (CTDMO), which coordinated consultations from mid-2024 with local residents, religious institutions, and nearby businesses.

This early engagement helped reduce resistance and shaped the design to reflect community needs. Initial challenges included skepticism about reducing road space and concerns over traffic adjustments. However, Pasig's prior experience in implementing bike lanes, along with institutional support and coordination among city departments (i.e., engineering, traffic, tourism, parks) contributed to smoother implementation. Early feedback indicated improved street usability for pedestrians and cyclists and better accessibility for wheelchair users. The adjacent park showed increased use, with some visitors engaging with the area's cultural features. The case illustrates how early planning, clear coordination, and attention to local concerns can improve the effectiveness and acceptance of TU efforts in highly urbanized cities.

➤ Wheelchair Route assessment with Mr. Danilo Campos along A. Mabini Pasig City

▲ Street view of A. Mabini before pilot test of the Spark project

Table 1 below shows the main findings from the Maginhawa (Quezon City) and A. Mabini (Pasig City) pilots across mobility and safety, community response, local government support, economic impact, and environmental effects. The data indicate how the respondents from the pilot surveys and focus group discussions rated safety, satisfaction, and ease of travel during the intervention, along with reported changes in business performance and public space use. These figures provide a comparative view of the outcomes across both sites without drawing on unverified financial or anecdotal data.

Table 1

Insights from Maginhawa (Quezon City) and A. Mabini (Pasig City) Pilots Across Key Dimensions.

	Maginhawa (Quezon City)	**A. Mabini (Pasig City)**
Implementation period	December 01, 2024–February 02, 2025 (with gradual phaseout by April 2025)	March 25, 2025–June 25, 2025
Key interventions	Converted a former parking lane into a 3-meter shared pedestrian-cyclist lane; added parklets with seating, bicycle racks, regulated parking bays, solar lighting placed in front of Brgy. Teachers' Village East Hall, and hosted interactive events in the area.	Painted 1.5-meter shared pathways for walkers, cyclists, and persons with disability; introduced placemaking at Plaza Familia with murals, seating, lighting, a small public library, and bike boxes at intersections.

Dimension	**What Worked (Enablers and Successes)**	**What Did Not Work (Challenges and Pitfalls)**
Mobility and Safety	**Safer streets for walking and cycling.** The one-way traffic scheme and street redesign in Maginhawa Street in Quezon City improved the pedestrian environment and local safety perception. About 69% of users in the area were satisfied with the new active mobility lane during the pilot. The changes also yielded localized gains in weekend foot traffic. Pedestrian counts at one key section rose significantly on weekends during the intervention, when parklets and bike lanes made the street more inviting. Traffic flow through at least one junction (Magiting Street) became smoother as well as a result of the intervention made in the area.	**Traffic diversion, congestion, and safety.** In Quezon City, jeepney drivers and tricycle operators in the area cited rerouting difficulties and longer travel times. The one-way scheme in Maginhawa Street also encouraged faster vehicle speeds, heightening safety risks instead of reducing them. Objective counts did not confirm a broad increase in use or safety. In Pasig City, the measured weekday pedestrian volumes actually fell significantly at most locations during the intervention, which contradicted the positive perceptions of the pilot project. Bicycle counts in the site likewise decreased on weekdays and showed no significant rise on weekends. Vehicle speeds were not reduced either. In A. Mabini, the 85th percentile speed stayed at around 26–27 km/h (i.e., no statistically significant change) because no physical calming measures (e.g., bollards or bumps) were allowed. In short, midblock conditions improved but did not truly translate into universal behavior shifts. The busiest intersection, as in the case of A. Mabini, remained a bottleneck. Thus, overall travel delay and safety risk persisted in the area. These findings show that short-term, painted interventions alone had limited impact on actual mobility patterns, especially during weekdays, even as people reported feeling safer.

Connectivity	**The pilot improved last-mile connectivity and local access for some users.** Nearly half of the tricycle drivers (47%) interviewed in A. Mabini reported that the street changes made it easier for them to navigate and pick up passengers, representing an important gain for these feeder services. In fact, vehicle count surveys recorded a significant drop in car volumes on A. Mabini on weekdays and weekends during the course of the intervention, indicating that fewer vehicles entered the area. This reduction in traffic load mid-corridor likely minimized mode conflicts and made it simpler for tricycles, cyclists, and pedestrians to share the road together.	**Broader connectivity impacts were limited.** According to the tricycle operator survey, a large majority of tricycle drivers in A. Mabini (78%) saw no change in passenger load during the pilot. In other words, the pilot did not substantially shift commuter volumes on the route. Moreover, while fewer cars used A. Mabini itself, the key intersection remained congested; thus, end-to-end travel time did not improve much as desired. As such, without the presence of network-wide changes, the pilot's connectivity gains were incremental and localized in nature.
Community Response	**Public engagement and volunteerism.** In Quezon City, over 140 volunteers joined implementation activities, while in Pasig City, more than 60 volunteers helped paint, install, and maintain the site. Volunteer participants included residents, local organizations, and advocacy groups who contributed time and labor during the preparation and installation phases. In both locations, volunteers were involved in tasks such as outlining shared paths, assembling temporary fixtures, and assisting with traffic management. The presence of community members on-site also helped build familiarity with the intervention and encouraged dialogue between implementers and users. While participation levels varied by day and activity, volunteers played a consistent role in maintaining site conditions throughout the pilot period. **Positive user feedback.** In QC, 69.1% of the respondents during the intervention reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with their experience using the active mobility lane; in the gradual phaseout, this result remained stable at 68.81%. The average satisfaction score was 3.566 during implementation and 3.557 after partial rollback. In Pasig City, satisfaction levels were higher before the intervention (78.57% satisfied or very satisfied), but they slightly declined to 73.36% during implementation. Despite this decline, the average rating remained above neutral, with 3.85 before and 3.75 during the intervention. The most common response in both cities was "satisfied," indicating that the majority of users viewed the interventions favorably.	**Little ongoing programming after installation.** In Pasig City, the upgrades made along Plaza Familia (e.g., murals, seating, mini library) did draw locals to explore around the area, but there were no regular events or organized activities following the initial implementation. Quezon City's Maginhawa pilot did organize a few community events such as bike lessons and yoga classes to activate the street, but such efforts were limited in scope. Sustaining a program for continued public space activation was not among the SPARK project's original objectives; however, the experience highlights the importance of consistent programming to sustain interest, encourage community ownership, and maximize the long-term value of TU interventions.

Economic Impact	**Demonstration effect.** The pilots created visible examples of pedestrian-friendly design. Several survey participants from Quezon City said that the changes made them "proud" of the city and sparked conversations on reclaiming public space.	**Negative impacts on businesses during weekdays overshadowed these gains.** Many establishments along the Maginhawa corridor reported declining sales once the street changes took effect. During the focus group discussions conducted in the area, some owners overwhelmingly attributed losses to the removal of parking and circulation changes that made access harder. One restaurant for instance downsized staff from 13 to 8. Another shop saw a 20% drop in sales and customer volume, and three businesses closed during the pilot. Maginhawa's customer base relied heavily on "park-and-go" behavior, and the intervention in the area disrupted this without drawing enough new foot or cycling patrons to compensate. Yet, parking surveys revealed that curbside capacity was never fully used. For instance, weekday parking occupancy in the area peaked at 41% during the pilot. In other words, plenty of parking space remained available, implying that the sales downturn was more due to perception and habit than to an absolute lack of parking. Additionally, a school break during the period likely dampened foot traffic and sales independent of the project. Mixed evidence of street activity. The A. Mabini pilot in Pasig City was observed to revitalize Plaza Familia with the goal of bringing more people gathering for leisure in the plaza. However, data showed divergent trends in street use. Weekday pedestrian counts in A. Mabini actually declined significantly at 4 out of 5 survey stations along the street. Only one spot saw a rise in weekend foot traffic. Although a shop footfall survey registered a sharp uptick in customers after the intervention, this coincided with a Father's Day event and likely inflated the numbers. All told, while the pilot activated the plaza area, claims of overall "increased vitality" must be tempered, as only targeted locations and special occasions saw higher activity, whereas routine weekday use did not grow by the counts.

Sustainability and Scaling up	**Pilots treated as proof of concept for future policy.** Both city governments viewed the street interventions as testbeds for longer-term improvements in their respective areas. In Pasig City, the A. Mabini trial demonstrated the feasibility of active mobility measures, serving as a "proof of concept" that actual users would utilize bike lanes and crossings. Similarly in Quezon City, local officials noted the Maginhawa project's value as a learning experience, yielding insights on the importance of community buy-in, as well as inclusive consultations, and clear maintenance roles. Project methods mainstreamed at the national level through the Active Transport Strategic Master Plan (ATSMP). The Department of Transport (DoT) issued the inception report of the ATSMP, which aims to mainstream active mobility across the country, citing SPARK methodologies for baseline assessment, community engagement, cultural change, and risk management.	**Institutionalization gap.** The SPARK project revealed challenges in integrating temporary interventions into standard city frameworks. Implementation relied largely on ad-hoc arrangements, meaning that city offices redeployed existing staff and resources with no dedicated budget or unit for the project instead of institutionalizing it as a program. Local officials also raised concerns about the sustainability of the improvements, noting that paint-on pavement markings faded quickly, accessibility features were still lacking, and inter-agency support was weak for enforcement and overall upkeep. **Limited public outreach hampered broader momentum.** In Pasig City, there was a general lack of public awareness about the project's origin, as many locals did not realize that the SPARK project was a special pilot. In fact, some residents assumed that it was a standard city project. In Quezon City, the local government expected stronger barangay support and social media visibility than what materialized. **Stakeholder participation was modest in nature.** In both pilot sites, only a few attended the consultations. Moreover, miscommunication with national government agencies such as the DPWH occurred during the course of the project. Many business owners were unconvinced or disengaged, seeing these pilots as a short-term disruption rather than an opportunity. This lukewarm public engagement made it difficult to build momentum for extending or scaling up the interventions beyond the trial period.
Institutional Coordination	**National support.** The pilots benefited from alignment with the 2020 Joint Administrative Order by DOTr-DILG-DPWH-DHSUD on active transport. Endorsements from DOTr and DHSUD lent institutional legitimacy to both projects. **External funding and expertise.** International Climate Initiative (IKI) funding via ICLEI and technical assistance from ICSC provided crucial support in logistics, capacity-building, and monitoring (e.g., air quality and emissions data).	**Coordination hurdles with DPWH.** The absence of a local ordinance or executive order authorizing the pilots created ambiguity regarding their legal basis. In Quezon City, this resulted in initial conflict with the DPWH, which questioned the legitimacy of the Maginhawa intervention; the matter was subsequently resolved, permitting its implementation as a temporary measure. In Pasig City, DPWH regulations prohibited the use of physical barriers on A. Mabini, deeming them as obstructions; this constrained the intervention to pavement markings alone.

Local Government	**Mayor and LGU leadership**. Strong political support enabled the rollout in both cities, each of which signed an MOU for the SPARK project. In Quezon City, the initiative was led by the City Administrator's Office, with the Parks and Development Administration Department supporting the project and leading the design and rendering of the TU plans for Maginhawa. In Pasig City, the project was spearheaded by the Pasig Transport Office under the CTDMO.	**Quezon City.** The choice of Maginhawa as the pilot site posed challenges. High commercial activity, existing traffic pressures, and parking demand made it difficult to balance business concerns with mobility improvements. The site also lacked direct connections to public transport, making it a largely car-centric area that limited the intervention's accessibility and broader impact. **Pasig City.** A change of leads within the CTDMO Pasig Transport Office during the SPARK project period delayed implementation and created bureaucratic slowdowns. Barangays also noted a perceived lack of consultation during planning, which affected local ownership.
Indicative Environmental Impact (Greenhouse Gas [GHG] Avoidance)	**Pasig City.** Estimated GHG emissions were indicative of a 7.9% reduction, reflecting lower vehicle volumes. The estimate was based solely on observed reductions in vehicle volumes while actual GHG avoidance should be calculated based on mode shift, which was not captured in this study.	**Quezon City.** Emissions declined along Maginhawa but rose on nearby streets due to traffic displacement. The pilot showed limited climate impact at the network level, underscoring the need for broader measures to reduce demand and support active and public transport.

The SPARK pilots in Quezon City and Pasig City demonstrate how TU can improve conditions for walking and cycling and encourage greater community involvement. However, both cases also highlight common challenges:

- Securing stakeholder support is crucial when reallocating road space where changes can directly affect both community access and business activity.
- On national roads, early coordination with agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is critical, as overlapping mandates and regulatory restrictions often constrain the scope of permissible design interventions.
- Legal frameworks and institutional processes also often lag behind, making it difficult to transition from temporary to permanent interventions.
- Effective features included participatory planning, quick implementation, and attention to user needs. Less effective were the limited mechanisms for consensus-building and the absence of formal structures to sustain successful projects.

These observations set the stage for the next sections, which examine how policy and governance frameworks can more effectively support TU at the local level.

Placemaking at Plaza Familia with murals, seating, and bike boxes at intersections.

Policy & Legal Context

A clear policy framework is important for moving TU beyond isolated pilots.

In the Philippines, several national laws and plans already support active transport, road safety, and inclusive urban development. While these approaches align with the general goals of TU, legal and institutional gaps sometimes limit their implementation. This section reviews national and local policies related to active mobility and urban development, highlighting areas of consistency and tension with tactical methods.

Spark team in dicussion with Maginhawa stakeholders and the local government unit

National Development Plans and Frameworks.

National planning documents show increasing attention to walking and cycling. The PDP 2023–2028 identifies active transport as a priority and calls for integrating pedestrian and bike infrastructure into land use and transport planning. The National Urban Development and Housing Framework 2017–2022 promotes compact, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development while recognizing walkability and cycling as core elements of sustainable urban areas. While these strategies are consistent with the principles of TU, they remain broad in scope and do not mandate low-cost experimental interventions. Their effectiveness depends on interpretation and adoption at the local level.

Local Government Empowerment.

The Local Government Code (Republic Act [RA] No. 7160) grants cities and municipalities broad powers over local roads, traffic, and public spaces. This legal authority enables LGUs to enact ordinances for bike lanes, pedestrian zones, street closures, and similar street-level interventions. These projects can also be included in local investment and development plans. RA 7160 provides LGUs with the legal basis to implement many forms of TU without needing new national legislation. Cities have used this power to set speed limits, create car-free zones, and establish bike networks through local ordinances. However, this authority has limits. The law does not explicitly mention pilot interventions, and LGUs may face challenges when national agencies oversee key roads. Ambiguities in legal language can also lead to street experiments being viewed as obstructions under other regulations. Without clearer definitions or supporting national policies, implementation may rely on interpretation and local discretion.

Active Transport and Road Safety Policies.

In recent years, several policies from different national government agencies (NGAs) have been introduced in response to both the coronavirus pandemic and the growing emphasis on sustainable transport.

- **The National Transport Policy (NTP)** was adopted by NEDA in 2017 to guide long-term transport planning in the Philippines. It instructs agencies to integrate sidewalks, bike lanes, and pedestrian infrastructure into transport projects, supporting the reallocation of road space toward non-motorized modes. This framework can be used to justify TU interventions under the broader goal of promoting active mobility. However, the NTP's effect depends on agency-level interpretation and execution. Without enforcement mechanisms, implementation remains uneven.
- **The Department of Transportation (DOTr) has issued key policies supporting active mobility.** Department Order (DO) 2020-014 was the first to provide national guidance on bike lanes and light electric vehicles. It instructed LGUs and transport offices across the country to integrate active transport infrastructure into their pandemic response, effectively allowing the rapid deployment of temporary bike lanes across Metro Manila and other cities. In September 2024, DOTr updated these through DO 2024-013, which added technical specifications on bike lane classification (e.g., Class I/II/III), minimum width, and guidance on connectivity and maintenance. These orders give local governments a policy foundation to install bike lanes, even on a temporary basis, supporting one of the more common TU strategies. However, the guidelines focus on cycling and light mobility infrastructure but do not extend to other tactical measures, such as pedestrian plazas or parklets. While they support rapid implementation, the policies assume long-term integration into formal infrastructure, leaving short-term or experimental street designs outside their scope. As a result, purely experimental uses of space may still face regulatory uncertainty, as observed during the implementation of the SPARK project.
- Currently, the DOTr is leading the piloting of the **Active Transport Strategic Master Plan**, which is envisioned as the national strategic framework for integrating walking and cycling into the broader transport system. The plan outlines two primary objectives. First, it aims to formulate a detailed roadmap that consolidates the national vision, strategies, and corresponding actions required for embedding walking and cycling infrastructure within the transport framework. Second, it aims to enhance the planning and implementation capacities of the DOTr, LGUs, and other agencies through targeted training and institutional development.
- At the same time, the DOTr is implementing the **Philippine Road Safety Action Plan (PRSAP) 2023–2028**, which serves as the national framework for improving road safety outcomes across the country. The PRSAP provides the strategic direction for reducing traffic-related deaths and injuries and is aligned with the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. It consolidates the national government's commitments to safer mobility and provides operational measures that can be integrated into local and national transport programs.
- The **DPWH has issued guidelines that support the integration of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure into national road design.** DO 88 s. 2020 introduced technical standards for bicycle facilities, requiring the inclusion of designated lanes, buffers, and warning signs in the planning and implementation of national road projects. This

directive was further refined by DO 263 s. 2022, which consolidated engineering drawings and clarified design details. While these guidelines apply specifically to national roads, LGUs have referenced them to guide the development of cycling infrastructure on local roads, often for maintaining consistency and demonstrating compliance with recognized safety benchmarks. However, other regulations, such as DO 73 s. 2014, established restrictions that affect how modifications to the roadway environment can be introduced. DO 73 prohibits obstructions and unauthorized uses within the right-of-way of national roads, including community-installed elements that are not covered by approved project plans. Although not written in direct response to TU, the order has practical consequences for local governments that wish to implement street-level interventions in areas under DPWH control. In the absence of enabling protocols for adaptive modifications, such projects are at risk of being classified as obstructions, even when they are designed to improve safety or promote active mobility. As a result, LGUs often face uncertainty when introducing pilot interventions on or adjacent to national roads, particularly where formal approval is required.

- The **Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA)** has supported active transport implementation primarily through traffic management directives and coordination with local governments in the National Capital Region. Acting under RA No. 7924, the MMDA's mandate allows it to regulate traffic flow and designate road space across Metro Manila's major corridors. Since the pandemic, the MMDA has issued operational guidelines for local enforcement units on the delineation of bike lanes, placement of bollards and pavement markings, and integration of non-motorized transport into traffic management schemes. These efforts support the DOTr's Active Transport campaign by standardizing road markings while making sure that local governments within Metro Manila adopt uniform signage and safety features.
- In June 2025, the MMDA launched the **Metro Manila Road Safety Action Plan (MMRSAP)**, which operationalizes the objectives of the PRSAP 2023–2028 within the metropolitan context. It provides a framework for addressing urban-specific road safety challenges in Metro Manila, where high vehicle density, mixed traffic conditions, and varied enforcement capacities contribute to elevated crash risks. The MMRSAP seeks to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by improving the level of safety performance of road networks, as well as the safety of transport operators and road users.
- The **Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has promoted active transport through a series of memorandum circulars (MCs) encouraging local action**. MC 2020-100 instructed LGUs to create cycling lanes and pedestrian paths, pass enabling ordinances, and allocate budgets. MC 2021-105 called for LGU involvement in the DOTr's Active Transport campaign while MC 2020-165 encouraged the observance of National Bicycle Day and integration of bike infrastructure into local plans. These circulars help operationalize national mobility goals by guiding LGUs toward specific actions. They also signal policy support, making it clear that local investments in bike and pedestrian facilities are consistent with national directives. However, one gap is that as administrative issuances, MCs are not laws and lack enforcement mechanisms. LGU responses have been varied, with some actively implementing measures and others being slower to act. The presence of multiple agencies such as the DPWH and DOTr, with overlapping roles in active transport, also presents coordination challenges, especially without a unified framework to align priorities.
- In August 2020, the **DOTr, DPWH, DILG, and DOH issued Joint Administrative Order (JAO) No. 2020-0001** to guide the implementation of active transport measures during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The JAO outlined a coordinated approach, encouraging LGUs to include walking and cycling infrastructure in their recovery and investment plans. It emphasized health benefits, connectivity, and linked active transport to pandemic response funding under the Bayanihan Acts. JAO 2020-0001 provided clear institutional backing for rapid street interventions, including temporary bike lanes and pedestrian improvements. Its support helped clarify jurisdictional roles and offered LGUs a basis for immediate action. However, the JAO was issued as an emergency measure and was not designed for long-term implementation. After the pandemic, inter-agency coordination weakened, and the guidance lacked a mechanism for sustaining momentum. It also did not address how temporary interventions could evolve into permanent infrastructure or how funding could be maintained beyond short-term allocations.

Pending Legislation on Active Transport and Commuter Rights.

Currently, several legislative proposals seek to formalize the role of active transport within the national transport policy framework. One such effort is the Safe Pathways Network bill, which was refiled across successive congressional sessions. During the 18th Congress (2019–2022), a version of the bill advanced in the House but did not progress in the Senate. In the 19th Congress (2022–2025), House Bill No. 8790 and Senate Bill No. 1582 proposed the establishment of a national walking and cycling network, the creation of an Active Transport Office, and the regular allocation of budgets. These bills also included provisions requiring all LGUs in the country to incorporate walking and cycling infrastructure in development plans and delineate the responsibilities of national agencies. While none of these bills were enacted, similar proposals have re-emerged in the 20th Congress (2025–2028), including House Bills 1892, 1968, and 2571, each seeking to formally recognize active transport as a distinct element of the national transport system. These efforts aim to strengthen the legal and institutional mandates for active mobility and ensure consistent implementation across jurisdictions. Until these bills are passed into law, implementation continues to rely on non-binding policies and the discretion of individual LGUs and NGAs (Table 2).

Parallel to these bills, other pending legislation in the 20th Congress includes various proposals for a Magna Carta for Commuters. These Senate Bills are currently under deliberation by the Senate Committee on Public Services. Common features of these bills include mobility standards that define acceptable distances between public transport access points and key destinations, as well as technical specifications for sidewalks, bike lanes, and street design. The bills also declare that public road space should prioritize pedestrians and public transport users and assign implementation roles to NGAs such as the DOTr, DPWH, and DILG. The Magna Carta for Commuters and a legislative framework for active and sustainable modes are among the priority measures listed for the physical connectivity sector in the PDP 2023–2028.

Table 2

Policy Gaps and Alignment with Tactical Urbanism (TU) in the Philippines.

	Relevant Mandate/ Provision	Alignment with TU	Conflict / Gap	Opportunity for LGUs
DOH-DOTr-DILG-DPWH Joint Administrative Order No. 2020-0001	Guidelines for active transport promotion during/after COVID-19. Encourages safe walking and cycling networks.	Directly supports TU-style interim interventions such as pop-up bike lanes and pedestrian paths.	Issued as emergency guidance, lacks permanence and enforcement mechanisms.	LGUs can use it as a temporary legal basis for TU pilots while advocating for longer-term instruments.
DILG Memorandum Circulars 2020-100, 2020-165, and 2021-105	Encourage LGUs to establish bike/walking networks, issue supportive ordinances, allocate local funds, and observe National Bicycle Day.	Provide administrative encouragement for TU-relevant actions.	Advisory in nature, lack mandatory authority. Multiple overlapping directives from agencies may cause confusion.	LGUs can formalize through ordinances, clarify administrative mandates, and integrate TU in local planning.
DOTr Department Orders (DOs) 2020-14 and 2024-013	National strategy and technical standards for integration of walkways, cycleways, and light electric vehicles.	Offer technical legitimacy and design guidance for TU interventions.	Supersession of DOs may cause transitional confusion; light electric vehicle focus may narrow applicability.	LGUs can adopt DOTr standards for their TU designs and request targeted support for local pilots.
DPWH DOs 88-2020 & 263-2022	Prescribe design standards for bicycle facilities along national roads, including lane width and buffers.	Strengthen TU by grounding pilot designs in established national infrastructure standards.	Limited to national roads; TU on local streets may not qualify, complicating implementation without national project status.	LGUs can align local designs with national standards and advocate for local adaptation in road design protocols.
National Transport Policy and Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028	Frameworks that prioritize walkability, inclusive mobility, and non-motorized transport	Sets high-level strategic alignment for TU integration into long-term development agendas.	Broad & programmatic; lacks implementation guidelines specific to TU.	LGUs can reference these priorities when crafting TU programs and seeking alignment with national visions.

Policy Options for Local Government Units

Local governments play a central role in implementing TU, but their ability to do so effectively depends on how well they engage with the broader institutional and policy framework.

This section outlines practical options and strategic considerations that can support LGUs in adopting TU. It discusses how to better navigate overlapping mandates, the appropriate levels of governance for TU-related decisions, possible revisions to national policies, and the selection of policy tools. The aim of this section is to provide actionable pathways for integrating TU into routine urban planning and development processes.

Spark team in dicussion with Maginhawa stakeholders and the local government unit

Clarifying and Harmonizing Overlapping Mandates.

A central step toward improving coordination in road classification and active mobility interventions in the Philippines is the formal clarification of institutional mandates. Existing ambiguity between national agencies and LGUs has resulted in inconsistent implementation, overlapping jurisdictions, and fragmented classification systems. To address these issues, responsibilities should be explicitly assigned to a designated agency or consortium with the appropriate legal

and operational authority to lead. This agency should be tasked with managing a unified and evolving atlas for road categorization, supported by technical criteria that incorporate functional, administrative, and jurisdictional attributes. The development and maintenance of such an atlas would provide a shared reference point for decision-making across agencies. To facilitate coordination, a formal platform for inter-agency collaboration should be established.

An Active Mobility Task Force, co-chaired by the DHSUD and DOTr, may fulfill this function. The task force would serve as a venue for recurring technical discussions and progress reviews involving national agencies, local governments, and other stakeholders. Within this setup, national agencies such as the DHSUD and DOTr are expected to focus on policy direction, standards-setting, and institutional alignment. The DOTr can ensure that TU and road reclassification remain within the scope of infrastructure planning, while the DHSUD can integrate relevant criteria into land use and urban development frameworks. At the same time, implementation responsibilities should rest with LGUs, given their direct access to local data, land use plans, and community dynamics. To reinforce their role clarity and operational coordination, a Joint Memorandum Circular issued by the DHSUD, DOTr, and DILG should formalize agency functions. This document would define DHSUD's role in embedding TU and road use guidelines into national planning instruments, DOTr's responsibility in aligning transport programming and funding, and DILG's role in implementation oversight. The DILG can collect and report data on the LGU-level adoption of TU strategies and active mobility interventions and reflect such data in instruments such as the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). LGUs, for their part, may designate specific focal points for active mobility and participate in metropolitan-wide efforts, such as synchronizing interventions across jurisdictional boundaries, to ensure the continuity of active mobility networks.

Determining the Appropriate Level for Implementation.

The implementation of TU interventions requires a structured assessment of which governance level is best equipped to carry out specific actions. LGUs should adopt a recommendatory, non-prescriptive approach in identifying the appropriate administrative layer for planning and execution. Neighborhood-scale interventions may be more effectively handled at the barangay level, provided that enabling mechanisms such as LGU-issued ordinances, implementing guidelines, and planning toolkits are in place. These measures allow barangays to respond to highly localized conditions, manage micro-scale projects, and facilitate community-led adaptation. For interventions that span multiple neighborhoods or impact major public spaces, project leadership should rest with the city or municipal government. These LGUs are better positioned to manage projects that require formal integration into local planning instruments such as the approved Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) and Annual Investment Plan (AIP). In doing so, TU can be categorized under existing budgetary lines, such as open space development, green infrastructure, or pedestrian safety, rather than requiring a separate funding stream.

Selecting the Appropriate Policy Instrument.

Legal and regulatory instruments should be selected based on their suitability for enabling TU practices across different levels of government. Revising existing frameworks, including DPWH DO 73 and Batas Pambansa Blg. 344 (more commonly referred to as the Accessibility Law), is necessary to address operational constraints and allow for more flexible interpretations of functional classifications, particularly in dense urban contexts where conventional standards may not apply. Updates to DO 73 and related issuances should include provisions for exemptions, adjusted criteria for road use, and scope for experimental interventions, especially in areas with unique spatial and mobility patterns. At the national level, issuing a JAO can provide a structured basis for integrating TU into broader road safety, climate adaptation, and resilience agendas. The JAO could establish protocols for pilot implementation, define roles across agencies, and outline procedures for scaling up projects based on evaluation results. It may also serve as a mechanism for harmonizing agency mandates and ensuring coordination in policy application.

For cities and municipalities, local ordinances remain the most direct policy tool to institutionalize TU. A city ordinance may establish programs for time-bound interventions such as street reallocations, temporary pedestrianization, or low-cost traffic-calming designs while requiring these interventions to be reflected in their approved CDP and AIP. This form of localization ensures consistency with formal planning and budgeting processes. The policy approach should avoid imposing uniform or prescriptive models. Instead, national and local instruments may present a set of optional strategies that LGUs can select and adapt, depending on their institutional capacity, spatial constraints, and community readiness. This approach enables phased adoption and allows cities to explore incremental adjustments rather than commit to fixed standards that may not suit their current conditions.

Reframing TU as Core Urban Practice.

TU and similar interventions should be positioned as standard components of urban development practice. This requires both national and local governments to adopt terminology and framing that reflect local context and institutional goals. For example, referring to these interventions as makataong daan allows for clearer communication with constituents and facilitates alignment with planning narratives centered on accessibility, safety, and public utility. Language that reflects lived experience, rather than technical terms, can improve understanding and support from decision-makers and community stakeholders. To operationalize this reframing, relevant objectives should be formally embedded in policy instruments and performance monitoring systems. Inclusion of TU within the SGLG criteria, for instance, allows it to be treated as a measurable area of local performance. Similarly, objectives may be integrated into frameworks such as the Local Climate Change Action Plan or Local Road Network Development Plan. This undertaking enables institutionalization without the need to create new standalone mandates by incorporating TU into existing structures for planning, budgeting, and evaluation. Beyond regulatory and planning frameworks, sustained uptake depends on peer-to-peer learning and shared technical resources. Creating a structured community of practice among LGUs, with support from national government bodies and civil society organizations, can help local implementers exchange lessons, develop working templates, and scale promising approaches. This platform can also serve as a mechanism for capturing field-level feedback that informs national guidance. Establishing this kind of technical and administrative support network contributes to the normalization of TU as a replicable and locally adaptable method within the broader field of urban management.

In selecting among available policy instruments, LGUs should consider their administrative structure, resource constraints, and degree of community engagement. Implementation feasibility will vary depending on local leadership priorities, governance arrangements, and public receptiveness to change. Administrative capacity, particularly in terms of planning, procurement, and monitoring, will also influence the appropriate starting point and pace of adoption. A sequenced approach may be warranted in many cases. For example, a city government may issue a local ordinance to authorize TU pilots using existing regulatory authority. This measure allows for near-term action without awaiting external approvals and offers a basis for testing procedures, community engagement methods, and technical standards. In parallel, LGUs may participate in broader policy coordination efforts through institutional mechanisms such as the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, which engages with national agencies on matters related to local autonomy, mandates, and intergovernmental financing. Such coordination can inform legislative or programmatic reforms at the national level that facilitate local implementation.

Recommendations & Next Steps

To enable the integration of TU into national and local urban development frameworks, this section outlines a set of policy recommendations for national and local governments. The proposed actions address critical institutional levers (e.g., planning mandates, regulatory coordination, technical capacity, and funding mechanisms) that were consistently raised during the key informant interviews and focus group discussions conducted under the SPARK project.

Instead of setting fixed time horizons, the recommendations emphasize preparatory groundwork in the near term, followed by a progressive adoption aligned with LGU readiness, inter-agency coordination, and policy alignment. The framework reflects the understanding that embedding TU in governance systems requires both incremental steps and sustained institutional support.

Develop a Comprehensive Atlas and Clarify Mandates.

Developing a unified, functionally grounded road classification system for Metro Manila requires the formal designation of a lead agency or inter-agency working group. This body must be explicitly tasked with formulating a detailed atlas that distinguishes roads not only by physical attributes but also by functional role, administrative ownership, and jurisdictional authority. While the DPWH maintains a national road inventory, the dataset is largely limited by inconsistencies in terms of road classification because of incomplete integration with local government data. To improve the level of interoperability across NGAs and LGUs, the proposed atlas must reconcile these inconsistencies and bridge these gaps that presently hinder coordinated road space management, especially for non-motorized transport infrastructure. The institutional foundation for such an atlas should rest on a legal instrument, either by amending DPWH DO 73 or issuing a new policy that defines the roles of the DPWH, MMDA, and concerned LGUs. This legal basis would ensure that the output is formally recognized and used in transport planning, enforcement, and budgeting processes.

In this context, the Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on Active Transport (IATWG-AT) may serve as a relevant forum for coordinating this effort. Formed to implement JAO 2020-0001, the IATWG-AT currently guides policies for active transport systems in response to both pandemic-era needs and longer-term mobility planning. Its broad membership includes key NGAs and civil society organizations such as Move as One Coalition and AltMobility PH. Given its technical mandate and multi-stakeholder composition, the IATWG-AT is positioned to facilitate institutional dialogue around the development of a Metro Manila road atlas. This role involves clarifying agency mandates over roads classified as national, metropolitan, or local; and identifying which agencies should lead planning, funding, and implementation across those tiers. In addition, the IATWG-AT may serve as the venue to align the proposed atlas with outputs from pilot tests under the SPARK project, particularly for identifying priority corridors where TU initiatives and active transport improvements can be scaled. It would allow the integration of bottom-up innovations with institutional reforms, potentially guiding the formulation of a shared road classification framework that incorporates safety, mobility, and accessibility criteria into both legal and operational practice.

Establish a Working Definition and Non-Prescriptive Framework.

A clear and commonly accepted definition of TU is necessary to promote consistent understanding and application across national agencies and local governments. TU refers to the use of low-cost, adaptive, and scalable interventions in public space intended to improve the quality and functionality of streets, with particular focus on mobility, safety, and everyday access. These interventions, such as protected bicycle lanes, pedestrian-priority zones, or curb reconfigurations, are typically deployed to test design ideas, assess public response, and inform the design of future infrastructure or policies. What distinguishes TU is not the duration of the intervention but the method by which change is introduced.

It is a tool for structured experimentation and iterative decision-making that allows cities to assess real-world use before committing to long-term capital investments. Unlike routine maintenance or permanent upgrades, TU allows design revisions and spatial adjustments based on observed outcomes. Policy frameworks that support TU should avoid prescriptive requirements regarding materials, timelines, or design specifications. A recommendatory approach enables LGUs to select from a flexible menu of strategies and apply them according to local context rather than comply with a series of uniform standards that may not be relevant or feasible. It allows for broader adoption among cities with varying institutional capacities and community conditions.

Strengthen LGU Mandate for TU Through DHSUD-Approved Planning Tools.

As the primary agency for urban development in the Philippines, the DHSUD, in coordination with the DILG, can strengthen the local mandate for TU by integrating it into existing planning guidelines rather than issuing a separate administrative order or department circular. TU may be formally recognized within the DHSUD's planning and design frameworks as an adaptable method for testing and scaling improvements in accessibility, safety, and public space quality. Incorporating tactical approaches directly into the Comprehensive Land Use Plan guidelines, Local Development Investment Program templates, and zoning ordinance manuals would allow LGUs to apply these methods under their existing planning processes.

The DHSUD can also define parameters for TU application, such as eligible project types, design standards, and evaluation protocols, while allowing flexibility for local adaptation. This integration would enable LGUs to use TU as a sanctioned option for quick, data-driven interventions that can later inform permanent infrastructure planning. To facilitate implementation, the DHSUD can coordinate with NGAs such as the DILG and DOTr in developing a technical module for LGU planners and engineers by focusing on procedural compliance, documentation standards, and linkages with local investment programming. LGUs can institutionalize low-cost, community-responsive design practices without requiring a new regulatory issuance by embedding TU within DHSUD's official planning tools, aligning with the broader shift toward evidence-based and incremental planning in the built environment sector.

Promote Knowledge Exchange Through a Community of Practice.

To support the consistent and effective implementation of TU, NGAs should enable structured knowledge-sharing and deeper community engagement. One option is for the DILG or DOTr, in collaboration with civil society organizations, to initiate a community of practice focused on active transport and low-cost street-level interventions. The initiative should not only center on technical replication but also emphasize participatory processes, such as documenting strategies for mobilizing local stakeholders, selecting appropriate community partners, and ensuring that marginalized groups are represented in both planning and implementation. Cities with operational experience such as Quezon City and Pasig City can contribute practical tools, but these tools should be accompanied by guidance on community coordination, volunteer management, and feedback integration. NGAs may further consolidate these practices into an open repository, which LGUs can access when preparing project proposals or grant applications. In addition, rotating public events such as demonstration days and open streets may serve as platforms to pilot these processes while exposing local officials and residents to TU methods.

TU offers an opportunity to improve public space through practical, adaptive measures that respond to immediate needs while informing longer-term planning. The SPARK pilot initiatives have demonstrated that such approaches can be implemented with limited resources and broad community participation. However, sustaining and scaling these efforts requires a combination of policy and institutional support in all levels of the government. Integrating TU into official planning, budgeting, and training systems, backed by appropriate legal instruments, can help ensure that these interventions are not only temporary solutions but also components of a more responsive and inclusive urban governance framework. The lessons from SPARK should inform future efforts to embed TU into national and local urban policy agendas.


TEACHER'S VILLAGE
MAGINHAWA STREET
ATM
DALI


Isabel's
coffee house


BARRIO
KAPASIGAN
NOONG 1956
SOURCE: MS. THELMA MILLEZA


SPARK
PASIG
ICSC
ICLEI
ALAM MO BA?
Sa gabi ng Agosto 29, 1896, humigit-kumulang 2,000 Pasigueño mula sa mga baryo ng Pineda, Bagong Ilog, Ugong, Maybunga, Caniogan, Santolan, Rosario, Palatiw, Sagad, Poblacion (San Nicolas, San Jose, Santo Tomas, Santa Cruz, Malinao, Sumilang), Pinagbuhatan, Bambang, Kalawaan, at Buting ang nagtipon sa pangunguna ni Heneral Valentin Cruz.
Bitbit lamang ang kanilang mga bolo, sibat, karit, ilang baril, at matinding hangaring makamit ang kalayaan, nagmartsa sila upang bawiin ang kanilang bayan. Habang naglalakad, sinalubong sila ng mga mamamayan na buong pusong sumuporta at nagbigay ng sigaw ng pag-asa.
Pagsapit nila sa Plaza de la Paz (ngayon ay Plaza Rizal), isang sniper mula sa tore ng simbahan ang bumaril at nakapatay ng isang taga-Bagong Ilog—ang unang Pasigueñong nagbuwis ng buhay para sa kalayaan. Hindi natinag, sinalakay ng mga rebolusyonaryo ang Tribunal de Naturales (ngayon ay Jollibee Caruncho Ave. Branch) at ang himpilan ng Guardia Civil (ngayon ay tahanan ng pamilya Guanio), kung saan nakakuha sila ng 17 piston rifles at tatlong Remington.
Sa gabing iyon, ipinagdiwang ng mga Katipunero ang kanilang pinakaunang tagumpay sa himagsikan—isang makasaysayang pangyayaring kilala bilang Nagsabado sa Pasi
SOURCE: Pasig City Cultural Affairs and Tourism Office (CA