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Article

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“Shared Growth” Urban Renewal Initiatives in Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines

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ABSTRACT. Urban renewal is a strategy for revitalizing underutilized and degraded sections of an inner city in the hopes of reducing crime, enhancing the environment, preventing further depreciation of land values, and stimulating economic activity. Many urban renewal projects in the past, however, have been associated with substantial demolition of properties, the displacement of residents, expensive infrastructure, and the gentrification of the urban renewal site.

In this study, urban renewal schemes in Makati City, Philippines, are explored to determine the appropriate developments for identified urban renewal sites that are situated on the fringes of its affluent sections. The urban renewal proposals seek to involve the participation of the residents of the blighted areas so that they themselves can benefit from the revitalization initiatives. The

conceptualized “shared growth” urban renewal initiatives will attempt to minimize dislocation, encourage investment, improve the urban environment, create a more vibrant neighborhood, and spread the economic benefits of the initiatives to the original residents of the redevelopment sites.

KEYWORDS. *Urban renewal, shared growth, sustainable urbanism*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Metropolitan Manila's Economic Divide

The Philippines is a republic consisting of more than 7,000 islands situated in Southeast Asia. Like most of Asia, the country is urbanizing rapidly, with more than 100 cities already located all over the archipelago. The primary city and first metropolis in the Philippines is Metropolitan Manila. It was created by Presidential Decree in 1975 when the city of Manila and 16 other Local Government Units (LGUs) were consolidated to constitute Metropolitan Manila (Figure 1). Today this conurbation occupies a total land area of 638.55 square kilometers and has a population of 11.86 million (National Statistics Office, Census 2010). That represents about 13% of the national population, even as the city accounts for only 0.20% of the country's total land area. Actually, urbanization has spilled over into the cities and municipalities in the provinces adjacent to the metropolis, creating a Mega Manila Urban Region that has a total population of about 25 million, or roughly a quarter of the national population. Metro Manila, which is also known as the National Capital Region (NCR), is considered the political, economic, and cultural capital of the Philippines. With a gross regional product of USD 189 Billion (2011), it accounts for 33% of the National GDP and is considered the second largest economy among metropolitan areas in Southeast Asia. This strong metropolitan economy and the better services associated with it have been the main reasons for the continuous increase in the urban population. This densely populated urban environment of 18,557 people per square kilometer, however, has contributed to considerable stress on the resources of the mega-city.

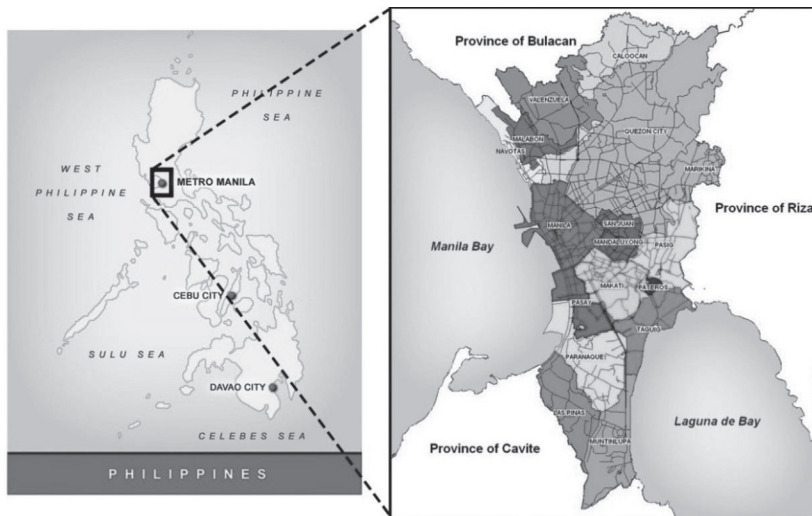


Figure 1. Map of the Philippines and Metropolitan Manila (Map by TAM Planners Co.) Metro Manila consists of 17 Local Government Units (LGUs) each headed by a mayor.

The Philippines, like its Southeast Asian neighbors with similar economies, Indonesia and Thailand, has to contend with the issue of income inequality (Seneviratne and Sun, 2013). Based on 2012 data from the National Statistical Coordination Board, poverty incidence in the Philippines has “hardly declined” from the 28.6 percent of the population in the first half of 2009 to the 27.9 percent in the first half of 2012 (<http://www.nscb.gov.ph>). In spite of the affluence of Metro Manila, there is also a wide disparity in incomes among Metro Manila residents. With a large percentage of the population falling under the low income group coupled with the high cost of land, livable housing has become unattainable for millions of Metro Manila residents. In 2007, it was estimated that about 544,609 (21%) out of 2.6 million households in Metro Manila were “informal settlers” (Cruz, 2010). The term “informal settlers” refers to people who live in housing but have no legal tenure over the land they occupy. The informal settlers illegally inhabit both private and public properties, and many have lived in these slums for decades. “Informal settlements” occupy hazardous locations (e.g. on waterway easements, under bridges, beside railways), are poorly planned (e.g. odd-shaped lots, winding and narrow access, sub-standard construction), and are densely occupied.

Most informal houses were built by the occupants themselves, which is evident in their use of recycled materials and their poor construction. The absence of security of tenure also explains the temporary and blighted appearance of informal housing. Given that eviction is a real possibility, there is no incentive to improve the condition of the structure. Metro Manila has many such slums; however, it should also be noted that there are some communities in which the residents do own the small lots they live in but that still look blighted because of the low construction standards and poor condition of the houses.

1.2. Makati City and Its Urban Renewal Program

Makati City is one of 17 Local Government Units (LGUs) that comprise Metro Manila. It has a total land area of 27.38 square kilometers and a population of 529,000 (NCSO, 2010 Census). As the financial capital of the Philippines, Makati hosts the biggest banks and corporations, the highest number of embassies, 62,000 registered enterprises, and the most affluent residential enclaves. However, the city also has its share of high-density residential areas that are highly vulnerable to disasters and are in need of upgrading. Because of the limited land available, the Central Business District (CBD) and the other Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) have developed alongside areas that are in the process of urban decay.

Makati City has consistently been ranked among the top five most affluent cities in the Philippines. There is no doubt that it has the financial capability to initiate programs that would promote shared growth in the areas where economic benefits have not been fully realized. One of

the urban renewal programs being conducted by the city is called “Special Precincts for Urban Redevelopment,” or SPUR; as part of the program, a total of 14 urban renewal sites have been identified. These SPUR sites are considered underutilized or declining medium-density areas adjacent to or accessible from the Makati CBD, Special Mixed Use Zones, or major thoroughfares. The SPUR sites are envisioned to become new areas for new industries or start-up businesses. Most of these peripheral areas are less affluent than their neighboring commercial/business zones. Nonetheless, these strategically located areas have the potential to be transformed into higher value developments that could nurture new business ventures, distribute economic opportunities to the local community, and add to the city’s inventory of commercial spaces. The proposed SPUR sites should have a strong sense of community, entrepreneurship, and other qualities that will allow economic activity to naturally spill over to them.

The Land Use Plan should allow for these SPUR sites to improve their efficiency to perform their new functions as business and commercial villages. For example, development guidelines will provide bonus Floor Area Ratios (FAR) for parcels that consolidate to form bigger lots or for lots that give up portions for the widening of streets. The SPUR sites will improve the urban environment in these neighborhoods and at the same time promote shared growth wherein more people can participate in the city’s economy.

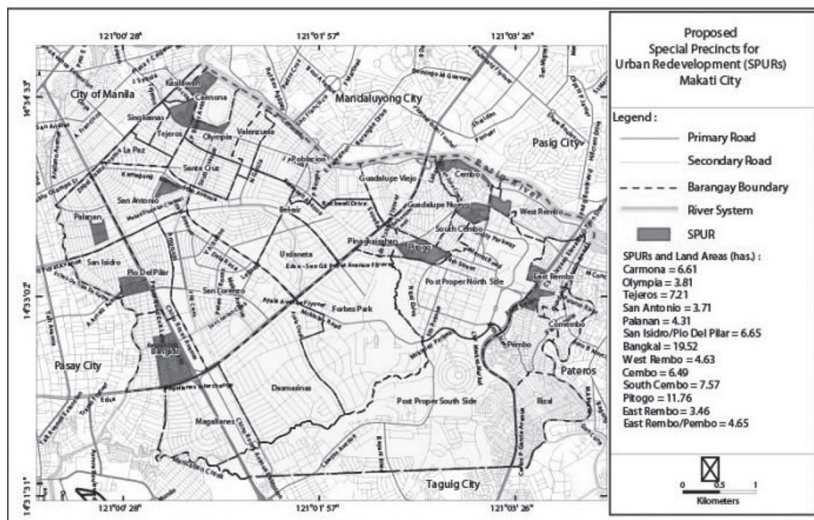


Figure 2. Map of Special Precincts for Urban Redevelopment (Source: Makati City CLUP 2013-2023) Makati City’s Urban Renewal Program aims to upgrade blighted areas by consolidating small properties into more attractive economic developments wherein residents will also directly benefit.

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This paper presents urban renewal proposals for the City of Makati, which is one of 17 Local Government Units that comprise Metro Manila (Figure 2). Like the other component cities in the metropolis, Makati City has struggled to balance development throughout its jurisdiction and to promote shared growth among its citizens. Although the present paper focuses on urban design proposals for pilot SPUR sites, it is imperative to understand the nature of their present economic condition, the sizes of private properties, the social dynamics, and the development potential. The methodology of the study can be summarized as follows:

- (1) **Study Makati City's Urban Renewal Program.** – The latest Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) of Makati City offers an urban renewal strategy called “Special Precincts for Urban Redevelopment,” or SPUR, which offers opportunities for small lot owners to maximize the potential of their properties and, therefore, share in the benefits of the development of the whole city.
- (2) **Select SPUR sites for pilot urban design proposals.** – There were 14 SPUR sites identified by the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2012) where it is hoped that the affected community could organize to jumpstart the redevelopment of what are considered under-achieving areas (Makati City CLUP 2013-2022, Volume 1, Part II). A few of the 14 SPUR sites were selected as “demonstration” areas to illustrate how they can jumpstart urban regeneration. Only three SPUR sites are presented in this paper as this sample was considered sufficient to illustrate the range of urban design proposals that can be applied in a particular SPUR site.

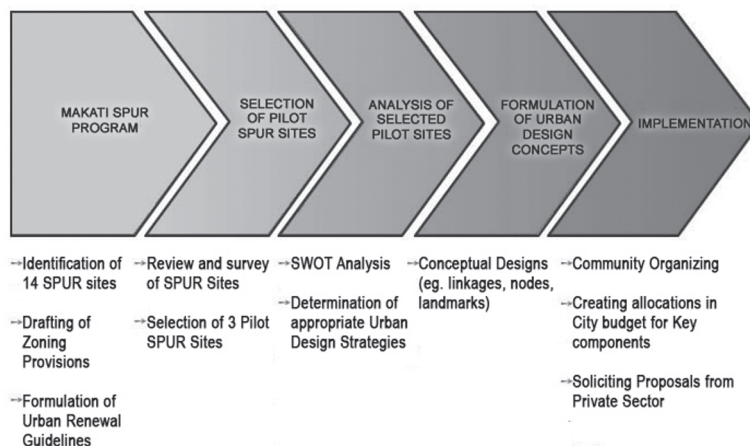


Figure 3. Urban Design Methodology (Graphic by TAM Planners Co.)

- (3) **Analyze the SPUR sites identified for urban design proposals and prepare a strategy for their redevelopment.** – It is accepted that each of the 14 identified SPUR sites consists of a unique setting with its own community, attributes, development challenges, and economic potentials. Therefore, the approaches to urban renewal used for each site will likely be different from each other but will also have some similarities. Like any urban design project, there could be more than one product or infrastructure proposal (e.g. creation of new open space, transforming a street into a pedestrian zone, Transit-Oriented Facility) that can achieve the same objective of urban redevelopment.
- (4) **Formulate urban design proposals.** – Physical planning and urban design are important considerations in the success of any urban renewal initiative. Economic opportunities may drastically improve with the improvement of access, the reduction of nuisances, or merely the enhancement of the physical environment.

3. RESULTS

It was discerned in the survey of the 14 SPUR sites that each of them had opportunities for economic benefits to accrue to their respective communities. Any urban design proposal would have to address the observed weaknesses and capitalize on the perceived strengths. This section presents the selected SPUR sites for the study and discusses their attributes and possible strategies for redevelopment.

3.1. *Barangay Pitogo (11.76 hectares)*

About 11.76 hectares in Barangay Pitogo that currently constitute a high-density residential area were identified by Makati City as a potential site for urban renewal. The existing lots are small and the streets are narrow. Nevertheless, the SPUR site is bordered on two sides by two major thoroughfares (Kalayaan Avenue on the Northwest and 32nd Street on the South) which make it quite accessible. Furthermore, it is located just across from the newest business district, which is called Bonifacio Global City and has property values ranging from USD 4,583 to USD 6,684 per square meter (Global Property Guide, 2013). Because of the small lots, many private properties would need to be consolidated to increase their development potential and attractiveness as locations for a residential or commercial development. Any eventual development will likely have to link its function to Bonifacio Global City (Figure 4); however, because of the area's proximity to Bonifacio Global City, any linkages could be achieved simply by walking. The SPUR at Barangay Pitogo could host a variety of developments, including residential developments, small start-up and knowledge process outsourcing offices, or services (such as

food or office-related services) that cater to businesses in the BGC. All of them would complement the existing developments in the BGC.

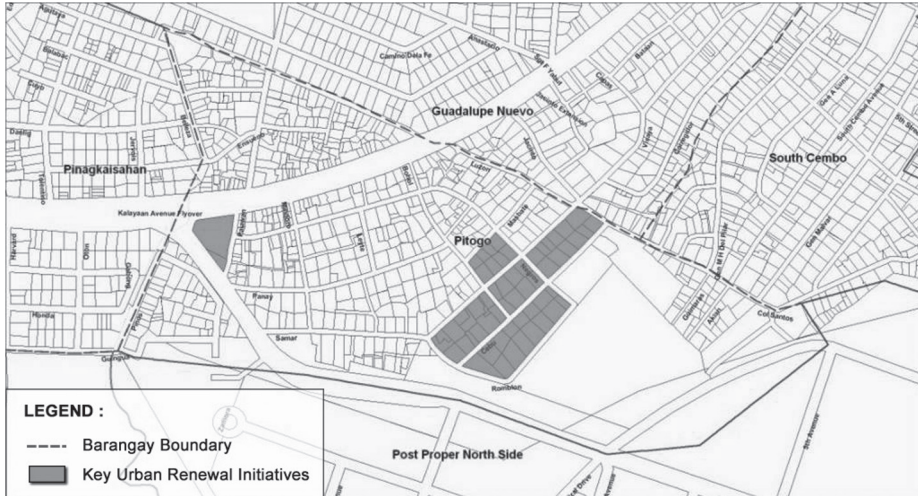


Figure 4. Map of SPUR in Barangay Pitogo (Map by TAM Planners Co.)

The SPUR site is just north of Bonifacio Global City (Special Mixed-use Zone).

3.2. *Barangay Bangkal (19.52 hectares)*

Barangay Bangkal is another strategically located area with access to major Radial Road 3 (Osmena Avenue - SLEX) and Circumferential Road 4, or Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (Figure 5). Only about 19.52 hectares of Barangay Bangkal have been identified for redevelopment. This SPUR site has an existing mix of commercial and residential land uses, with the commercial buildings situated adjacent to Osmena Avenue and Epifanio de los Santos Avenue. The widest street inside the SPUR site is Evangelista Street, which has become a strip known for automobile parts and automobile-related services. Another trade which has flourished in the area is the selling of antiques and used furniture.



Figure 6. Map of Pembo – East Rembo SPUR Site (Site Diagram by Antonio, Arcenas, Beltran, Cacialda) The Pembo-East Rembo SPUR site lies along C5 and across from Bonifacio Global City (BGC)

The barangay is a high-density residential area with relatively small lot sizes. Housing units vary from one-storey single-detached houses to multi-story apartments. A few small businesses are also situated along its perimeter; these consist mostly of wood works and retail establishments. Green open spaces can rarely be found, although trees and plants are still occasionally present on walkways. Only roads are considered open spaces that people can also utilize as places for community activities and for social interaction. All the roads are made of paved concrete, but there are numerous alleys that traverse the blocks and are used for primary pedestrian access since there are only two main roads that penetrate the interior of the barangay. The undulating contour of the site limits road construction and leaves much of the area below the main inter-city road, Circumferential Road 5.

The current situation of Barangays Pembo and East Rembo is typical among other dense barangay clusters in Makati City; however, this is far from the emerging developments within the city which are mostly mixed-use, compact, and vertical. Thus, there is a need for redevelopment to fully harness the potential of the SPUR site and to uplift the economic condition of the community.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. *Barangay Pitogo (11.76 hectares)*

The SPUR at Barangay Pitogo will serve as the expansion area for Bonifacio Global City. Development in the SPUR, however, will occur on a smaller scale and at a slower pace since it will rely on the cooperation of private lot owners to consolidate their individual lots so that higher density but better quality developments will be possible. A master plan for the redevelopment of the area will have to be formulated.

There are two pedestrian linkages between the SPUR and BGC (see Figure 7). The entry points have to be developed first as they are crucial to accessing the whole area. The portals to Barangay Pitogo have to be iconic or should serve as landmarks to draw attention and potential business to the area.



Figure 7. Pedestrian Linkages between Barangay Pitogo and Bonifacio Global City (Diagram by TAM Planners Co.)



Figure 8. Conceptual Plan to Consolidate Lots in Barangay Pitogo (Map by TAM Planners Co.)
New developments have to be balanced with open spaces.

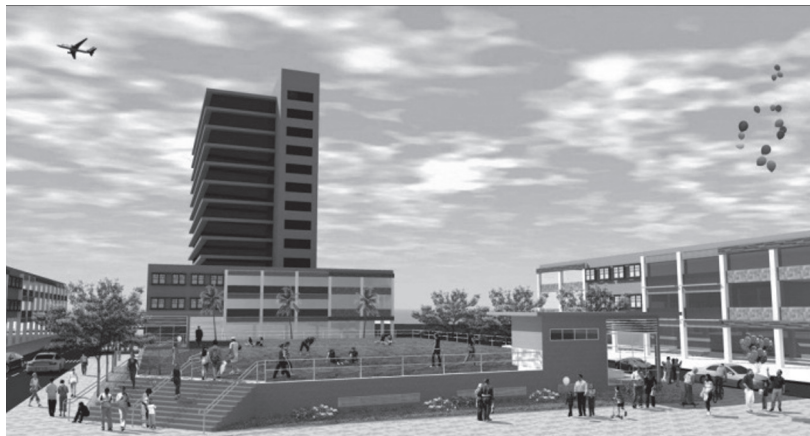


Figure 9. Conceptual Drawing of Block Redevelopment (Drawing by TAM Planners Co.)
A central open space allows for community interaction while the lower level can be used as parking spaces.



Figure 10. Concept for Southeast Entry Point to Barangay Pitogo (Drawing by TAM Planners Co.)

The southwest entry point of Barangay Pitogo can be accessed from BGC by crossing 32nd Street. Vehicles can also enter from the northwest, although at the moment the streets are narrow and parking spaces are few. The concept for redevelopment involves the consolidation of lots in 5 blocks to allow for larger mixed-use types of developments (e.g. shophouses with commercial space on the ground floor and residential space in the upper levels). The proposed block redevelopment includes a central block which will have a parking area at the semi-basement level and a grass lawn to serve as a space for recreation and community interaction (see Figures 8 and 9). The southeast entry point, on the other hand, is underneath an elevated highway and at the corner of Kalayaan Avenue and 42nd Street. Vehicular entry is not possible here, which is why the urban design has to cater to pedestrians (see Figure 10).

4.2. *Barangay Bangkal (19.52 hectares)*

Barangay Bangkal can also raise its level of development to cater to both the residential needs of Makati City's work force and to new commercial and office spaces. As a residential or office base, it is already considered a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) owing to its proximity to both an MRT Station, which provides access to other cities within Metro Manila, and a PNR Station, which provides access to cities and provinces south of Makati City (see Figure 5).

The heavy inter-city vehicular traffic at the corner of Osmeña Avenue and EDSA hampers pedestrian movement to and from the Barangay Bangkal SPUR site. The urban design solution for the Barangay Bangkal SPUR will have to be the installation of elevated walkways to ensure

safe and unimpeded pedestrian movement. The elevated infrastructure can be financed by the national and city governments; however, the cooperation of private lot and building owners will be needed to reorient pedestrian movement to both the ground and elevated levels (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. Concept for Elevated Walkway in Barangay Bangkal. (Drawing by TAM Planners Co.)
Elevated walkways will ensure safe and unimpeded pedestrian movement from transit stations



Figure 12. Conceptual Drawing of Commercial Building that Connects to Proposed Elevated Walkways (Drawing by TAM Planners Co.)

The lack of open spaces in the SPUR site can also be addressed by convincing commercial building owners to install green roof decks on their buildings. Introducing open spaces at the upper levels will increase the inventory of community open spaces and will entice people to come to the commercial establishments located at those levels (see Figure 12).

Other lots may also be consolidated to allow for larger service areas for establishments that offer the same merchandise and services. Small car shops adjacent to each other, for example, may combine their lot areas to allow for a shared service/work area. For urban redevelopment to be financially viable for individual lot owners, the floor area has to be increased to maximize the value of the real estate.

4.3. Barangay Pembo and Barangay East Rembo (4.65 hectares)

The proximity of Barangays Pembo and East Rembo to the booming Bonifacio Global City has opened up several business opportunities for the community to explore. A well-designed mixed-use development project for Pembo-East Rembo will improve the neighborhood environment and attract new business locators and potential buyers of new residential units. The proposed development adopts a lifestyle based on the concept of “Live, Work and Play” (see Figure 13), which seeks to combine those activities in a sensible manner, and establishes certain parameters to make this neighborhood attractive to new businesses and future residents. It aims to involve the community residents in the future development so as to give them a “sense of ownership,” not only for the residential portions but for the whole development as well. It was envisioned that current residents of the community will have the opportunity to purchase a residential unit in the development so that they will not feel displaced once redevelopment efforts begin. The development is designed to strengthen the community activities in a harmonious work-and-live environment by providing open spaces for community interaction. The areas of Pembo East Rembo will be consolidated and developed as a single entity. Multi-family dwelling units, commercial buildings, neighborhood retail shops, and transport hub facilities are all integrated together. Compact development is highly encouraged as it maximizes the potential of the area.



Figure 13. SPUR in Pembo-East Rembo Conceptual Zoning for Purposes of Live, Work and Play (Drawing by Antonio, Arcenas, Beltran, Cacalda)

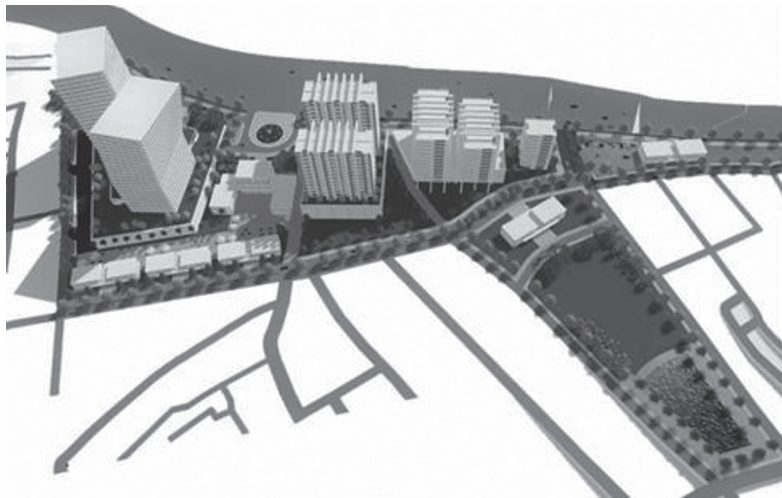


Figure 14. Aerial View of the Mixed-use Proposal for the Pembo-East Rembo SPUR (Drawing by Antonio, Arcenas, Beltran, Cacalda) The tallest buildings are office-commercial (2 towers on the left) and residential (5 buildings).

Households will have the option to sell their properties or be relocated in the residential buildings of the Pembo-East Rembo development. The Pembo-East Rembo Development will

mainly consist of five residential buildings (2 sets of which will sit on a parking podium and 1 building which will stand alone), two mixed-use towers (consisting of commercial and office space) with a parking podium, five 2-storey commercial strips, a community center, a transportation hub, an open space with a water feature, an amphitheatre that will also serve as a detention pond to manage storm water, and a waste facility (see Figure 14).

Funding for this development will be generated by the two mixed-use buildings. The iconic design of the two towers aims to attract business locators that cannot be accommodated by the Bonifacio Global City Business District. The buildings will sit on the highest elevation of the site and will be oriented to capture the magnificent views of Laguna de Bay (east), the Makati Central Business District and BGC skylines (west), and the green open spaces of the American Memorial Cemetery (southwest). The provisions for parking for residents and mixed-use building end-users will be located in the lower podium levels of the residential buildings. The ground levels will not be accessible to vehicles, which will ensure a safer and more pleasant walking environment.

The proposal for urban renewal also includes a transport hub facility which will consist of a multi-storey development that services Pembo-East Rembo and the neighboring barangays. This will also be located along Circumferential Road 5, a major inter-city road used by various modes of transport to travel to and from Bonifacio Global City.

The proposed cluster of residential towers were envisioned and designed to house the existing lot owners. Based on sustainable urbanism principles, concentrated developments reduce carbon generation by at least 30% and energy consumption by at least 50% (Farr, 2008). Compared with detached single-family housing, the reduced building envelope of attached multi-family housing can reduce the energy required to cool the housing by 30-35%. This is one “selling” point for the residents of barangays Pembo and East Rembo (see Figure 15).

The residential buildings will adopt a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of about 14. This is relatively low and represents an acceptable building density for residential spaces in comparison to most parts of the city. Commercial spaces will be located on the ground floor and on lower floor levels. These commercial sections will be low density, with only 10 units per floor level and parking spaces located at the podium. The heights of the towers are designed to vary from 12-16 floor levels, with podiums that feature an open deck and a roof garden in order to allow natural light and ventilation.

Rising along Circumferential Road 5 are two mixed-use buildings that have parking garages located below the street level of the road so as to maximize the visibility of commercial spaces. The upper floors are office spaces for Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) offices and other businesses (see Figure 16). The commercial buildings will feature 10 levels of commercial spaces, approximately 15 levels of office spaces, and vehicle parking at the podium levels.

Working with the existing contours, the low-lying area is designed as an open space for recreation. The surrounding community will be able to access and use the facility, and it will feature an amphitheater that will also serve as a detention pond for excess surface run-off during extreme rainfall events. This sunken amphitheater/detention pond will thus prevent the occurrence of flash floods during the rainy season. Wastewater facilities will also be provided for the new development to minimize water pollution in waterways (see Figure 17). Other spaces, meanwhile, will be allocated for commercial strips and community activity centers.



Figure 15. Concept Drawing of the Residential Buildings Along Circumferential Road 5
(Drawing by Antonio, Arcenas, Beltran, Cacalda)

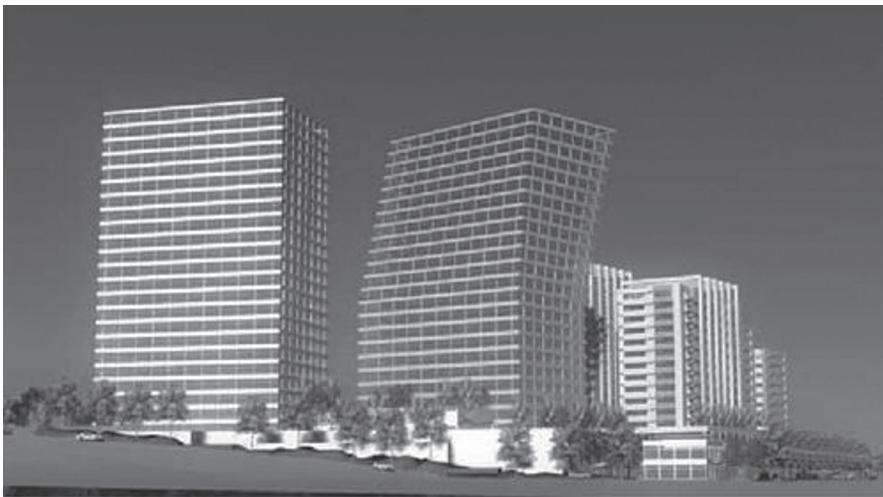


Figure 16. Proposed Office/Commercial Buildings in Pembo-East Rembo SPUR
(Drawing by Antonio, Arcenas, Beltran, Cacalda)

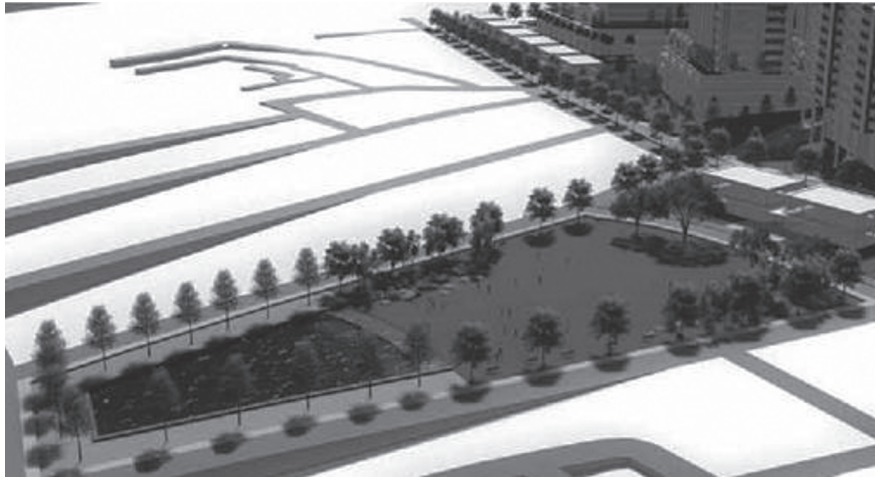


Figure 17. Concept for the Amphitheater that Will Also Serve as a Detention Pond during Extreme Rainfall (Drawing by Antonio, Arcenas, Beltran, Cacalda)

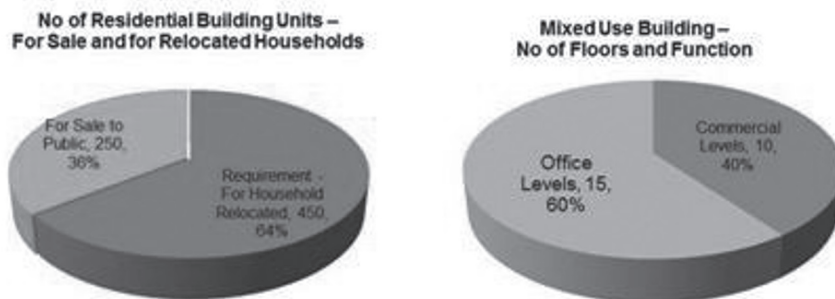


Figure 18. Projected Percentages of the Residential Units Alloted for Sale to the Public and the Households to Be Relocated and Projected Percentages of the Mixed-use Buildings for Office and Commercial functions (Graphic by Antonio, Arcenas, Beltran, Cacalda)

To fund the Pembo-East Rembo project, a partnership with a private developer shall be explored. An offer to the public will be made to sell/ lease some of the residential units, commercial spaces, and office spaces (see Figure 18). The revenues from these agreements will then be used to fund the Pembo-East Rembo SPUR development project. The developers will have an opportunity to determine their margins and project revenues from this development (see Figure 19). The developer can also be responsible for funding interim costs such as costs for the open space park and utility facilities, as well as planning and design costs.

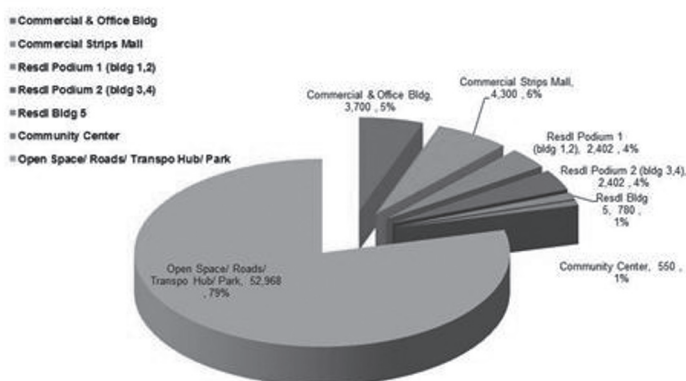


Figure 19. Pembo-East Rembo SPUR Development Building Footprints – Area (sqm) and Percentage (%) Relative to Open Space (Graphic by Antonio, Arcenas, Beltran, Cacalda)
The Building Footprint Study can be used as a reference for projecting profit margins.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed urban design initiatives for the selected SPUR sites demonstrate the potential for district upgrading and community building under Makati City's SPUR program. The Zoning Ordinance of Makati City has provisions to increase building density (Floor Area Ratio) if lots are consolidated. The assumption is that this will encourage the pooling of smaller lots to form bigger lots and, therefore, raise the quality of buildings and improve the urban environment. In addition, Makati City intends to spend funds on improving existing infrastructure or even on new infrastructure if these are matched with the same fervor by the community.

It is also the intent of the SPUR program that each of the small lot owners will benefit from the value of their property either through outright sale, by becoming partners with each other, or by partnering with a developer/ investor. Businesses that are invigorated by new and better developments will also generate employment and livelihood opportunities for these areas' residents. This is the true essence of shared growth wherein most of the residents benefit from the anticipated prosperity and the improved environment instead of being eased out by gentrification.

Since each of the 14 identified SPUR sites has different strengths and weaknesses peculiar to its location and the make-up of the community, the appropriate urban renewal proposal for each will be based on a careful analysis of the specific SPUR site. It is hoped, however, that the urban design concepts presented in this paper will still inspire ideas for the other urban renewal sites in

Makati City or even other urban renewal initiatives throughout the rest of the metropolis.

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