

Monday, December 19, 2011

Ilonggo Senator Franklin M. Drilon has reported to the local business community and community leaders his short and long-term plans regarding the Iloilo River development projects.

In his briefing to the press and business sector in Iloilo City last Saturday, Drilon, supported by Mayor Jed Patrick Mabilog, itemized the projects until 2016 with some to be completed by middle of 2012.

[Plan your Sinulog week ahead and find out what's in store for Sinulog 2012.](#)

His short-term plans include the complete removal of 10

derelicts and 38 idle vessels near the Iloilo River mouth and the removal of A1 shipyard operations in the river. A1 Shipping was given until January 31, 2012 to cease operations and vacate the area.

A 1.3-hectare government lot used illegally by A1 is currently being processed for the issuance of a Presidential Proclamation giving the property to the Philippines Ports Authority (PPA) for its roll on-roll off operations.

Another short-term plan is the prohibition of fishing vessels to dock at the Muelle Loney area, which is now clear of vessels, to allow Ilonggos to go fishing in the river.

A total of 75 fishpen owners were given financial assistance of P900,000 to remove their illegal fishpens at the Iloilo River.

Fishing vessels were likewise encouraged to use the Iloilo



Fish Port Complex to decongest the PPA port in Muelle Loney area. The fish port complex had reduced its berthing fees and opened its berthing facilities by October 2011.

A river patrol and permanent security team was established to enforce policies at the river; and PPA donated two rubber boats to beef up the river security.

The senator's long-term plans for the Iloilo River development covers the relocation of informal settlers living along the riverbanks at the Iloilo River and its tributaries.

A total of P344 million was allocated for the relocation and housing units of relocated families. An initial 1,000 housing units out of the 3,500 informal settlers will be completed and awarded by December 2012. The City Government is also planning to buy lands for the relocation of informal settlers in the next phase of the project.

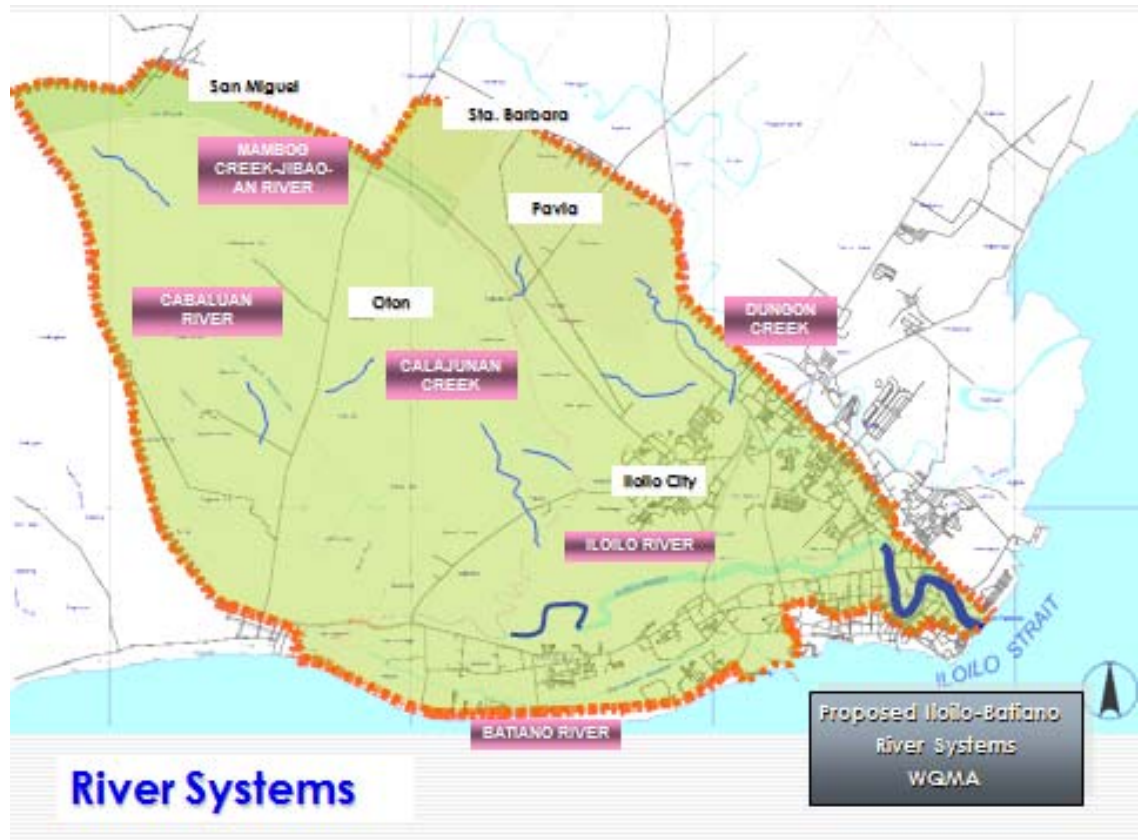
Mabilog said the City Government is pursuing the removal of dikes and illegal fishpens along the Iloilo and Batiano Rivers.

The city slaughterhouse at Tacas, Jaro will be upgraded soon into a full Double A abattoir with P40 million from the Department of Agriculture, which Mabilog said the upgrading will be completed by middle of 2012.

The Iloilo River Esplanade project is currently being constructed with an allocation of P70 million to be completed by June 2012.

Similarly, the PPA has allocated P145 million for the construction of a new passenger terminal building for vessels going to Negros to be built on a vacant lot owned by PPA in Muelle Loney area.

This is aimed to free up the road that is currently used by the PPA for



a fast-craft terminal going to Bacolod.

Department of Public Works and Highways is also slated to buy a new watermaster dredging machine worth P39 million to be permanently assigned in Iloilo City for the continuous dredging of the Iloilo River and tributaries. The new dredging machine is expected to arrive by May 2012. **(Lydia C. Pendon)**

Supplementary Note:

Rivers of the World Foundation (www.rowfoundation.org) from Maryland, USA is providing active help towards restoration of the Iloilo River by providing experts to address various issues. To that end a cursory water quality monitoring survey was conducted along the main stretch of the Iloilo River from the confluence of the Calajunan Creek to the Iloilo straight by Subijoy Dutta of the ROW Foundation on Dec 16th with support from Mayor Jed Patrick Mabilog.

