

Las Piñas City, Republic of the Philippines

Population Size: 532,330 (2007)

Las Piñas was one of the early settlements south of Old Manila during the Spanish colonial times. It was a salt-center where 1,200 inhabitants live. It was a sleepy fishing and agricultural community located at the mouth of the Zapote and Las Piñas Rivers as their waters flow out to Manila Bay.

Today Las Piñas is a highly urbanized city and has grown by leaps and bounds. Its rich history and culture and the gains obtained for it by its past leaders are steppingstones that has moved the quality of life forward. It is not just known now for its world famous bamboo organ but a lot of other accomplishments and recognitions it has obtained. Yet it has kept its quiet charm and small town feel where the values of family and kinship, sense of community and civic spirit remain. Where every resident have a deep sense of belonging to a place they proudly call their home.

Las Piñas urbanization was spearheaded by the suburban dream of the low-to medium density residential subdivisions available for middle income employees from the major business districts of other Metro Manila towns. It boost of a more than 99% literacy rate of it's more than half a million population. Its education and health and nutrition programs are recipient of local and regional awards. The city's environmental accomplishments for its River Rehabilitation and Clean and Green Programs are honored by national and international award giving bodies.

The Las Piñas Historical Corridor Project is a 3.4-kilometer stretch of the city's old district was developed showcasing and bringing back the picturesque aspects of the City's Spanish colonial heritage. Many public buildings have been restored and privately- owned structures within the area have already conformed to an architectural master plan. The project kicked off in 1995 with the signing of Republic Act 8003, declaring as tourist spots certain areas including the Bamboo Organ and the Bamboo Organ Church. The City passed an ordinance regulating the construction, renovation, and repair of properties and establishments or infrastructure works undertaken within the tourism development zone, requiring them to conform to the design suggested. The corridor is a fitting backdrop to the fiestas and street parade during the annual patron saint's day celebration in March and the International Bamboo Organ Festival in February.

The leadership of Mayor Nene Agular and Senator Manny Villar has invested in the construction, upgrading and maintenance of major and secondary roads. Asphalt paving and concreting of the city road network now covers 99%.

Friendship Route is a bold experiment and a test of negotiating skills. The idea was to pry open certain private subdivision roads linking one to the next to provide alternate routes between 5:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. to skip the huge traffic congestion along the Alabang-Zapote Road. The vision of a flourishing city found the approval of the leaders

of homeowners associations in the 30 villages in 1993 and another 10 more in 2009. Immediately results were felt- parents were able to get home early after work, students had more time to study and business prospers. Friendship Routes are reserved for bonafide residents of Las Pinas.

Building other roads and infrastructures like the Zapote-Alabang Flyover, which is a four-lane overpass over Diego Cera Avenue was completed in 1998. It allowed commuters to skip a major intersection bottleneck. The C- 5 Extension which is a major 4-lane avenue that was completed in 2009 and connects Fr. Diego Cera Avenue in Barangay Pulanglupa 1 to Sucat, Paranaque City. The Daang Hari Road (King's Way) which was completed in the eastern part of the City and connects it to the neighboring towns of San Pedro, Laguna; Molino, Cavite; and Muntinlupa City. This massive construction, which took at least ten-years to complete, is a 6-lane highway. These roads provide areas for bikers and weekend joggers as well as stimulate a better economic activity by promoting mobility within the city.

The widening of the CAA Road is also aimed to decongest traffic along the Alabang-Zapote Road. From its original two-way lane it is now a four-way-lane accommodating the large volume of vehicles. Negotiating skills was required to make this change since residents with houses and business establishments have to be enjoined to relocate to the inner part of the barangay to give way to a better road network.

Modern Overpasses with Escalators and Covered Pedestrian paths and Tricycle Stations. In 2005, four pedestrian overpasses with escalators were constructed along busy intersections of the Alabang-Zapote Road to allow easy traffic flow. The modern overpasses are to ensure safety of both the pedestrians and motorists. It also provides convenience for the women, children and the elderly pedestrians. The common design for both the covered pedestrian walks and tricycle stations were meant to provide safety and security to the riding public.

Tree Parks and the green Lanes are present in all the 268 subdivisions. These are fully maintained by the homeowners association but were planted by the City's Clean and Green Program and the Villar Foundation in 1995. The federation of homeowners association have revitalized the parks for recreational and sports development programs. The trees have help prevent urban decay and have upgraded the value of the properties. Now these parks are walking tracks and jogging paths for residents that contribute to their physical and mental well-being.

Community involvement is alive and vibrant in Las Piñas as manifested by the active participation of the people in barangay assemblies and social, civic, cultural, religious and professional clubs that help the local government improve the management of its affairs.

