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Owning the Metropolitan Vision: The Case of BLIST

Ruben G. Mercado and Carmel P. Chammag

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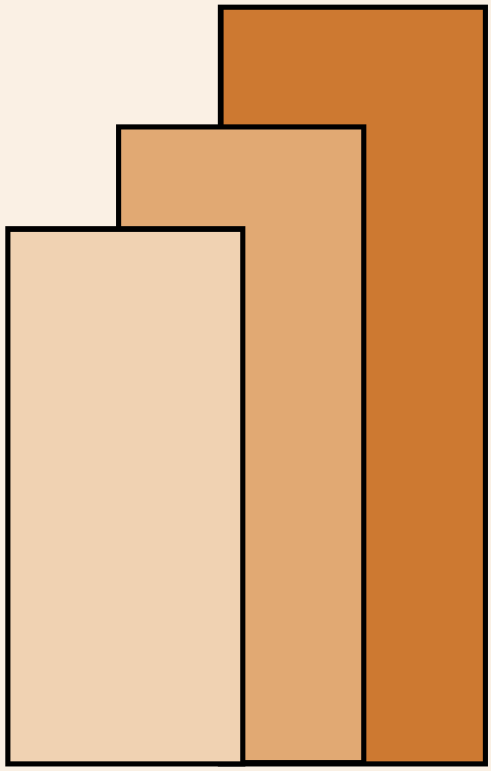

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For comments, suggestions or further inquiries please contact:
The Research Information Staff, Philippine Institute for Development Studies
3rd Floor, NEDA sa Makati Building, 106 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City, Philippines
Tel Nos: 8924059 and 8935705; Fax No: 8939589; E-mail: publications@pidsnet.pids.gov.ph
Or visit our website at http://www.pids.gov.ph

Owning the Metropolitan Vision:
The Case of BLIST

Ruben G. Mercado and Carmel P. Chammag[1]

1. Introduction

BLIST stands for Baguio, La Trinidad, Itogon, Sablan and Tuba, contiguous areas in the regional center of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). The BLIST is not a geopolitical entity but a planning area. When the Regional Physical Framework Plan of CAR was formulated in 1990, the BLIST was identified as a major subregional area due to the fast urban growth of Baguio City influencing the adjacent municipalities most especially, La Trinidad. The other municipalities close to the city are showing potentials of being the catchment area for Baguio's rapid growth. The BLIST currently plays a key role in the development of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and the Northern Luzon as the educational, tourism and commercial center. The BLIST area is also one of the growth nodes of the North Western Luzon Growth Quadrangle (NWLGQ). The NWLGQ is a growth area being promoted as an economic and tourism zone linking the coastal provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, la Union and Pangasinan with the BLIST in Benguet Province of CAR.

Serious planning for the BLIST area has been undertaken in view of the need to rehabilitate Baguio City which was seriously damaged by the earthquake in 1990. It was thought then that rehabilitating the city should go beyond restoration and address the city's long-term reconstruction. This necessitates a deliberate attempt to plan for the city's development considering its future interaction as well as integration with its neighboring areas.

Metro BLIST is a new term being introduced to call the Urban BLIST. The term that was originally used was Metro Baguio but was received with strong negative reaction because it seems to leave the impression that the other areas are just extensions of Baguio City.

This paper reviews the developments and challenges of Metro BLIST with focus on the needed steps to take to deal with its present and future concerns.

[1] Research Associate, Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) and Senior Economic Development Specialist, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Cordillera Administrative Region, respectively. The views expressed in this paper are solely of the authors and not of the institutions they represent.

2. Development Trends in Metro BLIST

2.1 Demographic and Land Characteristics

The population of Metro BLIST is less than half a million in 1995 distributed quite unevenly with about 59 percent in Baguio City (Table 1). Population growth rate in the whole area is a little higher than the national average. However, this average rate is unevenly distributed across each of the political units. While Sablan is growing at a modest rate of 1.67, Baguio and La Trinidad are experiencing very rapid growth of more than four percent. In contrast, Itogon and Tuba are losing population, quite rapidly in the former. Population density in Baguio City and La Trinidad are high relative to other municipalities owing to the smallness of their land area while being home to three fourth of the entire metropolitan population.

Table 1
Metro BLIST: Demographic and Land Characteristics

City / Municipality	Population Level 1990	Population Level 1995	Growth Rate 1990-1995	Land Area (sq.km)	Population Density 1995 (prs/sq.km)
Baguio City	183,102	226,883	4.38	48.9	4639.73
La Trinidad	48,252	63,089	5.51	61.4	1027.51
Itogon	61,773	47,781	-5.01	423.7	112.77
Sablan	8,440	9,170	1.67	91.6	100.11
Tuba	39,635	39,589	-0.02	314.4	125.92
Metro BLIST	*341,202*	*386,512*	*2.53*	*940.0*	*411.18*
Philippines	*60,679,725*	*68,616,536*	*2.32*	*300,000*	*229*

Basic Sources: National Statistics Office, 1990 and 1995 Census of Population and Housing

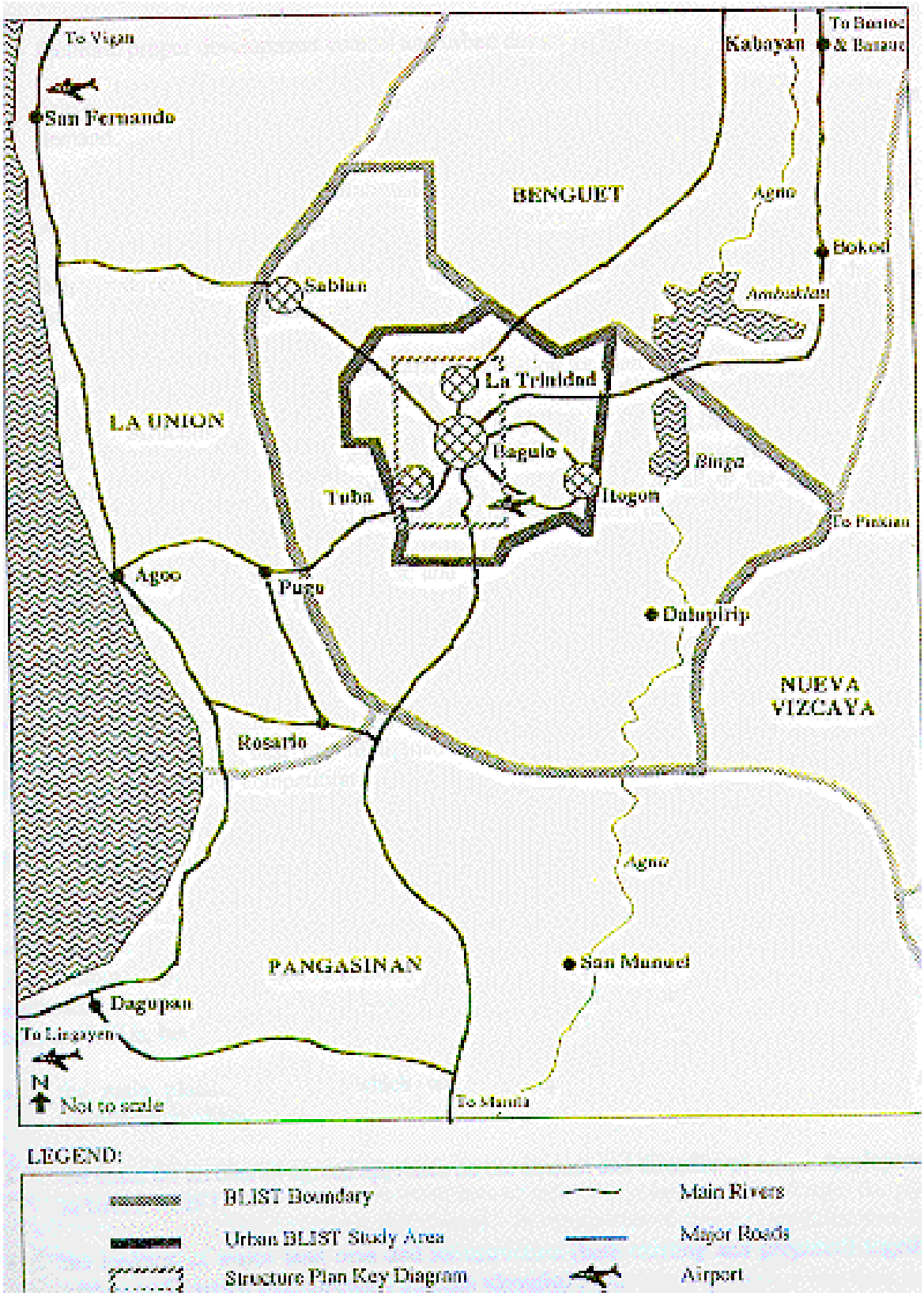
Table 2
Land Use (in percent)

LAND USE	Baguio	La Trinidad	Itogon	Sablan	Tuba	BLIST
Built up	48.3	21.1	1.6	7.2	1.7	6.1
Agriculture	1.6	6.9	1.6	2.3	0.0	1.6
Grassland	44.7	60.8	56.8	76.3	53.7	57.3
Forest	5.2	11.1	39.0	13.7	43.7	34.2
Others	0.2	0.0	0.9	.05	0.9	0.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Basic Source: BDUPP Report Volume B. Source of BDUPP report is DENR – CAR Geology Division, Land Use Map, 1:50,000 scale, December 1991.

Particular land uses would reveal the physical development features of areas composing Metro BLIST (Table 2). Average rates for the entire BLIST area do not accurately represent the land use features of Baguio City and La Trinidad. These areas have definitely larger built-up areas (almost half of the total land area in Baguio City) and smaller forest lands. On the other hand, grasslands and forest lands dominate land

BLIST Location Map



uses in the three other municipalities. Pressures of urbanization and urban development are expected to be experienced in the BLIST areas especially within Baguio City and La Trinidad.

3. The BLIST Master (Structure) Plan

A master plan has been prepared for the development of what soon will become a Metro BLIST. This plan is essentially a *structure* plan *which* connotes greater flexibility than a *master* plan which is conceptually static and fixed. The Urban BLIST plan was prepared in 1993 by a joint group of European and Filipino consultants following the July 1990 earthquake. While expectedly, future urbanisation will be more increasingly felt in Baguio City and La Trinidad, the plan considered a larger planning area in view of the influence and integration of development of other areas surrounding them. Thus, Itogon, Sablan and Tuba along with Baguio and La Trinidad formed part of the larger urban planning area.

Completed in October 1994, the Plan has already influenced planning and investment programming of local government units as well as regional institutions including the Regional Development Council (RDC, which is the Cordillera Executive Board, Cordillera Regional Assembly, Regional Line Agencies acting as the RDC of CAR), the government line agencies. Since its formal launching in 1994 with the President as audience, the BLIST Urban Master Plan has influenced the contents of the development plans of the region and LGUs (Benguet Province and the BLIST LGUs) as these plans now considered the BLIST concepts or proposals. In addition, programs and projects found in the Plan has become a handbook for program pr project proposals in the area. Consistency with the Plan has become one of the suggested acceptance criteria for these proposals.

The formulation of the Plan was not an easy undertaking. It was met with strong resistance and open criticism all throughout the stages of its development from various sectors even among BLIST member-municipalities. Impressions were articulated that BLIST planning was a strategy for Baguio City to transfer the city's problems to its neighbours. Some raised that urban concerns are not as important to the municipalities of Itogon, Sablan and Tuba than it is to Baguio and La Trinidad. In view of these views expressed, public consultations and information dissemination were undertaken to clarify the objectives of the planning activity and to raise awareness about the need for integrated planning as well as to involve as many sectors in plan formulation and decisionmaking.

4. Potentials for Cooperation

The following presents some of the major development areas where BLIST members can have mutual benefit from strong alliance and coordination as identified in the BLIST Master (Structure) Plan.

4.1 Water Supply and Distribution

One of the most daunting challenges for Metro BLIST is the development of water sources and water distribution. The current water supply (as measured in average liters per capita demand (LPCD)) for the area is still below the standard of 220 liters. Table 3

further highlights the water production requirements to raise the present water supply level to such standard. Strategies to address this issue include the need to reduce system leakage and the metering of previously unmetered connections.

Table 3
Metro BLIST: Water Demand , 1994-2020

Year	Population	% Served	Average LPCD	Water Production Requirements	
				Ave. (m^3/d)	Peak (m^3/d)
1994	312,000	58	190	34,400	48,135
2000	358,000	70	210	54,600	73,700
2010	421,000	80	220	74,100	103,700
2020	473,000	90	220	93,700	131,100

Source: BDUPP, 1994

The problem of water supply involves not only the production aspect but more critically the distribution within the BLIST area. The most affected is Baguio City whose topography constrains it to yield much water from the city's site itself and moreso makes water distribution technically difficult and expensive to manage. The situation is further complicated by an institutional problem. The Baguio Water Ditrict is perceived to exploit water resources in neighboring areas but does not have the responsibility of serving the needs of areas outside of Baguio City. This led to serious conflicts in recent years, conflicts which continue to fester the BLIST-member municipalities at present. [2]

The three new water sources that are located in the BLIST area are the following: the Budacao spring and waterfalls in Tuba; the Mohawk water sources at Baguio Gold Mines in Itogon and the Irisan spring in Sablan. The challenge of the metropolitan arrangement in BLIST, in this case, is how to bring about an adequate water supply to the growing requirements of Baguio City given its continued rapid urbanization and urban development while at the same time providing mutual benefit to the municipalities from where these resources originate.

4.2 Solid Waste Management

Another important concern is solid waste management particularly in the identification and development of a landfill site for the BLIST area. This is an immediate concern especially for Baguio City whose dumping site in is already reaching full capacity and aside from being located within the city proper in an inhabited area (therefore poses danger to health for the nearby residents) and in steeply sloping area. It is also a source of conflict between Baguio City and Tuba as the solid wastes flowing

[2] For example, the municipality of Tuba expressed its opposition to a proposed BLIST-wide Water Resources Study (one of the projects proposed to be conducted by the BDUPP Study). Resolution 377-96 of the Sangguniang Bayan of Tuba dated October 29, 1996 said that " the BLIST Water Resources Study is rejected since it uses the municipality as resource tapping for the benefit of Baguio City without addressing the issue of revenue sharing and without a study for agricultural, domestic and future industrial uses of the waters for future investors in the municipality. The municipality of Tuba has its own Development Plan for its water resources."

down and seeping leachate threaten the public health in nearby barangay of Tadiangan. The presence of weathered rocks in the area also contribute to the pollution of the groundwater table and downstream springs.

The present dumpsite in Wangal, La Trinidad is also beset with similar problems as it is located near an inhabited area and adjacent to a cemetery. The high population growth in La Trinidad is expected to further burden its present solid waste disposal problems. The other municipalities (Itogon, Sablan and Tuba) do not undertake solid waste management activities. Households in these municipalities usually resort to placing their garbage in vacant lots, riverbanks or burning which is not environmentally friendly. Thus, these five municipalities stand to gain through reduced solid waste treatment and disposal cost if they come together for a joint development, use and maintenance of a BLIST wide solid waste management.

Aside from improving waste disposal, waste collection scheme can be improved that would not only service the more urbanized areas of La Trinidad and Baguio City but extend to other BLIST areas particularly Tuba. This will necessitate the provision of sufficient number of garbage collection vehicles, equipment and manpower as well as the installation of better collection schemes or system.

4.3 Transport

People in the BLIST area rely upon road-based public transport for mobility and such transport mode shall continue in the future. All-weather highways, thus, play a very important role in this regard. At present, there are four main roads serving Metro BLIST which following the earthquake needs rehabilitation and/or major improvement: Naguilian Road, Marcos Highway, Kennon Road and the Halsema Highway north to Bontoc. However, there is no road linking these major roads.

Thus, the BLIST Master Plan proposed a Western Link Road which connects Halsema Highway to Naguilian Road (first phase), the Naguilian Road to Marcos Highway (second phase) and Marcos Highway to Kennon Road (third phase). This western link road provides a by-pass to the central business district (CBD) of Baguio City for those going to La Trinidad or Tuba and can reduce the number of vehicles passing through the CBD.

Alternative routes should also be developed to relieve the already congested areas such as Baguio City and La Trinidad as well as encourage the development in appropriate peripheral locations. One such route proposed is the Western Link road which according to the Plan “will relieve pressure on the existing Baguio-La Trinidad route and open-up the north and northwest of Urban BLIST for development”. The new road will also serve as am emergency evacuation route in the event that both Naguilian and Marcos highway become impassable. The planned road also hopes to link Naguilian road with Marcos Highway and the latter with Kennon road. The new road will also help decongest Baguio City as travelers can by-pass the center of Baguio City to reach other areas of Benguet Province.

A perennial problem is the heavy traffic between La Trinidad and Baguio along the major throughfares (Baguio-Bontoc Road) which continues despite the road widening measures in this route. The great number of vehicles plying the Baguio-La

Trinidad Road also somehow contributes to traffic along the Magsaysay and Bokawkan Road. This is due to the fact that there are many residents of La Trinidad who works in Baguio and vice versa. La Trinidad is also fast becoming a regional government center as some government regional offices (e.g Department of Science and Technology) are located in the municipality.

Table 4
Landfill Site Requirements – BLIST

Period	Initial Population	Final Population	Land Area Required (Ha.)
1996-2000	327,600	357,800	10.0
2000-2010	357,800	420,600	28.3
2010-2020	420,600	473,100	30.6
TOTAL (1996-2020)			**68.9**
Assumptions: Average daily waste generation: 0.75 kg/capita/day Percent of Population serviced by collection system: 95% Average solid waste density (as collected): 375 kg./m^3 Final Landfill volume: 50% of collected volume Average landfill depth: 5 meters Additional site area required for services: 5%			

Basic Source: BDUPP Supporting Volume D: Infrastructure, 1994

4.4 Tourism Management

Tourism is one of the important sectors in the BLIST economy. Compared with the past, it is faced with greater competition in attracting visitors or tourists considering the range of alternative locations in the Philippines and outside the country. Thus, there is a need to develop a comprehensive strategy to maintain or improve existing tourist attractions as well as identify and develop new attractions or sites especially outside Baguio City. Among the promising sites in the BLIST area include the West Itogon Countryside Park, Asin Hot Springs in Tuba and some water and hill-based sites in Sablan. In addition, Baguio City's wooded parks, a popular destination for picnics, are no longer as available in the city as before. These wooded parks such as communal parks complemented by the right facilities and playground for children can be promoted in the other LIST municipalities for tourism and recreation.

The Cordillera Tourism Master Plan has identified the BLIST area as one tourism cluster to be promoted. BLIST area is also a primary service center and gateway to introducing other tourist destinations in CAR. With clustering, a string of places and activities within the tourism cluster will be promoted. The BLIST municipalities stand to gain from this clustering, as it will ensure that their respective tourist attractions/sites will likewise be visited.

4.5 Housing Development

It is a fact that Baguio City's perennial problem is "squatting" or the prevalence of "informal dwellers". There is no definite data on how many squatters are there in Baguio City but they are widely acknowledged to be occupying various kinds of

government reservations (such as forest and watershed reservations) and even in hazardous areas (steeply sloping areas). Where to relocate these "squattters" and locate further housing developments is a big problem. Baguio City is limited by not only the land area but by that fact that many of its available lands are declared as government reservations (meaning, they are not available for housing). Through the BLIST arrangement, housing development can continue to be encouraged to be undertaken outside of the city which would lessen the pressure on land water resources in Baguio and La Trinidad while promoting economic activities and higher income from real property taxes in Itogon, Sablan and Tuba.

5. Managing Metro BLIST

Metro BLIST is fortunate to have a ready guiding framework for directing its development through the comprehensive Structure Plan containing the physical framework plan and the identified policies, strategies, programs, projects and investment costs and schedules for implementation. There are two BLIST organizational set up handling BLIST wide issues and programs. First is the BLIST Consultative Council (or BLIST Forum) which was organized when the BLIST Master Plan was being finalized in 1994 and the BLIST Area Task Force created by the North Western Luzon Growth Quadrangle (NWLGQ) Commission. Of these two, the BLIST Area Task Force is the more active in coordinating BLIST affairs. As to which of these two organizations, with similar membership is more responsive in promoting the sustained implementation of the BLIST Plan will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.1 Recommended Organisation for BLIST under the Structure Plan

The Plan pointed out two alternative structures that can implement the Plan and other BLIST-wide projects. One is a "metro authority" and the other one is a "consultative forum".

The concept of a metropolitan authority in BLIST as explained in the Plan is a body "which subsumes most or all major political and administrative powers and responsibilities currently undertaken by the individual BLIST authorities". The Plan explains that based on the public consultations, the LIST authorities do not favor such concept for two basic reasons. First, urban population is currently concentrated in Baguio City. The creation of a Metro BLIST would only be appropriate once BLIST population has spread into or increased in the other municipalities. Second, the necessity of establishing a metro authority would only be urgent if interlocal issues are not resolved within political boundaries. It is opined that mayors are "talking" to each other to resolve these common issues.

A more workable and acceptable proposal according to the Plan is the formation of a Consultative Forum composed of representatives from the five BLIST members. Figure 5.1 graphically illustrates the proposed organisation. The basic idea of the institutional framework is that the Forum can provide the general policy direction on BLIST-wide issues and those that would impact on more than one local entity. At the same time, local entities can directly control projects, service functions and planning activities "where these can be managed locally". Where concerns affect two municipalities, these can be managed jointly on an ad-hoc arrangement. The body can also set-up organisations to deal with specific BLIST-wide issues. Examples cited in the

Plan include a BLIST Water Board to deal with supply, distribution and identification of new water sources, an Inward Investment Agency to deal with resource marketing and a Land Delivery Unit to manage urban land delivery. The forum is envisaged to be composed of not only the five municipalities but also representatives from the Provincial Government, relevant national and regional agencies, NGOs and leading private sector groups.

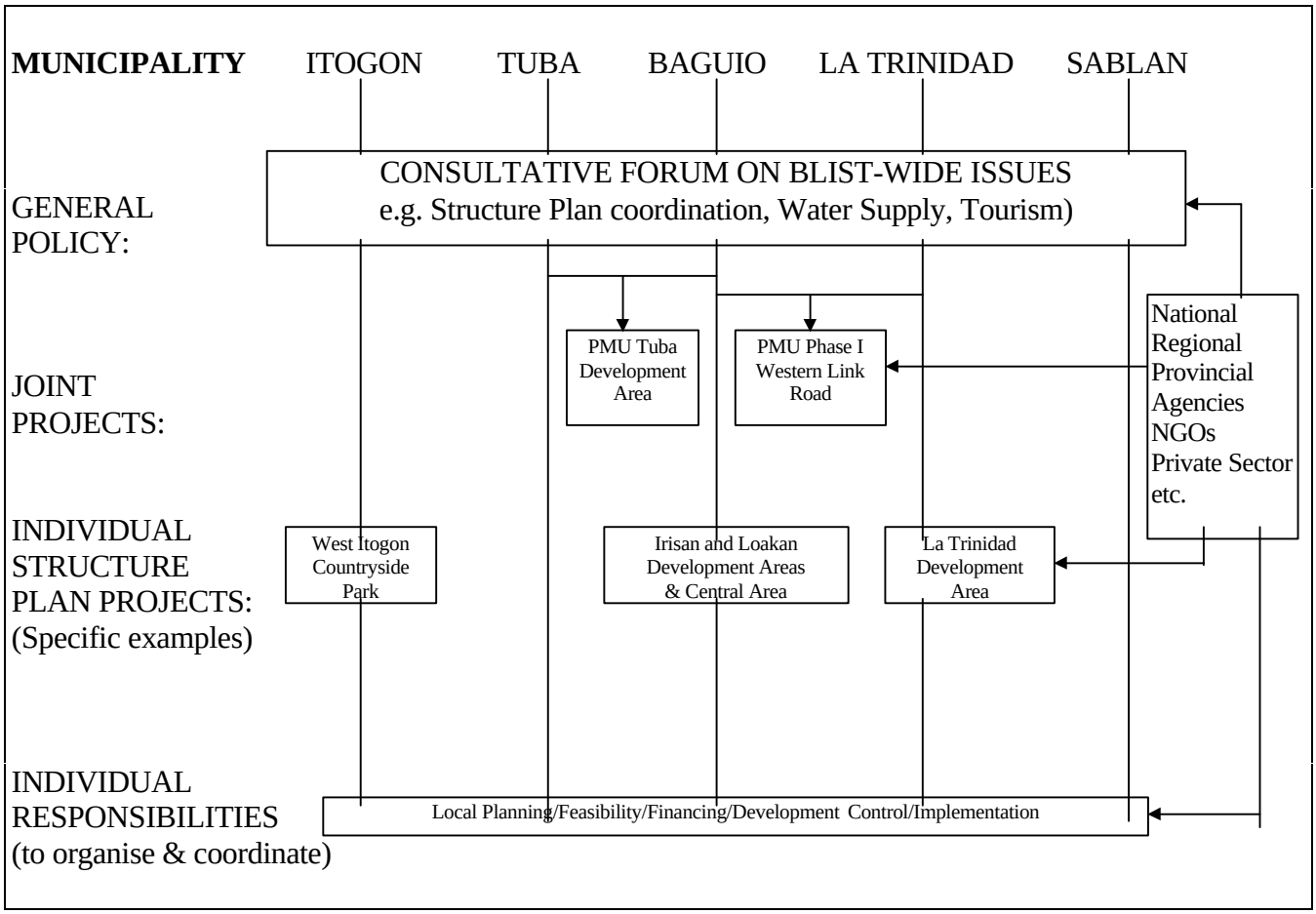
5.2 Existing BLIST Structure

It is difficult to categorically state that there is a real institutional mechanism in place to oversee the implementation of the BLIST Plan. A BLIST Consultative Council (or BLIST Forum) was informally organized in a Memorandum of Agreement signed by BLIST LGUs on 19 February 1994 to organize into a consultative forum or body to "coordinate the planning, implementation and monitoring of development activities in the BLIST area especially projects and activities that transcend political boundaries." Since February 1994, it has met sporadically to act as adviser in the finalization of the BLIST Urban Master Plan and to oversee the implementation of the Plan. The last time it met was sometime in the first quarter of 1996 to map out plans for the approval of the Plan by the BLIST LGUs. Since then the council/forum has not met officially, although at times the LIST mayors meet informally to discuss mutual issues and concerns. The forum has not yet been officially dissolved.

Eventually Executive Order 175 was issued creating the Northwestern Luzon Growth Quadrangle (NWLGQ) Commission which would be responsible for the overall direction, coordination and supervision of the entire NWLGQ development efforts. Under this Commission, the Quad East (BLIST Area) Task Force was organized March 26, 1996 responsible for promoting the BLIST area as a growth node under the NWLGQ Figure 5.2 presents the current organizational structure of the said BLIST Area Task Force.

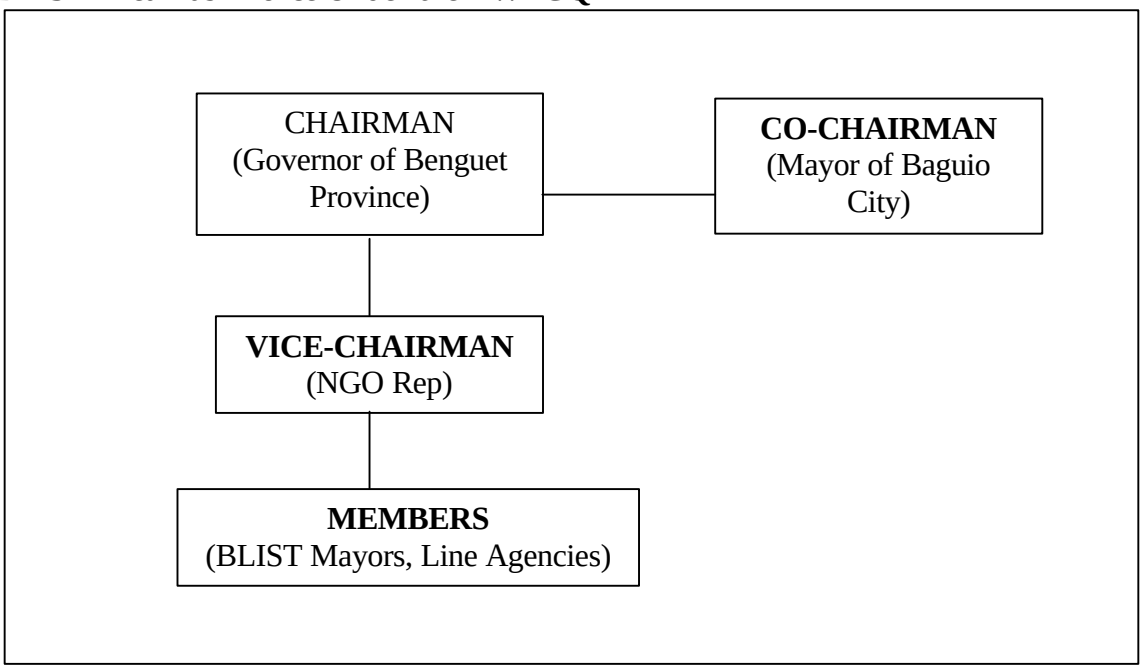
The BLIST Task Force has essentially adopted the compositional definition of the Consultative Forum envisioned under the BLIST Plan. The BLIST plan proposed the membership to include the five mayors with representatives of provincial government, other relevant national, regional agencies, NGOs, leading private sector organizations. This was adopted by the BLIST Area Task Force. The functions of the BLIST Area Task Force is to oversee the planning, coordination and implementation of programs/projects in the BLIST Area within the context of the overall North Quad Plan. On the argument that the North Quad Plan is basically consistent with the BLIST Master Plan, then the Consultative Forum is now being relived by the BLIST Task Force (BTF).

Figure 5.1
BLIST Organisation for Structure Plan Implementation



Source: BDUPP, Main Volume, 1994

Figure 5.2
BLIST Area Task Force Under the NWLGQ



Whether the BLIST Task Force has been addressing the very basic issues of the Structure Plan is a sensitive question. Those in the know would claim that the BLIST Task Force has been tackling these urban development issues and are trying their best through their regular meetings to address these issues. For example, in terms of solid waste, the agreement of the BTF in their February 1998 meeting is to wait for recommendations of the consultancy firm undertaking a Feasibility Study on the BLIST Solid Waste Project. On the other hand, others may think that since the local governments in the BLIST area are still singly undertaking solid waste management in terms of recycling and reuse of refuse as well as landfill site identification through local or nationally assisted programs, it may indicate that BTF may not be completely successful in this regard. The same holds true for water supply distribution and development of new water sources. Also, the fact that other urban development concerns such as housing shortage, traffic, transportation are not given much attention by the BLIST TF may add to the need for a more responsive BLIST wide structure other than the Task Force. However, it should also be emphasized that the BLIST LGUs are aware of the need to have a common solid waste management system for the entire BLIST area.

In terms of projects, the BLIST Task Force had some positive effect in that it is able to exert a sort of "pressure" to line agencies to "implement" the identified BLIST projects. The NWLGQ Commission "champions" these identified priority projects to then President Fidel V. Ramos and the heads of the national departments and in this way , results are achieved. These list of priority projects that the Area Task Force "shepherd" are those that are identified in the BLIST Plan such as the Western Link Road and the West Itogon Countryside Park.

It may, however, be unreasonable to judge the effectiveness of the Task Force on the basis of how they address these concerns inasmuch as functionally it was created to look into area project planning, coordination and implementation in the context of the North Quad. Moreover, activities of the Task Force are also determined substantially by higher order structures and funds availability within the NWLGQ Commission. The BLIST Task Force by virtue of its name is not a policymaking body but an implementing arm of such a larger structure which gets its overall policy guidelines from the Commission. One of the policy guidelines of the Commission is that activities to be promoted within the BLIST Area should complement or be supportive of other activities being promoted in other growth nodes within the North QUAD Area.

Given the foregoing, it can be said that there is a form of structure that looks at BLIST concerns (i.e. BLIST Task Force). However, its propensity and motivation to deal with the larger and broader concerns and the comprehensiveness of the scope of its responsibilities can stand improvement.

Recent events in CAR particularly on the revival of the metro issue attest to the fact that a gap exists in instituting a mechanism that will deal with important urban concerns being currently faced in the area. There are, however, different understanding or interpretation of the BLIST cooperation which surfaced with the defeat in the plebiscite of the Cordillera Autonomous Region Act. [3] The Office of the President has

[3] Recently, the Metropolitan Baguio concept was again revived as a means of spurring development in Baguio City and its neighboring areas after the defeat of Republic Act 8438 (An Act to Establish the Cordillera Autonomous Region). An article in the March 29, 1998 issue of *Midland Courier* titled

also taken the initiative to formalize institute reforms in the management of the BLIST by tasking NEDA-CAR to draft an Executive Order creating a BLIST Coordinating Council.

6. Points For Consideration in Handling Metro BLIST

Given the preceding account of development expansion in the BLIST area and the institutional transformations that have taken place in managing the area, the following may be of value to policymakers who would want to take a second look at BLIST and the challenges that it continues to confront.

6.1 Owning the Vision and Reconsidering the Benefits of Cooperation

The difficulty in instituting a mechanism to handle BLIST concerns can be partly attributed to their seeming lack of appreciation of the municipalities on the benefits to be gained from cooperation under one structure. The BLIST mayors although they understand the importance of the BLIST Plan are not very sure about the benefits they can gain from implementing the Plan . The historical resistance and allegation to it as a plan that benefits mostly Baguio and that the adjoining municipalities will be absorbers of Baguio's dirt (although efforts to clarify the matter have been substantial) may have created a psychological barrier to motivate a more binding arrangement among the BLIST municipalities to see through the Plan's implementation. The mayors are also perhaps fearful that they may lose to the formal structure some of their executive powers and prerogatives.

Looking at BLIST like a single organism, one of the metaphors shared in one of the BLIST public consultations, may provide a graphic concept of a BLIST cooperation. It would be worthy for municipalities to revisit what they have realized to be the benefits as well as their major contribution to the cooperation during the various consultations held for the BLIST plan preparation (See Table 4). From this initial listing, they can sit down together and validate or add other items they expect from the cooperation and discuss how they can work out their full realization.

6.2 Installing A More Binding and Authoritative Structure

It is important for local governments to talk to one another. Local governments in the BLIST area discuss mutual concerns but in the public consultations some have complained that "talking takes too long". This concern indicates the public's clamor to deal with issues with dispatch and authority especially on immediate issues at hand. A more decisive stance and action are expected by the people and this can be facilitated if a strong management structure is in place.

"Groups Asked To Be Calm on Post-Autonomy Moves" mentioned that some leaders (did not name the leaders) vowed to convert Baguio City and its neighboring towns into a Metro Baguio status similar to that of the Metro Manila Development Authority. Likewise, an article titled" Autonomy Offcially Rejected" in *Zig-Zag* dated March 15, 1998 mentioned that the "creation of a Metro Baguio composed of Baguio and adjoining areas was also reiterated by Congressman Edgar Avila as another avenue for development". The revival of metropolitan Baguio concept came as this was perceived to be an alternative strategy to achieving development at least for Baguio City, instead of establishing a Cordillera Autonomous Region which was rejected by Baguio residents.

As have been the experience of many emerging metropolises in the country, the crafting of an appropriate institutional structure is not an easy undertaking. Metropolitan arrangements in the Philippines vary in form, functions and scope. Under the current decentralized system, however, the structure that has received more attraction is one that guarantees LGU executives sufficient powers while surrendering certain functions or responsibilities to an integrative body to realize a united vision under a cooperative arrangement. A menu of

Table 5
Expected Benefits From and Share in the BLIST Cooperation

BLIST	What It Can Benefit	What It Can Share/ Provide
Baguio	Water source from Sablan, Itogon, Tuba or La Trinidad to meet high demand for water. Possible arrangements for a common landfill site. Better traffic situation especially with effective coordination with La Trinidad. De-congestion as other urban functions (industrial, residential, commercial, and institutional) can be relocated to the other LIST municipalities. Cleaner, better urban environment with the decongestion of urban functions and better traffic situation.	Perform the role of a service center to LIST. Provide a sustainable market for LIST products and services. Provide payment for water provided by LIST municipalities. Provide gateway to other BLIST tourism sites.
La Trinidad	More integrated approach to better handle urban growth and expansion especially in the aspect of housing and road development. Water sources from Sablan, Tuba or Itogon. Local economy more developed due to relocation of certain urban functions such as commerce, education, industry etc. and due to more expanded and intensified tourism activities. More employment opportunities and potential for higher income for its residents. Higher revenue collections from greater real property and business taxes collection on the part of the LGU.	Provide the alternative business, educational, industrial center and residential area for Baguio residents or other in-migrants. Provide possible area for landfill. Tourism sites. Agricultural production area. Industrial sites for light, non-pollutive, low water consumption industries.
Itogon	Tourism plans can increase employment opportunities and increased income of residents. Road development for better access.	Provide water source Provide land for housing, industrial, residential purposes. Provide possible area for landfill.

	Local economy more developed due to relocation of certain functions such as commerce, education, industry etc. and due to more expanded and intensified tourism activities. More employment opportunities, potential for higher income of its residents. Higher revenue collections from real property and business taxes on the part of the LGU. Additional income from payment of water from other BLIST municipalities. Market for its agricultural products.	Provide area for countryside tourism. Agricultural production area.
Sablan	Road development and positive effects on transport of vegetable produce; Resolution of boundary disputes with La Trinidad and Tuba. Local economy more developed due to relocation of certain functions such as commerce, education, industry etc. and due to more expanded and intensified tourism activities. Better employment opportunities, potential for higher income for its residents. Higher revenue collections from real property and business taxes on the part of the LGU. Additional income from payment of water from other BLIST municipalities. Market for agricultural products leading to higher income.	Water Source Provide possible area for landfill. Provide possible area for housing and industrial sites. Tourism sites Agricultural production area
Tuba	Road development. Arrangement can provide opportunity for local government to determine resource utilization and set appropriate user fees for the same. Additional income from payment of water used by other BLIST municipalities. Local economy more developed due to relocation of certain functions such as commerce, education, industry etc. and due to more expanded and intensified tourism activities. Better employment opportunities and potential for higher	Water Source Land for residential, institutional, commercial, industrial purposes. Tourism site Agricultural production area. Possible area for landfill

	income for its residents. Higher revenue collections from real property and business taxes on the part of the LGU. Market for agricultural products leading to higher income.	

Basic Source: Documentation of Various Municipal Public Consultations on BDUPP, 1994 and inputs from NEDA-CAR Technical Staff

options are available which include a Metropolitan Authority, a Metropolitan Council, a Metropolitan Government, a Metropolitan Corporation or a reconstituted political entity.

It may be worthwhile to evaluate the two alternative structures proposed in the Structure Plan. First, the metro authority that was proposed which is defined as a body "which subsumes most or all major political and administrative powers and responsibilities currently undertaken by the individual BLIST authorities" is close to establishing a Metropolitan Government. It may not only be unfeasible to establish because of resistance from the BLIST municipalities but also because it violates the present Constitution. The present Charter safeguards the LGUs against any form of disempowerment as a result of the establishment of metropolitan authorities or similar bodies.

The other proposal for a Consultative Forum is more or less close to establishing a Metropolitan Council (as in the case of Metro Naga and Metro Cebu) in that membership is largely by the member municipalities. Leadership, however, is not so well defined in the proposed Forum. Perhaps one can derive a lesson from the experiences of the created Coordinating Forum whose leadership is vague and which eventually ceased to exist, and the BLIST Task Force led by the Governor of Benguet and remains in place. It may be workable to adopt such model for evolving a new BLIST structure. However, the structure should have a comprehensive mandate, power and authority, have the independence to work out its own policies within the BLIST area of coverage (not necessarily being limited to working within a higher framework of development), be given sufficient funds for its operations and have a full time secretariat.

There are instances that the need for cooperation is so glaring and completely understood but not one of the member municipalities or cities in the arrangement would want to take the initiative. Generally, the expectation of initiative is to come from the dominant city because it has the greatest stake in the arrangement, is usually regarded as the "big brother" to other LGUs and also since the other municipalities are ethically constrained to make the first move because they are structurally under the provincial government. In the case of BLIST, even though Baguio City admittedly has the largest stake in the arrangement in the immediate term, it is concerned with the sensitivities of the other municipalities. Hence, its initiative might be misconstrued as a move to expand its political power or authority given the strong reaction made in the past concerning the formation of Metro Baguio. On the other hand, the "little brothers" (adjoining municipalities) may find the urban development problems too enormous and complex, whose solution may not bring immediate and tangible benefits that they may

prefer other agencies to handle or coordinate the resolution of these problems with their cooperation. The mayors of the other "little municipalities" can then concentrate their efforts on "doable" and "high-impact" projects within their political jurisdiction.

In this particular situation, national leaders or regional authorities may provide the push for the creation of the needed management structure. There are existing models that can be replicated in this regard. The recent establishment of the Metro Cebu Development Council is an example of a Regional Development Council (RDC) initiative in view of the long overdue creation of a formal body to manage Metro Cebu. On the other hand, the Metro Naga Development Council is an arrangement formed by Naga City and the 14 municipalities in the province of Camarines Sur but was legally created through an Executive Order by the President to provide for funding support to implement its programs and projects. Their experiences can provide some lessons for BLIST in crafting its own structure.

In all these possibilities, however, it would be unwise to adopt a model devoid of a full understanding of the socio-economic and political context upon which the model has proven to be workable. It is important to realize that in the case of BLIST that the failure of operationalizing the metropolitan arrangement is largely based on the difficulty in fostering local ownership of the vision for the BLIST area. Until this is resolved and fully comprehended by all concerned, structures that will be placed, even originating from the top leadership will not be effective and sustainable.

7. Concluding Remarks

The paper has suggested the need for BLIST municipalities to reconsider its full support to a cooperative arrangement with each other considering the benefits and the support they can give to such cooperation. With this as the foundation, an institutional handle or a management structure can be created that can directly address the immediate and long-term urban BLIST concerns. It is recognized that the BLIST Task Force plays an important role in the realization of the North Quad Plan and in facilitating likewise the implementation of the BLIST Master Plan, given the "hiatus" of the Consultative BLIST Forum. Thus, it is suggested that this remain. However, it seems imperative to evolve an independent structure (similar to the BLIST Forum) that will directly handle key urban issues in BLIST such as water supply, solid waste management, transport, road development and tourism. This structure should likewise oversee the updating or re-planning the BLIST Area and coordinate, implement programs/projects within the BLIST Area. Given the socio-political dynamics in the area and in the spirit of decentralization, such structure will be locally led and managed to be workable and effective. However, it must be clothed with sufficient powers & authority to set BLIST-wide policies over the scope of its responsibilities.

The statement made that "talking is taking too long" may be countered by a deliberate attempt to get organized, make agreements more binding and translate the same into concrete actions. It is hoped that this initial discussion of the basic BLIST issues has impressed the need for the BLIST mayors to fully own or espouse the vision first presented in the BLIST Master Plan and the urgency to come together to attain greater synergy in their development efforts.

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