

# Jakarta developments in 2014

**A**lthough the rather dramatic drop in the exchange rate of the currency and the gathering political momentum for the elections in 2014 hit key headlines in the latter stages of 2013, a number of encouraging decisions were also made in 2013 toward addressing the chronic transport issues that plague the city of Jakarta and its surroundings and also the first steps relating to the different projects associated with water.

The foundation works for some of the significant number of tall buildings that are to be erected over the next decade, estimated at over 230 by property developing consultants, also got underway, although the impact on transport was unlikely to have featured as strongly as it might in the decision-making processes that add these buildings to the skyscape.

On the transport side, the two key public rail transport projects, the MRT and monorail, at last emerged from the planning and bureaucratic stages and showed some early physical signs of happening.

These projects will inevitably cause disruptions during construction to the already congested city routes where the respective alignments will impinge, and this will have to be endured by us for the next three years or so, even while the numbers of vehicles and motor-cycles increases every week.

City congestion noticeably worsens every year, and perhaps it is time to take seriously an electronic road pricing system for the city center, first studied a decade ago.

There is more talk about this, but will steps to implement be realized?

There are already plans to increase the number of monorail links, initially coming into the city, e.g. the plan for an east approach from Bekasi being promoted by SOEs, and one could expect other suburban links being brought forward as well as within the city itself.



**Scott Younger**  
JAKARTA

It is important that some form of standardization of structure is adopted from the beginning, especially when there should be a seamless approach to operations even though the promotion and funding comes from different sources.

It is also important to ensure that there is strict compatibility between the monorail operating systems adopted, a matter that has plagued the normal railway routes where there has been a variety of systems in place depending on the source of funding.

Along with the operating system(s) there need to be proper skills in place and a strict code of conduct for operatives. Breakdowns through poor operating skills or inadequate maintenance will be very apparent but justifiably not tolerated by the using public. The same will apply to plans being brought forward for monorail projects being espoused for other cities.

Another project that has been aired for some time but not implemented is the rail link from city center to Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, already suffering severe capacity congestion.

Such is the severity of this congestion that Halim on the east side of the city is having to be brought back into handling a selected range of commercial operations, something that effectively ended on March 31, 1985, coming up to 29 years ago.

Sensibly the air-link project now considers a connection through to Halim, thence linking the two airports. The question is will 2014 see some visible movement on this important outstanding project, being championed under the public private partnership (PPP) process, which in itself has yet to prove itself

in the eyes of the public?

Perhaps this can be put to the top of the PPP list for completion, with phase 1, city center to Soekarno-Hatta a reality by 2016.

For successful city rail projects, in order to maximize passenger usage, attention has to be paid from the beginning for the provision of multi-storey car parking at terminals and selected key stations, elsewhere known as providing "park and ride" facilities. Properly developed park-and-ride arrangements could have a notable positive impact on city road traffic through a reduction in car journeys and should be made compatible with any adopted electronic road pricing system.

Most people will not remember that in the mid 1990s, a fully prepared feasibility study for a multi-modal transport terminus at Manggarai was prepared by a top US architect.

Unfortunately, the plan was necessarily shelved as a result of the 1998 economic crisis and the city has moved on, but the idea was sound.

Will 2014 see some traction in dealing with surface water supply projects pushed along in order that the city government can take stronger measures to reduce the dependence on abstracted groundwater which has had such a deleterious impact on settlement, especially in the north of the city?

Plans and designs to build the new Kerian dam to the southwest of the city with pipeline to serve the west side of the city, and to bring water directly from Jatiluhur to the east side of the city, without being heavily contaminated by flowing along the West Tarum Canal, have already been prepared. It would be good to see progress on these important projects.

The plan to install a sea wall to protect the city has been gaining momentum and is generally accepted as an important endeavor for the city, acknowledging that this is a long term expensive project of at least a decade in all its manifestations.

A late 2013 large business-supported visit from Holland, headed by their Prime Minister, raised the profile of this project, which must include the provision of fresh water storage to serve development in the north of the city.

These developments must assume current recycling technology which also requires stronger implementation of the regulatory structures that feature in the green building code.

In similar vein 2014 should see steady continuation of flood control measures, and the start of dealing firmly with sanitation and waste issues, even initially in prioritized zones of the city, and there is a case here for pushing on with educated and trained community support, something encouragingly taken on board by the current city leaders.

There is much to do in 2014 with many projects running in parallel, not forgetting our reliance on a regular power supply. Perhaps some solar energy for new buildings as a contribution to requirement, in line with the green building code.

Interesting times for this major conurbation.

**City congestion worsens every year, and perhaps it is time to take seriously an electronic road pricing system.**

*The writer, who has degrees in civil engineering from Glasgow University, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Hong Kong, is a director at PT Nusantara Infrastructure Tbk. and vice chairman of EuroCham.*

*He has worked in Indonesia for nearly 30 years as an academic and consultant in the infrastructure sector on a number of projects.*