

# Capas-Botolan Road: Paving the way for motorist convenience and economic growth

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The Capas-Botolan Road Project is set to transform lives and drive economic progress by connecting the provinces of Zambales and Tarlac.

With its promise to cut travel time between the two provinces to just one hour and 20 minutes, the road has sparked excitement and hope among communities in Central Luzon.

Spearheaded by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), this project represents more than just infrastructure. It symbolizes opportunity, convenience, and a brighter future for countless Filipinos.

## BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN PROVINCES

For decades, travelers moving between Zambales and Tarlac have endured lengthy detours through Pampanga, Bataan, or Pangasinan, with trips lasting up to three hours.

This long journey has discouraged trade, strained personal relationships, and slowed the region's growth.



The Capas-Botolan Road will change this by providing a 38.4-kilometer direct route with eight bridges spanning two kilometers.

This modern highway will feature an 11-inch-thick concrete pavement, wide shoulders, guardrails, and slope protection for enhanced safety and durability.

Once operational, the road will cut travel time and lower transportation costs. Daily commuters, truck drivers, and small business owners can look forward to saving time and money.

For many, it means a fresh start and a chance to pursue opportunities that were previously out of reach.

## HOPES PINNED ON THE ROAD

For Ramonchito Cruz, a farmer from Zambales, the road offers a lifeline.

Ramon's mangoes are highly sought after in neighboring provinces, but the long travel time means his fruits often arrive bruised or overripe.

"Sometimes, I have to sell my produce at a lower price because of delays... This road will make it easier and faster to reach markets," he said.

Similarly, Anna Morales, who owns a beach resort in Zambales, sees the road as a way to attract more visitors.

"Travelers complain about the hassle of getting here. If the road is completed, we expect more guests, especially from Tarlac and Pampanga," she said.

For families like the de Leons in Tarlac, the road promises more than convenience—it's about connection. "We have relatives in Zambales we haven't seen in years because it's too far. This road will bring us closer," says Marco de Leon.

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN EVERY MILE

The Capas-Botolan road project is expected to drive significant economic growth in the region by improving access to key trade and tourism hubs in Central Luzon.

For local farmers and producers, better roads mean easier access to markets.

Zambales is famous for its mangoes and seafood, while Tarlac is known for its rice and sugarcane. With reduced transportation costs, these goods can reach buyers quicker and fresher.

The road will also encourage investment in agriculture and agribusiness, allowing small-scale farmers to grow their operations.

## BOOSTING THE TOURISM SECTOR

Zambales and Tarlac are home to some of Central Luzon's most popular destinations. From the pristine beaches of Zambales to Tarlac's cultural and historical landmarks, the improved connectivity will open up the region to more local and international tourists.

Tourism-related businesses—resorts, restaurants, souvenir shops, and tour operators—are expected to thrive. Additionally, eco-tourism initiatives, such as hiking trails and nature reserves, will benefit from increased accessibility.

## **ENHANCING TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

The road will link Zambales and Tarlac to economic centers like Pampanga and Nueva Ecija, creating a seamless network for trade and logistics.

Manufacturing, retail, and agriculture industries will surely benefit from faster and more efficient transportation.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL GROWTH**

The Capas-Botolan Road is not just about convenience; it reflects the government's commitment to sustainable infrastructure development.

As a key component of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos Jr.’s “Build Better More” initiative, this P15.474 billion project emphasizes the importance of eco-friendly practices and long-term planning.

By integrating features like slope protection and minimizing environmental disruption, the project aims to strike a balance between progress and preservation.

Local governments are also exploring green tourism opportunities, ensuring that development along the route supports environmental sustainability.

## **DRIVING CHANGE FOR COMMUNITIES**

For residents and businesses, the road symbolizes hope. In areas where poverty and lack of access have long been challenges, the Capas-Botolan Road promises a brighter future.

With an economic internal rate of return (EIRR) of 14.83%, the project is projected to deliver long-term socio-economic benefits, including job creation, reduced poverty, and social integration.

## **CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS**

While the project holds immense promise, it is not without challenges. Funding, environmental considerations, and construction logistics remain critical hurdles.

The project is currently in its Detailed Engineering Design (DED) phase, scheduled for completion by 2026.

Construction works will follow from 2027 to 2030, with financing proposed through a partnership with Korea.

Despite the timeline, anticipation continues to grow among communities. Residents are optimistic that the government will deliver on its promise.

## LIFELINE FOR THE FUTURE

The Capas-Botolan Road Project exemplifies the transformative power of infrastructure.

Beyond concrete and steel, it represents progress, connection, and opportunity for millions of Filipinos.

For Ramonchito Cruz, it's a chance to expand his farming business. For Anna Morales, it's an opportunity to boost her resort. For families like the de Leons, it's a path to reunions and cherished moments.

As the project nears completion, Central Luzon looks ahead to a future of faster travel, stronger communities, and economic growth. The Capas-Botolan Road is not just a road—it is a journey toward a brighter tomorrow. **(PTV)**