

EVENT: Honolulu Philippines Sister Cities Goodwill Delegation

DATES: February 21-27, 2024

LOCATIONS: Manila, Baguio, Candon, Vigan, and Laoag, Philippines

ATTENDEE: Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, Councilmember, District 6

I was honored to participate in the 2024 Honolulu Philippines Sister Cities Goodwill Delegation, which included myself, Council Chairman Tommy Waters, Councilmembers Radiant Cordero, Matthew Weyer and Val Okimoto, Mayor's Representative Director of Facility Maintenance Gene Albano, and Director of International Relations Brad Kitsu. We visited five of the seven Honolulu Sister Cities in the Philippines from February 21st- 27th, 2024. The Delegation visited the Philippines for the purposes of renewing and reinvigorating the sister city ties between Honolulu and sister cities in the Philippines. Below is a detailed recapturing of the Goodwill Mission.

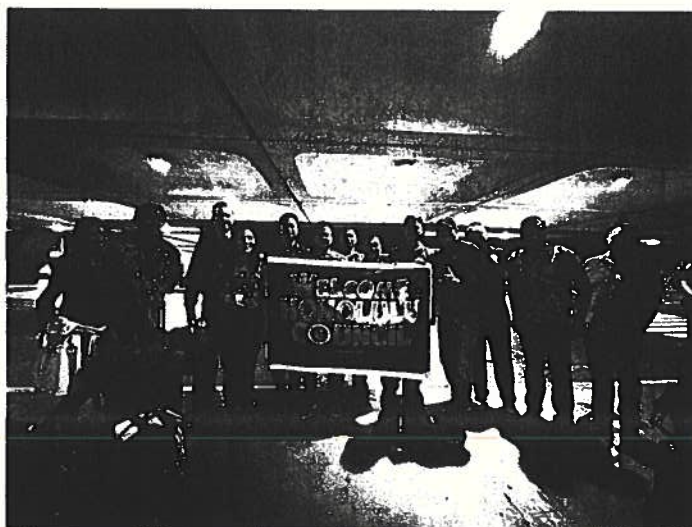
Wednesday February 21st, 2024

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm Chair Waters and the Honolulu Delegation arrived in Manila. They were received by Manila City Council representatives and officers of the Philippines National Police, and were escorted from the arrival gate, thru customs and onto the bus. The reception included greeters with a "Welcome to Manila" Banner for the Honolulu Delegation, and were presented with small welcoming token.

7:00pm – 9:00 pm The Honolulu Delegation attended a dinner reception sponsored by the Manila City Council. Members of the Manila Council and the members of the Honolulu Delegation participated in a meet and greet over traditional Filipino dishes, as well as discussed the upcoming activities for the 3 day stay in Manila. Councilor Uno Lim, co-organizer of the 2024 Honolulu Philippines Sister City Goodwill Mission, greeted the group and shared the procedure for the activities that were scheduled for the following Days.

This was my second time meeting with Councilor Lim, as I had met with him in April 2023 during a personal trip to the Philippines.

Following the Dinner, the Honolulu Delegation was transported to the Diamond Hotel in Malate, for check in.

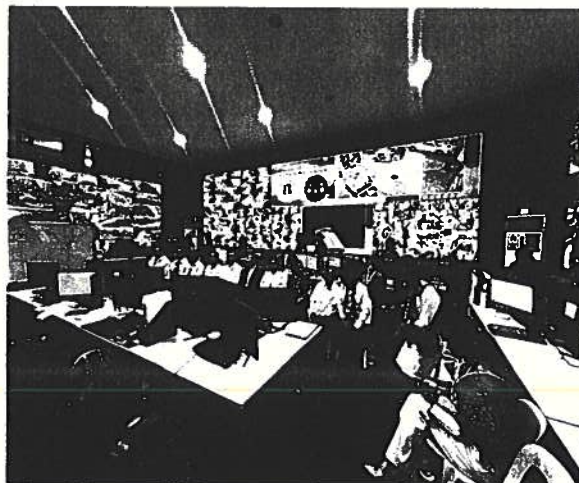


Thursday February 22nd, 2024

8:00 am – 3:00 pm The Honolulu Delegation, led by Chair Tommy Waters, began the day with a visit to Manila City Hall. Upon arrival to Manila City Hall, the Honolulu Delegation was provided a warm welcoming from the Manila City Band members of the Manila City Government. The first activity upon arrival was a visit to the Manila Clock Tower Museum. The significance of the Manila Clock Tower is that stands as a memorial for the Heroes who fought for Manila in the historical Battle of Manila. During the Battle of Manila of 1945, the clock tower along with the Manila City Hall were shattered and destroyed. Fast forwarding to 2020, under the guidance of then Mayor Isko Moreno the clock tower was renovated and repurposed to house a Museum that would feature the Battle of Manila's history to signify the resiliency of the Philippines. Under the leadership of current Mayor Honey Lacuna Pangan, the clock tower serves as a historical tourist attraction that provides the history of Manila and honors the fallen war heroes of the past.



Following the tour of the historic Manila Clock Tower, the Honolulu Delegation went to the Manila Emergency Operations Center to meet with Director of Manila's Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office Mr. Arnel M. Angeles and Deputy Chief Mr. Christian Evangelista. Deputy Chief Evangelista gave an informative presentation which specifically touched upon controlling vehicle emissions, mitigation of storm surge and land erosion, and pollution control. Takeaways from Chief Evangelista's presentation are; 1) the propagation of the Nilad Plant, similar to Hawaii's mangroves, a native species to the Philippines, that not only provides edification to shorelines when grown in masses, but is also an air pollutant absorber, providing both shoreline protection but also air quality controlling attributes 2) repurposing of trash and waste. Manila has developed a state of the art Material Recovery Facility (MRF) to coincide with government conducted rehabilitation and sustainable clean-up drives of Manila Bay and surrounding areas, taking the generated trash and waste and turning it into useable, everyday life products (i.e. reusable shopping bags and construction materials such as hollow tiles and building blocks.)

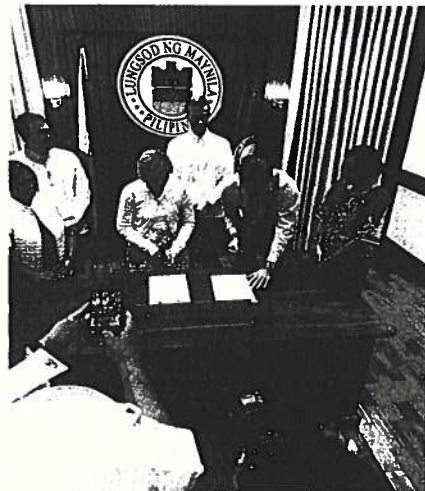
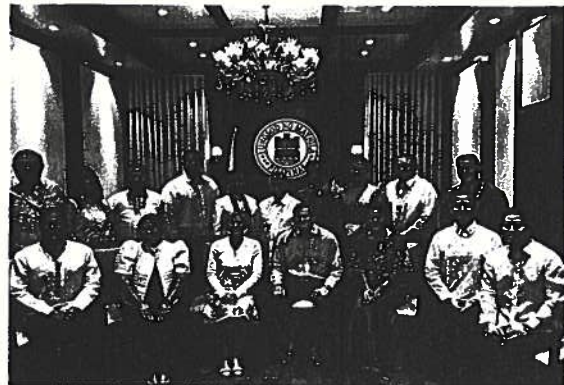
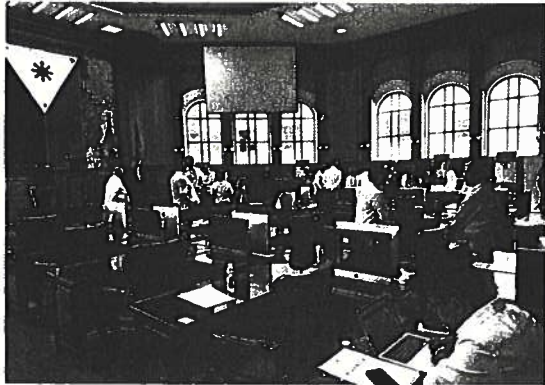


Following the visit to the Emergency Operations Center, the Honolulu Delegation attended a full Manila Council Meeting. At this meeting the Manila Council proposed and passed Resolution 71 Series 2024, ratifying the Sister City Agreement between the City of Manila and the City of Honolulu.

The resolution was passed by 26 attending members of the 38 person Council. The passing of the resolution allowed for a formal renewal agreement signed by Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna Pangan and Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi and Council Chair Tommy Waters.

Each Councilmember was offered the opportunity to give remarks before the Manila City Council. My remarks can be found here:

<https://www.instagram.com/tylerdossantostam/reel/C38o26CBapK/>.



After the passing of Resolution 71 at the full Manila Council Hearing and the signing with Mayor Honey Lacuna Pangan, the Honolulu Delegation sped off to Malacañan Palace for a meeting with Philippine President, the Honorable Ferdinand “Bong Bong” Marcos Jr.

At this meeting, the Honolulu Delegation was joined by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i, Honolulu Branch. The courtesy visit with President Marcos provided an opportunity for the Honolulu Delegation to share the purpose of the Goodwill Mission and the importance of the budding relationship between Hawai'i and the Philippines.

Council Chair Tommy Waters spoke at the engagement, offering thanks for the opportunity to be in the Philippines and the opportunity to meet with City Government Officials to fortify the bond between Honolulu and its Filipino Sister Cities in the name of enhanced business opportunities and partnerships. Chair Waters took the time to discuss Honolulu's Sister City relationships with



the Filipino Sister Cities and the importance of revitalizing the relationships, to share in best practiced policies to address the similar circumstances of housing, climate change and workforce issues shared between the two, as well as potential business/economic opportunities, touching upon the Filipino Chamber of Commerce's' mission.



5:15 pm – 8:00 pm Following the day's activities, the Honolulu Delegation attended a "Aloha Night" Dinner sponsored by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i-Honolulu Chapter, in support of their cause to encourage business/ economic trade between the Philippines and Hawai'i. A particular aspect of the dinner that was a major focus for the Honolulu Delegation was the focus on providing support to the workforce in Honolulu specifically teachers and first responders (nurses and police officers), and the significance of the immigration process. Currently, Filipinos need to acquire a Federal Government approved visa in order to gain entrance to the United States. The Philippines specialize in providing overseas workers, and is the number one exported commodity from the Philippines. At the dinner, the Councilmembers were scattered throughout the room, touching base with the attendees, gathering information and thoughts regarding the various issues and challenges that need to be addressed in order to take advantage of such a program.

Friday February 23rd, 2024

9:00 am – 12:00 pm The Honolulu Delegation began the day with a visit to the U.S. Embassy, led by Political Officer Natalia Rankine-Galloway. In our meeting with the members of the U.S. Embassy, the Honolulu Delegation was able to freely ask questions pertaining to United States engagement with the Philippines in Manila. This was my second time to meet with Ms. Rankine-Galloway, after my personal visit to the Philippines in April 2023.

The overarching theme of the discussion touched upon the U.S.'s pursuit of international relationships between the Philippines and the United States. The members of the Embassy praised the Honolulu Delegation's commitment to invigorating its Sister City relationships and how it coincides with the United States current objectives with the Philippines. The Embassy emphasized that the work being done at the city level, provides tremendous assistance in fortifying the U.S.-Philippines relationship, which has become the pinnacle of President Biden's plan in Southeast Asia. Other topics such as the critical nature of the energy crisis in the Philippines and the possible repercussions for the United States, immigration struggles, and poverty were also discussed.



Following the meeting, the Honolulu Delegation was given a tour of the U.S. Embassy compound. The tour included the history of the property and its presences during World War II and the Battle of Manila. Noting the occupation of Manila by the Japanese, to the forfeiture of the property to the United States and the historic events in between, the Honolulu Delegation was moved and inspired by the facts that were being presented. The tour surely moved the Honolulu Delegation and provided a different view point of the Philippines and its heritage.

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm After the meeting and tour of the U.S. Embassy, the Honolulu Delegation had a brief lunch and then went to Quezon City to meet with Director Elenida Basug of the Division of Environment and Natural Resources. Director Basug enlightened the group with a discussion of the projects her division was currently working on the address Climate Change in Manila. Amongst the topics of seal level rise and flooding throughout Manila due to storm surges, Director Basug presented a current project that her team is working on in Ermita, which is similar to the proposed flood mitigation project for the Ala Wai Canal. It was good to see that similar proposals have been executed in other parts of the world and its efficiency. This discussion was particularly educational for DFM Director Gene Albano, whose Department is vital to the Ala Wai Project's successful implementation.



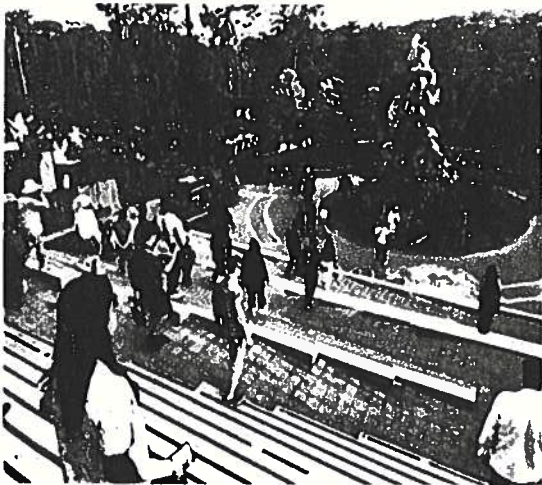
Saturday February 24th, 2024

8:00 am to 8:00 pm Starting out the day with a 6 hour drive from Manila to Baguio, the Honolulu Delegation took the opportunity to take in the sights and sounds of the Philippine Countryside. The views of the Philippines agricultural landscape was both breath taking and educational as the Delegations was able to see the vast difference between the urban infrastructure to the rural, less sophisticated conditions of the countryside.

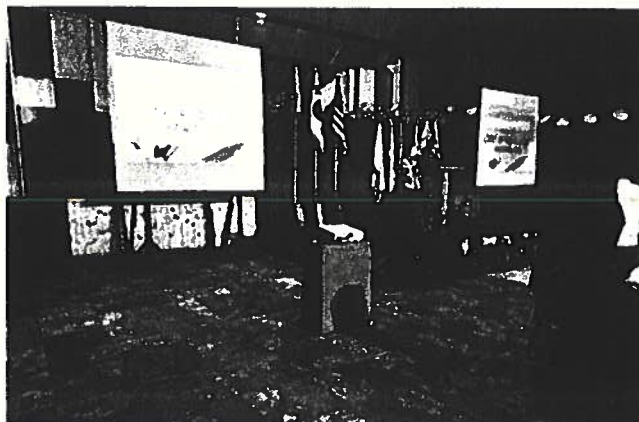




After checking into the hotel and a brief meeting with Baguio Senior Tourism Operations Officer, Mr. Joma Rivera, the Honolulu Delegation visited the Baguio Botanical Garden. This special botanical garden specializes in floral exhibits native to each of Baguio's Sister Cities. During the Delegations brief visit to the Garden, the Honolulu Councilmembers were shown a special section where space is being held for Honolulu's participation. The section is being held should the City and County of Honolulu decide to participate by funding and building out the section. The idea would be for Honolulu to plant an indigenous plant species in the Botanical Garden and showcasing all that Honolulu has to offer.



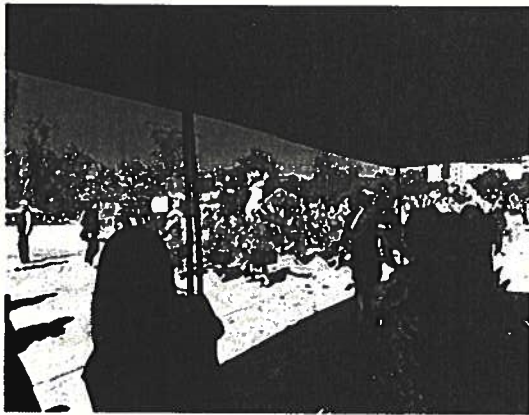
After the visit to the Botanical Garden, the delegation attended a Sister City Welcome Dinner hosted by Baguio Mayor Benjie Magalong. The dinner was attended by Baguio Sister Cities from 1) San Antonio, Texas, 2) Gongju, South Korea, 3) Incheon, South Korea, 4) Taebaek, South Korea, 5) Nepal, and 6) China. Members of the individual Sister Cities, including Chair Waters, had the opportunity to address the group and share their thoughts on the Sister City Program and how the relationship is individually beneficial to their City.



The dinner itself was part of the celebration of the Panagbenga Festival, a month long festival held annually in Baguio. The Panagbenga Festival although also known as the "Flower Festival" is more of a celebration of the co-existence of the past and the present. In Baguio, the indigenous tribes still exist and live synchronously with modern day living, and is celebrated and honored throughout the festival culminating with the Grand Festival Float Parade on the final days of the month long celebration.

Sunday Feb. 25th, 2024

8:00 am – 11:00 am Before departing Baguio, the Honolulu delegation was a guest in attendance of the aforementioned Pangbenga Grand Festival Float Parade. The delegation sat with other Dignitaries as the finale of the Parade on the Fairgrounds. The Honolulu Delegation was able to participate in the parade's street festival with food and trinkets being sold, as well as take in the parade. The parade was full of beautifully decorated floats as well as dance presentations from the various indigenous tribes that live in Baguio. It was an inspiring moment to see the celebration of life and culture in Baguio and the co-existence of its indigenous people with modern day society.



12:00 pm – 4:00 pm After leaving Baguio, the Honolulu Delegation took a 3 hour drive from Baguio to Candon for a meeting with Candon Mayor Ericson Singson and former Congresswoman Madame Grace Singson. During the brief visit between Candon Mayor Singson and members of the Candon Council, both parties reaffirmed its commitment to revitalizing the Sister City relationship between Honolulu and Candon and agreed to prepare for a Anniversary celebration in 2025.



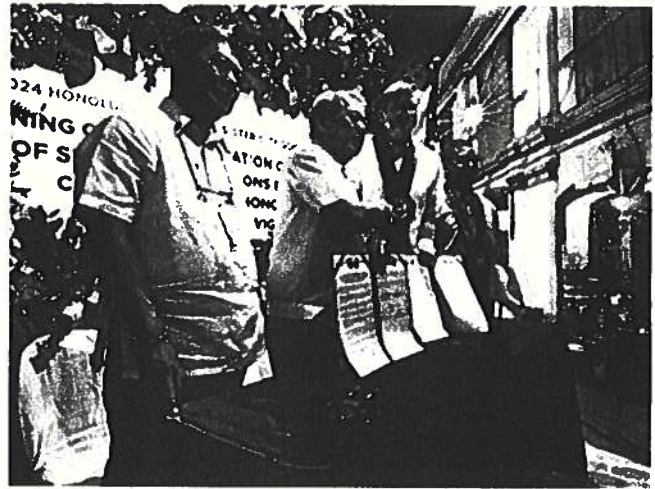
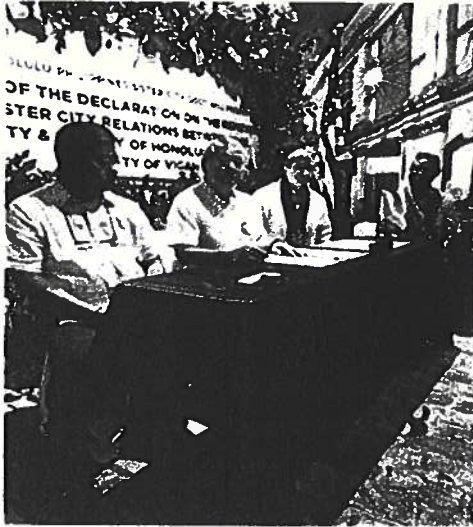


6:00 pm – 10:00 pm After the meeting with Candon Mayor Eric Singson, the Honolulu Delegation continued on to Vigan. Upon arriving in Vigan, the Honolulu Delegation attended a dinner meeting with Mayor Bonito Singson and members of the Vigan City Council. Discussions were light hearted and provided a family like atmosphere. The Honolulu Delegation was treated to a dance performance, traditional Ilocano foods, and conversation regarding building infrastructure and maintaining historical buildings and fixtures, as Vigan, over the years, has been able to maintain its historical Spanish influenced architecture throughout the City.



Monday February 26th, 2024

8:00 am – 11:30 am The Honolulu Delegation began the morning with a tour of the Vigan Historical Museum. The tour covered the history of the Japanese occupation during World War II and how the Spanish colonial influenced architecture survived the war. It was another opportunity again to learn more about the Japanese occupation of the Philippines and the resiliency of the Filipinos to endure and persevere. Following the tour, the Honolulu Delegation proceeded to the 2nd floor where the Sister City Renewal document was signed by Mayor Bonito Singson and Council Chair Tommy Waters (confirming Honolulu Mayor Blangiardi's signature). The signing signified the re-affirmation of the commitment to foster the Sister City relationship and use it to benefit the communities of Honolulu and Vigan. Learning from Mayor Singson and the City of Vigan, the Honolulu Delegation can continue to learn how to preserve the antiquity of historic infrastructure and how to market it for tourism as a self-sustaining entity. The bond created between the two Cities and between Mayor Singson and Chair Waters led to the recent visit to Honolulu by the Vigan Council in Honolulu.



1:00 pm – 4:00 pm Following the signing of the Sister City Renewal Agreement with Vigan, the Honolulu Delegation ventured on to Laoag City. Upon arriving in Laoag City and Laoag City Hall, the Honolulu Delegation was again welcomed by the Laoag Administration and Council. It was there, at Laoag City Hall where Laoag Mayor Michael Marcos Keon hosted a lunch/Sister City Renewal Agreement signing, with the members of Laoag Administration and City Councilmembers in attendance. Mayor Marcos Keon began the ceremony with a warm welcome to the Honolulu Delegation before commenting upon the significance of the timing of the renewal signing. He mentioned that prior to the proposed visit by the Honolulu Delegation and the agreement to sign a renewal agreement, the Philippines Government has sanctioned all City governments to cease establishing any new sister city relationships until further notice. Mayor Marcos Keon spoke to the procedures that needed to be followed in order to clarify that the signing between Honolulu and Vigan was not an establishing of a Sister City Relationship but a renewal that again, re-affirmed the commitment between the two (2) cities to rely on one another in support of the communities they serve.



In our discussions with Mayor Keon and the members of the Laoag City Council, members of the Honolulu City Council including myself reiterated our support for the proposed Laoag-Honolulu direct flight being discussed by Philippine Airlines.

The Laoag Airport has had air service from Philippine Airlines since February 1946, and is now the main hub in northern Philippines. Philippine Air had been serving the Laoag-Honolulu connection since 1974 with a stop in Manila, which was upgraded in 1994 to Boeing 747 jets from Honolulu to Manila with a transfer to a Boeing 737 for the Manila to Laoag leg. In 2009, Hawaiian Airlines and Cebu Pacific Airlines partnered to offer a one-stop connection from Honolulu to Laoag, via Manila.



In October 1996, Philippine Airlines' twice-weekly direct air service called the "Ilocos Express" between Honolulu and Laoag began, with a third flight planned starting in December 1996. This helped to facilitate tourism as well as family reunification visits by Hawai'i Filipinos. The flight enabled passengers to bypass the very congested Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila.

The Laoag International Airport was recently upgraded to permit wide-body jets to land. Through joint initiatives and development projects pursued by the Philippine Department of Transportation and the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, the airport can now serve 200 international passengers and 240 domestic passengers per day.

I intend to work with representatives of the Laoag City Government, as well as with representatives from the office of Ilocos Norte Governor Matthew Manotoc to support the approvals necessary for PAL's Honolulu-Laoag flight on the U.S. side.

For future visits to Laoag, I hope we have the opportunity to discuss clean energy initiatives, as Ilocos Norte is a hub for wind power in the Philippines.

Tuesday February 27th, 2024

This was the last day of the 2024 Honolulu Philippines Sister City Goodwill Mission. The morning was spent packing and organizing *balikbayan* boxes to bring back omiyage both purchased by the Delegation and/or gifted by the Sister Cities.

The Honolulu Delegation flew from Laoag to Manila, with a 3 hour layover in Manila, before continuing on to Honolulu.

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City Council
City and County of Honolulu

2024 MAR 25 P 4: 55

CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

CITY COUNCIL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Date: 03/25/2024

Traveler: TYLER DOS SANTOS-TAM

Event: 2024 ^{Seven} Honolulu Philippines Sister City Goodwill Mission

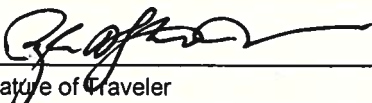
Location: ~~Manila~~, Philippines

Dates: From 02/20/2024 To 02/27/2024

21

| Description | Amount | Notes: |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|
| 1. Registration Fee | | |
| 2. Airfare | | |
| 3. Hotel | 488.20 | |
| 4. Meals | 29.38 | |
| 5. Ground Transportation | | |
| 6. Tips | | |
| 7. Other | | |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |
| 8. Adjustment | | |
| TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT | 517.58 | |

This is to certify that the above data, based upon receipts submitted to Council Administrative Support Services via a CCLTRVL02 form, is accurate. Further, I am claiming reimbursement for expenses associated with a trip in which City business was conducted and personal funds were used to advance payment:



Signature of Traveler

03/25/2024

Date