

New Clark City design plan a showcase of PH identity

Manila Bulletin · 15 May 2018 · B-8 · By MAR T. SUPNAD

The New Clark City is not only designed to be the first smart, sustainable, and resilient metropolis, but also a showcase to the world of the Philippines' cultural identity.

Sylvester Wong, vice president for strategies and development of AECOM, one of the main master planners for the New Clark City, said this during a briefing with members of the local and foreign press in Clark, Pampanga.

"It's a dream of many planners and people passionate about cities to start from scratch. It offers a lot of opportunity to do things right so that you avoid congestion issues, you're future-proofing for users and locators, residents and tenants but it doesn't mean you start from nothing. It is about celebrating that cultural and natural identity that's already on the site," Wong said.

"On the long term, it's about realizing that this is not just a piece of land to fill up; this is part of a national strategy. This is part of a nation who we saw is now at the top of the investment list," he said.

The 9,450-hectare New Clark City being developed by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) together with its private partners is envisioned to be the "showcase of the Duterte administration's economic strategy." It is one of the BCDA's projects under the Build, Build, Build infrastructure program, said Noel Manankil, CDC president.

Architect Royal Pineda of the Budji+Royal Architecture+Design said the New Clark City will present the "soul of the Philippines."

"This is not just the face of Clark, but this is the face of the country. Hopefully this time, we really get to present to the world our modern and present status as a country, as a nation, that we are ready for business," said Pineda.

Part of the New Clark City is the 200-hectare National Government Administrative Center (NGAC) which involves the development of back-up offices of various agencies to ensure continuous business operations and services in case of disaster or national calamities.

Phase 1A of NGAC, which covers 40 hectares, also features the construction of world-class sports facilities to be used for the Southeast Asian Games in November 2019. Designs and materials for the construction of the facilities are all distinctly Filipino.

BCDA President and CEO Vivencio Dizon said New Clark City can be a model for future developments in the country.

For Surbana Jurong, BCDA's development management partner for the full implementation of New Clark City, the new metropolis will also help decongest Metro Manila.

"For many big cities in the world, the way to develop is really to develop outward in neighboring cities so that you have a twin city and you have new activities around

the area. And I think New Clark City will play that role vis-a-vis Manila," Surbana Jurong Chief Executive Officer Teo Eng Cheong said.

Engr. Patrick Nicholas David, president of MTD Capital Berhad's local unit AlloyMTD, said the NGAC, modelled after Malaysia's Putrajaya, will improve efficiency and productivity.

"The NGAC will bring government offices closer to make sure that there is efficiency in doing business, efficiency in delivering government service," David said.

"Our vision is not for us to travel around Metro Manila's traffic just to get our business done; it's to make sure that it is efficient, conducive and productive."