

Meralco and Filinvest partnership supports growth in Alabang



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF FILINVEST'S FESTIVAL SUPERMALL. Muntinlupa has gone through dramatic changes in the last few decades from sleepy residential subdivisions to progressive commercial haven because of the tight collaboration between the Filinvest Development Corporation and Filinvest Alabang, Inc. and the Manila Electric Company.

In the early 70's, the existing Meralco infrastructure in Muntinlupa was sufficient to provide its energy requirements. Aside from a correctional facility, the area wasn't known for much else.

Then came urban sprawl and growth projections for the south changed. That electrical infrastructure became obsolete and had to be upgraded for the demands of what would in a few years be a popular commercial destination. Load requirements of about 500 MW of power were anticipated.

Fortunately, Filinvest Development Corporation (FDC) had the foresight to initiate discussions with Meralco about how to get the energy requirements up to speed.

"We saw this coming; Manila to Makati was slowly getting congested. So the company bet on property development trending southward. To be ahead of the pack, we needed to move quickly and form strategic partnerships – especially with the utilities," said Josephine Gotianun Yap, President of Filinvest Development Corporation (FDC) and Filinvest Alabang, Inc. (FAI). "Meralco was there to provide us with the groundwork and did the joint planning with us to make sure power was adequate to make our growth sustainable."

On September 3, 2012, FAI designated an area in Filinvest City where to build the Filinvest Substation. Meralco and FAI signed a Substation Agreement for a 1,240 square-meter lot to be used for the utility's 115kV-34.5kV Gas Insulated Switchgear-type substation scheduled for commissioning this 2013.

The Filinvest Substation will have an initial 83MVA power transformer designed to adequately and reliably serve Filinvest City's current and future large commercial and residential loads. Core customers that will benefit include the Westgate Hub, Entrada Urban Complex, Festival Supermall, Plaza E, iHub 3 & 4 in Northgate Cyberzone, Bellevue Hotel and Asian Hospital. It will also provide back-up and flexibility to adjacent areas during outages.

The new substation sealed a partnership between the property developer and the distribution utility. Filinvest can now accommodate high load capacity developments from the substation Meralco erects, and Meralco enhances its services in Filinvest City.



Commercial establishments in Filinvest Alabang are booming with the help of Meralco's Filinvest Substation.

"I believe this partnership between Meralco and Filinvest came at an opportune time," said Meralco Senior Vice President and Head, Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications Alfredo S. Panlilio.

"Filinvest City is thriving. Because of adequate electrical capacity we still have more room for growth. And that's why we're glad Meralco was there to provide critical support from the start."

- Josephine Gotianun Yap,
President of Filinvest Development Corporation (FDC)
and Filinvest Alabang, Inc. (FAI)

"Given that Alabang is seeing phenomenal growth, both parties realized the benefits of improving power distribution."

The Filinvest Substation provided the capacity to accommodate the increasing power requirements of Filinvest City and relieved the critical loading of Ayala-Alabang Bank 1 and Bank 2. It also allowed operational switching flexibility whenever there were power interruptions in the area, as well as reducing technical system loss of 1,724,443 kWh per year; a system loss that translates to P10.9-million per year.

With electrical capacities up to speed, Filinvest feels supremely confident in its future projects. Developments have been non-stop ever since. Filinvest City is the home of Festival Supermall, the biggest regional mall in Southern Metro Manila. The mall's expansion plans alone will add 57,000 square meters of Gross Leasable Area (GLA) for retail and food beverage outlets to complement the existing mall with over 135,000 sqm of GLA. Filinvest is also expanding its portfolio of BPO buildings in Northgate Cyberzone through its subsidiary, Cyberzone Properties, Inc., with five buildings currently in the pipeline. The residential condominiums, like The Levels, will also be the immediate beneficiaries of the new substation.

"Our bet really played out. Filinvest City is thriving. Because of adequate electrical capacity we still have more room for growth. And that's why we're glad Meralco was there to provide critical support from the start," said Gotianun Yap.



Filinvest Development Corporation and Filinvest Alabang, Inc. President Josephine Gotianun-Yap (middle left) and Meralco Senior Vice President and Head of the Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications Alfredo S. Panlilio seal their partnership with a handshake. Flanking them are Filinvest Alabang Inc. Executive Vice President Catherine Ilagan (extreme left) and Meralco Vice-President and Head of the Corporate Business Group Victor Genuino.