Travel and Expenditure Reimbursement Policy and Procedures

Responsible Party:	Effective Date:
Finance Director	TBD
Approval Authority:	**Next Review Date:**
City Council	TBD

I. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this Policy is to establish clear requirements for authorizing travel, paying or reimbursing travel-related expenses, and reconciling travel costs incurred by City employees while conducting official City business.

II. POLICY

City employees, in the scope of official duties, may travel and attend conferences or events that directly relate to their role. It is the policy of the City that travel and travel-related reimbursements are permitted only when:

1. The travel is authorized in advance,
2. The expense is reasonable, necessary, and directly related to City business, and
3. The traveler submits a complete reconciliation within the required timeline and
4. Unauthorized expenses will be the responsibility of the employee traveling.

Budget appropriation does not constitute authorization to travel or incur expenses. Each trip requires an approved Travel Request Form. Expenses that are personal in nature, not supported by required documentation, or not compliant with this Policy will not be reimbursed and may result in progressive discipline in accordance with the City's Personnel Policy. A comprehensive review of, and updates to, this Policy will occur approximately once every two years.

A. Travel Authorization – Prior to booking travel or incurring costs, the traveler shall complete a Travel Request Form documenting the City business purpose, travel dates, destination, and estimated costs by expenditure type. The traveler shall attach required supporting documentation, such as an agenda or program, registration details, lodging estimates, and airfare comparisons when required under the 300 mile rule outlined in Section II-D, and obtain all required approvals before travel arrangements are made. Any arrangements made prior to necessary approval shall be considered at the employee's sole risk and subject to possible denial. When possible all arrangements should be made by a City Procurement Card (P-card) or check paid by the city. The following authorization requirements apply based on traveler type.

1. **City Employee** – All City employee travel must be included in the annual budget. Travel not included in the annual budget, and/or which requires an out-of-state stay, requires approval by the City Manager, or their designee.
   - City employee travel must be approved by the City Department Director/Assistant Directors, or their designee.
   - Department Directors/Assistant Directors shall have their travel approved by the City Manager, or their designee.

- City Manager travel is approved by the Assistant City Manager or Finance Director or their designee.

B. **Travel Payment Methods** – For City employees with a City P-Card, City P-Cards are the preferred method of payment for eligible travel expenses. During travel, if a City employee does not have an assigned City P-Card expenses not covered by per diem (when eligible based on travel length) shall be paid personally and submitted for reimbursement post-travel. Duplicate payment is prohibited. Travelers shall not request advance for, or reimbursement of, expenses charged to a City P-Card. Travel advances are not permitted by way of a City P-Card. Travel advances may be issued only for extended travel exceeding seven (7) consecutive days unless approved by the City Manager or their designee, and only for allowable expenses such as per diem, mileage, conference/hotel registration, air fare, and other approved travel-related costs. Advance amounts shall be prorated based on the actual duration of travel and approved activities. Any excess advance funds must be returned to the City within 30 days following the completion of travel.

C. **Authorized Travel Expenses** – The following expenses shall be reimbursed:

1. **Registration** – Registration fees charged for any authorized convention, conference, seminar, or meeting should be made prior to attendance. Travelers shall register as early as possible to take advantage of the most cost-effective early-bird rates and shall seek group discount pricing when more than one (1) City traveler is attending the same conference or event.

2. **Tips and Gratuities** – Reimbursements for tips and gratuities shall be limited to amounts deemed to be reasonable given the service provided and should not exceed 18%. Amounts above 18% are personal expenses unless approved in advance due to documented exceptional circumstances.

3. **Transportation** – Travelers shall use the most cost-effective and efficient mode of travel. A concerted effort should be made to travel efficiently, including researching and committing to cost saving or least expensive travel, which includes carpooling when reasonable. If the destination is more than 300 miles from City Hall, driving in lieu of flying requires City Department Director approval in advance. Reimbursement is limited to the lesser of: (a) allowable mileage and eligible driving costs or (b) the cost of a comparable coach airfare (documentation required). Exceptions may be allowed due to unusual or unforeseen circumstances. When, for personal reasons, a traveler elects to use a mode of travel that is not the most cost-effective and efficient mode option (e.g., driving a personal or rental car instead of flying), and such a deviation is specifically approved by the applicable City Department Director/Assistant Director, the following apply:
    - Reimbursement shall be limited to the cost that would have been incurred using the most cost-effective and efficient mode of travel. If driving is chosen instead of flying, the City will reimburse up to the cost of a comparable airline ticket; mileage beyond that cap will not be reimbursed.

- Any additional costs attributable to excess travel time or personal convenience are not reimbursable.
- Unless otherwise approved by the Department Director/Assistant Directors only the time equivalent to the flight (including reasonable airport processing time) will be treated as “hours worked” for payroll purposes. Excess travel time resulting from utilizing a less economical mode is not hours worked.
- If excess travel time occurs during the City employee’s regularly scheduled work shifts, that time shall be charged to vacation.

a. **Airlines** – Travel shall be limited to standard lowest fare. Travel shall be booked at least 30 days in advance, or as soon as the traveler is made aware of the need to travel. The City will not reimburse seat upgrades, premium seat selection, early or priority boarding, or similar add-ons purchased for personal convenience. It is the City’s policy to not cover the travel expenses of a guest of a traveler.

b. **Taxi and Rideshare Service** – Shuttle, bus, rideshare (e.g., Uber, Lyft, Waymo), taxi, or other public transportation shall be used between airport, hotel, and conference site whenever available and less costly than a rental car. Taxi service should be used only when no other convenient, less costly transportation is available.

   When using rideshare, reimbursement is limited to standard/economy service levels (e.g., UberX, Lyft Standard, or equivalent). Premium or elevated service levels (e.g., Uber Black, Uber Premier, Lyft Lux, SUV, or similar premium tiers) are not reimbursable and shall be the personal responsibility of the traveler, regardless of availability, preference, or convenience. If a premium/elevated rideshare service is the only available rideshare option at the time of request (or standard service is unavailable within a reasonable wait time), the premium service may be reimbursed as an exception. In such cases, the traveler must document the reason on the Post-Travel Expense Reconciliation (e.g., “standard tier unavailable,” “no standard vehicles available,” “unreasonable wait time,” “larger group” or “safety-related circumstances”) and attach the itemized receipt showing the service level and time of request. If the Finance Department determines that a premium/elevated tier was selected for convenience when a standard tier was reasonably available, reimbursement shall be limited to the estimated standard-tier cost for the same trip when such estimate can be reasonably determined; the incremental cost shall be the traveler’s personal expense.

c. **Car Rental** – Rental cars are limited to the most economical and reasonable mid-sized vehicle available.

d. **Personal Vehicle** – Travelers not receiving auto allowances will be reimbursed for travel using personal vehicles for official City business at the IRS established mileage rate. Personal vehicles must be insured as required by State law.

When leaving from home, the mileage claimed from home to the destination shall not exceed the mileage from City Hall to the destination. The lesser of the two will be paid. When a commercial air carrier is used, a traveler will be reimbursed for mileage to and from the airport and the actual cost of economy or standard airport parking; however, mileage reimbursement remains subject to the limitation that mileage from home shall not exceed mileage from City Hall. Parking fees required are reimbursable. Valet parking that cost more than self- parking when available is not reimbursable. If two or more travelers share this transportation, reimbursement shall be made to the person driving their vehicle. If a van/shuttle is used, the traveler shall be reimbursed for the actual cost.

e. **City Vehicles** – Travel in City vehicles, when applicable, is encouraged. The use of a City vehicle for travel with family on City business, while not encouraged as a regular practice, is subject to City Department Director/Assistant Director approval. All receipts of charging, fuel, emergency repairs, and other supplies necessary must be furnished to obtain reimbursement, provide sufficient detail when reconciling a travel advance, or meeting the supporting documentation requirement for City P-Cards in the City's P-Card Policy.

4. **Lodging** – Lodging is reimbursable when travel on City business reasonably requires an overnight stay. Lodging may also be authorized to avoid unsafe and/or extreme commutes when the following apply:
   - The destination is 75 miles or more from City Hall or the traveler's residence (whichever is greater), or
   - Event start/end times require travel outside reasonable hours (e.g., early start), or
   - Extensive travel time makes same-day travel impractical.

a. **Hotel Lodging** – Lodging is limited to standard room rates and the minimum nights necessary. Room upgrades, such as ocean views, king-size beds, or suites, are not reimbursable. If such lodging is in connection with a conference, lodging expenses must not exceed the group rate published by the conference sponsor if such rates are available at the time of booking. Accommodations may be arranged directly by the traveler or by the City. All travelers must consider government rates for lodging, when available and offered by the hotel. Advance reservations made by the traveler guarantees a room if the traveler arrives late; therefore, it is the responsibility of the traveler to avoid "no show" charges by canceling reservations when a change is necessary.

b. **Short-Term Rental (e.g., Airbnb, Vrbo)** – Short-term rental platforms (such as Airbnb or Vrbo) may be used for City travel when they provide a safe, reasonable, and cost-appropriate lodging option. The City permits their use under the following conditions:

- The total lodging cost must be similar to commercial lodging and within 20% of the comparable hotel rate for the area.
- Travelers must provide justification demonstrating why a short-term rental is more suitable than commercial lodging, including consideration of the number of City employees traveling, location, safety, and accessibility.
- If a short-term rental is selected for two (2) or more City employees, all participating travelers must voluntarily sign a Short-Term Rental Consent Form acknowledging the shared nature of the lodging, confirming their understanding of expectations regarding conduct, safety, and privacy, and agreeing to comply with all applicable City and HR policies.

5. **Meals and Incidentals** – Per diem is allowed for meals and incidental expenses. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) establishes per diem rates for destinations within the Continental United States. As set by the GSA, the City will reimburse the traveler a daily per diem rate equal to the GSA lowest tier rate for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE), based on the approved travel destination, inclusive of taxes and gratuity. Current rates are published by the GSA and may be found at: http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem. The per diem rate will be adjusted for partial travel days and reduced for meals that are included in conference registration fees or otherwise provided at no cost to the traveler. A continental breakfast does not constitute a meal for purposes of this adjustment.

   For purposes of per diem eligibility and partial-day calculation, the "travel day" begins and ends as follows:
   - If travel begins before the traveler's normal work hours, the travel day begins when the traveler departs from their residence.
   - If travel begins during normal work hours, the travel day begins when the traveler departs from their primary work location (or other City-designated start point).

   The travel day ends when the traveler returns to either of the applicable starting points described above.

   For the first and last day of authorized overnight travel, meal eligibility is determined by the time travel begins and ends as follows:

   Departure Day (Travel Begins):
   - If travel begins after 7:00 a.m., breakfast is not allowed.
   - If travel begins after 1:00 p.m., breakfast and lunch are not allowed.
   - If travel begins after 7:00 p.m., no meal per diem is allowed for that day.

   Return Day (Travel Ends):
   - If travel ends between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., breakfast is allowed.
   - If travel ends between 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., breakfast and lunch are allowed.
   - If travel ends after 7:00 p.m., breakfast, lunch, and dinner are allowed.

The Finance Department may issue a per diem meal advance only for approved extended travel subject to Section IIB. No receipts are required for per diem meal advances. However, travelers must submit the Post-Travel Expense Reconciliation within the required timeframe to document the travel purpose, travel dates, and any adjustments required under this section (including reductions for meals provided). Meals exceeding the per diem are not reimbursable.

D. **Travel Dates, Changes, and Cancellations** – A traveler may request approval to travel for their convenience beyond the approved travel dates. The actual City travel dates and times will be the only dates and times considered as reimbursable travel. If the itinerary is changed after the Travel Request Form is approved, the applicable City Department Director should be notified at the time the traveler is aware of the changes.. Circumstances may also occur during travel that require modifications to reservations. It is the responsibility of the traveler to make such modifications judiciously and to promptly cancel any previous reservations. See Section I of this Policy regarding policy violations concerning late cancellations.

E. **City Employee Compensation for Travel** – Employees required to travel on City business shall be compensated for travel time in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the City's overtime and holiday pay policies, and applicable departmental work schedules. For non-exempt employees, authorized travel time occurring during an employee's normal work hours is compensable at the regular rate of pay; authorized travel time occurring outside normal work hours is compensable at one and one-half times the regular rate, if overtime-eligible. Time spent commuting between an employee's residence and their regular work location, and time spent in bona fide unpaid meal periods, shall not be considered compensable travel time. Overtime eligibility and calculation shall be determined pursuant to FLSA regulations and City overtime rules. Employees on approved travel status during a City-recognized holiday shall receive holiday pay in accordance with City policy, in addition to compensation for actual hours worked or compensable travel time. City Department Director approval is required when business travel is combined with personal travel, and any personal travel occurring during scheduled work hours shall be charged to applicable leave balances or leave without pay pursuant to City leave policies.

F. **Unauthorized Travel Expenses** – The following expenses are not allowed:
- Expenses not related to the purpose of travel.
- Insurance coverage for air travel while in travel status.
- Expenses incurred by non-City travelers.
- Parking fees not related to the travel.
- Rental car insurance coverage for collision and personal liability.
- Alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, or controlled substances.
- Gambling or betting of any kind.
- Adult entertainment or sexually oriented services.
- Gift cards or prepaid cards, regardless of intended business purpose.
- Personal expenses or non-business purchases.

G. **Post-Travel Expense Reporting** – During travel, travelers shall retain all itemized receipts required by this Policy and maintain sufficient documentation to substantiate the City business purpose and allowability of expenses. City P-Card summary receipts alone are not sufficient documentation. Within ten (10) business days of returning to the workplace, the traveler shall complete the Post Travel Expense Reconciliation, attach all required documentation for all expenses incurred for that travel, obtain approval, and submit the complete reconciliation to the Finance Department. If a travel advance was issued, and the advance exceeds allowable expenses, excess funds must be returned with the reconciliation. The Finance Department may withhold future travel advances or City paid bookings until required documentation is submitted and compliance is restored.

H. **Non-Compliance** – City employee violations of this Policy may result in progressive discipline, administered in accordance with the City's Personnel Policy. In addition to the general requirements above, the following provisions apply to all travelers:

1. **Travel Changes and Cancellations** – Travelers are responsible for notifying the City as soon as they become aware of changes or cancellations in accordance with Section E of this Policy. Failure to provide timely notice that would allow the City to obtain a refund may result in the traveler assuming personal financial responsibility for any unrecoverable costs. If a traveler fails to provide adequate notice twice within a 12-month period, the City may take any of the following actions:
    - Suspend or reduce City P-Card privileges.
    - Deny future authorization for travel.
    - Apply additional corrective actions consistent with progressive discipline.

2. **Expense Reporting** – If the reconciliation is missing, incomplete, or late, the Finance Department will issue one written reminder; failure to submit a complete reconciliation within three (3) additional business days will result in escalation to the City Department Director/Assistant Director, and continued noncompliance after ten (10) business days will be escalated to the City Manager, or designee. Until compliance is achieved, the Finance Department may delay reimbursement processing, deny or withhold travel advances (when otherwise eligible), and recommend suspension of travel privileges or City P-Card travel use, with repeated violations potentially resulting in travel restrictions.

III. ATTACHMENTS

A. Travel Request Form
B. Post Travel Expense Reconciliation

CITY OF MANTECA
TRAVEL REQUEST FORM

Travel must be approved before booking or incurring costs.

Complete all applicable fields and attach supporting documentation. Unauthorized expenses are the traveler's responsibility.

1. TRAVELER INFORMATION

Employee Name		Department	
Job Title		Employee ID	
Phone		Email	
Supervisor		Request Date	

2. TRAVEL DETAILS AND BUSINESS PURPOSE

Conference / Event Name					
Destination (City, State)		Travel Type			
Departure Date		Departure Time		Overnight?	
Return Date		Return Time		Out-of-State?	
Number of Travelers		Number of Travel Days		Budgeted?	
Business Purpose / Benefit to City					

3. FUNDING AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

Funding Source		Fund / GL Account	
Project / Grant Number		Federal Grant Funded?	
Preferred Payment Method		Travel Advance Requested?	
Advance Amount		P-Card Holder / Card Last 4	

4. TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING

Primary Transportation		City Vehicle Requested?	
Personal Vehicle Miles (estimated)		Airfare Comparison Required?	
Hotel / Lodging Name		Nightly Rate	
Number of Nights		Short-Term Rental?	

5. ESTIMATED TRAVEL EXPENSES

Expense Type	Estimated Cost	Payment Method	Notes / Calculation Basis
Registration			
Airfare / Rail			
Lodging			
Meals / Per Diem			
Mileage			
Rental Car			
Taxi / Rideshare / Shuttle			
Parking / Tolls			
Other			
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	-		Formula-protected total

6. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS CHECKLIST

☐ Agenda / Program	☐ Registration Details / Invoice
☐ Lodging Estimate	☐ Airfare Comparison (300+ miles)
☐ Map / Mileage Support	☐ Short-Term Rental Comparison / Consent
☐ Other Supporting Documentation	☐ Grantor Approval / Instructions
Note: Driving more than 300 miles in lieu of flying requires advance Department Director approval and comparable coach airfare documentation.	

7. TRAVELER CERTIFICATION

I certify that this travel is for official City business; the estimates are reasonable and complete; I will comply with the City Travel and Expenditure Reimbursement Policy; I will retain required itemized receipts; and I will submit the Post-Travel Expense Reconciliation within ten (10) business days after returning to the workplace. I understand that unauthorized or personal expenses are my responsibility.

Traveler Name (Print)		Signature		Date

8. REQUIRED APPROVALS - COMPLETE BEFORE BOOKING

Supervisor / Department Review	Department Director / Assistant Director	City Manager / Designee (when required)
☐ Approved ☐ Denied	☐ Approved ☐ Denied	☐ Approved ☐ Denied
Name:	Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:	Date:

City Manager approval is required for travel not included in the annual budget and/or requiring an out-of-state stay. Department Directors/Assistant Directors require City Manager or designee approval.

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CITY OF MANTECA
POST-TRAVEL EXPENDITURE RECONCILIATION

Complete within ten (10) business days after returning to the workplace. Light-blue fields are fillable.

Attach itemized receipts and supporting documentation. City P-Card summary receipts alone are not sufficient.

1. TRAVELER AND TRIP INFORMATION

Employee Name		**Department**	
Job Title		**Employee ID**	
Conference / Event			
Destination		**Original Travel Request**	
Departure Date / Time		**Return Date / Time**	
Funding Source / Fund /		**Project / Grant Number**	

2. MILEAGE CALCULATION (IF APPLICABLE)

Travel Date	From	To	Business Purpose	Business Miles

Mileage Rate (per mile)		**Total Miles**	0.0
Calculated Mileage Reimbursement	-		

3. EXPENDITURE SUMMARY AND SETTLEMENT

Expense Type	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost	City Paid	Employee Paid	Notes
Registration					
Airfare / Rail					
Lodging					
Meals / Per Diem					
Mileage		-			
Rental Car					
Taxi / Rideshare / Shuttle					
Parking / Tolls					
Other					
TOTAL	-	-	-	-	

SETTLEMENT CALCULATION	
Employee-Paid Reimbursable Expenses	-
Travel Advance Issued	
Amount Due to Employee	-
Amount Employee Must Return to City	-

4. REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION AND EXCEPTIONS

DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST		TRAVEL CHANGES / EXCEPTIONS / BUSINESS JUSTIFICATION
☐	Itemized receipts attached for all applicable expenses	
☐	Agenda / program attached	
☐	Lodging folio attached	
☐	Transportation / airfare documentation attached	
☐	Missing Receipt Form attached, if applicable	
☐	Excess travel advance returned, if applicable	

5. TRAVELER CERTIFICATION

I certify that the expenses reported above were incurred while conducting official City of Manteca business, are accurate and complete, and comply with the City Travel and Expenditure Reimbursement Policy. I have not requested reimbursement for expenses paid by City P-Card, City check, purchase order, or another source. I have attached all required itemized receipts and supporting documentation and will promptly return any amount due to the City.

Traveler Name (Print)		**Date Submitted**	
Traveler Signature		**Date**	

6. REQUIRED APPROVALS

Supervisor / Department Review		Department Director / Assistant Director		City Manager / Designee (when required)	
Name:		**Name:**		**Name:**	
Signature:		**Signature:**		**Signature:**	
Date:		**Date:**		**Date:**	

City Manager approval is required when applicable under the Travel and Expenditure Reimbursement Policy.