



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report

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### Review and Discussion of the Culver City Police Department's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) 18- Month Pilot Program and UAV Policy.

**Meeting Date:** January 28, 2019

**Contact Person/Dept.:** Captain Jason Sims/Police Department

**Phone Number:** (310) 253-6391

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes  No

**General Fund:** Yes  No

**Public Hearing:**  **Action Item:**  **Attachments:**

**Commission Action Required:** Yes  No

**Public Notification:** (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (01/23/19);

**Department Approval:** Scott Bixby, Chief of Police (10/16/18)

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### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council review and discuss the proposed Culver City Police Department's (CCPD) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) 18-month Unmanned Aerial Vehicle pilot program and UAV policy.

### BACKGROUND

The CCPD Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) are very powerful and versatile officer and community safety tools. Light weight and easy to transport, UAVs can be quickly deployed to assist Police, Fire and Public Works personnel in enhancing public safety, and search and rescue operations. The UAVs will be used to provide aerial support during tactical Police and Fire operations, and provide an added layer of transparency and accountability by recording aerial video of the incidents. The UAVs will utilize a high definition camera and/or forward looking infrared (FLIR) camera system to provide real time situational awareness, which will help public safety officers in locating both suspects and victims.

In addition to providing situational awareness to public safety and other City personnel, the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) program will assist in crime and accident scene reconstruction, and

disaster management. The UAV program will have the added benefit of enhancing safety to City personnel by limiting their exposure to the dangers of natural disasters, chemical, and biological threats.

The City Council discussed the CCPD's purchase and use of UAVs in open meetings on January 8, 2018, February 12, 2018, and March 13, 2018, and received extensive public comment on the proposed UAV program. CCPD personnel also conducted considerable public outreach, including holding two community meetings (August 9, 2018 and January 15, 2019), three neighborhood meetings (in Blair Hills, Culver Crest and Lindberg Park), and distributing information related to the program to Tellefson Park, Carlson Park, Rancho Higuera, Studio Estates, Sunkist Park, the East End, and Fox Hills neighborhood groups. At the February 12th and March 13<sup>th</sup> City Council meetings, as well as the neighborhood meetings, the CCPD UAV policy was presented and discussed at length. Information about the program and the UAV policy was also posted on the Department's social media platforms and website.

At the March 13, 2018 City Council meeting, City Council approved the purchase order to Ackah Sarbah Botach Tactical for the purchase of two (2) DJI Matrice 210, four (4) DJI Phantom 4 Pro, two (2) DJI Spark Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and accessories.

In August 2018, Staff received the eight (8) Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and accessories.

### **DISCUSSION:**

CCPD is aware of the privacy concerns related to the use of UAVs and has taken measures to address those concerns; primarily through a combination of policy (see attached policy) and reporting. The CCPD UAV policy outlines situations in which the UAV may be utilized, including but not limited to:

- Accident Investigations
- Missing Persons Investigations
- Search & Rescue Operations
- Illegal Drug Investigations
- Fires
- Disaster Management
- Crowd Control Situations
- Explosive Ordinance Disposal/Bomb Threats
- CBRNE Incident (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive)
- Supporting Criminal Investigations (search and or arrest warrants)
- Major Event Security Support
- Perimeter Searches and Security
- Routine Training (public places)

UAVs may only be deployed with a supervisor's approval, and only after all of the required notifications to air traffic control towers (per FAA regulations) have been made. Only pilots who possess a valid license to fly UAVs issued by the FAA may deploy a UAV.

The policy also lays out a public reporting procedure wherein every use of a UAV will be announced using the public announcement system on our Police vehicles, and or social media outlets (safety and time permitting). Every deployment will be documented and published in the CCPD monthly report. This report, which is posted on our Department's public website, will include flight data such as: date and time, duration of the flight, reason for the deployment, and outcome (i.e. whether a suspect was located etc.). Additionally, every flight is digitally logged. The digital log includes a full tracking of each flight including the entire flightpath (GPS), altitude, and speed. The digital information will be stored in house and available for release as required by law.

Sometime around the first of the year (January 2019), CCPD will begin an 18-month pilot program. All of the aforementioned policies and procedures will be adhered to during this time and CCPD staff will report back to City Council to discuss the program's effectiveness at the conclusion of the pilot program.

### **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

There is no fiscal impact.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2019-01-28 - ATT Culver City Police Department UAV Policy

### **MOTION**

That the City Council:

Review and discuss the CCPD 18-month Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) pilot program and the UAV policy.