



# City Council Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL                      DATE: AUGUST 20, 2019**

**FROM: POLICE DEPARTMENT    WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM PILOT PROGRAM**

**ISSUE:**

Approve the continuation of the Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council approve the continuation of the Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Program.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

On May 15, 2019, the Public Safety Committee, with Chair Perry and Member Adams present, received and ordered filed the report regarding the Riverside Police Departments Special Operations Division implementation of an Unmanned Aircraft System Pilot Program for 90 days to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the Unmanned Aircraft System for Police Operations. After discussion, the Committee unanimously voted that a report on the implementation of the Unmanned Aircraft System Pilot Program be presented to the full City Council after the 90-day test period.

**BACKGROUND:**

Over the past year, the Riverside Police Department (RPD) has been researching the potential benefit of utilizing Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) technology across a wide variety of RPD operations.

RPD has obtained a two-year Certificate of Agreement (COA) with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to fly police operations. In addition, RPD has two (2) sergeants and six (6) officers with FAA Part 107 Commercial Remote Pilot Licenses and (3) deployable UAS and one training UAS.

RPD provided a presentation to the Public Safety Committee (PSC) on May 15, 2019, and discussed the pilot program that would run for approximately three (3) months to evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of continuing the program.

## **DISCUSSION:**

As of July 17, 2019 (during the 90-day pilot program), RPD flew 16 real world missions and numerous other training missions. These missions included supporting the patrol force, SWAT Team, detectives, Public Safety Engagement Team, Technical Services Unit, as well as the Riverside Fire Department.

RPD was able to enhance the safety of the public and the safety of our officers by using the UAS in the following situations:

1. In support of the SWAT team, the UAS was used to help team members safely respond to a violent subject in the river bottom. The area was visually cleared using the UAS and the SWAT officers were able to safely walk into the area with real time visual intelligence of the location. The UAS was also used for air support during a barricaded subject SWAT callout. The Team responded to a trailer where a violent subject who was wanted on felony warrants, and for assaulting his wife, was locked inside a trailer. The UAS gave the Tactical Commander an overview of the whole operation as it was happening.
2. The UAS was used to search for two (2) prowlers who fled from a yard in the Overlook area. Two (2) subjects were identified as potential suspects in this prowling incident and with other crimes in the area.
3. The UAS was used numerous times to help patrol officers clear roofs and fenced yards during alarm calls in the middle of the night when the helicopter is not staffed.
4. The Narcotics Unit used the UAS to locate, photograph for evidence, and safely eradicate a large marijuana grow in the river bottom.
5. The Technical Services Unit used the UAS for numerous training missions and deployed it on a suspicious device in the Eastside area.
6. The Public Safety Engagement Team (PSET) used the UAS on several occasions. PSET used the UAS to map out and track the movements of homeless camps in several different areas of the City, including the river bottom and other downtown and eastside neighborhoods. The PSET has plans to continue to use the UAS to help direct resources to the right locations.
7. The UAS was used to support the Riverside Fire Department while they were fighting two (2) fires. One fire was in the area of Mount Rubidoux and the other was in the river bottom in the area of the Van Buren Bridge. In each of these fires, the police and the fire commanders were able to get an overview of the fire and direct public safety and firefighting efforts where they were needed most.

The UAS system has allowed officers to obtain a very quick and cost effective way to obtain real time aerial observation at active police incidents. RPD expects the uses to expand as the technology continues to be used and developed in the field. Potential uses may include crime scene photos, search for missing children, large scale public events, and active critical incidents.

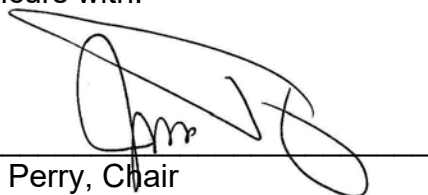
The UAS pilot evaluation period has proven to be successful and RPD would like City Council's support for the continuation of the UAS program.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Sufficient funding for this program is included in the Police Department's annual operating budget.

Prepared by: Sergio G. Diaz, Chief of Police  
Certified as to  
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer  
Approved by: Lea Deesing, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Concurs with:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JP", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Jim Perry, Chair  
Public Safety Committee

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. Drone Video