



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

City Council Meeting – Council Member Items Report

To: CITY COUNCIL
From: BUTCH TWINING, COUNCILMAN
DON KENNEDY, COUNCILMAN
Date: JUNE 3, 2025
Subject: **EXPLORATION INTO THE USE OF DOWNLINK TECHNOLOGY FOR THE
HUNTINGTON BEACH POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

ISSUE STATEMENT

Downlink technology can be a powerful communication tool for law enforcement agencies. Downlinking is the process of sharing live video from an aircraft to a receiver, typically ground based. In other words, sharing live stream from a police helicopter or drone to a responding law enforcement team.

Downlink systems can provide specific and critical advantages to the HBPD and HBFD, especially given the City's urban, coastal, and tourist-heavy environment. Advantages include:

1. Wide-Area Coverage for Huntington Beach. The city spans over 30 square miles with beaches, residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas.
2. Coordinated Response in crowded Tourist areas. Locations like Main Street, Pacific City and the Pier attract large crowds.
3. Real-Time Updates to field personnel. Crowd control, active shooter threats, major structure fires, vehicle pursuits, medical emergencies, barricaded subjects, perimeter coordination with police and fire, without confusion or delays.
4. Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management. Huntington Beach may be vulnerable to wildfires, flooding and earthquakes, real-time updates on evacuation routes, road closures and conditions.
5. Marine & Coastal Operations. Police, Fire, and Marine Safety units depend on solid communications with onshore dispatch, Lifeguards and Coast Guard.
6. Emerging Technologies. Downlink systems can support streaming high definition video from drones and the helicopters during fires, search & rescue, GIS Mapping pushed to patrol vehicles and fire engines.

Downlink communications are not just advantageous—they're mission-critical. They ensure situational awareness, coordinated multi-agency responses, and public safety efficiency in a complex and high-risk environment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Direct the City Manager to report back in 90 days on the viability and expense associated with equipping our public safety departments with downlink technology.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Non Applicable - Administrative Item