



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 18-052

MEETING DATE: 6/18/2018

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Fred A. Wilson, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Robert Handy, Chief of Police

Subject:

Approve implementation of Public Safety Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS) one-year pilot program

Statement of Issue:

City Council approval is requested for a joint public safety Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS) one-year pilot program to include the Police Department, Fire Department and Marine Safety Division.

Financial Impact:

The program would require the purchase of SUAS systems as well as the training of personnel assigned to the program. Partial funding will be from the FY 2017/18 adopted budget in account number 32440213 and additional funding will be absorbed within next year's budget, if necessary. The City's standard procurement and purchasing policies as outlined in Municipal Code Section 3.02 will be utilized for this purchase.

Recommended Action:

Approve the implementation of the one-year pilot public safety Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS) program.

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve and direct staff accordingly.

Analysis:

The Police Department has conducted extensive research and has developed a plan to start a SUAS program to include joint training and testing exercises with the Fire Department. The benefits of this program are many and will enhance public safety in a variety of ways

As technology evolves, it is important for our agencies to take advantage of these advances to enhance public safety. SUAS programs are being created throughout the State of California by both police and fire departments with overwhelmingly positive results. SUAS are currently being used in crime scene and traffic collision photography, tactical deployments involving SWAT, shark detection and missing person's searches, and to assess structure fires and natural disasters with real time

aerial photography capabilities.

We are confident SUAS technology can safely be deployed in Huntington Beach with public safety as our sole purpose. The SUAS can easily be deployed for short periods of time to photograph crime scenes, traffic accidents, and special events. It is intended to use SUAS technology to assist in tactical situations to enhance officer safety as well as that of the public. The SUAS would be deployed to assist in search operations along the shoreline. The SUAS could also be used to assist in the monitoring of the recent increase of shark activity along our beaches. The SUAS systems can also be equipped with sensors to help locate victims of medical emergencies in darkness, as well as in structure fires, by plotting out dangerous hot spots under rooftops. Additionally, the SUAS will be used to aid in Marine Safety operations. Great thought has been given to the fear of abuse of the SUAS program in Huntington Beach. The purpose of this program is not to conduct surveillance operations. It is not intended for proactive law enforcement activities. Operators of the SUAS will be trained in the use of the SUAS and comply with the 4th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and all applicable Federal Aviation Regulations under Part 107. The pilot program will be closely monitored by the Police Chief and Fire Chief to ensure compliance with the State and Federal Laws. All deployment during the pilot program will be documented and forwarded to both Chiefs. At the conclusion of the one year program, the Chiefs will report back to the City Council on the pros and cons of the program.

The request is for the approval of a one-year test and evaluation pilot program where all aspects of public safety applications will be explored. The program will be managed by the Police Department in cooperation with the Fire Department and Marine Safety Division.

Environmental Status:

Not applicable

Strategic Plan Goal:

Enhance and maintain public safety

Attachment(s):

None