CITY OF CARSON

701 East Carson Street

Legislation Text

Report to Mayor and City Council

Wednesday, March 06, 2024

Discussion

SUBJECT:

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 24-026, "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A POLICY FOR CITY USE OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS" (CITY COUNCIL)

I.   SUMMARY

The purpose of this Resolution and Policy (Exhibit No. 1) is to effectively integrate and utilize Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) technology within City departments. This integration aims to enhance the efficiency, safety, and quality of public sector operations. By deploying drones for tasks such as infrastructure inspections, public safety, environmental assessment, and emergency response, the City seeks to leverage UAS technologies to augment its capabilities in delivering services more efficiently and effectively, ensuring compliance with safety and privacy standards.

This policy governs the utilization of drone use by City personnel or contracted work authorized by the City, excluding operations by non-City entities such as commercial operators or hobbyists regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Additionally, it does not amend Chapter 16 of the Carson Municipal Code sections 41601-41605 pertaining to UAS.

It is recommended that the City Council support adoption and approval of this Resolution and Policy as it will provide City staff the necessary guidance to utilize UAS or contract for such services.

II.   RECOMMENDATION

ADOPT Resolution No. 24-026, "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A POLICY FOR CITY USE OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS."

III. <u>ALTERNATIVES</u>

TAKE another action the City Council deems appropriate and consistent with the requirements of the law.

IV. <u>BACKGROUND</u>

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), commonly known as drones, are aircraft without a human pilot onboard that are controlled by an operator on the ground. Drones can be operated for a variety of reasons including for commercial purposes, recreational use or in support of public agency services.

Given the widespread integration of UAS technologies by public agencies to enhance critical operations, improve safety, and streamline project processes, the City contracted with Airspace Link to assist in the formation of a UAS policy tailored for the City.

The consultant was tasked with reviewing relevant Federal, State, and Local regulations as well as the City's existing ordinance to inform policy development. The consultant met with City personnel from various departments, including the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles County Fire Department, as well as other stakeholders. A Virtual Drone Policy workshop that was open to the public was convened on December 11, 2023, facilitated the exchange of information and feedback from stakeholders (Exhibit No. 2 & 3).

The Policy that was drafted governs drone use by City personnel or contracted work authorized by the City, and it establishes guidelines for City UAS usage, including purpose, scope, operational guidelines, training, certification, legal and privacy considerations, safety protocols, approval and oversight, equipment management, and data management captured by the UAS.

Authorized personnel would be permitted to utilize drones for the following purposes:

- Inspections: Performing surveys and assessments of properties and assets, including bridges, building exteriors, facades, rooftops, and assets located in difficult-to-reach areas such as solar panels and roof-mounted AC units.

- Construction Management: Conducting inspections of project sites to ensure contract and environmental compliance, documenting areas of erosion, and creating informational materials for progress reports and completed projects.

- Disaster Response: Utilizing drones for aerial reviews of disaster-affected areas, conducting initial damage assessments during and after natural disasters or emergencies, and capturing aerial views of affected areas, properties, roadways, and assets, including hazardous material incidents.

- Environmental Monitoring & Documentation: Inspecting vegetation types and health, wildlife, and waterways, as well as assessing the condition and health of

City-owned street trees.

- Marketing, Public Outreach, and Video Production: Using drones to capture video and still photographs as elements of City video productions and for educational and outreach purposes.

- Surveying and Mapping: Deploying drones equipped with various sensors, such as high-resolution cameras, LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), thermal sensors, and multispectral cameras, to capture detailed images and measurements of the City's surface and features.

- Public Safety: Utilizing drones for emergency response and safety operations ranging from SWAT deployments to searching for critical missing persons. Drones can provide real-time intelligence to officers in the field, enabling them to quickly develop a plan to de-escalate situations before the officer arrives on the scene. In addition, fire departments can use drones to determine how chemicals and hazardous materials are spreading in fires without endangering members of their team.

- Security: Using drones for surveillance and monitoring, crowd monitoring, and perimeter security to enhance the City's existing security capabilities.

- Testing and Training.

Additionally, the policy includes provisions for annual policy review and evaluation, ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness. Furthermore, it contemplates the development of an electronic database or software to facilitate the submission and tracking of UAS projects.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

There is no cost to implement this policy; however, departments or divisions opting to utilize this technology must budget for procurement, maintenance, training costs, and software development.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Resolution No. 24-026 and Policy. (Pgs. 5-16)

2. Drone Workshop Flyer. (pg.17)

3. Public comment. (Pg.18)

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