



CITY OF SALINAS

AIRPORT COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2017

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS, AIRPORT DIVISION

FROM: BRETT J. GODOWN, AIRPORT MANAGER

TITLE: UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS (UAS) POLICY FOR THE CITY OF SALINAS

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

It is recommended that the Airport Commission move to recommend City Council approve the City of Salinas Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Policy.

RECOMMENDATION:

City Staff has concluded that support of this action will allow City staff the necessary guidance to utilize UAS or contract for such services. This action will support City Council's Strategic Plan Goal of Effective, Sustainable Government and Economic Diversity and Prosperity.

BACKGROUND:

As unmanned aerial systems become more prevalent and the utility of the systems expands, many organizations, including governments, are implementing these technologies to increase effectiveness of their critical operations, improve safety, and save time and money on projects. The Public Works Department, in coordination with the City Attorney's Office, Police and Fire Department, and other City Departments/Divisions developed a program outlining proposed uses of UAS to assist with infrastructure and construction monitoring, and other non-surveillance needs. From that outlined program a policy was developed. The purpose of this policy is to provide the framework to implement a citywide program that will meet the requirements of specific projects and needs of city staff.

The City UAS policy only addresses the use of UAS by city personnel or contract work in pursuit of city-authorized work; it does not address or intend to address UAS operations in the City of Salinas conducted by non-city personnel including commercial operators/businesses or hobbyist. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the governing agency who has the authority to control airspace matters and regulate commercial operators.

In summary, the UAS policy establishes guidelines for city UAS use, including the storage, retrieval, and dissemination of images and data captured by the UAS.

ANALYSIS:

Over the last several years, with budgets limited and staffing reaching critically low levels, the City of Salinas has progressively begun implementing state-of-the-art technology to help manage projects and assist with daily operations. In the last two years, Public Works staff conducted extensive research in the use of UAS technologies. The Airport Division began using UAS technology in 2015 to monitor construction projects, inspect navigation aids on airport property, inspect facilities that would otherwise require a man-lift vehicle, collect marketing and promotional materials, and inspect fixed airport facilities. The added value over two years is estimated over \$150,000.00 in savings. Based on a combination of the added value to the Airport Division, expansion of the utility of the systems, and evaluating how other agencies currently use UAS as a means to assist in critical operations, City Staff has developed a UAS program for City-uses.

The program the Salinas staff is proposing uses these devices as added value for current construction management, planning, traffic analysis, asset management, and other non-surveillance type uses. This may include search and rescue assistance, 3D modeling, city facilities inspection, terrain modeling, surveying, and asset management.

Key factors in this program development are FAA regulations. The Salinas Airport has received a Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the FAA to operate UAS. The FAA originally required that all operators attend ground school, but has since eased this requirement in the updated part 107 of the regulations (Appendix A). The Public Works Department currently has two (2) pilots on staff with FAA part 107 certification. These individuals will be trained and certified to operate the UAS. The Airport has one (1) certified, FAA section 333 certified UAS pilot.

Understanding the public may view the use of UAS's as an invasion of privacy, City staff has taken steps to ensure full disclosure when these devices are activated. Privacy considerations are an important aspect of the City's UAS policy and program. Proposed City uses of UAS will be consistent with state law regarding privacy and private property rights that may be impacted by the City's use of the UAS. Notification to the Salinas Airport Tower and Salinas Police will be done when city staff activate a UAS. The City of Salinas has received a FAA waiver to fly in class D, regulated airspace. Four critical documents will be drafted to support this policy: 1) General Operations Manual, 2) UAS Training Manual, 3) UAS Maintenance Manual, and 4) a Risk Assessment and Checklist handbook.

The Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Program will be dedicated to support the City's Council's Strategic Plan Goal of Effective and Sustainable Government and thereby influence or directly support the remaining City goals as previously outlined. The program will provide valuable assistance to all departments, including Community Development, Public Works, Parks, and Recreation. Additionally, staff will be trained with the latest technology and tools available to continue to keep the citizens of Salinas safe, and provide data for informed management decisions.

City Staff hosted a series of public meetings to discuss the proposed policy and program. On August 30, a meeting was held at the Salinas Airport; this meeting primarily focused on integrating

UAS operations in the Airport's Class Delta Airspace. On September 22 and October 18, 2017, public meetings were held at City Hall and the Cesar Chavez Library. The community meetings held at City Hall and the Cesar Chavez Library focused more on intended uses and privacy concerns. Staff received constructive feedback. The comments and feedback from all of the public meetings were constructive, thoughtful, and generally positive. The comments and feedback will be implemented in the operation manuals.

The proposed UAS policy has received very positive reception from the Californian, KAZU, and Social Media. KION and KSBW are scheduling interviews with city staff. The Californian published an article on October 19, 2017. KAZU Radio (a NPR affiliate station) aired a story on October 10, 2017. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was contacted regarding the proposed City policy. The ACLU responded with no objections to the current policy as proposed.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

In the Fiscal Years 2016-2019, Salinas City Council Strategic Plan, Council's Goal Statement for *Effective, Sustainable Government* in part reads, "Resources are allocated effectively and fiscal solvency and sustainability are achieved." This policy will support City Council's Goals by providing Excellent Infrastructure, and promoting Economic Diversity and Prosperity.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There is no financial obligation incurred by the City of Salinas to implement this policy. Departments and Divisions that choose to utilize this technology under this policy will incur procurement, maintenance, and training costs. After evaluating two years of the Airport and GIS Division expenses, costs are expected to be no more than \$5,000 the first year and less each year thereafter.

ATTACHMENTS:

City of Salinas Draft Unmanned Aerial Systems Policy

Draft Resolution for City of Salinas Draft Unmanned Aerial Systems Policy