



REPORT to the MAYOR and MEMBERS of the CITY COUNCIL  
From the CITY MANAGER

DATE: April 14, 2026

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SUBMITTAL OF A COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING REQUEST THROUGH CONGRESSWOMAN SARA JACOBS' OFFICE FOR THE LA MESA DRONE AS FIRST RESPONDER PROJECT AND, IF AWARDED, AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF THE FUNDS

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Police Department

Recommendation:

Adopt a resolution approving the submittal of a Community Project Funding request through Congresswoman Sara Jacobs' office for the La Mesa Drone as First Responder project and, if awarded, authorizing the acceptance and appropriation of the funds for project implementation.

Fiscal Impact:

The City is requesting \$2,000,000 in federal Community Project Funding for the La Mesa Drone as First Responder project. The application identifies a project period of October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027. If awarded, grant revenues and related expenditures would be appropriated in accordance with City budget procedures.

City's Strategic Goals:

- Maintain a community where residents and visitors feel safe.

**BACKGROUND:**

Congresswoman Sara Jacobs' office is accepting Community Project Funding requests for federal fiscal year 2027. The La Mesa Police Department's application seeks funding under the U.S. Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Technology and Equipment category for a project titled "La Mesa Drone as First Responder".

COPS Technology and Equipment projects support law enforcement efforts to develop and procure technology and equipment needed to respond more quickly and effectively, improve officer safety, increase transparency, and enhance community relations. The program guidelines identify local law enforcement agencies as eligible recipients.

The La Mesa Police Department is seeking this funding to establish a Drone as First Responder (DFR) program and a Real-Time Crime Center (RTCC) to enhance public safety and reduce emergency response times. Drones would launch immediately on high-priority public safety calls (both police and fire / EMS) and provide real-time aerial video and critical intelligence before personnel arrive. The RTCC would consolidate and analyze live feeds and data to direct field response.

**DISCUSSION:**

The proposed project is designed to improve the City's emergency response capabilities and public safety operations through advanced technology. DFR and RTCC capabilities would shorten response times by locating suspects, victims, and hazards more quickly; confirming descriptions and direction of travel; and identifying access points, obstacles, and perimeter needs. Integrated aerial imagery and intelligence would improve decision-making during crimes in progress, missing or at-risk person incidents, traffic collisions, and brush or structure fires, while also supporting safer tactics and more efficient deployment of resources.

At major events and large gatherings, including the annual La Mesa Oktoberfest and the weekly Farmer's Market, the proposed DFR program and RTCC would strengthen situational awareness by detecting emerging issues, coordinating responses, and improving communications with partner agencies such as fire and emergency medical services. The information provided would support more informed incident command decisions during large-scale or rapidly evolving events.

Requested funds would support drone aircraft, launch, landing, and charging equipment, secure data storage, and technology needed to integrate video, mapping, computer-aided dispatch, and intelligence platforms within an RTCC environment, as well as initial and ongoing pilot and analyst training. No additional staff are proposed. All operations would follow FAA requirements and all applicable local, state, and federal privacy safeguards.

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposed Community Project Funding request would provide the City with an opportunity to seek \$2,000,000 in federal funding to establish a Drone as First Responder program and Real-Time Crime Center for the La Mesa Police Department. The projected funds are for equipment and training only. If funded, the project would enhance emergency response, improve situational awareness, support safer and more efficient deployment of personnel, and strengthen the City's ability to respond to crimes in progress, emergencies, and major public events. Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution approving the submittal of the funding request and, if awarded, acceptance and appropriation of the funds for project implementation.


Reviewed by:



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Greg Humora  
City Manager

Respectfully submitted by:



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Ray Sweeney  
Chief of Police

Attachments:

- A. Community Project Funding Request
- B. Resolution