



POLICE ADVISORY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY APRIL 16, 2025, AT 6:00 PM

In-Person:

San Rafael City Council Chambers
1400 Fifth Ave, San Rafael, California

Virtual:

Watch Online: <https://tinyurl.com/PAAC2025>

Listen by Phone: (669) 444-9171

Meeting ID: 861 8590 4369

AGENDA

How to participate in the meeting:

- You are welcome to provide comments in person at the meeting. Each speaker will have 2 minutes to provide public comments.
- Submit your comments by email to PAAC@cityofsanrafael.org by 4:00 p.m. the day of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER–6:00PM MINUTES

1. Approve regular meeting minutes from the March 19, 2025, meeting.

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

The public is welcome to address the Police Advisory and Accountability Committee at this time on matters not on the agenda that are within its jurisdiction. Comments may be no longer than 2 minutes and should be respectful to the community.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

If necessary to ensure the completion of the following items, the Chairperson may establish time limits for the presentations by individual speakers.

2. Other Agenda Items:

- a. AB481 Military Equipment, Lieutenant Scott Eberle, SRPD

Recommendation: Receive the informational report and presentation and provide feedback.

STAFF LIAISON REPORT

3. Other brief program updates or reports on any meetings, conferences, and/or seminars attended by staff.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

4. Other brief reports on any meetings, conferences, and/or seminars attended by the Committee members.

ADJOURNMENT

Any records relating to an agenda item, received by a majority or more of the Board less than 72 hours before the meeting, shall be available for inspection online and in the city hall large conference room, third floor, 1400 5th Avenue, San Rafael, California placed with other agenda-related materials on the table in front of the location prior to the meeting. Sign Language interpreters may be requested by calling (415) 485-3066 (voice), emailing city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org or using the California Telecommunications Relay Service by dialing "711", at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request



SAN RAFAEL
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

**POLICE ADVISORY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE (PAAC)
WEDNESDAY MARCH 19, 2025, AT 6:00 PM**

In-Person:

**San Rafael City Council Chambers
1400 Fifth Ave, San Rafael, California**

Virtual:

Watch Online:

<https://tinyurl.com/PAAC2025>

Listen by Phone: (669) 444-9171

Meeting ID: 898-5264-7245#

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tokolahi called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and requested a roll call.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Member Daniel Alm
Member Paula Kamena
Member Mydung Nguyen (arrived at 6:02 p.m.)
Member Darlin Ruiz
Vice Chair Davidi
Chair Fatai Tokolahi
Alternate Member Salamah Locks
Alternate Member Karla Valdez

Absent:

Member Alvarez

Alternate Member Valdez voted in Member Alvarez's absence.

Staff Present:

Angela Robinson Piñon, Assistant City Manager
David Spiller, Police Chief, San Rafael Police Department
Scott Eberle, Lieutenant, San Rafael Police Department
Teresa Olson, Sr. Mgmt. Analyst, San Rafael Police Department
Kyle Williams, RIPA Data Analyst, Marin County Sheriff's Department
David Swing, Retired Chief of Police, California Police Chiefs
Association Board Member, former RIPA Board Member Representative

Lieutenant Scott Eberle informed the community that the in-person meeting would also be recorded and streamed live to YouTube and through Zoom. He noted the two-minute timer for public comment and closed captioning on Zoom.

1. MINUTES

Chair Tokolahi invited public comment, however, there was none.

Member Alm made a motion to approve the minutes of February 19, 2025, with the amendment that Vice Chair Davidi was absent for the vote. Member Valdez seconded the motion.

AYES: MEMBERS: Alm, Alvarez, Davidi, Kamena, Nguyen, Ruiz, Tokolahi
NOES: MEMBERS: None
ABSENT: MEMBERS: None
ABSTAIN: MEMBERS: None

The motion carried 7-0-0-0.

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Sara McEvoy commented on the reinstatement of Officer Nail.

Heidi commented on the community needs of the PAAC.

Shinji Saka-Egi commented on agenda items.

Jonathan Frieman commented on prostitution and human trafficking stings.

Jason spoke on the topic of homelessness and update going before City Council in April.

An unnamed male spoke on a 2017 report published about Marin County.

2. OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

a. U.S. Customs & Immigration and the San Rafael Police Department

The Committee asked questions.

Chair Tokolahi opened the item for public comment.

Speakers: Tara, Russ, Shinji Sakai-Egi, Sara McEvoy, Heidi.

The Committee provided comments.

b. Public Comment Duration

The Committee asked questions.

Chair Tokolahi opened the item for public comment.

Speakers: Shinji Sakai-Egi, Heidi, Jason, Tara, male no name provided, Jonathan, Russ, Sara

The Committee provided comments.

Member Alm made a motion to maintain the public comment duration period at two minutes, Member Ruiz seconded the motion.

AYES: MEMBERS: Alm, Kamena, Nguyen, Ruiz, Tokolahi, Valdez
NOES: MEMBERS: Davidi
ABSENT: MEMBERS: None
ABSTAIN: MEMBERS: None

The motion carried 6-1-0-0.

c. Racial Profiling and Profiling Act (RIPA)

The Committee asked questions.

Chair Tokolahi opened the item for public comment.

Speakers: Frank Shinneman, Tammy Edmonson, Ed Rusky, Nanatte Zavala, Sara, Shinji Sakai-Egi, Jonathan, John Reynolds, male no name provided, Jason

The Committee provided comments.

STAFF LIAISON REPORT

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Member Alm attended a Sun Valley Neighborhood Association meeting on Fire Safety and mentioned there was an open discussion about traffic safety, speeding and stop sign violations and asked to reconsider discussing traffic safety.
- Member Davidi mentioned tomorrow is the first day of spring and the Persian New Year.
- Member Kamena mentioned having a conversation with the President of the San Rafael School Board regarding the topic of School Resource Officers. She also mentioned an article published in the Marin IJ discussing the PAAC Annual Report and requested a rewrite on using the verbiage on recommendations.
- Member Locks attended a San Rafael City School Board Meeting on March 11th and a VA Protest Rally on the Avenue of the Flags on March 14th.
- Member Ruiz attended a meeting at the San Rafael Church about immigration and ICE and thanked the involved organizations including SRPD and legal aid.
- Member Tokolahi mentioned using various platforms where he is also a member to share information about U.S. Customs and Immigration. He is working with the homeless population. He further shared Member Alm and Alvarez were selected to attend youth listening sessions on the topic of Youth and Policing coordinated by a partnership with Youth Transforming Justice in order to observe and provide feedback to the PAAC on the topic.
- Member Valdez nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tokolahi adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM

Liaison

Teresa Olson, Staff

APPROVED THIS ____ DAY OF _____, 2025



**April 16, 2025
Item 2a**

TITLE: AB 481 MILITARY EQUIPMENT ANNUAL REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the report and provide feedback.

BACKGROUND:

The California Legislature passed [Assembly Bill 481](#) (AB 481) in 2021, which requires the applicable governing body to adopt an ordinance approving a military equipment use policy for the funding, acquisition, and use of military equipment by a law enforcement agency. That law enforcement agency must also hold one community engagement meeting, at which the department should discuss the report and respond to public questions regarding the funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment.

In May of 2022, the City Council adopted [Ordinance 2007](#), adding Chapter 2.52 to the [San Rafael Municipal Code](#), to establish the requirements for approval and annual review of a military equipment policy. In Division 3 of Ordinance 2007, the City Council also approved [Policy 706 - Military Equipment Funding, Acquisition and Use Policy, and a Military Equipment Inventory List dated March 7, 2022](#).

The April 16, 2025, Police Advisory and Accountability Committee (PAAC) meeting will serve as a public forum for community engagement, providing an opportunity to address any questions or concerns from the public and committee members.

ANALYSIS:

The San Rafael Police Department (SRPD) AB 481 2024 Military Equipment Annual Report is provided as Attachment 1 to this staff report and includes the following:

- (1) A summary of how the military equipment was used and the purpose of its use.
- (2) A summary of any complaints or concerns concerning the military equipment.
- (3) The results of any internal audits, information about violations of the military equipment use policy, and any actions taken in response.
- (4) The total annual cost for each type of military equipment, including acquisition, personnel, training, transportation, maintenance, storage, upgrade, and other ongoing costs, and from what source funds will be provided for the military equipment in the calendar year following submission of the annual military equipment report.
- (5) The quantity possessed for each type of military equipment.

(6) If the law enforcement agency intends to acquire additional military equipment in the next year, the quantity sought for each type of military equipment.

The San Rafael Police Department (SRPD) plans to implement an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) – Drone as a First Responder (DFR) program in 2025. The attached report provides a comprehensive overview of the acquisition, associated costs, and an ACLU article outlining concerns related to drone deployment.

As described in the 2024 Military Equipment Annual Report, the SRPD, in most instances, only deployed military equipment for training. However, SRPD did have cause to deploy some equipment in the course of their duties. As described, this included:

- In Category 1- The use of the Marin County Sheriff's Office Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)- (13 call outs)
- In Category 3- The use of the Armored Rescue Vehicle (2-Call outs)
- In Category 14- The use of the Less-Than-Lethal Impact Device. (3- Deployments)

As noted in the report, SRPD did not receive any complaints about using military equipment during the reporting period, nor did any internal audits reveal any policy violations.

The inventory of the military equipment in the annual report documents the purpose of use, costs, and quantity of each item of military equipment used by the SRPD. The inventory has not changed since 2023.

The SRPD has not obtained, nor does it utilize, any equipment procured from the United States Department of Defense through the Law Enforcement Support Program (also known as the 1028 or 1033 program).

[Military Equipment Use Policy 706](#) is effective, and no circumstances have changed that would require an update to the policy.

Submitted by:

Scott Eberle
Lieutenant

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [2024 Military Equipment Annual Report](#)
2. [Draft UAS Policy](#)



AB 481 Military Equipment Annual Report 2024

Prepared by:

Lieutenant Scott Eberle

San Rafael Police Department

Submitted April 1st, 2025

Military Equipment Use AB 481 Compliance Requirements

- [Approval of the Military Use Policy \(Completed May 2022, Policy 706\)](#)
- [Approval of the Police Acquisition and Use of Military Equipment Ordinance](#) (Completed May 2022, SRMC 2.52)
- The initial Community Engagement Meeting will take place on April 16, 2025, during the Police Advisory and Accountability Committee (PAAC) meeting.
- Current Military Equipment Inventory (Attached)
- Annual Report (See below)

Annual Report Description

[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 481](#) requires police departments to report annually on the inventory, procurement, use, and misuse of covered military equipment items. This report also includes a description of new military equipment the San Rafael Police Department (“Department” or “SRPD”) seeks City Council approval for acquisition and funding.

Per AB 481, an annual report must include the following:

1. A summary of how the military equipment was used and the purpose of its use.
2. A summary of any complaints or concerns received concerning the military equipment.
3. The results of any internal audits, any information about violations of the military equipment use policy, and any actions taken in response.
4. The total annual cost for each type of military equipment, including acquisition, personnel, training, transportation, maintenance, storage, upgrade, and other ongoing costs, and from what source funds will be provided for the military equipment in the calendar year following submission of the annual military equipment report.
5. The quantity possessed for each type of military equipment.
6. If the law enforcement agency intends to acquire additional military equipment in the next year, the quantity sought for each type of military equipment.

SRMC 2.52 Military Equipment Policy (Approved May 2022)

As required by AB 481, the City Council approved and enacted by resolution [Municipal Code Section 2.52](#) to approve a Military Equipment Use Policy. The City Council's approval shall remain effective for one year, during which approval may be revoked, extended, renewed, modified, or amended by resolution of the City Council. Within a year of the initial approval, and at least annually thereafter, the City Council will review this section and related resolutions. The City Council may, by resolution, make amendments, modifications, or revisions to the Military Equipment Use Policy adopted by the San Rafael Police Department. The Ordinance must be reviewed and renewed annually.

A. The City Council has made the following determinations:

1. The military equipment inventoried and presented to the City Council is necessary because there is no reasonable alternative that can achieve the same objective of officer and civilian safety.

2. The military equipment use policy (Lexipol policy 706) will safeguard the public's welfare, safety, civil rights, and civil liberties.
3. The equipment is reasonably cost-effective compared to available alternatives that can achieve the same objective of officer and civilian safety (if any).
4. Prior military equipment use complied with the applicable equipment use policy (which included equipment now defined as military equipment) that was in effect at the time, or if prior uses did not comply with the accompanying military equipment use policy, corrective action has been taken to remedy nonconforming uses and ensure future compliance.

Military Equipment Defined

- Category 1: Unmanned, remotely piloted, powered aerial or ground vehicles¹
- Category 2: Mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles or armored personnel carriers¹
- Category 3: High-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWV), two-and-a-half-ton trucks, five-ton trucks, or wheeled vehicles that have a breaching or entry apparatus attached.
- Category 4: Tracked armored vehicles that provide ballistic protection to their occupants
- Category 5: Command and control vehicles that are either built or modified to facilitate the operational control and direction of public safety units.
- Category 6: Weaponized aircraft, vessels, or vehicles of any kind.
- Category 7: Battering rams, slugs, and breaching apparatuses that are explosive in nature¹
- Category 8: Firearms of .50 caliber or greater
- Category 9: Ammunition of .50 caliber or greater
- Category 10: Specialized firearms and ammunition of less than .50 caliber¹
- Category 11: Any firearm or firearm accessory that is designed to launch explosive projectiles
- Category 12: Noise-flash diversionary devices and explosive breaching tools, munitions containing tear gas or OC, excluding standard, service-issued handheld pepper spray¹
- Category 13: TASER® Shockwave, microwave weapons, water cannons, long-range acoustic devices
- Category 14: Kinetic energy weapons and munitions (Less than Lethal)¹

¹ Denotes SRPD equipment in inventory

Category 15: Any other equipment as determined by a governing body or a state agency that requires additional oversight

Equipment Usage for 2024

As evident in the Military Equipment Inventory, the San Rafael Police Department does not own any equipment in categories 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, or 13. The SRPD has not obtained, nor does it utilize, any equipment procured from the United States Department of Defense through the Law Enforcement Support Program (also known as the 1028 or 1033 program).

Category 1: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles² (Drone) and Ground Vehicle (Robot).

In 2024, the SRPD used the equipment shared in Category 1 for training situations, including range training and SWAT training. The remote-piloted ground vehicle (robot) was used twice during a SWAT activation, and the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV-Drone) was used thirteen times. The SRPD does not possess its own UAV and relies on outside agencies for assistance.

The Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) also has an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that is not a shared piece of equipment. On occasion, the SRPD makes a mutual aid assistance request. For transparency reasons, we share that the SRPD requested the UAV from the Marin County Sheriff's Office thirteen times in 2024. The following pages briefly summarize the incidents where the SRPD used the equipment in Category 1.

- 1) On January 30, 2024, the SRPD received numerous phone calls reporting a male "dancing around a light pole" with a gun in a Terra Linda neighborhood. Witnesses described the male, and the supervisors immediately called for an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) to respond. While en route, officers contacted the suspect, who was holding a BB gun that looked real. Officers were able to de-escalate the situation as the MCSO UAV team arrived and was ultimately canceled. (SR24-0612)
- 2) On February 12, 2024, a 33-year-old male made unwanted advances and inappropriately touched a 14-year-old girl at Northgate Mall. When police arrived, he fled into a nearby neighborhood, jumping fences in an attempt to escape. The MSCO UAV team was deployed and arrived 30 minutes later to assist in the search. Although the suspect evaded capture that night, he was taken into custody a few days later. (SR24-0906)
- 3) In February 2024, the Peacock Gap and Dominican neighborhoods were targeted by a series of residential burglaries. On February 13, 2024, residents in Peacock Gap began calling 911 to report a man jumping fences into backyards. One caller noted that the suspect resembled the individual they had seen peering through their window the previous weekend. The MCSO UAV team was requested and arrived approximately 20 minutes after the initial call. Despite an extensive search, the suspect was not located, and the case remains active. (SR24-0923)

² The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) is a shared piece of equipment that the Novato Police Department purchased and stores.

- 4) On February 26, 2024, a sergeant on patrol in the Terra Linda neighborhood noticed a car with its alarm sounding and broken glass on the ground. Nearby, a running truck with its lights on caught the sergeant's attention as a man ran from the victim's car and got into the driver's seat of the truck. When the sergeant attempted to stop the vehicle, the driver fled a short distance, initiating a pursuit. The sergeant caught up to the truck, at which point the passenger fled into the neighborhood. The MCSO UAV team responded approximately 30 minutes after the initial pursuit but was unable to locate the second suspect. The driver was found near the truck and taken into custody. (SR24-1180)
- 5) On March 3, 2024, the SRPD received a phone call that a man had just shot his father in the chest and was about to shoot himself. Officers arrived on scene and were able to determine this was not a real incident and more of a "SWATTING" incident. A drone was requested, but it was not available in time to deploy it.
- 6) Twice in April 2024, a drone was requested, but the UAV team could not respond. One incident was a call where a victim was shot at but not hit, and the suspect was still in the downtown area of San Rafael (SR24-02234). The Marin County UAV was not available. The second incident was to look for a missing male who said he had fallen in an unknown area around the Civic Center. The UAV was not available in time, and the man was located after searching for approximately 50 minutes. (Inc#2404200089)
- 7) On April 29, 2024, multiple gunshots were fired in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael. Several witnesses provided descriptions of the suspect and the vehicle he was driving. The vehicle was later found in a nearby parking lot, with the driver still inside. The MCSO UAV team was requested and arrived nearly an hour after the initial call for service. Their assistance helped facilitate a peaceful resolution, leading to the suspect's surrender. A loaded handgun was recovered from the vehicle. (SR24-2494)
- 8) On June 20, 2024, a pickup truck was stolen in the area of Redwood Highway in Terra Linda. The victim saw the suspect drive by his location, and SRPD officers were able to respond and set up a perimeter. The Marin County UAV team was called out and was not available to respond in time. The suspect was later apprehended after a foot pursuit. (SR24-3475)
- 9) On July 25, 2024, the Novato Police Department requested the activation of the San Rafael-Novato Crisis Response Unit (SWAT and CNT) to assist with a search warrant for a suspected gang member linked to a robbery. The suspect resided in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael. Both the Unmanned Ground Vehicle (Robot) and Novato's UAV were deployed to clear the interior of the apartment; however, the suspect was not located. The Armored Rescue Vehicle was also used to provide protection for the officers making entry into the apartment. (NP24-2294)
- 10) On August 5, 2024, the San Rafael Crisis Response Unit (SWAT and CNT) was activated to apprehend an armed and dangerous suspect residing in the Canal neighborhood. The suspect was suspected of committing numerous burglaries, including one of a gun retailer located in Placer County. Both the Unmanned Ground Vehicle (Robot) and Novato's UAV

were deployed to clear the interior of the apartment. The suspect was located and taken into custody peacefully and without incident. The Armored Rescue Vehicle was also used to provide protection for the officers making entry into the apartment. (NP24-2369)

11) On September 6, 2024, a report of two to three subjects pulling a gun on a victim in the Terra Linda area of San Rafael. It took over eight minutes for officers to arrive in the area, and when they did, they located the suspect vehicle but no suspects. The Marin County UAV was called out to assist, but they were not available. (SR24-05014)

12) On December 5, 2024, a suspect was caught on the Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) system in a stolen vehicle. Officers were able to find the vehicle and followed it to an apartment complex in Terra Linda. The suspect attempted to hit the officer with the vehicle and continued the pursuit, driving in the wrong direction on the roadway. The suspect proceeded to drive the wrong way on the freeway, causing the officers to discontinue the pursuit. (UAV not available).

Category 2: Armored Rescue Vehicle: Ford Transit-Van

The Armored Rescue Vehicle (ARV) is a resource shared with the Novato Police Department. The San Rafael–Novato Crisis Response Unit (CRU) deployed the ARV twice in 2024. Both of the incidents are outlined in the previous section of this report.

- 1) The service of a search warrant involving a suspect who committed a robbery in Novato, as documented in incident #9 above.
- 2) The service of a search warrant of an armed burglary suspect, as documented in incident #10 above.

Category 5: Command Trailer

The SRPD no longer possesses a Command Trailer. In 2023, the trailer was returned to the City of San Rafael Public Works Department, which coordinated its sale through the standard auction process.

Category 7: Breaching Projectiles

In 2024, the SRPD did not use any equipment in Category 7.

Category 10: Patrol and SWAT Rifles and ammunition

In 2024, the SRPD used the equipment shared in Category 10 solely for training situations, including range training and SWAT training.

Category 12: Diversionary Device, Tear Gas & Air Powered Less Lethal Device (pepper ball)

In 2024, the SRPD used the equipment shared in Category 12 solely for training situations, including range training and SWAT training.

Category 14: Less than Lethal Impact Device (Kinetic Energy Munitions)

In 2024, the SRPD utilized the equipment in Category 14 in training situations, including range and SWAT training. The Department also used Less than less-than-lethal impact Devices in the following three (3) incidents.

- 1) On June 25, 2024, SRPD officers were dispatched to a report of a man who had just stabbed his mother in the neck. While en route, SRPD Dispatch identified the suspect and noted he had a history of numerous prior contacts with the department, many of which involved uncooperative behavior. Upon arrival, officers observed the suspect pacing shirtless in front of his residence. Unsure if he was still armed with the knife, officers issued multiple commands in both Spanish and English. The suspect responded in an agitated state, swearing at officers and repeatedly demanding that they shoot him. Due to the suspect's violent history and the immediate threat he posed, officers deployed one less-lethal impact round, which struck him in the upper thigh. The suspect became immediately cooperative and was safely taken into custody. He was found to still be in possession of the knife. (SR24-3581)
- 2) On November 6, 2024, SRPD officers were conducting patrols in Albert Park near the childcare center in response to recent reports of drug use, alcohol consumption, and other unwanted behavior in the area. During the patrol, an officer observed an individual near the childcare center with a methamphetamine pipe and an open container of alcohol in plain view. When the officer approached the individual to identify him and request that he leave the area, the individual immediately became aggressive, striking the officer in the face. Over the next ten minutes, officers attempted to de-escalate the situation, but the individual grew increasingly violent. After attempts to subdue him through verbal commands were unsuccessful, officers deployed a taser, which had no effect. Officers then utilized a less-lethal impact round, after which the individual became compliant. (SR24-6339)
- 3) On December 3, 2024, at approximately 12:30 a.m., a resident reported an unknown intruder on his rear balcony. The intruder was acting aggressively and had armed himself with a chair. SRPD officers arrived on scene and observed the individual from the street, recognizing him as someone known to be aggressive and uncooperative with law enforcement. Officers attempted to engage in conversation and de-escalate the situation for over 20 minutes, but the individual became increasingly hostile. He then took a fighting stance and began advancing toward the officers. To safely resolve the incident, officers deployed a less-lethal impact round. Following this, officers were able to take the individual into custody without further incident. (SR24-6855)

Summary of Complaints for 2024

The SRPD did not receive any complaints concerning military equipment in 2024.

Violations of Policy 706

An internal review revealed no violations of Policy 706.

Total Annual Cost for Military Equipment

The attached Military Equipment Inventory documents the fiscal impact of each category's yearly maintenance costs. The only new purchases in 2024 were ten new rifles for Patrol Officers approved by the San Rafael City Council during the [Military Equipment presentation on June 3, 2024](#).

New Proposed Items for the Military Equipment Inventory List

1. UAVs (Category 1 on Current Inventory List)

I. Description

[Flock Safety's Drone-as-First-Responder](#) (DFR) program, known as Flock Aerodome, is an automated system designed to enhance public safety by deploying drones rapidly to emergency scenes. These drones can respond to incidents within approximately 85 seconds, providing real-time aerial intelligence to first responders. Strategically stationed at automated docking stations throughout a city, the drones cover a four-mile radius, offering immediate situational awareness to emergency personnel.

The Flock Safety DFR program will be seamlessly integrated into SRPD's Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Upon receiving an emergency call, a dispatcher, watch commander, or on-duty supervisor will be able to deploy a drone in under 3 seconds. With a top speed of 53 MPH and a 55-minute battery life, the drone can rapidly respond to emergencies in seconds rather than minutes. Once on-site, an observer can remotely maneuver the drone and its video equipment to assess the scene and gather critical information. When the drone's battery reaches a low level, it will autonomously return to its docking station at the Public Safety Center (PSC), where it will quickly change its battery in under 2 minutes, ensuring it is ready for immediate redeployment.

II. Fiscal Impact

- \$150,000 per year

III. Purpose

This program directly supports the City's overarching goals of improving public safety, enhancing community well-being, and utilizing resources efficiently to benefit residents and local services. A DFR program is aligned with the following 2026-2028 City Council Goals and Objectives.

- Enhance the City's capacity to respond to emergencies and natural disasters.
- Ensure police, fire, and emergency medical services meet evolving community needs through increased engagement, innovation, training, and operational excellence.
- Ensure police and fire response times and services can meet the needs of future developments by identifying funding sources to address service-level impacts of population growth.
- Strengthen mutual aid agreements and regional collaboration for large-scale incidents.

- Promote community safety through innovative programs that strengthen neighborhood security and foster resident engagement in public safety.
- Improve service to the community by reducing emergency response times of Priority 1 police calls.
- Leverage technology solutions to improve public safety response efficiency.
- Modernize City systems and operations to improve service delivery, customer experience, responsiveness, transparency, and resource utilization.

IV. **Benefits**

1. Reduced Response Times

In 2024, SRPD's average response time to Priority 1 crimes was five minutes and thirty-nine seconds. Implementing a DFR program could significantly cut this response time. Drones can be deployed immediately after receiving an emergency call, reaching the scene in under one minute—reducing response times by more than 80%. With drones capable of traveling at speeds up to 45 mph, they can quickly cover the city. The average response time with a DFR program is approximately 137 seconds, which would result in an estimated 60% reduction in response times based on SRPD’s current performance for Priority 1 calls. As noted, DFR first on scene response times are even quicker

Response Times			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Priority 1</u>	<u>Priority 2</u>	<u>Priority 3</u>
2024	5:39:00	26:22:00	61:54:00
2023	5:49:00	26:18:00	63:07:00
Trend	-2.87%	0.25%	-1.93%

2. Enhanced Situational Awareness & Liability Reduction

Drones provide real-time aerial video footage to officers en route to a call for service, allowing for better preparation and strategy formulation before arriving on scene. This capability enhances officer safety and operational effectiveness. Drones can verify the validity of a call for service and potentially mitigate those calls without requiring officer response if unnecessary, enhancing operational efficiency and safety.

Additionally, a drone program will significantly reduce liability for SRPD by ensuring that responding officers have the most accurate and up-to-date information before initiating a response. Drones can also:

- Verify if a crime is still in progress, preventing unnecessary high-speed responses.
- Identify errors in reporting, such as misidentified suspects, locations, injuries, number of involved parties, or weapon involvement.
- Evaluate the necessity of deploying a Code 3 emergency response (lights and sirens) versus adopting a more deliberate approach that allows for careful response planning, de-escalation tactics, and the coordination of additional resources to ensure a more effective and controlled outcome.

By reducing unnecessary Code 3 responses, the DFR program will:

- Minimize department liability in the event of accidents occurring during high-speed responses.
- Decrease the risk of vehicle collisions and traffic-related incidents involving officers and the public.
- Improve overall roadway safety and traffic management in San Rafael.

Drones are capable of performing tasks that are not safe or possible for personnel, such as:

- Entering hazardous environments that are dangerous for humans.
- Capturing high-definition video and images.
- Providing thermal imaging capabilities.
- Transporting external loads, such as flotation devices, radios, and more.
- Monitoring or evaluating areas that may pose potential risks or dangers in a natural disaster.
- Navigating inaccessible areas.

V. **Applications of a DFR Program in San Rafael**

1. Traffic Collisions – Drones can swiftly reach the scene of injury-related traffic collisions, providing real-time assessments of the situation. This immediate aerial perspective aids in determining the severity of incidents, facilitating quicker medical response and traffic management.
2. Major Disasters and Flooding – San Rafael is susceptible to natural disasters, particularly flooding. Drones can monitor flood-prone areas, assess damage during and after events, and assist in coordinating evacuation and relief efforts. Their ability to access areas unreachable by ground units during disasters is invaluable.
3. Search and Rescue Operations – In cases of at-risk missing persons, such as individuals with cognitive impairments or children, drones can cover large areas quickly, utilizing thermal imaging and high-resolution cameras to locate individuals efficiently, thereby increasing the chances of a successful rescue.
4. Civil Unrest and Public Events – During events that may lead to civil unrest, such as Guatemalan Independence Day celebrations, drones can monitor large gatherings, providing real-time intelligence on crowd movements and potential hotspots. This capability allows for proactive measures to maintain public safety.
5. Fireworks Complaints – Illegal fireworks pose safety risks and generate numerous calls for service. Drones can quickly identify the sources of fireworks, enabling officers to address violations efficiently without extensive ground searches.
6. In-Progress Crimes – For incidents such as burglaries, assaults, or other crimes with potential for injury, drones can arrive swiftly to provide real-time visuals, aiding in suspect apprehension and ensuring officer and public safety.
7. Active Incidents - Monitor barricaded suspects, hostage situations, active shooters, apprehension of armed and dangerous and/ or violent fleeing suspects,
8. Post-Incident Crime Scene Preservation and Documentation - One of the earliest drone uses was traffic collision reconstruction. Not only can drones accurately capture crash

scenes, but they can also do so in a third of the time of traditional methods and create three-dimensional models that can be accessed later for review. Most importantly, the quicker process reduces the possibility of secondary accidents, which enhances safety for all involved.

9. Hazardous Material – In hazardous environments like chemical spills or collapsed buildings, drones gather critical information without putting officers at risk, ensuring their safety while obtaining necessary data.
10. Search Warrants & SWAT Operations – SWAT operations are inherently high-risk, often involving armed individuals with a history of violent behavior. Drones offer critical overwatch as the SWAT team progresses, with real-time video feeds streamed directly to team members. This gives officers the ability to see around buildings, over fences, and into confined spaces, reducing the risk of moving forward without awareness of potential threats. The combination of visual optics and thermal imaging ensures versatile operations, whether during the day or night.
11. Explosive Devices – Drones equipped with specialized cameras, sensors, and thermal imaging can be used to inspect suspicious objects from a safe distance. This allows bomb disposal units or law enforcement to assess potential threats without putting personnel in harm's way. Some drones can also carry advanced detection systems to identify explosives or other dangerous materials.
12. Training – Aerial video footage and images captured during an incident are crucial in after-action assessments, where first responders critique their efforts to improve their approach and identify future training needs. These materials can also be used to train new personnel, providing real-life examples of how a situation might unfold and decisions made on the ground.
13. Mutual-Aid – Drones can provide significant benefits to mutual aid agreements by enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and safety of coordinated emergency responses. Drones can cover large areas in a short amount of time, reducing the need for ground teams to search areas manually. This leads to faster responses, lower operational costs, and more efficient use of personnel.
14. Emergency Communication – Equipped with loudspeakers, drones disseminate important information to the public during emergencies, evacuations, or large gatherings, enhancing communication and public safety.

VI. Usage Limits

The ACLU posted an article written in 2023 titled [*Eye in the Sky Policing Needs Strict Limits*](#). The article raised concerns over the possibility of widespread police surveillance and provided policy suggestions to prevent unchecked expansion.

The ACLU and San Rafael city staff agree that a Drone as a First Responder (DFR) program must operate within strict limits to prevent its expansion into broad surveillance tools. As these programs evolve, clear policies are essential in three areas: usage limits, transparency, and data handling.

Before implementation, all policies must be approved by the San Rafael City Council.

In alignment with recommendations from the ACLU and San Rafael City staff, drone deployments should be limited to emergencies, situations involving an imminent threat to life or property, or the documentation of crime scenes—ensuring the technology is not used for unwarranted surveillance.

VII. **Transparency**

Public accountability is essential. Cities like [Elk Grove](#), Chula Vista and Hemet, CA, already publish DFR flight details, including time, purpose, and route. The SRPD will follow suit by creating a transparency portal to share flight paths, deployment times, and reasons for each mission.

VIII. **Data Handling**

The ACLU and San Rafael City Staff recommend that the SRPD record every flight mission. While en route to each emergency, the camera will face towards the area of concern and not face directly downward. The data will be retained for the same amount of time and be subject to the same retention schedule as Body-Worn Camera (BWC) footage. The SRPD does not permit the sharing of video data gathered by the City for federal immigration enforcement. These federal immigration agencies include Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CPB). Neither Flock Safety nor any other third-party company has access to SRPD recorded data.

Flock Safety utilizes the same evidence management software as the existing Body-Worn Cameras (BWC), ensuring seamless integration with our current infrastructure for video evidence collection. This eliminates the need for additional software, saving the City both time and resources.

The ACLU recommends retaining UAV or Drone recordings to be consistent with body-worn camera retention timelines. Consistent with current policy, the SRPD will keep recordings of use-of-force incidents, officer-involved shootings, arrests, and complaints against officers or the SRPD for at least two years ([Penal Code § 832.18](#)). Any recordings relevant to a criminal prosecution must be preserved for the legally required duration.

After each flight, the recordings are automatically stored in a secure and reliable cloud-based system hosted on AWS. The San Rafael Police Department holds exclusive authority to access this data. Neither Flock Safety nor any other third-party company has access to the recordings. Access and deletion logs must be retained permanently.

The ACLU acknowledges that drones can serve valuable law enforcement purposes in emergencies and specific investigations where there are clear, justifiable reasons for their use. They do not oppose drones for tasks like crime or accident scene documentation, provided they do not infringe on reasonable privacy expectations, requiring a warrant when necessary. However, the ACLU strongly opposes the use of drones for routine, suspicionless, or mass surveillance.

During community [engagement meetings](#) in the Canal neighborhood in 2023 and 2024, residents provided feedback about what they wanted to see from the SRPD. The community advocated for an increase in video surveillance cameras, faster police response times, and greater law enforcement presence in their neighborhood. The implementation of a Drone as a First Responder (DFR) program directly addresses these community concerns while aligning with the City

Council's Goals and Objectives. This initiative is a proactive response to the needs of San Rafael's predominantly Latinx community, enhancing both public safety and emergency response capabilities.

Community feedback also emphasized the need for the SRPD to build trust and strengthen relationships with residents by engaging in community events, attending neighborhood meetings, and participating in youth programs. There is also a strong desire for officers to spend more time connecting with community members through activities like walking and biking in specific neighborhoods.

A DFR program can support these community needs by enhancing operational efficiency. By utilizing drones to conduct assessments of incidents, the program enables officers to gain real-time situational awareness without being dispatched to every call. This allows officers to focus more on community engagement, building relationships, and attending neighborhood events rather than responding to incidents that can be assessed remotely. As a result, officers will have more time to interact with residents and participate in youth programs, strengthening trust and fostering deeper connections within the community.

IX. Authorized Use

Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) or DFR may be utilized to enhance the department's mission of protecting lives and property when other means and resources are not available or are less effective. Any use of a UAS will be in strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

The DFR video surveillance equipment shall not be used:

- To conduct random surveillance activities.
- To target a person based solely on actual or perceived characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, or disability.
- To harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.
- To conduct personal business of any type.

The DFR shall not be weaponized.

X. Lifespan

The Flock Safety DFR program utilizes leased equipment. When equipment needs upgrading or maintenance, Flock Safety will do so at no charge. As part of their contract, a new drone is provided every two years.

XI. Training

All authorized operators will complete all required FAA training.

XII. Legal And Procedural Rules

The SRPD will deploy a DFR program strictly for official law enforcement purposes, in full compliance with State and Federal laws, as well as [San Rafael Police Policy 606](#).

Unmanned Aerial System

606.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of an unmanned aerial system (UAS) and for the storage, retrieval and dissemination of images and data captured by the UAS.

606.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Unmanned aerial system (UAS) - An unmanned aircraft of any type that is capable of sustaining directed flight, whether preprogrammed or remotely controlled (commonly referred to as an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)), and all of the supporting or attached systems designed for gathering information through imaging, recording or any other means.

606.2 POLICY

Unmanned aerial systems may be utilized to enhance the department's mission of protecting lives and property when other means and resources are not available or are less effective. Any use of a UAS will be in strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

606.3 PRIVACY

The use of the UAS potentially involves privacy considerations. Absent a warrant or exigent circumstances, operators and observers shall not intentionally record or transmit images of any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g., residence, yard, enclosure). Operators and observers shall take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images of areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. Reasonable precautions can include, for example, deactivating or turning imaging devices away from such areas or persons during UAS operations.

606.4 PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Chief of Police will appoint a program coordinator who will be responsible for the management of the UAS program. The program coordinator will ensure that policies and procedures conform to current laws, regulations, and best practices and will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Coordinating the FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) application process and ensuring that the COA is current, and/or coordinating compliance with FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate, as appropriate for department operations.
- Ensuring that all authorized operators and required observers have completed all required FAA and department-approved training in the operation, applicable laws, policies, and procedures regarding use of the UAS.
- Developing uniform protocol for submission and evaluation of requests to deploy a UAS, including urgent requests made during ongoing or emerging incidents.

San Rafael Police Department

San Rafael PD Policy Manual

Unmanned Aerial System

- Coordinating the completion of the FAA Emergency Operation Request Form in emergency situations, as applicable (e.g., natural disasters, search and rescue, emergency situations to safeguard human life).
- Implementing a transparency portal that post-flight lists, flight paths and reasons for deployment
- Developing an operational protocol governing the deployment and operation of a UAS including but not limited to safety oversight, use of visual observers, establishment of lost link procedures, and secure communication with air traffic control facilities.
- Developing a protocol for fully documenting all missions.
- Developing a UAS inspection, maintenance, and record-keeping protocol to ensure continuing airworthiness of a UAS, up to and including its overhaul or life limits.
- Developing protocols to ensure that all data intended to be used as evidence are accessed, maintained, stored, and retrieved in a manner that ensures its integrity as evidence, including strict adherence to chain of custody requirements.
- Developing protocols that ensure retention periods are maintained in accordance with established records retention schedules.
- Facilitating law enforcement access to images and data captured by the UAS.
- Recommending program enhancements, particularly regarding safety and information security.
- Ensuring that established protocols are followed by monitoring and providing periodic reports on the program to the Chief of Police.
- Maintaining familiarity with FAA regulatory standards, state laws and regulations, and local ordinances regarding the operations of a UAS.

606.5 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The UAS Program Coordinator shall conduct an annual needs assessment to ensure that training is conducted within unit capabilities, department policy, and training guidelines as established by the FAA.

606.6 DEPLOYMENT PROCEDURE

Requests to deploy Unmanned Aerial Systems shall be forwarded to the Watch Commander or their designee for approval.

606.7 USE OF UAS

Only authorized operators who have completed the required training shall be permitted to operate the UAS.

Use of vision enhancement technology (e.g., thermal and other imaging equipment not generally available to the public) is permissible in viewing areas only where there is no protectable privacy interest or when in compliance with a search warrant or court order. In all other instances, legal counsel should be consulted.

UAS operations should only be conducted consistent with FAA regulations.

San Rafael Police Department

San Rafael PD Policy Manual

Unmanned Aerial System

606.8 PROHIBITED USE

The UAS video surveillance equipment shall not be used:

- To conduct random surveillance activities.
- To target a person based solely on actual or perceived characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, or disability.
- To harass, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual or group.
- To conduct personal business of any type.

The UAS shall not be weaponized.

606.9 EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND RETENTION

To avoid missing critical evidence during UAS operations, all UAS video will be recorded during flight. Data collected by the UAS shall be retained as provided in the established records retention schedule. Video and live feeds activated during training missions need not be stored as evidence