

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(11) Nay(2) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

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Type of NC Board Action: For if Amended

Impact Information

Date: 09/10/2017

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Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 17-0002-S96

Agenda Date:

Item Number: 20

Summary: The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council wishes to again put on record its strong opposition to allowing the LAPD to operate drones for any reason in our City. We also call on the City to ensure privacy, community safety and freedom from the militarization of our police department. And, finally, we ask that the existing regulations be enforced.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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<http://www.highlandparknc.com>
Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

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Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

September 7, 2017

Mayor Garcetti

Members of the Los Angeles City Council

200 N. Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Opposition to drone use by the LAPD and improvement/enforcement of existing regulations

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council which represents over 60,000 Los Angeles stakeholders who reside, own property, or conduct business in our neighborhood would like to reiterate our stand from 2014 that drones aka Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) have no right to invade our privacy, and their use both by public agencies and private individuals needs to be regulated with care.

We support CF 17-0002-S96 in support of Senator Dianne Feinstein's bill that would enable state and local governments to establish reasonable regulations on the time, place and manner of UAS use in their jurisdictions and up to 200 feet above ground level, or within 200 feet of a structure and ensure no agency other than the FAA be allowed to impose or overrule local law.

HHPNC – Opposition to drone use by the LAPD and improvement/enforcement of existing regulations

We support existing City regulations under CF 14-1198 et al to limit use of drones to specific areas, to require permits where appropriate, to stay away from other aircraft and from situations where their use may put people at risk such as wildfires and police activity, and to mandate that the drone be visible by the operator at all times.

The one exception to the last would be an expanded version of use by the LAFD (which has far more acceptance within the community) under CF 16-0410 for search and rescue purposes to avoid risking lives in fire incidents and to expand the scope of similar activities including, upon request and proper authorization support for police SWAT incidents as set forth below.

Furthermore, we request increased enforcement of Civil Code Section 1708.8 which prohibits the use of drones to capture video and/or a sound recording of another person without their consent (invasion of privacy). We need a procedure to report peeping Tom drones and assurances that police will respond and charge violators. They are liable for up to three times the amount of damages related to the violation, and a civil fine of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 – penalties which should stop both casual operators checking out sunbathers as well as criminals scoping their next job.

Given the general militarization of the LAPD along with most other police forces across the US, the confrontations that happen all too often between individual police officers (understandably afraid in potentially threatening environments) and members of the public (also understandably afraid given the history of brutality of certain members of the LAPD), the inevitable ‘mission creep’ especially with the build of paranoia driven by the current federal government, we continue to strongly oppose giving the LAPD authorization to use drones under any circumstances.

We view with concern last month’s request by the LAPD (who recently destroyed the drones against which we successfully lobbied two years ago) to inaugurate a one-year test program to use a new drone they purchased with our tax dollars, and the recent secret purchase and use of a drone by the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department.

The LAPD wishes to use drones for SWAT calls such as barricaded suspects, bomb scares or hostage situations but in four separate meetings in the fourth week of August, with advance notice to the community so limited as to be almost non-existent, citizens and organizations including the ACLU expressed serious concerns about privacy, more militarization and other police abuses, first step to a “Big Brother” state, mission creep, etc. It will also significantly increase fear and anxiety among our stakeholders whether justified or not.

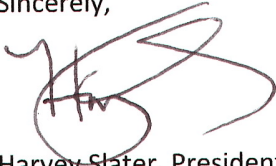
HHPNC – Opposition to drone use by the LAPD and improvement/enforcement of existing regulations

We as spokespersons for our community strongly feel that the LAPD should focus on continuing to build trust with communities, work on crime prevention and improve mental health training and services.

In the event the LAPD is ever allowed to use its drone it MUST obtain specific warrants for each and every use as required in 18 other states (although vetoed by Jerry Brown). Additionally, effective regulations must be put in place and not deviated from to ensure the LAPD does not weaponize their drone, nor borrow or purchase an already weaponized drone for use in the City.

Therefore, the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council wishes to again put on record it's strong opposition to allowing the LAPD to operator drones for any reason in our City. We also call on the City to ensure privacy, community safety and freedom from the militarization of our police department. And, finally, we ask that the existing regulations be enforced.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HS', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Harvey Slater, President
Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council