

REPORT FROM

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Date: April 3, 2026

CAO File No. 0130-02179-0000

Council File No. 26-0306

Council District: --

To: The Mayor and Council

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer



Reference: Board of Police Commissioners Transmittal dated February 24, 2026; referred for report March 4, 2026

Subject: **COUNTER-UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS GRANT PROGRAM — GRANT AWARD FROM THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, THROUGH THE CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. Authorize the Chief of Police, or designee, to:
 - a. Retroactively apply for and accept the grant award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), sub-awarded through the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal-OES), for the Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) Grant Program in the amount of \$9,770,209 for the period of July 4, 2025 through September 30, 2028, subject to the review and approval of the City Attorney as to form;
 - b. Negotiate and execute the grant award agreement, subject to review and approval of the City Attorney as to form;
2. Authorize the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to:
 - a. Expend up to \$9,770,209 in accordance with the grant award agreement;
 - b. Issue a check to the Cal-OES, in the amount up to \$9,770,209, for the purpose of purchasing grant reimbursable equipment and services from the Defense Logistics Agency of the United States Department of Defense, upon execution of the grant award agreement;

- c. Submit grant reimbursement requests to Cal-OES, deposit grant receipts in the Police Department Grant Fund No. 339, Department No. 70, and repay the loan to the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund No. 872 immediately upon reimbursement of grant expenditures;
 - d. Prepare Controller instructions for any technical adjustments as necessary to implement Mayor and Council intentions, subject to the approval of the City Administrative Officer, and authorize the Controller to implement the instructions;
3. Authorize the Controller to:
- a. Authorize a loan of up to \$9,770,209 from the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund No. 872 and transfer to the Police Department Grant Fund No. 339 to front-fund equipment purchases to be reimbursed by the C-UAS grant; and,
 - b. Establish a grant receivable and appropriate \$9,770,209 to appropriation account, account number to be determined, within Fund 339/70, for the receipt and disbursement of the Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems Grant Program award.

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is seeking retroactive approval to apply for and accept a \$9,770,209 grant award for the Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) Grant Program from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), sub-awarded through the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal-OES). The grant award has a performance period of July 4, 2025 through September 30, 2028. The City of Los Angeles received the largest C-UAS grant award in the State of California. No matching funds are required for this grant; however, the City must front-fund the full expenditure (\$9,770,209) with subsequent reimbursement by the grantor (FEMA).

Background and Purpose

The C-UAS Grant Program was established under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 (Pub. L. No. 119-21, Sec. 90005(a)) and is administered by FEMA. The program was created in response to the emerging threat posed by unmanned aircraft systems (UAS, commonly known as drones) to public safety, critical infrastructure, and large-scale public gatherings. FEMA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and DHS have jointly identified drone activity as the foremost

current domestic security threat. Unlike ground-level threats, drones can bypass vehicle checkpoints and other conventional security perimeters entirely, and threat actors—including foreign adversaries, domestic extremist groups, and criminal organizations—have demonstrated the capacity and intent to utilize drones for ballistic delivery and hazardous materials dispersal. Tactical drone employment patterns developed in the conflict in Ukraine continue to inform domestic threat modeling by Federal law enforcement.

Los Angeles is one of eleven FIFA World Cup 2026 host cities in the United States, and the region will host matches beginning June 11, 2026. The FIFA World Cup 2026, along with the America 250 national commemoration, are both designated Special Event Assessment Rating (SEAR) 1/2 events—nationally significant events requiring sustained Federal coordination, joint planning, and resource integration. FEMA awarded \$250 million to the eleven FIFA host states on December 30, 2025. The Los Angeles subaward of \$9,770,209 is the highest amount awarded to any municipality in California.

System Description and Privacy Protections

The C-UAS system is a detection and interdiction network. The system does not utilize drones themselves; it relies instead on ground-based tools to detect, identify, track, and, where authorized, interrupt or neutralize drone activity remotely rather than kinetically. The system operates in three layered detection tiers:

- *Primary*: Radio frequency (RF) detection operating across the 400-500 MHz, 900 MHz, and 5-6 GHz spectrums. RF sensors passively identify drone control signal signatures (including OcuSync™ and other commercial protocols) and report the drone's position, altitude, velocity, heading, type, and the pilot's ground location. RF detection is entirely passive—it reads electromagnetic waveforms and does not intercept data payloads or communications content.
- *Secondary*: Tuned radar calibrated to detect small, low-altitude objects consistent with drone profiles.
- *Tertiary*: Sky-facing cameras used solely to visually confirm whether a detected object is a drone or a benign object (e.g., a balloon). These cameras are pointed exclusively at the sky and are physically and operationally incapable of capturing faces, license plates, or any ground-level imagery. The cameras serve only to verify objects already detected by RF or radar; they have no independent surveillance function and cannot be integrated into any other law enforcement database or surveillance system.

Fixed infrastructure will be deployed at two hub locations—one in the downtown area and one at the Mt. Lee communications tower—with additional sensor density concentrated around City Hall and LAPD Headquarters. Mobile trailer units and a response van will be available for deployment to large public events, including World Cup venues and other SEAR-rated gatherings. The grant

also funds handheld interdiction devices and a counter-UAS command and control tracking system. All mitigation technology—including signal-interruption and drone-control-override tools—is restricted to use by law enforcement personnel who have completed training at the FBI National Counter-UAS Training Center (FBI NCUTC), as required by Federal law. LAPD personnel have completed this training and are ready to deploy upon delivery of the equipment.

Authorized Equipment

The equipment authorized under the Cal-OES subaward letter dated February 6, 2026, is detailed in the table below.

C-UAS Grant Authorized Equipment	Award Amount
Citywide RF-560 Network & License (24 fixed locations)	\$1,668,600
Fixed-Site RF/EO & Mitigation — Police Admin Building / Downtown	1,539,150
Fixed-Site RF/EO & Mitigation — Mt. Lee Communications Tower	1,539,150
Mobile Tactical RF/Radar/Mitigation Units (3 triangulation kits)	2,266,000
Trailer-Based RF/ADS-B/Long-Range Radar & Camera (3 triangulation units)	2,369,000
Handheld Mitigation Device (AI-powered, with Drone Tracking Software)	208,060
Counter-UAS Command & Control Tracking System	77,250
Mobile Response Van (towing and mobile command of trailer units)	102,999
TOTAL	\$9,770,209

Front-Funding and Reimbursement Date

The C-UAS Grant Program operates on a reimbursement basis: the City must expend funds first and submit a request for reimbursement to Cal-OES, which in turn will draw down funds from FEMA. Cal-OES has committed to initiating reimbursement within 24 hours of receiving the City’s payment submission; under normal operating conditions, the full reimbursement cycle would be expected to take approximately 30 days. However, FEMA is not currently processing grant reimbursements due to the current partial government shutdown. As of the issuance of this report, there is no certain date for the resumption of such reimbursements.

FEMA has guaranteed delivery of the equipment within 70 days of receiving the City’s front-funding payment. Delivery is expected to occur sooner because the specific equipment package has already been pre-approved and is intended for deployment ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which begins on June 11, 2026. Given this fixed start date, delaying action until FEMA resumes processing reimbursements would create a material risk of missing the required delivery window.

Should the recommendations of this report be approved, the LAPD will front-fund grant expenditures with a loan from the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund (DATF). The DATF is a special fund within the City's treasury established to receive funds from state and federal programs and grants for emergency and disaster response, recovery, preparedness, and hazard mitigation. The source of funds for the proposed DATF loan originated from Cal-OES which is the same entity the City will issue payment to for the purpose of purchasing the agreement. The LAPD has committed to expedite reimbursement of the loan immediately upon receipt of the FEMA reimbursement.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of the recommendations within this report will have no additional impact to the General Fund. Furthermore, to avoid a Reserve Fund impact., the LAPD will front-fund grant expenditures of up to \$9,770,209 with a loan from the Disaster Assistance Trust Fund. All front-funded amounts are expected to be fully reimbursed by Cal-OES upon submission of eligible expenditure documentation, pending restoration of FEMA reimbursement operations. No matching funds or cost share are required for this grant.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendations provided in this report are in compliance with the City's Financial Policies in that one-time grant funding will be utilized for one-time program expenditures.