



Contra
Costa
County

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Keith Freitas, Airports Director
Date: February 26, 2019

Subject: Authorization to Promote Marketing Opportunities at County Airports Resulting from Industry Trends

RECOMMENDATION(S):

AUTHORIZE the Director of Airports to promote and market Buchanan Field and Byron Airport as testing locations for emerging aeronautical and aeronautical related technologies.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct impact to the County General Fund. Airport staff time and any County Counsel staff time will be charged to the Airport Enterprise Fund. Successful marketing efforts are expected to have a positive impact on the Airport Enterprise Fund and the County General Fund over the long-term.

BACKGROUND:

The aviation industry is a dynamic economic engine that is affected by global trends. Historically, the County's airports' clientele has been hangar developers, pilots and providers of aviation-related services. In recent years, however, a new market for airport use has emerged. That market, acting as a test site for emerging aeronautical and aeronautical related technologies, is being driven by a variety of factors. One is the ever-increasing

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **02/26/2019** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I
Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II
Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV
Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V
Supervisor

ABSENT: Diane Burgis, District III
Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: February 26, 2019

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: Stacey M. Boyd, Deputy

Contact: Beth Lee, (925)
681-4200

cc:

interest

BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

within the aviation community of using unmanned aeronautical systems (UAS or drones) for public safety and commercial purposes. Another is the interest on the part of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in promoting research in technological advancements in the interest of policy formation and improved safety.

To capitalize on this market trend, the Airport Division proposes to actively market the County's airports as test sites for companies engaged in developing new aviation and aviation related technologies. In doing so, the County could benefit from (i) increased rent revenues, (ii) the ability to be an early-adopter of technologies that improve airport operations and safety, and (iii) establishing a more diverse tenant population, diminishing the impact of economic downturns. Other benefits include the potential for new capital investment and additional jobs in Contra Costa County. It is also anticipated that the County could benefit from the use of new UAS software and hardware applications in the areas of security, airfield inspections, wildlife hazard abatement, and pavement inspections.

The risks identified in testing new technologies at the County's airports are identical to those that currently exist with the daily aircraft operations conducted at Buchanan Field and Byron Airports. The most significant risks associated with aircraft operations are related to the safety of individuals on the ground and noise impacts. Any new technology-related testing operations conducted at these facilities would be mandated to comply with existing FAA operating rules and regulations. As a result, the safety risks would be the same as those that currently exist. Furthermore, Contra Costa County currently has existing noise abatement restrictions/noise ordinance in place that must be met by any new operator.

It is important to note that many of the new technology aeronautical operations are already approved under FAA policies, which precludes the County from prohibiting such operations. It is also worth noting that expanding our marketing efforts will not guarantee short-term or long-term business development, new construction and or job opportunities. However, not exploring these opportunities will guarantee that Contra Costa County will not be considered.

For all of these reasons, it is recommended that the County authorize the Director of Airports to broadly market, promote and partner with various private and government entities to conduct new technology testing at both Buchanan Field and Byron Airports, when consistent with FAA and Caltrans Division of Aeronautics operating rules and regulations. Any long-term agreements, such as lease, would be brought back to the Board for consideration. Short-term testing operations would only be approved once they have met existing FAA operating rules and regulations or have received special waiver authorization from the FAA to conduct the proposed operations.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Contra Costa County will not pursue testing of new technologies at Buchanan Field and Byron Airports. This could lead to a loss of potential business development and job opportunities in Contra Costa County.