



Contra  
Costa  
County

To: Board of Supervisors  
From: Keith Freitas, Airports Director  
Date: March 10, 2020

Subject: Master Administrative Agreement with the University of Alaska Fairbanks

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### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

AUTHORIZE the Director of Airports to execute a Master Administrative Agreement (“Agreement”) between Contra Costa County (“County”) and the University of Alaska Fairbanks (“University”) to establish a partnership through which Buchanan Field and Byron airports will be included in the Pan-Pacific UAS Test Range Complex.

### **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:**

Historically, the County’s airports’ clientele have been hangar developers, pilots and providers of aviation-related services. In recent years however, a new market for airport use has emerged. Airports are now sought after for use as test sites for emerging aeronautical and aeronautical related technologies. This demand is being driven by a variety of factors. One is the ever-increasing interest within the aviation community of using UAS (unmanned

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

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Action of Board On: **03/10/2020** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

### **VOTE OF SUPERVISORS**

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor  
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor  
Diane Burgis, District III Supervisor  
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor  
Federal D. Glover, District V 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: March 10, 2020

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

By: Stacey M. Boyd, Deputy

Contact: Beth Lee, (925)  
681-4200

cc:

aviation system 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 has been actively marketing 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 similar 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.

On August 14, 2018, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 2018/462. The Board resolved the following:

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## BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

Buchanan Field and Byron airports are essential economic engines that aid the County in meeting the current and future transportation and economic needs of the community.

- The Director of Airports shall continue to actively pursue innovative and sustainable opportunities to enhance airport facilities and partnerships to remain competitive in the regional marketplace.
- The Director of Airports will work closely with the County Administrators Office and the County Economic Development Manager to further the economic development potential of airports, as they are capital assets to the County and an integrated transportation asset to the Bay Area region.

On February 26, 2019, the Board of Supervisors took action to authorize the Director of Airports to promote and market Buchanan Field and Byron airports as testing locations for emerging aeronautical related technologies. Airport staff has convened several working groups with expertise in emerging aeronautical related technologies to assist in the development and implementation of a marketing and attraction strategy. Over the past 24-months of this effort, two companies have relocated their design, assembly and testing operations to Buchanan Field Airport. Additionally, several other companies are currently in discussions with the Airports Division staff to explore relocating their assembly and testing operations to Byron Airport.

The University operates the Alaska Center for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration (“ACUASI”), which is also known as the Pan-Pacific UAS Test Range Complex. The ACUASI is one of seven sites in the United States designated by the FAA for testing UAS.

The purpose of the Agreement with the University is to create a partnership that will enable Buchanan and Byron to become members of the ACUASI, making Buchanan Field and Byron airports available for use by third-parties for UAS-related testing, research and educational purposes in coordination with the University. It is expected that the University and the County will use various electronic and printed media to promote this partnership.

When the University or the County are approached by a third-party interested in conducting testing at Buchanan Field or Byron airports they would first coordinate with the County to ensure they meet specific operational requirements. Once those requirements have been met, the third-party will be directed to the University to coordinate securing all necessary FAA airspace/flight operation authorizations.

For the above reasons, and as supported by the Aviation Advisory Committee and the Airports Committee, it is recommended that the County authorize the Director of Airports enter into a partnership with the University of Alaska Fairbanks

### CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Failure to enter into the Agreement with the University will diminish the County's ability to complete in this emerging market.

### ATTACHMENTS

ACIASI UAS Master Agreement

PPUTRC MOA Template

Temp Use Permit