

October 8, 2024

County of Ventura
Board of Supervisors
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Approval of, and Authorization for the Director of Airports or His Designee to Sign, an Updated Master Administrative Agreement with the University of Alaska Fairbanks to Continue a Working Relationship for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Related Testing, Research, and Education; Authorization for Director of Airports or His Designee to Sign a Task Order Agreement with the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$53,692 for Consulting Services in Support of Development and Maintenance of a Flight Testing Area to and from the Oxnard and Camarillo Airports; Authorization for the Auditor-Controller to Process the Budgetary Transactions Necessary to Establish Appropriations (Recommendation No. 3 Requires 4/5th Vote); Supervisorial District Nos. 3 and 5

Recommendations:

1. Approve, and authorize the Director of Airports or his designee to sign, the revised Master Administrative Agreement between the County of Ventura and the University of Alaska Fairbanks (Exhibit 1), to continue a working relationship for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) related testing, research, and education; and
2. Authorize the Director of Airports or his designee to sign the first Task Order with the University of Alaska Fairbanks (Exhibit 2), not to exceed \$53,692, to provide consulting services in support of the development and maintenance of flight-testing area to and from the Oxnard and Camarillo Airports; and
3. Authorize the Auditor-Controller to process the necessary budgetary transactions to Division 5020 – Unit 5021 to adjust appropriations as follows for FY 2024-25. (requires 4/5th vote).

AIR – Camarillo Airport Administration – Unit 5021

INCREASE 5020-5021 Services and Supplies \$53,692
DECREASE Fund E300 Unrestricted Net Position \$53,692

Fiscal/Mandates Impact:

Mandatory: No
Source of funding: *Department of Airports Enterprise Fund (AEF)*
Funding match required: *None*
Impact on other departments: *None*

There is a limited financial impact to the Airport Enterprise Fund associated with this action, specifically tied to each Task Order. All costs will be borne solely by the Airport Enterprise Fund.

Summary of Revenue and Project Costs: **FY 2024-25** **FY 2025-26**

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|---------------|----|----------|
| Revenue | \$ | 0 | \$ | 0 |
| Direct Costs | \$ | <u>53,692</u> | \$ | <u>0</u> |
| Net Cost – Airport Enterprise Fund | \$ | <u>53,692</u> | \$ | <u>0</u> |

Current Fiscal Year Budget Projection:

| FY 2024-25 Budget Projection for Camarillo Airport Administration Division 5020 - Unit 5021 | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Adopted Budget | Adjusted Budget | Projected Budget | Estimated Savings/ (Deficit) |
| Appropriations | \$ 4,307,001 | \$ 5,175,236 | \$ 5,175,236 | \$0 |
| Revenue | 6,238,817 | 6,238,817 | 6,238,817 | 0 |
| Net Cost | \$(1,931,816) | \$(1,063,581) | \$(1,063,581) | \$0 |

Strategic Priority:

Approval of the revised Master Administrative Agreement is consistent with the Ventura County Strategic Plan Priorities in the areas of: Fiscal Responsibility, Economic Vitality, and Diverse & Innovative Workforce.

Discussion:

Historically, the County's Airports' clientele has been aircraft hangar/aviation related developers, pilots, flight schools, and providers of various aviation-related services. However, over the past six years 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 in the aviation community with the utilization of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or drones for public safety, transportation, and other commercial purposes. Another is the interest on the part of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in promoting research in technological advancement in the interest of policy formation and improved safety.

To capitalize on this market trend, the Department of Airports is requesting approval to continue our relationship with the University of Alaska Fairbanks's Alaska Center for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration (ACUASI), which is also known as the Pan-Pacific UAS Test Range Complex. Your Board approved our first Master Agreement in November of 2022.

Over the last two years the Department has marketed 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, safety and noise reduction, 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 Ventura County. We have already seen success in attracting several companies (AmpAire, Skyrise and SwarmAero) which are already testing and developing at our Airports. Additionally, several more aviation technology companies are currently exploring opportunities at Oxnard and Camarillo Airports.

The risks identified in testing new technologies at the County's Airports are similar to those that currently exist with the daily aircraft operations already conducted at Camarillo and Oxnard 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. It is important to note that adding different types of flight operations at the Airports would likely result in fewer standard training operations, such as fewer touch and go operations that have caused noise complaints, due to the added activity at the airport.

The purpose of this updated Agreement with the University of Alaska Fairbanks is to continue our relationship that will enable Camarillo and Oxnard Airports to remain

members of the Pan-Pacific UAS Test Range Complex and continue making the airports available for use by third parties for UAS-related testing, research and educational purposes in coordination with the University.

The agreement in Exhibit 1 provides for "Task Orders," which are agreements with the University of Alaska Fairbanks for specific consulting services in support of improving our airports' suitability for these new operations. The first Task Order (Exhibit 2), with an expected expenditure of approximately \$53,692, is for the University to conduct airspace analysis to develop a safe test airspace near Oxnard and Camarillo Airports for new aircraft technologies. Most of the airspace will encompass areas over water along the coast between Oxnard/Camarillo Airports to just south of Santa Barbara Airport (Exhibit 3). This first Task Order will also include the University of Alaska personnel on site visit and the completion of FAA mandated monthly reports, over the next 24-month period.

Additionally, future Task Orders are expected to be executed with the University of Alaska to conduct airspace analysis for safe aviation corridors between the County Airports and Santa Barbara Airport and Los Angeles International Airport to prepare for the contemplated electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) passenger service. The Department of Airports will return to your Board for authority to sign future Task Orders as needed.

The County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office, and County Counsel have reviewed this item. The Aviation Advisory Commission, Camarillo Airport Authority, and the Oxnard Airport Authority recommend its approval.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please call me at (805) 388-4200.



KEITH FREITAS, A.A.E., C.A.E.
Director of Airports

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Master Administrative Agreement
- Exhibit 2 – First Task Order
- Exhibit 3 – Proposed Test Flight Area Map