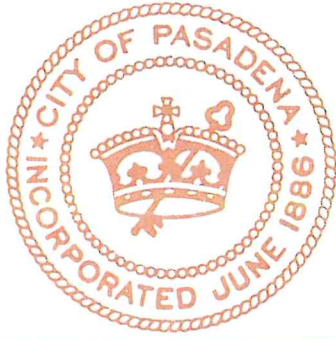




Agenda Report

September 29, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Public Safety Committee (September 16, 2026)

FROM: Police Department

**SUBJECT: APPROVE MILITARY EQUIPMENT ANNUAL REPORT,
AUTHORIZATION OF ENERGY ASSISTED BREACHING, UPDATED
UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS (UAS) DEPLOYMENT, AND
RENEWAL OF EXISTING MILITARY EQUIPMENT**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that this action proposed herein is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b);
2. Find that each type of military equipment identified in the Pasadena Police Department (PPD) July 2025 through June 2026 Annual Military Equipment Report has complied with the standards for approval set forth in the PPD Military Equipment Policy 711 and Government Code Section 7070 et seq.;
3. Authorize the PPD SWAT team to use Energy Assisted Breaching (EAB), when appropriate and consistent with PPD Policy 409;
4. Authorize the updated use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) for public safety operations consistent with PPD Policy 622;
5. Confirm that authorization of UAS consistent with Policy 622 does not constitute authorization for the acquisition of new UAS equipment outside of scheduled replacement equipment. Any acquisition of additional UAS equipment outside of scheduled replacement equipment will require approval of City Council and is subject to the applicable AB481 process; and,
6. Approve the continued use of the currently authorized military equipment by renewing Ordinance no. 7395 pursuant to Government Code Section 7071(e)(1).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Pasadena Police Department (PPD) is required by Government Code Section 7070 et seq. and PPD Military Equipment Policy 711 to prepare an annual report regarding the Department's use of equipment defined by state law as "military equipment." The annual process provides the City Council and the public with information regarding the Department's inventory, use, costs, complaints or concerns, policy compliance, and anticipated acquisitions.

PPD has completed its Annual Military Equipment Report for the reporting period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The report was made publicly available on August 24, 2026, and PPD conducted the required community engagement meeting on August 27, 2026, at the Washington Park Community House. PPD presented the annual report to the Community Police Oversight Commission (CPOC) on September 10, 2026.

In addition to the annual renewal of currently authorized military equipment, PPD is requesting City Council authorization for two operational updates: the use of Energy Assisted Breaching (EAB) by appropriately trained SWAT personnel and revisions to the authorized use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) pursuant to PPD Policy 622. PPD worked with CPOC in developing the governing policies associated with the use of EAB and UAS. Policy 622 was presented to CPOC on July 9, 2026, and EAB Policy 409 was presented on August 13, 2026. Both policies were recommended by CPOC for advancement to City Council.

EAB provides specially trained SWAT personnel with an additional breaching option during limited high-risk incidents where rapid entry may be necessary to protect human life or prevent serious bodily injury. Use of EAB will be governed by PPD Policy 409, including applicable authorization, training, risk-assessment, documentation, and supervisory-review requirements.

The Department's authorized uses and operational framework for unmanned aerial systems are detailed in Policy 622. The revised policy establishes the circumstances under which UAS may be deployed while maintaining requirements related to lawful use, supervisory oversight, privacy, documentation, training, and accountability.

Approval of the updated UAS policy does not provide blanket authority for the Department to purchase new or additional UAS platforms. Any acquisition outside of previously authorized or scheduled replacement equipment that is subject to Government Code Section 7071 will undergo the required AB 481 review process, community engagements and return to the City Council for any required authorization before acquisition.

PPD is therefore requesting that the City Council find the Department's use of military equipment during the reporting period compliant with applicable requirements; authorize EAB and the revised UAS operating framework; and renew Ordinance No. 7395 authorizing the continued use of existing military equipment.

BACKGROUND:

Assembly Bill 481 (AB 481), codified at Government Code Section 7070 et seq., became effective January 1, 2022. The legislation established transparency, oversight, and approval requirements for law enforcement agencies that fund, acquire, or use equipment falling within the statutory definition of “military equipment.”

Among other requirements, law enforcement agencies seeking to acquire or continue using military equipment must:

- Maintain a military equipment use policy describing the equipment, quantity, capabilities, purposes, authorized uses, acquisition costs, and fiscal impacts;
- Obtain approval from the agency's governing body as required by Government Code Section 7071;
- Make proposed and final military equipment policies publicly available;
- Prepare an annual military equipment report containing information regarding use, complaints or concerns, internal audits, policy violations, annual costs, inventory, and anticipated acquisitions;
- Conduct at least one annual community engagement meeting following publication of the annual report; and,
- Obtain annual governing-body review and renewal of the ordinance authorizing continued use of military equipment.

Government Code Section 7070 defines “military equipment” broadly and includes categories of specialized equipment that may be routinely used by civilian law enforcement agencies.

Equipment within PPD's inventory covered by AB 481 includes, among other categories: Unmanned aerial or ground vehicles, armored vehicles, command vehicles, chemical agents, less lethal 40 mm launchers and munitions, noise-flash diversionary devices and certain specialized firearms.

Except for the Department's three Bell OH-58 helicopters, which were originally obtained through a military surplus program, PPD's qualifying equipment was acquired from commercial vendors supplying equipment designed for law enforcement or public-safety applications.

The statutory classification of an item as “military equipment” does not necessarily mean that the equipment is designed exclusively for military use. Several items covered by AB 481 are less-lethal, protective, robotic, aviation, emergency-response, or other specialized tools routinely used by civilian law enforcement agencies nationwide.

These systems provide officers with additional options to resolve critical incidents, obtain information from safer positions, reduce unnecessary exposure to hazards, facilitate de-escalation where feasible, protect members of the community and responding personnel, and enhance overall public safety.

On June 20, 2022, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 7395 which established the Pasadena Police Department Military Equipment Policy 711 (Attachment A). The policy and subsequent annual reports have been posted on the City's website as required.

The public may also access the documents at the following website:
<https://www.cityofpasadena.net/police/news/ab-481-military-equipment-policy/>.

PPD's annual report documenting all required information for the reporting period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, was posted to the PPD website for public review on August 24, 2026 (Attachment B).

The annual report identifies how qualifying equipment was used during the reporting period, annual equipment-related costs, quantities, complaints or public concerns, internal review information, and anticipated equipment needs.

PPD used some, but not all, categories of authorized military equipment during the reporting period. No policy violations associated with the deployment or use of military equipment were identified. Public complaints or concerns during the reporting period were limited primarily to noise concerns associated with operation of the Department's Bell OH-58 helicopters.

On an annual basis, the PPD must hold at least one "community engagement" meeting pursuant to Government Code Section 7072(b). Additionally, the City Council must review the military equipment policy; and receive an annual report prepared by the law enforcement agency to include how any equipment was used in the prior year; a summary of any complaints or concerns received; the results of any internal audits, policy violations, total annual cost, quantities, new acquisitions planned in the next year, and the City Council must vote on whether to renew the ordinance at a regular meeting.

PPD held its annual community engagement meeting at Washington Park Community House on August 27, 2026, providing members of the public with an opportunity to review the report, ask questions, and provide comments concerning the Department's use of military equipment. Notice of the meeting was distributed through Department and city communication platforms, including two posts on Instagram, Facebook, X, local media and posted to the Pasadena City website.

PPD presented the report to the Community Police Oversight Commission on September 10, 2026.

PPD is seeking City Council approval for the continued use of all authorized military equipment identified in the annual report and two additional operational updates regarding the use of Energy Assisted Breaching (EAB) and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS).

Energy Assisted Breaching (EAB)

PPD is requesting authorization for the PPD SWAT Team to employ as an additional specialized breaching capability as defined in Policy 409 (Attachment C).

EAB uses a controlled explosive charge specifically designed and placed to defeat a door, lock, hinge, or other structural barrier to facilitate entry. EAB is not intended as a general-purpose entry technique and would be limited to appropriately trained and authorized SWAT personnel during qualifying high-risk operations involving the preservation of life or to prevent serious bodily injury.

The purpose of EAB is to provide SWAT personnel with an additional option when conventional breaching techniques may unnecessarily delay entry, expose officers or community members to increased danger, or be ineffective based on the construction or configuration of the entry point.

Use of EAB will be governed by PPD Policy 409 and applicable SWAT procedures. Prior to deployment, personnel will consider the necessity and proportionality of the proposed use, the compelling public-safety need for entry, foreseeable risks to occupants, officers and surrounding people or structures, and available alternatives. Because explosive breaching tools fall within the statutory definition of military equipment, City Council authorization is required before PPD may employ this capability.

Policy 409 was presented to CPOC on August 13, 2026. PPD reviewed 33 recommendations identified by the CPOC Ad Hoc Committee related to the proposed EAB policy and agreed with or incorporated 26. Seven recommendations were not adopted as written, primarily because they would have placed specific limitations on tactical decision-making or addressed safeguards and potential disparities that were already incorporated elsewhere in the policy.

The final policy reflects the substantive concerns raised through requirements addressing necessity, proportionality, vulnerable persons, surrounding residences and structures, risk mitigation, documentation, supervisory review, and accountability, while preserving appropriate tactical discretion for trained SWAT personnel during critical incidents.

After presentation and discussion, CPOC recommended the policy advance for City Council review.

Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)

PPD currently uses UAS for authorized SWAT operations and the PPD is requesting authorization to expand the use of UAS to citywide public safety operations. UAS provides personnel with the ability to obtain information from locations or perspectives that may otherwise expose officers, community members, or other emergency personnel to unnecessary risk.

PPD is requesting authorization to update the Department's operational framework for UAS deployment as defined in Policy 622 (Attachment D).

The updated policy is intended to allow UAS technology to support public safety while maintaining appropriate limitations, supervisory oversight, privacy protections, training requirements, documentation, and accountability.

Use of UAS does not eliminate existing legal requirements applicable to police activity. UAS operations remain subject to applicable constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and Department policy requirements.

The updated policy also provides an operational framework for potential expansion of UAS capabilities to provide a Public Safety Aerial Response Platform, authorizing the use of UAS for response to appropriate calls for service and fire/rescue operations.

Policy 622 was presented to CPOC on July 9, 2026. PPD reviewed 27 recommendations identified by the CPOC Ad Hoc Committee related to the UAS policy and adopted all 27. The final policy incorporates the recommendations through provisions addressing authorized uses, supervisory oversight, privacy protections, documentation, training, accountability, and limitations on deployment. These changes strengthen the policy framework while preserving the Department's ability to use UAS technology for legitimate public-safety purposes consistent with applicable law and Department policy.

After presentation and discussion, CPOC recommended the policy advance for City Council review.

Future UAS Acquisitions

Authorization of Policy 622 is intended to approve the use framework governing PPD UAS operations. It is not intended to provide advance authorization for the unrestricted purchase of future UAS equipment.

Replacement of previously authorized UAS equipment may proceed consistently with applicable City purchasing requirements, existing Council authorization, Policy 711, and AB 481.

Any proposed acquisition of new or additional UAS equipment outside of authorized or scheduled replacement equipment will be evaluated under PPD Military Equipment Policy 711 and Government Code Section 7071. When governing-body authorization is required, PPD will complete the applicable AB 481 process and return to the City Council for authorization prior to acquisition.

This approach allows the City Council to approve the operational policy governing UAS while retaining oversight of future equipment acquisitions and significant program expansion.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Approval of the recommendations supports the City Council's commitment to effective public safety while maintaining transparency, oversight, accountability, and appropriate limitations on the acquisition and use of specialized law enforcement equipment.

Renewal of Ordinance No. 7395 will permit PPD to continue using previously authorized equipment that provides officers with additional options to safely respond to critical incidents.

Authorization of EAB as defined in Policy 409 will provide the PPD SWAT Team with an additional specialized capability for limited high-risk incidents where rapid and controlled entry is reasonably necessary to preserve life or prevent serious bodily injury.

Authorization of UAS as defined in Policy 622 will establish updated operational standards for the use of UAS while maintaining City Council oversight of future equipment acquisition. UAS equipment acquired outside of previously authorized or scheduled replacements will remain subject to applicable AB 481 requirements and additional City Council authorization when required.

Collectively, these actions allow the Department to maintain appropriate public-safety capabilities while preserving the safeguards established by state law and City policy for transparency, community engagement, fiscal accountability, and governing-body oversight.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

CEQA excludes, from environmental review, actions that are not "projects" as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b). Sections 21065 and 15378(b) define a project as an action which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Section 15378 excludes from the definition of "project" continuing administrative activities that do not result in physical changes to the environment. The actions proposed herein, renewing Ordinance no. 7395 to continue the use of military equipment, is an administrative governmental activity that does not result in physical changes to the environment, and therefore is not a "project"

as defined by CEQA. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.

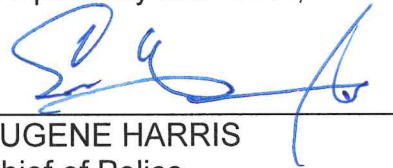
FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact related to military equipment for this reporting period was approximately \$473,614. New acquisitions projected for 2026/2027 will be presented to City Council in accordance with Assembly Bill 481 and PPD Policy 711. The cost of those acquisitions will be identified during the procurement process, and alternative grant funding will be assessed if available.

Procurements to replace authorized military equipment will follow the City of Pasadena's purchasing guidelines and will be reported on the next annual military equipment report.

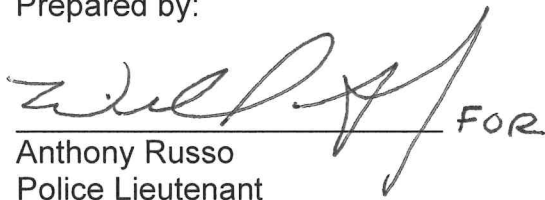
No grant funding was utilized for equipment acquisition or maintenance during this reporting period.

Respectfully submitted,



EUGENE HARRIS
Chief of Police

Prepared by:



FOR
Anthony Russo
Police Lieutenant

Approved by:



MATTHEW E. HAWKESWORTH
Interim City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Ordinance No. 7395 and Military Equipment Policy 711
- Attachment B – 2025/2026 Annual Military Equipment Use Report
- Attachment C – Policy 409 Energy Assisted Breaching with CPOC Endorsement Letter
- Attachment D – Policy 622 Unmanned Aerial Systems with CPOC Endorsement Letter