



Northfield Police Department

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone) Program

Purpose of the Presentation

- Provide an overview of the proposed Police Drone Program
- Outline intended uses and benefits
- Explain state legal requirements (MN § 626.19)
- Highlight privacy and accountability safeguards
- Invite public and council input before purchase and implementation approval



Background and Need



- The Northfield Police Department continually evaluates modern tools to enhance safety and effectiveness.
- Drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles – UAVs) are increasingly used by Minnesota law enforcement agencies.
- Provide real-time data to support operations, reduce risk to officers, and assist in emergencies.
- Aligns with technological advancements and community expectations for proactive public safety response.

Authorized Uses under Minn. Stat. § 626.19



- Emergency situations involving risk of death or injury
- Search and rescue or missing person incidents
- Crash reconstruction and crime scene documentation
- Threat assessment for public events
- Disaster response and recovery efforts
- Officer training and community outreach
- Other uses consistent with statutory exceptions or warrants

Prohibited or Restricted Uses



- No use for general surveillance of the public
- No use for monitoring First Amendment activities unless with a warrant
- No facial recognition or biometric tracking without court authorization
- No weapons or crowd control applications
- Strict documentation and data retention rules apply

Data and Privacy Protections



- All deployments documented with case numbers and justification
- Non-investigative data deleted within 7 days
- UAV data classified as private/non-public per Minn. Stat. Chapter 13
- Public access to written UAV policy on city website
- Independent audits and annual reporting to BCA/DPS

Financial Impact



- Estimated initial cost: **\$20,000**
 - Includes drone equipment, accessories, software, and FAA certification
- Funded through sale of other police equipment
- Annual maintenance and data-storage costs covered in operating expenses
- Program designed for scalable, cost-effective growth

Proposed Purchase



- Bids received from multiple vendors
- Requested bids for multiple UAV platforms – exterior and interior
- Requested purchase:

Transparency and Accountability



- Public comment and council approval required by law
- Written policy publicly available online
- Annual report submitted to BCA
- Continuous training and review to ensure compliance
- Commitment to maintaining public trust and responsible use of technology

Public Comments Received



- XXXXX

Implementation Timeline



- November 18, 2025 – Council worksession discussion and open public comments
- December 2, 2025 – Council decision to include purchase approval
- First quarter 2026 – FAA training and operator certification
- First quarter 2026– Drone deployment and community education

Closing and Call for Feedback



- The UAV program is intended to enhance safety, efficiency, and transparency.
- We welcome continued feedback from City Council and the public.
- Questions, comments, or concerns can be submitted during this meeting.
- Future comments can be submitted to the Police Chief.

NORTHFIELD

POLICE DEPARTMENT

