

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Catherine Anderson
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026 3:36:42 PM



Public Comment: Catherine Anderson

Date: 06/18/26, 3:34 PM

Drones- July 8 Hearing

I am strongly against any drone or camera surveillance.

What is happening with the data?

Who is watching?

Vote 'absolutely not'.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Skydio's First Responder program
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026 5:48:04 PM



Public Comment: Skydio's First Responder program

Date: 06/18/26, 5:45 PM

Contract with Skydio, Inc. for a drones-as-first-responder pilot program (RCA-2026-00585)

Please vote no and do not allow this invasive and unnecessary program in our city.

I am SO concerned that approving this pilot program will lead to drones being widely used in law enforcement in our city. There is no information about how citizens privacy will be protected (if at all), or limits on where these drones can fly or who they can film. There is no guarantee that the video footage that is captured will be kept private, or even kept within MPD. There are also no prohibitions on what these drones can carry or drop(pepper spray and flash bangs are demonstrated options by Skydio). It is scary to think about what the MPD or ICE could do with something like this.

There is already so much information out there about how detrimental the Flock cameras are to our privacy and the safety, and this feels like Flock on steroids and in the air.

The police don't need drones. Our community doesn't need drones spying on us. Our community needs investments in our schools, third spaces, youth activities, health care, and opportunities for economic advancement. Drones spying on us doesn't help with any of this.

Ward: Ward 5

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026 5:51:37 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 06/18/26, 5:49 PM

No, no, no. We do not need drones. Leave people alone. People wouldn't do car repair out of their driveway if they had paths to jobs that provide living wages. They wouldn't need to do illegal things if you'd be serious about affordable housing. And they wouldn't have issues getting jobs and housing if you'd stop criminalizing everything under the sun.

Ward: Ward 5

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Tracy L Hayek
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026 7:40:12 PM



Public Comment: Tracy L Hayek

Date: 06/18/26, 7:38 PM

Drones as first responder: haven't we had enough government surveillance with the metro surge bs??

Bad idea!

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026 8:12:23 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 06/18/26, 8:10 PM

2026-00488

I absolutely and wholeheartedly do not support any drone technology. As someone in north mpls who has experienced things like illegal dumping and auto thefts, this is not the solution I need in my neighborhood. Please vote no and do not allow this to be piloted. This is one way to make my family feel way less safe in our community. Use these funds to invest in community resources that matter - like a grocery store - not surveillance.

Ward: Ward 4

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026 8:28:32 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 06/18/26, 8:26 PM

Drones as First Responder

Drones as First Responder (DFR) is an awful idea. The city doesn't even follow up on illegal auto repair operations in residential areas or illegal dumping that get reported to the city. We've been reporting illegal auto repair operations and illegal dumping to Representative Vetaw for several years through 311 and NOTHING gets investigated and nothing changes. The DFR won't change that, it will just reduce our privacy.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Friday, June 19, 2026 8:00:42 AM



Public Comment:

Date: 06/19/26, 7:58 AM

No drones, community-centered solutions only!

I do not believe using drones is what Minneapolis needs. It would be far more effective to give the large sum of money these drones would cost, and give it to hyper local community-based groups to help their communities as needed in regards to illegal dumping and theft. Creating a fund to relieve the costs of the city charging residents for someone else's error puts a financial burden on a resident that did nothing wrong. This fund could be vetted with images, visits, and or video. We saw this happen almost seamlessly with residents' funds for rent relief during and after Metro Surge. Instead of looking for the more "technologically advanced" option, look towards what the community needs. Our trust and respect has been ruptured by government entities since Metro Surge. Investing in surveillance does not stop the issue at hand.

As someone who had illegal dumping and attempted auto theft take place, I'd much rather have a system for support after it happens than drones trying to mitigate before. Many residents, including myself, are already against surveillance like flock cameras. With drones, there is no way for a resident to know where they are and when. Minneapolis needs leadership that is willing to listen to residents that want to help, and each other, even in times when we forgo our values and need redirecting. Instead of trying to focus on the terrible acts of auto theft and illegal dumping, I urge you to practice with me in considering why it started. Did this individual desperately need money? Are they unaware of food and housing support? Are they unaware of trash and recycling programs? Are the resources available accessible to all residents (physically and in terms of language support)? What are the consequences for families when the person taking cars or dumping is a minor?

Please take my compassion-led opinion that has personal experience to vehemently disagree with using drones for mitigation of theft.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Mike Hallenbeck
Date: Friday, June 19, 2026 9:33:07 AM



Public Comment: Mike Hallenbeck

Date: 06/19/26, 9:30 AM

Concerning the possibility of the City of Minneapolis pushing a DFR (Drones as First Responders) program:

Drones risk becoming persistent "eyes in the sky," violating the Fourth Amendment by enabling continuous, indiscriminate monitoring of neighborhoods, backyards, and public movements without warrants.

While initially pitched for volatile, high-stakes incidents, DFR programs often normalize routine aerial observation, tracking, and patrolling without clear community guardrails

Setting up an active DFR program involves steep ongoing capital expenditures. Costs for equipment maintenance, software, and dedicated staffing frequently divert limited tax dollars from essential ground-level first responder resources or preventative services.

There is limited third-party, objective research proving these drones significantly improve conviction rates, long-term public safety, or general emergency efficiency.

Taxpayers should not foot the bill for this nonsense. There are more human-centered public safety solutions we can invest in. Let's look past dystopia and toward a future that brings people together.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Ariel Warne
Date: Friday, June 19, 2026 5:10:54 PM



Public Comment: Ariel Warne

Date: 06/19/26, 5:08 PM

2026-00488

Absolutely NOT in favor of drones used as first responders.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Friday, June 19, 2026 6:58:53 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 06/19/26, 6:56 PM

This is regarding ward 4 using drones for surveillance. I want to say that invading the privacy of law bidding citizens is not the answer to crime. I dont not support this and may even move is this is implemented. The response to crime is more police officers and harsher punishment for repeat offenders. Its pretty simple. Stopping crime should not be at the cost of my privacy and rights.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Sunday, June 21, 2026 1:31:49 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 06/21/26, 1:29 PM

We do not need to be spending money on drones. We need to be using that money to hire people to help our neighbors. What about a social work clinic on 42nd and Lyndale? What about additional mental health responders? What if we paid everyday people to clean up messes? Offer additional dumping permits for people who volunteer to get rid of trash? So many better ways to spend this money.

Ward:

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From: [A Grey](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: drones as first responders
Date: Friday, June 19, 2026 12:55:49 PM

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These comments were crafted by a friend and they express my exact sentiments on this issue.

Concerning the possibility of the City of Minneapolis pushing a DFR (Drones as First Responders) program:

Drones risk becoming persistent "eyes in the sky," violating the Fourth Amendment by enabling continuous, indiscriminate monitoring of neighborhoods, backyards, and public movements without warrants.

While initially pitched for volatile, high-stakes incidents, DFR programs often normalize routine aerial observation, tracking, and patrolling without clear community guardrails

Setting up an active DFR program involves steep ongoing capital expenditures. Costs for equipment maintenance, software, and dedicated staffing frequently divert limited tax dollars from essential ground-level first responder resources or preventative services.

There is limited third-party, objective research proving these drones significantly improve conviction rates, long-term public safety, or general emergency efficiency.

Taxpayers should not foot the bill for this nonsense. There are more human-centered public safety solutions we can invest in. Let's look past dystopia and toward a future that brings people together.

All Best,

Andrea

Andrea E Grey
3437 18th Ave S Apt 2
Minneapolis MN 55407
612-886-4127
andrea.e.grey@gmail.com

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Monday, June 22, 2026 9:18:44 AM



Public Comment:

Date: 06/22/26, 9:16 AM

I vehemently oppose the use of drones for policing. I think it opens risk, including misuse and potential violations of innocent people and property near the site of use. I also have serious concerns about data collection and retention. This is ridiculous and should not be implemented. I have yet to see a justification that actually matches real concerns in my neighborhood.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Byron Richard](#)
To: [Whiting, Jamison](#); [Sheldon, Chelsea \(she/her/hers\)](#); [Council Comment](#); councilcomments@minneapolismn.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No No No to Skydio!
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2026 5:37:16 PM

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Jamison,

Our DFL Congressional delegation would jump at this opportunity to act in opposition to corporate support for genocide.

I'm writing to voice my opposition to the proposed City of Minneapolis contract with Skydio. Skydio is a major supplier of drones that Israel uses to commit genocide in Gaza. Minneapolis City Council must continue to oppose contracting with companies that support the genocide. In the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department, Skydio's drones would also threaten the human rights of Minneapolis residents. On July 8, please vote against the proposed 'Drones as First Responders' contract with Skydio.

Byron
952 239 0752

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Sonya Kuznetsov Duffy
Date: Monday, June 29, 2026 1:48:32 PM



Public Comment: Sonya Kuznetsov Duffy

Date: 06/29/26, 1:46 PM

DFR pilot program

I urge you to vote against exploring Drones as First Responders in Minneapolis.

This proposal is about much more than technology and public safety. It is about privacy, civil liberties, government accountability, and whether residents can trust that surveillance tools will only be used as promised.

History tells us they will not and especially not in predominately BIPOC neighborhoods.

Across the country, automated surveillance systems have repeatedly been used beyond their intended purpose. Recent investigations found that police agencies improperly shared and searched Flock license plate reader data for federal and out-of-state agencies in violation of state law. Separate investigations have also documented officers using these systems to stalk former romantic partners and other individuals for personal reasons. These incidents demonstrate that even when policies prohibit misuse, access to powerful surveillance tools can be abused, often without the public knowing until long after the fact.

Once surveillance infrastructure exists, the temptation to expand its use grows. Today's emergency response tool becomes tomorrow's routine monitoring system. Minneapolis should not assume that stronger technology automatically leads to stronger accountability, especially when we already have a serious accountability problem with MPD.

These concerns are especially meaningful for many Minneapolis residents who continue to carry trauma from Operation Metro Surge. During that time, drones flew repeatedly over neighborhoods throughout the night for months. For many residents, the constant buzzing overhead was a continual reminder that they were being watched. Expanding the routine use of drones without acknowledging that experience risks deepening community mistrust rather than improving public safety.

We have also recently seen that drones are not a substitute for effective emergency response.

During the June 2025 attack that killed Representative Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark Hortman, law enforcement deployed a drone inside the home after officers encountered the suspect. Public reporting indicates the drone located Melissa Hortman on the stairwell before officers ultimately entered the residence. The incident has raised legitimate public questions about whether reliance on remote surveillance delayed direct intervention. Regardless of the conclusions ultimately reached, this tragedy demonstrates that technology alone cannot replace sound judgment, decisive leadership, or well-trained first responders.

The City Council should consider: What problem are we trying to solve, and what are we giving up in return?

Every new surveillance system collects data. That data must be stored, accessed, shared, and protected. If other jurisdictions, with written policies, audits, and oversight, have still experienced unauthorized searches, illegal data sharing, and personal misuse of surveillance systems, Minneapolis should not assume it will be immune from those same failures.

Public safety and privacy are not competing values. They are both essential to a healthy democracy.

Rather than investing in expanded aerial surveillance, Minneapolis should continue investing in people: adequately staffed emergency responders, violence prevention, mental health crisis response, community partnerships, and evidence-based policing practices that build trust instead of eroding it.

Once privacy is lost, it is extraordinarily difficult to restore.

I respectfully ask you to reject Drones as First Responders and instead pursue public safety solutions that protect both our security and our constitutional rights.

Ward: Ward 4

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Lisa de Felice
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2026 2:00:37 PM



Public Comment: Lisa de Felice

Date: 06/30/26, 1:48 PM

I do not support the move to use drones as first responders in our city. With an already bloated police budget, supporting inept and corrupt police, you are suggesting that Minneapolis police put their feet up? take it easy? while drones take to the skies to surveil and spy on my neighbors in North Minneapolis under the guise of “first responders.” I suppose perhaps this should be a relief that police officers won’t be first responders on the scene to murder Black people as they are known to do. Ah, who am I kidding? They’ll find other opportunities to do that! But I wonder—will the drones be affixed with guns? Or tasers? This suggestion of using drones as first responders is ludicrous and a negligent use of money by a corrupt police department. Who suggested this? Can just anybody throw out suggestions to the police department? Here’s an idea, let’s make pigeons into first responders to fires around the city! We can attach buckets of water to their ankles and they can be sent to scenes of fire! Since we’re putting ridiculous ideas up for vote...

Ward: Ward 8

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2026 1:19:14 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 06/30/26, 1:17 PM

2026-00609 Contract with Skydio, Inc. for a drones-as-first-responder pilot program

I am against the oxymoronic use of "drones as a first responder". A first responder is a person, not surveillance technology. I do not want to live in a city that hopes the latest form of mass surveillance can somehow magically fix issues that require the hard work of people helping build community. The use of drones separates the city into groups of watchers and those that are watched, instead of building systems and processes that engages everyone to work towards positive outcomes. Please do not proceed further with 2026-00609 Contract with Skydio, Inc. for a drones-as-first-responder pilot program.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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Public Comment: Kayla Devorak

Date: 07/01/26, 9:04 AM

2026-0048

There is much to consider regarding participating in a 'drone as first responders' pilot program. More questions arise than this program could potentially answer. It also opens the door to more surveillance and the continued erosion of trust with MPD and with the city.

1. Do we know what residents of the cities that already use drones think about the usage? Data was provided in the presentation, but there was no feedback from residents who are living with this program. Gathering this information and perspective should be considered before moving forward with adopting the pilot. A real understanding on how the drones impact the residents is imperative.
2. How is bias in the drone operators being addressed? 11 officers were sent or will be sent to NM for training. Will these officers complete additional bias training to ensure that they use the drone ethically and respond to all calls the same? Do these officers bring multiple perspectives to the role? Do these officers have any sanctions or reprimands as it relates to interacting with Minneapolis residents in their performance record? Do these officers live in the city?
3. What actual guard rails will be in place and how will these function in practice. Looking at current drone programs, how and where have these guard rails failed to function?
4. How exactly will these drones stop burglaries, car thefts, illegal dumping? How do they work in these capacities? How are they intervening in these calls?
5. What community programs could actually solve these issues without the use

of drones?

This program isn't ready to be adopted until these questions can be answered. Programs like this should require deep research and understanding of both the data being collected, the perspectives of the residents living with it, and how to ensure the officers responsible for this will perform their duties in the way that they should.

It has been proven time and time again across many decades that MPD cannot be trusted and will take every opportunity to worsen the conditions and treatment of the residents they claim to protect. Adopting drones seems like another way for them to continue this treatment without doing the actual work of changing.

Lastly, Council member Vetaw's comment about those on the North side being comfortable with "this kind of Big Brother" is untrue and clearly indicates she is out of touch with many who live in her ward and on the North side. There are many of us living in North Minneapolis who have serious concerns about using a program like this without further thought.

Please do not move forward with this program until there's a better understanding of its impacts and how it could be abused.

Ward: Ward 5

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Joshua Hermerding
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 12:46:50 PM



Public Comment: Joshua Hermerding

Date: 07/01/26, 12:44 PM

2026-00488

Hello.

My name is Josh Hermerding. I am a resident and educator of Ward 4. Unfortunately, because I care for the children of our neighborhood in summer school, I cannot attend this meeting.

I write to ask City Council and LaTrisha Vetaw specifically to vote against the "Drones as a First Responder" pilot.

Remember how less than a few months ago, HSI and its internal agency ICE were in town terrorizing our neighbors? According to MPR, currently MPD and HSI maintain joint law enforcement investigations across the city. That means, if we vote for drones, the information MPD gets could be shared with the agency that is allowed to use racial profiling to send our neighbors to South Sudan.

If you vote YES on this pilot, you are saying: YES, I approve of ICE in Minneapolis; YES, I approve of racial profiling of non-white people; YES, I approve of black and immigrant neighborhoods being testing grounds for intrusive AI-driven technology.

Please don't do the racist thing and vote YES. After months of exhaustion fighting ICE, please do the right thing for Ward 4. Vote NO against this pilot. Don't make our neighborhood your guinea pig.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Ward 4 resident
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 11:18:48 AM



Public Comment: Ward 4 resident

Date: 07/01/26, 11:16 AM

2026-00488

I strongly oppose the "drones as public responders" pilot program in my ward. I do not trust the assurances of the MPD that drones would be limited strictly to emergency response and will not be repurposed for general surveillance. Our community does not need surveillance drones, we need actual support, resources, and services provided by human beings. This is not the way to invest in a historically underrepresented neighborhood. Please invest in people, not drones.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Amber Frederick
Date: Monday, July 6, 2026 11:37:58 AM



Public Comment: Amber Frederick

Date: 07/06/26, 11:35 AM

2026-00609 2026-00488

I reject any attempts to gather and collect surveillance information on our neighbors through companies that directly profit off of the genocide of Palestinians. The company through which this is being proposed contracts directly with Israeli occupying forces to perform surveillance. The North Side deserves better than a city council representative pushing occupying surveillance onto them. I would say I am disappointed in the city council, Latrisha Vetaw specifically, for bringing this forward, but that is a gross understatement. I am appalled. For a community who has experienced immense isolation, police violence, and attempts at erasure, this is extremely insidious to consider as an alternative to investing in our neighbors. Do better. Don't become the oppressor.

Ward: Ward 5

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Michelle Steffen
Date: Monday, July 6, 2026 12:38:10 PM



Public Comment: Michelle Steffen

Date: 07/06/26, 12:35 PM

2026-00609 and 2026-00488 lo

No drones in N Mpls pls. There are already enough cameras everywhere. We don't need extra surveillance Flying through the air. What makes a place safe is community, ample job opportunities that pay well and bring meaning/purpose, access to healthy and affordable food, parks and natural places to gather and be outside in beauty, access to clean and affordable housing, access to affordable healthcare, and places to pray and play. These are the things to invest in. These are the things that make all beings safer. Thank you.

Ward: Ward 5

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Per Wiger
Date: Monday, July 6, 2026 12:46:40 PM



Public Comment: Per Wiger

Date: 07/06/26, 12:44 PM

2026-00609, 2026-00488

Hello,

I strongly object to contacting with Skydio (a company that profits off war crimes and human rights abuses) for any reason. Furthermore, I object to MPD or any other law enforcement body being provided drone weapons because I've seen what these technologies do in Ukraine and I don't want to watch the next MOVE bombing uploaded in FPV.

As soon as traffic cameras were deployed in Minneapolis the first time cops used them to stalk a female officer. Across the country right now there have been numerous reports of officers using flock cameras to stalk and harass citizens. If they are allowed the use of drones they will be used to stalk and harass people. The only question is, will we ever find out about it.

MPD has continuously abused the trust and finances of this city since the Jim Crow era charter amendment guaranteeing budget and staffing levels. Those abuses grow more flagrant every year. Their heavy vehicles destroy our roads, their response rates are abysmal, and their follow-through is worse. These problems will not and cannot be solved with new toys and tech, they can only be solved by radically transforming the culture and practices of the department.

The drone responder program will constitute 4th amendment violations while not improving public safety in any way. I thank you for opposing it on its face.

Ward: Ward 5

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Amy Johnson
Date: Monday, July 6, 2026 2:56:39 PM



Public Comment: Amy Johnson

Date: 07/06/26, 2:54 PM

2026-00609 and 2026-00488

I urge you all to vote against this. This is a gross overreach of surveillance of myself and my community. We do not need North Side community members to continue to be over-policed. We KNOW this data will be used against our neighbors and will most likely be shared with agencies and governments that have no business getting this data. When people say, it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. This is a "FREE" trial, but free is never free. Skydio wants access to our data, and they are willing to pay for it by offering their services for "free". There are so many better options to making our communities safer.

Ward: Ward 1

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From: [Wayne Cassman](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Drones as first responder
Date: Monday, July 6, 2026 4:22:59 PM

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing to ask you for your support for the Drones as First Responder proposal being discussed at the July 8 meeting of the Minneapolis City Council. I have been a resident of Victory Neighborhood in the 4th precinct over 20 years. I have seen many changes in our neighborhood over the past several years, including a significant increase in illegal activities. I believe that the use of drones would be very helpful to law enforcement at eliminating criminal activity in our neighborhood.

Activities that I have observed frequently occurring in our neighborhood include illegal dumping of trash around abandoned businesses, illegal operation of an automobile repair business on the street in a residential neighborhood, and open drug dealing on our street.

I have reported these incidents to authorities including 311 multiple times, however by the time that authorities arrive the activity has stopped or become less obvious to observers. If we were able to have drones quickly respond to reports of criminal activity, evidence of the crime could be documented and would provide further support to law enforcement.

I feel strongly that the drones as first responders would greatly enhance the work of law enforcement, and enhance the quality of life for our neighborhoods. Please support this program.

Sincerely,
Wayne A. Cassman
4429 Oliver Avenue North
Minneapolis

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From: [Andrew Jarvinen](#)
To: [Council Comment](#); [Amanda Kauffmann](#); [Vetaw, LaTrisha](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Drones As First Responders public comment
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 11:49:22 AM

You don't often get email from andrewjarvinen@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello Minneapolis Councilpeople,

Thank you for taking comments on the potential Drones As First Responders pilot program.

I believe there is value in the drone program but with guardrails.

Drones would enable faster response to criminal situations, which is an obvious win, capturing video evidence where otherwise there would be none.

Drones could also shift certain tasks off of officers. Illegal dumping and illegal auto work are low-priority calls for an officer, but could be documented by a drone in a faster, more effective manner, resulting in more offenders being held accountable and more citations being issued.

These type of surveillance functions could reduce the load on the police force, increase the case closure rate, and increase the issuance of citations-- all good things for the Minneapolis Police department.

However, it is important to note how annoying drones are. Nobody wants these things flying in their neighborhoods, they're very loud and invade privacy of the citizenry. In today's day and age, we are used to being photographed whenever we go out in public, and we already have stationary cameras on busy corners, but it's very different when a drone hovers over the block and or backyard.

I would want strict guidance defined for situations in which these drones would be deployed, and have public comment and review of that guidance before the pilot program be initiated.

I would also want to know about the data security around the program, i.e.- how is personally identifiable information protected through the process?

And there are use cases with which I would not be comfortable. I would not want drones taking actions in situations, i.e.- drones with guns, or drones that incapacitate or interact

with the alleged offenders. It's a slippery slope between a drone with a camera and a drone with a weapon.

Ultimately, I think the pilot program is appropriate if the right protections are in place, but believe those need further investigation and review.

I appreciate you opening the program to public comment. Thank you for your consideration.

Andy Jarvinen,
Fourth ward resident

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

From: [Joshua Keller](#)
To: [Vetaw, LaTrisha](#); [Council Comment](#)
Cc: [Joshua Keller](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Invitation to Speak at July 8 Public Hearing
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 10:21:45 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

You don't often get email from keller.joshua@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello Council Member Vetaw,

Thank you for your email and apologies for the delayed response.

Recently, I have been collaborating with four Minneapolis departments to address persistent illegal dumping in Camden. Despite installing signs, paying for large trash dump clean ups, surveillance, and fencing, as well as coordinating with neighbors, MPD, 311, and your office, repeat offenders continue to target the area. It is frustrating to receive enforcement letters regarding cleanup when I'm also investing my own time and resources to locate offenders who often reside in other cities. The enforcement is directed at the constituency who funds the city, not the criminals. From my years spent in Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Chicago, I've learned that selective enforcement doesn't result in healthy communities.

Unfortunately, I will be out of town during the public hearing. However, I want to offer my strong support for the Drones as First Responder pilot program. I have witnessed how this technology reduced illegal activity in San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley. Drones provide a safe alternative to dangerous car chases and have significantly reduced car thefts and illegal dumping—by upwards of 90% in the first month of implementation in San Francisco alone.

I would like to highlight the following points for the City's consideration:

- The benefits of this technology significantly outweigh the low cost.
- Established policies effectively safeguard civil liberties, private property, and civil rights.
- The technology is used equitably and does not have an impact on protected classes.

Our community needs the City to prioritize safety while protecting private property and civil liberties. I hope these insights are helpful to the discussion.

Thank you,

Joshua Keller
Owner of 800 42nd Ave N. / 4217 Aldrich Ave N.

On Thu, Jun 18, 2026 at 9:53 AM Vetaw, LaTrisha <latrisha.vetaw@minneapolismn.gov> wrote:

Hi Joshua,

I hope you are doing well. I'm reaching out because you've previously contacted us about concerns related to illegal dumping, illegal auto repair activity, auto theft, or other

neighborhood livability issues. I wanted to personally invite you to a public hearing on **July 8 at 1:30 PM in the Council Chambers**. If you're unable to attend, you can also submit written comments to councilcomment@minneapolismn.gov.

If you've experienced these problems in your neighborhood, you know how challenging they can be to address. The City is currently considering a **Drones as First Responder** pilot program that could help improve response times and provide responders with real-time information before they arrive on scene. In many cases, drones can reach an incident in under a minute, helping responders better assess situations and more effectively address ongoing issues such as illegal dumping, illegal auto repair activity, and related crimes.

Your perspective and firsthand experience would be valuable as the City considers this proposal. If you're able, I would appreciate your participation at the public hearing and your support for this effort.

Thank you for your continued engagement in helping improve our neighborhoods.

Best,

LaTrisha Vetaw

Council Member

Pronouns*: she/her/hers

City of Minneapolis – Ward 4

350 S. Fifth St. – Room #370

Minneapolis, MN 55415

Office: 612-673-2204

Cell: 612-322-1143

Latrishavetaw@minneapolismn.gov

[*Why this matters](#)



--

JOSHUA KELLER CCRM
California BRE #02187126
MN Broker #40050504
m: 415-582-0001

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Sara Lavelle
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 1:17:09 PM



Public Comment: Sara Lavelle

Date: 07/07/26, 1:14 PM

2026-00609

I live in the 4th ward and I do not support the pilot program being proposed for my neighborhood.

These drones do not belong in our neighborhoods.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

<!--[if !mso]-->

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Statement to the Minneapolis City Council

Re: Opposition to the Skydio Drones-as-First-Responders Pilot Program (Ward 4)

My name is Derek Harley, and I am a resident and North Minneapolis stakeholder submitting this statement in strong opposition to the drone surveillance and response pilot program sponsored by Council Member LaTrisha Vetaw.

North Minneapolis has carried the weight of over-policing and over-surveillance for generations. The sound of helicopters and low-flying aircraft over our neighborhoods is not neutral background noise — for a community that has lived through repeated trauma, it can trigger real, physical fear responses. Adding a fleet of camera-equipped drones to that soundscape, marked as police vehicles and hovering over our homes, does not make us safer. It tells us, again, that our neighborhood is a testing ground.

We do not need expanded aerial surveillance infringing on our Fourth Amendment rights. This is the kind of program I would expect from an authoritarian government, not from a DFL city council member — and it comes after a year in which our immigrant and Latino neighbors have already lived under the shadow of ICE activity in this city. Placing a drone surveillance program on top of that fear, in the same precinct, is not the message this Council should be sending right now.

If the City genuinely believes more enforcement capacity is needed, the honest answer is to fully fund the police department and staff it properly — not to outsource first response to a for-profit drone company with military and federal law enforcement ties.

And if illegal vehicle activity and unlicensed repair operations are truly the driving concern, there is a far simpler, cheaper, and less invasive fix already available: enforce existing code against the repair shops that illegally park vehicles on public streets for extended periods, blocking parking for the very constituents Council Member Vetaw represents. Residents have filed complaint after complaint about this for years. That is a code enforcement problem with a known solution — it does not require a drone.

I urge the Council to reject this contract and instead invest in solutions that respect this community's history, its trauma, and its constitutional rights.

Respectfully submitted,

Derek Harley

Ward 4, Minneapolis

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 11:22:52 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 11:20 PM

2026-0488

The use of drone technology by MPD is threatening to the community of Minneapolis. Not only does it violate privacy, it infringes on constitutional rights. There is already a lack of trust toward MPD, this motion will only create further ethical issues and increase tension. The culpable negligence of MPD's repeated use of racist policing and excessive and lethal force with little-to-no consequences for or accountability taken by MPD officers and the city of Minneapolis as a whole is deeply concerning. The partnership with Skydio is controversial at best, and poses further severe safety risks due to the company's direct affiliation to international operations. We do not need a further militarized police state here in Minneapolis. Lastly, drones cannot perform life-saving measures such as CPR, or any other assistance that police should be providing in emergency situations. This motion is clearly targeted at unwarranted surveillance rather than "faster response times." Absolutely no drones should be authorized for use by MPD.

Ward: Ward 10

I don't know, share with all City Council

<!--[if !mso]-->

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Stacey I.
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 10:44:32 PM



Public Comment: Stacey I.

Date: 07/07/26, 10:42 PM

2026-0488

Using drones to assist in police work is a costly mistake, particularly now and with Skydio. Using the North side of the city will perpetuate racial disparity in policing and further contribute to our immigrant neighbors feeling threatened. This is an irresponsible and unconstitutional use of the funds I pay as a resident and property owner.

The police do not need more expensive toys. They need effective training. They need to work on winning back the community's trust. NO TO DRONES.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (2 entries)
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 10:37:09 PM



Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 10:36 PM

This is a very bad idea. Please Please Please do not do this.

Ward:

-

Public Comment: Johnathan Barkei

Date: 07/07/26, 10:34 PM

2026-00609

I strongly oppose the proposed Skydio contract. Skydio is a major supplier of drones that Israel uses to commit genocide in Gaza. Minneapolis City Council must continue to oppose contracting with companies that support the genocide. In the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department, Skydio's drones would also threaten the human rights of Minneapolis residents. We have seen first hand the effects of unchecked power and militarized law enforcement during the invasion of the Twin Cities by federal agents. Continuing to militarize the MPD and expanding the surveillance state without accountability is actively detrimental to the safety of our community and lays the groundwork for the continued regression of civil liberties. On July 8, please vote against the proposed 'Drones as First Responders' contract with Skydio.

Ward: Ward 10

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 2:54:30 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 2:52 PM

2026-00609

Not only are my neighbors and I vehemently opposed to inviting surveillance into the Northside, I believe that any incident that drones respond to in our neighborhood will be escalated by their presence. Drones responding to minor incidents would potentially be met with destructive behavior, increasing the tension and causing MPD intervention. I invite you all to look on Facebook at the community reaction to CM Vetaw's posts about this initiative. You will find them overwhelmingly negative and if she pursues this, she will be acting against the wishes of the people she is supposed to represent.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Jennifer K.
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 3:39:27 PM



Public Comment: Jennifer K.

Date: 07/07/26, 3:37 PM

2026-0488

Regarding file 2926-0488.

I am staunchly against any use of the Skydio drones either as first responders or in any capacity, and further use of drones and police surveillance in general. . Frankly, the police cannot be trusted with them, nor can Skydio be trusted as they are a federal amd military contractor, and we know how the federal government wants to treat Minneapolis. We should give them absolutely no more ability to gain insight into our communities. Sgydio is also willingly complicit in an ongoing genocide.

Ward: Ward 4

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: A Concerned Citizen
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 3:46:16 PM



Public Comment: A Concerned Citizen

Date: 07/07/26, 3:44 PM

I am strongly opposed to having drones used in MPLS. Regardless of this trial period being free, it isn't a good look for us to be inviting this type of surveillance into our city. Despite my councilperson's extreme desire to implement this trial, there is little to no true info or guidance on very necessary details. Where is the data held? Who determines if footage have value for evidence or should be deleted? despite being deleted, does it stay on the third party server/database? How that third party protect our information? How can these drones be "looking for and finding suspects" or missing persons, or whoever, without gathering footage from private property? There is so little transparency. Our neighborhood doesn't need more surveillance (yes, it will be, even if it isn't intended to be to start with), it needs more investment, infrastructure, and true building up, not drones.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (2 entries)
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 3:55:35 PM



Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment: Emer Griffin

Date: 07/07/26, 3:54 PM

2026-0488

I am appalled that our city is even considering use of surveillance drones. We do not need to intrude on citizen's privacy, and the potential for abuse is very high. Police can avoid accountability with drone surveillance that is already under-regulated by the government. MPD has not demonstrated trustworthiness and we do not need more excuses for invading people's privacy. Skydio is also a military contractor and provides services that have been used against civilians in Gaza, so they are also not a company that we can trust will use the data gathered ethically.

Ward: Ward 8

I don't know, share with all City Council

-

Public Comment: Echo

Date: 07/07/26, 3:53 PM

I am a disabled individual who lives in Minneapolis. I am not able to attend the meeting tomorrow. But I adamantly oppose these drones. Please do not need more gadgets and more funding. The government is already having overreach. This kind of access is unconstitutional.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (3 entries)
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 3:57:41 PM



Public Comment: (3 entries)

Public Comment: Miriam Kniaz

Date: 07/07/26, 3:56 PM

2026-0488

I am firmly against using Skydio as the company for first responder drones. They are a military contractor, and are not trustworthy stewards of privacy, or civilian priorities.

Ward: Ward 5

I don't know, share with all City Council

-

Public Comment: Ashley

Date: 07/07/26, 3:56 PM

2026-0488

Absolutely NOT. Thank you!

Ward: Ward 5

I don't know, share with all City Council

-

Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 3:55 PM

I do not consent to my property being under surveillance, much less by a company who is actively involved in a genocide. Absolutely not.

Ward:

<!--[if !mso]-->

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (2 entries)
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 9:49:50 PM



Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 9:47 PM

Do not engage with Israeli companies perpetuating genocide in gaza

Ward: Ward 8

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

-

Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 9:47 PM

20260488

No to skydio drones

Ward:

I don't know, share with all City Council

<!--[if !mso]-->

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 9:43:47 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 9:41 PM

Drones as first responders

As a resident of the city of Minneapolis I do not feel comfortable with drones, especially by this company, to be the first responders in our neighborhoods.

Ward: Ward 5

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (2 entries)
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 9:13:34 PM



Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment: Sophia Lipset-Dean

Date: 07/07/26, 9:11 PM

Drones being used by police/first responders

NO to drones

Ward: Ward 10

I don't know, share with all City Council

-

Public Comment: Maisey

Date: 07/07/26, 9:11 PM

I do NOT want drones to be used in the police force or for first aid response with this company. This company supports a genocide. Find a different source and do more research. I will not support Israeli business.

Ward:

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

<!--[if !mso]-->

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 9:04:53 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 9:02 PM

2026-0488

Please do not approve these drones!

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 8:33:26 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 8:31 PM

2026-00488

Please do not allow drones to respond to 911 calls. We deserve HUMANS responding to emergencies, not robots that have no accountability. Skydio drones have been used in the Gazan genocide. We should not give this company a dime.

Ward: Ward 10

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Danielle Thurow
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 8:21:58 PM



Public Comment: Danielle Thurow

Date: 07/07/26, 8:19 PM

LIMS numbers 2026-00609 and 2026-00488

As a firmware engineer for the last decade, I can confidently say that a technical solution to a human problem does not work. The Drones as first responders is trying to do exactly that.

Skydio's argument is it makes officers safer and improve lives in the precinct it is deployed in. The solution to this does not require shiny new tech, it involves officers building better ties with communities, which can't be done from a panopticon drone hovering over their fellow civilians.

Skydio's plan is clearly to hook cities in order to lock in long term and expensive contracts, while also using cities as testing grounds and collecting data to improve their product, and "improve" will definitely involve more surveillance and tracking. After all, what would make officers job easier if they could simply track every person within the drone range at all times? Let's try and go AWAY from the fascist dystopia, not towards it.

Speaking of, during operation metro surge, many of my neighbors became terrified of drones, sure they were being used by ICE to kidnap anyone and everyone. I became the technical expert helping people understand the capabilities and threats from potential sightings. Those scars are still very fresh, and introducing more drones into the skies will absolutely reopen those wounds for many people.

This program is not needed and I request you do NOT move forward with it. The solution to this problem sadly isn't fun new tech, it's the old standby of building face to face community.

Thank you for your time.

Ward: Ward 12

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Sonia Krech-Jacobsen
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 7:13:06 PM



Public Comment: Sonia Krech-Jacobsen

Date: 07/07/26, 7:10 PM

I am a Saint Paul resident who spends a good deal of time in Minneapolis. Overall, it feels very safe, in large part to how connected and involved communities and neighborhoods are around the city.

I have witnessed officers storm into situations that warranted a friendly greeting and some safety questions. Officers already have the attitude that they are in battle with the residents.

I do not support the addition of using drones in the police arsenal of equipment. Drones further separate officers from the people and add a level of mistrust that no one needs to increase. Drones won't help the overall issues impacting the police department and will only harm whatever trust residents have for their integrity.

Ward:

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Brooklynn
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 7:10:05 PM



Public Comment: Brooklynn

Date: 07/07/26, 7:07 PM

2026-0488

No.

Ward:

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 4:00:01 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 3:57 PM

2026-0488

I do NOT give consent for drones to be on or above my property while you look for crimes. Not when you already have zero accountability on MPD.

A drone can't do CPR. A drone can't assess medical condition. If you have a medical professional to operate the drone, why the heck aren't they out with EMS?

The ONLY ethical use of drones as first responders is as part of the fire department, to HELP look for people in burning buildings. A drone cannot replace a member of the fire team doing a full sweep, but they can assist into getting into tight places!

Even there, there is data privacy concerns with Skydio -- they could easily share local data with federal agencies, and given the issues we've had with federal overreach, that's not safe for Minneapolis residents.

Ward:

I don't know, share with all City Council

<!--[if !mso]-->

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 6:59:39 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 6:57 PM

2026-0488

The money this costs taxpayers is not worth the squeeze. If you're worried about the safety of North Minneapolis, try investing in initiatives that give to the constituents instead of taking away and provide further surveillance of the town.

Ward: Ward 9

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 6:46:10 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 6:43 PM

2026-0488

NO, WE ABSOLUTELY DO NOT WANT MORE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS.
NO DRONES, NO FLOCK, RESPECT OUR FIRST AND FOURTH
AMENDMENT RIGHTS.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 5:55:47 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 5:53 PM

2026-0488

I do not support this idea of using drones as first responders. It seems like a waste of money and highly unlikely to be useful. Also I do not think the police need more toys.

Ward: Ward 5

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 5:50:33 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 5:48 PM

Skydio Trial

Keep Skydio OUT of Minneapolis! As a resident of Ward 4, I am completely disappointed in CM Vetaw for putting the safety and privacy of residents in danger. I have privacy concerns, and concerns for how much the surveillance technology will cost after the trial, as well as how these drones are assisting in genocide in Palestine. Please keep surveillance technology out of our city!

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: North Minneapolis Resident
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 5:41:52 PM



Public Comment: North Minneapolis Resident

Date: 07/07/26, 5:39 PM

2026A-0325

I support adopting the drone pilot program. Anything that can increase safety and speed of help in my North Minneapolis neighborhood is welcome. Of course the city will need to ensure the non involved citizens privacy in using this. It is the 21st century and our neighboring cities already have this technology.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: C McDonnell
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 5:02:37 PM



Public Comment: C McDonnell

Date: 07/07/26, 5:00 PM

2026-00609

Please do not approve the contract with Skydio, Inc and leave drone surveillance off the table. This is a deep intrusion of our privacy. Minneapolis residence were forced to endure federal drone surveillance this last winter and it was unsettling and disturbing to be spied on by my government in this way.

Ward: Ward 12

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (2 entries)
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 4:51:38 PM



Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment:

Date: 07/07/26, 4:49 PM

please, no drones by a company that provides information to forces that kill civilians...as in Gaza

Ward:

-

Public Comment: Todd Downing

Date: 07/07/26, 4:49 PM

Whether it's a good idea to trust MPD or any other law enforcement agency with drone technology (it's not) is a separate question. Should Skydio be the supplier of those drones? Absolutely NOT.

Their involvement with the IDF is an automatic deal breaker. Added to that it's complicity with the Trump administration makes them uniquely unqualified and unwelcome to operate in the Twin Cities or to receive our tax dollars.

Ward:

I don't know, share with all City Council

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Lee D.
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 4:28:57 PM



Public Comment: Lee D.

Date: 07/07/26, 4:26 PM

2026-0488

VOTE NO to using Skydio drones as first responders. The police don't need more taxpayer money to buy expensive toys. No to drones to spy on people, no to military contracts that are connected to murdering people in Gaza.

Ward: Ward 13

I don't know, share with all City Council

<!--[if !mso]-->

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (2 entries)
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 8:35:46 AM



Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment:

Date: 07/08/26, 8:35 AM

2026-00609 and 2026-00488

Drones will NOT make north safer!!! Invest more money in infrastructure and community initiatives, not these ridiculous policing ideas that will have zero productive impact on the ground.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

-

Public Comment: benjamin melançon

Date: 07/08/26, 8:33 AM

2026-00488

Drones will be traumatizing, full stop. The overuse of police helicopters already is, and we want it to stop. North Minneapolis needs less surveillance and fewer "first responder" police officers. We need more detectives solving violent crimes, and more JUSTICE, economic and social, reducing the incidence of community harm overall.

As an affected resident, i am completely opposed to the drones as first responders program proposed by Mayor Frey and Council Member Vetaw using Skydio Inc.

Absolutely no to the genocide partnering LIMS numbers 2026-00609 (Skydio

contract & legislative directive) and community traumatizing and spying on 2026-00488 (Drones as First responders pilot program details).

Ward: Ward 5

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

<!--[if !mso]-->

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 7:41:50 AM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/08/26, 7:39 AM

2026-00609, Drones as First Responder Pilot Program

To my city council members,

I am a parent and union worker whose family resides in the Shingle Creek neighborhood. I strongly urge you to reject this proposal from Skydio. While this pilot program is marketed as “free,” I believe the final cost to myself and my fellow North Minneapolis neighbors will be too high.

As a parent, it is ever more evident how watched my neighborhood is — and that doesn’t make us feel safer. While this program purports to be in response only, I am full of misgivings. Given MPDs history of misapprehension of technology for uses other than presented, and the recent incursion on our rights by federal forces, there is not enough trust on the ground for this to be a sound decision for Minneapolis. I urge the city to approach this with utmost caution. The growing push for corporate-supplied surveillance in our communities is too much, too fast, and too unregulated.

What happens when the “free” pilot ends and we have to fund the continuing program? We need money to care for our people, not pay a subscription to give more of our data to a company that uses the same drones over military occupation. The city budget is already strained, and where the city chooses to put its money speaks volumes. I have family and acquaintances who work at HCMC and who have had to deal with the uncertainty and loss that comes when our hospitals and healthcare aren’t prioritized. I have family who are left to lift the burden of underfunded education and cut programs for their students. Rather than funding more tools for MPD, we should be oriented towards lifting up the Minneapolis residents who have been left scrambling.

I appreciate the need to respond to emergency situations quickly. I can

certainly see the benefits of more awareness in emergency situations. However, I would rather put my trust in better trained, better supported dispatch and first responder staff than a shrunken system that seems to prioritize efficiency and closing calls. Eliminating the human response in emergency situations doesn't make us safer. Eliminating further connection with actual people in the community doesn't build trust. What happens in the instance of a wrong call? Who takes on that responsibility?

Thank you for hearing my concerns, and I hope that you will reject this proposed program.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 7:36:02 AM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/08/26, 7:33 AM

I have lived in Minneapolis for 5 years. I don't want drones being used by the police. My kids are already terrified of sleeping at night after ice drones kept coming super close to the neighborhood houses.

Protect our privacy. No drones for the police!

Ward:

<!--[if !mso]-->

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Jake Holcomb
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 5:08:01 AM



Public Comment: Jake Holcomb

Date: 07/08/26, 5:05 AM

This is unacceptable and dystopian, it's against everything American. Down with the surveillance state.

Ward: I do not reside in Minneapolis

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Carolyn Ritter
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 2:51:33 AM



Public Comment: Carolyn Ritter

Date: 07/08/26, 2:49 AM

2026-00609

I'm opposed to beginning a pilot program with Skydio, first because it steps towards privatizing a public service- then giving a private company access to our data, information and videos of citizens. Many of us have felt uncomfortable with the use of drones to surveil Minneapolis - especially during Metro Surge. Adding a dedicated private owned surveillance system will not enhance or restore public trust, and is unlikely to provide even a false level of security to citizens.

Furthermore, free isn't free. If Skydio is interested in giving their services away temporarily, we are the commodity.

Ward: Ward 12

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Adam Beers
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 1:40:36 AM



Public Comment: Adam Beers

Date: 07/08/26, 1:38 AM

2026-0488

My name is Adam Beers.

I lived through Operation Metro Surge and I remember helicopters overhead, armored vehicles going past, and feeling like my own neighborhood had become occupied.

That experience changed how I think about surveillance.

Now we're considering autonomous AI drones from a company that's shifted its focus from everyday consumers to policing and military contracts. We're told they're about public safety. But once surveillance tools become normalized, they rarely stay limited to their original purpose.

I don't want future generations to grow up thinking it's normal to have AI-powered police drones watching their neighborhoods.

I've seen what over-policing feels like. I don't want us investing in technologies that take us further down that road.

Please vote no.

Thank you.

Ward: Ward 9

I don't know, share with all City Council

<!--[if !mso]-->

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Samuel Spenader-Roark
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 1:12:11 AM



Public Comment: Samuel Spenader-Roark

Date: 07/08/26, 1:09 AM

We have seen MPD members abuse surveillance technology for personal use regularly enough that it should be obvious that giving them anything farther to spy on us with it's a terrible idea.

Ward: Ward 1

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Brian Chval
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 12:23:59 AM



Public Comment: Brian Chval

Date: 07/08/26, 12:21 AM

2026-0488

As a Minneapolis resident I absolutely reject any contracting with Skydio. For one, City Council and the representative of my ward know full well that MPD cannot be trusted to use tools responsibly, and in fact are guaranteed to use it to abuse the public. The AI and surveillance capabilities of these drones have far reaching implications, and MPD has already reached far as it is, with their extensive surveillance network established in the aftermath of their murder of George Floyd. Beyond that, Minneapolis residents have been subjected to AI and surveillance-driven brutalization during Metro Surge and are still in the crosshairs of the Trump administration. Anyone who believes that this program will have no relation to these facts is ignorant to the point of public danger.

On top of all of that, Skydio has a well documented relationship with Israel and use in the mass surveillance and murder of Palestinians. That alone should be disqualifying just on a conceptual level, but let me tease that out further. Many of the methods of rule and surveillance that our government enables Israel to develop on Palestinians are exported and further developed around the world, return to Palestine, and go out again. This a constant loop of heightening deadly repressive technology. We cannot afford to be another data point in that loop. We must protect our safety and refuse to sharpen the tools to threaten the safety of others, like Palestinians.

Some people will attempt to frame this as just a trial run, what's the big deal? The big deal is that you don't leave the door to hell open a crack - you shut it.
VOTE NO TO SKYDIO

Ward: Ward 8

I don't know, share with all City Council

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Shane P
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 9:06:23 AM



Public Comment: Shane P

Date: 07/08/26, 9:04 AM

2026-0488

I find it absolutely unconscionable that our city is even considering this proposal. Government overreach is already at an all time high between Operation Metro Surge, and Flock cameras everywhere. Minneapolis citizens are having their privacy invaded on a daily basis and it needs to stop. We've already seen reports about police using flock cameras to stalk people, so what's to stop them from using drones to do the very same?

Safety aside, we should also be looking at the companies we're partnering with. Skydio is directly connected to the genocide in Gaza, and it's abhorrent that we as a society would consider working with them. If safety is our number one concern, then we should avoid using companies responsible for humanitarian issues.

As a long-time Minneapolis resident, I believe that making our streets safer is important, but this is not the way to do it. I oppose to this proposal and condemn it with every ounce of my being.

Ward: Ward 5

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

<!--[if !mso]-->

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 9:02:15 AM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/08/26, 9:00 AM

2026-0489

What data security measures will be maintained for the videos/photos? What measures will be taken to ensure that there are no fourth amendment violations? When the city gets sued for fourth amendment violations, will the funds for the defense and settlement be taken out of city council salaries? Or from another source, like road maintenance, teachers/school funding, or parks? Who will monitor these drones? If they will be monitored by AI, where is that data center located? Is it ethical to ask another community to bear the burden of our drones?

Ward: Ward 4

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From: [Haider, Robert \(he/him/his\)](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] ACLU of MN: Drone First Responder Program Letter
Date: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 4:00:52 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[ACLU-MN statement Drones as First Responders \(1\).pdf](#)
[ACLU Report Drone First Responder Program.pdf](#)

Robert Haider (he/him)

Policy Aide— Ward 9

From: Munira Mohamed <MMohamed@aclu-mn.org>
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 12:37 PM
To: Munira Mohamed <MMohamed@aclu-mn.org>
Cc: John Boehler <jboehler@aclu-mn.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ACLU of MN: Drone First Responder Program Letter

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mmohamed@aclu-mn.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

The ACLU of Minnesota is sharing this letter on the new Drone pilot program.

Multiple cities are beginning to adopt these First Responder programs, and we will be monitoring their rollout and implementation. Our letter lays out some concerns regarding privacy and civil liberty protections.

I've also attached a report from our National office on this issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Munira Mohamed (*she/her*)

Policy Associate

American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota

■ o: 612.978.6841

mmohamed@aclu-mn.org

www.aclu-mn.org

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[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

Drones as First Responders Program

July 7th, 2026



The ACLU of Minnesota is aware of police departments beginning to adopt and explore various Drones as First Responders (DFR) programs. We've worked with lawmakers over the years to ensure that there is a balance between upholding public safety and protecting people's privacy when it comes to drone usage. State law requires that Law Enforcement have a warrant when deploying drones with exceptions for when there is risk of bodily harm or death. As we monitor the rollout of these programs, ACLU-MN maintains that State law is the floor and that cities are free to add more protections.

1. **The DFR program is likely to dramatically increase the usage of drones by police, especially as more cities implement this program.** Widespread and frequent drone usage opens the door to privacy violations and warrantless surveillance. Because drones are so cheap, there is the possibility that they could be used for routine patrols, suspect surveillance, or to simply gather intelligence. More drones flying across the sky on various 911 calls could possibly mean more surveillance footage being passively obtained. This could be video footage of peoples' yards or kids walking to and from school. There is a real concern about data retention and that police will use drones outside the scope of emergency response.

Cities should provide clarity on when and where DFRs will be deployed.

Several of the proposed uses we've seen in these programs exceed the authority delegated by the state including "verifying occupancy", "nuisance abatement," "illegal auto repair," and "traffic control". Local governments should ensure that the systems are regularly, independently audited and that the results of those audits made public

2. **Cities who have a DFR program should have Data security and Data Privacy measures.** They must ensure that all data collected and managed by DFRs is retained solely by the city and only shared with those law enforcement agencies that agree contractually to abide by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA). What Minnesota experienced during Metro Surge was less an increase in surveillance than an unveiling and weaponization of an existing surveillance apparatus by the federal government. Cities should anticipate that once this data is shared outside the confines of its own system that it will end up in the data surveillance network of the federal government – either through third-party vendors, collaborating in-state and out-of-state law enforcement agencies, fusion

centers or other joint task forces. Cities should further allocate sufficient resources for internal auditing of their drone flights, recordings, and other data to ensure that operators and those with third-party access are using the systems for lawful purposes.

3. **Drones are not a substitute for uniformed personnel.** As Law Enforcement continues to utilize a wide range of technologies, it's vital that there still be human officers conducting police business. Saving labor costs should not be the reason for increased automation because of the risk of technological errors or increased privacy violations.
4. **Drones should be limited to emergency use.** Utilizing drones for issues like code violations, unauthorized auto repair, and waste dumping increases the likelihood of misuse, and accelerates the general dissent into mass, systemic surveillance.
5. **Community members should demand a high level of transparency and engagement from their local police departments and City Councils.** There should be public hearings where Drone proposals are presented so that community members can weigh in and express concerns. People should also reach out to their state legislators, so they are aware of the situation.
6. **Local governments can also track the effects of this program and collect reports on complaints or violations.** Investing in long-term monitoring and reporting will help lawmakers and advocates understand the real-world impacts of using drones as first responders.

John Boehler

Policy Counsel, ACLU-MN



Eye-in-the-Sky Policing Needs Strict Limits

We're on the cusp of an explosion in law enforcement use of drones. Is America ready?

By Jay Stanley

July 27, 2023

A new use for drones has arrived in the United States: so-called “Drones as First Responder” (DFR) programs, which involve sending unpiloted aerial vehicles to the location of 911 calls. In 2019 the city of Chula Vista, California, became the first to start a DFR program, but the number of cities and towns following suit — already more than a dozen — is poised to explode, along with other police uses of the technology. And those novel uses for drones threaten to pave the way for an even greater expansion of the aircraft in the skies above American communities.

A world where flying robotic police cameras constantly crisscross our skies is one we have never seen before. While some departments have long used fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for some aerial surveillance, drones are far cheaper and can therefore be used by many more departments and in much greater numbers.

Widespread police use of drones would be a major change, with implications foreseeable and not. Yet there are strong reasons to believe that such a world may be coming faster than most people realize. It's important that we don't sleepwalk into a world of widespread aerial surveillance, that communities think very carefully about whether they want drone surveillance, and, if they decide to permit some operations, put in place guardrails that will prevent those operations from expanding.

Why police drone use is likely to take off

Already there are over 1,400 police departments in the United States [using drones](#). Such use increased sharply after the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) enacted [new regulations](#) in 2016 allowing anyone to fly a drone as long as they follow certain rules. But operators in the United States, including police departments, are still generally not allowed to operate a drone beyond their visual line of sight (BVLOS). A few police departments have gone through an extensive and time-consuming processes to secure a special exemption from this ban from the FAA so that they can carry out drones-as-first-responder flights.

The number of departments seeking such exemptions is [growing](#). I recently spoke to Matt Sloane, the CEO of Skyfire, a consulting firm that works with public safety agencies looking to start drone programs, and he told me that “there’s going to be an explosion of these departments doing DFR in the next 6 to 12 months. We’re talking to 5 or 6 departments a week.” Even back in 2020, [a poll](#) by the organization Drone Responders found that 75 percent of 248 public safety respondents said “yes” when asked whether their organization wanted to conduct BVLOS flights. The process of applying for an FAA waiver is getting smoother, and companies have already begun [marketing drones](#) and [software](#) specifically for the first responder market.

But for now, for most of the nation’s approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies, the ban generally restricts the use of drones to local spot deployments and generally prevents them from being used for routine, suspicionless surveillance.

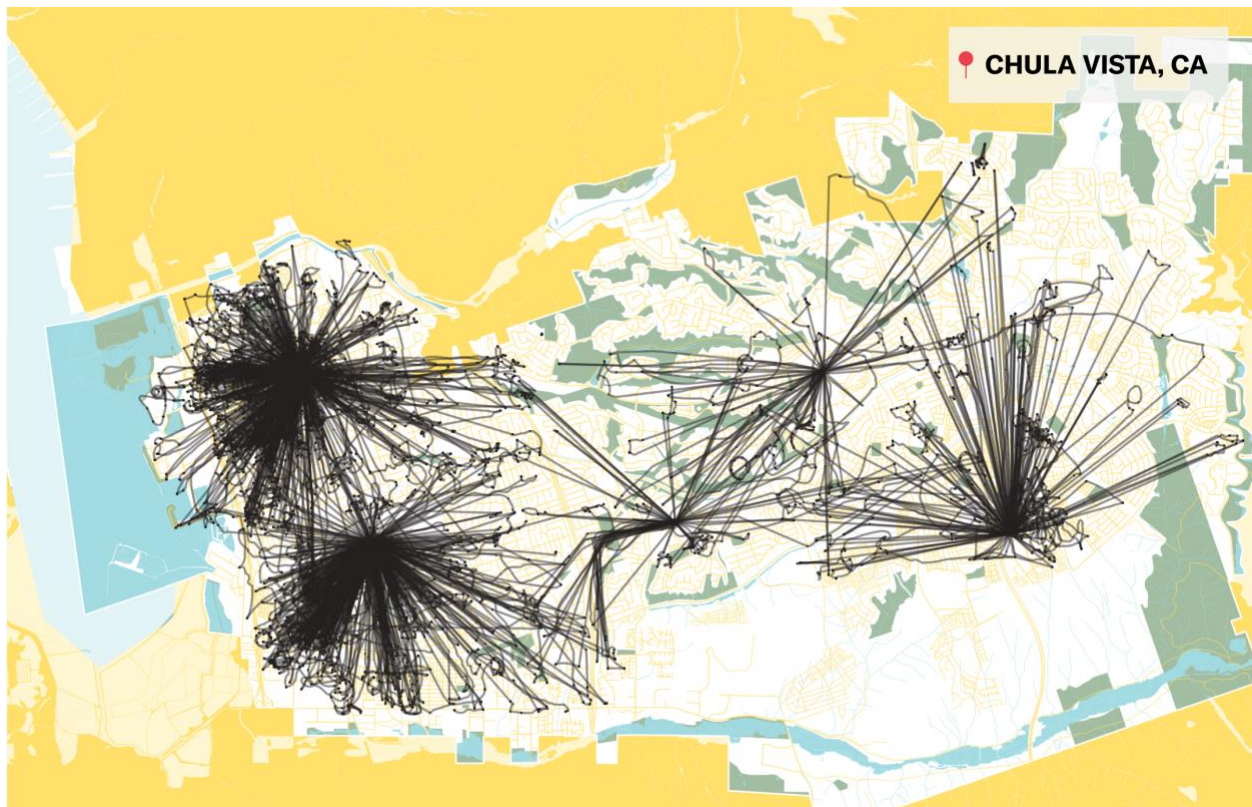
The FAA, however, is currently working toward another revolutionary [rulemaking](#) — this one allowing by-right BVLOS flights for anyone who meets certain criteria. Some in Congress are [pushing](#) the agency to move quickly to issue such rules, which may open the skies to all kinds of uses, including delivery drones, and greatly increase the overall number of drones operating over our communities. In particular, they will open the door to many more police DFR programs, and to whatever other uses of aerial robots might be dreamed up by America’s law enforcement agencies, and by the growing ecosystem of drone companies hungry for markets.

It’s also clear that police departments will push their use of drones beyond emergency response. Proponents cite their potential usefulness in responding to dramatic crimes and emergencies, but in Chula Vista, where the police department has been running its DFR program for more than two years, a large portion of deployments are for much less serious incidents. Some of the more than 14,000 drone flights [reported](#) by Chula Vista have been responses to calls about apparently serious situations like fires, accidents, and gun violence. But many [other](#) deployments have been in response to family and domestic disputes, wellness checks, mental health evaluations, shoplifting, and “suspicious persons.” In recent months drones were dispatched in Chula Vista for reports of “loud music,” a “water leak,” and someone “bouncing a ball against a garage.”

As Patrick Sisson [put it](#) in Technology Review:

Police departments like to share examples of daring and excitement: drones assisting officers in tracking down suspects, providing situational awareness during tense arrests, or helping to secure crime scenes. But drill down and ask about the real case for drones, and they’ll talk about the practical matter of clearing 911 calls.

This is a classic case of government powers being justified by the most serious applications — and then their uses rapidly expanding to much more mundane purposes. To their credit, Chula Vista has been quite transparent about its drone program; in May, the Chula Vista Police Department gave me a tour of their drone operation, and the officers there answered my questions openly. It seemed clear that they genuinely view their DFR program as helping their community, including by reducing the number and danger of police interactions. And I believed them when they said they had no desire to use drones in broader ways, such as for routine surveillance.



Drone Flights over Chula Vista April 2021-May 2023 cover most inhabited areas of the city. The black lines represent drone flight paths.

But this issue is far bigger than any one police department and its current practices. It's not hard to see how, once normalized by deployments such as DFR programs, police drones could become an increasingly common sight over American communities for a wide range of police purposes. In addition to what we're already seeing, those purposes could include:

- **Suspect surveillance.** "We got a report of a shoplifter, but we don't have a spare officer to send so we'll follow the accused around the city with a drone until an officer is available to apprehend them."
- **Anticipatory or intelligence-based crime locations.** Santa Monica sends its drones on such missions. "Say we had a specific [parking] structure where we're constantly having vehicle burglaries — there may be a periodic check," an officer told a [reporter](#).
- **Routine patrols of particular neighborhoods.** "Our predictive policing software suggests a high chance of crime on that street tomorrow night." Or, "That wealthy enclave keeps insisting we increase our patrols to watch for suspicious visitors."
- **Routine patrols of an entire city.** "We can stop and solve more crimes if we have eyes over the whole city, so why wouldn't we do that?"

That last step — that drones will usher in an era of pervasive, suspicionless, mass aerial surveillance — has [always](#) been one of our biggest fears. Though the desire of at least some to do so is [apparent](#), most police officials disclaim any such interest. And critically, in a case

litigated by the ACLU and ACLU of Maryland, an attempt by the Baltimore Police Department to deploy pervasive, city-wide aerial surveillance (using piloted aircraft) was [struck down](#) by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals as violating the Constitution.

But it's not clear where the courts will draw lines, and there's a very real prospect that other, more local uses of drones become so common and routine that without strong privacy protections we end up with the functional equivalent of a mass surveillance regime in the skies. We don't have to think current police officials are lying to understand that mission creep is a very real tendency. While controversial new police technologies are often unrolled in limited ways and accompanied by promises of best behavior, they may be overtaken by later adopters who brush aside the limits and promises of the early pioneers.

In fact, it's already starting. One city, Beverly Hills, has become the first in the nation that we know of to begin using drones on [routine patrols](#) — an alarming expansion in the use of this technology. Following a shooting at a parade, Chicago [passed](#) legislation that would allow the police to use drones over “special events” such as parades and festivals. That ordinance prohibits the use of drones to monitor events that touch more closely on First Amendment rights, such as protest marches, but there's still plenty of reason for concern — and many police departments will likely want to use drones for such purposes. The Omaha Police Department in Nebraska [boasted](#) that “During protests, we also used the sUAS [drone] to document activities from a great vantage point.” Police in Elizabeth, New Jersey used drones to [monitor a protest](#) by local students demanding fewer police and more counselors in schools, and for a wide [variety](#) of other uses. Many people were appalled by widely circulated [videos](#) of drones in China [shouting](#) at people to comply with COVID measures — but for the Elizabeth police, that was a [model](#) to be [embraced](#), and touted as a “[success](#).”

Illegitimate uses of drones may not depend on BVLOS flights — a lot of ground can be covered within the line of sight of an operator on top of a tall building. But the number and scope of drone operations will almost certainly balloon when by-right BVLOS operations become possible.

Implications of police drone flights

Are Americans ready to have large numbers of police drones flying and hovering over their homes and communities?

Of course, uniformed police officers and marked police cars already circulate throughout our communities, observing what is around them. But many people feel self-conscious and uncomfortable when a police car is driving behind or near them, or when a uniformed police officer is watching them. In communities of color where residents have sharp reasons to fear dangerous interactions with law enforcement, the negative feelings evoked by a watchful police presence can be far more powerful.

So what happens when the presence of police “eyes” expands? Won't we have these same feelings when there are police drones flying overhead — likely armed with powerful zoom lenses (as today's DFR drones already are) that might single us out at any time and watch with great detail what we are holding, wearing, or doing?

One stated advantage of DFR programs is that they can be a “force multiplier” for overworked departments, allowing police to stretch more work out of fewer officers. But just how much of such “multiplication” do we want? There’s a large body of writing by psychologists and those who have lived in totalitarian regimes on how living under surveillance creates feelings of powerlessness and is inherently stressful and stifling. When we know we’re being watched, we monitor ourselves — we think about what we’re doing, how it might appear to others, and how it could be taken out of context or mistaken for suspicious behavior. We’re more likely to censor ourselves and to conform, and less likely to dissent. We’re less freewheeling and spontaneous. Basically, we’re just less free.

If a drone flies over my yard, do I have to worry that it is capturing me and my friends as we smoke weed in my back yard? If I’m helping my son with wrestling moves for his high school match, is it going to be misinterpreted as some kind of fight? If my kids are playing with an airsoft gun, is my house is going to get raided by a SWAT team? Will I need to worry that a police drone is looking through my windows into my house? The Constitution doesn’t normally permit warrantless surveillance where people have a “reasonable expectation of privacy,” but abuses do occur, and when they do people naturally become paranoid.

Drone surveillance will be sold as increasing “security,” but a full definition of that word should incorporate the sense of safety and well-being that people want to feel when they’re in their homes and communities. Persistent surveillance can undermine that kind of security.

We are hopeful that the FAA’s “[Remote ID](#)” system, which is basically a requirement that drones carry a radio “license plate” transponder, will allow people to easily find out whether a drone hovering overhead belongs to the police, to Amazon, or to the kid next door. Non-police drones can [pose a threat](#) to privacy as well, but a local burrito delivery drone is not generally going to create the same chilling effects as a police drone. If people do not gain an easy and practical way to tell whether drones that are overhead belong to the police, then they’re likely to feel the police may be watching whenever *any* drone is overhead.

Low-income communities of color in certain areas like Los Angeles have been dealing with oppressive aerial surveillance for many years, from police helicopters. Those communities have found such surveillance physically and psychologically [harmful](#). Drones, too, are likely to be deployed first and foremost in low-income communities — though they could easily become far more pervasive and ever-present than police helicopters, which are expensive and thus subject to [natural limits](#) on their deployment, especially in communities that don’t have very well-funded police departments.

Finally, we should keep in mind that, with advances in artificial intelligence, video is becoming a far more searchable, accessible, and analyzable — and therefore dangerous — set of data than it used to be. There will be a constant incentive on the part of both government and private contractors to run video datasets through machine learning algorithms for AI training purposes and to search for particular violations of the law or other facts of interest to law enforcement that might be buried within. Human attention is [no longer a limiting factor](#) when it comes to analyzing video data.

The jury's still out on "drones as first responder" programs

We're very concerned that we may be moving toward a future where we find ourselves constantly scanning the skies, seeing drones overhead, and feeling like the eyes of law enforcement are always upon us. That's no way for anybody to have to live.

Today's DFR programs for now remain much more limited in purpose, and many or most of the departments running such programs disclaim any intention to engage in more systematic surveillance. So what are we to think about what's happening now?

The ACLU recognizes there are many situations where drones can be useful for law enforcement and don't involve undue surveillance. We don't object to the use of drones for specific emergencies, or in bounded situations where there are specific and articulable grounds to believe that the drone will collect evidence relating to criminal wrongdoing (except where the drone will intrude upon reasonable expectations of privacy, in which case the government must obtain a warrant based on probable cause). We don't see a problem with their deployment for such uses as accident or crime scene photography.

At the same time, we are adamantly against the use of drones for routine, suspicionless, or mass surveillance. We laid out our early, and still applicable, views on law enforcement use of drones in more depth in a [2011 report](#).

Given that so many 911 calls are not true emergencies, DFR programs like Chula Vista's lie in a gray area between these two ends of the spectrum — between emergency-only and routine deployments of drones.

Police proponents in Chula Vista and elsewhere cite various examples to argue that the technology can be good for civil liberties by helping to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations — for example, an incident in which a drone was able to [establish](#), before police arrived, that a man reported to be waving a gun was actually holding a gun-shaped cigarette lighter, lowering the chances that frightened officers arriving on the scene would use deadly force when they didn't need to.

Police departments regularly receive and must respond to false or unreliable reports, including calls from racist citizens [complaining about Black people](#) doing ordinary things. That may just lead to more police cameras crisscrossing the skies for no good reason. Or, DFR boosters would argue, if it can be established by drone rather than by the arrival of armed police officers that nothing actually suspicious is taking place, fraught law enforcement encounters can be reduced.

As we [always stress](#), it's important not to make policy by anecdote. Anyone can come up with scenarios about how a technology will improve people's lives and the life of a community. The real question is how it will play out over time in this complex and messy world, where it's likely to have cascading effects that we can only dimly anticipate.

Will DFR programs become a tool of undeniable usefulness for law enforcement with positive effects for individuals and for communities? Will they become just another layer of surveillance and another weapon in the war on drugs, in over-policing, in the targeting of Black, low-income,

and other vulnerable communities, and otherwise amplify the problems with the deeply broken U.S. criminal legal system? Many drone missions appear to be, as Dave Maass from the Electronic Frontier Foundation aptly [put it](#), for “crimes of poverty.” Will DFR programs lead to a decrease in fraught citizen-police interactions, as proponents suggest — or an increase, as police are called out to investigate numerous “suspicious” scenes — such as a man teaching his son wrestling moves — that without drones would never have been noticed?

With DFR programs, the technology and programs are so new that the jury is still out.

We are watching these programs to see how they operate, what they may evolve into, and how communities are reacting to them. Given the uncertainties, we recommend that communities hold off on creating DFR programs until we have a better sense of how they play out in the communities that have already deployed them.

Guidelines for existing DFR programs

Existing DFR programs must adhere to a strict set of limits to make sure they don’t evolve into much broader surveillance programs. Given the novelty of DFR, unanticipated issues are likely to emerge, but at the moment it looks clear to us that policies are needed in three areas: usage limits, transparency, and data handling.

Of course, even before considering those factors, a threshold question is whether a community has been fully informed about a DFR program and has then decided that it wants its police department to deploy this tool. A police department should not, [and should not be permitted to](#), deploy surveillance technologies without the consent of the community it serves.

Good policies, including on usage limits, transparency, and privacy, should not be left up to police departments, but should be given legal force by a city council or other legislative body as part of a vote to approve a DFR program.

Usage limits

As a number of [critics](#) have [pointed out](#), it’s questionable how much the presence of drones really helps the authorities in dealing with everyday police calls — but every deployment means a law enforcement camera flying across town. Communities that have decided they want to allow their police department to use BVLOS drones as first responders should impose limits on the circumstances under which those drones are deployed, restricting them to emergencies first, and secondly to the most serious ones. Communities should also bear in mind that mass and suspicionless aerial surveillance violates the Constitution’s Fourth Amendment.

Transparency

Drones are a powerful and novel surveillance technology, and the public has a right to know how they’re being used and how that is working out — not only as a question of resources, but also because there are legitimate fears of the misuse of aerial surveillance. We’ve seen such misuse with police helicopters — in New York City, for example, where operators of an aircraft

hovering over a 2004 bicycle protest diverted their night vision camera to [film an amorous couple](#) on a pitch-black rooftop balcony.

It is critically important that police provide clear information about where and when surveillance drones have operated and the policies that govern their use. [Chula Vista](#) and [Hemet](#), California have commendably adopted the practice of publishing the time, purpose, destination, and precise route of every DFR flight. Although many of the listed flight purposes are missing or vague (“unknown problem”), which should be fixed, overall these disclosures give the public a good start at understanding why and where drones are being deployed. With proper controls and auditing, this data could also serve as a deterrent to flights that are not for legitimate law enforcement purposes. The practice of per-flight transparency should be regularized and mandated as a part of every police BVLOS drone program.

However, few police departments appear to have provided much transparency about their DFR programs. Of the dozen or so other departments running such programs that we have heard of and reviewed, no others published a record of flights, and only a handful had published the policies governing their drone operations. Many departments had no information whatsoever about drones on their websites, despite touting their programs in local media outlets.

Key elements of transparency include:

- **Capabilities and sensor payload.** Drones are a platform; they typically include regular video cameras but can also carry any kind of sensor that has been invented, including night vision, radar, [lidar](#), cell phone tracking tools and other radio devices, and chemical and biological sensors. Other technical capabilities such as battery life and top flight speed should also be shared with the public.
- **Drone policies.** Ideally, policies covering such elements as criteria for deployment, privacy practices (such as data storage, retention, and access), and auditing (as we discussed in our 2011 [paper](#)) would be given legal force by a city council or other legislative body, but where internal police department policies govern operations, those should be made public.
- **Performance and results.** With any technology that has potential ramifications for privacy and other civil liberties, a threshold question is whether it works. Vendors frequently push new technologies by making all kinds of unproven claims about their performance and benefits. Meanwhile, drones can have significant downsides, from their monetary costs to privacy, noise, the danger of crashes, and other quality of life issues. The public deserves to know to what extent these aircraft are actually offering practical real-world benefits for the community, and whether any such benefits outweigh their disadvantages. Law enforcement agencies tend to trumpet their successes and bury their failures, so communities should carefully consider how they can obtain independent auditing or other disinterested evaluations of the technology over time.
- **Video of public interest.** Police drone video can be highly privacy invasive, for example when it captures people experiencing domestic violence or mental health crises. In such cases, timely deletion and limits on access are appropriate. In other situations, however, such as where a police shooting has been [recorded](#), the public interest in access to video is [paramount](#), and in those cases police departments shouldn’t be allowed to bury it (for

example, by claiming that it is tied to an [ongoing investigation](#)). We have [published](#) (and [some jurisdictions](#) have adopted) a carefully considered [framework](#) for balancing the privacy and transparency interests of police body camera video, and we believe that drone video should be handled under that same framework.

Privacy rules

The handling of data is another important issue that should be addressed.

- **Recording policies.** A significant question around police drones is what kind of imagery they capture, and how that data is handled. The more that drones are crisscrossing a community, the more of everyday life they have the potential to record. Some drones have cameras that beam video back to the craft's operator for navigation purposes, while carrying other cameras used for photography at the scene. There is no reason that video from navigation cameras should be recorded, and there's no reason why downward facing cameras should record while they're traveling to and from their destination. A [number](#) of [departments](#) currently say they do record en route but point their cameras forward rather than downward, so they can get "eyes" on the emergency location as soon as possible. Better would be not to record at all en route.
- **Data sharing and retention.** Any imagery that is collected should not be shared with other parties unless there is reasonable suspicion that the images are relevant to an ongoing investigation or pending criminal trial, contain evidence of criminal activity, capture a police use of force, or capture incidents that are the subject of a complaint against an officer. Such data should not be subject to AI analytics, and should be retained no longer than necessary under our recommended [framework](#) for body camera video.
- **Private companies.** Communities and police departments should pay particular attention to private-sector vendors and contractors who are part of a drone program. Do they have access to data that police drones are collecting? If so, that raises additional privacy concerns, since profit-making companies can have incentives to use and abuse data in ways beyond those of law enforcement. At the very least, any such companies must be contractually bound to honor the policies that apply to the department.

These limitations are important to prevent drones from expanding from tools for specific emergencies into general surveillance devices that lend themselves to abuse and over-use and create chilling effects in a community.

Conclusion

Drones often [elicit](#) a [visceral response](#). When the identity of their operator and reason for their presence are not crystal clear, they are [inscrutable](#) and often perceived as alien and hostile. We saw a very [strong backlash](#) in state legislatures around the country when drones first came into their own in the early 2010s, because this technology has a significant potential to invade privacy, create chilling effects, and otherwise degrade the quality of life of our communities.

American police departments have begun making the case that they should be permitted to fly drones broadly across cities and towns for purposes such as responding to emergencies, but they are already being used far more broadly than many realize, and their use is likely to broaden even more. We recommend that communities put in place statutory guardrails to ensure that drone use

does not overspill reasonable limits, and that they do not initiate DFR programs until we have a better sense of how this technology is playing out in the real world.

From: [Will](#)
To: [Vetaw, LaTrisha](#); [Council Comment](#)
Cc: [Payne, Elliott](#); [Ward 2](#); [Ward 3](#); [Warren, Pearl Y](#); [Osman, Jamal](#); [Shaffer, Elizabeth A](#); [Stevenson, Soren D](#); [Chavez, Jason](#); [Ward 10](#); [Whiting, Jamison](#); [Chowdhury, Aurin](#); [Palmisano, Linea](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Petition Against Proposed Minneapolis "Drones as First Responders" Program (MCC File No. 2026-00488)
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 8:48:20 AM
Attachments: [Broader Minneapolis Petition for the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis City Council \(MCC\) to Reject Proposed "Drones as First Responders" \(DAFR\) Program.pdf](#)
[Ward 4 and 5 Minneapolis Petition for the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis City Council \(MCC\) to Reject Proposed "Drones as First Responders" \(DAFR\) Program.pdf](#)

You don't often get email from willreely@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Apologies, I attached a copy of one of the blank doorknocking petitions. Please see the attached PDF document for the Ward 4 and 5 signatures.

On Wed, Jul 8, 2026 at 8:01 AM Will <willreely@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello,

Please see attached signatures for a grassroots petition which your constituents have assembled over the last several weeks, in response to MCC File No. **2026-00488** "Drones as First Responders pilot program".

One petition was conducted in Minneapolis Wards 4 and 5 as the proposed program was originated by Councilperson Vetaw and would most directly affect these wards. A parallel petition was conducted in all other Minneapolis wards. The petitions were conducted via a combination of physical door-knocking and signature gathering, and online means (Google Forms).

The full text of the petition is as follows:

In May of 2026, Minneapolis Ward 4 Councilmember LaTrisha Vetaw initiated the process of considering a pilot program for "Drones as First Responders". The program would begin with a 75-day trial period offered by Skydio, a California-based producer of military-grade drone technology. The trial period drones would be housed in Precinct 4 (Ward 5). **A public hearing and comment period about the program will be held Wednesday July 8th at Minneapolis City Hall, at 1:30PM.**

We, the undersigned residents of Minneapolis, do not trust the assurances of the MPD that drones would be limited strictly to emergency response and will not be repurposed for general surveillance. We do not trust that the MPD would hold itself to current local and state laws which govern and limit the use of drones. We demand that the City and the MCC reject the proposed DAFR program.

Given the historical expansion of surveillance infrastructure in Minneapolis and ongoing concerns about accountability, we do not believe current safeguards are sufficient to prevent misuse or mission creep. Without strong safeguards, transparency, and independent oversight, surveillance technologies can be used in ways that erode privacy, increase general public surveillance, and further damage community trust.

These concerns must also be understood in the context of the U.S. Dept of Justice (DOJ) findings regarding the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) ca. 2023. The DOJ documented

patterns of conduct that undermined public trust and raised serious concerns about policing, accountability, and discrimination.

The DOJ found that the MPD “unlawfully discriminates against Black people and Native American people in its enforcement activities, including the using of force following stops”, and that “along with the city, discriminates against people with behavioral health disabilities when responding to calls for assistance”.

Many of these concerns and issues were first documented by the MN Dept. of Human Rights. Given these realities, it is understandable why many Ward 4 residents are skeptical about expanding law enforcement surveillance capabilities through a DAFR program.

We are also concerned about the growing normalization of surveillance technologies in public life. Large corporations, including Minneapolis-based Target Corp., have played a role in shaping and supporting broader security and monitoring ecosystems in urban environments. While these systems are often justified as being “for public safety”, their expansion raises serious questions about privacy, data use, and long-term impacts on civil liberties.

The proposed Skydio partnership raises additional concerns which cannot be ignored or brushed aside. Skydio is a manufacturer of military-grade drones with substantial defense and government contracts with both the U.S. military and the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Residents are concerned about the increasing militarization of local policing tools, and the blurring of lines between military-grade technology and civilian law enforcement.

Additionally, the City of Minneapolis is claiming that in the next year, the city will be ~\$30 million in deficit and that it will be raising property taxes and cutting city services. A budget is not a morally neutral document - the city should not be prioritizing purchasing drones for the police when we have many more city services that actually help keep us safe and which are potentially going to become defunded or underfunded.

As the City of Minneapolis continues to work toward meaningful reform and accountability, we should be more cautious about investing in new surveillance technologies and programs before clear protections are in place. Everyone deserves to live and work in Wards 4 and 5 free from surveillance, and our communities cannot be a testing ground for the additional - and not yet known - risks and impacts this technology and program may have.

Given the potential for the misuse of drone technology by the MPD, we the undersigned demand that the City and the MCC reject the proposed DAFR.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

Minneapolis Ward 4 & 5 Petition for the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis City Council (MCC) to Reject Proposed “Drones as First Responders” (DAFR) Program

In May of 2026, Minneapolis Ward 4 Councilmember LaTrisha Vetaw initiated the process of considering a pilot program for "Drones as First Responders". The program would begin with a 75-day trial period offered by Skydio, a California-based producer of military-grade drone technology. The trial period drones would be housed in Precinct 4 (Ward 5). **A public hearing and comment period about the program will be held Wednesday July 8th at Minneapolis City Hall, at 1:30PM.**

We, the undersigned residents of North Minneapolis (roughly, Wards 4 & 5), do not trust the assurances of the MPD that drones would be limited strictly to emergency response and will not be repurposed for general surveillance. We do not trust that the MPD would hold itself to current local and state laws which govern and limit the use of drones. We demand that the City and the MCC reject the proposed DAFR program.

Given the historical expansion of surveillance infrastructure in Minneapolis and ongoing concerns about accountability, we do not believe current safeguards are sufficient to prevent misuse or mission creep. Without strong safeguards, transparency, and independent oversight, surveillance technologies can be used in ways that erode privacy, increase general public surveillance, and further damage community trust.

These concerns must also be understood in the context of the U.S. Dept of Justice (DOJ) findings regarding the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) ca. 2023. The DOJ documented patterns of conduct that undermined public trust and raised serious concerns about policing, accountability, and discrimination.

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Many of these concerns and issues were first documented by the MN Dept. of Human Rights. Given these realities, it is understandable why many Ward 4 residents are skeptical about expanding law enforcement surveillance capabilities through a DAFR program.

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As the City of Minneapolis continues to work toward meaningful reform and accountability, we should be more cautious about investing in new surveillance technologies and programs before clear protections are in place. Everyone deserves to live and work in Wards 4 and 5 free from surveillance, and our communities cannot be a testing ground for the additional - and not yet known - risks and impacts this technology and program may have.

Given the potential for the misuse of drone technology by the MPD, we the undersigned demand that the City and the MCC reject the proposed DAFR.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Relevant Sources:

<https://www.minnpost.com/metro/2026/05/public-safety-or-orwellian-trap-minneapolis-open-s-conversation-on-drones-as-first-responders/>

<https://investigate.afsc.org/company/skydio>

<https://kstp.com/kstp-news/top-news/minneapolis-faces-30m-budget-gap-higher-property-taxes-or-cuts-in-2027/>

https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-06/minneapolis_findings_report.pdf

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Broader Minneapolis Petition for the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis City Council (MCC) to Reject Proposed “Drones as First Responders” (DAFR) Program

In May of 2026, Minneapolis Ward 4 Councilmember LaTrisha Vetaw initiated the process of considering a pilot program for "Drones as First Responders". The program would begin with a 75-day trial period offered by Skydio, a California-based producer of military-grade drone technology. The trial period drones would be housed in Precinct 4 (Ward 5). **A public hearing and comment period about the program will be held Wednesday July 8th at Minneapolis City Hall, at 1:30PM.**

We, the undersigned, do not trust the assurances of the MPD that drones would be limited strictly to emergency response and will not be repurposed for general surveillance. We do not trust that the MPD would hold itself to current local and state laws which govern and limit the use of drones. We demand that the City and the MCC reject the proposed DAFR program.

Given the historical expansion of surveillance infrastructure in Minneapolis and ongoing concerns about accountability, we do not believe current safeguards are sufficient to prevent misuse or mission creep. Without strong safeguards, transparency, and independent oversight, surveillance technologies can be used in ways that erode privacy, increase general public surveillance, and further damage community trust.

These concerns must also be understood in the context of the U.S. Dept of Justice (DOJ) findings regarding the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) ca. 2023. The DOJ documented patterns of conduct that undermined public trust and raised serious concerns about policing, accountability, and discrimination.

The DOJ found that the MPD “unlawfully discriminates against Black people and Native American people in its enforcement activities, including the using of force following stops”, and that “along with the city, discriminates against people with behavioral health disabilities when responding to calls for assistance”.

Many of these concerns and issues were first documented by the MN Dept. of Human Rights. Given these realities, it is understandable why many Minneapolis residents are skeptical about expanding law enforcement surveillance capabilities through a DAFR program.

We are also concerned about the growing normalization of surveillance technologies in public life. Large corporations, including Minneapolis-based Target Corp., have played a role in shaping and supporting broader security and monitoring ecosystems in urban environments. While these systems are often justified as being “for public safety”, their expansion raises serious questions about privacy, data use, and long-term impacts on civil liberties.

The proposed Skydio partnership raises additional concerns which cannot be ignored or brushed aside. Skydio is a manufacturer of military-grade drones with substantial defense and government contracts with both the U.S. military and the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Residents are concerned about the increasing militarization of local policing tools, and the blurring of lines between military-grade technology and civilian law enforcement.

Additionally, the City of Minneapolis is claiming that in the next year, the city will be ~\$30 million in deficit and that it will be raising property taxes and cutting city services. A budget is not a morally neutral document - the city should not be prioritizing purchasing drones for the police when we have many more city services that actually help keep us safe and which are potentially going to become defunded or underfunded.

As the City of Minneapolis continues to work toward meaningful reform and accountability, we should be more cautious about investing in new surveillance technologies and programs before clear protections are in place.

Everyone deserves to live and work in Minneapolis free from surveillance, and our North Minneapolis neighborhoods cannot be a testing ground for the additional - and not yet known - risks and impacts this technology and program may have.

Given the potential for the misuse of drone technology by the MPD, we the undersigned demand that the City and the MCC reject the proposed DAFR.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Relevant Sources:

<https://www.minnpost.com/metro/2026/05/public-safety-or-orwellian-trap-minneapolis-open-s-conversation-on-drones-as-first-responders/>

<https://investigate.afsc.org/company/skydio>

<https://kstp.com/kstp-news/top-news/minneapolis-faces-30m-budget-gap-higher-property-taxes-or-cuts-in-2027/>

https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-06/minneapolis_findings_report.pdf

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 9:26:31 AM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/08/26, 9:23 AM

2026-0488

As a resident of Ward 4, I watched the recording of the presentation at the council member hearing and I support this trial drone program. It seems like it will be a great help for issues where a quick response time is critical. It also sounds like there will be transparency for the public to see what the drones are responding to and that is appreciated.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Meredith Aby
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 10:15:07 AM



Public Comment: Meredith Aby

Date: 07/08/26, 10:12 AM

My name is Meredith Aby. I'm the director of Women Against Military Madness and I have been a Mpls resident for 30 years.

Women Against Military Madness has been organizing against drones - both domestically and internationally- since 2012. We see them as weapons of war and mass surveillance and don't want them to be used to control and kill people at home or abroad. Drone attacks cause thousands of fatalities globally and are a leading cause of civilian casualties in wars. For example, in Sudan, over 80% of civilian deaths are caused by drones. WAMM activists have led protests in the Twin Cities and traveled to Camp Ripley in outstate MN and even to Boeing's corporate office in Chicago to protest the use and manufacturing of drones.

We do not support a contract with Skydio because they profit from the use of drones as weapons of war in Palestine. In fact the only reason Skydio is a large company which can afford to entice Mpls with a 75 day free trial is because they have made bank from killing Palestinians. Any contract with Skydio would be using tax payer dollars to support a company that not only sells its drones to apartheid Israel but we would be funding their R and D to make more drones and therefore more weapons. The people of Mpls do not want Skydio's blood on their hands. Passage of this proposal would completely contradict the 2024 city council resolution which called for a ceasefire in Gaza and supporting an end to tax dollars contributing to Israel's attacks.

We do not support the use of Skydio for a "drones as first responders" pilot program in Minneapolis. Our city is known throughout the world for the murder of George Floyd. Since his murder in 2020 the city of Mpls - including the mayor's office - has done virtually nothing to reign in killer cops. We cannot

give this police dept access to drones. Without community control of the police we have no reason to believe that they wouldn't use them to police black and brown communities. It would be completely irresponsible for Mpls City Council to give this police department any technology that could be used for surveillance on Mpls residents.

On behalf of the Women Against Military Madness we join with the Free Palestine Coalition in their call on the Public Health, Safety & Equity Committee of City Council to reject this proposal at today's hearing, and on the whole City Council reject this proposal entirely at any future votes. The City Council NOT entangle Minneapolis with any companies tied to genocide or to support the surveillance of the people of Minneapolis. Thank you.

Ward: Ward 12

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: LOren McGrail
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 10:27:54 AM



Public Comment: LOren McGrail

Date: 07/08/26, 10:25 AM

Sky Dio Contract

Minnesota Christians for a Free Palestine ask you to vote NO on contract with Sky Dio

Ward: Ward 9

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Christians for a Free Palestine
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 10:34:43 AM



Public Comment: Christians for a Free Palestine

Date: 07/08/26, 10:30 AM

Skydio contract with Minneapolis Police Department

Minnesota Christians for a Free Palestine ask you to vote No on Sky Dio contract

Ward: Ward 1

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Jaina Petrovich
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 10:37:25 AM



Public Comment: Jaina Petrovich

Date: 07/08/26, 10:35 AM

2026-0488

I strongly protest the proposed use of drones by the MPD to respond to certain calls. The MPD already has lost the trust of the community after it's collaboration with federal agents in attacking Twin Cities citizens for months. The last thing they deserve is to be given access to tools allowing them to spy on us with impunity. Cops throughout the nation when given access to tools like this quickly begin to abuse them. How long before we hear of an MPD officer using a drone to spy on an ex-partner, or someone they know? The people of our city are struggling, not the police, the funding for this program should be divested back to community programs that provide real benefits to citizens.

The company the city is considering partnering with also does business with Israel providing drones to the IDF to surveil their ongoing genocide of the Palestinians. It would be a grave sin and a stain on any city council member's reputation to vote to give city dollars to a company so soaked in the blood of innocents.

Ward: Ward 9

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Andrew Schumacher
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 10:44:02 AM



Public Comment: Andrew Schumacher

Date: 07/08/26, 10:41 AM

SkyDio Drone Program

Hi, thanks for reading my comment.

I am a homeowner in Minneapolis. I feel incredibly uncomfortable with corporate fascist technology being used inside our city.

I'm conceptually open-minded to the city of Minneapolis using drones or even AI monitoring and telemetry. I just don't accept that the data generated from these drones is going to SkyDio servers.

I just don't accept that corporate servers will store our day-to-day lives in Minneapolis. The next occupation will be even more brutal if this infrastructure is created for the fascists.

If Minneapolis had a municipal data center that was regulated by our locality, protected by our locality, then I would be very open-minded.

However, if the Minneapolis government thinks that they can give city tax money to a hardware manufacturer that was involved in the Gaza genocide then the city of Minneapolis can make a bad decision that I don't support. That I would be unwilling to support in the future. That it would consider every month's I pay my mortgage and taxes.

As of right now, I don't trust the city of Minneapolis to be a subject matter, expertise in aligned and governed AI systems. I don't trust Minneapolis in being complicit with authoritarian power projection. The city of Minneapolis failed when it's citizens had to pull the slack.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Carol Dungan
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 10:55:35 AM



Public Comment: Carol Dungan

Date: 07/08/26, 10:52 AM

Skidio Drones for MPD

Time after time, MPD had proven itself to be untrustworthy with the city's money and community. The very idea that we would enable further unwarranted surveillance and abuse of our community by supplying them drone capability is repulsive to every metric of a healthy city and democracy. The opportunities for this tech to be used to harass and stalk the public are already making national news. I oppose this contract in the strongest possible way.

Ward: Ward 12

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Shalee Cole Mauleón
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 11:39:30 AM



Public Comment: Shalee Cole Mauleón

Date: 07/08/26, 11:36 AM

2026-0488

Hello, my name is Shalee Cole Mauleón, I living in Ward 4, Representative Vetaw's ward. She has shared on Facebook the claims this company makes about the drones, as well as the insistance of this being a free pilot program with assurances against surveillance. I appreciate her sharing this information, but write to share my opposition to this program.

I do not trust he claims made by this company that this will not be used for surveillance of our community. I have seen police technology used in ward 4 and have not been made to feel safe by it. I think it is too easy for this technology to misused even for stated good purposes. At worst, I think it, the ai, and the humans using it will make mistakes that will target the innocent and harm our community members. At best, I believe that it will be a nuisance to our community.

I am also incredibly disturbed that this company has supplied similar drones to the IDF to help commit genocide against Palestinians. It has been well documented that the technology and training piloted by the IDF against Palestinians always comes back to the US to harm particularly Black and brown people in the United States.

This program really terrifies me, so I must urge the council and Representative Vetaw in particular to please vote against. I oppose this program for the high risk and potential for great harm it will cause our community. Please provide care, not drones to the Northside.

Thank you,
Shalee

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Deborah Fiscus
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 11:33:52 AM



Public Comment: Deborah Fiscus

Date: 07/08/26, 11:31 AM

Skydio

Skydio drones are a very bad idea.
Don't implement them

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Sean Fagan
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 11:27:37 AM



Public Comment: Sean Fagan

Date: 07/08/26, 11:22 AM

At best, the use of surveillance drones is unethical and only serves to enact unease. At worst, they will be used inappropriately to more heavily police minorities and oppressed members of society as a weapon. This is a shameful proposal. I would vote no to this if I had citizens to protect.

Ward:

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (2 entries)
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 1:45:27 PM



Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment: Kirby Crow

Date: 07/08/26, 1:43 PM

My name is Kirby (she/they/ey pronouns) and I am a Ward 6 constituent, a local community leader and proud third generation healthcare worker with experience in adult inpatient psychiatry, community services, case management and rehabilitation programs.

I'm concerned about the SkyDio proposal because it distracts us from the research-backed public safety initiatives our city desperately needs. It simply is big tech marketing a "big tech solution" for a capacity issue that requires real people with real expertise and professional experience. Especially when this "big tech solution" is a euphemism for militarized technology that is used in the genocide against Palestinians and to engage in surveillance of anti-fascist protestors.

Instead I want us to focus on police and public safety initiatives that we desperately need like a DV first responder program.

There was a DV incident while I was walking my dog in my Ward. Officers were 30 minutes late and the officer (due to burnout) immediately gave up after 5 minute conversation. While I was able to get a name, the victims relationship, build trust, the officer got nothing. We still are a city dealing with the police misconduct of Allison Lussier and

First Responders are healthcare professionals. AI will never be a first responder. A drone or any machine for that matter will never be a first responder. Say No to SkyDio. Say No to contracts with companies who profit off genocide. AND SAY YES to create a DV public safety program so the world doesn't lose any more precious lives like Allison Lussier and Mariah Samuels.

Thank you.

Ward: Ward 6

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

-

Public Comment: Nikolai

Date: 07/08/26, 1:43 PM

2026-00609

The Minneapolis Police Department must not be allowed to have access to new surveillance drones. The police have repeatedly abused their power, and should not be trusted with such power. These drones have been used to surveil anti ICE protesters. We do not need more surveillance in Minneapolis. If these drones are introduced, we will have even less privacy, and people's rights will be cracked down on even more. The MPD can not be trusted with these. The MPD are known for violating rights of the people of Minneapolis and can not be trusted with more surveillance power. A vote in favor of these drones is a vote against the wellbeing of the people of Minneapolis.

Ward: Ward 5

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 1:41:41 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/08/26, 1:38 PM

2026-0488

Use of drones represents an unnecessary gross and disgusting invasion of peace privacy and respect it is advised that the city not turn itself into a war zone bees nest of these offensive machines. Thank you.

Ward: Ward 5

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: (2 entries)
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 12:32:29 PM



Public Comment: (2 entries)

Public Comment: Joseph Conway

Date: 07/08/26, 12:31 PM

2026-00609 Contract with Skydio, Inc. for a drones-as-first-responder pilot program

Re: Contract with Skydio, Inc. for a drones-as-first-responder pilot program

I have very serious issues with this proposed program. AI powered surveillance drones pose significant concerns for privacy, civil liberties, and accountability. These systems enable widespread monitoring of individuals without their knowledge or consent, and these concerns are amplified when drones are used for policing. Minneapolis police have not yet earned enough community trust to be given these tools, particularly where there are histories of over-policing, racial disparities, or civil rights abuses. Introducing powerful surveillance technologies before establishing strong community confidence will only lead to further harm and potentially serve as another mechanism for unchecked monitoring rather than a tool for public safety. At the same time, surveillance drones do nothing to address the underlying issues of poverty and income inequality and would instead continue the practice of excessive surveillance of some of the city's poorest residents.

Furthermore, the financial incentives for private military tech companies like Skydio are to EXPAND the adoption of surveillance systems which will only encourage broader monitoring capabilities without regard for privacy, civil liberties, or community consent. We don't have enough information about how the tools operate, what data they collect, or how accuracy and bias are evaluated to honestly assess whether the benefits of this tech outweigh its potential for serious harm. It's easy to dismiss these concerns by saying that "Skydio will follow state data collection laws" but we know companies break the law every day. We cannot trust a company that has recently been walking back it's commitments to the safe use of its own tech: Skydio CEO Adam Bry

recently went on The Verge's Decoder podcast and made a statement distancing the company from their own previously published principles; principles that stated Skydio would not put weapons on their drones. This is not a company Minneapolis should be trusting with our safety.

Lastly, perhaps most importantly, this pilot is being proposed after Minneapolis was (and is still being) subjected to unprecedented violence at the hands of federal law enforcement, who are using AI powered surveillance tech to abuse and violate the civil rights Minnesotans. We can reasonably assume that Skydio, as a military drone technology company, will almost certainly roll over to the current administration and surrender access to sensitive data for the promise of future defense contracts. We cannot in good conscience hand over any amount of tax money, city data, or access to Skydio for the illusion of 'peace of mind'.

A contract with Skydio will not lead to a safer city and will instead put our community at risk for harm and abuse while eroding our civil rights. We can stop this intrusion of surveillance tech now by saying no to this program and by saying no to military tech companies like Skydio.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

-

Public Comment: Deborah Fiscus

Date: 07/08/26, 12:30 PM

Skydio

No to Skydio.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Emily
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 12:41:33 PM



Public Comment: Emily

Date: 07/08/26, 12:39 PM

2026-0488

I am appalled to hear that the city council is voting on whether to use drones from Skydio. How did this idea even come up before city council? this is preposterous.

Private citizens should not have a big government watching their every move.

It's time for the big government to stop treating us like inmates. we are supposed to have freedom.

the person who proposed this ought to feel ashamed.

Ward: Ward 4

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Jamie Tysseling
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 1:09:39 PM



Public Comment: Jamie Tysseling

Date: 07/08/26, 1:07 PM

2026-0488

I live across the river but spend plenty of time in Minneapolis; I'll be heavily reconsidering that if we're adding fleets of drones to the already overly large array of surveillance tools monitoring our every move. Please, don't be a pioneer in this.

Ward: I do not reside in Minneapolis

I don't know, share with all City Council

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From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Joanna
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 1:23:51 PM



Public Comment: Joanna

Date: 07/08/26, 1:20 PM

2026-00609, 2026-00488

I am very concerned about the Drones as first responders program and do not agree with it. Skydio is not a reputable company and I don't trust them with the safety of our communities.

This is in reference to LIMS 2026-00609 and 2026-00488. Please prioritize the safety and wellness of our communities and do not contract with Skydio.

Ward: Ward 6

I don't know, share with all City Council

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Public Comment

Row 15

Date Created	07/08/26 12:53 PM
Saved	☐
Name	
Issue/File	2026-0488
Comment	For the love of god PLEASE do not let the police use Skydio drones as first responders. If you need me to explain how terrible of an idea that is, we are already doomed.
Ward	
Meeting Type	City Council
Council Committee	I don't know, share with all City Council
Independent Body	
Board/Commission	
Created By	web-form@smartsheet.com
Modified	07/08/26 12:53 PM
Modified By	web-form@smartsheet.com

Public Comment

Row 10

Date Created	07/08/26 1:14 PM
Saved	☐
Name	Andrea Johnson
Issue/File	2026-0488
Comment	please do not use sky drones!!! Especially the same ones that are being used to slaughter Palestinians!!! RIDICULOUS THAT THIS IS EVEN BEING CONSIDERED!!!!
Ward	Ward 8
Meeting Type	City Council
Council Committee	I don't know, share with all City Council
Independent Body	
Board/Commission	
Created By	web-form@smartsheet.com
Modified	07/08/26 2:12 PM
Modified By	web-form@smartsheet.com

Public Comment

Row 16

Date Created	07/08/26 12:52 PM
Saved	☐
Name	Noggle Rachel
Issue/File	2026-0488
Comment	File number 2026-0488: do not vote to allow drones as first responders. This is ridiculous and won't provide greater safety. If officers want to use drones for missing persons in the woods, they can use them for that. Also stop forcing us to fund police toys and instead appropriate money for something that will improve the community. I don't need any more money going to cops sitting around in their cars all day watching movies on overtime....
Ward	Ward 10
Meeting Type	City Council
Council Committee	I don't know, share with all City Council
Independent Body	
Board/Commission	
Created By	web-form@smartsheet.com
Modified	07/08/26 12:52 PM
Modified By	web-form@smartsheet.com

From: [Grant Johnson via Smartsheet](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment:
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 1:38:16 PM



Public Comment:

Date: 07/08/26, 1:35 PM

As a resident of Ward 4 in North Minneapolis, I am voicing my adamant opposition to the proposed Skydio contract with the city (LIM# 2026-00609) and the use of drones as first responders pilot program (LIM# 2026-00488). For starters, a company so intimately involved in orchestrating the genocide of Palestinians has no place in our city. And the use of such technology to surveil our community in Northside shows a complete lack of humanity towards our residents.

I urge you to vote against both of these proposed plans.

Ward: Ward 4

Public Health, Safety & Equity (PHSE)

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From: [Sarah Heller](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Cc: [Payne, Elliott](#); [Ward 2](#); [Ward 3](#); [Vetaw, LaTrisha](#); [Warren, Pearl Y](#); [Osman, Jamal](#); [Shaffer, Elizabeth A](#); [Stevenson, Soren D](#); [Chavez, Jason](#); [Ward 10](#); [Whiting, Jamison](#); [Chowdhury, Aurin](#); [Palmisano, Linea](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DAFR Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 11:23:51 AM

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Good morning. The following comment is from my husband, Gabe Heller. He asked that I submit it on his behalf. We live in Camden (Ward 4).

See you soon.

I have lived in North for nearly 20 years. I have had people dump things illegally on my property, things as big as cars. So I am concerned with both illegal dumping and chop shops. But the solution to these problems are not drones, certainly not police drones. The solution to these problems is the police getting off their duffs and doing their jobs for once.

The last time someone dumped a car in my yard and I called the police, they showed up, shone a spotlight in my eyes and yelled at me "this better be stolen or else it's your responsibility." Those are not the words or actions of a policeman who would be willing to stake out an illegal chop shop or serial dumper in order to catch them in the act, as we would hope they would. Those are not the words and actions of a man who I want to have access to a drone. That is not a man who would use that drone to catch the people who are illegally dumping stuff in my yard. That is a man who will use that drone to catch me not mowing my lawn during "No Mow May" and call his buddy in City Inspections to make sure I get fined for it. Those are the words of a man who solves problems by killing the messenger.

The problem with the Minneapolis Police is not that they don't have drones. The problem is that they don't trust the citizens of Minneapolis. They don't trust me. And I don't trust them either. My experience is that most of the time, when I call them, they don't show up, and if they do, they don't solve the problem I called them about, in fact they're liable to make it worse or cause even more problems. And people wonder why Northsiders don't call the police at the drop of a hat like folks in some other neighborhoods do. And sure we have a consent decree that is supposed to solve that eventually, but until it IS solved I do not want the police that I have dealt with in this city to have access to drones.

And if boots on the ground is just not a practical way to solve these problems and the only solution is increased surveillance, I want that surveillance placed in the hands of the community, so we can decide what is a problem serious enough that solving it is worth sharing our information with the police.

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

From: [Liz Opp](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Cc: [Payne, Elliott](#); [Ward 2](#); [Ward 3](#); [Vetaw, LaTrisha](#); [Warren, Pearl Y](#); [Osman, Jamal](#); [Shaffer, Elizabeth A](#); [Stevenson, Soren D](#); [Chavez, Jason](#); [Ward 10](#); [Whiting, Jamison](#); [Chowdhury, Aurin](#); [Palmisano, Linea](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written statement: Against proposal to use drones as First Responders (File 2026-0048 ??)
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 8:11:10 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lizopp@proton.me. [Learn why this is important](#)

My name is Elizabeth (Liz) Oppenheimer. I use she/her and they/them as pronouns. I live in a racially diverse, age diverse, and class diverse neighborhood, at 4252 Oliver Ave N, in Ward 4, a part of the city of Minneapolis with one of the densest populations of Black and Brown residents. On my block are at least 4 BIPOC households.

For the record, I and everyone with whom I have communicated directly about this proposal have reported that no one asked if we wanted a drones program for first responders. No one I have interacted with ever even heard that such a program was being proposed until about two weeks ago.

I am strongly **against the concept of using drones as first responders**, especially drones from a company that currently uses them for military operations. When will the militarization of our city's police draw down for good?

Regardless of zip code, ancestral home, immigration status, social class background, or station in society, we all deserve to feel safe in Minneapolis, relying on how it is that **we define safety for ourselves**, not by elected officials or developers. We deserve to be treated with dignity, again as we define it; to have our privacy protected as we go about our lives; and to trust that the City of Minneapolis, its employees, its police department, and its City Council will honor agreements and contracts made in good faith.

Summary of reasons I am against using drones as first responders:

1. **Unequal comparisons** to other cities already using the technology
2. **Lack of trust** with MPD in general
3. **Past record of MPD's misuse of technology**
4. Current and recent **issues with technology** like the Apple Watch and Amazon's Ring doorbell cameras, especially regarding facial recognition technology
5. The **consent decree** and disconcerting items in a recent summary of the City's court enforceable agreement
6. **Columbia Heights' recent unanimous vote** by its City Council to cancel its contract with Flock due to privacy concerns
7. **False sense of urgency**
8. **Funds need to be directed to restore social safety nets** impacted by federal cuts and federal withholding of funds for Medicaid, SNAP, rent relief, childcare, health insurance, and more.

I have heard the argument and rationale that programs for Drones as First

Responders are already used successfully in other cities across the US, including in the greater Twin Cities metro area. Well, those cities don't have the history that Minneapolis does: the Jamar Clarks, the Terrance Franklins, the George Floyds. Other cities don't have their police departments operating under a consent decree. Other cities haven't had peaceful protesters surveilled by their city's police department using technology outside of the confines of contracts and beyond the original mission and intent of the technology.

I became interested in the police and in their right use of technology when there was growing interest in using body cameras as a way to record the interactions between officers and the community members they were sworn to protect. So I went to a public hearing about 10 or 12 years ago of this very same committee back then, my first at City Hall meeting, back when I lived in south Minneapolis and Andrew Johnson was my city councilmember.

During that hearing, I was surrounded by uniformed officers who had guns holstered and legible name badges pinned on their shirts. Some were having quiet conversations right next to me. That's when I heard one officer say to another officer, "They're going to give us body cameras and we will just break them." I made sure to look at the name badge of the officer as my mind scrambled to think who I could talk to...

I was stunned by what I had heard. I still am, just by recalling that exchange.

Somehow I found my way to Andrew Johnson's office and told him. He and I brainstormed who else should know about this comment and the officer who had made it. Ultimately, I spoke to an attorney and to the deputy police chief at the time, Medaria Arradondo. Later I learned that the officer had been disciplined, though I don't know to what extent.

Police officers and 911 dispatchers have broken my trust and that of the community over and over again. Peaceful protesters in Minneapolis, including friends of mine, have been harassed, arrested, or charged because police have illegally and unethically used technology to surveil them, as reported by MIT's Technology Review and its investigative series, especially in the wake of George Floyd's murder. MIT's Technology Review has an article with this quote:

<<The [advanced technology tools and] system spread far beyond the confines of its publicly declared mission, and gathered personal data on journalists and demonstrators. And it's not going anywhere: by all indications, the system is built to last.>>

Makes my stomach turn.

(See: <https://www.technologyreview.com/supertopic/secret-police-surveillance-investigation-minnesota/>)

Another story: Within a few months of moving into my north Minneapolis home, neighbors pled with a 911 dispatcher and insisted they send a mental health crisis unit to where a Black man who was hitting himself with a brick. 911 could not do that. Neighbors insisted that since the police had to go to the scene, they would need to arrive with their guns in their holsters; they would need to be told that witnesses were not afraid for their safety; and the police should also know that a number of us would be using our phones to videotape the encounter. Think about that, how little trust in the police did most of the residents and witnesses have, not trusting quote unquote "peace officers" to do the right thing and to treat this man with dignity and respect?

Given these first hand experiences that I've had, and that others in this room have had, why in the name of our Black and Brown neighbors would we be okay with entrusting the MPD and other city officials with even more technology--militarized technology-- that could lead to greater harm?

I have two other points of deep concern:

1. Current and recent limitations with technology:

Like the Apple Watch that initially **could not accurately take measurements from a Black or Brown person's skin**, and like Amazon's Ring doorbell cameras that **stepped over the line regarding facial data privacy** when scanning faces, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2026/06/04/amazon-ring-lawsuit-facial-data-privacy/90404040007/> there is research that points to how facial recognition technology, like what might be used in drones that are dispatched to troublesome scenes, **"routinely perform worse when attempting to detect Black and brown faces."**

(sources: <https://www.mozillafoundation.org/en/blog/facial-recognition-bias/> and <https://defendernetwork.com/news/ai-bias-black-community/>)

My question is this:

- ***Why would Minneapolis pursue technology that gets things wrong because of racial bias built into the programming, and yet have human first responders trust it and implement it anyway?***

2. It seems that the consent decree between the Minnesota Dept of Human Rights and the City of Minneapolis mirrors concerns that are illuminated by way of the proposal to use drones as first responders. A few years ago, the MN Dept of Human Rights held focus groups within the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) and among community members across Minneapolis. One of the findings was that, quote, **"MPD officers shared they lack confidence in and/or are frequently frustrated by MPD's information and technology systems."**

It stands to reason that the police department's confidence in technology and new systems isn't going to be built by bringing in more technology.

Another finding from parallel focus groups with community members is this:
"Community members want MPD to move ... to a culture that prioritizes humanity... and [they] want MPD to prioritize building relationships."

It stands to reason that a move toward a culture that prioritizes humanity and relationships won't occur with military-style drones--or with any technology or devices that are deployed without the clear consent of residents, especially those in neighborhoods that have historically been targeted by police; and a lack of confidence in technology isn't addressed by bringing in more technology.

(Source: <https://mn.gov/mdhr/mpd/agreement/>)

My additional question is this:

- ***Why would putting even more technology into the care and responsibility of the police be a good idea, before there are more independent reviews about how things are going with the existing consent decree, and before learning if community trust is being earned by the police department's actions? Wouldn't that be putting the technological cart before the proverbial horse?*** (<https://mn.gov/mdhr/mpd/agreement/>)

To whit: Columbia Heights City Hall recently voted unanimously to remove the Flock cameras from their city because of privacy concerns.

(Source: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2026/06/09/columbia-heights-city-council-votes-end-flock-safety-camera-contract>)

I also have a concern about if a false sense of urgency may be driving this desire to use drones as first responders. To me, catching someone dumping trash, leaves, or snow illegally, or doing "illegal" auto repair doesn't need police and first responders. **It needs neighbors talking with neighbors to intervene; it needs better city services and a change in culture that respects everyone's dignity and sense of caring for one another and our property.** Nuisance activities don't need police to charge, detain, or arrest people engaging in those activities. I called the city to ask what I should do when I saw trash dumped in my alley; I wasn't going to call the police or expect a drone to be dispatched. And monitoring vacant buildings doesn't need a drone; vacant buildings can be rehabbed and turned into public or affordable housing, especially for our unhoused neighbors who have hit upon increasingly difficult times.

Funds don't need to be poured into a department that has broken so many of our trust and belief in them. We need funds to address the needs of Minneapolis residents who have seen their Medicaid cut, their SNAP benefits evaporate, their rental rates go sky high, their healthcare costs and grocery costs inflate where parents have to choose between paying for food or paying for rent. The list goes on.

I'll repeat myself: I was initially interested in the right use of technology, and I very quickly learned, with an hour or two of internet-based research, that police officers often sought ways to undermine the technology or resist its implementation--until they learned how they could **expand** its use **and get away with it.**

Let's not drone on about all of this: No drones in Minneapolis!!

TO BE CLEAR -- I have no distrust of the Fire Department. If they were to use the technology for their own needs, I'd have more empathy for and more confidence in using the de-militarized technology to address fires and searching for missing people. But **putting drone technology into the care of police when they already have proved to have overstepped and misused or abused tech before is immoral and unjust.**

I say No drones in Minneapolis!

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth A Oppenheimer
4252 Oliver Ave N.
Ward 4 resident

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the City of Minneapolis. Please exercise caution when opening links or attachments.

Transformational changes

The court enforceable agreement requires the City and Minneapolis Police Department to make transformational changes to **address race-based policing**.

As shown in the graphic, this transformational change requires a **culture of continuous learning based on humanity and civil rights**. This foundation is essential for creating and enforcing clear policies, training on those policies, and providing community members and officers with transparent assessments of enforcement practices and outcomes.

An **independent team** will support the City and MPD, monitor their progress, engage with community members and police officers, and provide public reports.

The agreement can **only be terminated by the court** when the City and MPD have reached full, effective, and sustained compliance with the terms in the agreement.



The agreement contains many provisions that are **based on what Minneapolis community members and MPD officers shared** during extensive engagement conducted by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.



What community members shared

Throughout the summer of 2022, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights worked with the Minnesota Justice Research Center to organize events across Minneapolis, including events with those most impacted by race-based policing.

Summary:

*

- Community members want MPD to move away from a culture of violence to a culture that prioritizes humanity.

*

- Community members want MPD to prioritize building relationships.
- Community members want the City and MPD to be held accountable.

What police officers shared

In August 2022, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights worked with 21 CP Solutions to hold a total of 15 focus groups at all MPD precincts with officers of all ranks and assignments.

Summary:

- MPD officers say that they receive too little guidance and training on policies that are overly long and convoluted – which leads to misunderstanding, confusion, and concern.
- MPD officers want more comprehensive health and wellness programs and services.
- MPD officers shared they lack confidence in and/or are frequently frustrated by MPD's information and technology systems.

*



<https://www.technologyreview.com/supertopic/secret-police-surveillance-investigation-minnesota/>

The Secret Police: A new era of law enforcement

This investigative series from MIT Technology Review offers an unprecedented look at the way local and federal law enforcement employed advanced technology tools to create a surveillance system for monitoring protests in the Minneapolis metro area in the wake of George Floyd's murder. The system spread far beyond the confines of its publicly declared mission, and gathered personal data on journalists and demonstrators. And it's not going anywhere: by all indications, the system is built to last. It's a sign of how technology is changing policing, making anonymous protesting—a key protected component of the right to free speech in the United States—increasingly hard to maintain.



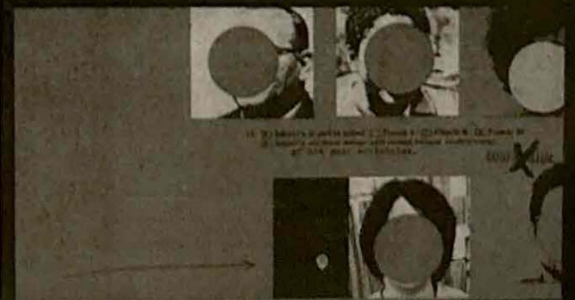
Minneapolis police used fake social media profiles to surveil Black people



A private security group regularly sent Minnesota police misinformation about protestors



After protests around George Floyd's murder ended, a police system for watching protestors kept going



Inside the app Minnesota police used to collect data on journalists at protests

usatoday.com



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NATION

Amazon sued over Ring facial recognition, plaintiffs seeking \$5M



Michelle Del Rey

USA TODAY

June 4, 2026 Updated June 24, 2026, 2:28 p.m. ET

Overall, the FTC will send Ring refunds via PayPal to more than 117,000 consumers who had certain types of Ring devices, including indoor cameras, the agency said in a press release. The settlement also requires Ring to delete videos it should not have in its possession and establish a more robust privacy and security program.

Here's everything you need to know about the \$5.6 million Amazon Ring settlement, including information about the claim form, how to find out if you're eligible to get a refund, and more.

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A private security group regularly sent Minnesota police misinformation about protestors

After protests around George Floyd's murder ended, a police system for watching protesters kept going



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Oppenheimer

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NATION

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Michelle Del Rey

USA TODAY

June 4, 2026

Updated June 24, 2026, 2:28 p.m. ET

Oppenheimer

classaction.org

Overall, the FTC will send Ring refunds via PayPal to more than 117,000 consumers who had certain types of Ring devices, including indoor cameras, the agency said in a press release. The settlement also requires Ring to delete videos it should not have in its possession and establish a more robust privacy and security program.

Here's everything you need to know about the \$5.6 million Amazon Ring settlement, including information about the claim form, how to find out if you're eligible to get a refund, and more.

Oppenheimer



Written Testimony Sheet

Subject: <u>Skydio antproposal</u>	Date: <u>7/8/2026</u>
	Time: <u>3:15pm</u>

Use the blank area below for your written comments, or submit comments at:
minneapolismn.gov/publiccomment

Name: Becca Andreassen, wards, Jordan

Pearl Warner

Comment: Surveillance is a tool of authoritarianism,
and drones are weapons of war. Surveillance
doesn't provide safety, and weapons don't bring peace.
We can't afford to give the police dept. more
fancy toys or anything more than their mandated
35% of the city budget. We need investment
in our neighborhood, in the well-being of
our people. We need boarded homes fixed up,
slumlords evicted, commercial properties restored
and made available at rates NoAussies can afford.
We need healthy food and warm homes. We need
activities and opportunities for people of all ages.
We need conflict resolution support. My neighbors →

These comments will be included in the public record. Only include information that you are comfortable making public.

and I aren't criminals. We're not on the wrong side of that imagined blue line. Stop treating us like it, and stop believing that new policing technology will be used in any way other than to maintain white supremacy.

I arrived today not even knowing that this contract involves yet another surveillance company with complicity in Israel's ~~gross~~ one-sided, genocidal war, and who sells drones for federal immigration enforcement. I am Jewish. I grew up hearing my family's Holocaust story, and I say Never Again. I do not want a single penny of my city's funds, my tax dollars funding ethnic cleansing here or abroad.



Written Testimony Sheet

Subject: Skydio Contract	Date: 7/8/26
	Time:

Use the blank area below for your written comments, or submit comments at:
minneapolis.mn.gov/publiccomment

Name: Anne Perkins

Comment: I appreciate the arguments about how this could benefit ^{city residents} by preventing police escalation of volatile scenarios, but I remain extremely concerned about privacy.

Our current federal government has actively sought to abuse state systems. They are attempting to access voter rolls. What will prevent them from attempting to obtain ~~more~~ the data collected by these drones? Why do we believe this is a best solution? I do not.

These comments will be included in the public record. Only include information that you are comfortable making public.



Written Testimony Sheet

Subject: <u>Skydio Drone Implementation</u>	Date: <u>7/8/2026</u>
	Time: <u>1:33pm</u>

Use the blank area below for your written comments, or submit comments at:

minneapolismn.gov/publiccomment

Name: Al Longtime - Ward 7

Comment: Regarding the City of Minneapolis deliberation on whether or not to implement a free trial of Skydio drones: I am strongly opposed. The concept of a legal right to privacy has been so eroded over the past 3 decades, such that it is laughable to invoke it, but individuals should be able to feel safe + free from scrutiny in their communities. Whirling autonomous drones showing up to the scene of a person in distress is far from a comforting sight. It is not a de-escalating presence. Our police department does not need any help in being threatening ~~to everyone~~. They do that well enough on their own. My question is: what level of visual surveillance is enough? At what point do we say "we can see all we need to see"? We can stop moving new cameras in now! if the answer is "when crime goes down" then we could start somewhere simpler investing in education, and housing services for the unhoused homeless. Somewhere with deeper long-term reward than the \$150,000 investment in these drones could ever return. Minnesota police departments that utilize drones as tools of surveillance have increasingly deployed them without proper warrants, indicating a reluctance on this technology without proper respect for due process.

streaming access to private spaces is a fast track to abuse of power.

Thank you.

These comments will be included in the public record. Only include information that you are comfortable making public.



Written Testimony Sheet

Subject: <u>Vote NO for MPD's Skydio Program</u>	Date: <u>7/8/26</u>
	Time: <u>1:40 pm</u>

Use the blank area below for your written comments, or submit comments at:

minneapolismn.gov/publiccomment

Name: Cathy Storer

Comment: I stand with Minnesota Christians for a Free
Palestine against the Minneapolis Police Dept's trial program
with Israeli drone supplier Skydio.

Our tax dollars should not be used for this kind of
surveillance and the connection to the Palestinian
Genocide is unacceptable. Vote "NO" against these
spy drones + STOP The Genocide!

These comments will be included in the public record. Only include information that you are comfortable making public.



Written Testimony Sheet

Subject: SKYdio Drone Implementation	Date: 7/8/2026
	Time: 1:42pm

Use the blank area below for your written comments, or submit comments at:

minneapolismn.gov/publiccomment

Name: Jayden Comella

Comment: Even without the distrust in policing in Minneapolis, the implementation of drones could only have a furthering disastrous affect on community in this city. Outside of policing, we have only seen further distrust in AI and tech on communities across the nation and in our backyard from FLOCK camera misuse ~~and~~ to data center lies, over consumption and water poisoning. Coupling these distrusts and historic misuses spells out one certainty for SKYdio Drone implementation: Abuse. We say no to drones.

These comments will be included in the public record. Only include information that you are comfortable making public.



Written Testimony Sheet

Subject: <u>Surveillance</u>	Date: <u>07/08/2026</u>
	Time: <u>2:15 pm</u>

Use the blank area below for your written comments, or submit comments at:

minneapolismn.gov/publiccomment

Name: Benjamin Verhasselt

Comment: _____

Aerial drones would be a horrendous presence
for the city and its residents.

(612)-601-9418

These comments will be included in the public record. Only include information that you are comfortable making public.