

**CIVIC CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
AGENDA REPORT**

**MEETING DATE:** 12/15/2022  
**AGENDA HEADING:** Regular Business

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**AGENDA DESCRIPTION:**

Receive a presentation from LA County Fire Department on its proposal to locate a helopod at the Ken Dyda Civic Center

**RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE ACTION:**

1. Receive a presentation from LA County Fire Department on its proposal to locate a helopod at the Ken Dyda Civic Center; and,
2. If deemed acceptable, direct Staff to incorporate the helopod in the preliminary site plan for the City Council's consideration.

**STAFF COORDINATOR:** Matt Waters, Senior Administrative Analyst 

**ATTACHED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

- A. June 21, 2022 CalWater Email (Page A-1)
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**BACKGROUND:**

The helipad on the Civic Center site is regularly used by the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) for exercises and for emergency situations. It is a designated LACFD helispot. Firefighting helicopters land there to fill up with water from a hydrant located approximately 300 feet away which requires hoses to be laid across the Civic Center ingress/egress road.

Cal Water has a Firefighter Grant Program that is dedicated to fire departments serving Cal Water's service areas to offset costs associated with fire protection efforts, equipment, training, and education. In 2021, Cal Water awarded grant funding to the Los Angeles County Fire Department for a helopod to be located on the Palos Verdes Peninsula to improve LACFD's firefighting capabilities by improving the efficiency of filling helicopters with water. The LACFD has reached out to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes to explore two potential locations; the Civic Center or the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School playing fields near Ladera Linda (Attachment A). The existing helipad at the Civic Center site makes it an attractive location.

The Civic Center Advisory Committee, at the request of LACFD, is being asked to determine whether the proposed helopod should be recommended to be added to the programming for the Civic Center for the City Council's consideration. LACFD would like to place the helopod at the Civic Center site in the near future with City Council approval as well as have the helopod be included in the long-term site programming.

## **DISCUSSION:**

LACFD approached the City earlier in the year seeking to locate the proposed helopod at the Civic Center because of its close proximity to the helipad. LACFD was informed that the programming for the Civic Center was completed and accepted by the City Council, and a preliminary site plan was being developed based on the Council-approved program. Understanding the importance the helopod would have for fire suppression, Staff expressed concerns with the overall appearance and aesthetics of it on the overall site, and noted that the City Council would have to make the final decision. LACFD indicated the helopod was already purchased with the grant funds and the funding was awarded specifically for the helopod.

A helopod is essentially a metal water container that can be accessed by a helicopter hovering over it. The proposed helopod weighs 4,600 pounds when empty and has a carrying capacity of 4,800 gallons of water. Its dimensions are 16' L x 8' W x 7'-5" H. It is wheeled and can be moved by a pickup truck with a tilt trailer. A concrete pad is recommended so the helopod does not settle into the ground. The helopod has a valve and can be refilled from the nearest hydrant or water source.

Below is a video link showing a helicopter filling up at a helopod during the 2022 Laguna Beach fire. Helicopters performed 136 helopod fills and dropped 37,900 gallons of water on May 11-12, 2022.

[Video - Coulson 3,000 gallon Chinook hover filling on Laguna Beach Fire HeloPod](#)

Below are pictures of an LACFD fire-fighting helicopter refueling at a helopod and closeups of helopods.







Below is LACFD's proposed location for the helopod at the Ken Dyda Civic Center-shown in red to the east of the existing helipod.



Representatives from LACFD will be available to answer any questions at the December 15 CCAC meeting.

### CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends the CCAC receive the presentation, and after reviewing the information provided, determine whether the Civic Center Master Plan should accommodate the proposed helopod and forward a recommendation to the City Council for its consideration at a future meeting.

**From:** Gilbride, Angie <agilbride@calwater.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 21, 2022 2:19 PM  
**To:** Ara Mhuranian <AraM@rpvca.gov>  
**Cc:** Baeza, Agustin <ABaeza@calwater.com>  
**Subject:** HeloPod information  
**Importance:** High

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes.**

Hi Ara,

We sincerely apologize for the delay in getting this information to you. Tammie has been swamped with drought-related projects but we hope this is everything that you requested. I believe you have some of this but please let us know if there is additional information that would help you. We would truly appreciate the opportunity to present before the Committee for the chairs to hear directly from the Fire Department about the importance of this equipment.

Angie

**Specifications - Size and weight of the HeloPod - (with built-in Fill Valve and Float)**

Grant provided by Cal Water to LA County Fire Department

Dimensions: 16' L x 8' W x 7'-5" Tall Rolling on (4) Steel 10" wheels

Capacity: 4,600 Gallons

Weight (Empty): 4,800 lbs

Weight (Full): 43,000 lbs. (HeloPod + Water)

NOTE: It can be moved and towed by a regular CDL holder and using an F-250 or larger Pick-up using a Tilt Trailer. It can also be transported by any Flat Bed Wrecker or Trash Bin Truck company.

Concrete is suggested for the Pad as eventually the four corner wheels will sink into the Dirt or non compacted Millings down on to the Rails when and bury the drain it is full. Without the concrete while draining the tank the Millings or Dirt can be tunneled or burrowed and cause erosion.

**Pad Option #1: Hard Packed / Sun Baked and already level Clay Dirt** - When water is poured onto the Soil it doesn't create Mud?? Example: For the Laguna Beach Dip Site we just rolled off the HeloPod and connected the Fire Hose and they had a working safe Dip Site in 15 minutes!. After 18 months they are placing Concrete.

**Pad Option #2:** Concrete Pad 12' x 20' x 8" Thick with Rebar

**Pad Option #3:** Concrete Strips (2) 3' Wide by 20' L x 8" Thick with Rebar

**Safety Items:**

Dust Control is needed to be considerate to neighbors surrounding the Dip Site. It 's also critical to the Pilots for visibility. If your Site is already level and has hard packed / sun baked dirt like

Laguna Beach site you can just do to Pad. But most commonly it is accomplished by using either of two materials: *[See Video's Below]*

Video - Coulson 3,000 gallon Chinook hover filling on Laguna Beach Fire HeloPod

Video - LADWP -LAFD Chatsworth 1st Hover Fills of HeloPod#2 by Ericson Skycrane

Thank you for your help!

**Tammie Myers**

Interim Lead Conservation Coordinator

California Water Service

424-399-9703 Mobile



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This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL. Stop and think before clicking a link or opening attachments.

Good morning Bill,

The City Council and the Emergency Preparedness Committee are in receipt of your email.

The City has been discussing a helopod with the Fire Chief and CalWater. CalWater has obtained a grant to install a helopod on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and have reached out to Rancho Palos Verdes to explore potential locations. We will continue to discuss this with CalWater and the LACFD.

Thank you,  
Ara Mihranian  
City Manager

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Bill Ward <[bill@pumpodusa.com](mailto:bill@pumpodusa.com)>

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2022, 11:54:20 AM -0700

Subject: HeloPod - Critical Asset during the Coastal Fire

To: David Bradley <[david.bradley@rpvca.gov](mailto:david.bradley@rpvca.gov)>, Donald Campbell

<[donald.campbell@rpvca.gov](mailto:donald.campbell@rpvca.gov)>, Larry Maizlish <[larry.maizlish@rpvca.gov](mailto:larry.maizlish@rpvca.gov)>, City Council