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Urban Air Mobility Policy Priorities for 2021
Proposed Executive Actions for the First 100 Days
of the Biden-Harris Administration

In January 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration will have a significant opportunity to advance the adoption of new aviation technologies that add to our transportation solutions, reduce congestion along heavily burdened corridors, and demonstrate U.S. leadership in sustainable aviation technologies and innovation. Together these innovations unlock a new industry that can spur regional growth and U.S. jobs creation.

The Commercial Drone Alliance (CDA)[1] has identified several concrete actions the White House and Executive Branch can take on Day 1 or within the first 100 days of 2021 that will ensure America's continued leadership in aviation innovation and facilitate the development of Urban Air Mobility ("UAM") technology in the U.S. and shape the global policy and regulatory approach.

Electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft (eVTOL) and other emerging clean-fuel aircraft technologies promise many benefits, including but not limited to:

- Reducing passenger travel times, surface congestion and overall transportation emissions through air taxi passenger flights in urban centers
- Connecting smaller communities to urban centers through new regional air mobility and complementing existing surface transportation systems by providing linkages to transit and intercity rail facilities
- Promoting economic development and local jobs through greater use of existing heliports and airports
- Improving mobility by integrating existing transit and regional commuter systems into multi-modal and multi-dimensional transportation platforms
- Additional applications including supporting emergency response during natural disaster emergencies and supplementing package delivery applications

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[1] The CDA is an independent non-profit organization led by key leaders in the commercial drone industry. The CDA brings together commercial drone end-users, manufacturers, service providers, advanced air mobility companies, drone security companies, and vertical markets including oil and gas, precision agriculture, construction, security, communications technology, infrastructure, newsgathering, filmmaking, and more. The CDA works with all levels of government to collaborate on policies for industry growth and seeks to educate the public on the safe and responsible use of commercial drones to achieve economic benefits and humanitarian gains. Learn more at www.commercialdronealliance.org.

Executive Branch actions that promote U.S. investment and leadership in UAM will advance a growing U.S. industry and sustain U.S. leadership in aviation. CDA recommends the following focused executive branch initiatives to continue to drive this innovation.

Establish UAM Leadership & Governance

To enhance accountability and promote innovation, the Administration should immediately:

- **Create FAA Leadership Position and Office Dedicated to Urban Air Mobility**. Immediately establish an executive-level leadership position and office with responsibility for promoting UAM policy development and addressing UAM-specific considerations including aircraft and operator certification pathways, battery standards, infrastructure standards, airspace integration and management, and community engagement.

- **Prioritize UAM activities within the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)**. Appoint a dedicated UAM Senior Advisor within OSTP to act as a liaison between industry and federal agency UAM leads. Create regular forums to advance public-private partnership initiatives.

- **Establish UAM Advisory Panel for DOT.** Direct the Secretary of Transportation to assemble a UAM Advisory Panel composed of a diverse group of industry, local, state and Federal stakeholders to examine the state of the industry, identify gaps in relevant policy/regulations, and make recommendations on ways DOT can advance progress.

- **Pursue Public-Private Partnerships and Flexible Regulatory Pathways**. Demonstrate continued commitment to U.S. investment and leadership in emerging aviation technologies through industry-government collaboration. Advance UAS/UAM integration in the National Airspace System through support for initiatives such as the U.S. Air Force's Agility Prime.

- **Demonstrate Leadership in Global Aviation.** Appoint a U.S. representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to demonstrate global leadership in developing standardized and harmonized approaches for airspace and infrastructure.

Support Infrastructure Development

Especially in the era of COVID-19, the Administration can spur job growth in state and local communities, and support the UAM/aviation industry, by taking the following steps:

- **Expand Federal Financing Eligibility to Aviation.** Expand Transportation Infrastructure Financing Improvement Act (TIFIA) financing program eligibility to airports, cities and developers seeking to build out physical infrastructure to support UAM operations.

- **Promote R&D by Enabling eVTOL Aircraft Testing at Federal Facilities**. Sponsor access to FAA, NASA and DOD flight test facilities for eVTOL aircraft test programs to unlock data collection and research opportunities.

- **Launch a National Vertiport Demonstration Challenge**. Establish a National UAM Vertiport Development Challenge through a joint FAA-industry-localities working group that supports early identification of sites and the development of prototype vertiport facilities through a competitive process.

- **Provide Grant Funding for Innovative Multi-Modal Infrastructure Projects**. Expand the US DOT's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development ("BUILD") discretionary grant program (previously the TIGER grant program) eligibility to support State and local innovative multi-modal infrastructure projects that would provide facilities to serve transit, commuter rail, and/or intercity rail, and air transportation in a combined facility. Consider a specific carve out of annual BUILD awards to support multi-modal advanced aerial mobility projects (passenger or freight) to enable UAS infrastructure.

- **Ensure Data Communications Access**. Support the safe and scalable integration of UAM into the National Airspace through equitable access to both refarmed and new Spectrum licenses.

- **Fund FAA eVTOL Noise Research**. Resource and initiate collaborative research to define appropriate noise metrics and methodologies for use in assessing community impacts associated with electric aircraft.

- **Grow U.S. UAM Manufacturing Capabilities and the Supply Chain System**. In an effort to put Americans back to work and promote American competitiveness, the White House should work with NASA, DOD, DOT, FAA, DOC and other agencies to grow and fast-track UAM manufacturing capabilities in the United States. Relatedly, in order to stimulate the UAM marketplace, the White House should support NASA's ongoing efforts to build a reliable U.S. UAM supply chain system and to identify gaps and vulnerabilities in the current supply chain system for unmanned vehicles, as well as downstream components. Collaboration between the federal government and industry on these important issues is critical to open the industry safely and securely.

Invest in Future UAM Workforce

To create good-paying jobs here in the United States and support the workforce, the Administration should:

- **Promote STEM Programs in Emerging Aviation Technologies**. Promote STEM initiatives focused on UAM infrastructure, battery technology, vertical flight, autonomy, and more to advance interest in emerging technologies and provide diverse workforce opportunities.

Institute UAM Safety Standards

Safety is always paramount when promoting innovation. To that end, the Administration should work right away to:

- **Implement Recommendations on Safety Management Systems (SMS).** Implement recommendations of the Special Committee Report on Aircraft Certification that were delivered to the Secretary of U.S. DOT earlier this year.[2] Establish a formal mechanism for government-industry collaboration to develop voluntary safety programs specific to UAM based on those that have delivered proven safety benefits to traditional aviation operations.

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[2] https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2020-01/scc-final-report.pdf