



City of Denton

City Hall
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, Texas
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AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Department of Development Services

ACM: Kenneth Hedges

DATE: June 8, 2026

SUBJECT

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding a new land use category related to unmanned aerial vehicles (“drones”).

BACKGROUND

At the February 23, 2026, Development Code Review Committee (DCRC) meeting, Staff introduced the Table of Allowed Uses, Use Specific Standards, and Definitions Sections of the Denton Development Code (DDC) topic, and discussed areas of the Code proposed to be refined as part of this amendment. As part of this ongoing topic, Staff is bringing forward a discussion item to incorporate a new use into the DDC: unmanned aerial vehicles (“drones”).

The proposed use would encompass several types of unmanned aerial vehicles, more commonly referred to as drones, not clearly classified elsewhere in the DDC. Commercial Drone delivery has become increasingly popular over the last several years, leading to a rise in the number of inquiries the City receives regarding the installation of drone equipment and infrastructure on-site at various retailers for delivery service purposes. Currently, there are two drone delivery services in the City of Denton:

- In 2024, in partnership with Wing, drone delivery service began at the Walmart located on Loop 288.
- In 2026, in partnership with Zipline, drone delivery service began at the Walmart located in University Drive.

In addition to the above locations, staff has received inquiries regarding the installation of drone delivery services as a stand-alone use intended to deliver goods from a multitude of retailers and/or restaurants.

An amendment to the DDC relating to drone delivery services is being brought forward because, in the absence of the proposed use(s), the DDC does not provide for a clear or comparable use to assist in the classification and regulation of drone delivery services. In the case of the two existing drone delivery services, because the drones were associated with the primary Retail use on the site, the use is being treated as Accessory Outdoor Storage and mechanical equipment. Staff reviewed the requests at the building permit stage and required screening typical for mechanical equipment. The classification of drone delivery services as Accessory Outdoor Storage has limitations, though, and does not provide a clear path for drone delivery hubs seeking to locate independently from a singular retailer.

As the use of drones for commercial and delivery purposes continues to increase in popularity, the establishment of a use specific to drones as well as use specific standards relating to the screening of associated equipment on site is necessary to ensure equal application of regulations across various users.

Given the complexity of the topic and the various limitations relating to the regulations of drones at the State and Federal level, this topic has been split into two discussions with the DCRC. At the April 27, 2026 DCRC meeting, staff introduced the topic, reviewed relevant legislation, and discussed how other cities have approached the use. Following discussion, staff sought consensus from the DCRC on creating the following land uses:

- Drone Delivery Hub (small) – as accessory uses to a primary use.
- Drone Delivery Hub (large)
- Drone Staging Area
- Unmanned Aerial Aircraft (“Drone”)
- Heliport/Vertiport

In relation to the above uses, staff also sought consensus on developing Use-Specific Standards relating to the following topics:

- On-site storage of equipment
- Approved staging areas on site
- Setbacks from sensitive uses (residential uses, schools, etc.)
- Maximum allowable area for Drone Delivery as an Accessory Use

At the May 11, 2026 DCRC meeting, staff presented proposed amendments to the DDC related to the above topics. The Committee provided general consensus to move forward with the proposed new land use categories and provided direction to staff to revise the proposed Table of Allowed Uses to include Drone Delivery by right in the Heavy Industrial and Public Facilities Zoning Districts and to consider allowing Drone Delivery with a Specific Use Permit in the Mixed-Use Downtown Core Zoning District. In addition, the Committee requested staff perform additional research relating to setbacks from sensitive land uses, screening requirements, home occupations and the use of drones, and the possibility of density limitations for Drone Delivery Services.

At the June 8, 2026 DCRC meeting, staff will present the requested information to the DCRC and seek feedback and consensus on revisions to the proposed amendments based on the information presented. The proposed amendments are intended to be incorporated into the comprehensive DDC amendment including the Table of Allowed Uses, Use Specific Standards, Definitions, and Residential Design Standards. Please note the presentation is still being refined and the final version will be shared at the June 8, 2026 meeting.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1 – Agenda Information Sheet

Exhibit 2 – Proposed Amendments

Exhibit 3 – Draft Presentation

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Hayley Zagurski, AICP
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