

DISCUSSION

DRONE RETAIL DELIVERY DISCUSSION

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 7, 2026



DRONE DELIVERY

- Castle Rock recently received a pre-application inquiry for drone delivery at a big box retailer.
- Drone retail delivery is an emerging use the Town has not previously processed.
- The use is not specifically addressed in the Town's zoning regulations or in custom PD zoning regulations.
- Deliveries would generally involve small retail items launched from ground-based infrastructure located on store property, generally delivering within 5-6 miles of the store.



LOCAL AUTHORITY

- The FAA generally regulates airspace, aircraft operations, flight paths, altitude, and in-flight noise.
- The Town's authority is primarily limited to land use and ground-based site design.
- Local review can address the location of launch and landing areas, accessory equipment, screening, lighting, setbacks, and compatibility.
- Once a facility is approved and operating, the Town may have limited ability to address flight-related concerns.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

- Drone take off/landing port could have high volume of drone traffic with multiple drones launching and landing
 - Recent preapplication was for an 18-drone launch/landing area
 - Noise issues with adjacency to either residences or outdoor/patio seating for restaurants
 - Visual distraction concentrated at landing/launch location during operational hours



COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

- Richardson, Texas: Approved drone operations; later residents raised concerns regarding noise, flight frequency, and low-altitude flights.
- Cobb County, Georgia: Denied a Walmart / Wing request based on land use compatibility and site context.
- Lincoln County, North Carolina: Request generated significant public opposition related to noise, privacy, wildlife, and quality of life.
- Parker: Held a study session and directed a temporary moratorium on drone delivery uses while staff researches ordinance options.



REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

- The Town's strongest opportunity to address impacts is before a facility is approved.
- A local ordinance could define drone retail delivery as a separate land use.
- Regulations could establish an appropriate review process and site-specific development standards.
- Standards could address separation distances, setbacks, ground equipment, screening, lighting, storage, hours of operation, and notice / hearing requirements.
- Proactive regulations would provide a clearer framework for applicants, the public, staff, and decision-makers.

DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION

Should the Town regulate drone retail delivery facilities as a distinct land use?

Staff recommendation:

- Direct staff to prepare a draft ordinance establishing land use / site design standards for ground-based drone delivery facilities for future Council consideration.

PROPOSED MOTION

“I move to direct staff to bring back recommendations on an ordinance addressing drone retail delivery facilities as discussed tonight.”

Alternative Motion

“I move to direct staff to bring back recommendations on an ordinance addressing drone retail delivery facilities as discussed tonight with the following changes _____.”

DISCUSSION

