

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM
#35-2026

DATE: Oct. 26, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor Meredith Leighty and City Council Members

THROUGH: Jason Loveland, Acting City Manager *AL*

FROM: Becky Smith, Director of Planning & Development *BS*

SUBJECT: CB-2043 – Commercial Drone Delivery Hubs

PURPOSE

To consider CB-2043, an ordinance on second reading amending Chapter 11 of the Northglenn Municipal Code, the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), to establish use-specific regulations for commercial drone delivery hubs.

BACKGROUND

On Aug. 3, 2026, staff presented commercial drone delivery to City Council as an informational item and received policy direction to draft an ordinance creating a defined, use-specific “Commercial Drone Delivery Hub” land use with standards tailored to this use.

While the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has exclusive authority over the airspace, the City can regulate the physical ground facility from which drones launch and to which they return, including the pad, structure, fencing, screening, hours of ground operation, parking, lighting, and security of the staging area. The City has no legal authority to regulate where drones fly, their altitude, flight paths, or flight schedule once airborne; those matters are governed exclusively by the FAA. The proposed ordinance expressly states this limitation in the Purpose and Authority provision in Subsection 11-3-3(i)(1). The proposed ordinance would regulate only ground facilities.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Sept. 15, 2026, to consider the draft ordinance and voted 4-0 to recommend Council approval.

BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget or time implications associated with CB-2043.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of CB-2043 on second reading.

STAFF REFERENCE

If Council members have any questions, please contact Becky Smith, Director of Planning & Development, at bsmith@northglenn.org or 303.450.8741.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Planning Commission Resolution 2026-04
2. Presentation

CB-2043 – Commercial Drone Delivery Hubs

**RESOLUTION 2026-04
NORTHGLENN PLANNING COMMISSION**

**A RESOLUTION PROVIDING A FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION TO
THE CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL OF ERRATA UNIFIED
DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #12**

WHEREAS, Northglenn Ordinance 11-6-4(c) requires that all proposed amendments to Chapter 11, Unified Development Ordinance, shall be referred to the Planning Commission for study, consideration, and recommendation prior to final action by Council; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has studied and considered various modifications to the Unified Development Ordinance and found that the proposed modifications satisfy the applicable criteria for Unified Development Ordinance Amendments under 11-6-4(c)(3)(D)(iii); and

WHEREAS, the Northglenn Planning Commission therefore desires to provide a recommendation to the City Council on the Unified Development Ordinance Amendment as required by law; and

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN, COLORADO, THAT:

Section 1. The City of Northglenn Planning Commission hereby provides a favorable recommendation for the modifications proposed in the Unified Development Amendment #12 as presented to the Commission on September 15, 2026.

DATED this 15th day of September 2026.



Sonia Di Carlo
Planning Commission Chair

ATTEST:



Collette Cook
Secretary

CB-2043 – COMMERCIAL DRONE DELIVERY HUBS

Becky Smith

Director of Planning & Development

303.450.8741

bsmith@northglenn.org

City Council

Oct. 26, 2026



**CITY OF
Northglenn**

PURPOSE

To consider CB-2043, an ordinance on second reading to establish regulations for Commercial Drone Delivery Hubs.



BACKGROUND

- Communities are receiving requests from commercial & distribution centers to install drone launch sites to accommodate drone deliveries.
- Council directed staff to draft an ordinance to establish commercial drone delivery hubs as a land use with use-specific regulations.
- Council requested that staff seek regional collaboration to promote consistent regulations.



REGIONAL DISCUSSION

- Seven regional cities participated in a collaborative meeting hosted by Northglenn staff in August.
- Participants discussed screening requirements, residential buffers, hours of operation, and methods of regulation.
- To date, no regional city has adopted an ordinance.



REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

FAA

- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has exclusive jurisdiction over the airspace:
 - Flight paths
 - Altitude
 - Schedule of flights once airborne

Local Authorities

- The City can regulate land use at the hub:
 - Ground noise
 - Fencing
 - Screening
 - Hours of ground operation
 - Parking
 - Lighting
 - Security



SPECIAL USE PERMIT CRITERIA

- The use is compatible with the surrounding area;
- The use has minimal impacts on future development of the area;
- The use meets all other standards of the UDO and all other applicable codes;
- Adequate mitigation of any impacts associated with access, traffic, emergency services, utilities, parking, refuse areas, noise, glare, and odor has been provided;
- The use is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan;
- The use is consistent with any applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- The use does not adversely impact the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the area and the City of Northglenn.



DRONE-SPECIFIC SPECIAL USE PERMIT

- Requires narrative describing hours of operation, flight altitude, noise levels associated with ground operations, and anticipated flight frequency;
- Requires statement of understanding regarding the prohibition of surveillance.



LAND USE REGULATIONS

- Permitted zones
- Location on property
- Noise level at ground base
- Screening
- Hours of operation
- Surveillance prohibition



PERMITTED ZONES

- Accessory use permitted in the following zones:
 - Commercial General (CG)
 - Commercial Auto-Oriented (CA)
 - Industrial (IN)
- Standalone use permitted in IN zoning
- Special Use Permit required



LOCATION ON PROPERTY

- Requires 200' buffer from nearest residential boundary;
- Allowed within setbacks provided the use complies with buffer, screening, parking, and circulation regulations;
- Prohibited in easements, drive and fire aisles, and loading zones;
- Rooftop staging allowed;
- Obstruction of pedestrian or vehicular visibility or circulation prohibited.



NOISE LEVEL AT GROUND BASE

- The City's authority to regulate noise is limited to ground-based equipment and ground operations;
- Noise from ground equipment and operations shall not exceed 65 decibels maximum at ground level;
- Aligns with noise ordinance.



SCREENING

- Ornamental fence or wall consisting of masonry, decorative metal, iron, or similar material required;
- Chain link fence only allowed in industrial zones or in a side/rear setback and decoratively finished or screened with landscaping approved by the Director of Planning and Development;
- Required screening of all materials or other equipment in accordance with Section 11-4-7.



ROOF-MOUNTED SCREENING

- Subject to maximum height for the zone, except for a single mast up to 10-feet in height when used for a windsock, antenna, or similar equipment;
- Required screening of all materials or other equipment to align with requirements of Section 11-4-7;
- Landing pads are exempt from this screening requirement.



HOURS OF OPERATION

- Aligns with current noise regulations, Section 9-13-4;
- Operations allowed from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.;
- Drone deliveries not permitted outside of the regular operating hours for the principal business.



SURVEILLANCE PROHIBITION

- Proposed ordinance prohibits intentional surveillance of another person in a private place;
- The Special Use Permit for drone delivery operations requires the applicant to sign a statement of understanding that surveillance is prohibited.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning Commission:

- Conducted a public hearing on Sept. 15, 2026.
- Voted 4-0 to recommend City Council approval of CB-2043.

Staff recommends approval of CB-2043 on second reading.



QUESTIONS?



CITY OF
Northglenn

SPONSORED BY: MAYOR LEIGHTY

COUNCIL MEMBER'S BILL

ORDINANCE NO.

No. CB-2043
Series of 2026

Series of 2026

A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 11-3-2 AND 11-3-3 OF THE NORTHGLENN MUNICIPAL CODE CONCERNING COMMERCIAL DRONE DELIVERY HUBS

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN, COLORADO, THAT:

Section 1. Table 3-2-A Table of Allowed Uses in Section 11-3-2(d) of the Northglenn Municipal Code is hereby amended by the addition of the following allowable use, added to the table, as follows:

Table 3-2-A: Table of Allowed Uses √ = allowed by right S = special use permit A = accessory Blank cell = use prohibited + = Use-specific standards apply															
	Residential						Mixed-Use				Other Nonresidential				
	RS-1	RS-2	RS-3	RM-1	RM-2	MH	MN	MC	MR	CG	CA	IN	PF	AG	OS
Commercial uses															
Commercial Drone Delivery Hub															
Commercial Drone Delivery Hub – accessory										S+	S+	S+			11-3-3(i)
Commercial Drone Delivery Hub –primary												S+			11-3-3(i)

Section 2. Section 11-3-3 of the Northglenn Municipal Code is hereby amended by the addition of a new Subsection (i), to read as follows:

Section 11-3-3 Use-Specific Standards.

* * *

(i) Commercial Drone Delivery Hub.

(1) Purpose and Authority. The purpose of this Subsection is to establish standards governing the location, design, and operation of the ground facilities associated with commercial drone package delivery. The City's regulatory authority under this Subsection is primarily directed to the physical characteristics and operation of ground facilities and other matters within the City's lawful land use and police powers. The Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA) has exclusive jurisdiction over matters of aviation safety and airspace management, including aircraft operations, flight paths, altitude, and safety certification of unmanned aircraft. Nothing in this Subsection shall be construed to regulate matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the FAA.

(2) Definitions.

Commercial Drone Delivery Hub means an area of land, structural surface, building, or structure containing one or more Drone Staging Areas used by an Operator to distribute commercial goods by unmanned aircraft. This includes any appurtenant buildings, structures, equipment, and outdoor storage areas used or intended for use in connection with the facility. A Commercial Drone Delivery Hub is commonly referred to as a “nest” or “drone staging area.”

Commercial Drone Delivery – Accessory means a Commercial Drone Delivery Hub established as a use accessory to an existing or proposed permitted use on the same lot, including but not limited to a food/grocery store, restaurant, retail store, shopping center, or warehouse/distribution facility.

Commercial Drone Delivery – Primary means a Commercial Drone Delivery Hub established as the principal use of a lot, independent of any other permitted use.

Drone or Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) means an unmanned aircraft and its associated elements that can fly under the control of a remote pilot using a first-person point of view, or in an autopilot mode guided by a global positioning system (GPS) or comparable technology.

Drone Staging Area means the specific portion of a Commercial Drone Delivery Hub over which an unmanned aircraft completes the final phase of approach, hovers, or lands, and from which it initiates take-off. A Drone Staging Area includes the launch pad(s) and any required safety area and may include areas for the outdoor storage of goods, materials, containers, trailers, fencing and screening, or- other equipment associated with the use.

Operator means the person or entity that owns, controls, leases, or is otherwise responsible for the operation of a Commercial Drone Delivery Hub.

(3) Applicability; Zone Districts.

(A) A Commercial Drone Delivery – Accessory use is allowed only in the CG (Commercial General), CA (Commercial Auto-Oriented), and IN (Industrial) zoning districts, and only upon approval of a Special Use Permit in accordance with Subsection 11-6-5(b), Special Use Permit.

(B) A Commercial Drone Delivery – Primary use is allowed only in the IN (Industrial) zoning district, and only upon approval of a Special Use Permit in accordance with Subsection 11-6-5(b), Special Use Permit.

(4) Special Use Permit; Application Requirements. In addition to the submittal requirements of Subsection 11-6-5(b), an application for a Special Use Permit for a Commercial Drone Delivery Hub shall include a written operational narrative describing, at a minimum:

- (A) Hours of operation;
- (B) Maximum flight altitude of unmanned aircraft associated with the use, including the flight altitude from take-off until the use exits the airspace over the property being utilized pursuant to the Special Use Permit;
- (C) Anticipated noise levels associated with ground operations, measured in decibels;
- (D) The maximum number of unmanned aircraft to be based at, launched from, or returned to the site;
- (E) Anticipated flight frequency, expressed as an average and peak number of flights per day;
- (F) Incident and Emergency Response plan;
- (G) A site plan showing the location of the Drone Staging Area and the distances from the property line of the closest constraints identified in Subsection 11-3-3(i)(6)(A-C).
- (H) A statement of understanding that it is unlawful for anyone to Operate a UAS to intentionally engage in Surveillance of another person when the other person is in a Private Place; and
- (I) All of the relevant federal authorizations that apply including:
 - (i) DOT certificate of public convenience and necessity under 49 U.S.C. § 41101 or an exemption from that certificate requirement.
 - (ii) DOT approved OST Form 4507, showing air-taxi registration, and its approved OST Form 6410 certificate of insurance.
 - (iii) 14 C.F.R. Part 119 Air Carrier Certificate authorizing operations under 14 C.F.R. Part 135
 - (iv) the relevant operations specifications under 14 C.F.R. § 119.5(g) and aircraft registration under 14 C.F.R. Part 47
 - (v) other relevant airspace authorizations, waivers, exemptions, or other FAA documents

Information provided in the operational narrative under this Subsection (4) is for disclosure and land-use compatibility review purposes only and shall not be construed to expand the City's regulatory authority to matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the FAA.

(5) Setbacks, siting, and operations.

(A) Drone Staging Area may be located within a required front, side, or rear yard/setback of the lot, provided it complies with the buffer, screening, parking, and circulation standards of this Subsection.

(B) Drone Staging Area shall not be placed within any required drive aisle, fire lane, easement, maneuvering aisle, customer pick-up lane, or required loading zone or parking space, and shall not obstruct pedestrian or vehicular visibility or circulation.

(C) Drone Staging Area shall be limited to 10% of the total lot area or no more than 10,000 square feet, whichever is less.

(D) Drone Staging Area located entirely within a building, or entirely upon the roof of the building containing the primary use, is not subject to subsections (5)(A)-(B) above, but shall comply with Subsection (8), Roof-Mounted Drone Staging Areas.

(E) Commercial Drone Delivery Hub operations shall not occur before 7 a.m. or after 10 p.m. or outside the operating hours of the principal retail establishment from which deliveries are initiated if the operating hours are more restrictive. No drone delivery operations shall occur outside of the principal business's regular hours.

(6) Proximity Restrictions. Restrictions shall be measured from the screening of the Drone Delivery Hub to the closest property line. Such measurement shall be made by following a straight line from the Drone Delivery Hub to the outer property line of the property that is the subject of the constraint. No Drone Staging Area shall be located at the following locations:

(A) within 200 feet of any single or multi-family residential zoned parcel or lot;

(B) within 200 feet of a licensed childcare center; preschool; elementary school; middle, junior or high school; or a residential childcare facility;

(C) within 200 feet of critical facilities (including police, fire, or utility sites).

(7) Screening and Fencing.

- (A) An at-grade Drone Staging Area shall be enclosed by an ornamental fence or wall consisting of masonry, decorative metal or iron, or similar ornamental material, and shall otherwise comply with Section 11-4-7, Landscaping, Screening, and Fencing. Standard chain link fencing when in a zone other than IN is prohibited unless it is located in the side or rear setback and finished with a black, dark green, or similarly colored vinyl or powder coating and screened with supplemental landscaping approved by the Director as part of the Site Plan. In IN chain link fencing shall follow standards set in forth for that district.
 - (B) All goods, materials, containers, trailers, or other equipment associated with the Commercial Drone Delivery Hub and located at grade shall be screened from view from adjacent public rights-of-way and residentially zoned property in accordance with Section 11-4-7.
 - (C) The Director may require supplemental landscaping to soften the visual impact of required fencing and screening on adjacent properties and public rights-of-way.
- (8) Roof-Mounted Drone Staging Areas. The following standards apply when a Drone Staging Area is proposed on the roof of a building:
- (A) Any structure, parapet wall, screening, safety railing, or other appurtenance associated with the Commercial Drone Delivery Hub is subject to the maximum height requirement of the applicable zoning district, except that a single mast up to 10 feet in height for a windsock, antenna, or similar equipment may exceed the maximum height requirement.
 - (B) Any goods, materials, containers, trailers, or other equipment stored on the roof in connection with the use shall be screened. Landing pads are exempt from this screening requirement.
 - (C) Any roof-mounted mechanical equipment associated with the use, excluding landing pads, is subject to the mechanical equipment screening requirements of Section 11-4-7.
- (9) Noise. Noise generated by ground equipment and ground operations associated with a Commercial Drone Delivery Hub shall comply with the noise performance standard set forth in Subsection 11-3-3(b)(5) (no operation or use shall generate sound that exceeds 65 decibels at any point on the property boundary line).The City’s authority to regulate noise under this subsection will be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by applicable federal and state law, as the same may be amended from time to time.

(10) Parking. The minimum number of off-street parking spaces otherwise required for the principal use of the lot under Section 11-4-6, Off-Street Parking and Loading, shall be maintained on the site. A Drone Staging Area and its associated improvements shall not reduce the number of available off-street parking spaces below the minimum required by Section 11-4-6.

(11) Security and Insurance.

(A) An at-grade Commercial Drone Delivery Hub shall be secured in accordance with Subsection (7), Screening and Fencing, and may at the Applicant's discretion be monitored by security camera(s) capable of recording activity within the Drone Staging Area.

(B) Prior to issuance of a Special Use Permit, and annually thereafter for the duration of the permit, the Operator shall provide the City with a certificate of insurance evidencing commercial general liability insurance covering the operation of the Commercial Drone Delivery Hub, in an amount of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence, naming the City of Northglenn as an additional insured. Failure to maintain the required insurance is grounds for suspension or revocation of the Special Use Permit in accordance with Subsection 11-6-5(b)(3)(F).

(12) Incident and Emergency Response Plan.

(A) As part of the application required under Subsection (4), the Operator shall submit an Incident and Emergency Response Plan addressing the Operator's procedures for responding to an unplanned landing, crash, or other incident involving an unmanned aircraft within the City.

(B) In the event of a crash, unplanned landing, or other incident involving an unmanned aircraft that results in injury, property damage, or a public safety hazard, the Operator shall immediately notify 911 emergency dispatch.

(C) The Operator shall copy the Director, in writing, within 24 hours of any incident involving an unmanned aircraft occurring within the City, regardless of whether the incident resulted in injury or property damage, that requires a report be made to any other federal or state entity or agency with jurisdiction.

(D) The Director may consider an Operator's incident history, and the Operator's compliance with this Subsection (12), in connection with any renewal, modification, or enforcement action related to the Special Use Permit.

(13) Privacy and Data Use. It shall be unlawful to Operate a UAS to intentionally engage in Surveillance of another party when the other party is located in a Private Place.

(14) Term of Special Use Permit. The term of any Special Use Permit authorizing a Commercial Drone Delivery Hub as an accessory use shall be one (1) year. Such use shall be reviewed annually by the Planning Commission for compliance with this Subsection, and to address any potential changes in rules and regulations at the local, state or federal level regarding Commercial Drone Delivery.

INTRODUCED, READ AND ORDERED POSTED this 12th day of October, 2026.


MEREDITH LEIGHTY
Mayor

ATTEST:


JOHANNA SMALL, MMC
City Clerk

PASSED ON SECOND AND FINAL READING this ____ day of _____, 2026.

MEREDITH LEIGHTY
Mayor

ATTEST:

JOHANNA SMALL, MMC
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


COREY Y. HOFFMANN
City Attorney