



MEMORANDUM

To: Planning And Zoning Commissioners

From: Adam B. Bailey, AICP, Director of Planning and Development Services

Date: July 10, 2026

Subject: **ZTA 2026-02 — Drone Delivery Text Amendment**

This memo is intended to help the Planning and Zoning Commission prepare for the public hearing on Zoning Text Amendment 2026-02 (Drone Delivery), scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2026.

THE BIG PICTURE

ZTA 2026-02 updates the City's drone delivery regulations by establishing development standards for Autonomous Package Loading Devices (APLDs) and strengthening existing standards for drone staging areas. The amendment addresses regulatory gaps identified as drone delivery operations have expanded in Mesquite. This is a text amendment only—no property is being rezoned and no project is being approved.

WHAT'S CHANGING (2 sections)

Section 3.513 establishes development standards for Autonomous Package Loading Devices (APLDs), strengthens the City's existing drone staging area regulations by adding screening, masonry wall, fencing, and accessory structure standards, and updates related terminology and definitions. Section 6.102 updates the related definitions. No other sections of the Mesquite Zoning Ordinance are affected.

KEY POLICY CALLS TO KNOW

- APLDs permitted by administrative building permit—no public hearing required for individual installations
- One APLD permitted per parcel as of right; up to two additional by Director approval upon written findings
- Rear yard placement preferred; front yard placement prohibited; side yard by Director determination only
- 15-foot maximum height; required separation from vehicular circulation areas (building-mounted devices exempt)

THE VOTE

The Commission will make a recommendation to City Council, which is scheduled to consider the amendment on August 3, 2026. Staff recommends approval.

QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD EXPECT — AND HOW STAFF WOULD ANSWER

- “Is drone delivery actually happening in Mesquite?” → Yes. Zipline currently operates here in partnership with Walmart and several quick-service restaurants (i.e., Wendy’s). This amendment is not speculative—it responds to an active operation and closes code gaps that staff identified as the program matured.
- “What’s the difference between a drone staging area and an autonomous package loading device?” → A drone staging area is where the drone itself launches, lands, charges, and is stored between missions. An APLD is only a package handoff point: an employee loads it, the drone retrieves the package, and departs. The drone never docks or charges at an APLD. Different function, different land-use impacts, different standards.
- “Are these amendments too permissive?” → No. The ordinance establishes objective standards for location, setbacks, screening, pedestrian circulation, emergency access, and utility safety while allowing administrative flexibility where appropriate. Certain standards—including residential setbacks, prohibited locations, and utility safety requirements—cannot be administratively adjusted.
- “Will this create nonconforming uses?” → Yes. Zipline’s existing installation predates this ordinance and will become a legally non-conforming structure upon adoption. It may continue to operate under Section 3.513.F.18, but it may not be expanded, relocated, or replaced without full compliance with the new standards. This is the expected and appropriate outcome—existing installations are protected while all future installations are held to the new standard.
- “Why does the City regulate GPS interference— isn’t that a federal issue?” → Primarily yes. The FCC regulates radio frequency emissions and aircraft communications. The City’s ordinance does not regulate aircraft operations; it addresses land-use compatibility by requiring documentation during permitting and requiring operators to address harmful interference if it occurs.

Please don't hesitate to reach out before the hearing with any questions or concerns.



Adam B. Bailey, AICP

Director of Planning and Development Services

CC: Garrett Langford, AICP, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Services
Raymond M. Rivas, III, Deputy City Manager