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Amazon Withdraws Westborough Drone Delivery Proposal

Prime Air commercial drone delivery plan halted after community pushback, government scrutiny

(WESTBOROUGH 10/31/2026) — Senator Michael Moore (D-Millbury), Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury), and Representative Kate Donaghue (D-Westborough) have issued the following joint statement:

"Last night, Amazon called us to share that they would be withdrawing their application to the Town of Westborough for a drone package delivery launch site at their Otis Street fulfillment center. We are extremely pleased and thank Amazon for listening to the overwhelming concerns voiced in making this decision.

We are deeply grateful to the residents of Westborough and the surrounding communities who came together to share their concerns about noise, safety, privacy, environmental, and quality of life impacts a commercial drone delivery service poses. Their engagement made clear how important these issues are to our communities.

Thank you to Mass Blue Skies for leading grassroots advocacy efforts, the local officials in Westborough and surrounding communities who shared numerous municipal concerns, Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll for their support, and to our colleagues in Central Massachusetts and the region's federal delegation led by Senator Markey's office for their partnership and advocacy. This is a great example of what we can accomplish when we all work together."

Amazon yesterday sent a letter to the Westborough Planning Board requesting approval to withdraw its application to expand its Prime Air drone delivery service to Central Massachusetts. The proposal, which was seeking to transform a parking lot at the commerce giant's Otis Street fulfillment center into a drone takeoff and landing field, faced intense pushback from residents in Westborough and beyond. "Amazon hereby requests approval of the Westborough Planning Board to withdraw, without prejudice, Site Plan Review Application No. 26-02275," the letter states.

Amazon's proposal withdrawal follows a series of moves from legislators and government leaders echoing constituent concerns about the noise, flight routes, operating hours, safety, privacy, cybersecurity, and environmental impacts of Amazon's proposed drone operations. In recent weeks, legislators sent a letter asking Amazon to pause its implementation plan to better engage with the community, established a partnership with the state's federal delegation to review national laws on the matter, and sent a letter to Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey requesting she establish a task force on commercial drones to review applicable laws and make recommendations on necessary policy changes. In mid-October, Massachusetts Department of Transportation Aeronautics Administrator Denise Garcia sent a letter to Amazon reiterating that the commerce giant must undergo a MassDOT regulatory review process before it can begin operating commercial delivery drones in the Commonwealth. Further, Westborough Special Town Meeting attendees last month voted 510-13 to establish regulations for unmanned aircraft.

Planned to operate out of the company's existing 200,000 square foot fulfillment center in Westborough, Amazon Prime Air would have been the first service of its kind in New England and would deliver items under 5lbs to Westborough and 15 surrounding communities. Amazon's proposal had stated that it hoped to eventually make up to 1,000 deliveries per day to addresses within a 7.5-mile radius of its fulfillment center.

Amazon Prime Air currently operates in 13 cities in 10 states, but the company has laid out an aggressive expansion roadmap that intends to serve over 500 communities with drone delivery by the end of the year. Prime Air drones typically fly up to 74 miles per hour and cruise to their destination at between 205 and 370 feet above the ground, before descending to 13 feet to drop the package on the customer's property. Amazon states that the drones are loudest during takeoff and landing, but that the sound at cruising altitude is comparable to an electric toothbrush held at arm's length when heard outdoors.

Designed to operate in wind, rain, and snow, Prime Air drones are said to include redundant propellers that can keep them airborne if one fails. They are equipped with cameras for navigation and collision avoidance, but Amazon claims that all image data is encrypted and that Amazon does not sell or commercially collect data from its flights. These technologies have not proven infallible, however – videos online show Prime Air drones dropping a package into a pool and crashing into a residential apartment building. Additionally, news reports from Texas and Nebraska highlight resident complaints about disruptive noise, with one nearby homeowner likening the constant sound of the drones to a beehive.

Amazon had faced a number of hurdles before it could begin launching Prime Air drones in Central Massachusetts beyond a MassDOT air navigation facility permit. The FAA approved Amazon's permit to operate delivery drones beyond a visual line of sight nationally in 2024, though a recent legal challenge brought by 15 US states may complicate this blanket permit. Locally, the Westborough Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) was scheduled to hear the appeal of the Westborough Building Commissioner's zoning interpretation related to Amazon's site plan application. A September 15th Planning Board meeting began the process, though the dialogue continued into the Board's October 6th meeting. The ZBA was expected to take up the appeal on November 2nd.

Amazon ended its brief letter requesting to withdraw its Prime Air proposal by stating, "Amazon values its relationship with the Town of Westborough and looks forward to continuing to work with Town officials on next steps."

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