

Uber will test unmanned aircraft at Fort Worth Alliance Airport's new technology zone

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Uber and other companies have a new place to test their driverless—and pilotless—technology in Fort Worth.

The well-known ride-sharing company—which aims to develop an Uber Elevate air taxi system at DFW Airport and Frisco by 2023—is among the key players in a new mobility innovation zone at Fort Worth's Alliance Airport.

Hillwood, the company that created the massive AllianceTexas development in far north Fort Worth, announced the creation of the innovation zone Monday.

The company says Uber and many other partners who already have a presence at AllianceTexas will be able to collaborate as they develop automation technology for driverless cars and aircraft.

The announcement comes just ahead of a two-day Uber Elevate summit in Washington, where company officials are expected to update business and [political leaders](#) about the status of its plans to develop an urban air taxi service.

Another [company](#) with a strong presence in far north Fort Worth, Deloitte, will be directly involved in the innovation zone, officials said. Deloitte, which is known for providing accounting services to its partner companies, will provide a "mobility global practice team" that will develop a business model for the zone, officials said.

Initially, the mobility innovation zone will be housed in office space formerly occupied by Bell, the Fort Worth-based helicopter manufacturer.

Mike Berry, Hillwood president, says he envisions the innovation zone becoming a much higher profile component of the business offerings at Alliance Airport in the next few years.

"Over the next two to five years, it has the ability to really evolve into

something much more visible, much more high-profile in the sense that it hopefully will attract more of the innovators and manufacturers of automated trucks, cars UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles)," Berry said in an interview.

Alliance Airport, which opened in 1989 as the first-of-its-kind, privately-run airport, has the advantage of having regulated air space available for unmanned technology research, Berry said. The airport features 26,000 acres of commercial and industrial space—including an inland port, BNSF Railway's intermodal yard and many other freight companies such as FedEx's Southwest Regional Sort Hub and Amazon Air's newest regional air hub.

Scott Corwin, managing director and global future of mobility practice leader at Deloitte Consulting LLP, described the zone as a "transportation innovation sandbox."

"AllianceTexas offers a unique platform to test and scale integrated mobility solutions [?](#) both on the surface and in the air," he said in a statement. "Beyond our role in developing the initiative with Hillwood, Deloitte professionals will have exposure to this effort, since our national leadership center [?](#) Deloitte University, where we grow the world's best leaders and incubate idea generation and breakthrough thinking [?](#) is located at AllianceTexas."

The area is also home to the Federal Aviation Administration's Southwest Regional Headquarters.

Wyatt Smith, head of business development for Uber Elevate, said "AllianceTexas offers a big canvas to develop, test, and refine our advanced mobility technologies to create next-generation transportation options for the growing population of Dallas-Fort Worth."

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