FAIRFAX COUNTY
VIRGINIA



Drone as First Responder (DFR)

Public Safety Update

Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold
Assistant Chief of Police Bob Blakley
Assistant Fire Chief Eric Craven
Major Hudson Bull

February 24, 2026

FCPD Drone Governance, Compliance, and Policy (Aviation Unit)

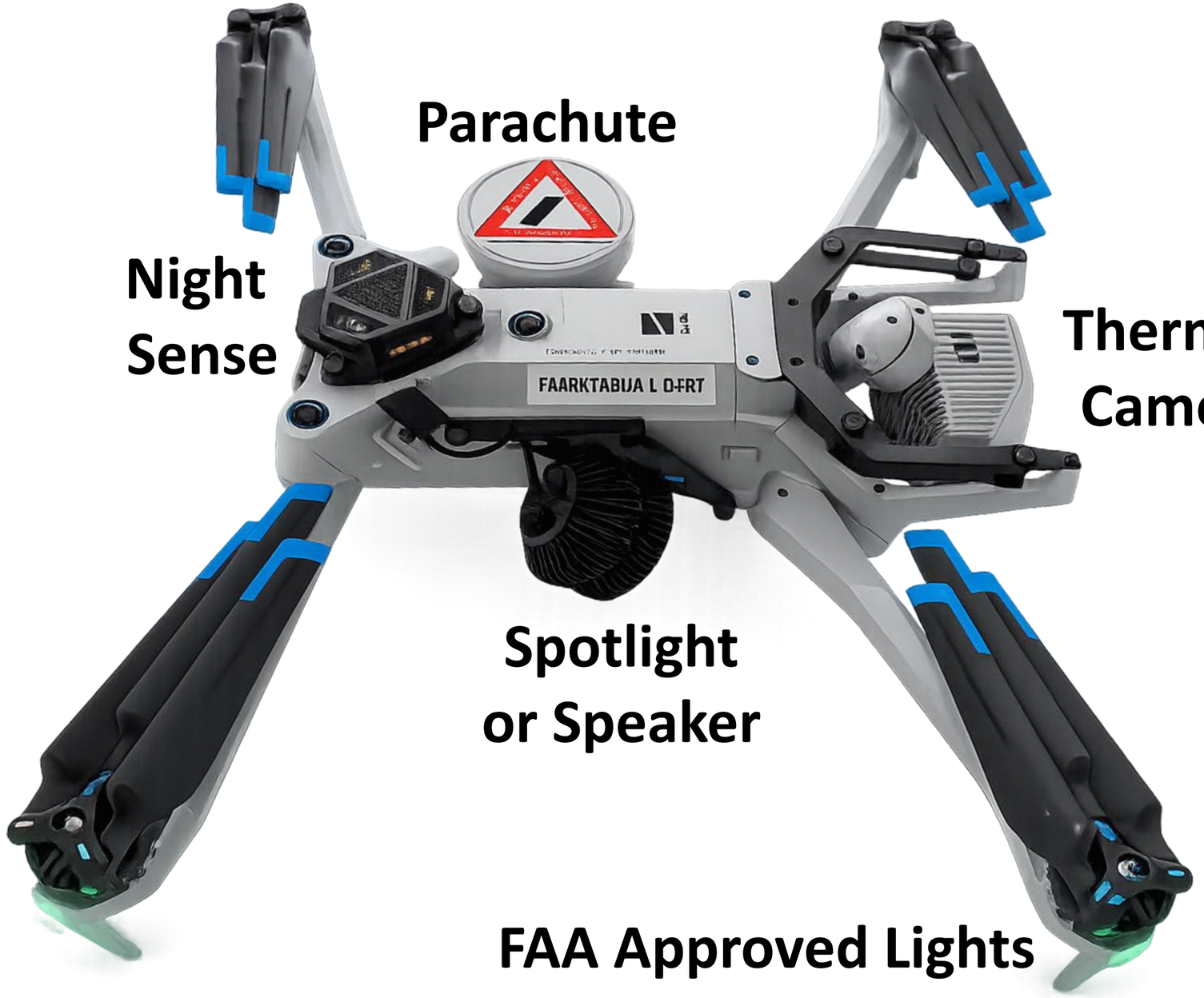
- Drone Response Team
- Crash Reconstruction Crime Scene
- SWAT Indoor Drones
- Drone as First Responder

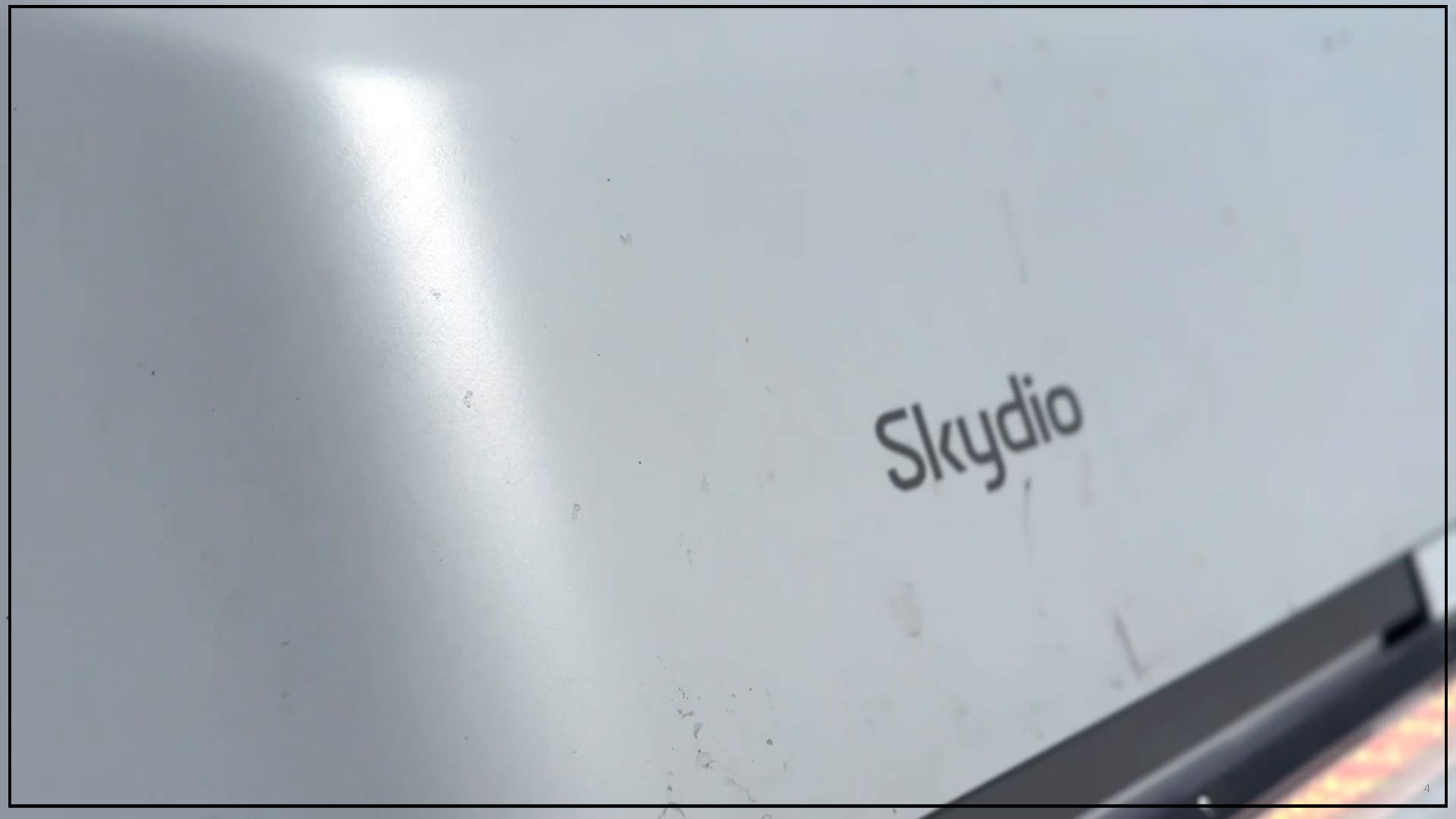
Drone as First Responder (DFR) is one component of the overall FCPD drone program. Our Aviation unit manages FAA compliance, licensing, and the coordination of all drone operations within FCPD, including the DFR program.

At the direction of the DCEX, a DFR work group was formed across all public safety departments to align best practices, ensure compliance with county drone policy, and increase awareness of DFR capabilities and benefits across public safety departments.

Skydio X10 Drone

- American made
- Collision avoidance
- FAA registered
- Parachute equipped
- ADSB receiver
- Axon integration
- 5G connectivity
- 5 lbs. total weight




Skydio

Phase One - Two Locations

100 missions flown, **83** second average response time, first on scene in **71** missions

DFR used to coordinate complex arrest of a dangerous wanted subject in a public parking lot.



Located a suspect attempting to force entry into a house and guided patrol for arrest.



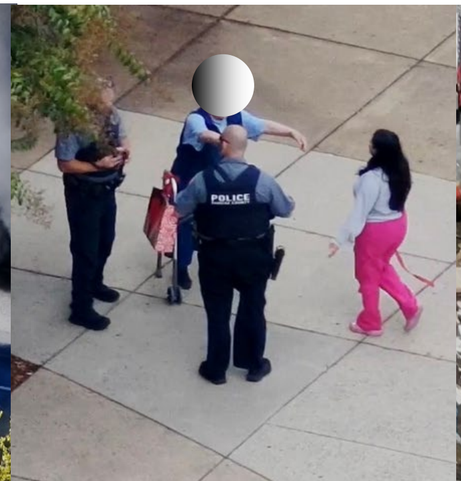
Canceled response to a man was said to have a weapon in the roadway, the drone found it was a stick.



First on scene of two vehicle fires in one day and shared video feed with fire command.



Found critical missing woman who emerged from inside a mall and was reunited with family.

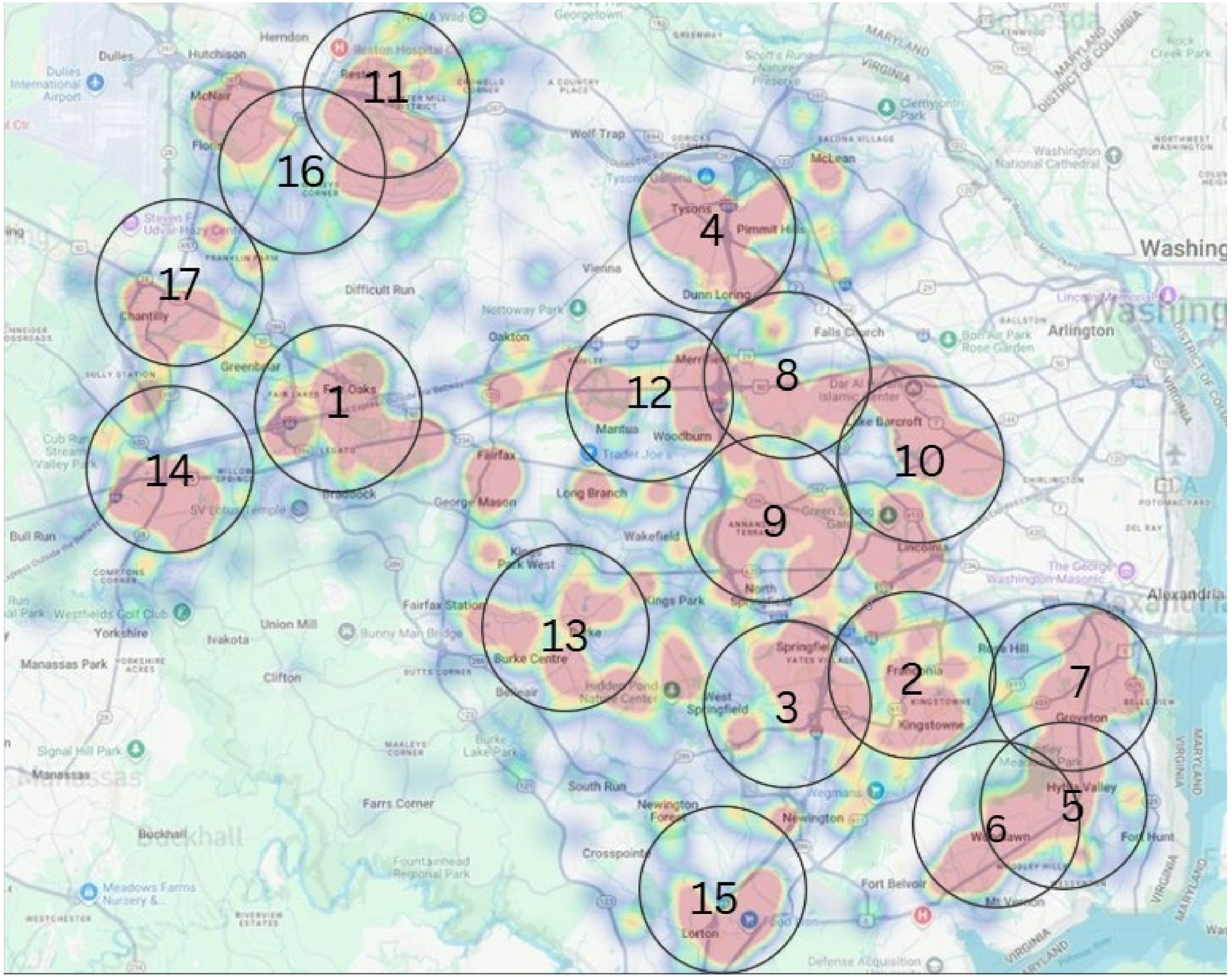


Arrived at rescue where a worker fell three stories from scaffolding.




2025-12-26 07:59:26 -0500
SKYDIOX10-2U36 VT300-Z NARROW


2026-01-22 12:44:06 -0500
SKYDIOX10-D3BU VT300-Z NARROW



Locations are determined using calls for service data.

Criteria for using the drone align with state code and existing county guidance.

The drone can fly about a two-mile radius from its docking station and remain in flight for about 25 minutes, with a typical flying speed of 35 mph and reaching heights between 200 to 400 feet.

Phase Two (Current – Spring)

- Adding locations, gathering flight data, increasing public communication including flight logs to the public website.
- Continue meetings with FAA and regional partners to set standards and best practices.
- FCPD absorbing costs.

Phase Three (Summer - Fall)

- Installation of all DFR locations.
- Integrate existing drone detection and radar systems into DFR program.
- Technology integration with DPSC to decrease response times to 911 calls for service and emergencies.
- Collaboration to address future budget requirements.

End of Presentation

Questions and Comments