

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

January 25, 2016

TO: All Planning Staff

FROM: Richard J. Bruckner
Director



SUBDIVISION AND ZONING ORDINANCE INTERPRETATION NO. 2016-01 - CLARIFICATION ON SPECIAL EVENT FACILITIES

This memorandum provides guidance for the regulation of “special event facilities” in unincorporated County areas.

BACKGROUND

Title 22 of the County Code (Title 22) does not define “special event facility,” nor is the use listed in any zone. However, the Department receives a high number of inquiries regarding the establishment of special event facilities, such as venues for the hosting of weddings, retirement parties, or fundraisers, which are not expressly authorized by Title 22.

Additionally, the Department receives a high number of complaints concerning unpermitted special event facilities, especially when these events are occurring in areas with limited infrastructure or in areas that are near sensitive biological resources. Similarly, unpermitted special event facilities are occurring in areas where special events are not typically an intrinsic part of the primary use, such as campgrounds, or in residentially or agriculturally zoned neighborhoods. In these areas, there is often a lack of off-street parking or road infrastructure to accommodate frequent large gatherings of people, and noise from special events are causing complaints from neighbors.

DEFINITION

“Special event facility” shall be defined as a facility where special events are permitted to occur, such as, but not limited to, weddings, parties, or fundraisers. Special events for the purpose of this memorandum concern commercial enterprises.

REGULATION OF “SPECIAL EVENT FACILITIES”

This memorandum and the attached table identify all uses in Title 22 where special events are allowed to occur. The table is divided into two groupings:

1. *Special Events as a Primary Use.* The Department has determined that special events, including special events that have live entertainment, are an intrinsic component of certain primary uses. These uses are identified in **Group 1** of the attached table. Special event facilities are considered similar to these uses and may host or allow special events as a primary use. Entitlement of these uses authorizes special events subject to all applicable permitting requirements, development standards, and restrictions.
2. *Special Events as an Accessory Use.* The Department has determined that the hosting of special events is expected to be an accessory use to certain primary uses. These uses are identified in **Group 2** of the attached table. Entitlement of these uses authorizes special events as an accessory use subject to all applicable permitting requirements, development standards, and restrictions. In this group, accessory live entertainment for special events in a legally established bar, cocktail lounge or restaurant shall be permitted as required by Title 22.

Pursuant to County Code Section 22.12.070.B, the Director, on a case by case basis, can determine whether special events are accessory to an applicant's existing or proposed primary use for any use not listed in Group 2 of the attached table.

CONDITIONS, REGULATIONS, AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

For existing, lawfully established uses that are listed in the attached table, special events shall be considered a permitted or accessory use, subject to the following:

1. Existing and applicable permit conditions, regulations, development standards, and other limitations, such as hours of operation, still apply.
2. If the previously-approved permit specifically did not allow special events, then the use will need to get a new permit to operate special events.
3. Special events are restricted to areas on an approved site plan designated for assembly or special events. For some uses, defined assembly areas or areas where special events can occur may not be clearly delineated on the approved site plan. The Director has the discretion to determine whether special events are occurring in areas that are within the scope and analysis of the previously approved permit. However, all areas where special events are taking place must comply with the overall approved occupancy load and parking standards for the subject property. Where the Director determines that special events are occurring in areas outside of the scope and analysis of the previously approved permit, the operator must obtain a new permit to host special events in these areas.
4. For existing uses with an active permit that are not listed in either grouping on the attached table, and where the Director has determined that special

events are not accessory to the existing primary use, the operator of the use shall be required to apply for one of the uses listed in the table as a second primary use on the property.

5. This memorandum does not supersede any entitlement approved or issued by the County of Los Angeles.

Establishment of new uses hosting or allowing special events is subject to the following:

1. For new uses, special event facilities must show all indoor and outdoor spaces where special events and related activities may occur. All of these areas must be accounted for in the implementation of applicable development standards such as, but not limited to, parking based on occupancy load.
2. Parking shall be provided consistent with the requirements for the primary use. Where a use has no specific parking requirement, special event facilities shall provide parking according to the requirements for entertainment, assembly and dining uses (Section 22.52.1110 of the County Code).

TEMPORARY EVENTS

Temporary events by non-profit organizations are not considered commercial enterprises and will continue to be regulated by the Temporary Use Permits Section of Title 22.

SPECIAL EVENTS AT SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCES

Title 22 does not prohibit private, non-commercial special events from taking place at a single-family residence (e.g. family weddings). However, a single-family residence may not be used to conduct or host special events for commercial or for-profit purposes. The owner of a single-family residence may apply to convert a residence to a use on the attached table at which special events are allowed provided the use is allowed in the underlying zone.

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Attachment

Special Event Facilities Table

Description	Use
<p>The following uses are assembly uses whose primary function is similar to a special events facility. Entitlement of any of these uses authorizes special events, subject to all applicable permitting requirements and development standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amphitheater Boat Charters Dance Hall Dance Pavillion, Outdoor Grange Hall Lodge Hall Outdoor Festivals Theaters and other Auditoriums Union Hall Wedding Chapel
<p>The following uses are not similar to special events facilities; however, these uses are commonly expected, by nature of their operations, to host special events accessory to the primary use. Entitlement of these uses authorizes special events, subject to all applicable permitting requirements and development standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aquaria Arboretums Bar and Cocktail Lounge Boat Operation, Rental, Charter, and Moorage Botanical Gardens Churches College and University Community Center Convents, Monasteries Educational Institutions Either Publically or Privately Owned; Conference Facility Entertainment Park Golf Courses Guest Ranch Hotel Library Lodges Museums Nightclub Observatories Recreation Club; Recreation Club - Commercial; Recreation Club - Private Restaurant Rural Inn Tasting Rooms Wineries Zoos