

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PERMITS
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

LATOYA CANTRELL
MAYOR

ZACHARY SMITH
DIRECTOR

ZONING INTERPRETATION MEMORANDUM

Memorandum Z-18-02

DATE: July 31, 2018
FROM: Zachary Smith, AIA, Director
RE: Definition of Customary Lodging Services included in the definition of “Hotel/Motel” in Chapter 26 of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

As the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) does not provide a definition for the terms “customary lodging services” within the definition for “Hotel/Motel” in Chapter 26, the Ordinance dictates that these terms shall be “interpreted in accordance with the definitions considered to be normal dictionary usage” (Sec 26.2.F) As there is no normal dictionary usage for this combination of terms and as per CZO Sec 4.10.D, the Director “will make and approve final written decisions on requests for zoning text interpretations.”

Per the CZO, a “Hotel/Motel Use” is defined as “An establishment providing a room for sleeping accommodations for a fee with private bathroom facilities and customary lodging services. Related ancillary uses may include, but are not limited to conference and meeting rooms, restaurants, sale of convenience items, bars, and recreational facilities...” In evaluating whether a proposed use is ‘customary’ the Department must look to the traditional pattern of hotel/motel development in New Orleans and the surrounding area. This Department is unaware of any instances where Hotels/Motels have been permitted or licensed to operate without ‘customary’ services.

In evaluating the intent of this term, it is found that commercial establishments, in addition to providing a room for sleeping accommodations and private bathroom facilities, must also provide guest services. These guest services can be amenities such as bars, restaurants, meeting rooms, and room service. They must include 1) dedicated lobby space to adequately enable check-in/check-out procedures, and 2) personnel/staffing to assist guests at check-in/check-out.

For the purposes of use within the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, the term “customary lodging services” shall mean those places that, at a minimum, provide an interior lobby or office supervised by a person in charge at all hours.

The Department has not previously maintained records relative to interpretations or determinations of this portion of the CZO; therefore, by Departmental policy, this document serves as written determination to provide clear guidance on this question.

As a result of this analysis, it is the determination of the Director of Safety and Permits that services included in the above definition of ‘customary lodging services’ shall be provided as a requirement to establish a Hotel/Motel.

