

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND PERMITS
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

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MAYOR

ZACHARY SMITH
DIRECTOR

ZONING INTERPRETATION MEMORANDUM

Memorandum Z-19-03

DATE: August 9, 2019

FROM: Zachary Smith, AIA, Director

RE: Applying Floor-Area-Based Exemptions to Non-Floor Area Parking Requirements

Article 22 of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) establishes the off-street vehicle parking requirements for proposed uses. The number of required vehicle spaces depends on the use, as provided in CZO Table 22-1. Most of the parking requirements are based on the gross floor area (GFA) of the use, but some uses have a parking requirement that is based on the number of units, rooms, seats, or some other unit of measurement.

There are a number of exemptions to the number of required off-street vehicle parking spaces, which are found in CZO 22.5.A. In certain districts, there is an exemption for either the first 3,000 sf (HMC-2 District) or 5,000 sf (HU-B1, HU-MU, and MU-1 Districts) in GFA for commercial uses (“SF Exemption(s)”). It is clear how to apply these exemptions where the parking requirement is based on the GFA; however, the Code requires some interpretation in order to apply these exemptions for commercial uses, such as a medical/dental clinic or a hotel/motel, where the parking requirement is based on rooms or another unit of measurement.

It is the determination of the Director that if the GFA of the commercial use is less than the square footage set out in the SF Exemption (3,000 or 5,000 sf, depending on the district), no off-street vehicle parking is required for that use, regardless of whether the parking is calculated based on GFA or another measurement. Furthermore, when a commercial use where the parking requirement is not based on GFA is larger than the square footage set forth in the SF Exemption, the amount of exempt parking spaces shall be calculated based on the ratio of the SF Exemption to the GFA of the use, including all ancillary uses. That ratio would then be applied to the total off-street parking requirement for that use to determine the number of exempt off-street parking spaces.

Take as an example a new construction hotel in an HMC-2 District. This hypothetical hotel has 20 guest rooms and is 15,000 sf in GFA including all rooms, the lobby, meeting rooms, and the bar. Based on the number of rooms, the hotel would be required to provide 10 off-street vehicle parking spaces; however, there is a SF Exemption for the first 3,000 sf of commercial uses in the HMC-2 District. Based on this determination of the Director, this hotel would be granted an off-street vehicle parking exemption of 20% ($3,000\text{sf} / 15,000\text{sf} = 0.2$). Therefore, 2 parking spaces are exempt ($10 \times 20\% = 2$), which reduces the off-street vehicle parking requirement for this hypothetical hotel from 10 spaces to 8 spaces.

