

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Division

FROM: Thomas B. Cole, Director of Community Development 

DATE: July 18, 2016

SUBJECT: UDC INTERPRETATION: PARKING STRUCTURE VERTICAL CLEARANCE

The City of Santa Clarita has established parking provisions within the Parking Standards Section of the Unified Development Code (UDC). The purpose of these provisions is to effectively regulate the design of parking facilities. These standards also are intended to promote compatibility between parking facilities and surrounding neighborhoods. In response to recent projects, this memo shall serve as clarification that the vertical clearance heights of parking structures are to be consistent with California Building Code (CBC).

Section 17.51.060(F) of the UDC indicates that the vertical clearance (i.e. “the minimum height from the floor to the lowest ceiling structure, support beam, or overhead fixture”) of parking structures shall be eight feet two inches for parking areas, including areas providing accessibility to parking spaces for the disabled. It was not the intention for the Parking Standards Section of the UDC to be more restrictive than the CBC.

The 2013 CBC establishes provisions for the vertical clearance heights for vehicle and pedestrian traffic areas within parking structures including areas that provide accessibility to parking spaces. Pursuant to Section 406.4.1, the clear height (or vertical clearance) of each floor level in vehicle and pedestrian traffic areas shall be a minimum of seven feet. In regards to accessibility, Sections 1109A.8.1 and 11B-502.5 require the vertical clearance of each floor level with parking spaces for the disabled to be a minimum of eight feet two inches.

Pursuant to Section 17.04.020 of the UDC, the Director may make a determination on the applicability of a provision of the code. In this case, the measurement of the vertical clearance of a parking structure is subject to interpretation. Therefore, it is the Director’s Policy that the vertical clearance for parking structures shall be consistent with the CBC. This policy promotes the compatibility of parking facilities and surrounding neighborhoods by lowering the overall height of parking structures and reducing the potential visual impacts. This policy shall be applied when reviewing requests for parking structures. This policy will be reflected in the next update to the UDC.

TC:HN:cf

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