

**CITY OF SANTA CLARITA**  
**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

TO: Planning Division

FROM: Thomas B. Cole, Director of Community Development

DATE: May 10, 2016

SUBJECT: UDC INTERPRETATION: ESCAPE ROOMS



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Escape Rooms are a type of physical adventure game where participants, within a staged and enclosed area, use elements of the room to find clues that aid in solving a series of puzzles including, but not limited to, participants freeing themselves from the confinement of the enclosed gaming area. Escape Rooms are a land use not currently listed in the Unified Development Code (UDC).

Pursuant to Section 17.04.030 of the UDC, the Director may determine that a use not listed in the UDC is similar to a listed use, and may be allowed in the underlying zone after making the following findings.

- 1. The characteristics of, and activities associated with, the use are similar to one or more of the listed uses, and will not involve a greater intensity than the uses listed in the zone;*

Escape Rooms are entertainment venues that provide live experiences for participants. These experiences typically occur during evening and weekend hours within existing commercial buildings, when many surrounding uses are not open for business. Live Entertainment uses include any live show, performance, singing, dancing, or artistic interpretation provided for the amusement of one or more persons.

Customers typically patronize Escape Rooms in small groups that are scheduled to use the staged room for a specified duration of time, resulting in traffic and parking patterns similar to uses such as martial arts studios, tutoring centers, and musical instruction businesses. The UDC classifies these uses as Instructional Schools, which require a parking ratio of one parking space for every 200 feet of instructional area, and one space for every 250 square feet of other area.

Due to the characteristics of and activities associated with Escape Rooms, it is determined that these uses will not involve greater intensity than, and are most similar to, Live Entertainment uses listed in the UDC. Such uses shall provide on-site parking at a ratio of one space for every 200 square feet of “performance area,” and one space for every 250 square feet of other area.

2. *The use will be consistent with the purposes of the applicable zone;*

Commercial zones throughout the City typically consist of uses that make up a mix of employment districts, and are consistent with commercial retail shopping centers including, but not limited to, medical office, research and development, light assembly and fabrication, commercial office, retail shopping centers, and commercial services. Due to their operational characteristics, including anticipated traffic and noise generation, hours of operation and the conducting of all business related activities within an enclosed commercial space, it is determined that Escape Rooms will be consistent with the purposes of Commercial zones throughout the City.

3. *The use will be consistent with the General Plan;*

Commercial land use designations identified within the General Plan are intended for businesses providing retail and service uses which primarily serve the local market. Typical uses include, but are not limited to, restaurants, clothing stores, grocery stores, banks and financial services, theaters, day care centers, and medical services. Due to their operational characteristics, including anticipated traffic and noise generation, hours of operation, and the conducting of all business related activities within an enclosed commercial space, it is determined that Escape Rooms will be consistent with the purposes of the General Plan.

4. *The use will be compatible with the other uses allowed in the zone; and*

Escape Rooms are entertainment venues that provide live experiences for customers. These experiences typically occur during evening and weekend hours within existing commercial centers, most often when many surrounding businesses are not open for business. Therefore, these uses will be compatible with the other uses within Commercial zones throughout the City.

5. *The use is not listed as allowed in another zone.*

Escape Rooms are not listed elsewhere in the UDC as an allowed use within any zoning designation.

TC:MM:cf

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