

FILE NUMBER: DCA 256-001(MW)

DATE INITIATED: February 9, 2026

TOPIC: Development Code Amendment establishing a new land use, "Event Venue"
(was "Reception Facility")

COUNCIL DISTRICTS: All

CENSUS TRACTS: All

PROPOSAL: Consideration of amending Sections 51-4.208, 51-4.210, and 51A-4.210 of the Dallas City Code to remove "Commercial Wedding Chapel" and create regulations for a new "Reception Facility" land use.

SUMMARY: Currently, facilities primarily intended for hosting private gatherings without are being classified as the slightly mismatched Commercial Amusement (Inside) and (Outside) land uses because there is not a more appropriate land use in the Development Code. The proposed code amendment establishes a land use that recognizes the unique nature of facilities that host private gatherings.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of Staff's recommended amendments.

ZOAC Recommendation: Approval of ZOAC's recommended amendments.

CPC Recommendation: Approval of CPC's recommended amendments.

Code Amendments Webpage:

<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/pnv/Pages/Code-Amendments.aspx>

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DELETED

1. Background

On June 1, 2022, Planning and Urban Design and Code Compliance Services staff presented to the City Council regarding proposed updates to short-term rental registration and zoning ordinances. Some short-term rentals were holding larger private gatherings frequently enough to no longer be reasonably considered a mere residential or lodging land use, and some of these gatherings produced nuisances for surrounding neighbors. However, codified land uses more appropriate for larger gatherings contain unsuitable or irrelevant requirements and prohibitions for banquets, celebrations, receptions, and similar activities. Facilities intended for private gatherings are usually permitted under a Commercial Amusement certificate of occupancy, which is intended for facilities open to the general public at regular hours for a fee where the public engage in games or other activities. Due to the gap in land use provision, Code Compliance officers do not have Zoning guidance on determining when a property holding large private gatherings is operating outside of the property's certificate of occupancy.

In 2022, staff recommended a new use called "Event Center", now called "Event Venue." An Event Venue is a space that is rented for private gatherings of invited guests. Establishing such a land use in the Development Code with appropriate regulations and zoning district allowances would give Code Compliance officers the tools to cite properties not intended or permitted for holding frequent gathering; it would also give Planning and Development staff a suitable land use under which to classify private gathering spaces.

No action was taken on this item in 2022. With the planned FIFA games in in 2026, however, the City expects private FIFA-related gatherings around the City, making establishment of an Event Venue land use timely.

2. Staff Analysis

a. Discussion

Staff has been issuing certificates of occupancy to such "Event Venues" as Commercial Amusement (Inside), described in [Sections 51A-4.210\(b\)\(7\)](#). However, the Commercial Amusement land uses are defined as facilities "offering entertainment or games of skill to the general public for a fee..." and are further broken down into certain publicly accessible establishments with focused games and activities such as billiard halls, children's amusement centers, skating rinks, and miniature golf courses.

The Commercial Amusement land uses contain two blind spots for which the Event Venue would provide:

- Private events: Commercial Amusement establishments are intended explicitly for public attendance – an interested attendee can decide spontaneously to enter and pay an entrance fee. In an Event Venue, only invited guests may attend private events. The privacy of the event may be proven through a list of invited guests and specific content of invitations in contrast to public promotional materials.
- Intermittent operations: Commercial Amusement establishments are intended for consistent attendance during set operating hours. An Event Venue hosting non-recurring events such as banquets and fundraisers facilitates gatherings less often, decreasing the frequency of traffic impacts and of potential nuisances generated by the property.

An additional overlapping land use is “commercial wedding chapel” as regulated in Sections 51A-4.210(b)(18) *Mortuary, funeral home, and commercial wedding chapel*. This land use attempts to combine the gatherings associated with funerals with those associated with weddings. However, a commercial wedding chapel is substantially more similar to the proposed Event Venue land use and should be regulated as such. Chapter 51 separates these land uses already, regulating mortuaries and funeral homes in Section 51-4.210(6) and commercial wedding chapels in 51-4.210(24).

b. Peer cities

An Event Venue land use is common across municipalities in the United States, going by names such as “Reception Facility”, “Reception Hall”, “Meeting Hall”, “Indoor Event Venue”, or “Events Center”, with some delineating Major and Minor Event Venues based on size, and others dividing those where entry fees are allowed from those where fees are prohibited. Texas cities with identical or very similar land uses include San Antonio, Austin, Mesquite, Bastrop, Corinth, and Mission. Outside of Texas, Chicago, IL, Denver, CO, Knoxville, TN, Charlotte, NC, New Orleans, LA, Saratoga Springs, NY, and Davenport, IA have identical or similar land uses.

Consistent themes in definition are that the events are pre-arranged, the guests are invited rather than the venue being open to public, and the operational times are inconsistent. Some cities prohibit fees from being charged for entry but allow carveouts for religious institutions or non-profit fundraisers and have another similar use where fees are permitted. For our purposes, the charging of an entry fee is not a useful characteristic.

Some peer cities require heightened review when the facility is located within 300 to 500 feet from residentially zoned property.

c. Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC) and City Plan Commission (CPC)

This item was considered by ZOAC on April 7, 2026. At the time staff called them “Reception Facilities” and recommended that facilities 2,500 square feet or less be allowed by right in NO(A) and NS(A). ZOAC voted to forward staff’s recommendation with the following modifications:

- a) Rename the land use “Event Venue” as a more intuitive moniker for the average code user; and*
- b) Require a Specific Use Permit for all Event Venues in NO(A) and NS(A), regardless of size or location, in order to ensure a public hearing where the public can participate in a venue’s zoning approval process.*

On April 9, the City Plan Commission considered this item and voted to forward ZOAC’s recommendation with the two following modifications to mitigate the impact on residential properties:

For Event Venues within 330 feet of property zoned residential or mixed-use zoning districts:

- a) Set a maximum decibel level at 55 decibels between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, and 56 decibels between 9:00 pm and 9:00 am, as regulated by the provisions in Chapter 51A Article 6.*
- b) Limit the outside area, not including on-site parking, to 25% of the indoor floor area.*

3. CPC Recommendation

On April 9, the City Plan Commission recommended adoption of the attached amendments.

**CPC Recommended
Chapter 51A Amendments**

**Chapter 51A Dallas Development Code: Ordinance No. 19455,
as amended.**

**Article IV.
Zoning Regulations**

SEC. 51A-4.210. RETAIL AND PERSONAL SERVICE USES.

...

(b) Specific uses.

...

(18) Mortuary, or funeral home, ~~or commercial wedding chapel.~~

(A) Definition:

(i) A mortuary or funeral home is a facility in which dead bodies are prepared for burial or cremation or funeral services are conducted.

~~(ii) A commercial wedding chapel is a facility, not associated with a church, where a wedding is performed for profit.~~

(B) Districts permitted: By right in CR, RR, CS, central area, mixed use, and multiple commercial districts.

(C) Required off-street parking:

(i) Except as provided in this subparagraph, none.

(ii) When located in an MD-1 Modified Delta Overlay, in existence on May 14, 2025:

(aa) One space per 300 square feet of floor area other than the chapel, plus one space for each two seats in the chapel. Up to 50 percent of the required off-street parking for this use may be tandem spaces.

(bb) If all spaces provided are non-tandem, the off-street parking requirement for this use is one space per 500 feet of floor area

other than the chapel, plus one space for each two seats in the chapel.

(D) Required off-street loading:

SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR AREA IN STRUCTURE	TOTAL REQUIRED SPACES OR BERTHS
0 to 10,000	NONE
10,000 to 60,000	1
Each additional 100,000 or fraction thereof	1 additional

~~(E) Additional provisions:~~

~~(i) A commercial wedding chapel may provide reception areas, but no alcoholic beverages may be sold.~~

...

(23.5) Event venue.

(A) Definition: A facility that is rented for private events for invited guests such as ceremonies, receptions, parties, celebrations, banquets, professional or industry gatherings, and fundraisers.

(B) Districts permitted: By right in all nonresidential zoning districts except NO(A) and NS(A). By SUP only in NO(A) and NS(A) districts. RAR required in all nonresidential districts except central area districts.

(C) Required off-street parking: One space per 200 square feet of floor area.

(D) Required off-street loading:

<u>SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR AREA IN STRUCTURE</u>	<u>TOTAL REQUIRED SPACES OR BERTHS</u>
<u>0 to 10,000</u>	<u>NONE</u>
<u>10,000 to 60,000</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Each additional 100,000 or fraction thereof</u>	<u>1 additional</u>

(E) Additional provisions:

(i) Any general admission fee, including donations made at the door in exchange for entrance by the general public, is prohibited except for:

(aa) fundraisers or events for bona fide non-profit organizations, places of worship, or educational facilities; or

- (bb) registration fees for pre-registered guests to a professional or industry gathering.
- (ii) An establishment meeting the definition of event venue that was issued a certificate of occupancy for commercial amusement (inside) or commercial wedding chapel before [date of passage] may continue to legally operate as a conforming use.
- (iii) Food and beverages may be prepared or served on-site to invited guests.
- (iv) Live performances or entertainment may be provided incidental to a private event hosted at an event venue.
- (v) Residential uses and lodging uses may not be used as event venues except when customarily incidental to a main lodging use.
- (vi) When an event venue is within 330 feet of a property zoned a residential or mixed-use zoning district.
 - (aa) The maximum decibel level is 65 decibels between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm and 56 decibels between 9:00 pm and 9:00 am, as regulated by the provisions in Chapter 51A Article 6; and
 - (bb) The amount of area outside, not including on-site parking, must be no more than 25% the inside floor area.

DELETED

**CPC Recommended
Chapter 51 Amendments**

Chapter 51 Former Dallas Development Code

**Article IV.
Zoning Regulations**

SEC. 51-4.208. RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT USES.

...

(14) Event venue.

(A) Definition: A facility that is rented for private events for invited guests such as ceremonies, receptions, parties, celebrations, banquets, business events, professional or industry gatherings, and fundraisers.

(B) Districts permitted: By right in all nonresidential zoning districts except NO(A) and NS(A). By SUP only in NO(A) and NS(A) districts. RAR required in all nonresidential districts except central area districts.

(C) Required off-street parking: One space per 200 square feet of floor area.

(D) Required off-street loading:

<u>SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR AREA IN STRUCTURE</u>	<u>TOTAL REQUIRED SPACES OR BERTHS</u>
<u>0 to 10,000</u>	<u>NONE</u>
<u>10,000 to 60,000</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Each additional 100,000 or fraction thereof</u>	<u>1 additional</u>

(E) Additional provisions:

(i) Any general admission fee, including donations made at the door in exchange for entrance by the general public, is prohibited except for:

(aa) fundraisers or events for bona fide non-profit organizations, places of worship, or educational facilities; or

- (bb) registration fees for pre-registered guests to a professional or industry gathering.
- (ii) An establishment meeting the definition of reception facility that was issued a certificate of occupancy for commercial amusement (inside) or commercial wedding chapel before [date of passage] may continue to legally operate as a conforming use.
- (iii) Food and beverages may be prepared or served on-site to invited guests.
- (iv) Live performances or entertainment may be provided incidental to a private event hosted at a Reception Facility.
- (v) Residential uses and lodging uses may not be used as Reception Facilities except when customarily incidental to a main lodging use.
- (vi) When an event venue is within 330 feet of a property zoned a residential or mixed-use zoning district:
 - (aa) The maximum decibel level is 65 decibels between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm and 56 decibels between 9:00 pm and 9:00 am, as regulated by the provisions in Chapter 51A Article 6; and
 - (bb) The amount of area outside, not including on-site parking, must be no more than 25% the inside floor area.

SEC. 51-4.210. PROFESSIONAL, PERSONAL SERVICE, AND CUSTOM CRAFT USES.

...

(24) ~~Reserved. Commercial wedding chapel.~~

~~(A) Definition: A facility, not associated with a church, where a wedding is performed for a profit.~~

~~(B) Districts permitted: SC, GR, LC, HC, central area, and industrial districts.~~

~~(C) Required off-street parking: None.~~

~~(D) Required off-street loading:~~

SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR AREA IN STRUCTURE	TOTAL REQUIRED SPACES OR BERTHS
0 to 10,000	NONE
10,000 to 60,000	4
Each additional 100,000 or fraction thereof	1 additional

~~(E) Additional provisions:~~

~~(i) This use may provide reception areas, but no alcoholic beverages may be sold.~~

DELETED