Zoning Resolution

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Zohran K. Mamdani, Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Sideya Sherman, Chair

37-71 - Basic Design Criteria

File generated by https://zr.planning.nyc.gov on 11/25/2026

37-71 - Basic Design Criteria

LAST AMENDED
10/17/2007

37-711 - Definitions

LAST AMENDED
10/17/2007

Corner public plaza

A “corner public plaza” is a #public plaza# that is located on an intersection of two or more #streets#.

Through block public plaza

A “through block public plaza” is a #public plaza# or portion of a #public plaza# that is not a #corner public plaza# and that connects two #streets# that are parallel or within 45 degrees of being parallel to each other.

37-712 - Area dimensions

LAST AMENDED
6/10/2009

A #public plaza# shall contain an area of not less than 2,000 square feet. In no case shall spaces between existing #buildings# remaining on the #zoning lot# qualify as #public plazas#. In addition, in

order to preserve the provisions relating to the boundaries, proportions and obstructions of #public plazas#, on any one #zoning lot#, an open area which does not qualify for bonus #floor area# may not be located between two #public plazas#, or between a #public plaza# and a #building# wall or #arcade#.

Any non-bonused open area located adjacent to a #public plaza#, other than an open area bounding a #street line# used for pedestrian access, must either:

(a) be separated from the #public plaza# by a buffer, such as a wall, decorative fence, or opaque plantings at least six feet in height; or

(b) meet all requirements for minor portions of #public plazas# related to size, configuration, orientation, as specified in Section 37-716.

37-713 - Locational restrictions

LAST AMENDED
7/20/2017

No #public plaza#, or portion thereof, shall be located within 175 feet of an existing #publicly accessible open area# or #public park# as measured along the #street line# on which the existing amenity fronts if the #public plaza# is to be located on the same side of the #street#, or as measured along the directly opposite #street line# if the #public plaza# is to be located on the other side of the #street#. Such distance shall include the width of any #street# that intersects the #street# on which the amenity fronts. However, such location restriction may be waived if the #public plaza# is located directly across the #street# from the existing #publicly accessible open area# or #public park# and if the Chairperson of the City Planning Commission finds that the location of the #public plaza# at such location would create or contribute to a pedestrian circulation network connecting the two or more open areas.

Additional provisions regarding the location of a #public plaza# are set forth in the #Special Midtown District#, the #Special Lower Manhattan District# and the #Special Downtown Brooklyn District#.

37-714 - Restrictions on orientation

LAST AMENDED
10/17/2007

For purposes of the orientation requirements, a "north-facing," "south-facing," "east-facing" or "west-facing" #street line# means a #street line# facing within 45 degrees of the direction indicated. To front on a #street# means to be contiguous to the #street line# or to a sidewalk widening along the #street line#.

(a) Where the major portion of a #public plaza# fronts on only one #street line#, such major portion is not permitted to front on a north-facing #street line# of a #zoning lot#.

(b) No major portion of a #public plaza# shall only front on a west-facing #street line# or an east-facing #street line# if the #zoning lot# also has frontage that is 40 feet or more in length on a south-facing #street line#.

(c) A #corner public plaza# must have its major portion, as defined in paragraph (b) of Section 37-715, front on the south-facing #street line#. In the case of a #zoning lot# having frontage on a south-facing #street line# of less than 40 feet, or having its frontage at the intersection of a north-facing #street line# with either an east- or west-facing #street line#, the major portion must front on the east- or west-facing #street line#.

However, the orientation restrictions may be modified if the Chairperson of the City Planning Commission finds that the orientation regulations would conflict with mandatory #street wall# regulations or that the modifications would result in better access to light and air for the #public plaza#.

37-715 - Requirements for major portions of public plazas

LAST AMENDED
10/17/2007

The major portion of a #public plaza# is the largest area of the #public plaza# and the area of primary use. Major portions shall be generally regular in shape, easily and directly accessible from adjoining #buildings# and public spaces, and continuously visible from within all portions of the #public plaza# and from adjoining public spaces. Major portions shall occupy no less than 75 percent of the total #public plaza# area.

(a) All contiguous #public plaza# areas on a #zoning lot# shall be considered as one #public plaza#.

(b) The shape and dimensions of a #public plaza# shall be such that all points within the major portion shall be visible when viewed perpendicular from each adjacent #street#. #Corner public plazas# that front on two #streets# that do not meet at a 90 degree angle must be fully visible when viewed perpendicular from one adjoining #street# and at least 50 percent of the #public plaza# must be visible when viewed perpendicular to the other adjoining #street#. For the purposes of this regulation, points that when viewed in plan may be joined by a straight line shall be considered visible one from the other; visibility between points shall not be affected by permitted obstructions or by changes of grade. Points within #public plazas# that front on three intersecting streets shall be treated as two #corner public plazas#.

The major portion of a #public plaza# shall be at least 75 percent of the #public plaza's# total area, except that in the case of a #through block public plaza#, pursuant to Section 37-717, a line drawn within 25 feet of the midblock line shall divide the #through block public plaza# into two areas that must separately meet all requirements of the #public plaza# regulations. The major portion of the #public plaza# shall be subject to the proportional requirements set forth in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this Section.

(c) The major portion of a #public plaza# shall have a minimum average width and depth of 40 feet. For #public plazas# that front on only one #street#, no more than 20 percent of the #public plaza# area may have a width of less than 40 feet. Dimensions shall be measured parallel and perpendicular to the #street line# on which the #public plaza# fronts.

(d) For major portions of #public plazas#, the maximum width measured parallel to any one #street# shall not be greater than three times the average depth of the #public plaza# measured perpendicular to the #street line# or the average width measured parallel to any one #street# shall not be greater than three times the maximum depth of the #public plaza# measured perpendicular to the #street line#.

37-716 - Requirements for minor portions of public plazas

LAST AMENDED
10/17/2007

Minor portions of #public plazas# are secondary areas that allow for additional flexibility in the shape and configuration of a #public plaza#. Minor portions shall not occupy more than 25 percent of the total area of the #public plaza#. The width of a minor portion shall be measured parallel to the line separating the major and minor portions. The depth of a minor portion shall be measured perpendicular to the line separating the major and minor portions. The provisions of Section 37-715 (Requirements for major portions of public plazas) shall not apply to such minor portions and the following regulations shall apply:

(a) The minor portion shall have a minimum average width and depth of 15 feet.

(b) The minor portion must be directly adjacent to the major portion.

(c) All points within the minor portion must be visible from within the major portion when viewed perpendicular to the line separating the major and minor portions.

(d) The minor portion must front directly on a #street# adjoining the major portion, unless the minor portion has:

(1) a width to depth ratio of at least 3:1; and

(2) its longest dimension contiguous with the major portion.

37-717 - Regulations for through block public plazas

LAST AMENDED
10/17/2007

#Through block public plazas# shall be treated as two #public plazas# separated at a line drawn within 25 feet of the midblock line.

Where any #building# wall or walls adjoin a #through block public plaza# or through #block# portion of a #public plaza# and where such wall or walls exceed 120 feet aggregate length, a minimum 10 foot setback at a height between 60 and 90 feet is required for the full length of the #building# wall.

#Through block public plazas# shall contain a circulation path at least 10 feet in width, connecting the two #streets# on which the #public plaza# fronts, as specified in Section 37-723.

37-718 - Paving

LAST AMENDED
10/17/2007

The paving of the #public plaza# shall be of non-skid durable materials that are decorative and compatible in color and pattern with other design features of the #public plaza#.