Zoning Resolution

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Zohran K. Mamdani, Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Sideya Sherman, Chair

37-741 - Seating

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

37-741 - Seating

LAST AMENDED
6/10/2009

Standards for seating within #public plazas# are intended to facilitate the provision of abundant, comfortable and accessible seating throughout the #public plaza#, including, more specifically, as follows:

(a) to provide a broad variety of seating types and configurations;

(b) to accommodate individual users engaged in solitary activities as well as groups engaged in social activities;

(c) to provide a comfortable and safe seating surface by providing smooth, even and level surfaces with rounded edges;

(d) to incorporate, to the maximum extent possible, a combination of fixed benches, moveable chairs, seating with backs, seat walls and ledges, and seating steps;

(e) to provide ample opportunity for social seating as a basic seating type that consists of seats that are placed in close proximity and at angles to one another or in facing configurations that facilitate social interaction.

There shall be a minimum of one linear foot of seating for each 30 square feet of #public plaza# area.

A minimum of one linear foot of the required seating for every two linear feet of #street# frontage must be located within 15 feet of the #street line#. At least 50 percent of this seating shall have backs and at least 50 percent of the seats with backs shall face the #street#.

Seating requirements may be satisfied by the following seating types: moveable seating, fixed individual seats, fixed benches with and without backs, and design-feature seating such as seat walls, planter ledges, or seating steps. All #public plazas# shall provide at least two different types of seating. #Public plazas# greater than 5,000 square feet in area shall provide at least three different types of seating. #Public plazas# greater than 10,000 square feet in area must provide moveable seating as one of the required seating types.

Not more than 50 percent of the linear seating capacity may be in moveable seats that may be stored between the hours of sunset and sunrise, where the City Planning Commission has authorized a limitation on the hours of access pursuant to Section 37-727.

Devices or forms affixed or incorporated into planter ledges, steps, sills or other horizontal surfaces that would otherwise be suitable for seating that are intended to prevent or inhibit seating (such as spikes, metal bars, or pointed, excessively rough, or deliberately uncomfortable materials or forms) shall be prohibited.

Deterrents to skateboards, rollerblades and other wheeled devices are permitted on seating surfaces if they do not inhibit seating, maintain a minimum distance of five feet between deterrents, and are integrated into the seating surface at the time of manufacture or construction or should be constructed of materials that are consistent with the materials and finish quality of the seating surface.

The following standards shall be met for all required seating:

(1) Seating shall have a minimum depth of 18 inches. Seating with 36 inches or more in depth may count towards two seats, provided there is access to both sides. When required seating is provided on a planter ledge, such ledge must have a minimum depth of 22 inches.

(2) Seating shall have a height not less than 16 inches nor greater than 20 inches above the level of the adjacent walking surface. However, as described in paragraph (5) of this Section, seating steps may have a height not to exceed 30 inches and seating walls may have a height not to exceed 24 inches.

(3) At least 50 percent of the linear feet of fixed seating shall have backs at least 14 inches high and a maximum seat depth of 20 inches. Walls located adjacent to a seating surface shall not count as seat backs. All seat backs must either be contoured in form for comfort or shall be reclined from vertical between 10 to 15 degrees.

(4) Moveable seating or chairs, excluding seating for open air cafes, may be credited as 24 inches of linear seating per chair. Moveable seating provided as a required amenity shall be provided in the amount of one chair per 200 square feet of #public plaza# area. One table shall be provided for every four such moveable chairs.

All moveable seats must have backs and a maximum seat depth of 20 inches. Moveable chairs shall not be chained, fixed or otherwise secured while the #public plaza# is open to the public; moveable chairs, however, may be removed during the nighttime hours of 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

(5) Seating steps and seating walls may be used for required seating if such seating does not, in aggregate, represent more than 15 percent of the linear feet of required seating in the #public plaza#. Seating steps shall not include any steps intended for circulation and must have a height not less than six inches nor greater than 30 inches and a depth not less than 18 inches. Seating walls shall have a height not greater than 18 inches; such seating walls, however, may have a height not to exceed 24 inches if they are located within 10 feet of an edge of the #public plaza#.

(6) Seating in open air cafes shall not count towards meeting the seating requirement of this Section.

(7) Seats that face walls must be a minimum of six feet from such wall.