Zoning Resolution

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Zohran K. Mamdani, Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Sideya Sherman, Chair

37-726 - Permitted obstructions

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

37-726 - Permitted obstructions

LAST AMENDED
12/6/2023

(a) #Public plazas# shall be open to the sky and unobstructed except for the following features, equipment and appurtenances normally found in #public parks# and playgrounds: water features, including fountains, reflecting pools and waterfalls; sculptures and other works of art; seating, including benches, seats and moveable chairs; trees, planters, planting beds, lawns and other landscape features; arbors or trellises; litter receptacles; bicycle racks; tables and other outdoor furniture; lights and lighting stanchions; public telephones; public restrooms; permitted temporary exhibitions; permitted awnings, canopies or marquees; permitted freestanding #signs#; play equipment; #qualifying exterior wall thickness# added pursuant to Section 33-23 (Permitted Obstructions in Required Yards or Rear Yard Equivalents); permitted kiosks and open-air cafes; stages; subway station entrances, which may include escalators; and drinking fountains.

However, an area occupied in aggregate by such permitted obstruction shall not exceed the maximum percentage cited in paragraph (b) of this Section. In addition, certain of the obstructions listed in this paragraph, (a), shall not be permitted within the sidewalk frontage of a #public plaza#, as described in Section 37-721 (Sidewalk frontage).

(b) Permitted obstructions may occupy a maximum percentage of the area of a #public plaza#, as follows:

For #public plazas# less than 10,000 square feet in area: 40 percent

For #public plazas# less than 10,000 square feet in area with a permitted open air cafe: 50

percent

For #public plazas# 10,000 square feet or more in area: 50 percent

For #public plazas# 10,000 square feet or more in area with a permitted open air cafe: 60 percent.

The area of permitted obstructions shall be measured by outside dimensions. Obstructions that are non-permanent or moveable, such as moveable chairs, open air cafes, or temporary exhibitions shall be confined within gross areas designated on the site plan, and not measured as individual pieces of furniture.

Trees planted flush-to-grade in accordance with the provisions of Section 37-742 (Planting and trees) and tree canopies do not count as obstructions for the purpose of calculating total area occupied by permitted obstructions. Planting beds and their retaining walls for trees count as obstructions, except that lawn, turf or grass areas intended for public access and seating shall not count as obstructions, provided such lawns do not differ in elevation from the adjoining #public plaza# elevation by more than six inches. #Qualifying exterior wall thickness# added pursuant to Section 33-23 in any #publicly accessible open area# or #public plaza# shall not count as obstructions for the purpose of calculating total area occupied by permitted obstructions.

(c) Canopies, awnings, marquees and sun control devices

(1) Entrances to #buildings# located within a #public plaza# may have a maximum of one canopy, awning or marquee, provided that such canopy, awning or marquee:

(i) has a maximum area of 250 square feet;

(ii) does not project into the #public plaza# more than 15 feet when measured perpendicular to the #building# facade;

(iii) is located a minimum of 15 feet above the level of the #public plaza# adjacent to the #building# entrance; and

(iv) does not contain vertical supports.

Such canopies, awnings, and marquees shall be designed to provide maximum visibility into the #public plaza# from adjoining #streets# and the adjacent #building#. However, canopies, awnings and marquees associated with entrances to #buildings# containing #residences# located within a #public plaza# may project more than 15 feet into the #public plaza# and contain vertical supports if they are located entirely within 10 feet of the edge of the #public plaza#.

(2) Sun control devices may be located within a #public plaza#, provided that all such devices:

(i) shall be located above the level of the first #story# ceiling;

(ii) shall be limited to a maximum projection of 2 feet, 6 inches;

(iii) shall have solid surfaces that, in aggregate, cover an area no more than 20 percent of the area of the #building# wall (as viewed in elevation) from which they project; and

(iv) may rise above the permitted #building# height, up to the height of a parapet wall or guardrail, pursuant to Section 33-42 (Permitted Obstructions);

(d) Prohibition of garage entrances, driveways, parking spaces, loading berths, exhaust vents, mechanical equipment and #building# trash storage facilities

No garage entrances, driveways, parking spaces, passenger drop offs or loading berths shall be permitted within a #public plaza#. No #building# trash storage facilities are permitted within a #public plaza#, nor shall any #building# trash storage facility be accessed or serviced through

the #public plaza#. If garage entrances, parking spaces, passenger drop offs, driveways, loading berths or #building# trash storage facilities are located near or adjoin a #public plaza#, they shall be separated from it by a barrier sufficient to substantially conceal these facilities and any vehicles therein when viewed from any point in the #public plaza#.

No exhaust vents or mechanical equipment are permitted on any #public plaza# or on any #building# wall fronting upon the #public plaza#, unless such exhaust vents are more than 15 feet above the level of the adjacent #public plaza#. All exhaust vents and mechanical equipment located adjacent to a #public plaza# shall be separated from it by a barrier sufficient to substantially, visually and audibly, conceal their presence and operation. Air intake vents or shafts shall be permitted within a #public plaza#, provided that such vents are concealed from public view by planting or other design features and that such vents do not impair visibility within the #public plaza# area.