Zoning Resolution

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Zohran K. Mamdani, Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Sideya Sherman, Chair

81-681 - Mandatory requirements for qualifying sites

File generated by https://zr.planning.nyc.gov on 11/6/2026

81-681 - Mandatory requirements for qualifying sites

LAST AMENDED
5/8/2019

(a) Building energy design requirements for #buildings# on #qualifying sites#

To ensure advancement of goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, #buildings# on #qualifying sites# shall either:

(1) utilize a district steam system for the #building's# heating and hot water systems; or

(2) the core and shell of such #building# shall exceed the standards of the chosen commercial building energy-efficiency compliance path within the 2016 New York City Energy Conservation Code (NYCECC), by three percent.

Compliance with the provisions of this Section shall be demonstrated to the Department of Buildings at the time of issuance of a new building permit for a #development# or, where permitted, an #enlargement# on a #qualifying site#.

The City Planning Commission may, by rule, modify the standards of this Section, as necessary, to ensure that the environmental standards established herein, meet or exceed the current best practices in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

(b) Mandatory publicly accessible space requirements for qualifying sites

A #qualifying site# shall provide a publicly accessible space, open or enclosed, as defined

herein, in accordance with the size provisions of paragraph (b)(1) of this Section and the design requirements of paragraph (b)(2). Each publicly accessible space shall require a certification by the Chairperson of the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 37-78 (Compliance), as modified herein.

For the purposes of this Chapter on a #qualifying site#, a "publicly accessible space" shall be defined as an open or enclosed area provided for public use and enjoyment on the #zoning lot#. An "open publicly accessible space" shall be defined as a publicly accessible space, that is open to the sky on a #qualifying site#, and an "enclosed publicly accessible space" shall be defined as a fully enclosed, climate-controlled publicly accessible space on a #qualifying site#. The design standards contained in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this Section for an enclosed publicly accessible space are intended to serve the same purposes outlined for #public plazas# in Section 37-70.

(1) Type and minimum size

(i) A #qualifying site# with a #lot area# of at least 30,000 square feet but less than 45,000 square feet shall provide a publicly accessible space, open or enclosed, with an area of not less than 10 percent of the #lot area# of the #zoning lot#.

(ii) A #qualifying site# with a #lot area# of 45,000 square feet but less than 65,000 square feet shall provide an open publicly accessible space with an area of not less than 10 percent of the #lot area# of the #zoning lot#, except that where the provisions of Sections 81-40 (MANDATORY DISTRICT PLAN ELEMENTS), inclusive, and 81-67 (Special Mandatory District Plan Element Requirements), inclusive, are applicable to the #qualifying site# and preclude an open publicly accessible space from being provided on the #qualifying site#, an enclosed publicly accessible space shall be provided in the proposed

#building#.

In addition to complying with paragraphs (a) through (d) of Section 37-78, each application for an enclosed publicly accessible space shall demonstrate which of the applicable provisions of Sections 81-40 and 81-67, inclusive, conflict with the design requirements set forth in 37-70, inclusive, and that they necessitate the provision of the enclosed publicly accessible space in lieu of an open publicly accessible space.

(iii) A #qualifying site# with a #lot area# of 65,000 square feet or greater shall provide an open publicly accessible space with an area of not less than 10,000 square feet. Where such #qualifying site# has a #through lot# portion, such #qualifying site# shall provide an open publicly accessible space across the #through lot# portion.

However, for a #qualifying site# with a #lot area# of 80,000 square feet or greater that includes an existing entrance to a rail mass-transit facility located outside the #through lot# portion of the #zoning lot# existing on May 8, 2019, such open publicly accessible space may be located so as to include the entrance to a rail mass-transit facility, provided that such open publicly accessible space adjoins a #street# or a required sidewalk widening, as applicable.

(2) Design requirements for publicly accessible spaces

(i) Open publicly accessible space

For open publicly accessible space, the provisions of Section 37-70, inclusive, shall apply, except that the provisions of Section 37-713 (Locational restrictions) shall not apply. In addition, the following modifications or waivers may be applied under certain circumstances:

(a) For #qualifying sites# where an open publicly accessible space is permitted to adjoin a #street# or a required sidewalk widening to accommodate an entrance to a rail mass-transit facility in accordance with paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this Section, and the majority of the subsurface area of such #qualifying site# is occupied by a railroad right-of-way, thus imposing practical difficulty in configuring the #building# or required publicly accessible space:

(1) the provisions of Sections 81-42 (Retail Continuity Along Designated Streets), 81-43 (Street Wall Continuity Along Designated Streets) and 81-671 (Special street wall requirements), paragraph (d) of Section 37-715 (Requirements for major portions of public plazas) need not apply;

(2) where #street wall# requirements are not applied, the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of Section 37-726 (Permitted obstructions) may be modified to allow a portion of an open publicly accessible space to be covered by a #building or other structure#, provided that there is an average separation of at least 50 feet between the level of such open publicly accessible space and any portion of #building# above, and further provided that any such portion shall be

located no lower than 40 feet above the level of such open publicly accessible space. In addition, such #building or other structure# shall not obstruct more than 60 percent of the area of such open publicly accessible space;

(3) the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of Section 37-76 (Mandatory Allocation of Frontages for Permitted Uses) need not apply, where at least one food service kiosk shall abut or be included within such open publicly accessible space. The size limitations of paragraph (a), and the certification requirements of paragraph (c) of Section 37-73 shall not apply to such kiosk; and

(4) where the provisions of paragraph (d) of Section 37-715 are not applied, the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 37-721 (Sidewalk frontage) may be modified to require no more than 40 percent of the area within 15 feet of any such #street line# to be free of obstructions and the provisions of Section 37-741 (Seating), may be modified to exclude the length of any such #street line# from the calculation of the amount of seating required within 15 feet of such #street line#.

(b) For #qualifying sites# where an open publicly accessible space is permitted to adjoin a #street# or a required sidewalk widening to accommodate an entrance to a rail mass-transit facility in accordance with paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this Section, the Chairperson of the City Planning Commission shall permit modifications to the remaining design provisions of Section 37-70, inclusive, upon certification to the

Department of Buildings that such modifications are limited to those that directly address practical difficulties resulting from the presence of the entrance to a rail mass-transit facility within the open publicly accessible space. Any application shall include materials demonstrating the extent of modifications necessary. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, shall determine the appropriate amount of above-grade pedestrian circulation space into and around the entrance to such rail mass-transit facility.

(ii) Enclosed publicly accessible space

For enclosed publicly accessible spaces, the following shall apply:

(a) An enclosed publicly accessible space shall have a minimum height of 30 feet or the height of the ground floor level, whichever is greater, and a minimum width and depth, at any point, of 30 feet. Such enclosed publicly accessible space shall be located on the ground floor level of the #building# and shall be directly accessible from an adjoining #street# or #publicly accessible open area# that the area fronts. A minimum of one entrance to the enclosed publicly accessible space shall be provided from the adjoining #street# on which it fronts; however, if it fronts on more than one #street#, such entrance shall be from the #street# with the longer frontage. The aggregate width of doorways accessing such enclosed publicly accessible space shall not be less than 10 feet in width.

(b) All ground floor level #street walls# enclosing the enclosed publicly accessible space shall be treated with clear, untinted, transparent materials. Such transparent materials shall occupy at least 70 percent of the surface area of such ground floor level #street wall# between a height of two feet and 30 feet, or the height of the ground floor ceiling, whichever is higher, as measured from the adjoining sidewalk. Such enclosed publicly accessible space shall be heated or air-conditioned, and the standards for heating, ventilating and air-conditioning shall be at least equal to those of the lobby for the principal #use# of the #building#.

(c) Public access to the enclosed publicly accessible space shall be provided, at a minimum, from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. However, if a cafe or kiosk, pursuant to Section 37-73 (Kiosks and Open Air Cafes), is provided within, such enclosed publicly accessible space shall remain open to the public during the hours of operation of the cafe or kiosk, if such hours are longer than otherwise required by this Section.

The hours of access shall be included on all required entry plaques and information plaques in accordance with the provisions of Section 37-751 (Public space signage systems) and for through #block# enclosed publicly accessible spaces, an information plaque shall be provided in accordance with paragraph (h)(2)(viii) of Section 37-53 (Design standards for Pedestrian Circulation Spaces).

(d) The provisions of Sections 37-718 (Paving), 37-722 (Level of plaza), 37-728 (Standards of accessibility for persons with disabilities), 37-744 (Litter receptacles), 37-745 (Bicycle parking), 37-746 (Drinking fountains), 37-748 (Additional amenities), 37-752 (Prohibition signs),

37-753 (Accessory signs) and 37-77 (Maintenance) shall apply to enclosed publicly accessible spaces.

(e) The provisions of Section 37-723 (Circulation paths) shall apply to enclosed publicly accessible spaces. In addition, for enclosed publicly accessible spaces provided in conjunction with subway entrances and/or designed to provide connection to above- and/or below-grade improvements, an unobstructed pedestrian circulation path shall be provided from at least one entrance of the enclosed publicly accessible space to such subway entrance and to such above- and/or below-grade improvements.

(f) The provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of Section 37-726 (Permitted obstructions) shall apply to enclosed publicly accessible spaces and are modified as follows:

(1) structural columns shall be considered permitted obstructions. The area occupied by such structural columns shall be excluded from the area calculations for the enclosed publicly accessible space. In addition, interior structural columns shall have an aggregate area of no more than two percent of the total enclosed publicly accessible space. Such columns shall not be considered permitted obstructions in any circulation path; and

(2) a cafe or kiosk permitted by certification pursuant to Section 37-73 (Kiosks and Open Air Cafes) shall be considered a permitted obstruction within an enclosed publicly accessible

space and may not occupy more than 20 percent of the enclosed publicly accessible space.

(g) The provisions of Section 37-741 for seating shall apply to enclosed publicly accessible spaces, except that such provisions are modified as follows:

(1) the requirements of seating within 15 feet of a #street line# shall not apply;

(2) all of the linear seating capacity may be in moveable seats. All such moveable seats must remain in the enclosed publicly accessible space during the hours of operation; and

(3) the requirement that seats facing walls be located a minimum of six feet from such wall shall only apply to fixed seating.

(h) The requirements of Section 37-742 for planting and trees shall apply to enclosed publicly accessible spaces, except that the surface area of any vertical planting may be included in the calculation of the total area of planting beds that are provided, and trees shall not be required.

(i) All enclosed publicly accessible spaces shall be illuminated with a minimum level of illumination of not less than five horizontal foot candles (lumens per foot) throughout the space. The requirements of Section 37-743 for a lighting schedule, a diagram of light level distribution and electrical power shall apply.

(j) At least 50 percent of the total frontage of all #building# walls fronting on an enclosed publicly accessible space, excluding such frontage occupied by #street walls#, #building# lobbies or #building# walls #abutting# #lot lines#, shall be limited to retail, personal service or amusement #uses# permitted by the underlying zoning district regulations, but not including #uses# in Use Groups 6B, 6E, 7C, 7D, 8C, 8D, 9B, 10B, 11 and 12D or banks, automobile showrooms or plumbing, heating or ventilating equipment showrooms. For such #building# walls, the transparency provisions of paragraph (c) of Section 37-76 shall apply.

(k) The area of the enclosed publicly accessible space shall be exempt from calculations for #floor area# as defined in Section 12-10 (DEFINITIONS).

In addition, a maximum of 30 percent of the area of the publicly accessible space, whether open or enclosed, may be counted towards meeting the pedestrian circulation space requirement, up to a maximum of 3,000 square feet.