



Zoning Resolution

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Eric Adams, Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Daniel R. Garodnick, Chair

37-71 - Basic Design Criteria

File generated by <https://zr.planning.nyc.gov> on 7/26/2025

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#.