

**AN ORDINANCE
OF THE
CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS**

By Goodman

**Amending Title 20, Chapter 535 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to
Zoning Code: Regulations of General Applicability**

The City Council of The City of Minneapolis do ordain as follows:

Section 1. That Chapter 535 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances be amended by adding thereto a new article XI, including new Sections 535.770-535.810, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XI. PLAZAS

535.770. Purpose. Standards governing plazas are established to promote year-round gathering places designed to maximize pedestrian access, interaction and visibility, reinforce public spaces, create community identity, promote public safety, and visually enhance development.

535.780 Definitions. As used in this article, the following words shall mean:

Plaza. An exterior open space designed for community gathering that is primarily hardscaped and accessible to the public, fronting along a public street, public sidewalk, or public pathway. Plazas shall include those on privately-owned property, public property and public right-of-way intended for active or passive use by the general public for circulation, seating, or activity space.

535.790. Permitted uses subject to administrative review and approval. Plazas shall be permitted in all zoning districts. Plazas with at least two thousand (2,000) square feet of contiguous area, not counting walkways, shall be subject to administrative review and approval by the zoning administrator, as specified in section 535.800, and shall comply with the standards of section 535.810.

535.800. Administrative review process. (a) *In general.* The zoning administrator, in consultation with the planning director, shall approve or deny such application. The zoning administrator may impose such conditions and require such guarantees deemed reasonable and necessary to protect the public interest and to ensure compliance with the standards and purposes of this zoning ordinance and policies of the comprehensive plan. If proposed as part of a project that includes a separate land use application, a plaza may be reviewed concurrently with said application, provided all requirements of this section have been met.

(b) *Submittal requirements.* In addition to the general application requirements of Chapter 525, Administration and Enforcement, the applicant shall submit the following:

- (1) A scaled and dimensioned site plan, including the following items:
 - a. All property lines.
 - b. Adjacent streets, sidewalks, pathways and alleys, including proposed pedestrian access points.
 - c. Adjacent buildings with uses identified, including pedestrian access from any adjacent buildings.
 - d. Square footages of plaza area with surface materials identified.
 - e. Any proposed right-of-way encroachments.
 - f. Landscaping plan showing existing and proposed shrubs and trees, including location and type.
 - g. Mechanical equipment.
 - h. Proposed furnishings.
 - i. Proposed lighting.
 - j. Topography.
 - k. The direction of water drainage from the plaza area.
 - l. North arrow and date the plan was drawn.

(c) *Appeals.* Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 525, Administration and Enforcement, decisions of the zoning administrator regarding the administrative review of permitted plazas shall be subject to appeal to the city planning commission.

535.810. Development standards for all permitted plazas. All plazas with at least two thousand (2,000) square feet shall be subject to the following standards:

- (1) Shape.
 - a. To avoid narrow spaces, the average length of the plaza shall not exceed three (3) times the average width in any direction.
- (2) Placement.
 - a. The placement of plazas shall maximize natural surveillance and visibility of adjacent spaces and public sidewalks and facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.

b. Plazas shall be designed to maximize interaction with occupants of adjacent buildings and uses.

(3) Access.

a. All plazas must be designed to allow for exceptionally accessible pedestrian and bicycle access through and/or around the plaza.

b. A minimum of two access points shall be provided for each plaza, with one access being connected to a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway.

c. All plazas shall be designed in accordance with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

d. Clear and well lighted walkways a minimum of four (4) feet in width shall connect the plaza to an entrance of any building on the same zoning lot.

e. When adjacent to a transit stop, direct access to the plaza shall be provided for transit users.

(4) Natural surveillance and visibility. Plazas shall be designed to control and guide movement through the site, promote natural observation and maximize opportunities for people to observe adjacent spaces and public sidewalks.

(5) Aerial obstructions. Plazas shall be unobstructed to the sky except for seating, arbors, trellises, lighting, water features, public art and landscaping. In downtown districts, up to thirty (30) percent of the plaza area may include a covered arcade with a minimum height of twenty-eight (28) feet.

(6) Surface materials. Plazas shall be surfaced with durable and decorative materials, including but not limited to pervious pavers, decorative pavers, stamped concrete, colored concrete, or brick. Gravel and asphalt shall not be permitted as surface materials.

(7) Seating.

a. A minimum of one (1) linear foot of seating shall be provided for each thirty (30) square feet of plaza area.

b. A minimum of fifty (50) percent of the required seating shall consist of fixed seating with backs. No more than twenty-five (25) percent of the required fixed seating shall be allowed along building walls.

c. Seating may take on multiple forms, including traditional and non-traditional seating, provided it is accessible and all other seating requirements of this section are met.

(8) Encroachments and setbacks.

a. Plazas shall not encroach into the public right-of-way without the property owner first obtaining an encroachment permit.

b. All seating, water features, arbors, trellises, trash receptacles or other accessory equipment and furnishings shall comply with the minimum yard requirements of the zoning district in which they are located.

(9) Landscaping.

a. Plazas shall provide a minimum of one (1) tree for each one thousand (1,000) square feet of plaza area. If proposed as part of a project that has a general landscaping requirement, trees located in the plaza shall contribute toward compliance with the general landscaping requirement.

b. Alternative landscaping materials and/or public art may be considered in lieu of trees.

(10) Lighting. All plazas shall be illuminated in accordance with Chapter 535, Regulations of General Applicability.

(11) Winter use. Plazas shall be designed for winter use and relate to the built form with consideration given to elements such as providing shelter from winds, utilizing seasonally appropriate materials, maximizing access to sunlight and providing for snow and ice removal.

(12) Trash receptacles. A minimum of one trash receptacle and one recycling receptacle shall be provided for each two thousand (2,000) square feet of plaza area.

(13) Maintenance required. All plazas shall be maintained in good order by the property owner for the life of the principal structure. The property owner shall be responsible for snow removal, maintaining green space. All adjacent streets, sidewalks and pathways shall be inspected regularly for purposes of removing any litter found thereon.

(14) Downtown districts. Projects seeking a floor area ratio premium in a downtown district by providing an outdoor urban open space shall comply with all requirements of this section and the requirements of the outdoor urban open space premium as specified in Chapter 549, Downtown Districts.