

## John Fields Plaza Space Requirements Letter 12/06/2019

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**From:** John Fields <[goldenfields22@gmail.com](mailto:goldenfields22@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 06, 2019 10:02 AM  
**To:** Brandon Goldman <[brandon.goldman@ashland.or.us](mailto:brandon.goldman@ashland.or.us)>

**Subject:** Re: Ashland Planning Commission meeting - private plaza spaces topic

Hi Brandon

You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. Plaza space is either beneficial to the developer's intended use or the city should figure out how create public space.

The Mahar building, First place, is a good example of a fenced in private plaza that serves no positive purpose. If it's public it can serve the general population and really get some use. As private space it is only useable for the one building. I never see it being used. If there is no a dining area or open invitation to enjoy the plaza area it's gratuitous. I don't find all the security railing and no trespassing signs around this private space as a Positive contribution to the streetscape or beneficial to the building or downtown.

That area probably cost \$100,000 in the lost street frontage and improvements. The patrons prefer sitting on the sidewalk.

I think public mini park/plaza space is great within dense, urban core but mandating design standards takes a lot of freedom away from the designers that could actually make the intended design better.

Buildings "learn" over time. They will either be modified to better accommodate real needs or if so poorly designed they will be redeveloped. That's how cities grow and great cities are created. It's a layered cake. I find our mandatory standards are filled with unintended consequences. Guidelines and education are quite beneficial. Social engineering is a a mixed bag and has a very high governmental cost.

Even with all our over-site, bad buildings happen. How much worse would they be if we had fewer specific requirements. I guess that's the risk.

I see a major obstacles in how our downtown and city can thrive. Ashland's marginal and seasonal economy cannot support the quality of buildings required by the growing building code demands, and planning standards.

I think plazas need to be public or a space that the building developer sees as intrinsic to the value of their design. Otherwise we are just encouraging superfluous amenities that just drive up cost.

I had foot surgery Wednesday and will be out of commission for the next six weeks so I won't be available to come to the PC study session. My opinion is that we should encourage great building designs and look for opportunities for public space but back off of the mandatory requirements for private space. Our downtown is small enough that we should identify where we want it and look for opportunities for public space and work towards acquiring it.

Thanks,

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