



# Dark Sky and Bird Safe Design Ordinances

Architectural Review Board  
Study Session

July 18, 2024

[www.cityofpaloalto.org](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org)





## Purpose

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- Council Priority 2024: Climate Change & Natural Environment  
*“Initiate an evaluation of strategies to protect natural habitats such as bird safe glass and wildlife protection from light pollution”*
- Comprehensive Plan Policy
  - Policy L-6.3: Encourage bird-friendly design.
  - Program L6.3.1: Develop guidelines for bird-friendly building design that minimizes hazards for birds and reduces the potential for collisions.



# Lighting Standards

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- Updating the existing Lighting Section 18.40.250
- Aligning with *DarkSky Principles* to reduce light pollution
- **Applicability**
- **Shielding**
- **Illumination Level**
- **Lighting Control**
- **Special Purpose Lighting**



# Lighting Standards

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## Applicability

- All new construction and any exterior modifications that require a planning application/approval

## Shielding

- Requirement of shielded lighting
- Exceptions for low-voltage landscape, art/monument, property line, and string lighting

## Illumination Level

- Staff recommends a 3,000 Kelvin limit for exterior lighting
- Retain foot-candle measurements



# Lighting Standards

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## Lighting Control

- Lighting extinguished by 10:00 p.m.
- Motion-sensor activation after 10:00 p.m. with a 10-minute maximum sensor duration

## Special Purpose Lighting

- Security Lighting
- Outdoor Recreational Facilities
- Service Station Lighting
- String Lighting





# Bird-Safe Design Standards

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- Introducing a new PAMC Section: 18.40.280
- **Applicability**
- **Bird Safe Treatment**
- **Bird Safe Treatment Location**
- **Bird Safe Design Standards**
- **Exemptions**



# Bird-Safe Design Standards

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## Applicability

- All new construction and any exterior modifications that require a planning application/approval
- Certain development is exempted

## Exemptions

- Historic Structures
- First-Floor Retail Storefronts
- 100% affordable housing projects
- Single-family homes outside the Bird Sensitive Area



# Bird-Safe Design Standards

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## Bird Safe Treatment

One of the following options:

- Fenestration and Glazing
- Exterior Features
- Threat Factor

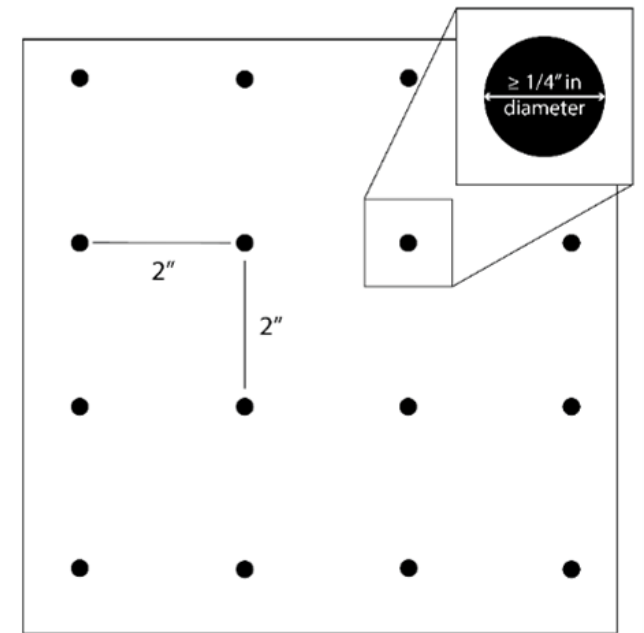
## Bird Safe Treatment Location

- Below 40 Feet: Bird Safe Treatment no less than 90 percent of the facade's surface area
- Above 40 Feet: Bird Safe Treatment no less than 60 percent for the facade's surface area





Sister Cities Café, Philadelphia



Source: City of Berkeley

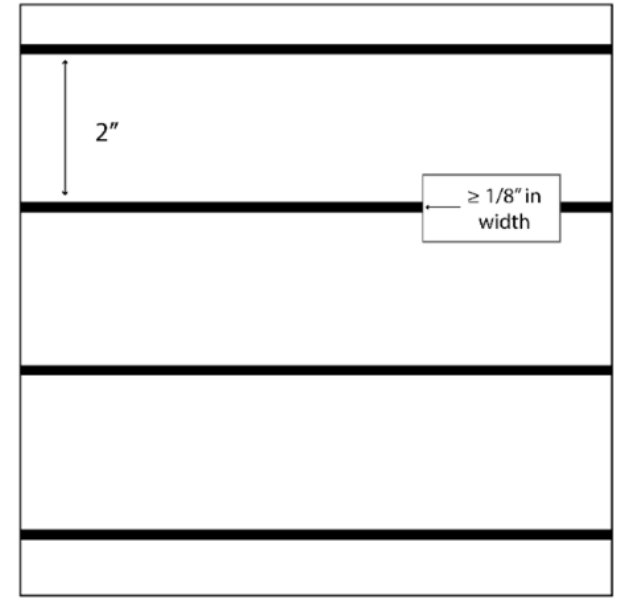


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Image: Vicki Thompson  
Google Campus in Mountain View



Source: City of Berkeley



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Metal Shutter House, New York City



McDonald's at Walt Disney World, Bay Lake, FL



Exterior Shutter sample



The Grounds, Hobsonville Point, NZ





# Discussion: Applicability

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## **Applicability for Lighting and Bird-Safe Design Standards Sections**

- Consider applying to “substantial remodel” as defined in the Building Code

“Substantial Remodel” definition:

- PAMC 16.14.070 definition of "Substantial Remodel" (AKA 50-50-50 rule)
- “Substantial Improvement” (50% of the market value of the structure)
- “Substantial Structural Alteration” (More than 30% of the total floor and roof area)

# Discussion: Bird-Safe Design

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## Exemption

- Single-Family Homes outside of Bird Sensitive Area
  - Current proposal in the draft ordinance
- Height Threshold
  - Increased starting height threshold for application of bird treatment
    - Current draft: existing grade
    - Berkeley: 35 feet
    - San Francisco: 45 feet
- Glazing Percentage
  - Bird treatment glazing required for homes with 50% or more glazing
  - Treated glass requirement on unbroken and larger size glass (24 sq. ft. or larger)

# Staff Recommendation and Next Steps

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- Study Session
  - ARB feedback on design standards on the considerations for lighting standards and bird-safe design standards
  - Opportunity for the public to comment
- Next Steps
  - August 2024: Planning and Transportation Commission recommendation hearing
  - September 2024: City Council Adoption hearing





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