



Agenda Report

Meeting Date: November 21, 2024

Prepared By: Nick Zornes

Subject: Zone Text Amendments for Bird Safe Design and Lighting Performance Standards.

COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA

- ☐ Business Communities
- ☐ Circulation Safety and Efficiency
- ☒ Environmental Sustainability
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Neighborhood Safety Infrastructure
- ☒ General Government

RECOMMENDATION

Consider draft ordinance and provide recommendation to the Los Altos City Council for adoption of the proposed ordinances which include the addition of Chapter 14.90 for Bird Safe Design and Chapter 14.91 for Lighting Performance Standards and find that the proposed amendments are exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not Applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed amendments are exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

BACKGROUND

In late 2023, the Los Altos City Council directed staff to develop an ordinance in coordination with the Environmental Commission regarding Bird Safe Design and Dark Skies. The Los Altos Municipal Code does not presently regulate either of these two provisions.

In late spring the Environmental Commission voted on the general requirements of what should be included within a Bird Safe Design and Dark Skies ordinance. Following the discussion regarding the general requirements for the ordinance an Environmental Commission Subcommittee worked directly with the Development Services Department, Management Analyst II and Assistant City Manager on the draft ordinances under consideration. Additionally, the draft ordinances were reviewed by the Environmental Commission on October 9, 2024; the

Environmental Commission made a unanimous decision for the Draft Ordinance to advance to the following stages for adoption.

Since the draft regulations will largely affect housing developments within the City of Los Altos it is essential for these provisions to be included within the Zoning Code which will allow for universal application of standards.

DISCUSSION

The proposed Lighting Performance Standards Ordinance is to protect and enhance the city's natural environment and public health by reducing light pollution at night through reasonable restrictions on outdoor lighting.

	New Builds	Existing Structures
Applicability	Residential, Commercial, City Buildings	
Prohibited Lighting	Blinking, flashing, rotating lights, searchlights, spotlights, high-intensity discharge lighting, aerial lasers	
Compliance Period	Immediate	Residential: 10 years; Commercial: 5 years, City: 10 years
Color Temperature	2700k or lower (warmer yellow light)	
Street Lighting	Shielded and directed downward; Extinguished by 11 PM (exceptions for seasonal or timer-controlled lighting)	

The proposed Bird Safety Ordinance is to protect the natural environment and promote wildlife by minimizing adverse effects of development on resident and migratory birds.

	Requirements
Applicability	Multi-dwelling residential and commercial buildings
Building Features	Avoid highly reflective/transparent glass on facade; Avoid funneling flight paths along buildings; Avoid planting trees close to facades
Facades	Ground to 60 ft: No more than 10% untreated glass; Above 60 ft: no more than 5% untreated glass
Glazing Treatments	Opaque glass, window muntins, exterior insect screens, exterior netting, etc. Treatments must have high color contrast and be applied to the outermost surface

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Ordinance Chapter 14.90
2. Appendix A
3. Draft Ordinance Chapter 14.91
4. Appendix A