



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## New Planning Code Change Summary: Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings

**Code Changes:** Sections 139 and 145.1  
**Case Number:** Board File No. 110785 (199-11 adopted Ordinance)  
**Initiated By:** Planning Commission  
**Legislative Sponsor:** Supervisor Mar  
**Effective Date:** November 7, 2011

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### Section 139 – Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings

**The Way It Was:** On July 14, 2011, 2011 the Planning Commission adopted a policy document titled, “Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings” that established a Commission preference for bird-safe buildings and recommended adoption of this implementing Ordinance. Previously, potential impacts to bird species created by building features were not addressed in the Code.

**The Way It Is Now:** This Section establishes standards for bird-safe buildings to help reduce injury and mortality to birds caused by certain types of new construction, replacement facades, and building features considered to be “bird-hazards”. This section further identifies geographical areas in San Francisco that, due to their location, may increase hazards for birds. These areas are known as “Urban Bird Refuge”.

The two circumstances regulated by this Section are:

- 1) **location-related hazards**, where the siting of a structure creates increased risk to birds, and
- 2) **feature-related hazards**, which may create increased risk to birds regardless of where the structure is located.

**Location-related hazards.** Structures that are near or adjacent to large open spaces and/or water may create increased risk for bird mortality. To address this increased risk, the portion of the structure most likely to sustain bird-strikes requires bird-safe façade treatments.

**Feature-related hazards.** Even if a structure is not located near a locational hazard, particular building features also may create a hazard for birds. Structures that create such a feature-related hazard are required to implement bird-safe treatment for the entire feature-related hazard.

**Exemptions.** Certain exemptions are allowed for Location-Related standards for residential buildings within R-Districts that have limited glass facades (less than 50% glass). Historic buildings must conform with Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties. The Zoning Administrator may also waive or modify requirements to allow equivalent Bird-Safe Glazing treatments upon the recommendation of a qualified biologist.

**Section 145.1 – Street Frontages**

**The Way It Was:** This section preserves, enhances, and promotes attractive, clearly defined street frontages that are pedestrian-oriented, fine-grained, and which are appropriate and compatible with the buildings and uses in Neighborhood Commercial Districts, Commercial Districts, Residential-Commercial Districts, and Mixed Use Districts.

**The Way It Is Now:** Section 145.1 was amended to provide for exceptions to the existing transparency and fenestration requirements for buildings near sensitive habitat, such that buildings located inside of, or within 300 feet of an “Urban Bird Refuge” (defined in Section 139(c)(1)) shall follow glazing requirements within the newly created section 139(c) of the Code.

<p><b>Board File</b> <a href="#">110785</a></p>	<p><b>Ord. No.</b> 199-11</p>	<p><b>Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings</b> Full text available at: <a href="http://www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances11/o0199-11.pdf">http://www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances11/o0199-11.pdf</a></p>
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