
SUBJECT: ADOPTING BIRD SAFE BUILDING DESIGN IN UNINCORPORATED LAKE COUNTY**Summary:**

At its February 5, 2020 meeting, staff committed to initiating a discussion with the PWPT Committee to summarize ongoing research and seek direction from the Committee on potential next steps regarding the implementation of bird safe design regulations in unincorporated Lake County.

Background:

- In 2017, a representative of the Lake County birding community requested that staff conduct research with the goal of creating bird safe design requirements for the County's development code. Staff's research found the following:
 - Bird collisions are a serious environmental concern. While there isn't any data specific to Lake County, according to a 2014 article published by the American Ornithological Society, "Building collisions, and particularly collisions with windows, are a major anthropogenic threat to birds, with rough estimates of between 100 million and 1 billion birds killed annually in the United States".
 - The American Ornithological Society also stated "Based on 23 studies, we estimate that between 365 and 988 million birds (median = 599 million) are killed annually by building collisions in the U.S., with roughly 56% of mortality at low-rises, 44% at residences, and <1% at high-rises."
- In 2017, the Planning, Building and Zoning Committee directed the Department to create a Bird Friendly Design informational webpage to provide the public with background information about the dangers that some building designs present to birds and provide a list of resources to address these dangers. [NOTE: The information page is temporarily off-line following an update in the County's e-platform.]
- At the Committee's direction, staff has also continued to conduct further research into regulatory options to mitigate the risk of bird collisions.

Analysis:

With the assistance of research resources offered by the American Planning Association and information from various conservation organizations, PB&D staff has conducted a review of national and local development codes. It was found that while some jurisdictions have implemented changes in their building and zoning codes to adopt bird safe design, it remains uncommon. When adopted, these design requirements have been exclusively applied to commercial and high-rise residential buildings. No jurisdiction in the United States has yet adopted bird safe design requirements for single family residential structures.

Locally, Cook County and the Cook County Forest Preserve District have instituted policies that require that their major infrastructure projects should include bird safe design. In addition, the City of Highland Park and the Village of Barrington offer their residents informational brochures about the inclusion of bird safe design in building projects. Lake County Facilities considers bird safe design in its projects.

Moving Ahead:

Based on analysis of how other jurisdictions have dealt with the problem, the County may:

1. Formally Encourage Voluntary Inclusion of Bird Safe Design through Proclamation. The County Board may consider adopting a Resolution encouraging the policy of bird safe design and provide further information about voluntary steps the public can take to minimize the frequency of bird collisions with buildings. Examples: Barrington has chosen to adopt a resolution encouraging residents to consider bird safe building features. Highland Park has created an informational pamphlet about bird safe design that is available at its permit counter.

2. Require Bird Safe Design for County Facilities. Highland Park, Cook County and the Cook County Forest Preserve require that their municipal facilities include bird safe design, if possible.
3. Adopt Cost-Reasonable Bird Safe Design Requirements for Commercial Structures. Examples: The City of Toronto, Canada adopted bird friendly safe guidelines for commercial structures, including commercial residential buildings, in 2007. San Francisco adopted similar guidelines.
4. Adopt Cost-Reasonable Bird Safe Design Requirements for both Commercial and Non-Commercial Structures including Private Homes. Staff has not identified any jurisdiction in the United States that requires residential structures to include bird safe design.
5. Reduce landscaping requirements for new commercial developments that include bird safe design features. This would be a unique Lake County approach that encourages bird safe design for new commercial structures.
6. Allow various development incentives for new residential subdivisions and new in-fill housing that include bird safe design features. This would be a unique Lake County approach that encouraged bird safe design for new residential structures.
7. Incentivize bird safe design on additions to existing principal commercial structures or on the facades of residential structures. Examples could include commercial landscaping requirement reductions and/or height, ISR, or other dimensional standard bonuses/reductions. This would be a unique Lake County solution that encourages bird safe design retrofits for existing commercial and residential structures.

Following PWPT Committee discussion on August 26, 2020, PB&D staff will seek direction on next steps regarding Bird Safe Design.

COORDINATION & ALIGNMENT	Staff Coordination	Strategic Initiatives			2020 Strategic Goals					2020 Strategic Themes									
	<div><div>✓</div>CAO</div> <div><div>✓</div>PB&D</div>	X						X						X	X				
		Regional Leadership	Fiscal Responsibility	Exceptional Service and Operational Excellence	Public Safety & Justice	Econ. Opportunities	Infrastructure	Sustainable Enviro.	Build Healthy Communities	Inter-Org. Coop.	Quality of Life	Econ. Development	Infrastructure	Enviro. Sustain.	Sustainability	County Branding	Mental Health	Specialty Funding	Diversity & Inclusion