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**Attachments:** [SJ-BirdFriendly Factsheet and Checklist to Planning.pdf](#)

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Best,  
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# City of San José Bird-Friendly Building Design

Designing a bird-friendly building does not have to add to the cost of construction. Retrofitting an existing building can often be done by simply targeting problem areas. Consider bird-friendly best practices early on in project development to meet your project budget and demonstrate environmental leadership.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BIRDS

Birds provide numerous benefits to our economy, environment, and well-being including:

- over \$13 billion in tax revenues
- rodent and harmful insect control
- human enjoyment

## BIRDS AND BUILDINGS

Birds can accidentally collide with buildings, causing a decline in the bird population.

### Common Causes of Collisions:

- Reflective/mirrored glass that birds perceive as actual landscaping, trees, the sky, or another bird
- Transparent glass which shows trees or sky
- Exterior spotlights which can cause birds to collide
- Interior lighting at night that can attract birds



Peregrine Falcon at San José City Hall

## BIRD-FRIENDLY BUILDINGS

The following best practices can reduce bird collisions with buildings and are particularly important for buildings near bird habitat, such as open spaces and water:

- Reduce mirrors and large areas of reflective glass
- Avoid transparent glass skyways, walkways, or entryways, free-standing glass walls and transparent building corners
- Avoid funneling open space towards a building façade
- Strategically place landscaping to reduce reflection and views of foliage inside or through glass
- Eliminate up-lighting and spotlights
- Turn non-emergency lighting off at night, especially during bird migration season (February - May and August - November)

The City applies the above bird-friendly principles to projects north of Highway 237 per policy ER-7.1 in Chapter 3 of the Envision San José 2040 General Plan. The City encourages projects to utilize the checklist on the reverse side in order to incorporate bird-friendly building design.

## RESOURCES:

- The American Bird Conservancy's Bird-friendly Building Design guidelines: [www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/BirdFriendlyBuildingDesign.pdf](http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/BirdFriendlyBuildingDesign.pdf)
- Report Injured/Dead Birds: Contact the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley at (408) 929-9453 or [www.wcsv.org](http://www.wcsv.org)

# City of San José

## Bird-Friendly Building Design Checklist

- Avoid transparent glass skyways, walkways, or entryways, free-standing glass walls and transparent building corners
- Ensure that at least 90% of the exposed façade material from ground level to 40 feet and 60% of the exposed façade material above 40 feet is not composed of transparent or reflective glass

If the above cannot be met, implement one of the following measures:

- Secondary facades, netting, screens, shutters, or exterior shades
  - Patterned glass that contains UV-reflective or contrasting patterns that are visible to birds
  - Patterned glass designed in accordance with the “2 x4 rule”, which restricts glass areas to less than 2’ high or less than 4’ wide
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- Reduce transparent glass at the top of buildings, especially when incorporating a green roof into the design
  - Avoid the use of mirrored glass facades
  - Avoid the funneling of open space towards a building façade
  - Locate water features and other bird habitat away from building exteriors to reduce reflection
  - Reduce or eliminate the visibility of landscaped areas behind glass
  - Reduce or eliminate up-lighting and spotlights
  - Ensure all site lighting uses shielded fixtures to cast light down onto the area to be illuminated
  - Turn non-emergency lighting off at night, especially during bird migration season (February - May and August - November)