

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago recognizes the importance of urban wildlife conservation and biodiversity and the crucial role migratory birds play in maintaining ecological balance in Chicago and throughout North America; and

WHEREAS, The shoreline of Lake Michigan and Chicago's rivers serve as critical flyways for millions of migratory birds that travel thousands of miles twice a year on the Mississippi Flyway; and

WHEREAS, Birds collide with glass that is transparent and appears to be an open space to fly through and strike glass that is reflective and fools them into flying towards mirror images of the sky and vegetation; and

WHEREAS, Bird collisions with buildings are a significant cause of bird mortality in urban areas, with ornithologists estimating that as many as a billion birds die each year from flying into buildings; and

WHEREAS, On the night of October 4, 2023, Chicago made national headlines when nearly 1,000 migrating songbirds died in one night after colliding with the McCormick Place Lakeside Center, with close to an additional 2,000 dead and injured birds recovered from downtown Chicago in one morning; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, City Council passed an ordinance amending the Chicago Sustainable Development Policy to prioritize bird collision deterrence strategies for building projects to reduce avian mortality and injury; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Planning and Development led public discussions and convened a 14-member focus group beginning in 2022 to identify opportunities to update the 2017 Sustainable Development Policy; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Development updated the Sustainable Development Policy for initial implementation on July 1, 2024, with full implementation expected on January 1, 2025; and

WHEREAS, The Sustainable Development Policy is a point-based system that assigns values to strategies and building certifications for certain projects with the intention of encouraging developers to incorporate sustainable design features into their projects; and

WHEREAS, Developers constructing new buildings or an addition that is greater than 50% of the building's gross square footage will be required to earn 100 points by selecting from the menu of sustainable options in the policy; and

WHEREAS, While the updated Sustainable Development Policy increased the number of points for bird-friendly design to 20 points for basic protections and 30 points for enhanced protection, bird-friendly design remains optional under the policy; and

WHEREAS, There are simple fixes to making buildings more bird-friendly, such as using patterns on glass, using a UV coating, or adding window treatment so birds can recognize buildings as barriers; and

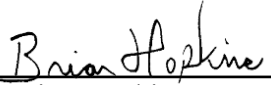
WHEREAS, According to a report by the Ornithology Center at Muhlenberg College, the cost to install these measures is nominal, only accounting for 0.38% of the total overall costs of new construction; and

WHEREAS, Chicago-based glass supplier Torstenson Glass was quoted in the Chicago Sun-Times stating that it is a misconception that bird-safe glass is sold at a high premium and clarified that bird-safe glass is only 5% to 10% more than traditional glass; and

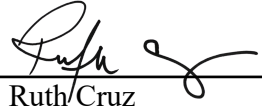
WHEREAS, Cities like San Francisco, New York, Toronto, and Evanston have already enacted bird-friendly ordinances mandating bird-safe materials and design strategies for new construction and major renovations aimed at reducing bird collisions and enhancing urban habitat; and

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago seeks to promote responsible urban development that supports wildlife conservation and enhances the quality of life for residents and migratory birds alike;

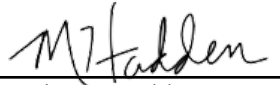
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of Chicago calls for a subject matter hearing convening experts in avian conservation, urban planners, architects, City Departments, and other relevant experts to provide insight and policy recommendations on bird-friendly building design.



Brian Hopkins
Alderman, 2nd Ward



Ruth Cruz
Alderwoman, 30th Ward



Maria E. Hadden
Alderwoman, 49th Ward