



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## New Planning Code Summary: Better Roofs; Living Roof Alternative

**Amended Sections:** 149 (*New Section*)  
**Case Number:** 2016-010605PCA  
**Board File/Enactment #:** 160965  
**Initiated by:** Supervisor Wiener  
**Effective Date:** January 1, 2017

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The proposed Ordinance amends the Planning Code to establish standards for new building construction facilitating development of renewable energy facilities and living roofs.

### The Way It Was:

1. California's Title 24 Energy Standards require new small and mid-sized buildings to be "solar ready, which means 15% of roof area is unshaded by the proposed building itself, and free of obtrusions. This state law applies to all new residential and commercial buildings of 10 floors or less.
2. San Francisco's Administrative Code Building Code builds on state law by requiring "solar ready" roof area to have solar actually installed.
3. The Planning Code was silent on living roofs.

### The Way It Is Now:

1. California's Title 24 Energy Standards remain unchanged.
2. In addition to the regulations above, the Better Roof Ordinance amended the Planning Code and Green Building Code to include a living roof alternative to the solar requirement. With this proposal, between 15% and 30% of roof space on most new construction will incorporate solar, living (green) roofs, or a combination of both. The living roof alternative will allow developers to replace required solar with living roof at a rate of 2 square feet of living roof for every 1 square foot of solar.

The living roof option is available for any project that meets all of the following criteria:

- Constitutes a Large Development Project or Small Development Project under the Stormwater Management Ordinance (any activity disturbing 5,000 square feet or more of ground surface)
  - Has gross floor area of 2,000 square feet or more
  - Has 10 or fewer occupied floors; and
  - Applies for a site permit or building permit on or after January 1, 2017.
3. Living Roof is now defined in the Planning Code under Section 149 and if chosen to satisfy the Better Roof requirement the living roof shall be used in compliance with the Public Utilities Commission Stormwater Management Ordinance.

**Link to Signed Legislation:**

<http://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/o0221-16.pdf>