

STAFF REPORT ON PETITION FOR ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT

PLN-ZOTA-24-00004: OUTDOOR LIGHTING ORDINANCE AND AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 21 OF THE LFUCG ZONING ORDINANCE

INITIATED BY: URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL

PROPOSED TEXT: See attachment: Text underlined indicates an addition to the existing Zoning Ordinance; text ~~stricken through~~ indicates a deletion.)

STAFF REVIEW:

On April 25th, 2024, the Urban County Council initiated a Text Amendment Zoning Ordinance (ZOTA) to regulate outdoor lighting. This initiative aligned with the 2045 Comprehensive Plan, specifically Theme B, Protection Policy #10, which advocates for the reduction of light pollution to protect dark skies. Regulating outdoor lighting also supports Lexington's commitment to reducing pollution and achieving LEED Certification.

The Outdoor Lighting ZOTA builds on the Parking ZOTA that was unanimously adopted on October 27, 2022, by the Urban County Council. Article 16-3 established minimum design and maintenance requirements for parking areas, including provisions stating that any lighting used to illuminate off-street parking areas should be arranged to reflect away from adjoining residential zones or uses and any public or private right-of-way. Additionally, it mandated that free-standing lighting should not exceed twelve (12) feet in height. While this amendment addressed outdoor lighting within vehicle use areas, it did not comprehensively cover all outdoor lighting concerns.

Building upon this foundation, the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance aims to improve upon Article 16-3 by addressing a broader range of outdoor lighting within the urban zones. The Ordinance seeks to establish comprehensive and objective regulations for effective outdoor lighting, with a focus on public health, safety, and welfare. It promotes quality outdoor lighting that enhances the built environment while mitigating light pollution, glare, light trespass, and sky glow. The proposed text aims to protect nocturnal wildlife and maintain natural light cycles, supporting the natural behavior and reproduction of various species. By regulating outdoor lighting more comprehensively, the Zoning Ordinance aims to reduce energy consumption, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and protect ecosystems.

The Outdoor Lighting ZOTA establishes guidelines for outdoor lighting to maintain consistency. The proposed regulations provide objective standards regarding the brightness (lumens), color (kelvin), and overall impact (foot candles) of lighting for development within Lexington. These regulations are both reflective of national best practices and are in line with the current policies of the Urban County Government. To ensure that these regulations are being met and do not conflict with other essential aspects of site development, the regulations include the submission of a lighting plan which include, parameters for lighting fixtures, positioning, and brightness and temperature levels. The proposed text also provide scenarios and lighting types that qualify for exemption. Furthermore, the Zoning Ordinance outlines procedures for handling pre-existing lighting that fails to meet the updated regulations.

The adoption of the Outdoor Lighting ordinance will contribute significantly towards the goals outlined in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan and Lexington's broader environmental commitments. The clear guidelines and standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance will ensure effective implementation and

compliance, ultimately benefiting the community and the environment. To align with these goals, Lexington should implement measures to minimize light pollution, promote energy efficiency, protect community health and safety, and develop a comprehensive lighting ordinance.

The Staff Recommends: **Approval** for the following reasons:

1. The proposed text amendment is in agreement with the 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Theme B, Protection Policy #10 - Reduce light pollution to protect dark skies.
2. The proposed text amendment promotes energy efficiency and cost reduction by encouraging the use of better lighting, and it enhances health and safety by minimizing issues related to excessive lighting while improving night visibility.
3. The proposed text amendment sets clear guidelines for consistent outdoor lighting practices, fostering innovation and the adoption of advanced lighting technologies.

BOS/HBB/DAC
5/29/2024
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