

To the Honorable, the City Council:

The undersigned hereby petition the City Council of the City of Cambridge to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cambridge by enabling enforcement of the already existing lighting restrictions. These existing restrictions require clarification to provide an easily understood definition of lighting that inappropriately affects properties (and people) beyond the property it is intended to illuminate.

This amendment directly supports the fundamental quality of life goals of the Zoning Ordinance as stated in Section 1.30:

"It shall be the purpose of this Ordinance ... conserve health ... to conserve the value of land and buildings, including the conservation of natural resources and the prevention of blight and pollution of the environment; to encourage the most rational use of land throughout the city, including ... the protection of residential neighborhoods from incompatible activities ... and to preserve and increase the amenities of the City."

Some abbreviated excerpts from the current Zoning Ordinance which show the intent to limit inappropriate lighting are:

Section 6.41 (off street parking facilities)

"... improvements to reduce noise, glare or reflection from autos, lights, ..."

Section 6.46 (off street parking facilities)

"... lighting installed and maintained in such a manner so as not to reflect or cause glare on abutting or facing residential premises nor to cause reflection nor glare which adversely affects safe vision of operators of vehicles moving on nearby streets ..."

6.93 (loading facilities)

"... Any lighting provided shall be install in a manner that will prevent direct light from shining onto any street or adjacent property."

Section 7.15.B (general limitations on signs)

"All lighting shall be indirect, continuous, and installed in a manner that will prevent direct light from shining onto any street or adjacent property. ..."

Section 7.20 (illumination)

"In Residence A, B, C, and C-1 districts no outdoor floodlighting or decorative lighting, except lighting primarily designed to illuminate walks, driveways, outdoor living areas, or outdoor recreational facilities, and except temporary holiday lighting in use for not longer than a four week period in any calendar year, shall be permitted. Any permanent lighting permitted by the preceding sentence shall be continuous, indirect, and installed in a manner that will prevent direct light from shining onto any street or adjacent property."

Amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cambridge by doing the following:

Insert the following text after "Section 7.20 ILLUMINATION" and with the existing text to be labeled as "Section 7.23 Restrictions for Residential Districts".

7.21 Definitions


7.21.1 Glare. Glare shall mean and include any lighting entering the eye directly from luminaires or indirectly from reflective surfaces that causes visual discomfort or reduced visibility. Additionally, for enforcement purposes, a luminaire shall be considered to be causing glare or direct light if any part of the lamp or any of the parts designed to distribute the light (reflector, lens, diffuser) are visible to any person.


7.21.2 Luminaire. Luminaire shall mean and include the complete lighting unit (fixture), consisting of a lamp, or lamps and ballast(s) (when applicable), together with the parts designed to distribute the light (reflector, lens, diffuser), to position and protect the lamps, and to connect the lamps to the power supply. Temporary holiday lighting in use for not longer than a four week period in any calendar year shall not be considered a Luminaire. Internally illuminated signs that have current and valid sign permits shall not be considered a Luminaire.

7.21.3 Lamp. Lamp shall mean and include the source of optical radiation (i.e., "light"), often called a "bulb" or "tube". Examples include incandescent, fluorescent, high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps, and low pressure sodium (LPS) lamps, as well as light-emitting diode (LED) modules and arrays.

7.22 General Limitations for All Lighting in the City of Cambridge

No glare or direct light shall be allowed on any abutting property, on any property abutting an abutting property, on any property across a public way from those properties, on any property within 300 feet of the Luminaire, and on any public way. Property shall explicitly include any buildings on those properties with the intent of prohibiting light from any other property entering windows or any other opening.

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