

## STAFF REPORT

TO: Bryan Beel, Chair  
Planning Commission

BY: Sarah Fox, Senior Planner

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### SUMMARY OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The City of Camas is preparing a complete update of its comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is a long-range plan that guides Camas' future growth and development.

This process has included two phases, visioning and implementation. Throughout 2014, citizens and leaders worked on developing a new vision. In 2015, we focused on developing draft policies and goals to make the vision a reality. The City is required by the state to adopt a new plan by June 2016.

In an effort to meet the mandated deadline, staff brought forward proposed goals and policies to discuss with the Commission at workshop sessions on June 16, October 20, and December 15, 2015. While reviewing the proposed goals and policies of Environmental Stewardship, there were questions raised about the meaning of the following policy, "***Encourage the preservation of the night sky through dark sky standards in development regulations and design guidelines.***" Staff requested that the Commission table that topic in order for staff to research and return with more details. Staff also asked members of the technical committees to better understand the origin of the policy.

**In summary, the night sky policy is supported in the community. Staff has also found that many of the current design and development guidelines already lay the ground work for more specific standards, if deemed necessary.**

### NIGHT SKY POLICY

Night sky regulations are adopted in cities to reduce or eliminate light pollution. Light pollution is defined as misdirected light, stray light, unavoidable reflected light, light during hours when it is not needed, and light levels in excess of what is necessary for the task.

The Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) noted that the SEPA Checklist includes a question (11) regarding light and glare impacts. They recommend a model ordinance that has been prepared by the International Dark-Sky Association and the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. According to MRSC the following cities have adopted night-sky ordinances or policies:

- Bainbridge Island Municipal Code Sec.18.15.040 - Outdoor lighting - Provides regulations that preserve and enhance the view of the dark sky; promote health, safety, security, and productivity; and help protect natural resources
- Benton City Municipal Code Ch. 12.08 - Outdoor Lighting
- Bothell Municipal Code Sec. 8.64.030 - Performance Standards - Exterior Lighting and Sec. 12.14.2405 - Exterior Lighting

- Burlington Municipal Code Sec. 17.48.020 - Light and Glare (Performance Standards) - Provisions on high light-reflective building materials and artificial lighting
- Goldendale Municipal Code Ch. 15.52 - Outdoor Lighting Fixtures - The purpose and intent of this chapter is to prevent excessive illumination, glare, and reflection in areas adjacent to astronomical research facilities, such as observatories, where such light intrusion would hinder use of sensitive optical devices.
- Island County Working Together to Preserve Rural Character and the Night Sky - Island County Planning Brochure
- Kennewick Municipal Code Ch. 18.39 - Outdoor Lighting - From Code: This Chapter is intended to reduce the problems created by improperly designed and installed outdoor lighting. It is intended to eliminate problems of glare, minimize light trespass into public spaces and private property, promote energy conservation, protect the nighttime character of the desert sky, and help reduce the energy and financial costs of outdoor lighting by establishing regulations which limit the area that certain kinds of outdoor lighting fixtures can illuminate.
- Lynnwood Municipal Code Sec. 17.05.110 - Light and Glare - It is the policy of the city that any activity shall not produce light or glare so as to create a nuisance beyond the parcel within which the use is located.
- Mountlake Terrace Municipal Code Sec. 19.120.030 - Artificial Light and Glare - Addresses uses producing artificial light, utilizing light for night operation, or causing glare
- Oak Harbor Municipal Code Sec. 20.14.060 - Light and Glare - Outlines policy and policy intent
- Pasco Municipal Code Ch. 12.32 - Outdoor Lighting - Defines "outdoor lighting fixtures" as includes but is not limited to lighting for billboards, street lights, shopping center or parking area lights, externally or internally illuminated on -site or business advertising signs and yard type lighting - Covers shielding, unlawful acts temporary exemptions, exclusions, enforcement, and penalties for violation
- Tumwater - Outdoor Lighting standards

Currently, the City has standards regarding outdoor lighting within the engineering details of the Camas Design Standard Manual, and within the Design Review Manual.

Design Review Standards for commercial and mixed uses *“Outdoor lighting shall not be directed off-site”* and for Gateways, *“A consistent streetscape lighting shall be used.”* The Camas Design Standard Manual, requires street lighting to be LED, cobra style on collectors and arterials, and be no higher than 30 feet.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff supports the proposed night sky policy as it is generally consistent with the current development standards. The more specific requirement of the policy to develop “dark sky” standards would likely require a few additions to the current standards, such as those recommended within the Model Lighting Ordinance.

Staff recommends support for the night sky policy.

*Please note that specific design or development standard amendments would be brought forward at a later date, as the comprehensive plan includes the city’s future goals and policies, and typically does not include engineering details.*