



Administration and Operations Committee Report

To: The Chair and Members of the Administration and Operations Committee
From: Greg Bergeron, Director of Enforcement and Regulatory Services
Date: February 17, 2026
Report #: RPT- 0052-26
Subject: Residential Nuisance Lighting
Purpose: For Information and Direction

Recommendation

THAT RPT-0052-26 be received as information;

AND THAT the Committee provide direction on whether to proceed with the development of nuisance lighting regulations prohibiting direct and indirect outdoor lighting from residential properties to trespass onto neighbouring residential properties;

AND THAT staff engage with the public in accordance with the community engagement framework should the Committee decide to proceed with the creation of additional regulations surrounding residential nuisance lighting.

Executive Summary

This report is seeking direction from the Committee regarding the development of a property standards bylaw amendment to address nuisance lighting at the request of a resident. The proposed amendment would establish clear definitions and standards to prohibit exterior lighting to trespass onto neighboring properties beyond the current prohibition as detailed in this report.

Strategic Plan Priority

Strategic Priority 4 - Stable and Responsive Governance

Impacts and Mitigation

Social Impacts

Given the potential impact on residents, public engagement will be an important component of this process. Staff recommend community engagement as per the policy as the adoption of additional light pollution regulations may impact several properties.

Environmental Impacts

Mandating a reduction of lighting may reduce the use of electricity and the emissions of light pollution. Conversely, regulating lighting may have unintended consequences on safety and security.

Economic Impacts

The adoption of new regulations surrounding light trespass beyond the current provisions will have an undetermined impact on resources. For a better part of the year, Municipal Law Enforcement Officers generally work during daylight hours. It is anticipated that the adoption of additional regulations will increase the need for Officers to respond to calls for service beyond daylight hours during the spring, summer and fall.

Report

Background

At the October 21, 2025, Administration and Operations Committee meeting, a delegate appeared before the Committee to propose a Nuisance Light Intrusion By-law. The delegate provided levels of light pollution, examples of municipalities who have adopted light intrusion regulations and various strategies to reduce light pollution. The Committee referred the matter to Enforcement Services and Planning for review.

Analysis

The Building Code Act authorizes municipalities to prescribe standards for the maintenance and occupancy of properties within the municipality through the enactment of a Property Standards By-law.

Subsection 25(2) of the County of Brant Property Standards By-law No. 205-02 currently states: ***“All properties must provide and maintain an effective barrier to prevent the light from lamp standards, signs, and other permanent sources from shining directly into a dwelling unit and away from all streets and highways.”***

At the meeting on October 21, 2025, the delegate indicated that the By-law subsection 25(2) only applied to external lighting sources which is not accurate. An outdoor flood light pointing directly into a neighbouring dwelling was used as an example, but other scenarios could apply based on the language in subsection 25(2). The interpretation requires residents to prevent light sources from shining directly into a dwelling unit. Under the current framework, Property Standard Officers are able to issue Orders on owners/occupants whose indoor or outdoor lighting is shining directly into a dwelling unit. The By-law does not apply to ambient lighting.

Direct light occurs when a light source (flood light, spotlight or security lamp) is aimed or positioned so that its beam shines directly into a neighbouring dwelling. It is generally easily identifiable as the source is visible and the light is concentrated. As an example, a neighbour’s flood light pointing into a bedroom window would be a violation of the By-law and subject to a Property Standards Order.

Ambient light, which is currently not applicable to the Property Standards By-law, refers to an overall glow, background illumination or scattered light that is present in an area and not aimed at a specific property. While generally less intrusive and uncommon, ambient light may have a detrimental effect on neighbouring properties based on individual sensitivity or if excessive.

In the delegation’s presentation, a list of communities that had light trespass/intrusion regulations was provided as follows: Brantford, Mississauga, Lakeshore and Oakville. Staff conducted an analysis and environmental scan of these, and other jurisdictions as summarized in the table below.

Municipality	Regulation	Summary
Brantford	Municipal Code Chapter 465	Prohibits light from shining directly into a dwelling unit . Applies to exterior lighting and vehicles. Also requires light used to illuminate yards or parking areas to be arranged or <i>shielded</i> to deflect light away from abutting properties and public right of way.
Mississauga	Nuisance Lighting By-law No. 262-12	Prohibits direct & indirect nuisance lighting from trespassing upon the land of others. Applies to indoor and outdoor lighting.
Lakeshore	Property Standards By-law No. 23-2018	Prohibits light of an unusual intensity or type onto adjacent properties to be or cause a nuisance.
Oakville	Property Standards By-law 2023-074	Requires barrier to prevent/block direct illumination of the interior of a dwelling . Also requires prevention of direct illumination of light onto adjoining residential properties in an area where an outdoor living space is located.
Toronto	Municipal Code Chapter 629 Property Standards	Requires buffering of nuisance lighting with barrier/deflectors to prevent lighting and motorized and non-motorized vehicle headlights from shining directly into a dwelling .
East Gwillimbury	Property Standards By-Law No. 2018-083	Prohibits any exterior lighting to shine directly into any

		adjacent dwelling unit windows.
Hamilton	Property Standards By-law No. 10-221	Requires placement and maintenance of barrier so as to prevent or block direct illumination of the interior of a dwelling or dwelling unit on adjoining property. Applies to indoor and outdoor lighting.
Norfolk County	Property Standards By-law No. 2024-12	Requires placement and maintenance to prevent or block direct illumination of the interior of a dwelling or dwelling unit on adjoining property. Applies to indoor and outdoor lighting.

Planning Comments

The Planning Act generally speaks to the regulation of buildings and structures and only allows lighting to be addressed for developments subject to site plan control (e.g., industrial, commercial and large residential). It does not provide authority to regulate general household lighting issues.

While broader community design can influence lighting impacts (through building height, setbacks, and rear-yard plantings) these considerations are addressed at the subdivision and zoning level. Beyond that, it remains the responsibility of property owners to manage their own spaces in accordance with property standards where lighting impacts would typically be managed through property standards by-laws under the Building Code Act, which is consistent with other jurisdictions as shown in the analysis above.

Summary and Recommendations

Although the County’s approach in dealing with nuisance lighting is consistent with several other municipalities, various approaches can be taken with respect to regulating nuisance lighting. At this time, the current language in the Property Standards By-law appears to be sufficient and staff have seen some success in resolving complaints of this nature.

Enforcement Services also offers third party mediation services at no cost to residents and have also seen some success through this process.

Staff are seeking direction on whether the Committee would like to proceed with the drafting of additional regulations surrounding the trespassing of light onto neighbouring properties and to engage the public accordingly.

Attachments

None

Reviewed By

Cindy Stevenson – General Manager - Emergency and Protective Services Department
Jeremy Vink – Director of Planning

Copied To

Alison Newton – CAO
Alysha Dyjach - General Manager of Development Services

By-law and/or Agreement

By-law Required	No
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No