

DEVELOPMENT LIGHTING

LIGHTING ISSUES

The issues of site lighting and exterior signage lighting are critical in the GACC area. Neighbors have repeatedly expressed a strong concern over past failures to provide effective lighting systems at local developments. GACC wishes to improve the community by helping developments avoid the negative feelings that result from poor lighting plans.

Chief areas of concern are “over lighting”, ineffective lighting and the placement and appearance of light fixtures. While lighting engineers (and some lighting sales representatives) may be able to correctly specify site lighting that meets the minimum requirements of local ordinances, they may not always have the time or inclination to identify the best solution for the project.

It is often beneficial for both the developer (and the tenants) to retain the services of his/her architect or landscape architect to integrate the development’s lighting and signage with the architecture and landscaping. Upon request, GACC will provide a list of lighting designers to aid the developer. This is a free service of GACC.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

GACC asks that all developments be designed to meet or exceed the lighting guidelines listed in Outdoor Lighting Practices in the State of Indiana, a publication produced by the Indiana Council on Outdoor Lighting Education (ICOLE). Free copies of this publication are available online at: <http://icole.home.att.net>

Developers should make special note of ICOLE’s recommendation that 0.1 foot-candle be the maximum allowable illumination spilling over a residential property line from the development.

DEFINITIONS

Developers should make sure that they correctly understand terminology of light measurement, i.e. lux, lumen, candela, foot-candle, etc. For example, it is widely misperceived that one foot-candle represents the light output of a single candle. However, one foot-candle is defined as the illumination on a surface that is twelve inches from a candle, about 10.76 lux.

Therefore, an illuminated street that measures seventy-seven foot-candles would not be comparable to 77 lighted candles to a passing driver but, depending on the intensity of the fixtures, could appear as 60,000 candles.

Light fixtures that utilize a “drop lens” or “sag lens” should be avoided at all cost as they contribute greatly to poor energy usage and light pollution in general. Preferred lighting fixtures utilize a downward aimed “cut-off” lens, which prevents light from escaping upward or into neighboring properties or streets. This greatly reduces glare and allows the same level of lighting to be achieved while using less energy.

AESTHETICS

GACC recommends that all exterior light fixtures be aesthetically appropriate to the architectural theme of the surroundings. For example, an industrial “cobrahead” light fixture would be as aesthetically inappropriate in an historical residential district, as an ornate Victorian gas lamp would be in a modernized warehouse district.

Over-lighting of a building is also to be avoided as this, in effect, creates a billboard. Some lighting sales representatives describe this practice as “the moth effect” and suggest that it may draw customers to the development. GACC holds a negative view of this practice. Developers should avoid the temptation to advertise their development with over-lighting, rather than with appropriate signage, landscaping and architecture.