

Administrative Policy

Effective Date: 4/5/05
Supercedes: AP 88-4
Approved By:

Subject: Street Lighting Policy

I. Purpose

This policy establishes general policies, street lighting standards, implementation procedures, streetlight design procedures and tree trimming standards for the City.

II. General Policies

1. The City of Wilmington provides street lighting on all open, public streets within the corporate limits for the purposes of traffic and pedestrian safety. Except for ornamental lighting located in the Central Business District or areas designated by City Council, streetlights are the property of Progress Energy Carolinas, Incorporated (PEC) and are leased to the City under a contract. The City determines the location of all lights to be placed on the public rights-of-way and pays a monthly service charge to PEC for installation, operation and maintenance of all standard lights.
2. The standard streetlight shall be a PEC enclosed cutoff (Cobra type), high pressure sodium vapor (HPSV) fixture installed within the recommended range of mounting heights for the specific fixture. The standard streetlight shall be installed on a wooden pole in areas served from overhead facilities and on a fiberglass pole in areas served from underground facilities. No service charge will be made to adjacent property owners for the installation, operation, and maintenance of these fixtures.
3. The City will fund nonstandard lighting only in the Central Business District and other areas designated by the City Council. Incorporated associations desiring street lighting in other areas must comply with the criteria outlined in Section V.3 of this policy.

III. Roadway Lighting

1. Recommended Minimum Lighting Standards:
 - a. Major thoroughfares-Streetlights shall be 16,000-50,000 lumens spaced approximately 350' apart. In areas served by overhead facilities the spacing may be determined by location of existing poles.
 - b. Residential and collector streets-Streetlights shall be 9,500 lumens spaced approximately 300-feet apart or 5,800 lumens approximately 200' apart as outlined in Section II. 2. In areas served by overhead facilities the spacing may be determined by the location of existing power poles.
 - c. State-maintained streets will be lighted according to the above standards or at the North Carolina Department of Transportation standards.
 - d. All open, public streets will have a light at each intersection.

- e. No lights will be placed on residential service alleys except at the request of the Wilmington Police Department. These requests should be supported by crime data.
2. The Development Services Director or designee may vary these standards when it is determined that adverse topography, roadway geometrics and design, the presence of natural vegetation, or any other adverse conditions exist. In such instances, the Development Services Director or designee may reduce spacing or cluster lights to prevent a hazardous condition.

IV. Requests for New or Additional Streetlights

1. All requests for new streetlights will be submitted to the Development Services Director or designee who shall review and approve any new streetlights meeting the criteria established herein. Approved requests may either be implemented using current funds if available or included in the proposed budget for the forthcoming year.
2. The Development Services Director or designee shall submit all requests for streetlights for personal safety or property safety in excess of the guidelines established herein to the Police Chief or designee for review. The Development Services Director or designee will not authorize any such lights without the approval of the Police Chief or designee. The Police Chief or designee will support all approvals and requests for street lighting with crime data. Approved requests may either be implemented using current funds if available or included in the proposed budget for the forth-coming year.
3. If new wiring is required to serve a streetlight and the wire crosses private property; the affected property owners must agree to its installation, whether overhead or underground.

V. Street Lighting in New Subdivisions

1. Developers shall bear any installation costs associated with streetlights, if applicable. In areas served from underground facilities, the developers shall pay the one-time underground contribution charge, if applicable.
2. Streetlights in new subdivisions will be reviewed through the subdivision process and must meet criteria established herein.
3. The Development Services Director or designee and the City Landscape Designer will coordinate plaza plantings and streetlight locations to minimize the obstruction of light by vegetation.

VI. Nonstandard and Ornamental Street Lighting

1. City-funded ornamental lighting will be restricted to the Central Business District and other areas designated by City Council.
2. In areas where special conditions indicate the need for nonstandard lighting, the Development Services Director or designee may investigate alternate lighting methods and submit a lighting plan and cost estimate to the City Council. If the plan and funding is approved, the staff will coordinate authorization and installation.

3. An incorporated property or unincorporated homeowners association, corporation, limited liability company or partnership (Property Management Entity” or “PME”) that desires street lighting other than the standard street lighting may enter into the Nonstandard Street Light Agreement with the City whereby the POA/HOA will contract with the PEC for the installation, operation and maintenance of the nonstandard lighting. The street lighting plan must provide lighting at a level that meets the minimum requirements of the City. The City will reimburse the PME in the amount it would pay for standard streetlights meeting the minimum standards established herein. Any unincorporated association shall provide the City with a copy of its organizational documents. In addition, each PME shall provide the the City with a Tax Identification Number prior to any reimbursement under the Nonstandard Street Light Agreement. Each PME also shall provide the City a copy of its agreement with Progress Energy Carolinas for street lighting.

VII. Street Lighting and Annexation Considerations

1. The Development Services Director or designee shall determine the number and locations of existing streetlights within the annexation area. The PEC shall provide to the Development Services Director or designee all existing street lighting account information associated with the annexation area, to include but not limited to fixture type, fixture location, underground contribution status, and contract/agreement expiration dates.
2. All existing standard streetlights along publicly maintained streets within the annexation area will be transferred to the City. Where applicable, the City will pay to the PEC any outstanding one-time underground contribution charges.
3. The PEC shall transfer the monthly service costs to the City for any nonstandard streetlights along publicly maintained streets that are provided under the Schedule SLR rate and that remain under contract/agreement with the PEC. The residents shall continue to pay a monthly underground contribution if applicable until the contract/agreement with the PEC expires. No additional streetlights shall be installed until the contract/agreement expires. Prior to the expiration, the neighborhood residents will be offered the opportunity to enter into the Nonstandard Streetlight Agreement with the City if certain criteria is met as outlined in Section V. 3. If the criteria are not met, or the residents no longer desire nonstandard street lighting, the existing nonstandard fixtures and posts will be replaced with standard streetlights at the City’s cost.
4. In neighborhoods where nonstandard streetlights along publicly maintained streets are provided under the Schedule ALS rate and remain under contract/agreement with the PEC, the City will make quarterly reimbursements for the monthly service charges to the POA/HOA until the contract/agreement expires. The reimbursements will be in an amount equal to that of providing standard street lighting under the Schedule SLS rate. No additional streetlights will be provided until the contract/agreement with the PEC expires. Prior to the expiration, the neighborhood residents will be offered the opportunity to enter into the Nonstandard Streetlight Agreement with the City if certain criteria is met as outlined in V. 3. If the criteria are not met, or the residents no longer desire nonstandard street lighting, the existing nonstandard fixtures and posts will be replaced with standard streetlights at the City’s cost.

5. Standard street lighting will be provided along publicly maintained streets where there are no existing streetlights. In neighborhoods served by underground power lines and certain criteria is met, the residents will be offered the opportunity to enter into the Nonstandard Streetlight Agreement with the City for nonstandard street lighting.

VIII. Outages

Streetlight outages shall be reported to the Traffic Engineering Division or directly to the PEC.

IX. Tree Trimming Standards

1. To reduce obstruction of streetlights by tree limbs, trees will be trimmed on a scheduled basis subject to availability of funds. Trees will be trimmed so as to allow for maximum distribution of light without disfiguring or unbalancing the tree. The City Urban Forester will be responsible for overseeing tree-trimming operations, which will conform to nationally recognized trimming standards and specifications.
2. Streetlights may be removed or relocated if obstructing trees can not be adequately trimmed.