

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN BOARD POLICY

POLICY: Dark Sky Protection and Outdoor Lighting Guidance

AUTHORITY: Board Resolution B312/26 dated September 24, 2026.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen supports efforts in Electoral Area “E” (Naramata) to:

- reduce light pollution;
- promote responsible outdoor lighting practices; and
- maintain and enhance the quality of the night sky.

This support is provided through advocacy, education, and leadership by example, rather than through comprehensive regulatory control.

PURPOSE

The Regional District Board recognizes the night sky as a shared natural and cultural resource and that excessive and poorly directed artificial light at night degrades this resource, *may* impact ecosystems, *may* contribute to unnecessary energy use, and impacts the quality of life for some residents.

This policy establishes the Board's commitment to responsible outdoor lighting practices, and to support the residents of Electoral Area “E” (Naramata) in seeking designation as an “International Dark Sky Community” through DarkSky International.

Accordingly, the purpose of this policy may be summarized as follows:

- support the preservation and enhancement of the night sky within Electoral Area “E” (Naramata);
- provide guidance respecting outdoor lighting practices on lands and facilities within the Regional District’s jurisdiction;
- demonstrate the Regional District’s support for community-led efforts to achieve recognition through DarkSky International; and
- acknowledge the legislative, jurisdictional, and practical limitations applicable to regulating private outdoor lighting in an electoral area.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This policy:

- applies to all outdoor lighting owned and operated by the Regional District within Electoral Area “E” (Naramata), including streetlights, park lighting, facility lighting, and any other publicly owned exterior fixtures; and
- applies to Regional District capital projects and infrastructure investments within Electoral Area “E” (Naramata) that include outdoor lighting components;

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- does not constitute a regulatory bylaw and does not impose enforceable obligations on private landowners (e.g. residential, agricultural and/or commercial); and
 - provides non-binding guidance to residents, businesses, and organizations.

With regard to the last dot point, and for clarity, the Regional District encourages voluntary adoption of responsible lighting practices by all community members through engagement with the “Dark Sky Naramata” community group.

Further, and in accordance with the requirements of the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*, nothing in this policy shall restrict or interfere with “normal farm practices” conducted as part of a farm operation on land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) or land where farming is a permitted use in the applicable zoning bylaw.

RESPONSIBILITIES

While the Regional District supports the designation of Electoral Area “E” (Naramata) as an “International Dark Sky Community”, the primary responsibility for obtaining and maintaining this designation along with required community outreach lies with the “Dark Sky Naramata” community group.

As a responsible land owner within the Electoral Area “E” (Naramata) community, the Regional District commits to:

- implement “Dark Sky” principles in the design, procurement, and retrofit of lighting on Regional District owned or managed facilities in accordance with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) equivalent to the IDA / IES Model Lighting Ordinance as fully described in par 1 A-H of International Dark Sky Community Program Guidelines (June 2018 - updated Sep 2023);
- liaise with FortisBC regarding requirements to retrofit existing street lights within the Naramata Street Lighting Local Service Area to “Dark Sky” compliant lighting standards; and
- assist the “Dark Sky Naramata” community group in distributing information on “Dark Sky” lighting standards that can be incorporated in development proposals.

PROCEDURES

The Board commits to the following principles in order to guide decisions in relation to Regional District owned or managed facilities:

- minimizing unnecessary outdoor lighting;
- encouraging fully shielded fixtures directed downward;
- avoiding excessive illumination levels;
- encouraging warm colour lighting;
- balancing safety, security, and environmental considerations.

This endorsement is advisory in nature and is intended to guide planning and operational decisions.