



Exterior Lighting Update

CITY COUNCIL

AUGUST 28, 2025



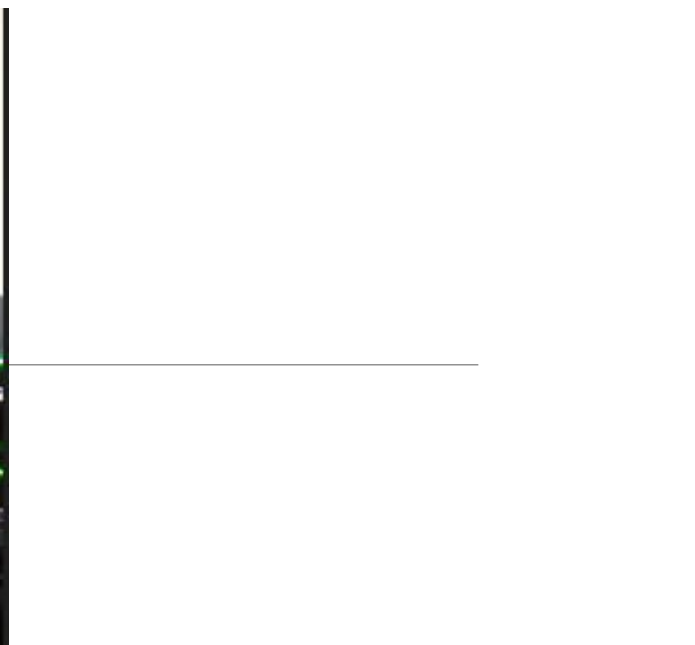
Background

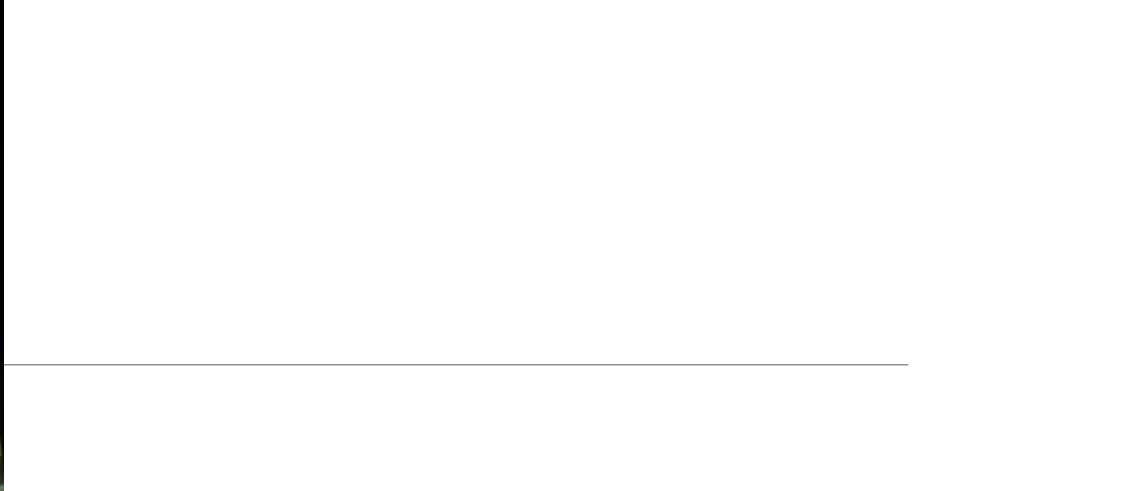
Chapter 24.16 Outdoor Lighting provides definition but minimal guidance on standards or process:

Decorative Lighting: Lighting products used for decorative effects versus lighting performance. Examples: fountain lighting, lighting fixtures with low lumen output, led commercial outdoor string lighting, building wall sconce and chandelier lighting with low lumen lamp sources.

Architectural Lighting: Lighting used to highlight architectural features, landscape, building façades, fountains, etc., shall be manufactured for the intended uses and shall be adjusted and/or aimed during the night to insure light is focused on the designated object.

August 22, 2024: City Council held a study session to review commercial exterior lighting. During the session, staff sought guidance on potential standards and processes for decorative lighting citywide. Council directed staff not to take immediate action but to continue monitoring the situation. While no formal requests for exterior lighting have been submitted to date, staff has continued to evaluate commercial lighting practices. At Council's request, this item is being brought back for further discussion.







Chapter 24.16 Outdoor Lighting

Lighting Type	Rancho Mirage		Indian Wells		Current Palm Desert		Proposed Palm Desert	
	Process	Permissibility	Process	Permissibility	Process	Permissibility	Process	Permissibility
<i>Facade Lighting</i>	Staff Review	Discouraged	Prohibited	N/A	ARC Review	?	ARC Review	Low lumen, white
<i>Window Lighting</i>	Staff Review	Discouraged	N/A	Discouraged	Unclear	?	No Permit	Not Allowed
<i>String Lights</i>	Staff Review	Allowed	Planning Review	Allowed	No Permit	Allowed	No Permit	Allowed if low lumen

Enforcement

Section 25.68.020 can require ARC Design Review for building lighting: *“No plan, elevation for buildings or structures, or **alterations** shall be approved [...] without review and approval by the ARC.”*

- A. The outdoor lighting requirements are intended to minimize light pollution and light trespass, and preserve the night-time environment in the city by:
 - 1. Encouraging the use of electrical engineers or lighting professionals to design outdoor lighting systems.
 - 2. Requiring that all lighting products are designed to be energy efficient and utilize technology to control the lighting in a manner to meet the lighting design criteria of this chapter.
 - 3. Implementing guidelines that define the characteristics of the lighting fixture distribution that reduces light pollution and preserve the night-time environment.
- B. The chapter is not intended to prevent the use of any design, products or method of installation. The director may approve any such proposed alternate if the design meets the intent of the chapter to provide high quality lighting performance, glare control, reduced light trespass to preserve the night-time environment.

(Ord. 1272 § 1, 2014)