545 Talbot St., P.O. Box 520, City Hall
St. Thomas, Ontario, N5P 3V7

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of St. Thomas will light recreational trail systems where community and program needs require trail usage in the evening and trail users can be assured of a reasonable expectation of safety.

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the City's process for the implementation of new recreational trail lighting projects in existing parks and open spaces in conjunction with section 13 Street Lighting in the City of St. Thomas Design Guidelines Manual.

In general, it is understood that recreational trail lighting, can:

- improve the look, feel and character of a trail
- enhance the pedestrian environment
- promote public opportunities for the use and enjoyment of City lands
- communicate that the park and pathways are "open for business"
- provide a greater sense of security for park users

The goal of this policy is:

1. establish criteria for the approval of new requests for recreational trail lighting on existing trails and,

2. define an implementation approach for new projects that includes characteristics of trail lighting and a description of the assignment of project implementation priorities

The City's primary objective for recreational trail lighting is to reduce the risks associated with evening use of trail areas and to improve access through our communities where a reasonable expectation of safety can be achieved.

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Lighting projects are to be implemented where the design of the trail permits evening use of trails and where the security of the trail user can be reasonably ensured.

Trail lighting is not intended to replace safer alternative evening routes such as local roads and sidewalks. In those locations where recreational trails are used extensively to commute to and from park and recreation facilities, transit, and shopping, etc., lit recreational trails should be constructed and maintained at a standard sufficient to ensure a reasonable expectation of safety. This policy is made with the understanding that a trail should not be only partially lit between access points as this can create hazardous situations for trail users expecting a trail to be fully lit. In other words, if part of a trail cannot be lit, the rest of the trails should not be lit.

Recreational trail lighting used in isolation of other security measures is not a reasonable solution in high crime / problem areas. Lighting in City parks and trails where there is little or no **witness potential**, where escape routes or options are limited, or where hidden pockets of criminal activity can occur, can create a more serious problem than what we intended to reduce or eliminate.

Recreational trail lighting does promote evening use of park facilities. Lighting should only be installed where the evening use of park facilities does not conflict with adjacent uses or applicable by-laws.

Recreational trail lighting should be developed to a standard, look and scale of a pedestrian environment. City owned recreational trail lighting will be noticeably different from street and road rights-of-way lighting for vehicles.

POLICY DESCRIPTION

There are 3 main components to this policy:

1) Characteristics of Recreational Trail Lighting, which shall apply City-wide.
2) Evaluation Criteria that are to be applied by staff and which are to provide guidance to staff; and,

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3) Development of Project Implementation Priorities which staff will use to determine which projects can proceed, depending on the availability of funds.

Characteristics of Recreational Trail Lighting

The following design principles were developed in consultation with staff having operations expertise, design and construction expertise, feedback from local police and a review of available literature.

Specific design criteria for fixture / pole manufacturer, colour, design, etc., are the responsibility of the Parks Department to review proposed selections for maintenance, and to make recommendations if necessary.

The following identifies the characteristics for the new installations that are approved through the Recreational Trail Lighting Policy in conjunction with the City of St. Thomas Design Standards for lighting:

1) **Light Source**: An appropriate light source will be selected to address the needs of each specific recreational trail lighting installation. There are different factors to be evaluated when selecting between Solar and LED as each recreational trail system can have different requirements depending on need for visibility, glare reduction, landscape and architectural aesthetics, colour rendition, efficient operation, and differentiation from road corridors.

2) **Photometrics**: The quality and quantity of light shall conform to the most current version of the City of St. Thomas Design Guidelines and the IES RP-8-14 standard for pedestrian walkways. All lighting to be Dark Sky Compliant.

3) **Pole Type and Location**: Wherever possible, and where park design permits, light poles are to be placed 1.5 metres off the edge of the trail. To ensure vandal resistance, product longevity and a uniform look City-wide, poles are to be constructed of durable materials and have very little flexibility when pushed by hand. All poles will be dark natural colours to blend in with the landscape and

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will be finished in a way that provides sufficient protection from graffiti. Poles will be of a design that can withstand the maintenance requirements encountered in City parks and along trails.

4) **Power Supply**: Where possible, continuous power source and existing power supplies shall be used. If required, a City-owned, secondary power supply or service is recommended. Power pedestals should be located near the nearest Road ROW and be accessible for service work. We use only Pedestal Solutions SLM-42, exclusively. Please refer to the City of St. Thomas Standard for Traffic Signals. OPSS.MUNI 614 CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATION FOR INSTALLATION OF POWER SUPPLY EQUIPMENT. These kiosks are to include an independent power supply shut-off switch accessible by City staff or crews, a timer to regulate on and off times, and potentially provide additional electrical distribution and receptacles as necessary for park program needs.

5) **Park Site Design Requirements**: Where new recreational trail lighting is to be installed, a minimum 2-meter width (2.4 – 3.0 meter when winter maintained), hard surfaced path with wheelchair accessible slopes is recommended to meet current AODA standards. Applications may vary since it is not the intention of this policy to replace existing trail systems that are in satisfactory condition but do not have sufficient width.

Evaluation Criteria

City staff will consider the impacts on park programming, facilities, budget, and neighbours. Most of the criteria are related to risk management and safety for the evening use of recreational trail – our degree of risk can require the installation of lights and it may also mean that no lights are ever installed.

To determine the appropriateness of implementing new recreational trail lighting projects in existing City parks and recreational trails, the following evaluation criteria will be used. These criteria will be used to determine the feasibility and need for new recreational trail lighting.

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1) **Safety of Users**: Staff in partnership with the Police Department will perform a **CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)** audit of the trail to confirm the viability of keeping the recreational trail accessible for evening use. The elements of the audit include availability of the public to supervise pathway users, availability of reasonable and safe alternative routes, identification of **entrapment spots**, analysis of crime statistics (if available) for the area in question, park users and park neighbours.

2) **Analysis of Park Facilities**: Staff will evaluate the vulnerable recreational trail program elements, their location on the trail, and analysis of the effects of new lighting on these facilities and / or park elements. Staff will ensure that they do not inadvertently light up facilities that shouldn't be lit (i.e. basketball courts) and ensure that the requested lighting project is necessary in comparison to design alternatives. Trail lighting to / from and around a play area is often sought as a solution when relocation of the play area to an enforceable or more visible location would be a more practical solution. Vulnerable park elements are best situated in areas where opportunities for **natural surveillance** can occur.

3) **Alternative Transportation Needs**: Staff will evaluate the recreational trail's role in the movement pattern of the community. Not all recreational trails provide access to roads, facilities and other amenities that are open for evening use. However, trails in parks that form part of an overall community access to City facilities, transit, and shopping, should be lit so long as it is safe to do so.

4) **Impact on Neighbours**: An informal impact assessment of the effects of new lights on park neighbours will be conducted. The addition of new lights into areas that have been traditionally dark and where the park borders residential homes, may adversely impact neighbours. This policy for recreational trail lighting addresses the need to use fixture types that are best suited to reducing light trespass onto adjacent properties. Light trespass is permitted but limited to levels indicated in the City of St. Thomas Design Guidelines. Such installations near neighbours are discouraged and require consultation with those who may be impacted by the intrusion of new lights near their property.

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5) **Impact on Park Environment**: New lighting projects that require significant change to the natural landscape character of the park are discouraged. For instance, if with the installation of new lights, significant proportions of woodlots need to be removed in order to provide evening trail users with the potential of public visibility and clear avenues of escape, such issues are to be identified and discussed with the City's Urban Forester and the local community prior to any commitment to proceed.

6) **Feasibility**: A cost-benefit analysis of a capital construction project for new recreational trail lights will be conducted. Identification of potential sources for metered hydro service is required. Consultation with Entegrus will be required. The feasibility of implementing the project if there is not an existing or sufficient hydro service must be analyzed.

7) **User Profile:** Recreational trail lighting generally creates an expectation of safety for the pathway users. Therefore, the physical characteristics of the trail surfacing, maintenance level, expected user types and the times that the City also expects the users to need lit trails are to be evaluated. Multiple trail counters have been installed on major intersections along our recreational trail system to provide user data including day and time of use. On/off times for the lighting system is to be confirmed through risk management, in consultation with the City's insurance provider and operating departments prior to any new installation being approved.

8) **Threat Analysis:** If the recreational trail lighting project is linked to identified personal security problems for trail users, a new installation of recreational trail lights into existing parks and trails cannot occur without the concurrent implementation of additional measures for enforcement of by-laws and added security patrol to curb potential criminal activity.

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Project Implementation Priorities

Staff would need to maintain a budget envelope for recreational trail lighting projects. New project requests often exceed approved capital budget envelopes and, as a result, a system of priority determination is required. As the system matures a dedicated account for operating regular maintenance should be included in financial forecasting.

The following priorities will be used:

First Priority: Projects that meet all evaluation criteria as detailed above and whose projected costs are within the approved capital budget envelope.

Second Priority: Projects that meet at least 4 of the evaluation criteria and are on recreational trails that receive winter maintenance. Second priority projects must have an audit performed which has resulted in a recommendation to install new recreational trail lights.

Third Priority: Projects that meet 3 or fewer of the evaluation criteria, and where an audit of the recreational trail system has determined that new pathway lights may create a false sense of security for pathway users

The Parks Department will maintain a list of new recreational trail lighting requests and evaluate these proposed projects annually to determine implementation priorities.

DEFINITIONS

CPTED: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: Proper design and effective use of the built environment which leads to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crimes of opportunity and an improvement in the quality of life.

Natural Surveillance: a design strategy that is directed at keeping intruders and / or vulnerable assets under observation. Designing for natural surveillance involves

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providing ample opportunity for park users, engaged in their normal activities, to observe the space around them.

Witness Potential: The ability for people to observe and monitor users. For instance, a sidewalk on a busy street has very high witness potential, a pathway in a forest has very low witness potential.

Entrapment Spot: Small confined areas adjacent or near a well travelled route that are shielded on three sides whether they be walls, shrubs, or trees.

APPLICATION

This policy document will apply to all new recreational trail lighting projects that are within existing and future City of St. Thomas lands.