

# TOWN OF VIENNA | EXTERIOR LIGHTING

The following is a summary of the Town Code relating to exterior lighting for non-residential properties. All regulations for lighting in the Town of Vienna are found within [Article 4 - 5 of Chapter 18](#) of the Town of Vienna Zoning Code. Property owners are encouraged to review the town code before submitting any applications for review, purchasing, or installing lighting. New permanent, exterior lighting installed without an approval by the Board of Architectural Review may result in fines.

## WHAT IS EXTERIOR LIGHTING?

Exterior lighting includes privately or publicly owned lighting that is outside the public right-of-way. This includes lighting such as facade or building-mounted lighting, landscape and hardscape lighting, permanent decorative lighting, and security lighting. It excludes street lighting.

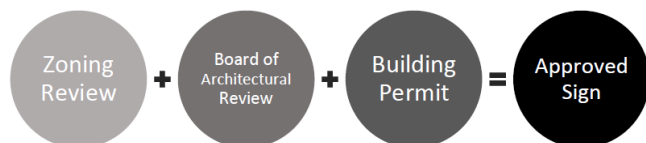
## LIGHTING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Any new, privately-owned exterior lighting that is located on a commercial or mixed-use property and intended for permanent installation requires zoning approval from the Town of Vienna, review by the Board of Architectural Review, and potentially building permits from Fairfax County.

Minor modifications such as changing a single light source wouldn't merit review, but changes to many light sources constitutes a redesign.

Temporary construction or event lighting must be approved by Town Staff, but does not require approval by the Board of Architectural Review.

## BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW



The Board of Architectural Review meets the third Thursday of each month at 7:30pm to review signs and other exterior modifications. The Board is comprised of community members appointed by Town Council.

Town staff will assist in submitting a complete application after confirming all zoning regulations have been met.

## ZONING REQUIREMENTS

The zoning code states maximum light level, luminaire heights, Correlated Color Temperature (CCT), targeting and shielding requirements, and acceptable light trespass levels.

All zoning regulations for exterior lighting in the Town of Vienna are found within [Article 4 - 5 of Chapter 18](#).

Town Staff reviews the lighting applications for zoning compliance before lighting designs are placed on the agenda of the Board of Architectural Review to confirm the aesthetic character of the Town's lighting is maintained.

## LIGHTING DESIGN QUALITY

In addition to zoning code requirements, the Town's nighttime character is impacted by the consistency of lighting per land use and whether new lighting choices are the best fit for a location's surroundings.

For example, a business located across from residential homes will need to carefully consider the placement of their lights. A building that does extensive seasonal lighting displays may be the wrong choice for permanent festoon lighting in order to avoid visual clutter. Property owners should ensure if they have a sign with exterior illumination that the CCT of their facade lighting matches.

These aspects of lighting design can be reviewed after zoning requirements are met.



**Department of Planning & Zoning**

127 Center Street South | Vienna, VA 22180

Phone: 703-255-6341 | Email: DPZ@vienna.gov | [www.viennava.gov](http://www.viennava.gov)

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## CHOOSING COLOR TEMPERATURES

CCT helps measure how warm or cool a white light source appears to most people. 3000K is considered a warm-white and is the maximum CCT for most of the Town, but sometimes a lower CCT may be a better choice.

### 2200K



This color temperature is considered very warm. Using this CCT can be beneficial around wildlife. It can also provide a more historic nighttime appearance for an area.

### 2700K



This CCT is considered warm. Using this color of light in residential zones or mixed-use areas can help create a cozy nighttime experience.

### 3000K



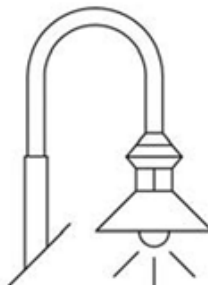
This CCT is considered warm-white. It is a standard choice for most outdoor lighting needs. Using this CCT in commercial areas helps us see the colors of materials in more detail at night.

## CHOOSING APPROPRIATE LUMINAIRES

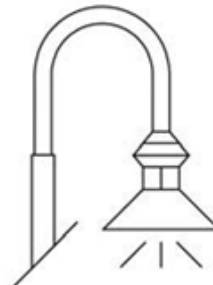
Exterior lighting in commercial and mixed-use spaces in the Town is expected to be fully-shielded. This means the light source is contained within the luminaire in such a way that it is not easily visible from most angles and light is being directed downwards towards hardscape or targeted to the object intended to be lit, such as a historic facade feature.

Managing light by using properly shielded luminaires reduces light pollution and light trespass into residential properties. Several common examples are shown to the right.

## PARKING & HARDSCAPE LIGHTING



Exposed light source contributing to glare and light trespass.



Shielded light source keeps light on the hardscape.

## FACADE LIGHTING

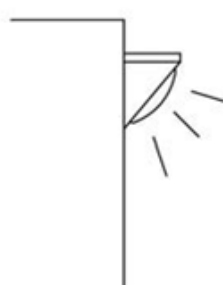


Uncontrolled light source contributing to glare and light trespass.



Shielded light source improves visibility and control of facade lighting.

## AREA LIGHTING



Lack of front shielding leads to high glare and light trespass.



Shielded light source supports better visibility and safety.



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## FESTOON LIGHTING

Festoon or string lighting refers to bulbs along a string that are designed for permanent, decorative outdoor installation.

The bulbs may be clear or frosted in appearance, but only one style should be used per property. They should be strung in an orderly way.

Locations with outdoor dining or pedestrian walkways that are not across from residential homes may be good candidates.

The lighting should use a traditional bulbs along a string appearance in the appropriate white CCT.



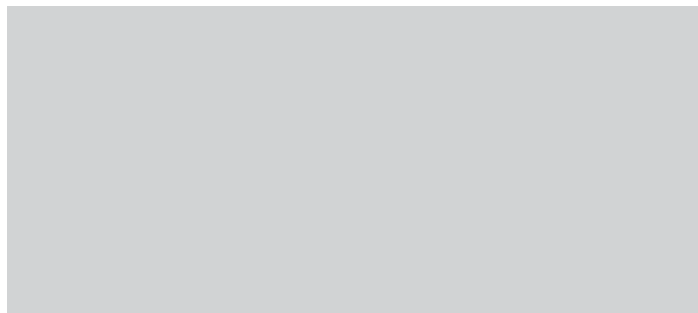
## EXTERIOR LIGHTING APPLICATIONS

When applying for new exterior lighting or renovations, applicants must provide some standard information to Town staff so they can verify the lighting plans meet the zoning requirements. These include:

1. Site plan with installation locations, their targeted directions, and their mounting heights
2. Luminaire identification (model numbers) with their lumen outputs and CCT
3. Description of any other physical conditions within the site that could impact the lighting outcomes

Applicants would also need to provide either a completed lighting compliance form, a photometric plan, or a certified statement of compliance from a qualified professional. This is to help verify the lighting design's performance.

Town staff will assist in submitting a complete application after confirming regulations are met.



## BUILDING OUTLINE LIGHTING

Building outline lighting may be an appropriate decorative choice for some types and locations.

Buildings with flat roof lines or wide eaves are good candidates.

Locations across from other commercial uses are more appropriate than those across from residential. Properties that have an extensive seasonal lighting display are not since they cannot be displayed together.

The lighting should use a traditional bulbs along a string appearance in the appropriate white CCT.



Applicants to the Board are required to provide all luminaire part numbers, site locations, and finish colors for the Board's review. The CCT of any white spectrum lighting and any planned single-color lighting should also be included.

The Board of Architectural Review criteria can be found in [Chapter 4, Section 4-15. - Design criteria.](#)

**Questions? Contact Planning and Zoning at [DPZ@viennava.gov](mailto:DPZ@viennava.gov)  
To start a lighting application, visit [\(hold for link\)](#)**



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