

Responsible Sports Park Lighting

The International Dark-Sky Assn., Texas Chapter is working to ensure that newly installed lighting is done properly, with minimal impact on the surrounding environment, including the night sky. Most of good lighting engineering is about minimizing waste, which will save the owners money in the long run. Besides efficiency, we need to be cognizant of the effects artificial light has on the natural world, including ourselves. The city of Austin is already using full cut off (all light below the horizon) LED fixtures to replace their existing street lighting in an effort to curb light waste and save revenue.

Meeting good lighting requirements will require lowered illumination levels and hoods or shields to prevent direct source light from reaching beyond the boundary of the sports park. This will prove to be more difficult when located high above the average terrain. It will require lighting supports to be lower and closer together to keep illumination levels adequate and even, without spilling outside the sports park. It would also require lower hoods or shields to prevent light trespass on to surrounding properties. Light found to be interfering with normal sleep has been deemed trespass, and subject to court action. I would encourage the development team to search for a location at an elevation equal to or lower than the surrounding terrain if possible. Land such as this is often designated for temporary recreational use anyway due to drainage issues and may be more reasonable to acquire.

As coordinator of the Texas chapter of IDA, I strongly support the proposal to move the currently designed sports complex and it's necessary lighting to a more suitable location where it will affect the natural environment to a lesser degree.

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