



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/08/2026

REQUESTER: Rickey J. Knighton II

PRESENTER: Rickey J. Knighton II, City Attorney

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF ORDINANCE O-2627-9 UPON FIRST READING BY TITLE: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, AMENDING SECTION 24-403 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NORMAN TO FORBID DISTURBING THE PEACE OF ANOTHER BY LIGHT TRESPASS AS DEFINED THEREIN; AND PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY THEREOF.

BACKGROUND:

The City's existing disturbing-the-peace ordinance prohibits conduct that interferes with the peace of others through specified activities, including violent or improper conduct, certain abusive language, loud or unusual sounds, distribution of certain literature, and display of certain signs or emblems.

The proposed ordinance amendment would add a new subsection addressing light trespass. The amendment is intended to provide a means of addressing artificial lighting originating on one property that extends onto neighboring property and substantially interferes with the reasonable use and enjoyment of that property.

Complaints concerning exterior lighting can arise when floodlights, security lights, recreational lighting, or similar artificial light sources are directed or allowed to shine onto neighboring property. Although the City Code addresses certain aspects of outdoor lighting in the context of development and land-use regulation, the existing disturbing-the-peace ordinance does not expressly address circumstances in which artificial light substantially disturbs neighboring occupants.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed amendment adds subsection (f) to Section 24-403 of the City code, which would prohibit:

Creating or maintaining light trespass that substantially disturbs the peace, comfort, or repose of occupants of neighboring property.

The amendment defines “light trespass” as artificial light originating on one property that extends onto another property and substantially interferes with the reasonable use and enjoyment of that property.

The proposed language is intended to address substantial interference rather than the mere presence of visible light on neighboring property. Artificial light commonly crosses property lines in an urban environment, and the amendment would not make every instance of such light a violation. Instead, a violation would require both light extending onto another property and a substantial interference with the reasonable use and enjoyment of that property.

This standard is consistent with the placement of the provision within the City’s disturbing-the-peace ordinance. The focus is not solely on the brightness or intensity of a particular light source, but on whether the light, under the circumstances, substantially disturbs the peace, comfort, or repose of occupants of neighboring property. Relevant circumstances may include the direction and intensity of the light, the duration or frequency of the intrusion, the time of day, the location and use of the affected property, and whether reasonable measures could reduce the intrusion.

The amendment also contains exceptions intended to avoid interfering with legitimate or necessary lighting. Lighting required by law and temporary emergency lighting would not be prohibited. Holiday lighting would likewise be permitted, provided it is not directed toward neighboring dwellings in a manner that substantially interferes with their reasonable use and enjoyment.

The proposed amendment is intended to provide an enforcement mechanism for significant light-related disturbances while recognizing that some degree of outdoor lighting and incidental illumination is a normal feature of residential and urban environments.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of Ordinance O-2627-9 to amend the City’s disturbing-the-peace ordinance by adding subsection (f) addressing light trespass that substantially interferes with the reasonable use and enjoyment of neighboring property.