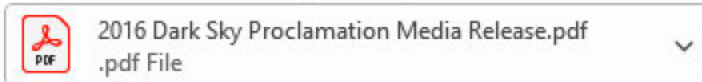


Public Comment for West Grey Official Plan



MR [REDACTED]

To Jamie Eckenswiler; Mayor WESTGREY; Tom Hutchinson; Doug Hutchinson; Doug Townsend; Scott Foerster;
 Geoffrey Shea; Joyce Nuhn; David Smith; CBO - Karl Schipprack
Cc Bev Falco; chris palmer



Mon 2025-10-20 12:22 PM

Re: Public comment for the Official Plan for the settlement areas of Durham and Neustadt Municipality of West Grey; Draft version Sept 11, 2025

Dear Mayor Eccles, Council Members and Planning Staff of West Grey,

It is my intent to make an oral presentation during the Public Meeting for the Official Plan tomorrow.

It is likely that in my statement I will reference both the Dark Sky Friendly Proclamation Resolution #162-16 and the Staff Report to Council Feb 15, 2022 Dark Sky Lighting - proposed municipal policy. As such I have attached these documents to this email for your convenience.

Also, I will be making some suggested changes to the Definitions in Section O page 74:

Original: DARK SKY FRIENDLY LIGHTING means lighting products and/or a lighting plan that is specifically designed to enable residents to enjoy nighttime views of the sky unobstructed by excessive municipal, business or parking lot lighting.

Suggested rewrite:

Option 1 - DARK SKY FRIENDLY LIGHTING means lighting products and/or a lighting plan that is specifically designed to protect the sky, surrounding environment and wildlife from light pollution due to outdoor lighting and lit signage.

Option 2 - DARK SKY FRIENDLY LIGHTING means lighting products and/or a lighting plan that is specifically designed to prevent light pollution due to outdoor lighting and lit signage trespassing into the sky and environment, and minimize its negative impact on wildlife.

Also I would like to suggest adding a definition for Light Pollution:

LIGHT POLLUTION is any light that is shining where, when and in an amount exceeding that required for the task. It can be described as skyglow, trespass, glare and clutter.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment on the draft Official Plan.

Respectfully yours,
Marian Ratcliffe
Resident, West Grey

From: MR [REDACTED]
Sent: October 14, 2025 12:22 PM
To: Jamie Eckenswiller <clerk@westgrey.com>; Mayor WESTGREY <mayor@westgrey.com>; Tom Hutchinson <deputymayor@westgrey.com>; Doug Hutchinson <dhutchinson@westgrey.com>; Doug Townsend <dtownsend@westgrey.com>; Scott Foerster <sfoerster@westgrey.com>; Geoffrey Shea <gshea@westgrey.com>; Joyce Nuhn <joycenuhn@westgrey.com>
Cc: Bev Falco [REDACTED]; chris palmer [REDACTED]
Subject: Public comment : WG Official Plan

I apologize that this written input is a day late on the cut off and would kindly ask if a grace period would permit including it in the agenda. Marian

Re: Public comment for the Official Plan for the settlement areas of Durham and Neustadt Municipality of West Grey; Draft version Sept 11, 2025

Dear Mayor Eccles, Council Members and Planning Staff of West Grey,

We are writing to express my concern that the Draft Official Plan is inadequate and lacks appropriate language regarding light pollution prevention.

We request that in this new Official Plan West Grey recognizes the importance of reducing light pollution into the environment as well as protecting our dark skies in its guidance statements. We also recommend that there be improvements to guiding language, providing better direction to address colour, intensity, trespass, shielding and times of operation.

Also, the policy coverage should be not be limited to larger scale developments, instead include all residential, employment, commercial, recreational, and institutional development. [Reference GCOP consol May 6, 2025 Sect 7.14 (10)]

We are concerned that the recommendation for **sensitive** outdoor lighting is too vague. What does **sensitive** mean? The definition for **sensitive** provided in the OP is unrelated. Optimally the requirements for outdoor lighting should meet DarkSky International approved standards [link here: [DarkSky Approved Luminaires guidelines | DarkSky International](#)]

We are also concerned about the use of the term “where appropriate” in the 3rd paragraph. We expect this is to allow for playing fields where higher illumination levels are needed for safety, but are concerned it is a loophole that will allow others to make claims that they too need excessive lighting for reasons that show ignorance about safe lighting and an unwillingness to seek better solutions. We also suggest changing some of the modal verbs to stronger forms to reduce loophole risks.

At the end of this letter we have provided below suggestions for improving the language in Section H5 Outdoor Lighting/Dark Sky Friendly. We hope that Staff and Council will consider and accept them.

Preventing an increase in light pollution and where possible actually reducing illumination levels is important because light pollution puts an additional strain on an ecosystem that already suffers in our current climate crisis. Light pollution has a negative impact on the natural rhythms, health and welfare of plants and wildlife. For humans, light pollution has a negative effect on health, our economy (wasted energy=wasted money), tourism, cultural and scientific development.

People appreciate West Grey for its natural environment, whether as permanent residents, on visits to their cottages or as general tourists. Stargazing, seeing the Milky Way, auroras and other astronomical wonders are a valuable part of our natural heritage. Our beautiful dark skies bring not only educational but also economic benefits as local businesses recognize that the sky overhead is a valuable resource since it draws tourists to his area. For example, the North York Astronomical Society hosts Starfest in West Grey.

Light can travel great distances so in devising lighting policies, we need to consider our neighbours, even those at a fair distance from the light sources. For example, the glow from Dundalk and even Shelburne can be seen at night from Glenelg in West Grey. In fact, light pollution can travel distances exceeding 200kms even when the source is below the horizon. Furthermore, participants at the annual Starfest gathering at River Place Park, are reporting that nighttime glows from West Grey and other areas are destroying the value of this location as a star party location. And these glow domes aren't just impacting the sky, light travels in all directions from the source impacting the environment all around.

On the good news side of the coin, reducing light pollution produces no residual effects and has many positive benefits, including better health for our residents and the other inhabitants of our environment as well.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to make our concerns known.

Respectfully yours,
Marian Ratcliffe
Bev Falco
Chris Palmer
Residents of West Grey

H5 Outdoor Lighting/Dark Sky Friendly

This Official Plan recognizes the use of outdoor lighting for public safety purposes and encourages the use of lighting which both provides for safety and limits light pollution.

West Grey values its dark sky nighttime environment and supports sensitive environmentally sound outdoor lighting practices that minimize undesirable or unsafe light rays into the dark sky, environment, waterways or surrounding properties.

West Grey shall require, on public lands, sensitive dark sky compliant outdoor lighting that is oriented downward, is low wattage intensity, warm in colour, shielded, aimed only where needed and energy efficient and minimizes glare, where appropriate. Dimmable and timed lighting will be encouraged. The use of lit-signage or billboards that may have a deleterious impact on dark skies, the surrounding environment, and wildlife should will be limited and will include measures to mitigate impact.

The same consideration should also be given to new forms of private development and redevelopment within Durham and Neustadt, including larger scale residential, employment, commercial, recreational, and institutional development. Such dark sky friendly measures can will be incorporated through Site Plan Agreements and Plan of Subdivision/Condominium Agreements.

West Grey requires as a condition of site plan, draft plan approval, or through wording in a subdivision, condominium, or site plan agreement, the requirement for dark sky friendly lighting, or light abatement provisions, to limit the potential for light pollution.

A Lighting Plan may will be required as part of an application.

Nothing within this section is intended to limit lighting required in accordance with any Federal or Provincial standards, including but not limited to navigation, telecommunication towers, etc. Federal or Provincially regulated projects are encouraged to use lighting which minimizes impacts on dark skies, while still meeting Federal or Provincial standards