



MEMORANDUM

P.O. Box 4100 ♦ FRISCO, COLORADO 80443

TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: EMMA HETH, PLANNER II
KATIE KENT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
RE: WORK SESSION: DARK SKY MENTOR PROGRAM
DATE: January 28, 2025

Summary and Background:

At the January 28, 2025 work session, DarkSky mentor Mark Laurin and Staff will present the process for pursuing Dark Sky certification, including next steps and community support that will be needed. The steps include: convening a project steering committee; conducting a sky brightness measurement program; engaging in community outreach; developing an updated lighting ordinance; setting up a policy planning framework; and conducting an inventory of Town-owned and leased lighting.

At the January 28th work session, Staff seeks feedback from Town Council; specifically:

- Does the Council have any concerns with the upcoming steps that are presented?
- Does the Council have any suggestions for local citizens to be invited onto the steering committee?
- Does the Council have questions after hearing the presentation at the work session?

Local dark sky advocates reached out to Town staff in 2023 to encourage the Town to consider pursuing an International Dark Sky Community certification through DarkSky International. On March 26, 2024, Town Council held a work session to provide Staff direction regarding pursuing an International Dark Sky Community certification through DarkSky International. At the work session, Council directed Staff to begin pursuing certification. Over summer 2024, Planning Staff submitted an application to be entered into the pipeline for certification. On August 7, the Town received written confirmation that we are eligible to continue in the International Dark Sky Community application process.

On October 8, 2024, Town Council approved a letter of support to apply to the [Colorado Dark Sky Certification Mentor Program](#) through the CO Tourism Office and DarkSky Colorado. The Town's application to the program was submitted on October 10, and the Town was notified of selection for the program on November 1. Town staff has begun working with our assigned mentor, Mark Laurin, to work toward certification. Staff anticipates submitting the application for certification in 2026 if all steps are completed and supported by Council.

Financial Impact: The Town spent \$250.00 to submit the official application process to be entered into the pipeline for certification. The Town is receiving 70 hours of mentorship support from Mark Laurin through the Colorado Dark Sky Certification Mentor Program. Additional financial impacts to the Town would be staff time and costs for bringing all public lighting into compliance over the next five years. Costs of compliance have not been quantified yet, but a lighting inventory is underway and will assist the Town in identifying future upgrades.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: The recently adopted 2024-2028 Strategic Plan includes the strategic objective “Provide progress-driven Quality Core Services” including the pillar:

- Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change: This pillar emphasizes the commitment to protecting the environment and taking proactive steps to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Dark sky-friendly outdoor lighting supports Frisco’s Quality Core Services by improving Frisco’s environmental stewardship and enhancing our public infrastructure to improve safety and quality of life for residents and wildlife.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends pursuing the steps outlined in the presentation at the January 28, 2025 work session including: convening a project steering committee; conducting a sky brightness measurement program; engaging in community outreach; developing an updated lighting ordinance; conducting an inventory of Town-owned and leased lighting; and setting up a policy planning framework.

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Reviews and Approvals: This report has been reviewed and approved by:

Diane McBride, Assistant Town Manager

Tom Fisher, Town Manager