



Position Against Streetlights

Underlined words indicate hyperlinks to the reference on MNA website version.

In our neighborhood, streetlights' effect on crime is negligible. They give only an illusion of safety. Lights work as crime deterrent in locations where the offender fears that somebody will [see and report the crime](#). They are effective in areas with high foot traffic after dark, such as campuses and apartment complexes. In suburban areas hardly anyone is in the street during night hours that would observe an offender. Most house break-ins occur during daytime hours, when owners are away. Alarms systems and motion sensors are the most effective crime protection tools for individual properties, 24 hours a day.

Crime rates in the Mountain are substantially lower than in other urban areas. Crime in neighborhoods is predominantly committed by residents of the neighborhood or nearby areas. Home and car break-ins typically are planned spontaneously. The Mountain is isolated enough from higher crime areas to not have such opportunity crime affect us. [Crime statistics by the City of Austin](#) show a very low overall crime rate for The Mountain. Nighttime crime is virtually nonexistent.

To the contrary, lighting in areas without much foot traffic attracts opportunity crime, because the offender [can better gauge the scene](#). Cars parked near streetlights are more susceptible to break-ins since valuable items are more readily visible. *"My daughter had her car broken into and iPod stolen with a streetlight literally over her car, in a nice part of Avery Ranch"* Bill Daly, Westerkirk Dr.

Disruption of darkness at night affects your health. Light at night reduces the production of the sleep hormone [melatonin](#), which has been linked to an increased risk for [obesity](#), [diabetes](#) and [cancer](#). Though the effect of nighttime light has become a focus of studies just in recent years, it is now evident that the light seeping in through your bedroom windows at night is [doing more to your health](#) than interfering with a good night's sleep.

The proposed streetlight plan is exactly the same as what they now have on Sixth Street and downtown. The backup plan is decorative lights, which require 50% more lights to achieve the city mandated lumen output, the cost for the neighborhood for these would be many

thousands of dollars. The "free" lights are on 25 foot galvanized poles and put out an unpleasant orange light along with a loud hum. The technology is decades old and looks it. Decorative lights [are worse with regards to scatter light](#), as stated by the City official at the meeting.

A misguided approach to crime prevention over the past 20 years has been [more and brighter lights](#). This brought us cities like Houston, where it is almost daylight at night, with associated energy costs. People are growing disenchanted with this. Statistics show that in over-lit suburbs property values are lower. Communities with higher property values opt out of city-mandated lighting standards and [take matters into their own hands](#).

As Austin grows, some feel we inevitably need to go the route of Houston or Dallas with grossly over-lit suburbs. The characteristics of The Mountain neighborhood are not dramatically changing with the rest of the city. Canyons around us protect us from suburban sprawl. No shopping mall is going to appear next to us. Streetlights will degrade the unique character of The Mountain and [reduce our visibility of the night sky](#).

Even with streetlights, there are dangers for small children walking alone before daylight. Car drivers have the hardest time noticing pedestrians and cyclists during twilight hours because of multiple light sources: cars, streetlights and ambient light. Streetlights do not keep children walking alone at dawn safer as they are not necessarily more visible to drivers.

Streetlights would make The Mountain neighborhood more generic and provide light intensity far beyond what would be desired. The associated loss of undisturbed nights and uniqueness of our neighborhood far outweighs any gain. On overcast days, the sky has a reddish tone at night gently reflecting the light from downtown Austin, combining with house lights to provide just enough illumination. Would you risk losing that?

Enjoy what is special about our neighborhood. We have convenient traffic connections, but are safe from further urban encroachment due to our geography. As a neighborhood annexed by the City of Austin, streetlights are not mandatory; we have a choice. This is the value of our neighborhood, now and in the future.

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