

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 20, 2019
FROM:	KELLY SCHERR, P. ENG., MBA, FEC MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER
SUBJECT:	STREET LIGHT LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Environmental and Engineering Services and City Engineer, an annual New Street Light Local Improvement Program with a 50% cost sharing with abutting property owners **BE CONSIDERED** alongside other investment priorities in the upcoming 2020-2023 multi-year budget process.

<b>2015-19 STRATEGIC PLAN</b>
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The following report supports the [Strategic Plan](#) through the strategic focus areas of:

- **Strengthening Our Community** by providing a healthy, safe, and accessible city to strengthen emergency management, operations, and public notification information; and
- **Building a Sustainable City** by providing convenient and connected mobility choices to improve travel by managing congestion and increasing roadway safety and by providing robust infrastructure.

by improving safety for pedestrians and facilitating alternative mobility choices in London’s neighbourhoods.

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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There are over 36,000 street lights in the city illuminating our roads and sidewalks. The majority of city streets have street lights and the Street Services Implementation and Financing Procedure provides a means to have street lights installed where they are absent or inadequate. The following report explores options to change how unlit residential streets could have street lights installed.

DISCUSSION

A review of the relevant research indicates that today’s car headlights are often sufficient to meet the illumination needs of motorists on many roads without the need for street lights. Streetlights, however, still play an important role in active transportation users and contribute to the level of safety and comfort cyclists, pedestrians and other road users experience at night. Property owners also often indicate that they feel safer when there are street lights. The following table summarizes the breakdown of unlit verses lit streets in the city:

Road Classification	Length of unlit roads (km)	Length of lit roads (km)	Percentage of roads unlit
Major Roads	240	303	44%
Minor Roads	130	1017	11%
All Roads	370	1,320	22%

Notes:

- (1) Major Roads are Expressways, Urban Thoroughfares, Rapid Transit Boulevards, Civic Boulevards, Main Streets, Rural Thoroughfares and Rural Connectors.
- (2) Minor Roads are Neighbourhood Connectors and Neighbourhood Streets

Major Roads

Lighting along major roads is the responsibility of the City. This may be done as development occurs on lands adjacent to the road, as standalone projects or when the road is improved (e.g. road widening, etc.). There are many rural roads, primarily in the south part of the city, which are not lit at this time due to the abutting land use.

The annual capital budget for the installation of new street lights not associated with other work is \$145,000. It should be noted that this account is funded from development charges so it can be applied to growth-related needs.

Minor Roads

When new subdivisions are constructed, the developer is required to install street lights on all public roads. The cost of this work is passed on to the purchasers of the property by the developer. In some older areas, the developers installed small front yard lights rather than street lights. The yard lights are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain.



From time to time staff receive requests from residents inquiring about installing street lights on their street. The Street Services Implementation and Financing Procedure allows for use of the Local Improvement Program to install street lights in unlit minor roads. A successful Local Improvement Petition requires “at least two-thirds of the owners representing at least

one-half of the value of the lots liable to be specially charged for the work” to be in support of the project. The abutting property owners are responsible for 100% of the project cost. The City is responsible for a portion of the cost at intersections and other exemptions as per the local improvement procedures. The typical cost to the City is 20% of the total project.

The current estimate to install street lights on an existing residential street is \$300 per centreline meter (\$150 per meter of frontage); therefore, a property with 12 m (39 ft.) of frontage would be assessed \$1,800, which can be paid in one lump sum or financed over 10 years on the owner’s property taxes. Both sides of the street are assessed equally, regardless of which side the street lights are to be installed.

The last street light local improvement project was completed in 2005. There have been several requests for street lights since 2005; however, there have not been any successful local improvement petitions. The typical reason given by the public for the lack of successful petitions is the cost allocated to the property owners.

**Funding Options for Minor Roads**

The cost to light all of the minor roads is estimated to be \$39,000,000. Municipal Council may choose to reduce the property owner’s share of the cost in order to encourage more residential streets to be lit and to be more responsive to requests.

Removing the property owner’s cost allocation entirely may increase the number of streets being lit; however, it does not recognize that property owners benefit from the street lights. It should be noted that any increase in the City’s share would need to be approved in the 2020-2023 multi-year budget.

The following are some potential cost sharing options that may be considered along with the cost for a typical property (12 m of frontage) and the capital budget impact of an example \$200,000 street light local improvement project:

Cost Sharing	Individual Property Owner’s Share (12 m frontage)	City’s Capital Budget (assume \$200,000 project)	Additional Capital Budget Required
100% property owner (Current Process)	\$1,800	\$40,000	-
2/3 <sup>rd</sup> property owner	\$1,200	\$93,333	\$53,333
50% property owner	\$900	\$120,000	\$80,000
1/3 <sup>rd</sup> property owner	\$600	\$146,667	\$106,667
100% City	-	\$200,000	\$160,000

A cost sharing of 50/50 is recommended. This recognizes that the property owners benefit from the installation of the street lights, but that the broader public in the area also benefits. This is particularly true for cyclists and pedestrians. An annual street

light local improvement program of \$200,000 would light approximately 670 m of residential streets each year or 0.5% of all unlit residential roads annually.

Regardless of the final cost sharing arrangement, it is recommended that the local improvement process be maintained. This will help ensure community support for the installation of the street lights and share some of the costs with those who benefit most directly. If the number of street light projects increases beyond the approved budget, then a prioritization system would be developed. The prioritization system may include such things as the continuity of existing street lights, traffic volumes, cyclist and pedestrian needs, and community safety factors. The ongoing operating costs are anticipated to be minimal.

CONCLUSION

Existing procedures adequately address the installation of street lights on major roads. The procedure for minor roads requires the abutting property owner to pay 100% of the cost, which is often cited as the reason why the street light local improvement petitions are not successful. A cost sharing of 50/50 between the City and abutting property owners will help residents get priority streets lit while ensuring there is buy-in from the majority of impacted property owners. A new capital budget program is required to finance this updated local improvement program and a business case should be submitted for consideration as part of the 2020-2030 multi-year budget process.

Acknowledgements:

This report was prepared by Doug Bolton and Shane Maguire of the Roadway Lighting and Traffic Control Division with the assistance of James Arthur of the Geomatics Division.

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