

STREET LIGHT POLICY

PURPOSE

To establish a consistent policy for placement, installation, type, maintenance and operation of the City's street and alley lighting system.

GENERAL CRITERIA & INFORMATION

The City has an extensive system of streetlights throughout the City. The streetlights come in varying styles, models, and wattages. Some are owned by Xcel Energy and leased by the City; and the City owns some. For the City-owned fixtures, Xcel maintains some, and the City maintains some.

The City has obtained from Xcel Energy a complete listing of all of the streetlights in South St. Paul and is available in the City Engineer's office. As of March 2009, there are a total of 1,064 streetlights in South St. Paul, varying in wattage from 100 to 400 watts. This does not include any parks lights, which are called area lights. Of those 1,064 lights, the City owns 374. This means the City pays for poles, fixtures, mast arms, anchors and wiring. Xcel replaces bulbs and ballasts and supplies energy for these lights. All lights are unmetered.

In addition to the lights on the attached listing, there are a few dozen alley lights, which were installed by Xcel Energy, but are paid for by the residents that live on those particular alleys.

Prior to 2009, current practice (there was no written policy that can be found), as deciphered from various letters on streetlights, is as follows:

- Streetlights are usually installed at street intersections.
- Lights are *not* usually installed at alley/street intersections.
- Generally, no mid-block street lights.
- City does not pay for or install alley lights.
- High vandalism areas can be criteria for placement of lights.
- High accident rates can be criteria for lights.
- School & MCTO bus stops can be criteria.
- Blocks longer than 600 feet can be criteria for mid-block streetlights.
- Lights are often installed at the ends of cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets.
- Collector or special district streets may have continuous street lighting (e.g.: 7th Avenue from I-494 – Marie, Concord Street, Grand Gateway, Hardman Avenue, Southview Boulevard, Marie Avenue).
- New developments pay 100% of costs for new street light installations (e.g.: Wilson Heights, Wentworth Hollow, BridgePoint Business Park, Hardman Court).

ALLEY LIGHTS

Over the years, the City has not installed lights in alleys. There are many (about 30) alley lights throughout the City. These lights have historically been paid for by the residents (\$0 - \$500 for installation) and the energy costs are about \$10/month. These costs are billed directly to the resident that requests it or that has been designated by the neighborhood.

The City has not historically been involved in the installation of alley lights. One may ask why the City has not been involved. Apparently, the City has taken the approach that alley lights serve a very localized individual purpose and do not serve the City as a whole. Some residents like alley lights; others think they are an intrusion into privacy.

Policy: The City's policy shall be to *not* get involved in alley light placement and continue to leave it to the residents to deal with Xcel on a case-by-case basis. All costs/issues associated with placement and energy for alley streetlights will be decided between the residents and Xcel Energy. The City will allow the alley right-of-way to be used for this purpose provided that a request is signed by all of the adjacent residents.

STREET LIGHTS ON INTERSECTIONS OF STREETS

The City has been very consistent on the placing of streetlights at intersections. Most intersections are lit to help with traffic visibility. Street intersections are the most common conflict points for traffic and pedestrians so keeping them lit is vital.

Intersections are usually the easiest locations to place streetlights based on pole and power availability. If a pole with power lines already exists at an intersection, Xcel will place a mast-arm cobra-head streetlight on the pole at no cost to the City for installation. The City only has to pay the energy costs each month. If a pole does not exist at an intersection, usually power is nearby along an alley. A new pole is placed and wire is strung overhead from the existing power lines. In this case, the City pays for the placement of the pole and for the energy cost. The pole life-cycle cost is amortized in the rate the City pays for that particular light.

Policy: The City's policy shall be to place streetlights at all street/street intersections when practical. The City shall bear all costs associated with these streetlights.

STREET LIGHTS AT INTERSECTIONS OF STREETS & ALLEYS

It has been the City's practice not to put streetlights at street/alley intersections. The City does not get a lot of requests for this type of location mostly because alleys are usually less than 150 feet away from a street/street intersection, and these are usually lit. In cases where there is not a nearby street intersection or it is very dark because of other circumstances, the City has placed lights on some alley/street intersections. Again, usually only where a wooden pole already exists and the City would only have to pay the energy costs of the light.

Policy: The City's policy shall be to *not* place a street light at street/alley intersections unless there are special circumstances such as high vandalism, high accident rates, or no nearby street/street intersection (more than 300 feet) as determined by the City Engineer. If installed, the City shall be responsible for all costs associated with these streetlights.

MID-BLOCK STREET LIGHTS

The City's past practice is to not place streetlights at mid-block locations unless the locations meet some of these criteria:

- ❑ It is more than 350 feet to an intersecting street.
- ❑ It is in a high vandalism area.
- ❑ It is a high accident rate area.

Mid-block streetlights usually pose a problem with access to power. In many areas, the power lines are in the back of the homes along an alley or rear lot line easement. If a mid-block streetlight is installed usually a separate pole has to be placed and power has to be extended from a rear lot line between properties along a common lot line out to the street. Additionally, if easements for the power lines were needed, the adjacent owners would have to grant them to the City, preferably at no cost to the City.

Policy: The City's policy for mid-block streetlights shall be as follows:

1. If any one of the following criteria is met:
 - ❑ If a mid-block street light is more than 350 feet from an intersecting street that is lit
 - ❑ If it is in a high vandalism area
 - ❑ If it is in a high accident areaThen all of the affected residents must sign a petition to have the mid-block light installed. If the City Council decides to install the mid-block light then all costs associated with the light will be borne by the City. Also, if necessary, any easements needed from adjacent property owners for the purpose of power line installation, must be dedicated to the City at no cost.
2. If the criteria outlined above are not met, and the residents still wish to pursue the installation of a mid-block streetlight, then a petition must be signed by all of the affected residents to have the light installed on the City right-of-way. The residents shall be responsible for all costs associated with installation and energy. The residents shall also be responsible for coordinating this work with Xcel Energy.

END OF STREET OR CUL-DE-SAC LIGHTS

It has been the City's past practice to place streetlights in cul-de-sacs or at the end of a dead-end street when requested. However, several dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs are very short thus illumination is provided by the nearby intersection streetlight. Therefore, a minimum length of 200 feet is recommended for consideration of a cul-de-sac or dead-end streetlight. These lights are usually only installed if they are petitioned or requested by the affected owners.

Policy: The City's policy for placing lights at the end of cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets, shall be, if the street is at least 200 feet away from the nearest intersecting street and a petition is signed by all of the affected property owners, then a streetlight will be installed. All costs associated with these streetlights will be the responsibility of the City.

If the criteria outlined above are not met, and the residents still wish to pursue the installation of an end of street or cul-de-sac streetlight, then a petition must be signed by all of the affected residents to have the light installed on the City right-of-way. The residents shall be responsible for all costs associated with installation and energy. The residents shall also be responsible for coordinating this work with Xcel Energy.

SPECIAL OR CONTINUOUS STREET LIGHTING

There are several areas of the City where there is specialized or continuous street lighting. Examples of these areas (ownership noted in parenthesis) are:

7th Avenue – I-494 to Marie Ave. (City)
Marie Avenue – 4th Avenue to 8th Avenue (City)
Southview Boulevard – 3rd Avenue to 13th Avenue (City)
Concord Exchange – 6th Street to Hardman Avenue (City)
Grand Avenue Gateway (Xcel)
South Concord Street – south of I-494 (Xcel)
Wentworth Hollow (Xcel)
Wilson Heights (Xcel)
Bryant Avenue Bridge (Xcel)

There are also several areas where there are more commercial looking streetlights (i.e.: tall, galvanized steel poles with arched mast arms). Examples of these areas are:

Concord Street – I-494 to Wentworth Avenue (Mn/DOT)
Villaume Avenue (City)
Hardman Avenue (City)
Armour Avenue (City)
BridgePoint Drive and Way (City)
Grand Avenue – east of Concord Street (City)

The City should limit the types of special streetlights. One style for industrial areas and one for residential or retail/commercial areas should be established. It is felt that using the style currently in place in the BridgePoint area is the most appropriate for the industrial park setting. The style used along Grand Gateway & South Concord Street is recommended for all other special lighting areas. Currently, different styles exist at Wentworth Hollow, Wilson Heights, 7th Avenue, Marie Avenue & Southview Boulevard, Concord Exchange. The large variety does not provide continuity for the City's lighting system as a whole.

Policy: The City's policy for special or continuous street lighting shall be to install only two styles of streetlights:

Non-industrial areas: Acorn lantern style with a fiberglass pole (Xcel owned)

Industrial areas: 40-foot galvanized steel pole with arch mast arm (City owned).

The City shall decide where special and continuous street lighting shall be installed. The City Council shall determine how these streetlights shall be paid for, on a case-by-case basis. These costs can be assessed to the benefited properties, paid by the City, paid by MSA, paid by another agency, paid by TIF, or any combination of these sources or other sources as determined by the City Council.

STREET LIGHT REQUESTS

All requests for streetlights must be received on the standardized petition form available at the City. That form is attached to this policy and may be modified from time to time as the need arises.

INITIAL INSTALLATIONS & REPLACEMENTS

For most typical streetlights, the installation costs are minimal, if not zero, and the City pays for energy. However, all special or continuous street lighting systems come with an initial installation costs. In most cases, the costs are assessed to the benefited properties. For example, BridgePoint lighting was all assessed to the industrial lots created as part of the development. Wilson Heights, Wentworth Hollow, and South Bluff all paid for these special lights as part of their development costs. Street lighting systems like Grand Gateway, Southview, Marie, 7th Avenue, and Concord Exchange were done as part of a City plan of localized enhancement. In these cases, direct assessment did not specifically pay for the street lighting systems.

If a street is an MSA street, municipal state aid funds will pay for street lighting. The City used MSA funds to help pay for the lighting on South Concord Street.

Staff feels that if individual neighborhoods or developments (i.e. Wilson Heights, Wentworth Hollow) wish to have a special street lighting system installed, it should be the City's standard system and paid for through direct assessments. If the City feels that a special street lighting system is an overall benefit to the City, like Grand Gateway or another main thoroughfare, then the City should contribute to the funding of the installation of the system. Installation that benefits the overall economic stability of the City would also warrant participation by the City (Southview Boulevard, Marie, Concord Exchange) in the initial installation of the system.

The replacement of systems is another important issue. Currently, some of our systems are old and in need of an upgrade. For example: Concord Exchange is 30+ years old, Marie Avenue is almost 30 years old, Southview Boulevard is 20 years old. A replacement system can be funded from the Street Light Utility, MSA (when applicable), assessments, TIF funds, City CIP costs, special taxing districts, etc., or a combination. At the time of replacement or initial installation, the City Council shall determine the method of funding the lighting system and its operation.