

Smarter. Brighter. Greener.



The District is modernizing our streetlight system. This [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) provides more information about the project. Email StreetlightP3@dc.gov or call 202.724.2128 if you have additional questions.

Q: Why are we modernizing the District's streetlights?

A: The District deserves a 21st century streetlight system. Upgrading the system will provide the District with longer-lasting and sustainable LED lights and advanced features, such as: a remote monitoring system that allows for faster repairs and adjustments to suit each neighborhood's needs, Smart City technology like free fast WiFi, better cell phone service, and sensors that provide valuable traffic and environmental data. We'll get that high quality, modern lighting and technology with this project!

Q: What are the benefits of LED streetlights?

A: LEDs last 4 times as long as traditional bulbs, require fewer repairs, and provide more consistent light so your neighborhood is well lit and safer. Converting the District's 71,000 streetlights to LED technology will also save us at least 40 million kilowatt hours (KWH) of electricity per year, which is the equivalent of burning 30 million pounds of coal. Finally, the budget savings from this efficiency can be invested in other improvements in your community, including free fast WiFi.

Q: Don't LEDs look different?

A: The early generations of LED streetlights had a bluer color and more intense light. But, like the LED bulbs you have in your home, the technology is constantly improving to feel more warm and natural while still being energy efficient. For example, the earliest LEDs that the District tested were rated at 5000 to 6000 Kelvin (K), which is bluer or whiter light. Currently, the District now uses 4000K LEDs and is testing lights in the 3000K to 4000K range that should feel even more natural. Before the District picks a new standard and installs thousands of lights, we will give residents the opportunity to see them and give us their feedback on what they like and don't.

Q: Are LEDs bad for your health or wildlife?

A: The American Medical Association (AMA) issued a report in June 2016 regarding the potential health and wildlife effects of LED streetlights, but it found that these concerns could be overcome and encouraged the installation of LEDs to get all the benefits discussed above. The District will choose the right standards for our city, which will direct light only to those places that need it and provide shielding to reduce light pollution. That's why the District's Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) are assisting on this project to make sure AMA concerns are addressed. Keep in mind that the LED streetlights are actually less intense and no more harmful than the "blue" LEDs we look at every day on our cell phones, computers and TV screens. It's also important to remember that the AMA report only made recommendations to mitigate light pollution in the manner that suits each locality's best interests and did not provide more definitive guidelines for a one-size-fits-all approach.



Q: Will LEDs shine into my house more than streetlights do now?

A: No, LED technology actually allows us to better manage light and direct it only to intended areas (such as streets and sidewalks). We will be able to remotely monitor and control the light to make adjustments where needed, including automatic dimming and brightening based on whether people are nearby. Shielding will also be installed to help prevent light from entering areas where it is not wanted. This will make our streets, sidewalks and alleys safer, while reducing light pollution that comes in your window, interferes with nature, or reduces star visibility.

Q: When will I see new lights in my neighborhood?

A: Before the District converts all its streetlights, a small number of lights will be installed throughout the city. Neighborhoods will be given the opportunity to provide feedback and learn more. We will be coming to a community meeting near you in the next few months to get your feedback. We want to know what you think. One of the best places to look is the PA2040 project, which converted about 80 lights to LED and offered free WiFi in the 1700 to 1900 blocks of Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. You can learn more at <http://octo.dc.gov/page/pa2040-project>.

Q: Will you be collecting my data with the Smart City technology?

A: No. The District will follow the same privacy policies it does now for WiFi at schools, libraries, recreation centers and other government facilities. Any traffic or environmental data collected will be in aggregate form, not include any personally-identifiable information, and be in an open source format that is freely available for all to see and use to benefit the District in innovative ways.

Q: Why is the District modernizing the streetlights through a public-private partnership?

A: The public-private partnership or P3 is a long-term, performance-based agreement that makes our contractor responsible not only for the construction of new streetlights, but also the financing and maintenance of them. This will allow us to get the benefits of the new lights faster than we would normally and best of all, the District doesn't pay when the lights don't work. The District will always retain ownership of the streetlights.

