

Why is the City of Colorado Springs turning off some of its streetlights?

To help address a \$28 million budget gap for 2010, City Council directed staff to develop a plan for reducing City costs by turning off some of the City's streetlights. In cooperation with Colorado Springs Utilities, the City estimates it can save \$1.245 million in 2010 by turning off 8,000 to 10,000 streetlights.

Does Colorado Springs Utilities still charge a streetlight fee?

The streetlight fee ended in 2006. Six days after the Colorado Supreme Court affirmed the legality of the fee the City Council decided to abolish it anyway. The Council originally adopted the fee in November 2002 to shift costs for maintaining existing lights and erecting new ones from the General Fund to Colorado Springs Utilities, which instituted the monthly fee (\$1.83 per month for residents and \$4.95 for businesses).

Which streetlights will be turned off and which will be left on?

The City will begin by turning off the least energy efficient streetlights (ones with 1000 and 700 watt mercury vapor bulbs). In addition, areas with high ambient lighting (parking lots, buildings) will have adjacent streetlights turned off. Streetlights will most likely be left on for intersections with traffic signals, mid-block crosswalks, school areas and hospital emergency approaches.

When will streetlights be turned off?

Colorado Springs Utilities crews will begin to turn off streetlights Feb. 1, 2010. It is estimated all targeted streetlights will be turned off in 10 weeks.

How did the City decide which streetlights to turn off?

The City established a task force, in partnership with the Police Department and Colorado Springs Utilities, to consider and oversee the program. The task force recommended:

- Turning off streetlights with the least efficient bulbs (such as the 1000 and 700 watt mercury vapor bulbs)
- Turning off streetlights in areas with high ambient lighting (i.e. adjacent parking lots, buildings, etc.)
- Turning off half of the downtown streetlights

How long will the streetlights be turned off?

It is unclear how long streetlights will be turned off. Each year the City will reevaluate its financial position and will make recommendations to City Council. Through its budget creation and approval process, City Council will establish its priorities.

How much does a streetlight cost to operate?

The cost to operate a street light is based on the wattage and type of bulb in the light. Mercury Vapor (MV) bulbs use more energy than High Pressure Sodium (HPS) bulbs for a similar amount of light. The energy costs range from \$5.87 (100W HPS) to \$42.41 (1000W MV) per month per light. The cost of energy for 24,512 streetlights is \$3,220,000 per year.

How many streetlights does the City have?

The City currently maintains 24,512 streetlights.

How do streetlights work?

Streetlights are constructed with a constant power source to each light. A photo cell (automatic switch) is placed at the top of each pole. The photo cell senses darkness and light. It turns the light on when darkness comes and turns the light off when the sun comes up in the morning. The photo cell at each streetlight to be turned off will have to be replaced with a device that will not tell the light to turn on when the sun sets.

Will the City reinstall streetlights that are knocked down?

The first priority will be to make sure any downed streetlights are made safe for pedestrians and motorists. Then the City will evaluate each streetlight for reinstallation.

Will the City continue to replace streetlight bulbs that burn out?

Bulb outages that occur after the turn offs are complete will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.