



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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January 5, 2017

Dear Lexington-Hamline Neighbors:

Thank you for sharing your concerns about the LED light bulbs that Saint Paul Public Works is installing in the public right-of-way. Our office received the petition signed by neighbors, and just as we were planning to respond to that, we subsequently received a letter regarding LED lighting from the Lexington-Hamline Community Council. I would like to take this opportunity to respond to both communications on behalf of the Mayor and the Public Works Department.

There are always concerns when we adopt a new technology for use on a broad scale. That is why we have been cautious in the transition from High Pressure Sodium (HSP) bulbs and continue to evaluate the research with respect to the effectiveness of specific LED products. We continue to believe that LED bulbs are the right technology for Saint Paul for a number of reasons:

- Cost savings – LED lights require approximately 50 percent less energy and last longer (10 or more years in some cases), meaning less maintenance over time. This means significantly less labor which accrues as savings to the City and its taxpayers.
- Environmental impact – LED bulbs represent two significant environmental benefits: (1) A 50 percent reduction in energy use is a significant step toward reducing the city's carbon footprint; and (2) With a longer lifecycle, fewer bulbs end up in landfills. And, unlike other bulbs, LED bulbs do not contain mercury which has its own disposal challenges.

We are aware that the brightness and color of the new bulbs is of concern to some Lexington-Hamline residents. The LED bulbs that have been installed rate a color temperature of approximately 4000° K, which is a standard color temperature for street lights. We have, however, suspended installing them in residential areas until we can evaluate new, lower temperature LED products for their effectiveness.

There is a certain amount of complexity involved in selecting bulbs for use city-wide. We are currently working with our engineers and vendors to determine which lower temperature options may be viable for use across the city. There appear to be limited options for retrofitting our older-style lantern light posts. We hope to have those options identified and evaluation criteria in place early in 2017.

In light of the Lexington-Hamline Community Council's offer to partner with the city in our assessment of LED technology, we look forward to working with the neighborhood, and others, to solicit feedback on the different options available. This may include changing out some of the currently installed 4000°K bulbs with lower temperature LED options. We will be in communication with the community council to further discuss the evaluation process as we seek to find a good match of LED light bulb for the lantern style light posts.

We do plan to continue the transition to LED technology across the city once we conduct this assessment. The savings to the taxpayer and the environment are too great to return to outdated technology. Therefore, we will not reinstall HPS bulbs in any of the fixtures that have been converted to accept the LED technology.

Thank you, once again, for sharing your concerns with us. We have work to do to find a good solution for LED light bulbs in the lantern style light posts. We appreciate your willingness to partner with us as we move forward in evaluating this valuable technology and its impact on residents and the neighborhoods where we live.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin Beckmann".

Kristin Beckmann
Deputy Mayor

cc: Councilmember Dai Thao
Kathy Lantry, Department of Public Works Director