

News Release

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Durham Converts Existing Streetlights to Energy-Saving LEDs

Change Will Save Energy and Reduce the City's Carbon Footprint

DURHAM, N.C. – Beginning this week and lasting over the next 18 months, residents may soon observe the Bull City's more than 20,000 existing streetlights being converted to high-efficiency LEDs, all thanks to a partnership between the City of Durham and Duke Energy Carolinas.

On April 1, the Durham City Council [approved a plan](#) to replace the City's 21,017 existing streetlights, which are owned by Duke Energy Carolinas. The City pays a monthly fee to Duke Energy Carolinas to operate and maintain these streetlights in Durham.

According to Acting Director Bill Judge with the City's Transportation Department, the changeover to LEDs – which will save energy and produce less light pollution than conventional streetlights – only became feasible when Duke Energy Carolinas reduced its streetlight rates in September 2018.

"We have been exploring opportunities to convert older, inefficient lighting to modern energy-efficient LED lighting for a number of years, but the previous rates didn't make a conversion program economically viable for us," said Judge. "Once the new rates became available to us in September 2018, we began working with Duke Energy Carolinas to develop a conversion program."

Under the new rate schedule, the monthly service fee for street lighting paid by the City was reduced by approximately \$64,000 per month for an annual savings of \$768,000. The total one-time cost to convert all of the existing streetlights to LEDs is \$895,119, which will mostly be covered in the first year's annual savings with the remainder coming from the Transportation Department's existing and future annual street-lighting budgets.

According to Duke Energy Carolinas, the conversion will save an estimated 6.2 million kWh of electricity per year. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this equates to an estimated 4.4 million tons of CO₂ emissions, which is the equivalent of 10,246 barrels of oil, or 4.8 million pounds of coal, or taking 940 passenger vehicles off the road for one year.

"This project is a great example of our organization's commitment to energy savings and environmental sustainability," said Paul Cameron, energy and sustainability analyst with the City's General Services Department. "We look forward to the many environmental benefits this conversion is going to provide to our community for years to come."

For more information about this streetlight conversion, watch the April 11th episode of [Bull City Today](#). For more information on the City's Street Lighting Program, visit the Transportation Department [webpage](#) or contact Judge at (919) 560-4366, ext. 36420 or Bill.Judge@DurhamNC.gov. For more information about the City's sustainability and energy management efforts, visit the General Service Department [webpage](#) or contact Cameron at (919) 560-4197, ext. 21244 or Paul.Cameron@DurhamNC.gov.

About the City of Durham Transportation Department

The [Transportation Department](#) is responsible for a broad range of transportation services, which include traffic signs and signals, transportation planning, [parking operations](#), street lighting, taxicab administration, and bicycle and pedestrian planning. The department also oversees [GoDurham](#) and [GoDurham ACCESS](#) as well as leads planning functions for the [Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) (DCHC MPO), which is the regional organization that is responsible for planning and programming state and federal transportation projects in the urbanized areas of Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the department helps to strengthen the foundation, enhance the value, and improve the quality and sustainability of neighborhoods that are necessary for a strong and diverse community. For more information, follow the department on [Twitter](#).

About the City of Durham General Services Department

The [General Services Department](#) builds and maintains City properties to make Durham a great place for people to live, work, and play. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the department's core functions include the acquisition and sale of properties, design and management of new construction and renovation projects, building maintenance, landscaping and urban forestry services, cemeteries management, sustainability and energy management, cultural and public art program management, and supporting the nonprofit [Keep Durham Beautiful](#).

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