

CHARLES V. PATRICELLI
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City of Watervliet to Upgrade City Lighting System, Which Will Save Revenue for Residents

City of Watervliet Mayor Charles Patricelli announced that the city is in the process of replacing traditional, inefficient high-pressure sodium or metal halide street lighting fixtures with more efficient LED Fixtures, which would reduce energy consumption. The anticipated cost savings for the city and its residents is approximately \$125,000 per year.

Mayor Patricelli said the city plans to use the annual savings to fund the lighting upgrade, which in turn, means there will be no additional cost to taxpayers. Watervliet joins the cities of Albany, Cohoes, Schenectady and Troy, which are in the process of replacing or completing the projects to switch to LED streetlights. *LED technology continues a commitment to implement smart-city initiatives, reduce a city's carbon footprint, and decrease power usage and help improve visibility in public spaces for pedestrians and motorists. LED lights are engineered to be more directional, which will result in much better light distribution.*

Watervliet replacing its city streetlights with LEDs has been under consideration for at least three years. The New York State Financial Restructuring Board (FRB) recommended the project in 2019 as a way for the city to cut costs and yield savings. The FRB has offered the city up to \$340,000 as an incentive to purchase the streetlights. This makes the Return on Investment (ROI) much faster and better than if city did this on its own.

“We have been working on this project for a couple of years now, and once the energy performance contractor, Centraca Business Solutions, was selected, we started the National Grid purchase process,” Mayor Patricelli said. “This is a win-win for the city and the residents. The saving of energy and the anticipated cost of savings will help our financial situation and relieve the pressure of the ever-increasing power costs.”

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Centrica is in the process of collecting necessary data to finalize the new system design. The project is on track to be approved early this year and installed later this summer, pending approval of the NYS Public Service Commission.

There are approximately 600 fixtures throughout the city, and Centrica will be conducting a survey of each fixture to determine the proper LED wattage for replacement.

City of Watervliet officials is in the process of purchasing the street lighting system from National Grid as part of this conversion. The city will remain responsible for the power needed to operate the lights. Once they are converted to LED, the cost will be significantly lower each month. The city currently pays approximately \$125,000 per year for streetlights alone to National Grid; and LED lighting reduces the electrical consumption by two-thirds. When the street lighting system becomes city property, Centrica will start swapping out the lights with new LED fixtures, with the cost built-in to the anticipated savings.

This good news isn't just limited to a savings for taxpayers. The new light bulbs and fixtures are expected to produce about 30% less greenhouse gases, and the fixtures are expected to direct more of the light toward the ground, where it's needed, rather than toward the sky.

“Conversion of these streetlights is one step in what we hope will be a larger, ongoing discussion about changes and regulations that will reduce light pollution across the region (and beyond),” Mayor Patricelli added. “Scientists are learning more about how excessive light at night harms humans and animals both physically and mentally. These negative effects include reduced sleep times, poor sleep quality, impaired daytime functioning and obesity, while poorly designed lighting can disorient some bird, insect, turtle, and fish species.

“Local governments are being encouraged to consider, like several cities already have, how their outdoor lighting regulations can be modified to reduce light pollution at night. In addition, developers, commercial property owners and even homeowners have a role in ensuring that our

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outdoor light fixtures direct light downward, shut off when they're not needed and generally minimize light loss.

The City of Watervliet was proudly designated a New York State Climate Smart Community on April 21, 2014, under previous mayor, Michael Manning, and continues to be a top priority to this administration. The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Certification program provides local governments with a framework to guide their climate action and recognizes communities for their leadership. Attaining this recognition takes time and commitment with many actions being done in phases. One of the climate smart actions under *Decrease Energy Use* includes LED streetlights which will strengthen the City of Watervliet's recertification application in 2025.

Sincerely,

Charles V. Patricelli

Charles Patricelli, Mayor
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