



CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

let us
LIGHT
your way





BUREAU OF
**STREET
LIGHTING**

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 Report of lights out: Call **3-1-1**

 Additional lighting,
Upgrade of lighting requests,
(213) 847-1456

 Proposition 218 questions:
(213) 847-1500

Visit the **Bureau of Street Lighting** website at:

www.lacity.org/BSL



from the **DIRECTOR**

Street lighting plays a major role in our everyday lives. It is woven into our street scenes and **provides safety, security** and **visibility for motorists** and



pedestrians. The Bureau of Street Lighting continues to strive to provide efficient, reliable street lighting systems that enhance the character of our communities. This booklet is intended to **inform you of the services** we offer and the various processes and procedures so that each **community may improve their street lighting systems.**

Sincerely,

Ed Ebrahimian,
Director



City of Los Angeles Lighting History

In 1867 a contract for lighting the streets by gas was granted by the City of Los Angeles Gas Company. Only a few units were ever installed. By 1882, when street lighting by electricity was finally authorized, there were 136 lamps operated by gas.

Arrangements were made in 1900 with the Los Angeles Electric Company and San Gabriel Electric Company to install electric lines and fixtures and supply energy and maintenance. In 1905, Broadway south of First Street, was lit by the city's first incandescent ornamental electrical lighting system.

The Bureau of Street Lighting was created within the Department of Public Works in 1925.



Bureau of Street Lighting Overview

The Bureau of Street Lighting is one of five Bureaus in the Department of Public Works. The Bureau of Street Lighting is responsible for the design, construction, operation, maintenance and repair of the street lighting system within the City of Los Angeles. There are currently more than 220,000 lights in the City consisting of more than 400 designs.

Streetlights provide illumination for City roadways and sidewalk areas. The main purpose of a lighting design is to provide comfortable visibility that will encourage vehicular and pedestrian traffic. All lighting installed in the City is designed to meet National Lighting levels that provide visibility and reduce sky glow and glare. All streetlights installed are tested for efficiency, safety and maintainability.

The City's policies for financing street lighting systems require adjoining benefitting property owners to bear the one-time cost of installation and annual operation and maintenance through a special assessment. Some projects obtain outside funding for the installation cost, and property owners are then only responsible for the annual operation and maintenance cost.



HOW can my community get streetlights?

Until the mid-1950s, the City did not require developers of housing, commercial and industrial property to install street lighting. Therefore, in the older areas of the City, most streets do not have streetlights unless the developer voluntarily installed them or a neighborhood installed them at the property owners' expense.

In Los Angeles, there are lights on wooden power poles (Utilitarian Lights), and lights on steel or concrete poles - (Electrolier Streetlights).

Electrolier Streetlights (ON STEEL OR CONCRETE POLES)

This type of installation is for a complete, uniform lighting system. City policy is to install electroliers with underground wiring, that meets our standards for lighting level and uniformity. Property owners are responsible for their share of the costs of installation and annual maintenance.



The installation and annual maintenance costs are handled through an assessment to the benefiting property owner. At times, developers, grants or other funding sources may pay for the installation costs. If this occurs, then the benefiting property owner is only responsible for the annual

maintenance cost. These costs are provided in the following street frontage table. The figures are estimates for a modern, ornamental and pedestrian system.

Installation assessments can be paid over 10 years at an interest rate of approximately 9%, billed semi-annually by the City Treasurer. Annual maintenance assessments are collected on property tax bills. This pays for the energy, maintenance and eventual replacement of the system.

Assessments are subject to the requirements of Proposition 218, which requires that whenever the City intends to impose new or increased assessments for maintenance and operation of street lighting, the property owners have to vote on whether they can be assessed. The ballot process is required to be conducted prior to construction. The City must receive passing votes on more than 50% of the returned ballots weighted by the assessment amounts, in order to proceed with the project. These costs are placed on the property's annual tax bill. More information on these assessments and Proposition 218 are included on pages 6-9.

* Costs are approximate and based on 50' Street Frontage

SYSTEM	RESIDENTIAL		COMMERCIAL	
	Installation	Maintenance	Installation	Maintenance
Modern System	\$3,000-\$4,000	\$65/YEAR	\$3,000-\$4,000	\$150/YEAR
Ornamental System	\$7,000-\$8,000	\$100/YEAR	To be determined (1)	To be determined (1)
Pedestrian System	To be determined	\$160/YEAR	To be determined (2)	\$50 to \$100/YEAR

(1) Cost based on unit chosen.

(2) These values are greatly determined by the pedestrian unit chosen. This is a pedestrian unit installed on or between existing streetlights.

If outside funding sources are not available and the community desires a complete lighting system, a street lighting system can be designed and installed, starting with a majority petition from the property owners in support of both the project and payment of the installation assessment. The Bureau will attend community meetings to discuss these requirements and answer any questions. To request a petition form for a new electrolier lighting system, call **(213) 847-1456**.

Utilitarian Lights

(ON WOODEN POWER POLES)

Upon request by nearby residents or businesses, the City may install one light on an existing power pole at an intersection, on a street, or in an alley no closer than every 300 feet from another streetlight. There is no cost for installation or maintenance. This lighting is only for minimal traffic safety and not considered a permanent system. The Department of Water and Power investigates all requests for utilitarian lights. Call 1-800-DIAL-DWP.

Upgrading Existing Electrolier Street Lights

The Bureau of Street Lighting will investigate the existing street lighting system to determine if the system can be upgraded, upon written request.

If the property owners want levels higher than the City's adopted illumination standards, they may be responsible for the cost of the upgrade as well as the increase of the annual maintenance assessment.



WHAT is the assessment process?

The Improvement Act of 1911 and the municipal Improvement Act of 1913 (State laws) provide the means through which City government may assist property owners in obtaining community improvements, including street lighting. The City acts as a trustee for property owners. Preparation of plans, project processing, responsibility for construction, and financial transactions are handled by the Bureau of Street Lighting.

If funding is not available for the installation of a street lighting system, the community may opt to pay for this cost through the assessment process described below.



Project Initiated by Petition Provided by Bureau of Street Lighting

Property owners interested in a street lighting project may circulate and submit a petition for a street lighting system. The petition is then checked against the latest County Tax Roll to determine the validity of the signatures. If the signatures on the petition represent a majority of the properties involved (i.e., at least 60% of the benefiting frontage), a questionnaire will be sent to each affected property owner to confirm that there is strong support for the project. If the majority of returned questionnaires are in favor of the assessment, the project can be authorized by the City Council. Then construction plans and specifications are prepared for the project.

After design and prior to construction of the project, a balloting procedure will be conducted as required by Proposition 218. Any proposed assessment against a property must be submitted to the affected property owners for approval or rejection. A ballot will be sent to each affected property owner and will include the proposed

assessments for (1) the design and construction, and (2) the operation and maintenance of the street lighting project. Also included is a notice of public hearing at the Council, and a map of the project area.

Design and Construction

Street lighting systems are designed and constructed to conform to nationally accepted standards developed by the Illuminating Engineering Society, approved by the American National Standards Institute and adopted by the City.

The posts (electroliers) are fabricated of concrete or steel. Electrical service is provided through cables placed in underground conduits. The project plans are reviewed and approved by the Cultural Affairs Commission to ensure that the aesthetic qualities of the project are compatible with the surroundings.

On residential streets, the posts are normally placed in a staggered pattern. Electrical conduits are placed underground by horizontal drilling. This drilling operation minimizes surface disturbance and inconvenience to the residents during the construction period. Before construction is considered complete, the contractor is required to restore all parkway areas.

Cost and Billing

Based on an average 50' x 130' lot on a residential street, the estimated cost per lot is about \$3,500 for a standard modern lighting system, and about \$7,500 for an ornamental lighting system. This cost includes construction by an electrical contractor along with the City's design, inspection and processing. Construction is the main factor in determining the overall cost to property owners. In general, the larger the project, the lower the bids submitted by electrical contractors, and the lower the cost for each property owner.

The assessments for a project are confirmed by the City Council; each benefiting property owner is billed for his share of the installation costs. If the bill is unpaid after 30 days, it automatically goes to an installment payment plan. If the final cost for constructing the project is lower than estimated, refunds will be made to property owners.

If a property owner chooses to pay installments, an interest rate of approximately 9% on the unpaid balance will be charged each year. Thus, the interest charge diminishes each year. One-half of the annual

interest is payable each June 1. The principal installment and the other half of the annual interest is payable on December 1. If you wish to pay in full after you have chosen the installment plan, there will be a prepayment charge of 5% on the unpaid balance. Bills are sent by the City Treasurer and are not part of the property tax bill.

After the lighting system has been placed in service, property owners will be billed annually (as part of their County Tax Bill) for their share of the maintenance costs of the system (electrical energy, maintenance, repairs, etc.). For an average 50' residential lot, this is about \$65/year for a modern lighting system and about \$100/year for an ornamental lighting system, based on prevailing electrical rates, and other maintenance costs.

If you wish to proceed with the petition process, please send your written request to the Bureau of Street Lighting, 1149 South Broadway, 2nd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90015 or call (213) 847-1456.

Assessments may be paid in a lump sum within 30 days after billing, or according to the following installment plan schedule:

Assessments may be paid in a lump sum within 30 days after billing, or according to the following installment plan schedule:

AMOUNT OF ASSESSMENT	NUMBER OF PRINCIPAL PAYMENTS	WHEN DUE
Less than \$150.00	1	Within 30 days after billing
\$150.00 - \$299.99	2	Equal principal payments
\$300.00 - \$399.99	3	Due each October
\$400.00 - \$499.99	4	"
\$500.00 - \$599.99	5	"
\$600.00 - \$699.99	6	"
\$700.00 - \$799.99	7	"
\$800.00 - \$899.99	8	"
\$900.00 - \$999.99	9	"
\$1000.00 - or more	10	"

WHAT is Proposition 218?

Proposition 218 was passed by the voters of California in November 1996, and became Article XIII C and XIII D of the California Constitution. It is an additional requirement on top of already existing state and local laws relative to assessments on real property.



YES vote



NO vote



**Operation
Bright Lights**

FOR STREETLIGHT REPAIR CALL:
BUREAU OF STREET LIGHTING
PHONE: 3-1-1

Proposition 218 requires that whenever the City intends to impose new or increased assessments for installation and/or maintenance and operation of street lighting, or for installation of street improvements, or special maintenance, including sidewalks, sewers, street paving, trees, landscaping, etc., the property owners have to vote on whether or not they are willing to pay a new or increased assessment.

How are the ballots processed? The Council adopts an ordinance setting a hearing and providing for ballots to be mailed to the property owners, with a description of the improvement and their assessment, and how it is calculated. The ballots must be mailed to the Election Division of the City Clerk and received by the date of the hearing, which is at least 45 days after the ballots are mailed to the property owners. The Clerk tallies the ballots and reports to the Council, and if the vote passes, Council may confirm and levy the assessments.

The ballots are counted if they are received on time, properly marked to indicate yes or no, and signed by a property owner or authorized representative. The ballots are weighted by the amount of the proposed assessment for the property. Therefore, a large assessment leads to a larger vote than a small assessment. If the total dollar amount in favor is at least equal to the dollar amount against, then the vote passes.

What if the ballot response is negative and fails?

If a lighting system or street improvement is to be installed, and the Proposition 218 vote on the installation and/or maintenance assessments fails, the street lighting or street improvements will not be installed. If the street lighting has already been installed and is operating pending the vote for street lighting maintenance assessments, and the vote fails, the street lighting will be turned off (removed from service). Property owners are informed by letter of the failure of a Proposition 218 vote and the impacts, and the vote results are posted to the Bureau of Street Lighting Web site.

If property owners want a rebalot, they may petition the Bureau of Street Lighting, and if they submit a petition with a majority of the affected property owners in favor of the assessment, the Bureau will keep the streetlights on or turn them back on, and conduct a new assessment ballot proceeding.



Questions & Answers

Q

Question:

Why do we have to pay for streetlights when we already pay taxes?

Answer:

The City's general fund budget does not include the installation of streetlights. These improvements are paid for by the benefiting property owners.

Q

Question:

What does the maintenance assessment include?

Answer:

This assessment includes energy and relamping for the lighting system and maintenance including repairs, pole knockdowns and eventual replacement of the system.

Q

Question:

I have trees that block my streetlights. Who do I call?

Answer:

This is handled by the Bureau of Street Services. Please call 3-1-1.

TYPICAL Streetlights

The Bureau maintains approximately **220,000 streetlights** in the City of Los Angeles that have more than **400 styles**. Many of these styles are historic and are no longer reproduced. The Bureau is responsible for keeping a certain number of streetlights in stock for rapid and efficient replacement.

The streets throughout the City are classified as local, collector and major/arterial. When a street lighting project is designed, there are a few standard designs that the Bureau will require for consistency and to match the nearby existing systems.

Streetlight Options

The streetlight options shown on these two pages have been installed in the City of Los Angeles and may be used for streetscape projects. Any new styles requested by the community or architects go through an approval process.

The Bureau maintains certain standards to ensure that the City receives lighting that meets national illumination standards for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, does not emit light pollution and produces little glare. In addition, the fixture must be electrically tested for required efficiency, and the units must adhere to specific criteria for maintenance.

Any pedestrian system, new or upgraded, may require a Proposition 218 process. Please call the Bureau of Street Lighting at (213) 847-1459 for information.



What if I want a different type?

The Bureau will consider a different style of streetlight on a case-by-case basis. Generally these requests must have the additional funding needed and be in a special area defined by a streetscape or other defining corridor. Also, the different style cannot conflict with existing systems. Some of these different styles of poles that the Bureau might consider are shown below.

New Equipment Procedure

For equipment other than these styles, please contact the Bureau of Street Lighting at (213) 847-1826 to discuss and review options. Final approval of street lighting equipment before installation must meet the following requirements:

- Shop Drawings and structural calculations must be submitted, signed and stamped by a California Licensed engineer.
- A prototype of the unit will be required.
- The equipment must provide efficient illumination in accordance with Illumination Engineering Society standards.
- The unit must be easy to maintain (tool-less units are preferred).

Each step will take **30 days** for processing. All submittals and questions concerning testings should be directed to:

Bureau of Street Lighting
1149 South Broadway, 2nd floor
Los Angeles, CA 90015
Attn: Equipment Testing or call (213) 847-1826.



PEDESTRIAN STREET LIGHTS



Shepards Crook with Pendant



Fluted Tapered Pole with "S" Arm



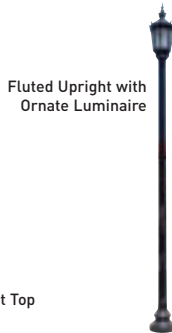
Modern Pole with Brim Top



Modern Semi-hemisphere



Modern Flat Top



Fluted Upright with Ornate Luminaire



ROADWAY STREET LIGHTS



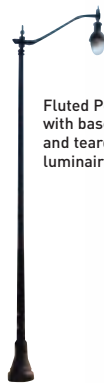
30' to 40' Fluted Pole with base



CD 929 Fluted



UM1906 Ornamental



Fluted Pole with base and teardrop luminaire

PERMANENT art displays and other lighting programs



Permanent Art Displays, sometimes referred to as Medallions, are becoming popular in the City of Los Angeles. They are a unique means of identification for a community, and may be a part of streetscapes. The following will provide a general overview of the process to obtain a permit for the installation and specific requirements of weight and size.

Process

An application may be obtained on the Bureau's website: www.lacity.org/bsl

Application

An application must be submitted with the following items and information:

- Area map depicting the limits of the requested installation and pole locations.
- Rendering of the art display.
- Contact person for further requests.
- Identification of group who will maintain the medallions.
- Letter of support from the Council Office.

Preliminary Approval

Upon receipt of the application, the Bureau will respond within 10 days. Once preliminary approval is obtained, the following must be submitted.

- A sample of art display, including brackets.
- Shop drawings of the entire installation, including size, weight and thickness of each art display.
- Proof of liability insurance from the maintenance group.
- Cash deposit of \$2,000.00.

Final Approval

Upon receipt of the requested items the Bureau will respond within 30 days. Once final approval is given, installation can proceed.

Important Restrictions and Requirements

- **Mounting locations:** The bottom of the art display shall be mounted at 16' from the base of the pole for all poles 25 feet or higher.
- **Size:** The display shall be no more than 8 square feet.
- **Weight:** The display and brackets shall weigh no more than 15 pounds.

Displays shall not be placed on poles with traffic signal equipment or poles less than 25' in height. Displays shall not be energized or have any electrical components. Commercial content of any kind is prohibited.

The Bureau will not maintain these structures, and the community will need to inspect the attachments every year and certify that they are safe.

For further information or questions, please call the Bureau at (213) 847-1459.

Twinkle Lighting

Many communities would like to install twinkle lighting in nearby trees as an accent to their community streetscape.

The following requirements will need to be met:

- The system must have a separate conduit, pullboxes and raceway up the pole.
- The system will be serviced from a metered pedestal and energy billed to the requesting party. The meter pedestal will service the street lighting and twinkle lighting systems, each with separate meters. The disconnects for each service will be mechanically linked to turn on and off both systems at the same time.
- The requesting community group will need to fund the installation of the separate system including the dual meter pedestal.

To obtain further information and/or submit a request please call (213) 847-1459.



Special Funding

The Bureau of Street Lighting has special funded programs for the installation and upgrading of lighting. These programs are funded by outside sources with a specific dollar amount allocated each fiscal year. They include lighting at: **bus stops, stairways, tunnels and streets surrounding parks.**

Any community that would like the lighting at any of these locations improved should submit a written request to the Bureau of Street Lighting through their Council Office. These requests will be placed in the first available year. Since funds are limited, the improvements may take a few years, but there is no cost to the community for installation or maintenance.

Streetscape Submittals

Streetscapes include any street or sidewalk-related enhancement for community identity and beautification within the public-right-of-way. A common element of a streetscape is decorative and/or pedestrian lighting. Other elements may include special sidewalks, trees, and street furniture.

These types of projects may involve several different city offices, each with their own requirements and restrictions. Once a community is organized and would like to construct a

streetscape, a project team should be assembled including all affected City Agencies. These typically include the Bureau of Street Services (BOSS) and the Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL). It is important to confer with City agencies early on to avoid misconceptions on improvements that may be cost prohibitive or not feasible. Please contact BOSS at **(800) 996-2489** to start this coordination process. Also, confer with BSL at **(213) 847-1459** to discuss lighting options.



Vermonica

Vermonica is named for the intersection located at Vermont Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard. It is an Urban Candelabra, sculptural arrangement of 25 streetlights in the parking lot of a shopping center. The installation, which is 120' long and 30' tall, consists of a selection of streetlights from the City of Los Angeles.

Some of the streetlights are current; others are rare examples of obsolete poles from the City's past. These 25 poles represent the diversity of the more than **400 types** currently in use in Los Angeles. The range of materials, styles and historical periods displayed in Vermonica invites people to notice the variety of streetlights they see every day, and to appreciate the efforts of the Bureau of Street Lighting. Vermonica was conceived and executed by artist Sheila Klein.



www.lacity.org/bsl

Bright Lights Safe Nights

For more information, please contact:

Bureau of Street Lighting

Phone.213.847.1456

Fax.213.847.1859

E-mail: streetlighting@bsl.lacity.org