

Street Lighting Will Be Changing

The City of Williams street lighting is currently either a high-pressure sodium (HPS) or low-pressure sodium (LPS) light, which produces a warm yellow glow. This type of light is no longer being manufactured; it's time to make way for LED technology with a catch: it has limited dark sky options.

Over the past few months the city has setup test lights trying to come up with the best option to satisfy the dark sky community and meet safety requirements. LED is measured in Kelvin's; with the lower end of the chart being 1000K, a warm color between red and amber. This temperature of light is much darker than our current lighting and safety becomes an issue. In addition temperatures below 2500K you start to see operation cost increase, this cost is well below our current operational cost but you don't get the full cost saving, that LED offers. At the upper end of the Kelvin chart is the cooler colors that produce a blue light. This is a brighter intrusive light that projects a lot of glare. At 4000k the light starts to create a skyglow that destroys dark sky and astronomy observations.

The City of Williams has decided to take the middle of the road, as Tucson has, with a 3000K light with different wattages. The 3000K will be a whiter light, this will increase lumen count but the reduced wattage will lower the lumens. This will be a wash and the skyglow will remain about the same.

In the next couple months you will start to notice street lighting being replaced and the changes.

Commercial & Residential Exterior Lighting

As discussed LED lighting appears much brighter than older incandescent lighting, just remember when you install new exterior lighting the light must be fully shielded within the fixture; meaning you should not see the source (bulb, diode, etc.) from off your property. Always remember to be respectful of your neighbors; too much lighting is a nuisance. If you feel you need a floodlight or projecting light for safety or security it must be on a motion sensor set at 5 minute maximum on time.

Recently some jurisdictions started requiring a building permit for residential change of exterior lighting, even if it is just a bulb. The City of Williams will not require residence to pull a permit for this simple task but we have ordinance's that will protect you from nuisance lighting. Commercial buildings and properties are required to have a permit if they want to change or add exterior lighting. Commercial properties are only allowed a set amount of lumen output per property size. You will need to submit specifications and a plan showing type of lighting and locations.

If you have any questions about the new street lighting or your exterior lighting requirements please contact Tim Pettit, tpettit@williamsaz.gov