

# Street Light Maintenance

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**Presented to the  
Quality of Life Committee  
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# Purpose of Briefing

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- Update on current street light maintenance issues and actions

# Overview

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- Present background information on street lights**
  - System inventory
  - Street lighting costs
  - Maintenance responsibilities
- Current maintenance issues and actions to reduce street light outages**
- Process to revise ONCOR maintenance responsibilities and response times**

# System Inventory

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## ❑ 85,000 street lights citywide in public ROW

- 72,000 owned by ONCOR (formerly TXU-ED)
  - 12,000 on major thoroughfares (mostly metal poles)
  - 59,000 on residential streets (mostly wood poles)
  - 1,000 in CBD (30' to 40' metal poles)
- 13,000 Non-ONCOR-owned
  - 8,500 TxDOT-owned on freeways
  - 4,500 City-owned (ornamental poles and fixtures)

## ❑ All lights are maintained by ONCOR

- Creates one stop shop for maintenance reporting
- Original concept was to use one regional provider and lower costs through economy of scale

# Street Lighting Costs

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## ❑ Cost to maintain ONCOR-owned lights

- Fixed monthly rate corresponds to bulb type, wattage & wiring connection (overhead/ underground)
- North Texas cities served by ONCOR negotiate costs & services under a regional rate case & appeal issues to the Public Utilities Commission “PUC”
- Rate cases result in a regional **tariff** that establishes rates, business procedures and maintenance responsibilities.

## ❑ Cost to maintain City/TxDOT-owned lights

- Maintained by ONCOR charging labor + materials
- TxDOT contracts with the City to maintain freeway lighting and reimburses the City

# Street Lighting Costs

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## ❑ Annual cost summary for FY06-07

- Electric cost = \$7 M
- Maintenance cost = \$10.6 M
- Total annual cost= \$17.6 M

## ❑ Electricity (not the subject of this briefing)

- Separate from ONCOR maintenance contract
- Competitively bid every 18-24 months

# Maintenance Responsibilities

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## ❑ ONCOR responsibilities

- **Repairs street lights on failure (all reactionary)**
  - Current Tariff requires 15 calendar day completion time
  - Average response time for bulb outages is 5 days
  - Major repairs take longer (i.e., pole knockdowns, cable cuts)
- **Provides customer service to report outages**
  - ONCOR Phone: **1.888.313.4747**
  - Website: [www.oncorgroup.com/community/streetlights](http://www.oncorgroup.com/community/streetlights)
- **Keeps database of outstanding & completed repairs**
  - Web database accessible to city staff at all times to view response times and track outstanding repairs
  - Staff periodically selects field outages to track and verify accuracy of response time

# Maintenance Responsibilities

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## □ City staff responsibilities

- Resolves complaints from residents or motorists about repeat repairs or lack of service
- Reviews ONCOR database and coordinates corrective actions if response times are excessive
- Reviews and approves monthly billings
- Warrants and approves new installations
- Patrols streets and freeways for outages
  - FY07-08 budget approved new position dedicated to patrolling and reducing the number of outages

# Maintenance Issues

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- Outage reporting by public
- Finding and Reporting Outages
- Wire theft on freeways
- TxDOT freeway lighting projects
- Road construction

# Maintenance Issues

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## ❑ Issue: Outage reporting by public

- Outages on residential streets reported using nearest address
- Outages on major roadways are difficult for motorists to report while driving (need pole numbers or addresses)
- Repair crews work during daytime and need good locations

## ❑ Actions:

- Improved 311 service request intake
  - Service request intake is more flexible in how outages can be described
    1. In front of 1201 Main Street
    2. At the intersection of Norris and Mockingbird next to the Luby's
    3. 3rd and 4th lights north of Buckner and Samuell
  - First time reports are sent directly to ONCOR customer service website
  - Repeat requests and repair issues are sent to city staff
- Meeting w/ ONCOR monthly to improve reporting procedures
- Coordinating with neighborhood associations to distribute street information through brochures and neighborhood newsletters

# Maintenance Issues

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## □ Issue: Finding and reporting outages

- ONCOR repairs reported outages but is not required to proactively patrol for outages
- Most cities have a patrol program
- In 2002, a city street-light position was cut and proactive patrolling ceased
- In December 2006, City resumed patrolling by assigning a traffic-signal maintenance technician on the night shift to proactively patrol streets and report outages
- Since patrolling began, the percentage of working lights has increased from 86% to 93%

## □ Actions:

- FY07-08 budget approved a new position dedicated to patrolling major streets and freeways to report outages

# Maintenance Issues

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## ❑ Issue: Wire theft on freeways

- In 2007, over 40 miles of freeway lighting was affected by stolen cable (selling cable for copper)
- Theft focused on freeways with wide shoulders, lower traffic volumes and no surveillance cameras

## ❑ Actions:

- Cable has been replaced along the 40 miles of freeway
- Actions have been taken to prevent recurring theft along freeways, however, theft has now moved to bridges where conduit is exposed
- The City and TxDOT are in the process of implementing measures to prevent theft under bridges

# Maintenance Issues

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## ❑ Issue: TxDOT Freeway Lighting Projects

- The City maintains street lighting along freeways under cost share agreement with TxDOT
- Due to budget constraints, TxDOT requested the City not to maintain existing street lighting along freeway segments under construction
- TxDOT's mandate to suspend maintenance resulted in a negative public perception of maintenance by the City and ONCOR

## ❑ Actions

- City has requested TxDOT to budget for maintenance of the existing lighting systems on all future freeway projects

# Maintenance Issues

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## ❑ Issue: Construction

- Road widening and private development construction projects include street excavations and utility relocations that often destroy wire connections.
- Most issues related to contracts administered by external agencies (i.e., DART, TxDOT, Dallas County)

## ❑ Actions

- Enhancing city contract specifications and procedures to ensure lighting during construction is maintained on future construction projects
- Working with external agencies to revise their specifications to require temporary lighting during construction

# Potential Contract Revisions

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## ❑ **Revising the ONCOR Tariff**

- A tariff is revised by filing a rate case with the PUC
- ONCOR plans to file a rate case in July 2008
- Rate cases typically take 12 months to negotiate
- Staff is participating in regional committee to negotiate maintenance requirements and costs prior to July 2008
  - Dallas staff conducted a national survey of maintenance requirements and costs to support upcoming rate case negotiations
- Discussion items for next regional committee meeting (Jan 18<sup>th</sup>)
  - Response times
  - Improved database software to track maintenance requests
  - Monetary penalties
  - Enhanced services

## ❑ **Commission on Productivity and Innovation appointed members to assist staff during process**

# Next Steps

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- ❑ Staff will return in 6 months with an update on:
  - Progress of ONCOR tariff negotiations
  - Results of our continued efforts to increase the number of working street lights