CITY OF LONG BEACH

COUNCILWOMAN SUELY SARO

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Date: March 10, 2026

To: Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Dr. Suely Saro, Sixth District
Councilwoman Megan Kerr, Fifth District
Councilwoman Tunua Thrash-Ntuk, Eighth District

Subject: **Request the Department of Public Works to provide a comprehensive report back on the City's street lighting infrastructure, maintenance practices, public safety impacts, and proposed standardized lighting guidelines in 90 days**

RECOMMENDATION

Request the Department of Public Works to provide a comprehensive report back on the City's street lighting infrastructure, maintenance practices, public safety impacts, and proposed standardized lighting guidelines in 90 days

BACKGROUND

Street lighting is a critical component of public safety infrastructure in the City of Long Beach. Adequate lighting enhances visibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists; supports crime prevention strategies; increases community perceptions of safety; and encourages evening economic and recreational activity. A substantial body of research demonstrates that improved street lighting is associated with reductions in certain types of crime and fear of crime, as well as improved traffic safety outcomes. A systematic review conducted by researchers Brandon C. Welsh and David P. Farrington found that enhanced street lighting was linked to meaningful reductions in crime in multiple jurisdictions.[1] In addition, large-scale LED streetlight upgrades evaluated in major U.S. cities have demonstrated statistically significant reductions in nighttime street crime following lighting improvements.[2] Beyond crime reduction, transportation and urban planning research consistently finds that improved illumination enhances nighttime visibility and can reduce traffic collisions and pedestrian injuries.[3]

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[1] Welsh, B.C., & Farrington, D.P. (2008). *Effects of Improved Street Lighting on Crime*. Journal of Experimental Criminology.
[2] Doleac, J.L., & Chalfin, A. (2022). Evaluation of LED streetlight upgrades and crime reduction outcomes (study of a major U.S. city lighting conversion project).
[3] Illuminating Engineering Society (IES). *Lighting for Roadway and Area Lighting* standards and guidance.

Given the importance of lighting as both infrastructure and a public safety tool, it is appropriate for the City Council to receive a comprehensive educational presentation and report on the City's lighting system. This should include an overview of the history of street lighting standards in Long Beach, including how brightness is measured, uniformity standards, and identification of the brightest standard fixtures currently in use. The report should also compare Long Beach's standards to those of other comparable cities and outline best practices in municipal lighting policy.

The report should further describe where lighting exists throughout the City, including a mapping or inventory of fixtures, identification of areas with limited or inadequate lighting, and an explanation of how lighting placement decisions are made. The report should also include recommendations for appropriate carve-outs or alternative standards for designated historic districts and landmarked areas citywide. Any proposed standardized lighting guidelines within Historic District shall be consistent with adopted Historic Preservation Ordinance requirements. The report should further clearly identify which department or division manages, maintains, and inspects the lighting system; outline standard procedures for reporting outages; describe the process from notification to repair; provide average response times and backlog data; and explain how brightness levels are evaluated and measured in the field.

In addition, the report should include data on increased vandalism of street lighting infrastructure, associated repair costs, geographic patterns, if available, and strategies to reduce vandalism and protect public assets. The Department should also explain current practices for notifying residents about outages, scheduled maintenance, or upgrades, and identify opportunities to improve public communication.

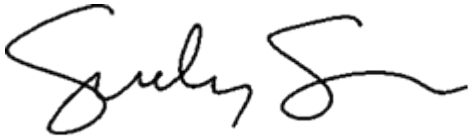
Finally, the Department should provide recommendations for standardized lighting guidelines for the City of Long Beach, including proposed minimum illumination standards, uniformity targets, maintenance benchmarks, fixture selection criteria, and prioritization strategies for upgrades in areas with demonstrated public safety needs. The guidelines created should then be included in the next 5-year infrastructure planning to ensure we discuss its implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT
No fiscal impact was conducted due to time constraints.

SUGGESTED ACTION

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



Suely Saro, Councilmember, Sixth District



Megan Kerr Councilwoman, Fifth District



Tunua Thrash-Ntuk, Councilmember, Eighth District