

Office of the Mayor
36 Court Street
Springfield, MA 01103

January 8, 2020

Dear Mayor Sarno,

At this time of year when the sun sets so early and as a new year begins, we write to express our concern about the need to address street lighting challenges in the city. We are members of several concerned groups including the Community Advocates of the Healthy Hill Initiative (supported by Way Finders), WalkBike Springfield, the Springfield Green Team, and Gardening the Community. We request that you allocate funding for a comprehensive audit of street lights in the City.

Recognizing this need, the Springfield City Council in October 2018 passed a resolution by unanimous vote requesting an audit that would assess the condition, effectiveness and technology of streetlights. Since that vote, residents have asked City Council members whether this would move forward, and we understand the next step rests in your hands.

Effective City street lighting is essential to urban living. It enables residents to more safely walk around the community. It is critical to the many residents without cars, especially young people and seniors. Adequate lighting increases the quality of life by artificially extending the hours in which it is light so that activity can take place. As observed by residents, submitted through 311 reporting, and documented in neighborhood walk audits, in Springfield there are:

- At times hundreds of lights that are not working.
- Lights that are missing in areas where more street lights are needed.
- Lights blocked by trees.
- Lights that provide too little or too much light.
- Lights directed upward creating wasted light.
- Lights that are not state-of-the-art energy efficient and maintenance saving.

In 2018, a street light subcommittee that included representatives from the City, EverSource, PVPC, Way Finders and others, identified 700 lights out in neighborhoods throughout the City. As you know it was a success to have 600 restored. However, within the same year an additional 400 lights were found to be out. Residents have expressed concerns that EverSource does not have a systematic process of checking the working conditions of street lights and repairing them quickly.

A street light audit would enable Springfield to assess and develop a long-term plan for improving street lighting and ultimately for upgrading our street lights to LED energy efficient and maintenance saving ones. Again, we request that funding be allocated for the audit and that the cost at least be built into the 2020-2021 budget. A streetlight audit is a key step to helping improve the quality of life throughout all of Springfield. To respond to this letter, please reach out to Beatrice Dewberry, Community Building and Engagement Manager, Way Finders, convener of the Healthy Hill Initiative, at bdewberry@wayfindersma.org or 413-222-9985.

Sincerely,

Members of WalkBike Springfield, the Springfield Green Team, Gardening the Community and the Community Advocates of the Healthy Hill Initiative

CC: Christopher Cignoli, Department of Public Works
See attachments: Audit Resolution and Signature List