

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AGENDA ITEM XIII



From: Municipal Services Committee

Subject: Adoption of a Street light policy resulting in reduction of city owned street lights

Recommending motion:

1. Councilor moves: "I move that the Franklin City Council adopt the proposed street light placement policy which will result in the reduction in the number of city owned street lights."
2. Mayor asks a second, discussion, and calls the vote.

Discussion:

The idea of a street light reduction has been talked about for years, with recent marked increases in electricity costs the expense to the City continues to grow.

In 2008, the then fire chief was asked to perform a study of where the current street lights are located throughout the City. The study identified that at that time the City had a total of 513 street lights that cost in the vicinity of \$58,000/year. The number of lights has increased to 521 (which include the new downtown street lights). The cost has also increased to over \$70,000 per year. The street lights are not metered and PSNH sets a fixed price per month if it is working or not. The Director of Municipal Services has been the person responsible for the addition, deletion or the moving of a light without much guidance. The current locations are sporadic and many times these were installed arbitrarily by request of residents and/or councilors. About a decade or so ago it was decided by staff that no new lights would be added and if a new light was needed that another would be removed from the current inventory. It has been that way since with only a few additions during recent sub-divisions. There is no policy statement for the Planning Board or staff to follow in regards to the placement of street lights. The Municipal Services Department (MSD) Committee is proposing a policy be adopted by the council before the expenditure of funds to convert all street lights to LED's.

In 2008, staff members created a framework in which to prioritize the need of a streetlight (listed in order of importance): 1. Crosswalks 2. Sidewalks 3. Intersections within the school walking zones 4. Elevated public hazard (high accident/crime area) 5. Economic – retail, business centers. It was also discussed that with modern automobile headlights that the need for streetlights was less for the motoring public and more for the safety of children especially those that are walking to and from school. Each Franklin School has a required walking route and children residing in that area will not be offered pupil transportation by the School District and most often have to walk sometimes during dark hours.

Using the above stated criteria it was calculated in 2008 that approximately 215 street lights could be removed. This did not however mean that there was a street light at each one of the prioritized locations on the list. Just that the ones being removed do not meet the criteria. PSNH has stated that any resident that wants to keep the "light in front of their house" could do so by adding the cost onto their monthly bill. This policy proposal was not approved in 2008.

At the August 2015 City Council meeting the topic was again referred to the MSD committee as a result of a street light conversion project currently in progress. Members of the Municipal Services Committee met several times over the last ten days. The committee members reviewed the overall street light plan and attempted to again reach a consensus for a proposed policy on street light placement. The proposal this evening is similar to the one proposed in 2008 with a few changes. In addition to the prioritized locations listed above 1-5, it is recommended that all existing streetlights located within the school walking zone will remain and the only existing streetlights outside the school walking zone to remain in place will be those at intersection or designated a hazard/crime issue as identified by MSD or PD. This change would mean the removal of approximately 80-100 lights instead of the 215 proposed in 2008. In addition it is recommended that Director Sullivan be allowed some discretion when reviewing the final locations to make sure we are not removing lights from the top 15 accident locations or high crime areas of the city. Director Sullivan would be empowered to determine dangerous areas where a street light makes sense as well as locations where they are needed for city services (such as plowing concerns).

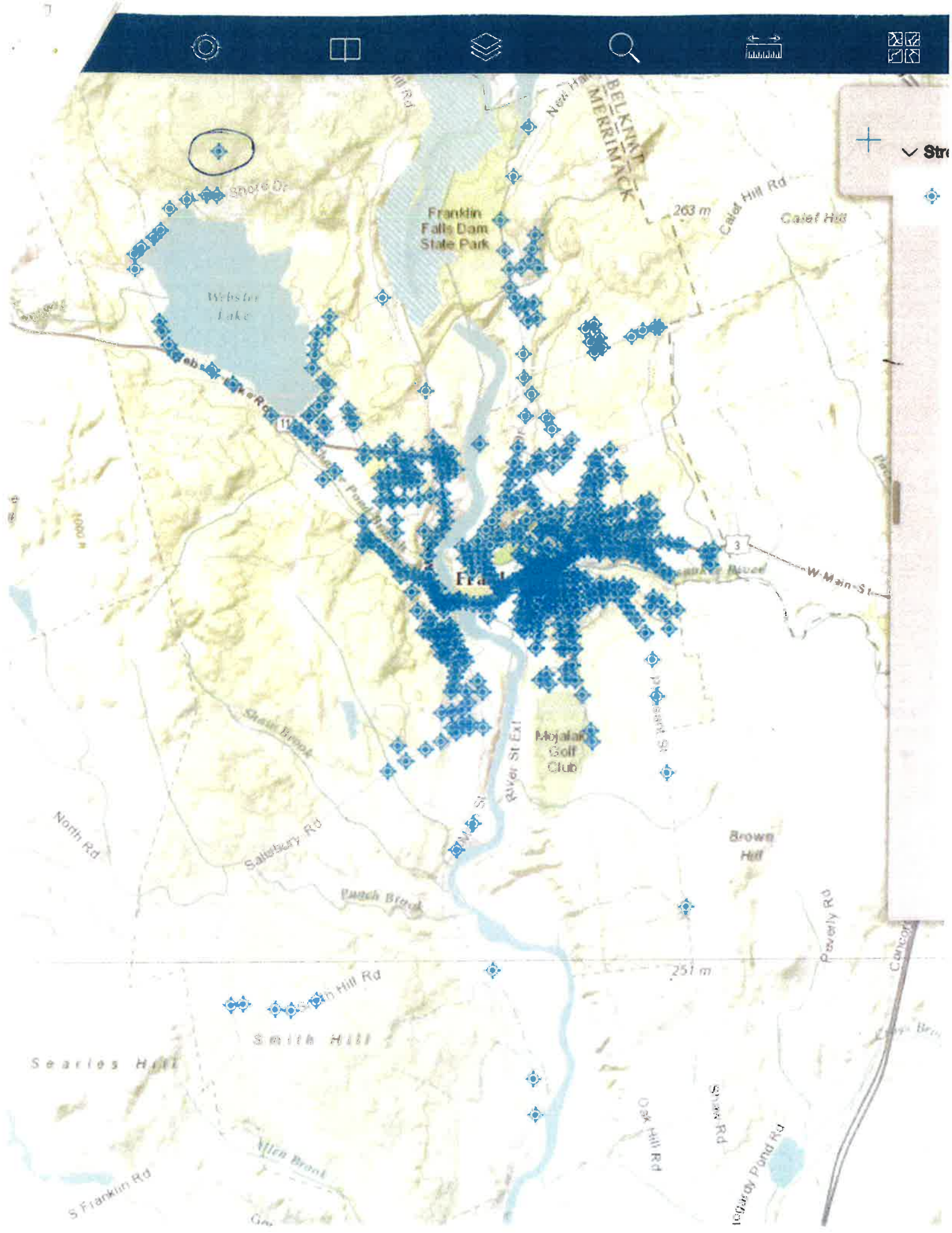
Concurrences: Members of the MSD committee met three times at the end of August to review the 2008 information and updated information from the LED conversion project.

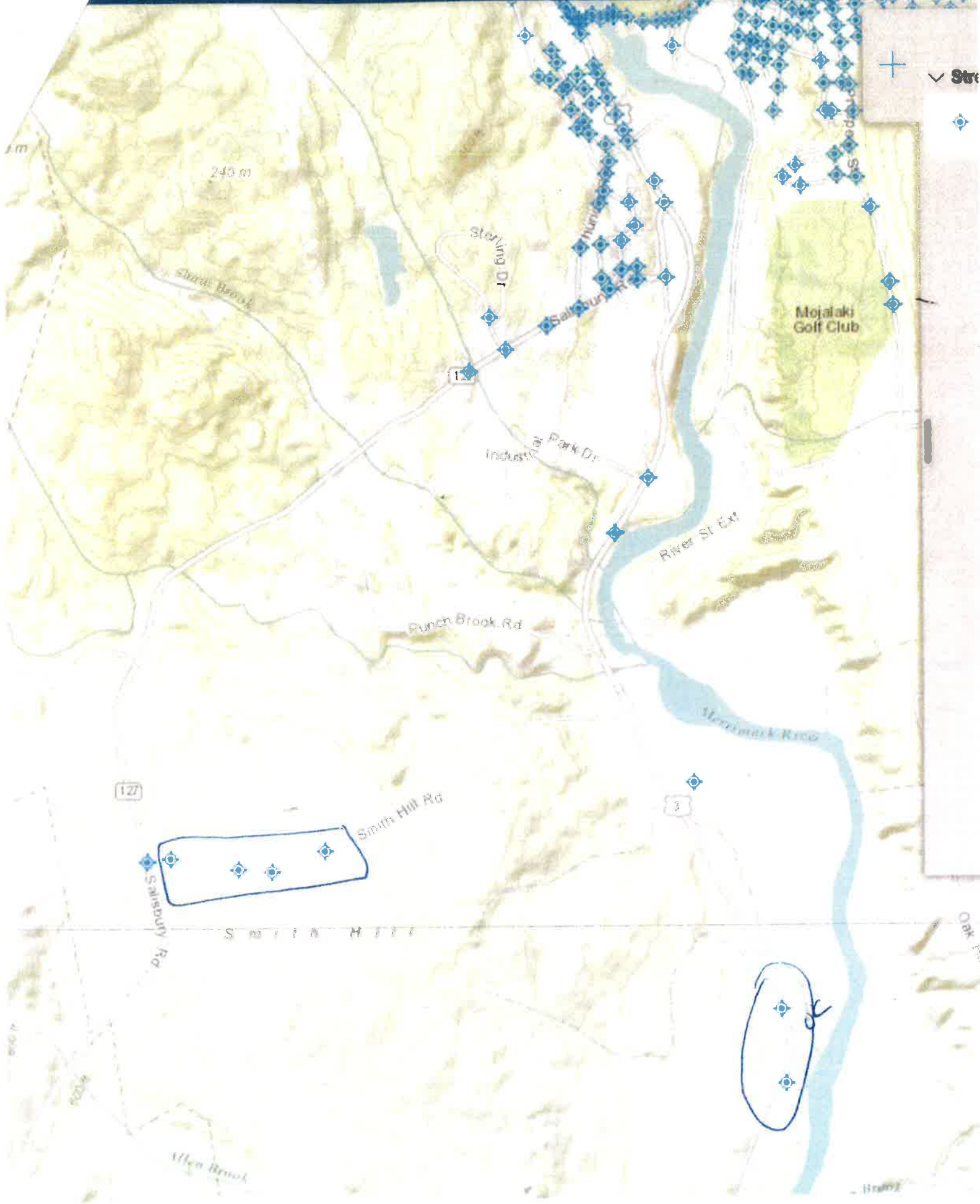
Fiscal Impact:

Due to PSNH charging a discounted rate for the electricity the City is responsible for PSNH's labor rate to remove (install or change also) each streetlight. It is estimated around \$130 - \$140 per light. However, this removal cost can be funded through the energy savings project for the conversion to LED street lights.

Alternatives:

To take no action and move forward with current plan to convert existing street lights to LED.





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