



**To:** Council Member Latisha Johnson  
**From:** John W. Prymack, Detroit Public Lighting Department  
Beau Taylor, Executive Director Detroit Public Lighting Authority  
**Date:** March 31, 2025  
**Re:** Responses to 2025-2026 PLA/PLD Budget Analysis

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Please find below responses to your questions sent on March 28, 2025, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the PLA/PLD.

- 1. We have received multiple complaints from residents about streetlights that are out.**
  - a. What percentage of streetlights are currently not working throughout the city?**
  - b. Is there a plan to remedy this situation and how much additional funding would be required to ensure that all streetlights are operational throughout the City?**

At any given time, streetlight outages will occur somewhere in the City due to such things as weather events, electrical problems, or car accidents. We monitor this in the field and have long averaged over 99% uptime (better than the national average of 98% uptime). Since 2023, we have experienced higher outage levels for specific models of fixtures as they each reach the end of their 10-year useful lives, having all been installed in the same 2014-2016 window. When all first-generation fixtures are replaced by next year, we expect to return to normal 99% outage level with current funding.

- 2. Has there been discussion around incorporating energy efficient smart lights throughout the City?**
  - a. If this were implemented, what would be the expected timeline of this project and would these be installed citywide, or in specified areas.**
  - b. How much would implementing these measures cost, and how much do we anticipate this would save in energy costs?**

Light fixtures in use are energy efficient LEDs and the technology continues to reduce the amount of energy needed to produce required light outputs. We are focused on keeping the system in a State of Good Repair and embrace future modernization, so we are investigating smart technology that allows for remote detection of outages and controls of light levels in different land use situations.

- a. Implementing smart controls would require installation of devices, either on each light or on each circuit, as well as new monitoring software and protocols. We would likely start in a densely trafficked area like the central business district and work out through corridors.
  - b. Smart technologies are typically rolled out by “node” or cluster of lights, and the systems have variable approaches to handling of the flow of monitoring data. In what we have investigated, roughly \$100 per light should be expected for materials with another \$50 for installation labor. We have yet to determine the impact of this change on normal operations and maintenance costs or on energy usage.
- 3. Last year, the Public Lighting Department stated that it intended to bring the legacy lighting system into a state of good repair. Please provide an update on this project and how much still needs to be addressed. Will the Department require additional funds to complete this project in FY 2026?**

The Public Lighting Authority is focused on keeping all light fixtures within life cycle and replacing legacy poles that were not part of the 2014 construction improvements. By the end of FY2025, 75% of all first-generation light fixtures will be replaced, with the remainder completed by June 30, 2026. We continue to address legacy wood poles under our program of corridor engineering standardization and through residential neighborhood canvasses; wood pole replacement is not scheduled for completion until FY2030. We also have some metal poles in several neighborhoods that are underperforming or high cost, and we have begun the first 1/3 in the Boston-Edison neighborhood; the remainder of neighborhoods are not yet scheduled for replacement. This plan assumes current funding levels.

- 4. The Public Lighting Department listed a goal for this year's budget that between 2025 and 2029, PLD plans to salvage recyclable unused underground cables to be sold to provide funds to reduce the burden of decommissioning. Furthermore, this year's proposed decommissioning fund budget is \$2,200,000, a \$300,000 decrease from the adopted \$2,500,000 last year. a. Is the current proposal enough to continue this work?**

Yes

- b. How many more miles of repair and maintenance of underground cables are left to complete?**

245 miles of underground cable left to be harvested.

- c. How much revenue has been generated from the sale from PLD Assets?**

FY25 to date - \$1,582,395.84  
FY24 - \$2,816,281.01  
FY23 - \$2,363,109.54  
FY22 - \$1,340,109.61

- 5. Last year, we asked about alley lighting behind commercial corridors that abuts residential areas. Are these areas included in PLD's planned upgrades and will additional lighting be added?**

PLA has identified funding for alley lighting restoration and we will be bringing to our Board a few scenarios for prioritizing this project in the Lighting Plan. The funding is contingent on successful refinancing of our 2014 bonds and on following the statutorily prescribed Lighting Plan amendment procedure between the PLA Board, the Executive Branch, and the City Council.