



Is there enough light on your block?
Is the light on your block too bright?

Even if the lights on your block and in your neighborhood are working, they might not be meeting your needs. It's common for people to feel that the light in their area is insufficient, or too bright, or intended more for cars than pedestrians. Though it's not always easy, you can advocate to have the lighting in your neighborhood changed. Here's how to get started.

call 3-1-1

DOT will decide whether or not to install additional lighting based on IES standards.

These standards guarantee that public lighting is bright enough for people to see where they are going.

DOT engineer determines the design and cost of the adjustments.

If standards are not met

If standards are already met

Alternative street lighting is not installed.

Additional grant funding for public lighting infrastructure is available on the federal, state, and local level.

Residents concerned with the quality of lighting in their neighborhood, have often taken it in to their own hands.

A number of non-profits in Baltimore also have grant funding available to support pedestrian lighting.

Another way to advocate for alternative street lighting is to contact city council representatives.

Funding is not available

Funding is available

A city contractor installs the lighting infrastructure which can include dimmers, lightshields, back lights, or pedestrian light fixtures.

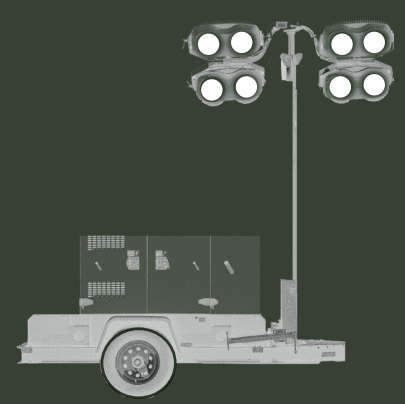
This is typically paid for by the City, and therefore depends on what's available in the City budget.



TOWER LIGHTS

In Baltimore, tower lights are sometimes used as a temporary solution to lack of lighting in a neighborhood or on a specific street. Typically, these lights are installed by DOT at the request of the Baltimore Police Department. These tower lights are convenient for the city because they are easily moved from place to place.

However, these lights are not standardized and are not a viable long term solution to lighting issues. In addition to the intense, harsh light they emit, the towers often block the pedestrian right of way and are fueled by diesel engines that produce loud sound and fumes.



Have you seen these lights in your neighborhood?

How do you feel about them?

I've noticed the glare in certain areas, by the bus stop. I like to be able to see at night. We need bright light for safety. I walk over from past the cemetery. Sometimes it's dim, sometimes it's bright. Need light on statues and street signs too.

Dunningham accesses health services in Station North.

Any lighting that supports or has anything to do with walking around. That's what we need. Anything else is secondary.

Neil lives in Station North.

Street lights are a network. The structures are vertical but they're connected by the horizontal network underneath them.

Cary works in Station North.

Those antique lights, they're not bright enough. Some people desire it in historic districts. It's comfortable, more intimate. But in this area, because of the nature of traffic, that lighting isn't conducive to what's here.

Now that it's starting to get dark sooner, as you head up Charles St. in the evening, there are a lot of dark spots.

We want consistent light. An even flow of light so folks feel less apprehension. You don't want to feel like they're under an umbrella of scrutiny.

Floyd lives in Station North.

If you go to Mt. Vernon or Downtown they have sidewalk lighting but in most of the urban neighborhoods, we have mostly traffic lighting.

We went through the gambit of SRB changing the lights that were being used. They switched the types of lights but we had to advocate for street level or pedestrian lighting.

In some neighborhoods it materialized, on Pennsylvania Avenue, for instance.

Ray is an activist in Station North and Baltimore, at large.

a guide to Navigating *lighting* at Night

Baltimore needs light. But, too bright is too much. We need yellow light to calm down, mellow light. Bright light to see, though.

Two of my grandchildren are autistic so they really need light. They can't read lips in the dark. I want bright light for them so they can understand.

Beverly accesses health services in Station North.

Lighting is energy, warming, exciting.

Light is inviting.

Thomas makes a bus transfer in Station North.

Lighting is a main issue around here. Sufficient lighting would solve a whole lot of unfortunate activity. Anything that lightens up the dark areas, I'm with that!

I think lighting is the main key. People wouldn't toss their trash, hang in shadows. Lighting would keep things nice.

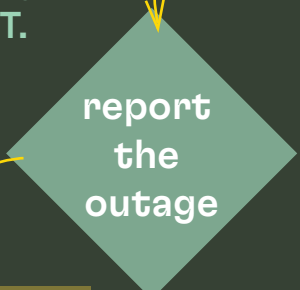
Ronald accesses public transportation in Station North.



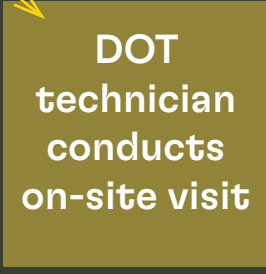
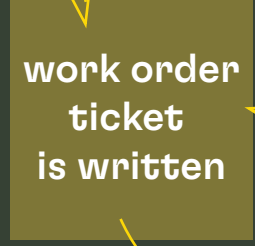
In Baltimore City, street lights are owned and maintained by two entities: the city's Department of Transportation and the utility company, Baltimore Gas and Electric. The majority of lights are maintained by BGE, but some are maintained by DOT. At first glance it's not easy to tell who maintains a light. The following illustrations are designed to help you navigate getting a streetlight repaired or altered.

On BGE's site, locate the Outage tab and select Report a Streetlight Outage to open a map of the city's streetlights.

Refer to the color code to determine whether the light is maintained by BGE or DOT.



To prepare for this call, determine the exact location of the street light, ie. 2400 block of Guilford, on the west side of the street.



The Department of Transportation also has a mobile 3-1-1 app. Pedestrians and residents can report outages, check the status of requests, and make online payments through the app.

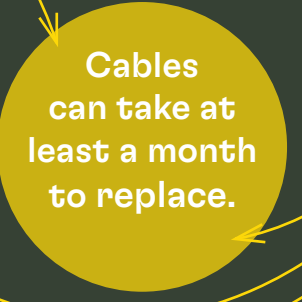
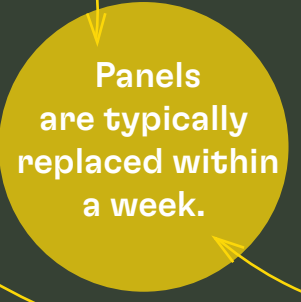
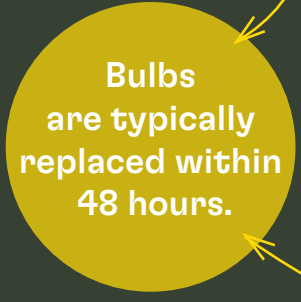


BGE's process for repairing a cable can take longer because repairs require a design team.



In general, DOT can move more quickly on cable repair because they can opt not to use a design team.

The time it takes for BGE to acquire the permits necessary to remove and replace cables can also slow the process down.



KEEP IN MIND

If you make a request for several outed streetlights on a block or in a neighborhood, it will typically take priority over the repair of a single outed light.

Though it's not always the case, lights on metal poles tend to be owned by DOT and maintained by BGE. Lights on wooden poles (often found in alleys) are owned and maintained by BGE.

It's common for older halogen bulbs (recognizable by their softer, more yellow light color) to burn out. Typically, these bulbs need to be replaced every four to five years.

KEY

- BGE** Baltimore Gas and Electric Company
- DOT** City's Department of Transportation
- IES** Illuminating Engineering Society



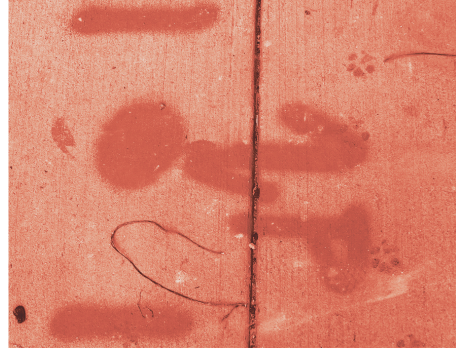
* We value lighting that supports comfortable movement at nighttime on foot and via public



Lighting: Signs and Symbols

One way to communicate the general concept of *light* is in American Sign Language. Simply flick the end of your chin with your middle finger twice to sign for light.

Another language that describes lighting and its systems is the utility code found on most sidewalks in the city. These spray painted lines and shapes communicate the details of underground infrastructure. The code functions like a set of annotations for municipal workers to read and better understand their work environment. To identify the placement and position of electrical power lines, look for any markings painted in red. These represent the underground system that electricity flow through to light up the city.



Additional Resources

Grant Funding for Residents:

Low to Moderate Income Energy Efficiency Grant

Available through
Maryland Energy Administration

Neighborhood Grant

Available through
Southwest Partnership Baltimore

Community Development or Environment Grant

Available through The Abell Foundation

Books for Young Readers:

Small in the City

By Sydney Smith

Max and the Tag-Along Moon

By Floyd Cooper

City Moon

By Rachael Cole

How can public lighting reduce harm?

Harm Reduction is a set of values and strategies that aim to reduce the negative consequences of drug use by caring for the people involved. In any city, people participate in public space in order to meet their needs. Through a harm reduction lens, public space can be a site for care when all of the people who share it can meet their needs with safety and compassion. This approach recognizes the dignity of every person in public space whether they use substances or not.

The physical structures that make up public space directly effect those within it, regardless of their activity. effect those within it. Lighting, like sidewalks, seating, and shade, is a tool that can help or hinder the experience of public space. In Baltimore, the quality and distribution of most infrastructure reflects and upholds inequities across race and class. How would lighting function if public infrastructure prioritized wellbeing and belonging over surveillance and crime prevention? If lighting is to reduce harm, it must first respond to needs of all people not simply those with wealth and power in the city. When that's the case, we can begin to consider public lighting as an invitation to take better care of one another and the spaces we share.

HOLD for official SSN description
+ "to learn more"

HOLD for Upcoming Events
+ Special Thanks



the
Neighborhood
DesignCenter

emphasizes the artistic character of the neighborhood * supports connections between neighborhoods. * doesn't feel antagonistic or like surveillance * suggests the presence of residential and commercial activity

transportation * supports access to neighborhood spaces at night * feels homey, warm, inviting * shows care for place, but