

Thetford Streetlight Project

SERG started working with Thetford on streetlights in 2004. Ultimately, they eliminated half the town lights and switched the remaining to LEDs, saving 89% of the energy used for streetlighting in town over the total process (see their spreadsheet).

Below are the highlights of their basic process. Thetford:

- Formed streetlight subcommittee including TEC members, select board rep, police rep
- Got streetlight inventory of existing lights from CVPS
- Toured lights at night verifying actual lights against CVPS inventory (found some discrepancies, including 1 that was not there that the town had been paying for and 1 the town was paying for that an individual had asked to be installed years before) and making recommendations for removal, based on gut sense of need - wanted to retain in more densely built out areas of town, and remove in more sparse areas basically. We did not meter all the lights or have more defined decision criteria, but that would be helpful.
- Made recommendations to select board to remove about 2/3 of the town's lights; the local energy committee led this process.
- Created maps with GPS showing locations of existing lights, indicating lights recommended for removal and posted at our town meeting table
- The Selectboard held public meetings to discuss proposed removals and seek feedback
- The Selectboard removed a few from the initial "turn off" list due to public concern. Covered the cost of installing a personal motion detector light to one homeowner in a remote area where there was an unneeded light (they were concerned about safety with the light removal and a one-time purchase of motion detector light would have cost the town less than one month's lease of the streetlight). The homeowner did not take the town up on the offer and dropped their resistance to light removal.
- Arranged with CVPS (now Green Mountain Power) to do a 1-month trial outage of streetlights so we could then collect more public feedback
- Held public meeting following the trial outage, and after public feedback, the SB turned a couple more lights back on. Total removed was about half.
- Went through a long process (with some challenging issues) with the utility to take over ownership of streetlights, because they were resisting installing more energy efficient options. Length of process was good in the long run as LEDs were not an option originally. (This is likely less/not an issue today...)
- Got a stimulus grant to purchase LEDs for all town lights. Purchased and installed all LEDs in 2012.