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## Proposed Decorative Lighting Rate Bylaw Change

### Recommendation

That the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities & Corporate Services recommend to City Council:

1. That the Decorative Lighting rate category in Bylaw No. 2685, The Electric Light and Power Bylaw be amended as outlined in this report to allow dusk-to-dawn lighting and the seasonal restrictions be removed; and
2. That the City Solicitor be requested to prepare the appropriate amendment to Bylaw No. 2685, The Electric Light and Power Bylaw.

### Topic and Purpose

This report is to request approval to amend the Decorative Lighting rate category in Bylaw No. 2685, The Electric Light and Power Bylaw to permit dusk-to-dawn lighting throughout the entire year.

### Report Highlights

1. The Administration has received requests to allow decorative lighting installations outside the existing bylaw hours.
2. The increase in energy consumption costs will be offset by savings on simpler lighting controls.
3. Decorative lighting installations will continue to be administered as per current practice.

### Strategic Goal

This report supports the Strategic Goal of Quality of Life by providing a welcoming place, and supporting the Winter City Strategy by providing more lighting to make the darker winter season more inviting and beautiful.

### Background

The Decorative Lighting rate in Bylaw No. 2685, The Electric Light and Power Bylaw has historically been applied to Christmas lights and decorations owned by the City of Saskatoon (City). Bylaw No. 2685, The Electric Light and Power Bylaw currently defines the dates and times when seasonal decorative lighting will be in operation. These lights are turned on beginning the first Monday in December through to and including the 14<sup>th</sup> day of January. Each day the lights operate on a timer control between the hours of 07:00 to 09:00 and 18:00 to 24:00.

City Council, at its meeting held on January 26, 2015, considered the Inquiry – Former Councillor C. Clark (January 20, 2014) – Decorative Street Lighting – Change to “Winter-based” Schedule and resolved that the dates for decorative Christmas lighting installed on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Broadway Avenue and the Broadway Bridge be extended to a winter-based schedule.

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During consideration of the aforementioned report, City Council also resolved, in part:

- “2. That the Administration, in consultation with the Business Improvement Districts, explore options for decorative lighting and financial implications and report back to the Committee.”

The Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services at its meeting held on April 4, 2017, considered a letter from Brent Penner, Executive Director, Downtown Saskatoon, dated March 8, 2017 and resolved:

“That the matter be referred to the Administration for a report on how this could tie in with the Winter Cities Strategy and similar lighting in the Central Business Districts.”

### Report

Interest has been expressed by a variety of community groups including the Business Improvement Districts and Community Associations that would like to extend the season and daily hours that decorative lights are illuminated. Many of these groups would also like to pursue options to add more decorative lighting in the city.

To facilitate operating the existing decorative lighting, timers and timer circuits have been installed to control the illumination of decorations based on the current bylaw requirements. If dusk-to-dawn illumination were permitted, the timers and their associated circuits would be eliminated and the existing photoelectric controls from the street lighting systems would be utilized. This would eliminate the need for maintenance of the timers, reduce the number of circuits, and lower the capital costs of installing new decorative lighting. It would also better follow the daylight patterns for turning the lights on and off. It is estimated that removing the timers and their circuits would reduce operational costs in proportion to the increased energy costs from the longer illumination cycle and seasonal timeframe.

A change to Bylaw No. 2685, The Electric Light and Power Bylaw is requested to permit more flexible timeframes for decorative lighting installations and their illumination. Aside from the timeframes, the installation, operation, and administration of the decorative lights would continue as usual.

Based on direction previously received from City Council, seasonal decorations will continue to be operational as follows:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Broadway Bridge and Broadway Avenue – from the first Monday in December until March 21 (these decorations are “winter-based” themed and not specifically designed for Christmas);
- 20<sup>th</sup> Street – from the first Monday in December until Chinese New Year (which is February 5 in 2019 – this date varies from year-to-year); and
- All other seasonal decorations – from the first Monday in December until January 14.

### **Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement**

Interest has been expressed by the Business Improvement Districts and some Community Associations to extend both the season and daily hours that decorative lighting is installed and illuminated. A formal request was received from the Downtown Saskatoon Business Improvement District on March 8, 2017, to amend the bylaw as outlined in this report.

### **Communication Plan**

Upon approval of the bylaw amendment, the City will communicate the change via a News Release and social media messages. Community feedback on the change will be welcome via the City's Shaping Saskatoon engagement site. A news conference, advertising, and a direct mail-out to areas being impacted by the change may be considered. The City will also work with the Business Improvement Districts and Community Associations to utilize their channels for communicating the change.

### **Financial Implications**

It is anticipated that there would be no net cost to the City since any potential increase in energy costs for the longer operational period for City-owned decorative lighting would be offset by the operational savings from the removal of timers and the timer controlled circuits.

New installations of decorative lights would cost less since no timers or special timer controlled circuits would be needed. It might also be possible to use existing dusk-to-dawn lighting circuits and controls for further savings.

### **Environmental Implications**

The increased operational time periods mean an increase in energy consumption and the corresponding increase in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Virtually all decorative lighting installations utilize high-efficiency LED technology and consume substantially less energy than previous lighting technologies. For City-owned decorative lighting, the extended operational time could mean as much as 40MWh additional annual energy consumption if all lights were operated dusk-to-dawn all winter. This corresponds to an increase in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 26 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e, the equivalent of adding five cars to the road each year.

### **Other Considerations/Implications**

There are no policy, privacy or CPTED implications or considerations.

### **Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion**

With the new bylaw, options for additional decorative lighting and their financial impact can be explored with Business Improvement Districts. A future report will be provided to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services.

### **Public Notice**

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

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### Report Approval

Written by: Brendan Lemke, Acting Director of Saskatoon Light & Power  
Approved by: Trevor Bell, Acting General Manager, Utilities & Environment  
Department

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