

Lighting Efficiency: Improving Cities Using LED Lights

LED cities are cropping up all over the globe as major metropolitan areas learn how effective LED light technology is in conserving energy, and in conserving taxpayers' dollars. In the past, most LED cities have functioned by making changes in parking garages, street lights, traffic lights, and things of that nature in the switch from incandescent light bulbs to LED energy efficient lights. Today, those changes are still occurring in all LED cities, however there are many cities getting very creative with how they implement the technology.

Toronto, Ontario in Canada is one city that has illustrated just how creative a city can be when it comes to the use of LED energy efficient lights. In fact, Toronto, Ontario is the first Canadian city to be known as an LED city and is the first Canadian metropolitan to join the LED City Initiative. Other cities that can officially be called an "LED City" include Raleigh, NC; Ann Arbor, MI; Austin, TX; and Torraca, Italy. This initiative sets out to share the best practices in the evaluation, promotion, and deployment of the light technology through its municipal works.

LED light technology, particularly when used at the city-wide level, has been known to consume 90% less electrical energy and the lights last longer than incandescent lighting. Toronto has capitalized on this savings by installing the energy efficient lights in street lights, parking garages, and in pedestrian lighted areas. Light emitting diode holiday lighting is also being utilized as all publicly controlled holiday lighting has now been switched over to LED light technology.

But Toronto has taken it even a step further than that. Perhaps the most famous public structure in Toronto is the CN Tower, a beacon of strength for many Torontonians, and the most famous landmark in the city. All lights within the CN Tower have been switched over to LED light technology, which in turn lights the public locale of Exhibition Place. This change alone has worked to save the city of Toronto 50% of their energy use and costs on an annual basis. When you add this major change, along with the addition of the change of over 160,000 Toronto streetlights, the city of Toronto does not just save in energy use. They also save a total of \$6 million dollars annually in electricity costs. More importantly, the estimated reduction of greenhouse gas emissions with these changes is ball parked at around 18,000 tonnes.

Computer operated bill boards are another measure that Toronto has taken in the switch to LED energy efficient lighting. These billboards are billboards that function with LED light technology and are controlled by an operator. These signs posted along the highway and in the major city centers of Toronto are yet another example of the great lengths the city is taking to save on energy consumption.

The number of LED cities is growing though they are quite a ways off from becoming the norm. However, when major city centers such as Toronto, Ontario make changes as instrumental as the ones they have made, they serve as shining examples to other cities around the world that every step toward better energy conservation is a step toward environmental consciousness and cost savings. Changing a major public landmark such as the CN Tower is one way that LED cities can say, hey, it's time for a change. If we can do it, so can you.

~Ben Anton, 2008

About the Author

Ben Anton writes for Discount Lights and Knives from his home in Portland, Oregon. Want more information on [efficient and long-lasting LED](#) light bulbs? Visit the DLK Web site to find out more about going green with [LED Lenser light products](#).

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