

## Cape officials say LCEC is reaping LED savings reward

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By Joe Roetz, Reporter

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The Lee County Electric Cooperative – or LCEC – is planning to swap out thousands of old street light bulbs in Cape Coral with longer-lasting and more efficient LED bulbs.

City leaders, though, say there's no plan to pass along the savings to customers.

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"We have been pushing for this to get our return on investment," said Michael Ilczyszyn, Cape Coral's assistant city manager. Ilczyszyn says the city pays LCEC more than \$2 million per year to install and maintain the lights, and if it's going to take less to power them going forward – the cost should drop.

But LCEC spokesperson Karen Ryan said that while the energy savings are real, the lights themselves are more expensive to purchase and install, which means LCEC isn't saving any money.

"The energy cost is lower but you take into account the higher price of the fixture," she said. "In the short term it'll probably hurt LCEC since they have to swallow a bigger bill to start with."

Nevertheless, Ilczyszyn said he'd still like to see a better cost breakdown – including maintenance fees.

The dispute comes at a time when the city and LCEC are discussing a new contract, a process that [could ultimately see Cape Coral break away](#) and establish its own electric utility.