



CITY OF APPLETON

MEMORANDUM

Date: 01/05/2026
To: Municipal Services Committee
From: Michael Hardy, P.E., Traffic Engineer
Subject: **Request to Approve** 2026 Sole Source Purchase Request – Various Traffic Equipment & Technologies

This sole source purchase request is reassessed and presented annually as required by the City Procurement Policy. It was last approved for calendar year 2025.

Traffic Signal and Control Equipment

The traffic signal industry is characterized by highly proprietary systems with limited interoperability and a small number of qualified vendors. The City of Appleton uses Econolite traffic signal cabinet and control equipment. As an example, Traffic Control Corporation (TCC) is the exclusive Econolite vendor in the state and possesses specialized knowledge for equipment configuration, testing, and servicing beyond the City's in-house capabilities.

While Econolite vendors exist in nearby states, manufacturer agreements prohibit overlap between vendor territories, preventing the City from procuring this equipment from other vendors. As a result, traffic signal control assemblies are commonly sole-sourced as complete, functional systems. These systems rely on proprietary firmware and components that make competitive procurement of comparable equipment impractical.

Under this approach, the sole source vendor assembles and functionally tests the full system prior to delivery, ensuring compatibility and assigning responsibility for system performance. Although this limits formal competitive bidding, alternative “competitive” specifications often result in only one qualifying manufacturer and provide little real benefit.

Decorative Street Lighting

The City has standardized on decorative lighting components from Stresscrete, King, and Visco to maintain consistent appearance, quality, and durability. While similar products exist, prior experience with off-brand alternatives has shown inferior quality, increased maintenance, and reduced service life.

Although these products are currently procured through competitive bidding via electrical supply chains, this process typically results in added markup on predetermined products. Sole source procurement more efficiently utilizes City time and resources while providing better overall value.

Non-Decorative Street Lighting

The City has standardized on Cooper, Leotek, and Philips fixtures for various street lighting applications. Requiring competitive bids through supply chains again results primarily in product markup without meaningful competition. The City has established direct purchasing relationships with these manufacturers, allowing for direct price comparison where products compete with one another, consistent with the intent of the procurement policy. Requiring additional manufacturers solely to meet policy thresholds does not provide added value; therefore, a sole source exception is requested.

Summary:

The Traffic Section continues to seek opportunities to improve competition and evaluate alternative products when feasible. Procurement decisions consider total lifecycle costs, including software, training, compatibility, and maintenance. Staff routinely coordinates with peer agencies such as WisDOT, the City of Green Bay, and Milwaukee County to benchmark pricing and assess alternative products. When applicable, WisDOT procurement contracts and price matching are pursued.

Based on these considerations, the Traffic Section believes sole source procurement for the following equipment and services remains in the City's best interest:

Signal Controller and Control Software:

- Econolite (TCC)

Signal Control Cabinets:

- Mobotrex (Mobotrex & TAPCO)
- Econolite (TCC)

Signal Control Malfunction Management Unit:

- Eberle Design, Inc. (Mobotrex & TAPCO)

Loop Detector Amplifiers:

- Eberle Design, Inc. (Mobotrex & TAPCO)
- Reno A & E (TCC)

Video Detection Systems:

- Iteris, Inc. (Mobotrex)
- Econolite (TCC)

Radar Detection Systems:

- MS Sedco / Intersector. (TAPCO)
- Notraffic (TAPCO)
- Wavetronix (TCC)
- Iteris, Inc. (Mobotrex)

Pedestrian Pushbuttons:

- Polara (TAPCO)

Preemption:

- GTT/Miovision (Mid America Signal)

Wireless Radio Communications:

- Encom Wireless (Mobotrex & TAPCO)

Radar Speed Signs:

- Information Display Company
- TAPCO

Railroad Interconnect Inspection Service

- Meade & Hunt

Decorative Concrete Poles & Arms:

- Stresscrete / King Luminaire (Visual Impact Lighting, LLC)

Decorative Steel Poles & Arms:

- Niland Company (Visual Impact Lighting)
- Spring City (Visual Impact Lighting)
- Structura Inc. (Werner Electric)
- Candela Series (Spectrum Lighting)

Decorative LED Fixtures:

- Stresscrete / King Luminaire (Visual Impact Lighting, LLC)
- Beacon Viper (Werner Electric)
- Candela Series (Spectrum Lighting)

LED Street Light Fixtures:

- Philips (Neher Electric, TAPCO)
- Cooper Lighting (Neher Electric, TAPCO)
- Leotek (Visual Impact Lighting)

School Zone Flasher & RRFB Controls:

- TAPCO
- Carmanah (Mobotrex)
- RTC