

Local Improvement FAQ's

How much will a local improvement in my area cost me?

Properties benefitting from a local improvement are “assessed” in a fair and equitable manner, according to provisions in the Municipal Government Act.

Local improvement tax will be calculated in the following manner:

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Residential properties will be assessed based on a per-parcel basis unless the frontage of the lot is greater than 23 metres. If the property is greater than 23 metres, it will be assessed on an additional per-metre cost up to a maximum of 150% of the typical residential parcel.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

All instances that are not considered residential will be considered special circumstances and will be assessed on a per-metre of frontage basis.

MIXED LAND USE

In cases where there is mixed land use, the contribution for residential property will be calculated by developing a per-metre rate as if all the parcels in the local improvement area have a 15.24 metre frontage. The per-metre rate is then applied to the typical residential properties as per the Residential Property calculation method. The total residential contribution is then removed from the total property owner's allocation and the remaining balance is calculated and taxed based on a per-metre frontage rate.

What are my options for paying the local improvement levy?

Each property owner will have the following options for payment once construction is complete:
Payment of the full amount (no interest is included)

Annual payments that are included in the property tax bill for the term of the bylaw (with a typical bylaw term of 25 years). Interest is included, and is fixed for the term of the bylaw. Partial or entire payments can be applied to the account at any time. If you do not specify which payment option you would prefer after receiving your local improvement assessment notice, please note that the charges will automatically be applied to your annual property tax bill.

What if I cannot afford to pay for the local improvement levy?

Senior citizens who are local homeowners can apply to the government for tax relief as long as they have a minimum of 25% equity in their home (visit www.seniors-housing.alberta.ca for more information).

For the rest of us, it will ultimately mean additional budgeting. Homeownership is usually accompanied by unexpected costs, no matter how much we try to anticipate them. [The Government of Canada has an informative web page](#) about maintaining a home and ongoing homeownership costs that you might find helpful.

Will the completed work affect my future property assessments?

The assessed value of your property will not increase as a result of the local improvement.

What am I paying for with the Local Improvement Tax?

Property owners in your area will be asked to contribute a percentage of the cost of roads and sidewalks only. The utility work is funded through the City of Wetaskiwin utility reserve.

Why are the Local Improvements happening now?

The City of Wetaskiwin historically used local improvements extensively in Wetaskiwin dating back to 1959 up until 2005. Since 2005, the condition rating of roads in Wetaskiwin has dropped significantly, showing the lack of sufficient reconstructions and preventative maintenance. Local improvements are not new but are an effective way to deal with limited funding to address the gaining infrastructure that effects specific areas of the city that are considered to not serve the city-wide population.

Do all City Residents have to pay for the Local Improvements?

The local improvement charge is only charged to properties that are deemed to benefit from the proposed reconstruction. Notices will be sent out to residents when a local improvement is being considered. There is a very specific order of events when either the City or Residents initiates a local improvement process. More information can be found on the City website at www.wetaskiwin.ca

Why is this not covered by the Infrastructure Maintenance tax?

The Infrastructure Surcharge Reserve (received through property taxes) is limited to use for maintaining existing road infrastructure (overlays), sidewalk infrastructure (spot repairs or connectors), trail and park systems (trail overlays or extensions and existing park routine rehabilitation) and building envelope projects (Policy #1807: Infrastructure Surcharge, does not differentiate between use for city wide projects vs site specific locations).

Do I have to pay if I don't support the local improvement project?

If you wish to petition against this local improvement plan, it must have support from 2/3 of the property owners liable to pay the local improvement tax and must represent fifty (50%) percent of the total assessed value for the plan area. *If a group of property owners successfully defeat a proposed local improvement bylaw, the proposed redevelopment will then be moved to the bottom of the priority list. Property owners may be subject to a lower level of service by this reprioritization.*

Do I still have to pay the local improvement tax if I move?

No. The local improvement tax stays with the property and the remaining payments become the responsibility of the new owner.

Do other communities have local improvement taxes?

Yes, communities such as Ponoka, Medicine Hat, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer and Camrose, Grand Prairie, to name a few, use local improvement taxes.

If I petition, how do I know the names of property owners?

The names of property owners cannot be provided for privacy reasons. As you are circulating the petition, you need to ensure that person signing is the registered property owner.

If the local improvement is not successful, how long will it be before this project is reconsidered?

When a local improvement is defeated by way of a formal petition, the project will be moved to the bottom of the rebuild list for the City and will be revisited according to the 10 year capital plan. If residents want to have the project reconsidered they must wait five (5) years from the last petition to reapply for the work to be completed.

Is there a cost to petition the project?

No, there is no cost to petition the project. You can obtain a petition package from City Hall and it clearly outlines the process.

What can I do if I disagree with the classification of my road (local, collector, etc.)?

If you disagree with the road classification, please contact the Engineering Department directly. They will explain the reasoning behind why roads are classified in specific ways. If you still disagree, let staff know and they will approach Council to see if they want to reconsider the classification.

How does this plan affect corner lots?

Corner lots will only be responsible for local improvement charges for the road based on their address. For example: a house (123 Birch Street) sits on the corner of Birch Street and Bark Road, but will only be responsible for local improvement costs resulting from work completed on Birch Street (because their address is 123 Birch Street).