



Property Owner's Guide to

Local Improvements

What is a Local Improvement?

A Local Improvement is a new or replacement construction project intended to upgrade specific conditions within a residential, commercial or industrial area of the city. Examples include:

- Rear lane paving (these are the most common)
- Street paving
- Driveway crossings
- Sidewalk replacement,
- Curb and gutter replacement
- Boulevard and street lighting
- Extending sanitary, storm or water systems

Who can request a Local Improvement?

Local Improvements are most often requested by property owners. As a property owner, you can initiate a Local Improvement with a petition. The City of Lethbridge can also initiate a Local Improvement.

In either case, the City will send a notice to each affected property owner. Sections 391 to 409 of the Municipal Government Act establish the provincial statutory guidelines for the administration of local improvements.

Who pays for Local Improvements?

Every property benefiting from a local improvement shares in the cost, even if some owners have not signed the petition.

How is each property owner's share of the Local Improvement cost determined?

Funding for the Local Improvement is borrowed by the City of Lethbridge and repaid by the affected owners.

Property owners have the option of paying this cost in one lump payment, thereby saving interest charges, or they may choose to pay the amount in installments over 10 years, with interest, which are added to their annual property tax bills.

For example, the estimated cost for paving the rear lane of a residential lot with a 50-foot frontage, payment would be calculated as follows:

One-Time, Lump-Sum Payment: 50 ft. x \$102.00 per assessable footage = \$5,100 lump-sum payment

10 Annual Installments: \$650.89 per year x 10 years = \$6,508.90 total payments (Including average estimated annual interest estimated at 4.7%)

These estimates would be adjusted if the local improvement area includes corner or irregularly shaped lots. Actual figures will vary each year depending on costs and the amount of paving done. If you choose to pay with a lump sum, you must make this arrangement at the Assessment and Taxation Department in City Hall the year following the lane paving installation.

How do I request a Local Improvement?

1. Call 311 to provide information for us to prepare a petition package for you. The package will include the petition and a map of the affected area. We'll phone you when the petition package is ready for pick-up at City Hall: Infrastructure Services, (4th Floor), 910-4 Avenue South, Lethbridge, AB.
2. To be valid, a petition must be signed by at least two-thirds of the affected property owners who represent at least half the total property assessment value of the affected area, according to the most recent property assessment roll.
If there are multiple owners of a property, a majority of those owners must sign the petition. For example, if two people jointly own a property, both must sign the petition. If six people jointly own a property, at least four of them must sign the petition.
Each signature must be witnessed by an adult who signs:
(a) opposite the signature of the petitioner, and
(b) an affidavit that to the best of the witness's knowledge, the signatures witnessed are those of persons entitled to sign the petition.
If an estate, church or corporation owns a property, the petition must be accompanied by a document authorizing that person to sign on behalf of the estate, church or corporation. This person must be at least 18 years of age. An individual may not sign on behalf of someone else unless that person has power of attorney and provides evidence of such.
3. The completed petition form and affidavit must be returned to Infrastructure Services within 60 days of initiating the petition. NOTE: if a petition is returned and found to be insufficient, the petition cannot be sent out again for more signatures. The petition becomes null and void, and a new petition must be created if the petitioner still wants to pursue a Local Improvement.
4. If a valid petition is received, City Council may start the Local Improvement and impose a levy on the affected properties. Affected property owners will be notified in writing if a petition is valid.

How do I petition against a proposed Local Improvement?

If you receive notification of a proposed local improvement, and you are opposed to the construction, please contact 311.

What if I disagree with my Local Improvement assessment?

In many cases, assessment concerns can be resolved without going through the formal appeal process. For this reason, we recommend that you first call the Assessment Department at 311 to discuss the assessment before deciding to file an appeal.

Assessment staff will be happy to meet with you to explain the assessment and review your concerns. Resolving the issue in this manner can save time and expense for both you and the City. If this process doesn't resolve your concerns, you may file an appeal of your local improvement assessment to the Assessment Review Board. Please note: A formal appeal can only be filed after the special assessment has been levied.

Call us. We're here to help.

If you still have questions, please call 311.

