

# Tools and Ideas

**CityPlan**

*Riley Park/South Cambie* **RPSC**

## **Local Improvement Process**

What is the Local Improvement Process?

The Local Improvement process is both a method of financing and a system for citizen participation. A local improvement project is paid for partly by the owners of property abutting a project and partly by the City. The process can be used to request construction of streets, sidewalks, lanes, lighting and other works which benefit local areas.

Local Improvements - Resident-initiated

Resident initiated projects are often for improved lighting, lane paving or speed humps. The process can be initiated by a single resident or by a group. If the resident "petition" gets the support of two-thirds of the property owners involved (representing at least half the assessed value), the project goes forward to City Council for final approval and the City will begin the work.

The cost for most projects is shared between City and property owners. The individual property owners' share of the cost is based on the length of their property abutting the project. Property owners can elect to pay their share of the cost in a lump sum or in annual installments with their taxes.

Local Improvements- City-initiated

A City-initiated process is usually used in commercial or multi-zoned areas where it would more difficult for a resident-initiated petition to get support from absentee owners. Streets in poor condition, lacking curbs or with badly broken sidewalks are identified by City staff, who contact property owners to determine if there is support for the improvement. This process is begun after City Council

approves a list of City initiated projects.

In City-initiated petitions, the project will go ahead unless the notified property owners register an objection. A project would be defeated if a simple majority (50% plus 1) objects. The usual project types are for curbing, sidewalk installation or sidewalk reconstruction. The cost is shared between City and property owners but the City proportion is usually higher than for resident-initiated local improvements.

Street Beautification Program

Owners can request beautification measures that go beyond the City's standard street treatments to create, or enhance, neighbourhood character. These can include special road or sidewalk treatment; banners; street trees and other planting; special street lighting; decorative benches, trash cans and other street furniture.

Recently, more flexibility has been given to residents in the design of local streets. This program also allows the use of measures that were previously limited to areas with local traffic plans. The Garden Drive project, located in east Vancouver between Dundas and Trinity Streets, serves as an example of this. Here, the street design came from residents and included elements such as wooden curbs and trees placed in planters on the pavement. The improvements were cost-shared by owners and the City, through the Local Improvement Process.