

In November 2011 SACA organized an opportunity for community residents concerned with the declining care and health of our community's public green spaces to meet with City staff regarding options to better care for these important public assets. After a series of meetings with City staff and further follow-up research the residents' group published information to the community at large regarding the process of establishing a Landscape Enhancement and Appreciation Fund (LEAF) - in accordance with the Alberta Municipal Government Act and municipal bylaws - as a means of financing better care of our community public green spaces. An on-line survey of Scenic Acres residents was distributed to gather opinions on the possible implementation of a LEAF program in our community. The survey link was made available to the community through various electronic means. Paper copies of the survey were also available at the community association office for those without internet access.

A total of 339 responses were received, providing a variety of opinions and suggestions. Key highlights of the survey results are summarized below:

- 68% indicated the appearance of our community needed improvement,
- 72% felt current public green space maintenance was inadequate,
- 78% believed the current appearance of our public green spaces had negative consequences,
- 83% thought our boulevard areas needed immediate improvement,
- 77% suggested that our community entrances needed immediate improvement,
- 82% were willing to pay to improve the maintenance of our community's public green spaces,
- 68% supported a petition for a special levy to fund public green space maintenance in Scenic Acres.

A number of questions regarding potential services, concerns, costs and alternatives were posed by residents. To address these questions, detailed answers were published to allow all residents to be informed on the parameters of a potential Scenic Acres LEAF program. In addition, an information session was included at the SACA March 2012 AGM, two open houses were held and questions were fielded by email. General feedback from participants was supportive of pursuing a LEAF program for Scenic Acres.

A door to door campaign began on May 22, 2012, with nearly 100 dedicated resident volunteers canvassing Scenic Acres homeowners regarding a petition to establish a Scenic Acres LEAF program through an annual \$60 special tax levy with all funds to be spent on maintaining and improving our community's public green spaces. In order to be considered the petition needed to be signed by 2/3 of residential property owners within Scenic Acres.

The petition was supported by 69% of Scenic Acres homeowners; thus the LEAF petition met the regulatory requirements. The petition was confirmed by the City in March 2013 and City Council passed a Special Tax Bylaw in April 2013 which allowed the implementation of a LEAF program in our community. In 2015 there were 10 other communities in Calgary with programs similar to the Scenic Acres LEAF program.