

# MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF **ANTIGONISH**

## What Are Local Improvements & Local Improvement Charges?

A local improvement is a new or extension to an existing municipal water, sewer, storm water (curb & gutter) systems, or street improvement. A Local Improvement Charge (LIC) is the cost to the property owner receiving benefit from the improvement.

LICs have long been used by municipalities to help cover the costs of infrastructure improvements deemed to benefit a specific neighbourhood or area. In Antigonish County we have embraced the approach of “user pay” in many areas of municipal service such as street lights, fire protection, road improvements, and water and sewer systems. This approach is particularly appropriate for rural municipalities where service levels vary among communities and residents.

LICs are used as a means of directly connecting the costs of capital improvements to those who enjoy them. This practice reflects the reality we face: costs are rising and municipalities require revenue beyond general taxation and infrastructure funding from other levels of government to support growth.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Who pays a LIC?**

A: All properties that front a road on which a municipal service is being installed or extended will be levied a LIC. If a new lot is created on that same road in the area of the municipal service, they too will be levied a LIC.

### **Q: How is a LIC calculated?**

A: The LIC can be calculated in a number of ways: uniform amount for each property, property frontage, property use, area, assessed value, or any combination of two or more methods. In each instance the Municipality tries to calculate the charge in a manner most appropriate for the location.

[Click here to view the Local Improvement Bylaw](#)

If you have question concerning local improvement charges, the bylaw or a local improvement, please contact the Municipal Office at 902.863.1117.

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## **Q: How are local improvements identified?**

A: Local improvements are identified in multiple ways:

- Residents can identify a local improvement they would like the Municipality to consider by petition.
- Municipal councillors have identified a number of local improvements in previous years that are being considered.
- Municipal staff may also identify local improvements necessary for improved public health and safety or critical for the controlled management of residential or commercial/industrial growth.

## **Q: Why do I have to pay a LIC when they weren't charged in the past?**

A: Like most things, municipal systems are becoming more expensive to construct, maintain, operate and replace. While most of the capital expense is still borne by the Municipality, a relatively small contribution from the property owner who will directly benefit from the improvement is also required. Many municipalities across Nova Scotia have similar requirements.

## **Q: Do I get an opportunity to comment on a proposed local improvement?**

A: Yes. All property owners affected by a local improvement have an opportunity to comment on the proposal, either through a petition or direct communication with the Municipality.

## **Q: What level of support is required for the Municipality to consider a local improvement?**

A: The Municipality requires 2/3 of the property owners affected by a proposed local improvement to express support before it will be considered.

## **Q: If I am in the 1/3 of property owners who do not support the local improvement do I still have to pay the LIC?**

A: Yes. The LIC constitutes a first lien on property in the same manner as property taxes under the Assessment Act.

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**Q: If I am responsible for a LIC, how long do I have to pay?**

A: You can pay the LIC in one lump sum or in equal installments over ten years in the case of water or sewer, and five years in the case of storm water or street improvements. The LIC will be added to your annual tax bill and carries the same 6% interest calculation.

**Q: Is the Municipality seeking grants from other levels of government for local improvements?**

A: Yes. The Municipality actively monitors and works with its provincial and federal counterparts to identify and secure infrastructure funding. When the Municipality is successful in securing infrastructure funding the contribution from the property owner is lowered.

**Q: If a local improvement is completed am I responsible for any other charges or costs associated with the municipal service?**

A: Yes. In the case of water services the property owner is also responsible for a connection fee, the cost of the lateral to the main, a bi-monthly water bill and an annual fire hydrant charge. If pumping or pressure systems are required to bring the service to any specific location on the property those costs are also the responsibility of the property owner.

In the case of sewer service the property owner is also responsible for a connection fee, the cost of the lateral to the main and the annual sewer bill. If pumping or pressure systems are required to bring the service to any specific location on the property those costs are also the responsibility of the property owner.

**Q: My property doesn't have road frontage but I would like to connect to municipal water or sewer extended as a result of a local improvement. Do I have to pay the LIC?**

Yes. You are also required to pay the other costs associated with the connection mentioned above.

**Q: If I subdivide my property after the LIC has been calculated and billed, do I have to pay the LIC on the subdivided properties?**

Yes. The same LIC is levied on new properties created after the fact.

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