

## Boone Station Drive is turning a New Leaf

Molly McGowan / Times-News

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The labors of New Leaf Society flourish all throughout Burlington, from the evergreen and magnolia trees at elementary and high schools to the shrubberies, trees and landscaping that decorate medians and islands of several busy city streets.

Now, the local nonprofit – which has invested \$411,000 in Burlington alone – will have a prominent piece of Burlington infrastructure named after it, featuring art purchased at last year's Willow Walk.



*The roundabout at the Boone Station Drive public entrance to Alamance Crossing in Burlington*  
*Scott Muthersbaugh / Times-News*

At a Burlington City Council work session Monday night, New Leaf requested that Boone Station Roundabout – at the entrance to Alamance Crossing – be renamed “New Leaf Circle,” reflecting the investment the nonprofit has made in the city since its inception in 2007.

According to information provided to council, New Leaf has raised \$877,349, established about 160 funding partners and executed more than 27 projects, using at least 3,110 trees, shrubs and flowers since 2012. And the society's work blooms in Elon, Graham, Mebane, Haw River, in addition to Burlington.

Burlington-specific projects include adding trees to medians in Rockwood Avenue/O'Neal Street, University Drive and Grand Oaks Boulevard, planting evergreens at Highland Elementary and oaks and magnolia trees at Williams High School, planting shade trees to three city parks, adding floral enhancements at the Alamance-Burlington Airport and Company Shops Market downtown, and several others.

The Boone Station Roundabout was the first site in Burlington that New Leaf established for public art, through its ongoing partnership with the Arts Council and the city.

The society's investment at that location began in 2010, when it prepared the site for and installed "Let's Build it Together," the egg-like sculpture by Michael Waller that was recently purchased by the Arts Council and given to Burlington for its collection of public art.

To date, the society has invested \$10,030 in the public art display at Boone Station Drive, and is ready to contribute another \$30,000 to install "Chasing the Wind" — the 9½-foot-tall bronze tricycle by Jeff Hackney — and add landscaping to complement the piece. The piece cost \$10,150, of which New Leaf paid \$7,000.

"We've already approved the art project," said Nolan Kirkman, Burlington's public works director. In February, the City Council saw tentative plans for the sculpture's installation, and on Monday gave New Leaf the go-ahead to build a low stone wall under the sculpture with the roundabout's new name.

The society also plans to grade the site in such a way that the sculpture is raised up, and create flowering "wheel trails" behind the giant tricycle to give the illusion of traveling movement through the grass.

New Leaf will also add lighting and maintain and rotate the trails' flowers seasonally — or about four times a year — annually spending about \$2,500 on the location's upkeep.

"We wanted to have a site that's a landmark," said Kelly May, co-chair of New Leaf's technical advisory committee. "It becomes a reference point."

Once the name change and project was approved, she said, "We want to begin work immediately." May said New Leaf will put out bids for contracts by the end of this week, and will likely start the process of grading, planting and installation within 30 days. Once the ball gets rolling, she said, the project should only take two weeks to complete.

May added that New Leaf hopes such beautification efforts inspire other local individuals and companies to use their resources to do the same. May said, "When you make something that's beautiful, it's contagious."