

Press Release

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New Leaf Society Creates Grand Oaks Boulevard “Gateway”

BURLINGTON, NC - January 31, 2012 - The New Leaf Society (New Leaf) has completed another high visibility landscaping project for the city of Burlington, introducing new trees along Grand Oaks Boulevard.

Living Landscapes of Graham, New Leaf’s partner on this project, put the final trees in the ground last week along Grand Oaks from Kirkpatrick Road to Alamance Road, marking the completion of the second step in a multi-phase, 3.7 mile landscaping project that began at the northern end of University Drive, at Westbrook Avenue, and continues to the southern end of Grand Oaks at Alamance Road. New Leaf officials plan to continue the boulevard landscaping north of Westbrook Avenue as the University Drive extension is completed.

Recent economic expansion along the western edge of Burlington gave New Leaf a perfect setting for this extensive project: a gateway to some of the best Burlington has to offer. "New Leaf wants to create tree-lined thoroughfares that thread through the economic centers of our city," said Rett Davis, New Leaf president. "We have street trees and plantings throughout Alamance County, but few of them are congruent. The University/Grand Oaks project is an effort to create distinctive ‘travel routes’ through Burlington."

ABOUT THE GRAND OAKS PROJECT

In addition to highly visible project sites, New Leaf carefully selects plantings to create an instantly noticeable impact in the community. "New Leaf invests in sizable, relatively mature trees, shrubs and other plantings so residents and visitors can enjoy the improvements immediately," said Tom Flood, co-chair of the technical advisory committee for New Leaf, landscape designer and Director of Landscaping for Elon University.

New Leaf trees usually range from six to 10 feet in height. Hand-selected by Flood, all plantings must meet stringent standards. "We go directly to the growers in order to make sure we have the best materials," said Flood. "We also purchase our plant materials as close to home as possible, but will go as far as we need if something is unavailable in our area."

Plantings for the Grand Oaks Boulevard project include ‘Oak Leaf’ holly, ‘Biloxi’ crape myrtle, ‘Little Gem’ magnolia, ‘Forest Pansy’ redbud and Chinese pistache. The number and variety of trees form a four-season “streetscape,” with evergreens for color stability, crape myrtles for deep summer color, redbuds that bloom in the spring, and the stunning fall colors of the Chinese pistache.

Street tree plantings must also possess certain unique features to comply with safety regulations laid out by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). According to Flood, the crape myrtle selected for this project was one such plant: “The ‘Biloxi’ crape myrtle does not have the usual multi-stem. Because it has a single stem, it grows upward, improving visibility for traffic.”

All New Leaf landscaping projects and designs must meet NCDOT safety standards for street tree plantings.

According to Flood, the "plant palette" for this particular project was selected based on several criteria, including continuity, hardiness and compliance. Because the initial phase of the project, along University Drive, included already established plantings north of the current site, Flood and Davis chose a complementary palette of trees, shrubs and other plantings for a seamless, coordinated stretch of landscaping.

Flood also pointed out that median plantings undergo unusual stress. “Anything planted along the center of a boulevard,” he remarked, “must have the ability to withstand a rugged street tree environment, minimal maintenance and periods of extended drought.”

As with all the organization’s landscaping projects, New Leaf has a long-term maintenance agreement with the city to maintain all their beautification initiatives for two years, at the end of which plantings are established enough to survive with minimal care. New Leaf will then donate the landscaping on Grand Oaks to the City of Burlington as a gift from members.

With a budget of nearly \$12,700 in funds from private donors, the Grand Oaks median plantings continue New Leaf’s mission to transform Alamance County into a desirable showcase for businesses to develop and thrive.

Among the beneficiaries of New Leaf’s work are those who live and work along Grand Oaks, including John Currin, President and CEO of Alamance Regional Medical Center. “The landscaping provided by the New Leaf Society for University Drive and Grand Oaks Boulevard has greatly enhanced the appearance of the streets surrounding our medical campus,” says Currin. “Visitors, patients and employees are able to enjoy the beauty of the trees and other plantings as they drive to our facility. The work of the New Leaf Society has had a very positive impact on the appearance of our community.”

ABOUT NEW LEAF SOCIETY

New Leaf depends entirely on member donations and private community contributions. Taxpayer funds are not used, and, although the city partners with New Leaf to approve and

complete these beautification projects, the city does not have to pay for any of the plantings, re-landscaping, design or initial maintenance. As membership grows, New Leaf's reach will extend, creating a coherent, distinctive landscape for Alamance County.

Founded by Allen Gant, Jr. in 2007, the New Leaf Society is a non-profit organization focused on enhancing the quality of life in Alamance County through unique beautification projects in high-traffic areas. To learn more about their mission and accomplishments, visit their website (www.newleafsociety.org).