



Planning & Economic Development

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ANNEXATIONS

WHAT IS AN ANNEXATION?

Annexation is the process by which cities extend their municipal services, regulations, voting privileges, and taxing authority to a new area. One of the primary reasons for annexation is so that the City can regulate growth and development in a manner consistent with the City's vision. Annexation can preserve a growing urban area as a unified whole. It can also facilitate the full and efficient use of existing municipal resources.

Annexation boundaries are typically determined through a variety of factors including the ease of service delivery, the relationship to the existing City, whether there will be support from the property owners, that it is a logical growth pattern for the City, etc.

For any proposed annexation, the property must be in an adopted Urban Growth Area (UGA).

ANNEXATION METHODS

Pursuant to [RCW 35A.14](#), cities in the State of WA are given a number of mechanisms to annex unincorporated areas. Among those methods are the following:

- Election Method. An annexation request may be initiated by the city council or by petition of property owners requesting the matter be put to a vote pursuant to [RCW 35A.14.015](#) through [35A.14.110](#).
- Direct Petition Method. An annexation request may be initiated by petition method by property owner initiation pursuant to [RCW 35A.14.120](#) through [35A.14.150](#).
- All other procedures in [RCW 35A.14](#) also apply to annexations to the City.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS?

- Local services may become available to properties within an annexation area. City police service will be provided and utilities are available for connection, subject to the ability to extend to a connection point.
- The City's zoning and development ordinances will help to ensure orderly growth. The City boundaries can become more logical, eliminating confusion regarding service provision.

- Residents in the unincorporated UGA may already feel affected by actions of Poulsbo's government, but they are largely unable to be influential in its affairs as Kitsap County residents. Upon annexation, residents from the UGA will be able to be involved directly in city politics or by being elected or appointed to a public position in city government.
- Annexation may increase the City's sphere of influence, its ability to attract businesses, and its ability to seek out financial grants by adding land and population to the city limits. Annexations that include industrial land may attract new industry or jobs, promoting further development of commercial enterprises.
- Urban infrastructure and improvements in annexed areas may bring improved real estate values and marketability.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL CONCERNS?

- Residents sometimes argue that they chose to live in the area because they did not want the services and/or taxes that come with belonging to a city.
- Residents may feel the area's "rural" character would be lost.
- There may be concern that city codes and regulations are inappropriate for the area (such as livestock regulations).
- Property owners may worry that property values will increase upon entering the city with a respective increase in taxes.

ANNEXATION PROCESS

The annexation process usually takes 6 months to 1 year to complete. Annexation is exempt from Poulsbo Municipal Code [Title 19](#), Project Permit Application Procedures. Annexation is also exempt from [State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\)](#) review.

Before filing submitting for an annexation, the applicant is required to schedule a pre-application conference. Pre-app conferences are intended to acquaint City staff and other agencies with a proposal and to generally advise the applicant of applicable regulations and policies impacting the proposal. See the [Pre-Application Conference](#) Handout and [Application](#) for more information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HAS THERE BEEN ADEQUATE PLANNING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE THE UGA AREA?

The City of Poulsbo has been planning to serve its UGA since the adoption of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan. The Poulsbo Subarea Plan included a capital facilities element that accounted for the total projected population for the City and its UGA. Future capacity needs, especially for water, sewer and traffic, have been modeled based upon the City's future population allocation. The Fire District serves the greater Poulsbo area without regard to city/UGA boundaries.

WILL ANNEXATION CHANGE MY ZONING ?

No, zoning will not change upon annexation. City of Poulsbo zoning was adopted for the unincorporated UGA during the Poulsbo Subarea Plan process.

WILL MY PROPERTY TAXES RISE?

Property taxes are set by the Kitsap County Assessor, and are based on current market value.

COULD MY PROPERTY BE TAKEN AS A RESULT?

No. Annexation does not involve "taking" of private property by the City or any other entity.

WILL MY CHILD NEED TO CHANGE SCHOOLS?

Annexation has no effect on school district boundaries, nor does it have any effect on where your child attends school.

CAN I CONNECT TO CITY UTILITIES IN THE UGA?

As a general policy, the City first requires properties to annex to the city prior to utility extension ([PMC 13.14](#)).

WILL MY CAR AND HOME INSURANCE GO UP BECAUSE OF ANNEXATION?

No. Most carriers base auto insurance rates on zip codes, and homeowner insurance rates are based on factors unrelated to annexation.

CAN I KEEP MY LIVESTOCK?

Poulsbo allows agricultural uses pursuant to [PMC 18.70.070 P](#). Properties which meet these standards can continue agricultural use as a legal conforming use. If a property does not meet the referenced zoning standards, the agricultural use can continue as a legal, nonconforming use, but cannot be expanded to other areas of your property.

WILL I BE FORCED TO HOOK UP TO CITY SEWER OR WATER UPON ANNEXATION?

Pre-existing septic systems and wells are allowed in the city unless they are found to be a public health hazard. If septic or well systems are found to be unsafe, the Kitsap County Department of Health or Washington State Department of Ecology will require the owners of failing systems to hook up to City sewer and water.

If your property is within 200 feet of a sewer, and you choose not to connect, a monthly fee may be charged, pursuant to Poulsbo Municipal Code (PMC) [3.12.100.E.4. A](#). City stormwater fee will also be assessed upon annexation, please see [PMC 3.12.100.F](#) (contact the Finance Department for more information).

*** new development will be required to connect to the city's infrastructure.*

HOW DO I ADDRESS A CODE ENFORCEMENT ISSUE AFTER ANNEXATION?

Uses that are legally established in the County can continue in the City after annexation. If and when an established use changes, it will be required to conform to City standards. In addition, existing uses that are not legally permitted in the County will be required to conform to City standards after annexation. City code enforcement, like the County, is complaint-driven. After annexation, please direct code enforcement questions or complaints to (360) 394-9880 or visit the 3rd floor of City Hall.

CAN A PROPERTY OWNER BUILD A SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING ON A LARGER PARCEL OF LAND OR IS SUBDIVISION TO MEET ZONING REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY FIRST?

A property owner can build a single-family residence on a larger parcel of residential zoned land in the City of Poulsbo. Only when subdividing property would the zoning densities be required to be consistent with the zone. The use must be allowed in the zone and development regulations, including setbacks and lot coverage, will be reviewed for compliance. When subdividing, a property owner may develop a "parent lot" that is larger than the maximum lot size in the Residential Low zone, but it must be able to be further subdivided pursuant to [PMC 18.70.040 C.4](#). Buildings or uses not conforming with the PMC upon annexation may continue pursuant to [PMC 18.160](#), Nonconformities. An existing nonconforming use may continue, when it is in compliance with [PMC 18.160](#), under new ownership.

HOW WILL ANNEXATION AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND CRITICAL AREAS?

Annexation does not grant development approval, and therefore does not have a direct effect on the environment. When a property is proposed to be developed, it must undergo a review process that takes environmental factors into account.

All properties within the City are required to comply with the City's [Critical Areas Ordinance](#) (CAO) for protection of wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, steep slopes and other critical areas. Until annexation, Kitsap County's CAO requirements apply. Generally speaking, the environmental protection requirements in both jurisdictions are similar. Other environmental regulations, such as the State Environmental Policy Act ([SEPA](#)) and the Shoreline Master Program ([SMP](#)), may also be applicable to certain development proposals.

Disclaimer: this handout should not be used as a substitute for codes and regulations. The applicant/property owner is responsible for compliance with all code and rule requirements, whether or not described here. Please see the City of Poulsbo Municipal Code for complete text and requirements.

