



# Annexation – Frequent Questions

City of Olympia  
Community Planning & Development  
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## **What exactly is an “annexation”?**

Annexation is the process of expanding the City limits to include properties currently outside the City, but located in the City’s Urban Growth Area (UGA).

## **The Urban Growth Area (UGA) has been discussed a lot over the years, what exactly is it?**

The UGA is the area surrounding the City where urban development is planned to occur. The boundaries of the Urban Growth Area were set in 1983 and reaffirmed in the early 1990s through a public process that involved the citizens and property owners of both Olympia and Thurston County.

## **What about zoning?**

Zoning stays the same with annexation. The County has already adopted the City’s zoning for the entire Urban Growth Area.

## **If an annexation is denied does that stop development?**

No. Approval or denial of an annexation does not affect whether a development can be initiated or continued. In the event of a denial, a developer may be required to sign an annexation agreement for access to City water or sewer.

## **What about taxes and other costs?**

The overall difference in taxes, fees, and insurance for the average homeowner will be minimal. Because the County road tax is eliminated after annexation, property taxes are generally lower, while utility taxes and stormwater fees are generally higher in the City. For a detailed summary of potential savings and costs please visit the City’s webpage on annexations at: [www.olympiawa.gov/annexations](http://www.olympiawa.gov/annexations)

## **What about schools?**

There is no effect on schools. School district boundaries are independent of City boundaries.

## **What about voting? Can I still vote for County Commissioners?**

After annexation, you still vote for the Thurston County Commissioners, and you will be also be able to vote in the elections for Olympia City Council.

## **Am I required to hook up to City water and sewer?**

No. You may continue to use your well and septic system after annexation. Annexation does not trigger any hookup requirements. In the event your well or septic system fails, being part of the City may allow you to connect to City water or sewer as necessary.

## **Will the City pay the electric bill for the street lights in my neighborhood?**

The City will take responsibility for the maintenance and electricity costs for County-owned streetlights and for those systems that are up to current standards. The City does not assume

responsibility for streetlights owned by PSE, a homeowners/neighborhood association, or a private individual/business.

**How would police services be different?**

After annexation, primary response is provided by the Olympia Police Department instead of the Thurston County Sheriff's Department. Olympia has two times as many officers per thousand residents than Thurston County. The City of Olympia provides 1.33 commissioned officers per thousand residents. Thurston County provides 0.60 commissioned officers per thousand residents. (Source: [Crime in Washington: 2011 Annual Report](#), Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs)

**How would fire services be different?**

Emergency fire and Medic One services won't change. Because of mutual aid agreements between the City of Olympia and the Fire Districts, the City of Olympia already provides emergency response for your area.

**What about garbage pick-up?**

Your current provider may continue to serve your area for seven years. After seven years Olympia will become your provider unless the current provider elects to discontinue service before that time.

**What about my livestock?**

The City of Olympia allows livestock and other urban agriculture land uses. Visit [www.olympiawa.gov/annexation](http://www.olympiawa.gov/annexation) for details.

**Can I burn my tree limbs and yard debris if I am annexed?**

No. The current restrictions on outdoor burning will continue. Outdoor burning is regulated by the Olympic Region Clean Air Agency. Per their regulations, burning is not allowed in urban growth areas or the cities in Thurston County, including the Boulevard/I-5 area proposed for annexation. For more information on this burn ban contact the Olympic Region Clean Air Agency <http://www.orcaa.org/>

**More Questions? Contact:**

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