

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – City Annexation

What is annexation? Annexation is a process by which a City adds land to its jurisdiction in order to extend services (e.g., sewer, police, roads, etc.), laws, and voting privileges.

Who decides whether annexation is approved or not? The Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is responsible for approving or denying an annexation. The annexation process typically takes a minimum of six months to complete, and can sometimes take longer. An annexation must be considered at a public meeting. For more information regarding Contra Costa LAFCO, please visit the website at www.contracostalafco.org or call (925) 335-1094.

Will my property taxes increase if my property is annexed to the City? As part of the annexation process, the City and County negotiate a property tax split to determine how much property tax the City will receive and how much the County will retain. Except for City of Concord special assessments your property tax will not increase. Under the California Constitution, your property cannot be assessed at more than 1% of its value. However, special assessments may apply in both the City and County. For example, the City of Concord has a citywide lighting and landscape assessment. Properties in the City are assessed annually based on an Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) factor of \$25 for a single-family residential parcel. Assessments range from \$12.50 for a condominium or vacant land, to \$500 for a commercial parcel.

Will there be a reassessment of my property upon annexation? No. A reassessment would not occur as part of an annexation.

Will my service providers change if my property is annexed to a city? Once annexed to the City, the City will provide municipal services such as police, building inspection, maintenance of public roads and infrastructure, public works, parks and recreation, and sewer. Other services, such as water, fire service, gas & electric, and cable will continue to be provided by your current service providers.

Will there be a change in my garbage collection services? Garbage service will be provided by Concord Disposal Service.

Will annexation change where my children go to school? School districts boundaries are not affected by annexations.

How will the zoning on my property change if the annexation is approved? Zoning will conform to the pre-zoning designation for the parcel when it is annexed. For example, if the property has been pre-zoned to R-20 (minimum 20,000 sq. ft. lot), that is the zoning that will be in effect when the property is annexed.

How will annexation to the city affect my pets and/or livestock? The City regulates the keeping of livestock and fowl on residential properties; see CityofConcord.org for the regulations.

Will a Contra Costa County building permit be honored by the City? Yes, a building permit issued by the County for a property subsequently annexed to the City will remain valid for the life of the building permit, including renewals, if construction was started prior to annexation. If you have a building permit from the County but have not begun construction, or if your permit has been suspended, revoked, or expired, a new permit would be required from the City of Concord.

How do the County and City enforce land use, health and fire codes to maintain the safety and value of the property? Both the County and cities operate “code compliance” programs to enforce local ordinances dealing with such issues as weeds, animals, noise, dilapidated structures, and similar property issues.

I have a home-based business, what will be required of me after annexation? A home based business would be subject to a city business license and to the City’s zoning requirements for a home based business. If the home based business is legal and permitted under County codes but not legal under the City codes, it would become a legal non-conforming use, subject to the City’s non-conforming use regulations. If the home based business is illegal (does not have county approval or does not comply with county requirements) it is most likely to be illegal under the City’s regulations. See CityofConcord.org, for the City’s home based business ordinance.

What happens to my street address after annexation? The City will review the existing addresses and will attempt to preserve the existing addresses. If there are any proposed changes, this will be to ensure that emergency responders will locate the property address without unnecessary delay. Advanced notice will be provided prior to any address change.

Will I be required to hook up to public sewer and/or water? You can continue to use a septic system and/or well after annexation. Continued use of an existing septic system is allowed unless a health problem is detected by the County Health Department. If your property is already connected to a City sewer line, there will be no change in cost or service. The City’s Sewer Ordinance requires a property owner to connect its property to the City’s sewer main if the nearest plumbing outlet is within 200 feet of the sewer main. The Ordinance holds this requirement in abeyance so long as the existing septic system continues to function and can adequately serve the property. The Contra Costa County Environmental Health Department makes the determination if the existing septic system is functioning. If the plumbing outlet of the property is beyond 200 feet of a sewer main, the decision on whether the septic system could be reconstructed rests solely with the County Health Department.

What does it cost to connect to city sewer and does the city offer any financial assistance? The cost of connection to the City of Concord sewer is as follows:

- Residential-single family home or 3-bedroom multiple dwelling unit \$4,776 + \$500 Clayton Valley Surcharge
- 2-bedroom multiple dwelling unit (per unit) \$3,534 + \$370 Clayton Valley Surcharge;
- 1-bedroom or studio multiple dwelling unit \$2,627 + \$275 Clayton Valley Surcharge;
- In addition to the connection fee, there is an annual residential surcharge of \$306 to cover maintenance and treatment;
- Sewer connection fees change annually on September 1st; annual sewer service fees are adjusted as needed and area approved through a public hearing process before the City Council.

Do I have to annex to the City in order to receive sewer service? Yes, however, the Government Code allows for what is called “out of agency service” if there is an existing or impending threat to the health and safety of the public (e.g., failed septic system) and in anticipation of annexation. Out of agency service is considered a temporary remedy in anticipation of a future annexation.

Will I be required to install curbs, gutters and sidewalks? The requirement for construction of frontage improvements such as curbs, gutters, and sidewalk is triggered by new construction. If there is no new construction, then the property owner is not required to construct frontage improvements. See CityofConcord.org for requirements.

Will my voice in local government change? As a City resident, you will be eligible to vote in City elections. City residents may also be eligible to run for City Council and serve on various City commissions and committees.

What benefit does the City get out of annexation? In order for the annexation to occur, the City and County need to agree on the portion of property taxes that will go to the City to pay for City services to the annexation area. In general, it costs the City more to provide services to a residential area than it receives from the property tax agreement. In the case of Ayers Ranch, which is an island completely surrounded by the City of Concord, the City boundaries will be more logical and orderly and residents will benefit from the provision of public services.

What if I don't want to annex? Property owners (and registered voters) within the annexation area have the right to protest annexation during the LAFCO review process. If LAFCO approves the proposal after its first hearing, LAFCO will then conduct a protest hearing. LAFCO will provide public notice of both hearings and direction on how and when to submit a written protest. If the protest is sufficiently large, affected voters may be asked to vote to annex their area. For more information about annexation procedures visit the LAFCO website or contact the LAFCO office.

How can I become involved in the annexation process? There are a number of opportunities throughout the annexation process where you can be involved and provide comment:

- Community meetings held prior to finalization of the annexation proposal;
- City Council meeting to consider adopting a resolution initiating the annexation proceedings;
- LAFCO public hearings;
- Voting in the annexation (if election is required).

How will I be notified of future public hearings on the proposed annexation? All affected and surrounding landowners and registered voters will receive information via US Mail regarding the proposed annexation and hearing. For information about LAFCO meetings and agendas, visit the LAFCO website or contact the LAFCO office.