

City of Asheville

Annexation FAQ

Has the City of Asheville been aggressively annexing areas around the City?

The City did complete some involuntary annexations during the 1990s but none were initiated after 1991. Involuntary annexations that occurred after 1991 were started on or before that date and were delayed pending resolution of legal challenges. Even after the City's current annexation program was initiated in 2000, Asheville has grown more slowly than most other large NC cities.

Can the City of Asheville grow without involuntary annexation?

It is true that much of the City's growth since 1950 has been through annexation. However, the City did not involuntarily annex between 1991 and 1999. Much of our population growth is now occurring through infill development, with Downtown Asheville serving as one of the hottest residential markets in the region. Despite this infill development, the 2000 Census showed that Asheville grew the slowest of the 15 largest NC cities, mainly because we didn't annex during the 1990s.

Is the City of Asheville only interested in annexing areas with water and sewer to minimize costs?

The City's annexation program is focused on annexing areas with high growth potential and existing development. Areas with water and sewer typically have the highest growth potential and most of the urban development. (NOTE: Most cities require annexation as a condition of receiving water and sewer. Asheville has not had that option under the former water agreement and current sewer agreement. Recent state legislation has prevented the City from using water service as a condition of annexation or for the City to charge higher rates for non-City customers. We are the only city in North Carolina with these restrictions.)

Even areas that contain water and sewer that are targeted for annexation may require upgrades or other service enhancements. This is consistent with Council policy to provide water and sewer services in annexation areas at the same level as other City residents enjoy. For example, water service upgrades are often needed to provide fire hydrants to annexed areas, improving public safety.

Is the City of Asheville only interested in the revenue from annexed areas?

In addition to existing development, the City's annexation program targets areas with high growth potential, including gateways to the City and areas likely to undergo land use changes. These areas represent the greatest challenges to our quality of life. Growth management and fair, effective and efficient service provision are just as important to the City as revenue.

People who live in the County chose to live there; why does the City seek to annex them?

State law says that urban development should be in cities. People who live on the fringe of a city in urban densities have the advantage of participating in the cultural, social, and economic benefits of the city while not sharing in many of the responsibilities (taxes, voting, etc.). Annexation is just good citizenship.

Is annexation bad for business? Will businesses that are annexed soon relocate due to added tax costs?

Businesses on an urban fringe receive the same benefits as residents, including access to urban infrastructure paid for by cities. They should share in the tax responsibilities.

Regarding the relocation issue, local taxes are only a marginal cost for most businesses. In addition, most businesses appreciate the land use stability that comes from City zoning and the greater range of services. Many see their property insurance premiums reduced.

Businesses already in the City must compete with other businesses located right outside the city limits that share many City benefits without paying the costs. Annexation addresses this inequity.

As a citizen, what benefits will I receive as a result of annexation of my property?

People annexed by the City of Asheville will receive many benefits as a result of their annexation. These benefits include:

- The right to vote and participate as a citizen in City government.
- Enhanced public safety protection provided by our highly-professional Police and Fire Departments.
- Access to infrastructure improvements and maintenance provided by the City, including the possibility of street maintenance and the provision of street lights.
- For most residential properties, provision of City solid waste pickup.
- City street-sweeping and snow removal services.

As a citizen, when can I voice my opinion about the annexation of my property?

Persons affected by the City's annexation program have the opportunity to participate in and comment on the annexation process. First, they have an opportunity to attend a public information meeting required by State Statutes that is intended to provide information about the annexation process and the provision of services. Additionally, City Council must hold a public hearing at which any interested person has the opportunity to voice his/her opinion about the annexation process. Finally, if their residences are annexed, these persons will be eligible to participate in City elections and other governmental functions available to all other citizens of Asheville.

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