



Annexation – Frequently Asked Questions

Purpose: This FAQ sheet answers common questions about annexation into the City of Stevenson. For questions about how annexation might affect a specific property or individual land use issues, please contact the City of Stevenson at (509) 427-5970. For more information about the annexation process, you can review State Law [Chapter 35A.14 RCW \(Annexation by Code Cities\)](#), or review the manual [“Annexation by Washington Cities and Towns”](#) published by the Municipal Research and Services Center. Much of the material in this FAQ sheet was derived from the MRSC manual.

If you have specific questions that are not answered by this Q&A sheet please call Stevenson City Hall at 427-5970 and ask for the Public Works Director for questions related to water, sewer, and streets; the Planning Director for questions related to zoning and land use regulations; or the City Administrator for questions related to the overall process.

1. How does the annexation process work?

Several different annexation methods are allowed by Washington State law. The most common method is the Sixty Percent Petition Method as described by RCW 35A.14.120 (MRSC, 2014). The major steps under the 60% petition method are:

- a. Notice of Intent: Initiating party gives written notice to the City of their intent to commence annexation proceedings.
- b. Staff Reports: City staff prepares reports for City Council addressing infrastructure conditions and recommended improvements, the ability of the City to service the proposed annexation area, and recommended zoning.
- c. Meeting with Initiators: City Council sets a date (not later than 60 days after receiving the Notice of Intent) for a meeting with the initiating parties to determine:
 - i. Whether the City will accept*, reject, or geographically modify the proposed annexation.
*City Council “acceptance” of the proposed annexation means only that Council will allow a petition to be circulated. It does not commit City Council to ultimately approving the annexation.
 - ii. Whether it will require the adoption of a proposed zoning regulation, if one exists. (A “proposed zoning regulation” does not currently exist for the City of Stevenson).
 - iii. Whether it will require the assumption of a portion of existing city indebtedness by the area to be annexed. (The City of Stevenson currently has no outstanding General Obligation debt).
 - iv. Whether it will require any other specific actions from the property owners, such as signing a Waiver of Remonstrance for the formation of a future LID.

- d. Circulation of Petition: If City Council accepts* the initial annexation proposal, the initiators may draft and circulate a formal petition to annex the proposed area.
* City Council acceptance of the proposed annexation means that Council will allow a petition to be circulated. It does not commit City Council to ultimately approving the annexation.
- e. Informational Meetings: If City Council approves the circulation of a petition, the City will hold one or more information sessions with property owners to discuss the annexation process and answer questions.
- f. Required Signatures: The petition must be signed by owners of at least 60% of the total assessed value of the property for which annexation is petitioned to continue the annexation process.
- g. Boundary Review Board: After filing their petition with the City, the initiators file a *Notice of Intention* with the Skamania County Boundary Review Board.
- h. City Council Hearing on Petition: After certifying the petition as sufficient, City Council will consider the petition and schedule and advertise a public hearing on the petition.
- i. City Council Approval: After the public hearing, if City Council approves the annexation they will pass an annexation ordinance to annex the petitioned area. At that same time, City Council should pass a zoning ordinance to specify the zoning for the newly annexed property. (The zoning ordinance process involves its own public hearing and is separate from the annexation process described above).

The annexation will not take effect until the Skamania County Boundary Review Board process is also complete.

2. How long does the annexation process take?

The time frames for some of the above steps are not specified by State law so the timeline depends somewhat on the applicant, but for a general expected timeline please see the attached flowchart (Attachment #1).

3. How would annexation affect property taxes?

Your property taxes would decrease slightly. A summary of property tax rates is shown below. The detail of taxing districts included in these rates is attached as Attachment #2.

| | 2016 Property Tax Rates: | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Skamania County Code Area 141 | City of Stevenson |
| Tax Rate per 1000 of AV: | 8.910460 | 8.902505 |
| Property Tax for \$100,000 AV: | 891.05 | 890.25 |
| Property Tax for \$250,000 AV: | 2,227.62 | 2,225.63 |

4. Would my “bonded debt” property taxes change?

No – neither the County nor the City currently has any outstanding bonded debt.

5. What are the City’s utility tax rates?

The City levies a 3% tax on the sale of utility services including gas, electricity, cable television, and local phone service.

6. How would annexation affect minimum lot sizes?

The City allows smaller lots sizes than Skamania County, but those smaller sizes are dependent on zoning and the availability of public water and sewer to a given property.

Skamania County has zoned most of the territory adjacent to the City as R-1 Residential. The City would zone most annexed territory as either Suburban Residential (SR) or Single-Family Residential (R1). The following table shows the allowed lot sizes before and after annexation.

| County | City | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| R1 | SR | R1 |
| Well & Septic | Well & Septic | Well & Septic |
| 2 acres | 1 acre | 1 acre |
| | Water & Septic | |
| | 20,000 sf | 15,000 sf |
| | Water & Sewer | |
| | 15,000 sf | 6,000 sf |

Additional dimensional standards for City zoning are summarized in Attachment #3. Full text is available in [Skamania County Code Title 21](#) and [Stevenson Municipal Code Title 17](#).

7. What affect would annexation have on Public Works services?

The City’s Public Works Department would take over responsibility for road maintenance and plowing for existing public roads; and maintenance of water and sewer utilities, street lighting, and storm drainage for currently installed systems.

8. If annexed, would the City improve roads or add sidewalks?

If the proposed annexation is accepted by City Council, the City generally accepts roads “as-is” and would not plan on making improvements in the near future. However, if improvements are desired immediately, the City can work with property owners to form a Local Improvement District (LID) to finance the cost of improving roadways.

9. Would being annexed allow me to connect to the City water and sewer systems? Yes, but property owners would be responsible to pay the cost of extending water and sewer service to the newly annexed area. These extensions could be paid for by individual property owners or a Local Improvement District (LID) formed by the annexed properties. The City would assist with formation of an LID if a LID is requested by the property owners.

10. Where are the nearest existing water lines and sewer mains? The Public Works Department can help you identify the exact location of existing water and sewer mains. For example, there is currently an 8” waterline along Bone Road and Loop Road in this area. The closest existing sewer mains are located one block east of Bone Road running North to South and in the Shepard Avenue / Pine Street area to the South.

11. If annexed, can we continue using our existing well and septic systems?

For water, you may continue using a private well as long as it meets your needs. For sewer, property owners are required to connect to the City sewer system if public sewer is on their property or within 300 feet of their building (unless granted a waiver by City Council).

12. How would annexation affect my water rates (if I am already receiving City water)?

Your water rates would go down. Water rates are as shown below:

| | City of Stevenson Water Rates | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------|
| | Monthly Rate | Monthly Rate |
| | Outside | Inside |
| | City Limits | City Limits |
| Base rate for first 400 cubic feet: | \$19.50 | 28.75 |
| Additional water use (per cubic foot): | \$0.039 | \$0.046 |

13. Would annexation affect electrical installations?

No. Electrical requirements and inspections are provided by the State of Washington Labor and Industries (not by the County or the City).

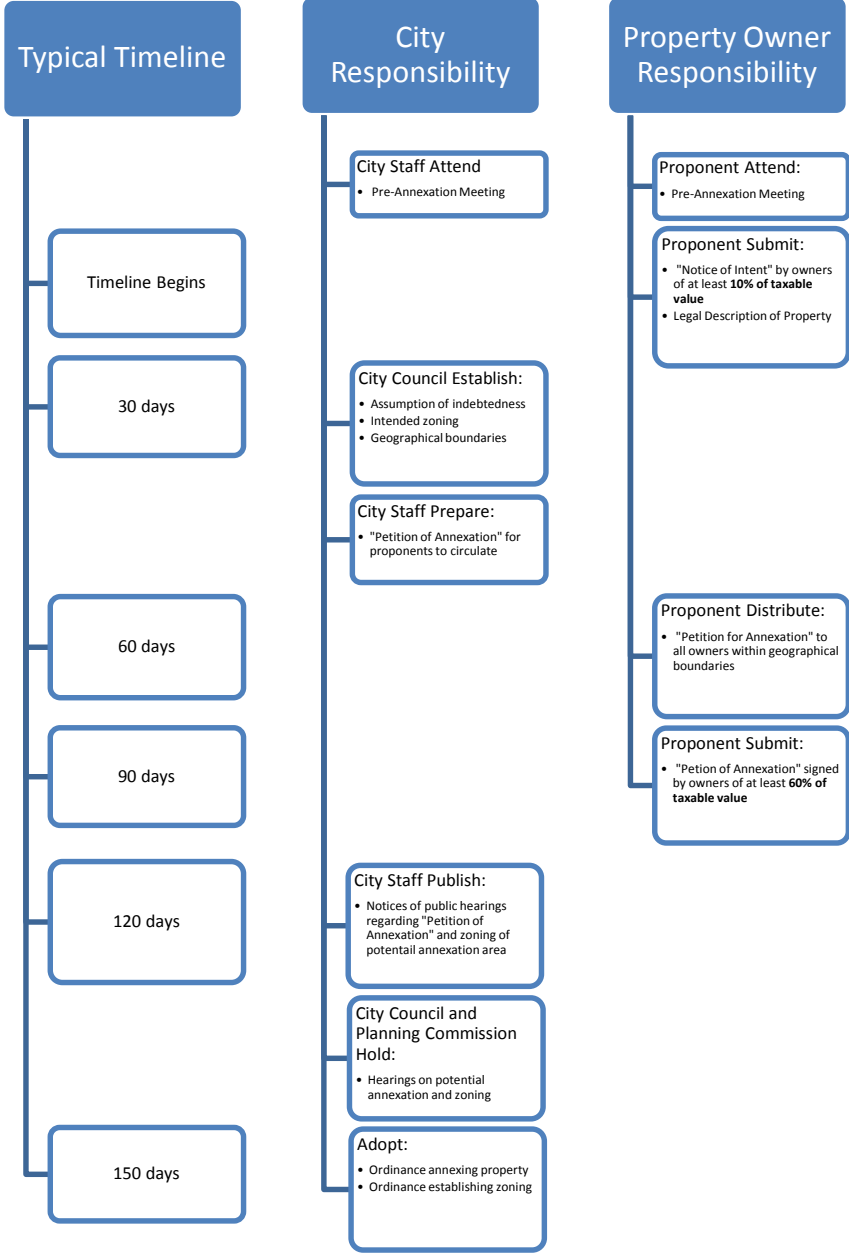
14. Would annexation have any effect on fire protection services? The City of Stevenson Fire Department and Fire District 2 operate as one combined volunteer fire department, so no change in response times or firefighting equipment is expected. Both the City and the County have a current Fire Insurance Rating of 6.

15. Would annexation have any effect on police protection services? The City of Stevenson contracts with the Skamania County Sheriff's office to provide police services for the City of Stevenson. No change in service levels or response times are expected from annexation.

References:

MRSC (2014) *Annexation by Washington Cities and Towns*. Municipal Research and Services Center. Copyright © 2014 by MRSC. Available from: <http://mrsc.org/getmedia/F7797A3E-D87B-4875-B70A-229A082D7EF3/annex14.aspx>

**Direct Petition Method-
RCW 35A.14.120-150
\$750**



2016 Stevenson and Skamania County Property Tax Rates
Prepared 4-15-16

| | (Area Surrounding Stevenson) | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| | <u>City</u> | <u>County</u> |
| Skamania County: | | |
| Current Expense | 1.544055 | 1.544055 |
| Veteran's Relief | 0.045000 | 0.045000 |
| Mental Health | 0.012500 | 0.012500 |
| Development Disabilities | 0.012500 | 0.012500 |
| County Road Tax | - | 1.335213 |
| Subtotal | <u>1.614055</u> | <u>2.949268</u> |
| City of Stevenson | 2.186979 | - |
| Port of Skamania County | 0.312327 | 0.312327 |
| PUD No. 1 | 0.362158 | 0.362158 |
| Hospital District | 0.497775 | 0.497775 |
| EMS | 0.250000 | 0.250000 |
| Cemetery District | 0.082499 | 0.082499 |
| Inter-County Library | 0.447985 | 0.447985 |
| Fire District #2 | - | 0.859721 |
| State School | 2.134224 | 2.134224 |
| Stevenson-Carson School District | 1.014503 | 1.014503 |
| Total Tax Rate | <u>8.902505</u> | <u>8.910460</u> |

Summary of Dimensional Standards



City of Stevenson

Attachment #3

More

Restrictiveness

Less

| Zoning District | Code Reference | Setbacks | | | | Building Height | Lot Coverage | | | Lot Size | | |
|--|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| | | Front | Side | Street-Side | Rear | | Water & Sewer | Water & Septic | Well & Septic | Water & Sewer | Water & Septic | Well & Septic |
| R1 Single-Family Residential | SMC 17.18 | 20' | 5' | 15' | 20'/5' ¹ | 35' | 35% | 25% | 10% | 6,000 | 15,000 ² | 1 acre |
| R2 Two-Family Residential | SMC 17.20 | 20' | 5' | 15' | 20'/5' ¹ | 35' | 40% | 30% | n/a | 6,000/ 1 unit 7,500/ 2 units | 15,000 ² | n/a |
| R3 Multi-Family Residential | SMC 17.22 | 15' | 5'/10' ³ | 15' | 20'/5' ¹ | 35' | 50% | 40% | n/a | 7,500 plus 2,500 per unit over 3 | 15,000 ² plus 5,000 per unit over 2 | n/a |
| MHR Mobile Home Residential | SMC 17.24 | 30' | 15' | 20' | 20'/5' ¹ | 35' | 40% | 40% | 40% | 5 acres plus 5,000 per unit | 5 acres plus 2 acres per unit | 5 acres plus 2 acres per unit |
| SR Suburban Residential | SMC 17.16 | 30' | 15' | 20' | 20' | 35' | 25% | 20% | 10% | 15,000 | 20,000 ² | 1 acre ² |
| PR Public Use & Recreation | SMC 17.34 | 25' | 10' | n/a | 10' | 35' | 35% | n/a | n/a | 10,000 | n/a | n/a |
| ED Educational District | SMC 17.33 | 25' ⁴ | 10' ⁴ | 10' ⁴ | 10' ⁴ | 50' ⁵ | 50% | n/a | n/a | 1 acre | n/a | n/a |
| CR Commercial Recreation | SMC 17.30 | 15' | 5' | n/a | 0'/20' ⁶ | 35' ⁵ | 35% | n/a | n/a | 10,000 | n/a | n/a |
| C1 Commercial (SFR) | SMC 17.28 | 15' to 20' | 5' | n/a | 0'/20' ⁶ | 35' | 50% | n/a | n/a | 6,000 | n/a | n/a |
| Commercial (MFR) | | 0' to 10' | 0'/5' ⁶ | 0' to 10' | 0'/20' ⁶ | 35' | 50% | n/a | n/a | 1,200 per unit | n/a | n/a |
| Commercial (General) | | 0' to 10' ⁷ | 0'/5' ⁶ | 0' to 10' | 0'/20' ⁶ | 50' | 100% | n/a | n/a | None | n/a | n/a |
| M1 Light Industrial | SMC 17.32 | 15' | 5' | n/a | 0'/20' ⁶ | 35' | 60% | n/a | n/a | None | n/a | n/a |

¹For a residential outbuildings 12 ft in height and 200 sqft or less on a non-through lot

²Unless a larger size is required by Health District

³For properties adjacent to an R1 or R2 district

⁴Unless in a zone transition areas, where it shall be the same as the more restrictive district

⁵Unless the Planning Commission grants a height allowance

⁶For properties adjacent to a residential district

⁷Unless use is an "automobile service station", which is exempt from the maximum front yard standard