



Bay Acres and Bagwell Ranch Area Annexation

Frequently Asked Questions

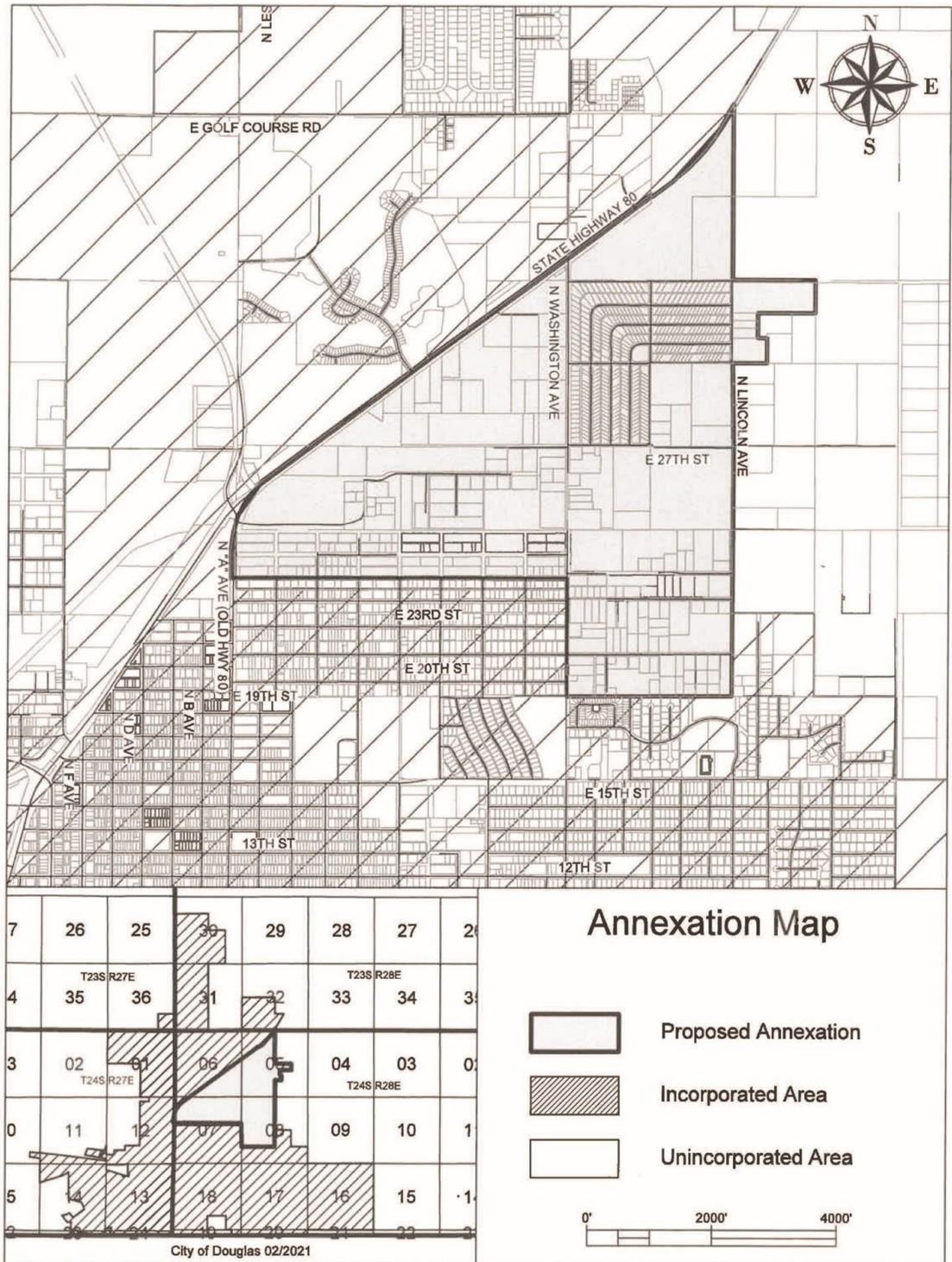
February 4, 2022

1. What is annexation?

Annexation is the process by which a city or town adds lands to its jurisdiction. The City of Douglas is interested in pursuing annexation of properties that are adjacent to its border in Cochise County, within its “growth area.” The City’s growth area is identified in the voter-approved General Plan. This is the best indicator of areas the City is interested in annexing. The growth area identifies areas located immediately outside of the City’s incorporated boundaries that plan to be located within the City in future years. Growth areas help developers determine where they want to build, with the expectation that if they build in the City’s growth area, they will be in the City at some point.

2. Can you tell me the road name boundaries of the annexation area?

The map of the annexation area is below.



(3)

3. What is the status of the sewer project?



The sewer project was officially completed on May 11, 2021. All eligible properties that authorized the City to connect to sewer have been connected. We understand that the County is doing roadwork at this time to chip seal the streets that were disturbed as a result of the project.

4. *How will the sewer/stormwater projects impact our FEMA rating and will this improve flooding?*

The sewer project did not include stormwater improvements and no such improvements are planned. FEMA ratings will not be changing at this time.

5. *Will my taxes decrease following annexation, if so is it guaranteed that they will remain this way?*

The City or any taxing entity is unable to guarantee a permanent tax decrease as those rates are subject to annual review. However, at the present time Sunnyside Fire District residents pay \$2.3910 per \$100 assessed valuation, while City of Douglas residents pay \$1.1591 per \$100 assessed valuation. As an example, a home with a valuation of \$50,000 pays **\$119.55** as Sunnyside Fire District resident and would pay **\$57.95** under the City of Douglas. For the latest property tax rates please visit the County website at:

<https://www.cochise.az.gov/439/Treasurer>

6. *Our Roads in Bay Acres are in better condition than City Roads. Why would we want to annex?*

The City offers services that the County is currently not able to offer such as curbside garbage collection, water,



sewer, code enforcement, local police, fire protection and emergency medical service (EMS), animal control and provides local government representation. We also offer streets lighting, curbing and sidewalks and streets maintenance. There are also plans to invest in our existing asphalt plant to meet the overdue needs in our community.

7. What will happen to my animals if the annexation goes through?

Existing farm animals at the date of annexation will be permitted. While the ownership of cattle, horses, mules, burros, swine, goats, or sheep is prohibited within City limits, it is permitted on property annexed into the city pursuant to a pre-annexation allowable use, as long as use is continuous and not interrupted by more than twelve (12) consecutive months. Chickens are allowed, subject to the requirements of Title 6 of the municipal code, which limits the amount of number of chickens to four (4) per property.

8. Will the City add storm drains to our area?

Stormwater improvements are not planned at this time.

9. Will the City add Fire Hydrants to our area?

Yes, over several years. We have budgeted 2 new hydrants in our FY 21/22 water budget to be installed in the Bay Acres area.

10. Will the City force our existing homes/trailers to come up to the current building code? Is the City looking to condemn our homes and force us out?

No. Building Code only applies at the time of construction. No one will be forced to renovate or modify their homes and no one will be forced out. Homes are only condemned if they are structurally unsafe such as after a fire.

11. Will the City add street lights and sidewalks to our area?

If annexed, the plan is to add street lights over several years. It is unknown at this time if we would be able to add sidewalks to all the new areas. This depends on right of way and drainage that needs to be studied.

12. City police and fire already respond to emergencies to our area, why do we need to annex?

Other than EMS, Fire and Police respond as a courtesy, and are not obligated to do so. If conflicted needs arise they will respond inside City limits prior to unincorporated areas. Having City Fire protection available in the area improve property insurance rates.

13. We're happy with the level of service we receive from the County Sheriff Office and Sunnyside Fire District. Plus the Sunnyside Fire District is a part of the Bay Acres community and hands out candy on Halloween.

We understand that there are satisfied residents with existing services, however we realize that there are



services lacking in the area that the City is able to provide such as garbage collection, street lighting, and others mentioned above. In addition, response times are greater from the Sheriff due to a larger coverage area. Sunnyside Fire's efforts are also not as quick to respond since they are not staffed 24/7 and also does not have the training or equipment to fight structure fires. If the annexation is approved there will be a fully staffed ambulance and fire engine stationed in Bay Acres 24/7.

14. *Will annexation cause our property values to increase, which will increase our property taxes?*

No, valuations by the Assessor's office are not based on incorporation. For more information regarding property values please call the Cochise County Assessor's office at 520-432-8650.

15. *We already pay for City Fire Protection and Sunnyside Fire Protection in our taxes.*

Bay Acres and the Bagwell Ranch area does not currently pay for City of Douglas Fire Protection, and it is not guaranteed. The Sunnyside Fire District Fire Department is comprised of volunteers and at this time do not have the training or equipment to fight structure fires. If the annexation is approved there will be a fully staffed ambulance and fire engine stationed in Bay Acres 24/7.

16. *The annexation is a bad idea and it will cause us to pay more in taxes.*



Taxes will decrease if residents pay the City rate currently at \$1.1591 per \$100 assessed valuation and Sunnyside rate is at \$2.3910 per \$100 assessed valuation. See question 4 for a scenario comparing both rates. Also visit the Cochise County website for the latest property tax rates at <https://www.cochise.az.gov/439/Treasurer>

17. *We're happy exactly as we are. Why change things?*

The area is underserved by not having access to services such as curbside garbage collection, street lighting, fire protection and more readily available police protection. In addition, the area is already receiving some City services that include water, sewer and EMS services. Being part of the City would give residents reduced City rates for water and sewer.

18. *This seems like it will benefit the City more than Bay Acres residents.*

There is benefit for the City and the residents, however, it costs the City more to serve additional population. In adding population, the City will receive more revenue from taxes and more funding from the state shared revenue distribution formula that is based on population. The City will however, need to pay for and hire additional police officers and firefighters as well as purchase more equipment such as vehicles and safety equipment to provide service to the additional population. The City and the entire area will benefit with an increased population by making it more attractive for new businesses and



amenities that establish new stores and services based on a city's population. Residents will receive benefits of lower property taxes and more services.

19. *Explain why the City is interested in annexing Bay Acres.*

The City gains benefits from an increased population and the ability to attract new business and potential to receive more grants.

20. *Will the City seek retribution if we don't annex?*

No. If the annexation is not approved existing service delivery of water, sewer, EMS, Fire protection assistance and police support will continue.

21. *What will happen to the Sunnyside Fire District – employees, building, and vehicles?*

If annexation is approved, the assets owned by the District such as building and vehicles and the liabilities such as any debt or amounts owed by the District will be absorbed by the City of Douglas. Qualified employees will be invited to apply for jobs with the Douglas Fire Department. We may also look at utilizing existing volunteers for wildland firefighting.

22. *We purposely chose to live in an unincorporated area. Why would we want to annex?*

Residents are already receiving City services and may be interested in receiving additional services such as garbage, street lighting, fire and police protection and other services mentioned above.

23. *If annexed, will I pay more in sales taxes?*

Taxable transactions will be subject to City sales taxes currently at a rate of 3.8%. Currently residents pay 6.1% in taxable transactions within the unincorporated area. If annexed, any taxable transactions within the area will be subject to 9.9% sales tax.

24. *What is the process for annexation to happen?*

The City filed held the required public hearing on May 19, 2021. The legal process allowed the City to start collecting signatures on May 21, 2021. The City has one year until May 21, 2022 to collect signatures. If a majority of property owners both by number and assessed value have signed, the petition can be taken forward to the Mayor and Council for final approval of the annexation. If the majority of the property owners and the majority of the assessed valuation are not obtained, the annexation does not pass.

25. *When will we know that the annexation process has gone through?*

Once the signatures have been collected and the Mayor and Council are scheduled to hold a public hearing to finalize the annexation, you will be notified by mail, by notice in the newspaper, and via signage in the community. If approved by the Mayor and Council at that meeting, the annexation becomes effective thirty days after the approval.

