

Justification Statement: Boundary and Annexation Study

The City is in a period of rapid growth as it transitions from a suburban area to an urban center. Continuing development pressure underscores the desirability of the City to investors and consumers alike. There has never been a formal boundary and annexation study of this scope completed for the City. It is structured to provide a data driven analysis of the implications of expanding the City's boundary for the use of the elected officials and staff.

As we work to manage the current growth, we frequently are operating more reactively than proactively. It is important to also ensure we are informed and proactive in our planning for what is in the best interests of the City of the future. For example, the jobs corridor has been a resounding success and we wonder where the next jobs corridor or opportunity for economic development will be. This study will help the city understand if the opportunity for the next jobs corridor may be on lands yet to be annexed into the city.

Benefits

The overall objective of the study is to review the extent of the current City limits, utility service areas, transportation network, existing and future land uses, and physical challenges or economic opportunities relative to expansion of the City limits.

The City is interested in evaluating what our boundary should look like and what is efficient for growth and provision of services. The study will evaluate the short- and long-term community and economic impacts of annexation of lands and provide guidance on the benefits and costs associated with the City proactively initiating annexation actions versus processing voluntary annexations over time as they are advanced by private property owners. The study will also evaluate lands proximate to the existing City boundary and analyze the costs and benefits of extending the boundary line in some areas for the purposes of economic development (next jobs corridor) and/or additional residential development.

Staff from planning and zoning, public works and utilities meet with customers to discuss prospective annexations, and those meetings can be very time consuming for multiple senior staff. Some of these prospective annexations are small in area but some are hundreds of acres in size. Planning staff recently had such meetings on annexations of 1,300 acres, 400 acres and 5 acres. The Comprehensive Plan details the process for voluntary annexations.

This study will provide data for the city staff and elected officials to use as we process annexation requests in the future or as a basis to reevaluate and change the policy on future annexation requests. The Comprehensive Plan update is anticipated to begin in 2024

so the results from this study would then guide revisions to that plan relative to annexation policy.