



September 21 and December 9 SE Interlocal Annexation Public Meetings Summary of Question and Answer Sessions

1. *Will I be able to vote on the annexation?*

This annexation is utilizing a new interlocal annexation method established by [Senate Bill 5522](#) that became effective in June 2020 and does not require a vote by residents.

2. *Who has the final say on the annexation? Do residents have no say?*

The annexation must be approved by both the Lake Stevens City Council and Snohomish County Council. Approval of the annexation requires a public hearing before both bodies. Residents can provide comments on the proposed annexation leading up to and during the public hearing, which is tentatively scheduled for March 2021. Notice of the public hearing is required to be published/posted weekly for 4 weeks in advance of the public hearing.

3. *The Machias Industrial Annexation is utilizing the 60% petition method. Why is the city using the interlocal annexation method for this annexation?*

There are a number of different annexation methods permitted by state law. The city has utilized a number of them for past annexations, including the interlocal method that existed prior to the passage of SB 5522. The Machias Industrial Annexation was initiated by individual property owners, and covers a much smaller area than the SE interlocal area. The city believes that the new interlocal annexation method is the most efficient method to annex a developed residential area within its UGA and to help meet its obligation under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to annex areas within its UGA.

4. *Why are the sewer and fire district involved, if it does not affect their service areas?*

The Lake Stevens Sewer District is legally required to expand its service area boundaries to match city boundaries. Portions of the Southeast UGA proposed for annexation are currently outside of the district's service area, which the sewer district will be expanding through a separate annexation process. Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue (formerly Lake Stevens Fire District) originally opted into the agreement, but removed themselves as a party to the agreement on November 12, 2020.

5. *There are approximately 1,000 households in the annexation area, and only about 40-50 individual attended each of the Zoom meetings. What is the city doing to ensure that people are aware of the proposed annexation, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic?*

Notices for each public meeting were mailed to all property owners within the annexation area, and also featured on the city website and social media. Notice of the public hearing will be published weekly in the Herald for the four weeks prior to the meeting, and the notice of public hearing will also be mailed to all property owners.

6. *Does this annexation impact school boundaries?*

No. School district boundaries are established through a separate process and will not be changed by the annexation.

7. *Will this annexation result in a new City Council position?*

All City Council positions are at-large positions, with residents able to vote for all councilors (as opposed to voting by district). There is not currently a proposal to add another councilor.

8. *How much of the city's Urban Growth Area (UGA) will remain following this annexation?*

Beyond the SE Interlocal Annexation area, the city has approximately 600 acres remaining in its UGA. The majority of that is south of 20th St SE, while 67 acres in the northeast portion of the city is in the process of being annexed (the Machias Industrial Annexation).

9. *The last two city annexations resulted in 3,600 sf lots. The zoning map for this annexation shows 9,600 sf lots for the waterfront and 6,000 sf lots for the remainder of the area. Is this the plan after annexation?*

Yes. The city assigned zoning predesignations to the UGA in late 2019, which were intended to most closely match the existing county zoning designations. The corresponding city designations are Waterfront Residential along the shoreline and R6 - Six Dwellings per Acre in other areas. There are no plans to amend any of these zoning predesignations as part of the annexation, with one exception – a few properties that were pre-designated for commercial use north of 20th Street SE were changed to medium density residential (Comprehensive Plan) and R6 (zoning) in December 2020 as part of the city's annual Comprehensive Plan docket.

Property owners can apply to rezone properties, subject to the required review process and approval criteria and restrictions of this type of annexation. Rezones require a public hearing before both the Planning Commission and City Council.

10. *Are there specific improvements proposed for the intersection of 20th St SE and S Lake Stevens Rd or elsewhere along 20th St SE?*

There are current plans for signalization and channelization improvements in the area. There are currently no plans to extend the five lane section.

11. *Does the city require sidewalks and on-street parking for new residential subdivisions?*

Yes. Frontage improvements (including sidewalks) and on-street parking (see [LSMC 14.56.165](#)) is required for new subdivisions, and specific street sections are established during the subdivision review. The minimum of one on-street parking space per five parcels is in addition to the two off-street parking spaces required per parcel, and additional parking can be conditioned through the subdivision review process.

12. *When might the annexation become effective? At what point will things like mandatory garbage service be required?*

Based on a tentative public hearing in March 2021, the annexation would likely become effective in April 2021. Once the annexation is finalized, the city would send out a “Welcome to Lake Stevens” pamphlet with city information and contact including information about garbage service. The city is also required to complete a post-annexation census of the annexation area.

13. *What is the deadline for submitting building permits to the county, and when will the city take over review of building and planning permits?*

Any building permit submitted and deemed complete prior to the effective date of the annexation would be vested to county code. The city and county have an existing ILA that covers the potential transfer of building and planning permits. Any permits transferred to the city would be reviewed under the county’s building and zoning regulations.

14. *For those of us with livestock and poultry, will we be allowed to keep our animals, which are permitted by the county?*

Yes. The city generally requires a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres in order to keep livestock, while poultry and household animals are permitted on smaller lots. However, annexed properties that were legally permitted to have livestock prior to annexation will retain the rights to keep their animals after annexation if no change or expansion occurs.

15. *Fireworks are currently permitted in the county for 4th of July- is the same true for the city?*

Yes. The City permits fireworks on the 4th of July, but not on New Years Eve/Day.

16. *We need to contact someone about overgrowth issues on our property. Will the point of contact change after annexation?*

Prior to annexation, Snohomish County Code Enforcement can be reached at 425-388-3650. Following annexation, the city will assume code enforcement duties in the area.

17. *What is the city’s primary motive for this annexation? A recent financial analysis from the FCS Group showed this area would cost the city millions of dollars.*

The FCS Group completed a financial analysis of several annexation scenarios for the city’s southeast UGA in October 2018. Based on that analysis, the City Council has decided to pursue Scenario 2, which is to annex the remainder of Areas 1 and 2 (those areas north of 20th St SE, minus the recently annexed Rhodora area). This will help the city in its pursuit to create one community around the lake. The city is also obligated under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to annex areas within its urban growth area (UGA).

18. *Regarding the cost benefit analysis, what is the downside for a household that is potentially going to be annexed?*

The total property tax levy rate for residents will decrease by approximately 7 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value following annexation. Like most cities in the Puget Sound region, Lake Stevens does have utility excise taxes, whereas the county does not. Excise taxes are dependent on the amount of the utility bill, but may add between \$5 and \$25 per month in excise taxes for all utilities, depending on which utilities a resident has. As a point of clarification, the city does not have a sewer excise tax (staff had previously indicated that there is a 2% excise tax on sewer service).

19. *Is the city considering an increase to the property tax levy rate?*

No. The city is not considering an increase to the property tax levy rate. As noted by Mayor Gailey in his response on December 9, the city's sales tax revenue recently surpassed its property tax revenue, and with new commercial development the city anticipates an increasing share of the city's total tax revenue will be generated by sales tax.

20. *What is the typical response time for repairing things such as potholes and downed street signs? Will annexation of this area require additional FTEs (full time equivalent staffing) and/or spread the Public Works Department too thin?*

The Public Works response time for things like potholes and downed street signs is typically 1-2 days. Public Work Director Eric Durpos notes that he is confident that there will be adequate staffing to provide city services to the annexation area.

21. *The city has said that garbage service is mandatory. Why can't I continue to take my garbage to the dump? Does the city provide garbage service, or will I be required to contract with a third party?*

The city considers garbage collection to be an essential urban service and as such requires collection service for city residents by code. The city contracts with private companies to provide garbage collection services – each company has different levels of service. Additional information will be provided to residents following the annexation.

22. *Would it be more cost effective for the city to have a single garbage provider and negotiate a more competitive bid for the entire city?*

The city is currently working with its garbage providers to develop the most competitive pricing for both existing and newly annexed residents. However, under state law the existing garbage purveyor(s) are permitted to serve the area for 7 years following annexation. The city recently negotiated the contract with the solid waste provider that covers the annexation area, which will reduce the cost for customers within the annexation area.

23. *Will the annexation impact any of my utility rates?*

Utility rates (water, electric, sewer) will not change, but will be subject to city utility excise taxes. Excise taxes appear as a separate charge on your existing utility bill.

24. *Will any fees, such as excise tax rates, be phased in for new residents?*

The city does not have a phase-in period for excise taxes. Total property levy rates will decrease upon annexation.

25. *I don't have telephone service. Will I still be charged the excise tax?*

Excise taxes are added to your utility bill. If you do not have a specific utility service, you will not be charged the excise tax.

26. *Are there plans to build sidewalks in the newly annexed areas?*

Yes. The city will be assessing the current inventory of sidewalk infrastructure as part of the annexation, and identify areas where sidewalks are warranted.

27. *What is the APU mentioned in the September 21 Powerpoint presentation?*

The slide referenced ADUs, which are accessory dwelling units. ADUs are permitted in the city's residential zoning districts, including the WR and R6 zones.

28. *Can Chief Dyer speak to the impact that annexation will have on police services?*

Upon annexation, the Lake Stevens Police Department proposes to have 22 patrol personnel, with 4-6 working at any one time in 12-hour shifts. This proposal would be an increase from current service levels, which is typically between 1 and 3 SCSO patrol personnel covering what is now the East Precinct. Lake Stevens has the lowest crime rate of any city in Snohomish County with a population of at least 5,000 people.

29. *The letter sent to annexation area residents noted recent improvements to S Lake Stevens Road, including a new multiuse path. Will a similar path be extended to the east side of the lake?*

The city is exploring ways to continue the multiuse path inside and outside the annexation area.

30. *Does the city have construction plans for the annexation area, and will annexation make it easier and faster for developers to build in the area?*

The city does not have any construction plans for the annexation area, and the zoning presdesignations are similar to the uses and development standards currently permitted by the county. The city did evaluate the development potential in the annexation area as part of its 2018 financial analysis.

31. *Will the eastern area along 20th Ave continue to be zoned for business?*

In 2019, the city pre-assigned commercial zoning to four properties along the north side of 20th St SE. However, under the interlocal annexation method, these properties are required to maintain their existing residential zonings for a period of at least 5 years. As such, in December 2020 the city amended the land use and zoning presdesignations for these four parcels to

medium density residential and R6, respectively. The commercial parcels on the south side of 20th St SE (located outside of the annexation area) were not changed.

32. How will the city better secure the safety net at Sunset Park? Ever since the county replaced the fence with boulders, people have been there at all hours of the day.

City staff will work with its Parks and Police Departments to address these concerns. The city included funding in its 2021 budget for improvements to Sunset Park.

33. Are there plans to better connect this area to the Centennial Trail?

The city is currently exploring potential pedestrian and bicycle improvements to connect to the Centennial Trail, and working to identify potential partners and funding sources.

34. Has the city explored locations for additional parks or recreational facilities in the area?

Yes, the city has been working to identify potential areas for a neighborhood park that would help meet the recreational needs of the southeast portion of the city, including the proposed annexation area.

35. Will sewer service extend further down Machias Cutoff Road? How much will it cost to connect to sewer, and when will it be available?

In general, sewer expansion is contingent on development, with “growth paying for growth.” There are additional options for expanding sewer services, including creation of a local improvement district (LID). Please contact the [Lake Stevens Sewer District](#) for additional details on future sewer service expansion and potential costs involved.

36. I have a functioning septic system. Will I be required to connect to sewer?

No. If you have a functioning septic system, you will not be required to connect to sewer, even if sewer service is currently available or becomes available in the future. Should your septic system fail and sewer service is available to your property, you will be required to connect to sewer.

37. Will there be a recording of the September 21 meeting available online?

Unfortunately, the meeting did not record properly. The city has provided this list of questions and answers and also made the Powerpoint available online. A recording of the December 9 meeting is available on the annexation website.

38. I have additional questions. Who can I contact?

Please contact Senior Planner David Levitan at dlevitan@lakestevenswa.gov or 425-622-9425.