EDMONTON LAND ANNEXATION

Frequently Asked Questions | March 2021

What is annexation?

Annexation is the process in which there is a change in municipal jurisdiction, transferring land from one municipality to another. In this annexation process, it is about land currently governed by the City of Edmonton being transferred to the jurisdiction of the City of St. Albert. This process will not change the ownership of the land.

Who makes the decision about the annexation?

Annexation is a provincially regulated process, with the Municipal Government Board recommending the final decision to the Government of Alberta. Edmonton and St. Albert are working together to ensure the annexation addresses the concerns of each municipality and their residents. This collaborative process is being used to help ensure a positive outcome for all who are impacted.

What is the Municipal Government Board (MGB)?

The MGB is an impartial and independent board established by provincial legislation to consider matters such as annexations. For annexations, the MGB prepares a report with a recommendation that is forwarded to the minister of Municipal Affairs, and then to the lieutenant-governor, who will make the final decision.

Why is this annexation occurring?

After the construction of Anthony Henday Drive, 46± hectares (114± acres) of land lying north of the Transportation Utility Corridor (TUC) and within the City of Edmonton boundary were fragmented and effectively “land locked” from the City of Edmonton. Administration from the City of St. Albert and the City of Edmonton are in agreement that these parcels would be a better fit with the City of St. Albert boundaries for access and servicing purposes. The goal of this annexation proposal is to adjust St. Albert’s boundary to match that of the northern boundary of the Transportation Utility Corridor (TUC) of Anthony Henday Drive.

What are the Benefits to the Proposed Annexation?

- The TUC boundary for Anthony Henday Drive provides a natural and logical boundary between the two municipalities.
- The City of St. Albert’s policy prohibits providing water and sewer services outside of the City boundary. This annexation would allow the identified parcels to be serviced by a connection to existing and proposed servicing from within St. Albert without a joint servicing agreement.
- Servicing and future development of these parcels would be cost prohibitive if these parcels were to remain in the City of Edmonton as infrastructure would have to extend services through the TUC – under Anthony Henday Drive.

- The parcels identified for annexation could be incorporated into the existing South Riel Area Structure Plan.

What is the process?

Annexation is legislated by the Province through section 116 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA). A summary of the process for annexation is as follows:

1. Notice of Intent to Annex - The municipality proposing the annexation (in this case, the City of St. Albert) must provide notice to the Municipal Government Board (MGB) and to the municipality that it wants to annex land from (in this case, the City of Edmonton).

2. Negotiations & Public Participation - Both municipalities will meet, discuss the annexation proposal, and negotiate in good faith. The City of St. Albert will engage with affected landowners, agencies and the general public.

3. Formal Annexation Application – The City of St. Albert submits a formal annexation application including a negotiation report to the Municipal Government Board.

4. Municipal Government Board Review (Uncontested) - If the annexation is uncontested (with signed consent from the landowners and the responding municipality), the application is processed.

5. Municipal Government Board Review (Contested) If the annexation is contested (all required consents are not given), the MGB will advertise for objections and individuals can submit objections or concerns.

6. Public Hearing - If there are objections and mediation attempts have failed, the MGB will conduct Public Hearing(s).

7. Municipal Government Board Report & Recommendation - After the Public Hearing(s), the MGB will prepare a recommendation for consideration by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

8. Provincial Decision - The Lieutenant Governor of Alberta will consider the Board's recommendation and approve, approve in part, or refuse the annexation proposal.

A detailed flow chart of the legislated process from Alberta Municipal Affairs is available at: http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/mgb/MGB_Annexation_Overview.pdf

Where are we in the process?

In March 2021, the City of St. Albert submitted a revised 'Notice of Intent to Annex' to the Municipal Government Board and the City of Edmonton. The City is preparing to hold a virtual public participation session with the public and landowners. Meanwhile, the City of St. Albert and City of Edmonton are meeting regularly to negotiate the annexation proposal in good faith.

How long will annexation take?

Several factors will influence the timeline, as all annexations must follow a process as set out by the Municipal Government Act. It is anticipated that the submission of the formal annexation application be submitted to the Municipal Government Board in late 2021.

Why is the proposed annexation area so small?

The proposed annexation is not being undertaken for the primary purpose of growth, rather it is intended to “clean up” parcels left orphaned and fragmented by the construction of Anthony Henday Drive. It also proposes to align the City of Edmonton and City of St. Albert boundary at the northern edge of the TUC boundary of Anthony Henday Drive.

Who is impacted by this annexation?

The majority of the lands in the proposed area are owned either by the Province, the City of Edmonton, or CN Rail who is neutral on the annexation proposal. Three private land owners are also affected.

Will the City of St. Albert be purchasing any lands?

One City of Edmonton owned parcel exists in the proposed annexation area. At this time, it is not the intention of the City of St. Albert to purchase this parcel. With permission of St. Albert City Council, Edmonton can own lands outside of its municipal boundaries.

What will the impact to taxes be in the annexation area?

The impacts to property taxes will be part of the negotiation process with landowners within the proposed annexation area and the City of Edmonton. The outcomes of the negotiations are confidential until complete and will be shared with the public prior to application submission to the Municipal Government Board.

What are the plans for the annexed land?

In the future, if the annexation area lands were to be developed, the City of St. Albert anticipates the developable portions of the annexed lands would be most suitable for commercial and commercial/industrial lands due to their proximity to Anthony Henday Drive and adjacent commercial and industrial development in South Riel. If the annexation is successful, St. Albert and/or land developers would be expected to undertake planning due diligence prior to development.

How can I stay informed?

Updates will be posted on the City of St. Albert’s public participation website – Cultivate the Conversation (https://conversation.stalbert.ca/). Notices for an upcoming open house will also be advertised in the local papers. All affected landowners will be notified by mail of the upcoming open house.

Where can I find more information on annexations?

To learn more about annexation, you can also visit Alberta Municipal Affairs’ website at http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/abc_MGB_annexations