# Appendix A: Community Information Meeting

## Materials and Outcomes

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Geneva Elementary - May 2, 2019

An informational open house regarding the process and effects of annexation was held at Geneva Elementary School May 2, 2019 from 6:00pm - 7:30pm. The open house was hosted by the University of Washington Annexation Research Initiative Team and supported by City of Bellingham and Whatcom County Staff. The event was intended to cover the area identified in Figure A1, and was attended by 46 Geneva area residents, 39 of which returned questionnaires. Event agenda, informational materials, and sample questionnaire are included herein, along with a summary of activity and questionnaire outcomes.

Figure A1. Geneva Elementary Meeting - Coverage Area
Agenda

A Discussion on Annexation
Hosted by
University of Washington Master of Urban Planning Studio
May 2, 2019 6:00 – 7:30 pm
Geneva Elementary School – 1401 Geneva St, Bellingham, WA

6:00 – 6:15 Welcome and Registration

6:15 - 6:30 Event Kickoff
- University of Washington Annexation Research Initiative overview
- Event format & objectives overview

6:30 - 7:00 Open House
- Information and Q&A tables
- Interactive activities
- Questionnaire

7:00 - 7:20 Group Discussion (time permitting)
- Open house highlights
- Additional Q&A

7:30 Event Conclusion

Additional Information:

- City of Bellingham
  Annexation Website: https://www.cob.org/services/planning/annexations
  Contact: Moshe Quinn mquinn@cob.org or (360) 778-8354
- UW Annexation Research Initiative
  Website: www.cob.org/uwresearch
  Contact: UWTTeam@cob.org
Open House Stations

Information and Q&A

Annexation 101
Information and frequently asked questions about the annexation process and University of Washington research initiative

Tax & Fee Changes
Information on tax and fee differences between the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County, and what they mean to residential property and business owners

City Services
Information on services provided for City of Bellingham residents including police, fire, public works, parks & recreation

Interactive Activities

Fact vs. Fiction
Test your understanding of the Bellingham annexation process by identifying statements as fact or fiction

My Community Is...
Let the UW team know which community or communities you most closely identify with by placing a dot on the provided chart and leaving a comment, if desired

What’s Most Important to Me?
Identify elements of community involvement and property ownership which are most important to you by placing dots on the provided chart and leaving comments, if desired

Questionnaire
Provide the UW team feedback on the event and your thoughts on annexation by completing either a paper or electronic copy of the event questionnaire at any point during the event

Notes:
Welcome Geneva!
The University of Washington (UW) Master of Urban Planning students are partnering with the City of Bellingham Planning to assess the interest of your area joining the City. We look forward to discussing this possibility with you today.

What is Annexation?
Annexation is the procedure for bringing unincorporated areas of a county into an adjacent incorporated city. An unincorporated area has yet to join a city or form a town or city of its own. The most common form of annexation is the “petition method”, whereby property owners (or residents) of the area sign a petition asking to become part of the city. If an area is annexed, the city becomes the primary provider of local government services.

Why is the city exploring annexing these areas?
The Growth Management Act of 1990 says that all areas defined as urban growth areas (UGAs) should be in a city. Whatcom County does not have the resources to support urban areas while the City of Bellingham does. Due to this, both the County and City agree that these areas should be part of the City of Bellingham to best serve the residents of the UGAs.

The average single family home owner will pay **$83 less** a year in taxes & fees.
Has annexation happened before in nearby areas? What changed afterward?

Yes, the most recent annexations were of Mt. Baker Highway/Britton Road and Bennett/Bakerview/Airport Drive in April 2019. The effects after annexation vary by community; however, the following have generally happened:

- Lower utility costs for City of Bellingham water and sewer services and extension of service to vacant properties (upon the submission of an application)
- Consideration for the City of Bellingham to improve public park spaces (trails, playfields, etc.) identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PRO) Plan
- Inclusion in City planning and budgeting for parks, infrastructure, and other neighborhood improvements
- Increased levels of service provided by the City of Bellingham police and fire departments
- The ability to vote in Bellingham elections along with representation on the Bellingham City Council
- Establishment of Neighborhood Associations officially recognized by the City of Bellingham and representation on the Mayor’s Neighborhood Advisory Commission (MNAC)
- Access to city and state funding for neighborhood development through programs such as Small and Simple Grants and Safe Routes to School

Additional Resources
University of Washington Bellingham Annexation Research Initiative Website
www.cob.org/uwreresearch

City of Bellingham Annexations Website
https://www.cob.org/services/planning/annexations/Pages/bellingham-annexations.aspx


Contact Info
UW Research Team
Email: UWTeam@cob.org

Bellingham Planning Department
Moshe Quinn
Email: mquinn@cob.org
Phone: (360) 778-8354

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***Cost estimates based on an owner-occupied single family home valued at $300,000 property tax value with a roughly 7,500 sq ft lot with roughly 2,500 sq ft currently using City of Bellingham water in 2019. If you are not on city water you will not receive the savings.

A special thanks for data from the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department, Whatcom County GIS and icons via The Noun Project.
Annexation 101
Things to know about annexation

Why is the city exploring annexing these areas?
The Growth Management Act of 1990 says that all areas defined by urban growth should be in a city.
• Whatcom County does not have the resources to support urban areas while the City of Bellingham does
• Both the County and City agree that these areas should be part of the City of Bellingham to best serve the residents of the UGAs

What is an “unincorporated area”?
In the case of Bellingham, an unincorporated area is an area within and governed by Whatcom County that has yet to join a city or form a town or city of its own.

What is an “Urban Growth Area” (UGA)?
• Bellingham urban growth areas (UGAs) are unincorporated areas next to city limits identified by Whatcom County that are characterized by urban growth
• Establishment of UGAs is required by the Washington Growth Management Act of 1990 for the purpose of encouraging urban growth within existing urban areas
• Several UGAs have already experienced significant development are being considered for potential annexation by the City of Bellingham

What is the annexation process?
Washington State law guides the annexation process. Many methods exist, ranging from petition-based to agreements between government authorities.
• Bellingham has grown via annexation throughout its history, and this is a common process

The most used annexation method is the petition:
• The petition starts with interested residents submitting a Notice of Intent to Annex that represents either:
  • at least 10% of the residents of the area to be annexed, or
  • the owners of at least 10% of the land value in the area to be annexed
• If the City Council decides that the proposed annexation is good for the public, it may begin a public process to study the annexation proposal
• In this case, the supportive residents must use official petition forms to collect the signatures of property owners that represent at least 60% of the total assessed land value of the area requested for annexation
• At the end of the public process, the City Council votes for or against the annexation in question. There is no guarantee of annexation by filing a petition and application for annexation to the City
Tax & Fee Changes
How much will this cost me?

The average single family homeowner in Geneva will pay $83 less a year in taxes & fees.

Rental Property Owners
- Rental registration fees
- Per unit annual fee ranging $8 - $10 per unit
- Rental inspections and fees are required every 3 years

Business Owners
- City of Bellingham Business and Occupation Tax will apply to businesses with gross revenue more than $20,000 per year
- City of Bellingham sales tax rate of 2.2% will apply on top of the state rate of 6.5%

Property Tax Levies

New Levies
- City of Bellingham Affordable Housing
- City of Bellingham Fire Pension
- City of Bellingham General Fund
- City of Bellingham Greenways IV
- City of Bellingham RDA
- Affordable Housing Bellingham

No Longer Applicable Levies
- Emergency Medical SVC Fire #04
- Fire SWFA Expense Fund
- County Road Diversion
- County Road Fund
- Rural Library

Total Rate:
$22.07/$1,000 in assessed value
$30.98/$1,000 in assessed value

***Cost estimates based on an owner-occupied single family home valued at $300,000 property tax value with a roughly 7,500 sq ft lot with roughly 2,500 sq ft currently using City of Bellingham water in 2019. If you are not on city water you will not receive the savings.

A special thanks for data from the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department, Whatcom County and icons via The Noun Project.
City Services
How does annexation affect your neighborhood?

The Growth Management Act of 1990 says that all areas defined as urban growth areas (UGAs) should be in a city. Whatcom County does not have the resources to support urban areas while the City of Bellingham does. Due to this, both the County and City agree that these areas should be part of the City of Bellingham to best serve the residents of the UGAs.

Lower utility costs for City of Bellingham water and sewer services and extension of service to vacant properties (upon the submission of an application)

Consideration for the City of Bellingham to improve public park spaces (trails, playfields, etc.) identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PRO) Plan

Inclusion in City planning and budgeting for parks, infrastructure, and other neighborhood improvements

Increased levels of service provided by the City of Bellingham police and fire departments

The ability to vote in the City of Bellingham elections along with representation on the Bellingham City Council

Establishment of Neighborhood Associations officially recognized by the City of Bellingham and representation on the Mayor’s Neighborhood Advisory Commission

Depending on the UGA you are located in, there will be varying potential increased in stormwater fees and reduced property taxes and water bills.

Check your FAQ sheet to review estimated costs for your neighborhood

Access to city and state funding for neighborhood development through programs such as Small and Simple Grants and Safe Routes to School
Questionnaire

Name (optional):
Email (optional):
Phone (optional):

Neighborhood:

☐ Northern Heights  ☐ Tweed 20  ☐ Hillsdale  ☐ Geneva  ☐ North Yew Street
☐ Other (please explain):

How did you hear about this event?

☐ Flyer  ☐ Website  ☐ Word of mouth  ☐ Other (please explain):

How engaged did you feel in this meeting?

Very engaged  Somewhat engaged  Somewhat disengaged  Very disengaged

What is the most important thing you learned today?

Did this event improve your understanding of annexation?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

How supportive of annexation are you at this time?

☐ Very supportive  ☐ Somewhat supportive  ☐ No opinion
☐ Somewhat unsupportive  ☐ Very unsupportive

Additional comments:
Activity Outcomes

Open house attendees had the opportunity to engage in activities identifying their community association, comment on aspects of potential annexation perceived as most important, and review frequently asked questions and responses in a fact vs. fiction quiz format. Activity takeaways are presented in Table A1:

Table A1. Geneva Meeting - Attendee Priorities and Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Identity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>● Participation in city government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Currently identify with Bellingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Disinterest in city services, sidewalks, lights, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Costs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>● Lower property taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>● Services are difficult to deliver to Geneva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Support for feeding wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Opposition to feeding wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets &amp; Sidewalks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>● Majority opposition to street lights, particularly LED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Minority support for street lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Crosswalks on Lakeway &amp; Cable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Stop neighborhood cut-throughs from Lake Louise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>● Support for decreased speed on residential streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Opposition to installation of traffic lights on Lakeway Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Open Spaces</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>● Broad support for improved park, playground, and open space access and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>● Support for local government representation and voting in city elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Opposition to additional government bureaucracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Lake Whatcom water quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questionnaire Outcomes

Attendees were encouraged to complete a questionnaire regarding their experience at the meeting and opinion related to annexation during the event. In the case of the Geneva Elementary meeting, 39 of 46 questionnaires were returned, the outcomes of which are provided below in Figures A2 through A5. This information was not evaluated as representative of overall community sentiment or statistically analyzed, as open house events were focused on sharing information with community members. Rather, attendee input was documented and used by the UW Team to inform follow-on assessment efforts.

Figure A2. Geneva Meeting - Public Notification Sources

![Geneva: How did you hear about this event?](image)

Figure A3. Geneva Meeting - Attendee Engagement

![Geneva: How engaged did you feel?](image)
Of the 39 people who responded to the Geneva meeting questionnaire, most reported that they felt engaged and at the meeting and the meeting improved their understanding of annexation. However, the majority of respondents indicate they do not support annexation.
Wade King Elementary - May 2, 2019

An informational open house regarding the process and effects of annexation was held at Wade King Elementary School May 2, 2019 from 6:00pm - 7:30pm. The open house was hosted by the University of Washington Annexation Research Initiative Team and supported by City of Bellingham and Whatcom County Staff. The event was intended to cover the area identified in Figure A6, and was attended by 31 North Yew Street area residents, of which 24 returned questionnaires. Event agenda, informational materials, and sample questionnaire are included herein, along with a summary of activity and questionnaire outcomes.

Figure A6. Wade King Elementary Meeting - Coverage Area
Agenda

A Discussion on Annexation
Hosted by
University of Washington Master of Urban Planning Studio
May 2, 2019 6:00 – 7:30 pm
Wade King Elementary School – 2155 Yew Street Rd, Bellingham, WA

6:00 – 6:15 Welcome and Registration

6:15 - 6:30 Event Kickoff
  • University of Washington Annexation Research Initiative overview
  • Event format & objectives overview

6:30 - 7:00 Open House
  • Information and Q&A tables
  • Interactive activities
  • Questionnaire

7:00 - 7:20 Group Discussion (time permitting)
  • Open house highlights
  • Additional Q&A

7:30 Event Conclusion

Additional Information:

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Open House Stations

Information and Q&A

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Tax & Fee Changes
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Interactive Activities

Fact vs. Fiction
Test your understanding of the Bellingham annexation process by identifying statements as fact or fiction

My Community Is…
Let the UW team know which community or communities you most closely identify with by placing a dot on the provided chart and leaving a comment, if desired

What’s Most Important to Me?
Identify elements of community involvement and property ownership which are most important to you by placing dots on the provided chart and leaving comments, if desired

Questionnaire
Provide the UW team feedback on the event and your thoughts on annexation by completing either a paper or electronic copy of the event questionnaire at any point during the event

Notes:
Welcome North Yew Street!
The University of Washington (UW) Master of Urban Planning students are partnering with the City of Bellingham Planning to assess the interest of your area joining the City. We look forward to discussing this possibility with you today.

What is Annexation?
Annexation is the procedure for bringing unincorporated areas of a county into an adjacent incorporated city. An unincorporated area has yet to join a city or form a town or city of its own. The most common form of annexation is the “petition method“, whereby property owners (or residents) of the area sign a petition asking to become part of the city. If an area is annexed, the city becomes the primary provider of local government services.

Why is the city exploring annexing these areas?
The Growth Management Act of 1990 says that all areas defined as urban growth areas (UGAs) should be in a city. Whatcom County does not have the resources to support urban areas while the City of Bellingham does. Due to this, both the County and City agree that these areas should be part of the City of Bellingham to best serve the residents of the UGAs.

The average single family home owner will pay **$667 less** a year in taxes & fees.
Has annexation happened before in nearby areas? What changed afterward?

Yes, the most recent annexations were of Mt. Baker Highway/Britton Road and Bennett/Bakerview/Airport Drive in April 2019. The effects after annexation vary by community; however, the following have generally happened:

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- Access to city and state funding for neighborhood development through programs such as Small and Simple Grants and Safe Routes to School

Additional Resources
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www.cob.org/uwresearch

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A special thanks for data from the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department, Whatcom County GIS and icons via The Noun Project.

Contact Info
UW Research Team
Email: UWTeam@cob.org

Bellingham Planning Department
Moshe Quinn
Email: mquinn@cob.org
Phone: (360) 778-8354
Annexation 101
Things to know about annexation

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• Bellingham has grown via annexation throughout its history, and this is a common process
The most used annexation method is the petition:
• The petition starts with interested residents submitting a Notice of Intent to Annex that represents either:
  • at least 10% of the residents of the area to be annexed, or
  • the owners of at least 10% of the land value in the area to be annexed
• If the City Council decides that the proposed annexation is good for the public, it may begin a public process to study the annexation proposal
• In this case, the supportive residents must use official petition forms to collect the signatures of property owners that represent at least 60% of the total assessed land value of the area requested for annexation
• At the end of the public process, the City Council votes for or against the annexation in question. There is no guarantee of annexation by filing a petition and application for annexation to the City
The average single family homeowner in North Yew Street will pay **$667 less** a year in taxes & fees.

### Rental Property Owners
- Rental registration fees
- Per unit annual fee ranging $8 - $10 per unit
- Rental inspections and fees are required every 3 years

### Business Owners
- City of Bellingham Business and Occupation Tax will apply to businesses with gross revenue more than $20,000 per year
- City of Bellingham sales tax rate of 2.2% will apply on top of the state rate of 6.5%

### Property Tax Levies
- **New Levies**
  - City of Bellingham Affordable Housing
  - City of Bellingham Fire Pension
  - City of Bellingham General Fund
  - City of Bellingham Greenways IV
  - City of Bellingham RDA
  - Affordable Housing Bellingham

- **No Longer Applicable Levies**
  - Emergency Medical SVC Fire #04
  - Fire SWFA Expense Fund
  - County Road Diversion
  - County Road Fund
  - Rural Library

### Total Rate:
- **Property Tax Levies**: $22.07/$1,000 in assessed value
- **No Longer Applicable Levies**: $30.98/$1,000 in assessed value

***Cost estimates based on an owner-occupied single family home valued at $300,000 property tax value with a roughly 7,500 sq ft lot with roughly 2,500 sq ft currently using City of Bellingham water in 2019. If you are not on city water you will not receive the savings.***

---

A special thanks for data from the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department, Whatcom County and icons via The Noun Project.
City Services

How does annexation affect your neighborhood?

The Growth Management Act of 1990 says that all areas defined as urban growth areas (UGAs) should be in a city. Whatcom County does not have the resources to support urban areas while the City of Bellingham does. Due to this, both the County and City agree that these areas should be part of the City of Bellingham to best serve the residents of the UGAs.

Lower utility costs for City of Bellingham water and sewer services and extension of service to vacant properties (upon the submission of an application)

Consideration for the City of Bellingham to improve public park spaces (trails, playfields, etc.) identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PRO) Plan

Inclusion in City planning and budgeting for parks, infrastructure, and other neighborhood improvements

Increased levels of service provided by the City of Bellingham police and fire departments

The ability to vote in the City of Bellingham elections along with representation on the Bellingham City Council

Establishment of Neighborhood Associations officially recognized by the City of Bellingham and representation on the Mayor’s Neighborhood Advisory Commission

Depending on the UGA you are located in, there will be varying potential increased in stormwater fees and reduced property taxes and water bills.

Check your FAQ sheet to review estimated costs for your neighborhood

Access to city and state funding for neighborhood development through programs such as Small and Simple Grants and Safe Routes to School
Activity Outcomes

Open house attendees had the opportunity to engage in activities identifying their community association, comment on aspects of potential annexation perceived as most important, and review frequently asked questions and responses in a fact vs. fiction quiz format. Activity takeaways are presented in Table A2:

Table A2. Wade King Meeting - Attendee Priorities and Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Identity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Costs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets &amp; Sidewalks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Safety for children walking to Wade King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Support for bike lanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Open Spaces</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>• Traffic concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Privacy concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wildlife/habitat preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tree conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Small community quality of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questionnaire Outcomes

Attendees were encouraged to complete a questionnaire regarding their experience at the meeting and opinion related to annexation during the event. In the case of the Wade King Elementary meeting, 24 of 31 questionnaires were returned, the outcomes of which are provided below in Figures A7 through A10. This information was not evaluated as representative of overall community sentiment or statistically analyzed, as open house events were focused on sharing information with community members. Rather, attendee input was documented and used by the UW Team to inform follow-on assessment efforts.
Figure A7. Wade King Meeting - Public Notification Sources

Figure A8. Wade King Meeting - Attendee Engagement
Of the 24 respondents, most reported they felt very engaged and nearly all respondents felt the meeting improved their understanding of annexation. However, responses indicate a majority of respondents were unsupportive of annexation at the time of the questionnaire.
Northern Heights Elementary - May 7, 2019

An informational open house regarding the process and effects of annexation was held at Northern Heights Elementary School May 7, 2019 from 6:00pm - 7:30pm. The open house was hosted by the University of Washington Annexation Research Initiative Team and supported by City of Bellingham and Whatcom County Staff. The event was intended to cover the area identified in Figure A11, and was attended by 51 Northern heights, Hillsdale, and Tweed Twenty area residents combined, of which all 51 returned questionnaires. Event agenda, informational materials, and sample questionnaire are included herein, along with a summary of activity and questionnaire outcomes.

Figure A11. Wade King Elementary Meeting - Coverage Area
Agenda

A Discussion on Annexation
Hosted by
University of Washington Master of Urban Planning Studio
May 7, 2019 6:00 – 7:30 pm
Northern Heights Elementary School – 4000 Magrath Rd. Bellingham, WA

6:00 – 6:15 Welcome and Registration

6:15 - 6:30 Event Kickoff
  ● University of Washington Annexation Research Initiative overview
  ● Event format & objectives overview

6:30 - 7:00 Open House
  ● Information and Q&A tables
  ● Interactive activities
  ● Questionnaire

7:00 - 7:20 Group Discussion (time permitting)
  ● Open house highlights
  ● Additional Q&A

7:30 Event Conclusion

Additional Information:

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  Contact: Moshe Quinn mquinn@cob.org or (360) 778-8354

● UW Annexation Research Initiative
  Website: www.cob.org/uwresearch
  Contact: UWTeam@cob.org
Open House Stations

Information and Q&A

Annexation
Information and frequently asked questions about the annexation process and University of Washington research initiative

Tax & Fee Changes
Information on tax and fee differences between the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County, and what they mean to residential property and business owners

City Services
Information on services provided for City of Bellingham residents including police, fire, public works, parks & recreation

Interactive Activities

Fact vs. Fiction
Test your understanding of the Bellingham annexation process by identifying statements as fact or fiction

My Community Is...
Let the UW team know which community or communities you most closely identify with by placing a dot on the provided chart and leaving a comment, if desired

What’s Most Important to Me?
Identify elements of community involvement and property ownership which are most important to you by placing dots on the providing chart and leaving comments, if desired

Questionnaire
Provide the UW team feedback on the event and your thoughts on annexation by completing either a paper or electronic copy of the event questionnaire at any point during the event

Notes:
Welcome Northern Heights, Tweed Twenty & Hillsdale!
The University of Washington (UW) Master of Urban Planning students are partnering with the City of Bellingham Planning to assess the interest of your area joining the City. We look forward to discussing this possibility with you today.

What is Annexation?
Annexation is the procedure for bringing unincorporated areas of a county into an adjacent incorporated city. An unincorporated area has yet to join a city or form a town or city of its own. The most common form of annexation is the “petition method”, whereby property owners (or residents) of the area sign a petition asking to become part of the city. If an area is annexed, the city becomes the primary provider of local government services.

Why is the city exploring annexing these areas?
The Growth Management Act of 1990 says that all areas defined as urban growth areas (UGAs) should be in a city. Whatcom County does not have the resources to support urban areas while the City of Bellingham does. Due to this, both the County and City agree that these areas should be part of the City of Bellingham to best serve the residents of the UGAs.

A single family homeowner in Northern Heights/Tweed Twenty will pay $889 less a year in taxes and fees. A Hillsdale homeowner will pay $372 less.
Has annexation happened before in nearby areas? What changed afterward?

Yes, the most recent annexations were of Mt. Baker Highway/Britton Road and Bennett/Bakerview/Airport Drive in April 2019. The effects after annexation vary by community; however, the following have generally happened:

- Lower utility costs for City of Bellingham water and sewer services and extension of service to vacant properties (upon the submission of an application)
- Consideration for the City of Bellingham to improve public park spaces (trails, playfields, etc.) identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PRO) Plan
- Inclusion in City planning and budgeting for parks, infrastructure, and other neighborhood improvements
- Increased levels of service provided by the City of Bellingham police and fire departments
- The ability to vote in Bellingham elections along with representation on the Bellingham City Council
- Establishment of Neighborhood Associations officially recognized by the City of Bellingham and representation on the Mayor’s Neighborhood Advisory Commission (MNAC)
- Access to city and state funding for neighborhood development through programs such as Small and Simple Grants and Safe Routes to School

Additional Resources
University of Washington Bellingham Annexation Research Initiative Website
www.cob.org/uwresearch

City of Bellingham Annexations Website
https://www.cob.org/services/planning/annexations/Pages/bellingham-annexations.aspx


***Cost estimates based on an owner-occupied single family home assessed at $400,000 with 2,500 sq ft of impermeable surfaces. Water and sewer costs are estimated using typical yearly usage for City of Bellingham municipal water. Actual homeowner savings will vary.

A special thanks for data from the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department, Whatcom County GIS and icons via The Noun Project.
Why is the city exploring annexing these areas?
The Growth Management Act of 1990 says that all areas defined by urban growth should be in a city.
- Whatcom County does not have the resources to support urban areas while the City of Bellingham does
- Both the County and City agree that these areas should be part of the City of Bellingham to best serve the residents of the UGAs

What is an “unincorporated area”?
In the case of Bellingham, an unincorporated area is an area within and governed by Whatcom County that has yet to join a city or form a town or city of its own.

What is an “Urban Growth Area” (UGA)?
- Bellingham urban growth areas (UGAs) are unincorporated areas next to city limits identified by Whatcom County that are characterized by urban growth
- Establishment of UGAs is required by the Washington Growth Management Act of 1990 for the purpose of encouraging urban growth within existing urban areas
- Several UGAs have already experienced significant development are being considered for potential annexation by the City of Bellingham

What is the annexation process?
Washington State law guides the annexation process. Many methods exist, ranging from petition-based to agreements between government authorities.
- Bellingham has grown via annexation throughout its history, and this is a common process
The most used annexation method is the petition:
- The petition starts with interested residents submitting a Notice of Intent to Annex that represents either:
  - at least 10% of the residents of the area to be annexed, or
  - the owners of at least 10% of the land value in the area to be annexed
- If the City Council decides that the proposed annexation is good for the public, it may begin a public process to study the annexation proposal
- In this case, the supportive residents must use official petition forms to collect the signatures of property owners that represent at least 60% of the total assessed land value of the area requested for annexation
- At the end of the public process, the City Council votes for or against the annexation in question. There is no guarantee of annexation by filing a petition and application for annexation to the City

A special thanks for data from the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department, Whatcom County and icons via The Noun Project.
Tax & Fee Changes
How much will this cost?

A single family homeowner in Northern Heights/Tweed Twenty will pay **$889 less** a year in taxes and fees. A Hillsdale homeowner will pay **$372 less**.

### Rental Property Owners
- Rental registration fees
- Per unit annual fee ranging $8 - $10 per unit
- Rental inspections and fees are required every 3 years

### Business Owners
- City of Bellingham Business and Occupation Tax will apply to businesses with gross revenue more than $20,000 per year
- City of Bellingham sales tax rate of 2.2% will apply on top of the state rate of 6.5%

### Property Tax Levies

**New Levies**
- City of Bellingham Affordable Housing
- City of Bellingham Fire Pension
- City of Bellingham General Fund
- City of Bellingham Greenways IV
- City of Bellingham RDA
- Affordable Housing Bellingham

**No Longer Applicable Levies**
- Emergency Medical SVC Fire #04
- Fire SWFA Expense Fund
- County Road Diversion
- County Road Fund
- Rural Library

**Total Rate:**
- **$22.07/$1,000 in assessed value**
- **$30.98/$1,000 in assessed value**

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***Cost estimates based on an owner-occupied single family home assessed at $400,000 with 2,500 sq ft of impermeable surfaces. Water and sewer costs are estimated using typical yearly usage for City of Bellingham municipal water. Actual homeowner savings will vary.***

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A special thanks for data from the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department, Whatcom County and icons via The Noun Project.
City Services

How does annexation affect your neighborhood?

The Growth Management Act of 1990 says that all areas defined as urban growth areas (UGAs) should be in a city. Whatcom County does not have the resources to support urban areas while the City of Bellingham does. Due to this, both the County and City agree that these areas should be part of the City of Bellingham to best serve the residents of the UGAs.

Lower utility costs for City of Bellingham water and sewer services and extension of service to vacant properties (upon the submission of an application)

Consideration for the City of Bellingham to improve public park spaces (trails, playfields, etc.) identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PRO) Plan

Inclusion in City planning and budgeting for parks, infrastructure, and other neighborhood improvements

Increased levels of service provided by the City of Bellingham police and fire departments

The ability to vote in the City of Bellingham elections along with representation on the Bellingham City Council

Establishment of Neighborhood Associations officially recognized by the City of Bellingham and representation on the Mayor’s Neighborhood Advisory Commission

Depending on the UGA you are located in, there will be varying potential increased in stormwater fees and reduced property taxes and water bills.

Check your FAQ sheet to review estimated costs for your neighborhood

Access to city and state funding for neighborhood development through programs such as Small and Simple Grants and Safe Routes to School
Activity Outcomes

Open house attendees had the opportunity to engage in activities identifying their community association, comment on aspects of potential annexation perceived as most important, and review frequently asked questions and responses in a fact vs. fiction quiz format. Activity takeaways are presented in Table A3:

Table A3. Northern Heights Meeting - Attendee Priorities and Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Identity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Costs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets &amp; Sidewalks</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>• Safety for children crossing Roma Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Open Spaces</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>• Land has to be available and these areas are developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questionnaire Outcomes

Attendees were encouraged to complete a questionnaire regarding their experience at the meeting and opinion related to annexation during the event. In the case of the Northern Heights Elementary meeting, 51 of 51 questionnaires were returned, the outcomes of which are provided below by neighborhood (Northern heights/Hillsdale/Tweed Twenty) in Figures A9 through A20. This information was not evaluated as representative of overall community sentiment or statistically analyzed, as open house events were focused on sharing information with community members. Rather, attendee input was documented and used by the UW Team to inform follow-on assessment efforts.
Northern Heights

Figure A12. Northern Heights - Public Notification Sources

Figure A13. Northern Heights - Attendee Engagement
Of the 51 total respondents, 32 reported they were from the Northern Heights area. Of these, most people reported they felt very engaged and nearly all respondents felt the meeting improved their understanding of annexation. Attendee responses in this area were largely supportive of annexation.
Hillsdale

**Figure A16. Hillsdale - Public Notification Sources**

**Figure A17. Hillsdale - Attendee Engagement**
Nine attendees reported they were from the Hillsdale area. Of these, most people reported they felt very engaged and nearly all respondents felt the meeting improved their understanding of annexation. Respondent support for annexation in this area was generally split at the time of the questionnaire.
Tweed Twenty

Figure A20 Tweed Twenty - Public Notification Sources

Figure A21: Tweed Twenty - Attendee Engagement
Nine attendees reported they were from the Tweed Twenty area. Of these, most people reported they felt engaged, and all respondents felt the meeting improved their understanding of annexation. Respondent support for annexation in this area was approximately split at the time of the questionnaire.