



Benson Hill Annexation: Get Informed!

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This November, voters to the south and east of Renton will have a choice to annex to Renton or to remain part of unincorporated King County. In late 2006, residents of Benson Hill communities asked Renton and King County to place the question of annexation before the voters. Benson Hill includes over 16,000 residents in the neighborhoods of Cascade, Benson Hill, Spring Glen and Spring Brook. Renton shares much with this area, including a Renton address and zip code, a commute corridor, and places to shop.

What is annexation and what interest does Renton have? Annexation is a process for an unincorporated area to become part of a city. Most government services in an annexed area would come under the umbrella of the annexing city. The City of Renton does not initiate annexation, but views annexation as a partnership between the City, current residents, and future residents. We welcome those who are interested in becoming part of Renton, while maintaining services to current residents.

Next, our interest is in maintaining the quality of surrounding area growth, development, and density on Renton's borders. The City also wants to align revenues for services with those who use the services – people who live, work, play and shop in Renton. And finally, we have more funding opportunities than we've ever had before to make annexation financially possible.

King County and State growth management policies encourage unincorporated urban areas to either annex or incorporate. Recently, the State made funding available to help cities provide local public services with annexation. As a result, Renton would leverage that funding for the next ten years, and seek additional county funding to help provide services to the annexation area.

What are the potential effects of annexation? If Benson Hill approves annexation, Renton would become Benson Hill's local government service provider. Renton would provide police response, parks and recreation, street maintenance, fire and emergency medical services, land use permits and planning, and library services as it does today to current residents. Benson Hill residents would live within Renton boundaries, pay the same taxes, and receive the same services that Renton residents now receive. Most would pay slightly less in taxes than they pay today. Annexation would not change school

district boundaries, water or sewer services, street addresses, zip codes, or King County Metro bus service. If voters choose not to annex, services will be provided as they are today by King County and special purpose districts.

Where to learn more? The City is planning today to ensure Renton would be ready to serve a much larger city of 75,000 residents. Whether annexation is right for each resident is an individual choice based on many factors – satisfaction with current services, tax levels, and willingness to change. Whether you support or oppose annexation, the most important step is to get informed about governmental services, learn about what annexation would mean, and discuss with your neighbors what’s right for your area. City and County representatives are available to answer questions and provide more information at rentonwa.gov and search for annexation or at www.metrokc.gov/annex/. Get informed!

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