



Renton and its Potential Annexation Areas

The Future is Yours

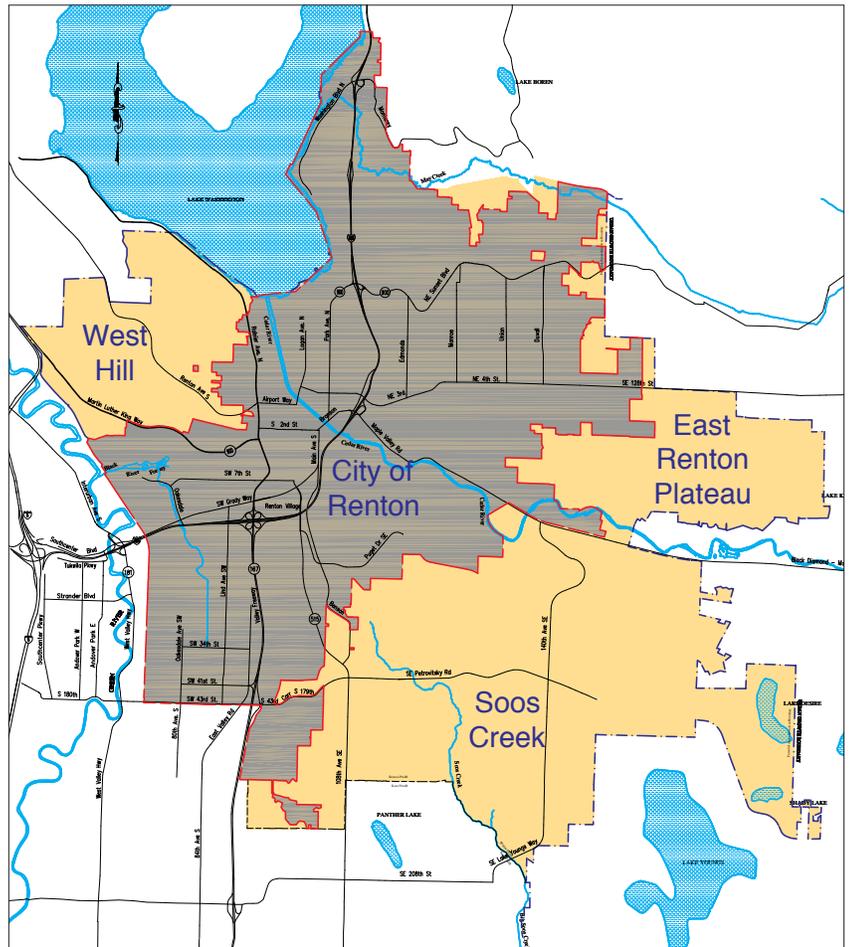
Renton and its surrounding areas are changing and growing. The City of Renton is an emerging regional urban center made up of active neighborhoods that range from luxury lakeshore condominiums and small-town, family-focused areas to places that have a distinctly suburban quality.

The revitalized downtown is providing new opportunities for both businesses and urban living. Activities like the Renton Farmers Market and events at the IKEA Performing Arts Center are adding to the vibrancy of the downtown and making it a gathering place for the greater Renton area. The Landing is taking shape as a new urban village that will provide dining, shopping and residential options. Landmark developments by corporate leaders such as the Seattle Seahawks and Federal Reserve Bank are broadening Renton's diverse job base.

All of this progress is proving that Renton truly is "ahead of the curve."

As people have moved into Renton and the city has grown, Renton has managed its growth in accordance with its own Comprehensive Plan, the State Growth Management Act (GMA), and regional policies agreed to by the county and cities. Today, Renton is the 14th largest city in Washington State, with increasing influence regionally and nationally.

Renton Potential Annexation Areas



Potential Annexation Areas (PAA's) include Fairwood, the East Plateau, West Hill and Soos Creek

- Renton City Limits
- Renton Potential Annexation Area

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Regional planning policies encourage communities within the urban growth boundary to either annex or incorporate if they are not already part of a city.

Renton's Comprehensive Plan lists a number of areas as "Potential Annexation Areas" (PAA). The map on the front page shows where these areas are. Recent actions by the State Legislature provide Renton's boundary communities with new opportunities and funding for discussing the best ways to manage their resources and their future if they choose to become part of the City.

Residents in Renton's potential annexation areas will have several future governance choices, including:

- 1. Annexation into the City of Renton.** Annexation is the process by which an area becomes part of a city. If an area is annexed, that area's government and many of its services come under the umbrella of the annexing city and are then provided by the City of Renton.
- 2. Incorporating to become a new city.** Incorporation is the process of creating a new city. When an area incorporates, the residents incur responsibilities such as organizing and funding their own services and establishing and electing a city level of governance.
- 3. Remaining "unincorporated."** An unincorporated area is one that is neither part of a city nor a city of its own. It is an area that relies on the county for the majority of local services including local courts, sheriff, roads and land use planning.

The City of Renton sees annexation as a way to help communities get better public services and maintain local control in their neighborhoods with approximately the same level of taxes that exist today.

In terms of land use and growth, annexation areas will largely stay as they are now, as residential areas, without having to absorb commercial development. At the same time, the City sees annexation as a way to allow Renton's emerging Urban Center to become the "downtown" for the entire area that it would potentially serve.

If the areas do become part of the City, services and programs can be planned and carried out for the entire area, and residents in these areas will shape the outcome. The contributions of these residents will diversify and broaden the city's cultural life and business community and contribute to a stable tax base and services for residents. The process of annexation is a partnership: it can only happen if it makes sense to both residents and the City.

That is why Renton has begun a dialogue with the communities outside its immediate boundaries.

In many ways, people in these communities already rely on Renton's roads, parks, and other public services; shop and play within Renton's borders; and are impacted by decisions made by the City of Renton.

In fall 2005 and spring 2006, Renton partnered with King County and community groups to host informational forums on governance options. Renton is poised to make agreements with King County and partner with special districts to actively pursue annexation of the City's PAAs by 2010.

Renton's Mayor and City Council will welcome any neighborhood or area with the desire to be part of the City, to begin the petition process to annex to the City.

City staff is prepared to provide information to any group who requests information about what annexation to Renton would mean for their community.

Over the next several months, Renton is committed to continuing this dialogue and work with its neighbors. In the future, we will be convening advisory committees and holding community workshops so that we can better understand each others' issues and aspirations. We will provide solid and objective information so that we can all make informed choices.

Some Frequently Asked Questions about Annexation

Q: What would it mean if my community decided to be annexed to Renton?

A: Your community would become part of the City of Renton and share its services, taxes and status. Additionally, as part of the City of Renton, your community would adopt and benefit from the core values and long-term goals of the Renton Comprehensive Plan which include promoting citywide economic growth, preserving neighborhood character, influencing regional decisions that impact the city, managing growth through sound planning and more.

Q: Does annexation mean that I have to pay higher taxes?

A: Depending on where you live, the *typical homeowner would see a slight decrease in taxes* if unincorporated areas were annexed to Renton.

Q: Will I see any changes in my library or school districts?

A: Currently, most libraries (except for Seattle, Renton and Enumclaw) are operated by the King County Library System. If annexation were to occur, the City of Renton would take on responsibility for these library services, and would seek to provide the same level of service that is offered today. *School district boundaries are not affected by annexations*, so current Issaquah, Kent and Renton School district boundaries would stay the same.

Q: What happens to other basic services like police, fire, parks and streets?

A: Newly annexed areas' police and fire service responsibility would transfer from King County and the Fire Protection District to the City of Renton. This transfer would likely include staff additions in police and fire as well as a potential transition for existing full-time fire staff to the City of Renton. Parks and streets would become a city responsibility and, over time, Renton would bring those areas up to the City's level of service.

Q: What happens if we remain an unincorporated area?

A: If residents choose to maintain the status of an unincorporated area, residents and business would see *no change in the providers of governmental service*. The unincorporated area would continue to receive the majority of local services from King County including local courts, sheriff, roads, land use planning and water and sewer service from special districts.

As part of a very large county, unincorporated areas' residents would have limited ability to influence government decisions that affect most local services because each area represents a relatively small portion of the voting population. In Fairwood, for example, residents represent less than 3% of the voting population in the county.

Remaining unincorporated is an option that has other implications. King County faces a situation in its General Fund in which long-term expenditure growth exceeds revenue growth. As a result of this budget situation and as a matter of policy, *King County will be unable, in the long-term, to provide urban services in unincorporated areas*.

Want more information? Visit: www.ci.renton.wa.us/ednsp/annexation.htm

You can also come to City Hall (6th Floor) during working hours to talk to a member of the planning staff or call (425) 430-6575.



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