

# CITY OF ST. ALBERT AND STURGEON COUNTY ANNEXATION

Frequently Asked Questions | November 2, 2018

## What is annexation?

Annexation is the process by 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 Sturgeon County 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 (MGB) recommending the final decision to the Government of Alberta. Sturgeon County and the City of 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 Municipal Government Board (MGB) is an impartial and independent board established by provincial legislation to make decisions about matters such as annexation. They prepare a report and a recommendation 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?

Both the City of St. Albert and Sturgeon County are facing growth pressures.

Starting an annexation process now enables sustainable, long-term community planning as well as planning certainty for residents, municipalities, developers, and landowners in a manner consistent with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan. The annexation provides enough land for the City's long-term residential and commercial growth needs.

## How much land is being considered for annexation?

The City of St. Albert and Sturgeon County jointly determined a potential maximum area of approximately 2,180 ha (5,387 ac). This is the maximum area that the annexation process is studying. However, the MGB will make the final recommendation to the province on the amount and location of the lands annexed, which may be less than the study area. [See Map - Proposed Annexation Area.](#)

## What is the process?

Annexation is a process legislated by the Provincial Government through the *Municipal Government Act*; the process includes:



1. The municipality proposing the annexation must provide notice to the MGB and the municipality from which it wants to annex land.
2. Both municipalities must meet, discuss the annexation proposal and negotiate in good faith.
3. Technical studies are conducted to enable evidence-based decision-making and inform the annexation submissions report to the MGB.
4. An Annexation Submission Report (the City's application) containing information about negotiations and the technical findings is prepared and sent to the MGB.
5. If the annexation is uncontested (with signed consents from the landowners and the responding municipality), the application is processed.
6. If the annexation is contested (by a municipality or if signed consents are missing), the MGB will advertise for objections and anyone can submit objections or concerns.
7. If there are objections, and there is not general agreement and mediation attempts have failed, the MGB will conduct a public hearing.
8. After the hearing, the MGB will prepare a recommendation for consideration by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.
9. The Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta will consider the Board's recommendation and approve, or approve in part, or refuse the annexation proposal.

Please see flow chart for further details:

[http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/mgb/MGB\\_Annexation\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/mgb/MGB_Annexation_Overview.pdf)

### **What is a Growth Management Study (GMS)?**

In an annexation context, a Growth Management Study (GMS), or more simply a growth study, projects an urban municipality's future growth over a specified time horizon, estimates how much land will be required to accommodate that growth (both inside and outside of the municipality's current boundaries), and recommends the best directions in which to grow based on a comprehensive opportunities and constraints analysis.

St. Albert's GMS will project three different future growth scenarios over a 50-year horizon to 2070. It will contemplate different types of growth (i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional) at a more sustainable tax revenue split. It will also provide an assessment of the City's future land needs beyond its current boundaries. The GMS will incorporate regional land use policy and density targets and recommend growth directions informed by supporting technical studies including: (1) Community Land Needs Assessment; (2) Transportation Study; (3) Infrastructure Servicing Study; (4) High-level Financial Examination; (5) Ecological Assessment; (6) Agricultural Impact Assessment; and (7) a Historical Resources Study.

### **What is a Financial Impact Assessment (FIA)?**

A Financial Impact Assessment (FIA) for the purpose of an annexation application determines the financial impacts associated with growth within an urban municipality's current boundary and recommended expansion areas over a 25-year period. Informed by a GMS or growth study, the assessment includes forecasted costs, recoveries, assessment, and tax impacts associated with the combined area of the current municipality and the expansion areas. For St. Albert, the FIA will

consider the impacts of annexation on: (1) the City of St. Albert; (2) Sturgeon County; and (3) landowners within the expansion areas recommended in the City's GMS.

**How do the GMS, FIA, and other supporting studies fit into the annexation process?**

## Annexation Process Overview



**Who is negotiating on behalf of each municipality?**

Sturgeon County and City of St. Albert Councils are negotiating terms of the annexation, which will be provided to the MGB for their consideration.

**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 to take a minimum of three years to complete the work required for the final submission to the MGB. The Board will then render a decision, the timeline of which depends on the complexity of the proposed annexation and support from impacted stakeholders. It is estimated that an annexation process generally takes between two and five years.

**Is annexation the same as expropriation?**

No — annexation involves the transfer of lands from one municipal jurisdiction to another. It does not involve a municipality acquiring private lands, as is the case with expropriation.

## **I am a resident of St. Albert. What does this mean to me?**

St. Albert is a growing community. The proposed annexation will provide additional land for the City to accommodate future residential, parks, public services, commercial, and industrial development.

## **I am a resident of Sturgeon County and I live in or own land in the annexation area. What does this mean for me?**

If you live in or own property within the proposed annexation area, it is possible that your land may change jurisdiction from Sturgeon County to the City of St. Albert. This means your land will be governed by the City, future servicing will be provided by the City, and your taxes will be payable to the City. Further details regarding municipal services will be discussed through the annexation process; however, it is anticipated that residents will initially continue to receive the same level of service currently provided to them by Sturgeon County, should their lands become part of St. Albert.

Details regarding taxes will be decided through the Annexation Negotiating Committee, which consists of three elected officials and the CAOs from each municipality. More information will be available at landowner open houses.

All impacted landowners will be sent an information package to the address registered on title and the address registered with the County for your tax notice.

## **How can I participate in the process?**

The City of St. Albert is committed to providing numerous opportunities for residents and stakeholders to be fully informed. Future public open houses will be scheduled as the process advances. The City has set up a webpage to share information and opportunities to provide feedback and ask questions: [stalbert.ca/annexation-sturgeon](http://stalbert.ca/annexation-sturgeon).

## **How can I stay informed?**

Updates will be posted on the City's website. Notices for upcoming open houses will be advertised in the local papers. All impacted landowners will be notified by mail of upcoming opportunities to provide input and feedback. People can subscribe to the electronic newsletter to receive updates by visiting the City's website at [stalbert.ca/annexation-sturgeon](http://stalbert.ca/annexation-sturgeon).

## **Where can I find more information on annexation?**

To learn more about the annexation process, you can also visit Alberta Municipal Affairs' website at [http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/abc\\_MGB\\_annexations](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/abc_MGB_annexations)

## **Who do I contact for additional information?**

### **Robin Beukens**

Senior Planner Annexation

City of St. Albert

[rbeukens@stalbert.ca](mailto:rbeukens@stalbert.ca)

780-418-6629

