

Annexation Benefits At-a-Glance

Reduced Fire Insurance Rates

One of the most desirable benefits of City residency is the significant decrease in your insurance rates due to the increased fire protection. Charleston has a Class 2 rating. Check with your individual insurance carrier to determine the exact amount of your savings in this regard.

Increased Fire Protection

The Charleston Fire Department operates out of 10 stations strategically located throughout the City and staffed 24 hours a day by highly skilled, professional career firefighters.

Improved Emergency Services

Within the City of Charleston, ambulances with state of the art medical equipment and highly trained paramedics can respond to any emergency call within 5 minutes or less, 24 hours a day.

Increased Police Protection

Charleston's Police Department is the largest municipal police department in the state and takes a proactive approach to prevention, deterrence, detection and investigation, providing for the protection and safety of our citizens, businesses and visitors 24 hours a day.

Reduced Cost of Garbage Collection and Recycling

Not only are refuse collection and curbside recycling fees slightly lower within the City of Charleston, an annual supply of black garbage bags, clear plastic bags and recycling bins are also provided to citizens.

Better Protection of Property Values

The City's *Planning and Zoning* Department guides future growth and development by regulating land uses and lot provisions to protect the character and density of our neighborhoods.

Building and property maintenance inspections help maintain a high standard of construction and public safety, and address issues like peeling paint, broken windows, trash and debris and high grass, which can quickly become a nuisance and affect property values in our neighborhoods.

Why does the City of Charleston annex properties?

The benefits to the City include more citizens participating in municipal government, economy of scale in providing services, increased revenue to support city services, better planning for the urban area, a stronger community of citizens with similar needs.

How does an area qualify for annexation?

The City of Charleston can annex property that is contiguous to the existing City limit boundary, or is accessible by a right-of-way or road that is already controlled by the City or can also be annexed into the City.

How are my property taxes affected?

An additional municipal tax will be collected after annexation. The tax will be included on the tax ticket you receive after annexation and is payable in the same manner as your current State and County taxes.

If you are a Class II property owner and you know the exact amount of your current tax ticket, additional taxes paid as a municipal resident may be calculated by multiplying that amount by .20707485. For example, if you currently pay \$350.00, you would pay an additional \$72.48, or a total \$422.48.

$(350.00 \times .20707485 = 72.48;$
 $72.48 + 350.00 = 422.48)$

When would I start receiving City services?

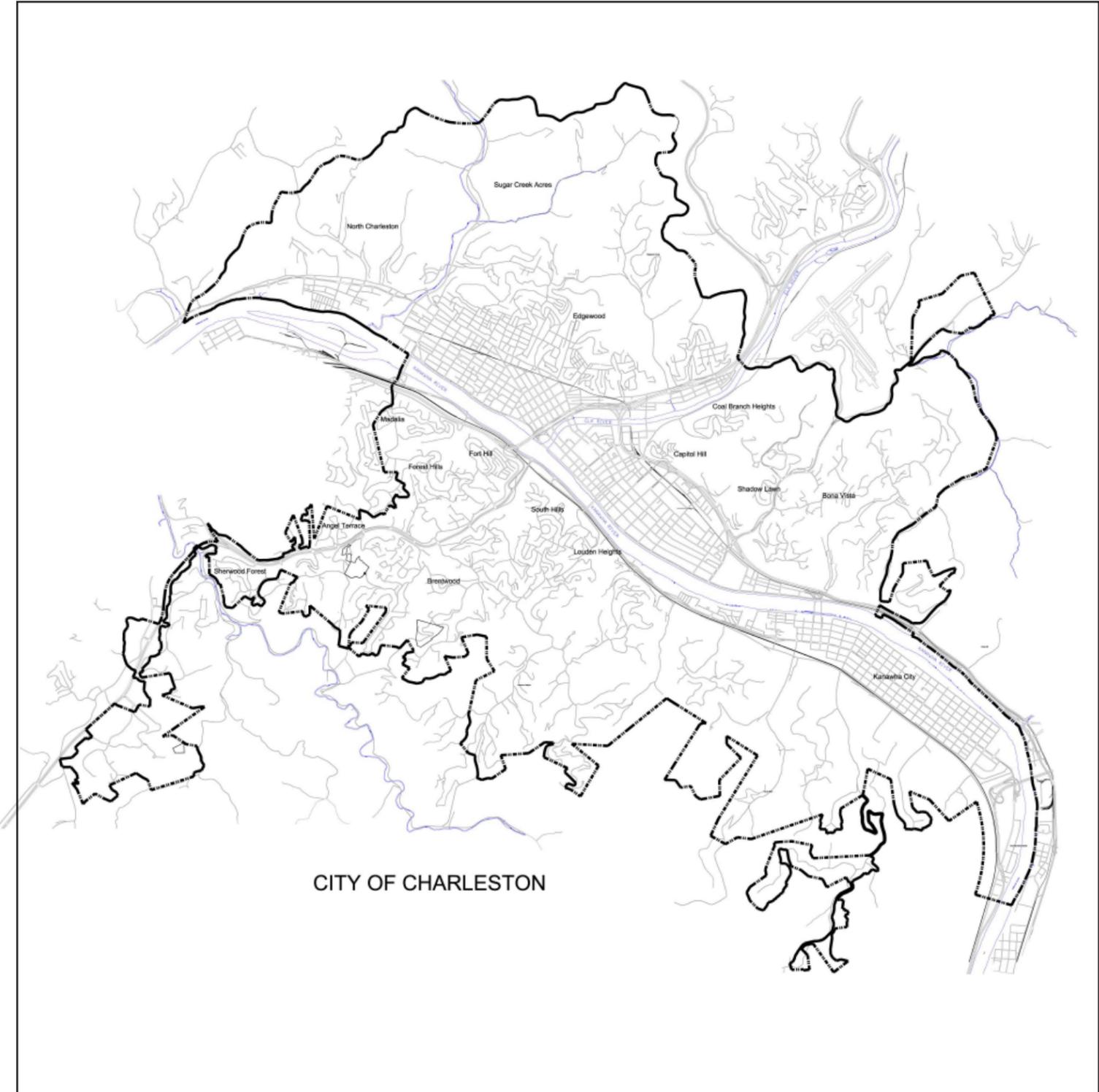
You may already be receiving some city services due to your proximity to the city limit line. If so, the services provided to you will continue without interruption. If not, city services will be provided to you immediately upon approval of the annexation request.

What City ordinances do I need to know about if my property is annexed?

The complete City Code is available online. Go to www.cityofcharleston.org and click on City Code/Ordinance.

The City's Zoning Ordinance (the laws regulating land use in the City) is available at www.cityofcharleston.org/planning.htm.

For more information about annexation in the City of Charleston, please call the Planning Department at 304-348-8105 or visit our web site at www.cityofcharleston.org/planning.htm.





A Citizen's Guide to **Annexation** Charleston, West Virginia 2009

What is annexation?

Annexation is the process by which cities extend their municipal services, regulations, voting privileges, and taxing authority to new territories. The result is a change in the boundaries of the community.

What are the benefits of annexation into Charleston?

The City of Charleston provides a number of services and protections for the benefit of its citizens:

Police and Fire Protection

One of the most desirable benefits of City residency is the increased level of police protection provided to our citizens. Charleston's Police Department is the largest municipal police department in the state. With a proactive approach to prevention, deterrence, detection and investigation, the police provide for the protection and safety of our citizens, businesses and visitors. Regular neighborhood patrols, crime prevention programs, drug enforcement, burglary and criminal investigation units, traffic and juvenile divisions are strengthened each year by additional officers hired as a result of the user fee.

The Charleston Fire Department operates out of 10 stations strategically located throughout the City. Staffed 24 hours a day by highly skilled, professional career firefighters, the department provides maximum protection of life and property through the prevention and extinguishment of fires and other necessary emergency services.

In addition to this higher level of safety, annexation into the City of Charleston provides significant decreases in insurance premiums due to the City's Class 2 rating. Check with your individual insurance carrier to determine the amount of your potential savings.

Emergency Medical Services

Ambulances with state of the art medical equipment and highly trained paramedics provide 24-hour service throughout the City of Charleston. These ambulances are capable of responding to any emergency call within approximately 5 minutes or less.

Land Use Controls

The City's *Planning and Zoning* Department enforces a zoning ordinance designed to protect and promote the public health, safety, convenience, morals and general welfare of our citizens. Land uses are directed to guide future growth and development in accordance with plans set forth by our City Council, and lot provisions help to protect the character and density of our neighborhoods.

Building inspections are conducted on all new construction and extensive rehabilitation projects in the City of Charleston to monitor compliance with all applicable building codes. These inspections help maintain a high standard of construction and public safety, and prevent buildings from deteriorating to the point of becoming a public nuisance.

Property maintenance inspections are also conducted throughout the City to address issues like peeling paint, broken windows, trash and debris and high grass, which can quickly become a nuisance and affect property values in our neighborhoods.

Street Lighting and Maintenance

The City's Public Works and Street Departments maintain and improve our public streets at no additional cost to our residents. Street cleaning, snow removal, repair work and paving are provided according to City priorities and budget constraints. Street lighting is being improved for safety and efficiency throughout the City.

More of these improvements are possible than ever before thanks to the user fee!

Refuse Collection

Garbage that is bagged, bundled or boxed and placed at the curb is collected weekly. The City of Charleston provides bags to its citizens free of charge. Common household waste should be placed in black bags; yard waste should be placed in clear plastic bags. City crews will also pick up appliances, tires and other bulky items when notified in advance.

The City's *curbside recycling program* requires that you separate your newspapers, aluminum, tin and bimetal cans, and plastics in recycling bins or clear plastic bags. Place these items at the curbside along with your other household waste, and it will be picked up by city crews and taken to the Slack Street Recycling Facility.

A Voice in City Government

The City of Charleston is administered by a Mayor-Council form of municipal government. The City is divided into 21 wards with a council member being elected from each ward. Along with an additional six at-large members, these elected representatives have authority over all City business, proposing, creating, and administering all City codes, ordinances, programs, services and special projects. When land is annexed into the City, it is merged with the adjacent ward, thereby creating council representation for the area.

City Council meets on the first and third Monday of every month in Council Chambers on the third floor of City Hall, 501 Virginia Street, East.

How are properties annexed into Charleston?

Annexation, or the incorporation of a land area into an existing municipality with a resulting change in the boundaries of that municipality, is accomplished in one of three ways:

Minor Boundary Adjustment

The Charleston City Council applies to the Kanawha County Commission, demonstrating the municipality's ability to provide applicable services and protections in the area to be annexed. This process is designed primarily for the annexation of streets or highways and is rarely used in Charleston.

Annexation with Election

5% of freeholders within the municipality file a petition with City Council and obtain a surety bond in an amount to be determined by the City Council. An election is held ordering the vote of all the qualified voters within the City and all the qualified voters within the area under consideration for annexation. A majority of all the legal votes both within the City and within the additional territory are required for the annexation to be approved.

Annexation without Election

This is the most commonly utilized annexation process in Charleston. Two petitions are required to initiate this annexation process: one signed by a majority of the qualified voters in the area to be annexed, and one from a majority of the freeholders in the area to be annexed. Approval of the annexation must be granted by City Council and an order submitted to the Kanawha County Commission.