



## **Unincorporated Islands – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **What is LAFCO?**

A state mandated agency that oversees the boundary changes (i.e. annexation, detachment) to cities and special districts. There is a LAFCO in every county in California. Orange County LAFCO (OC LAFCO) has jurisdiction over cities and special districts within Orange County. The OC LAFCO Board consists of seven voting members: 2 from the Board of Supervisors, 2 representing cities, 2 representing special districts and 1 representing the public.

### **What is a county unincorporated island?**

An island is a pocket of unincorporated land that is surrounded or substantially surrounded by a city, and receives municipal services (e.g., police, fire, roads, etc.) from, and is represented by, the County Board of Supervisors.

### **Why is the County getting out of the municipal services business?**

Since the County's bankruptcy in 1994, the County has wanted to transition into a primary role as a regional service provider. The County distinguishes between municipal services (such as public safety, road maintenance, and parks and recreation services) and regional services (such as the courts, jails, public health, and regional parks). Economies of scale usually make cities better suited to provide services that fall within the municipal services category. Since 2000, over 70 islands have been successfully annexed to cities in Orange County.

### **Why annex islands?**

The County's main function is to provide regional services (such as public health and welfare, the County court system, social services, and regional parks). One of cities' main functions is to provide municipal services (such as public safety, land use planning, code enforcement, and road maintenance). Annexing islands to a city improves the delivery of services and provides more cost-effective services. Annexation also provides residents with more local representation through a city council member rather than representation through a County Supervisor. It continues to be the mission of the County to strongly encourage cities to annex county unincorporated islands into their communities.



**Can the property tax rate (Proposition 13) be changed as a result of annexation?**

No. Property taxes are fixed at a constant rate (1% of the assessed value of the property) set by the State in accordance with Proposition 13. This rate does not change and property taxes ARE NOT affected by annexation.

**If my property is annexed, to which agency do I pay my property taxes?**

Upon annexation, property owners will continue to pay their property taxes to the County of Orange.

**Are there any other additional costs or taxes associated with annexation?**

Costs for water, sewer, and trash services may differ from what residents now pay. For example on January 1, 2017, the average residential monthly bill would be \$65.12 for water service, \$8.91 for sewer service (assuming a property is connected to the City's sewer system), and \$21.82 for trash service.

In addition, an assessment by the Orange County Sanitation District costs would be shown on the property tax bill and would be charged when the property is connected to the La Habra sewer system which feeds into the OCSD treatment facilities. For properties that continue to use a septic system, this charge would not be assessed.

**Are there any savings associated with Annexation?**

Yes. Currently some property owners within the unincorporated islands adjacent to the City of La Habra pay an annual County sewer assessment. Upon annexation, those property owners may not be required to pay this assessment.

**Will areas be rezoned upon annexation?**

Upon annexation and in accordance with Government Code 56375(e), the City is required to pre-zone the annexation area and may not change the pre-zoning designations during the first two years following annexation.

**What services will change and how?**

The County of Orange currently provides most municipal services (planning, code enforcement, public safety, solid waste) to all unincorporated areas. Upon annexation, municipal service responsibility is transitioned to the respective City. However, the ownership of certain infrastructure facilities, such as creeks, channels and some roads, will remain with the current owner, this includes privately owned facilities, roads and infrastructure.



**If my property is annexed to the city, will my address change?**

New address numbers will be assigned by the City that follows the numbering sequence of properties immediately adjacent to the county island thereby allowing emergency service providers to respond with minimal delay. The City will notify the Post Office and public service providers of the address change.

**Will I be able to protest the annexation if the City files for annexation?**

No. Under State law, annexation of small unincorporated islands (150 acres or under) that are initiated by a city are not subject to resident protest and shall be approved by OC LAFCO (Government Code Section 56375.3).