

## **DRAFT** Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Annexation

1. **What is annexation?** Annexation is a process by which a District adds land to its jurisdiction to extend services (e.g., sewer, street lighting) and voting privileges.
2. **Who decides whether annexation is approved or not?** The Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is responsible for the final approval or denial of an annexation. The annexation process typically takes at least six months to complete and sometimes takes longer. Annexation would be considered at local and LAFCO public meetings. For more information regarding Santa Barbara LAFCO, please visit the website at <https://www.sblafco.org/>
3. **Will I be required to hook up to the public sewer?** No, you can continue to use your septic system after annexation. Continued use of an existing septic system is allowed unless the County Health Department detects a health problem. If your property is connected to a District sewer line, there will be no change in cost or service.
4. The District's Sewer Ordinance only requires a property owner to connect their property to the District's sewer main if your nearest plumbing fixture is within 200 feet of the sewer main. The District's ordinance holds this requirement in temporary suspension if the existing septic system continues functioning and adequately serves the property. The Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Department, usually through private contractors, determines if the current septic system works. If the plumbing fixture on the property is beyond 200 feet of a sewer main, the decision on whether the septic system could be reconstructed rests solely with the County Health Department.
5. **What will annexation cost me?** There will be no initial cost for annexation. The District will initially pay for annexation. Only the properties that want a sewer connection will pay for an equitable portion of the annexation costs when they apply for a sewer connection permit.
6. **How can I become involved in the annexation process?** After the process starts, there will be several opportunities throughout the annexation process where you can be involved and provide comments.
  - Community meetings will be held before the finalization of the annexation proposal.
  - SYCSD Board meeting to consider adopting a resolution initiating the annexation proceedings.
  - LAFCO public hearings.
  - Voting in the annexation (if election is required).
7. **What if I don't want to be annexed after the official process starts?** Property owners (and registered voters) within the annexation area can protest annexation during the LAFCO review process. If LAFCO approves the proposal after its first hearing, LAFCO will conduct a protest hearing. LAFCO will provide public notice of hearings and direction on how and when to submit a written protest. If the protest is sufficiently large, affected voters may be asked to vote to annex their area.

8. **Will my property taxes increase if my property is annexed to the District?** Your property tax will not increase. As part of the annexation process, the District and County negotiate a property tax split to determine how much property tax the District will receive and how much the County will retain.
9. **Will there be a reassessment of my property upon annexation?** No. A reassessment would not occur as part of an annexation.
10. **Will annexation affect my property value?** No, property values are impacted by multiple variables, but annexation itself will not increase or decrease your property value.
11. **Will my service providers change if my property is annexed to a District?** Once annexed to the District, the District might decide to provide sewer lines, street lighting, but not necessarily. Other services, such as water, fire service, gas & electricity, and cable, will continue to be provided by your current service providers.
12. **Will there be a change in my garbage collection services?** No
13. **Will annexation change where my children go to school?** School district boundaries are not affected by annexations.
14. **How will the zoning on my property change if the annexation is approved?** Zoning will conform to the pre-zoning designation for the parcel when it is annexed.
15. **Will a Santa Barbara County building permit be honored by the District?** Yes, a building permit issued by the County for a property subsequently annexed to the District will remain valid for the life of the building permit, including renewals, if construction was started before annexation.
16. **What happens to my street address after annexation?** Your address remains the same.

**What will it cost if I choose to connect to the District sewer?**

- There would be construction costs, as well as a connection cost.
- We are many years away from installing sewer lines in unannexed portions of the District, and an equitable cost would be determined then.
- In addition to the connection fee, there is an annual residential cost to cover maintenance and wastewater treatment - paid via the county tax rolls twice a year.
- You can finance the connection for up to 20 years at 1% over the prime rate.

**Does my property have to be annexed to the District to receive sewer service?** Yes, but a property owner can also annex to our District individually, but it will require some workarounds depending on how close you are to the current sewer system.

Additionally, the Government Code allows for “out of agency service” if there is an existing or impending threat to the health and safety of the public (e.g., failed septic system) and in anticipation of annexation. Out-of-agency service is considered a temporary remedy in anticipation of future annexation.

***Will my voice in local government change?*** Yes, as a District resident, you can vote in District elections. District residents may also be eligible to run for District Board and serve on various District committees.

***If the community is annexed, how long would it be before I can connect to the sewer (with an understanding that I don't have to connect)?*** Annexation is the beginning step toward connecting to the sewer. However, many additional steps exist before any sewer lines can be installed. Some of those steps include:

- Preliminary designs and cost estimates with presentation to the Board - could take 3 to 6 months.
- If the Board of Directors approves the preliminary design, the final design, including construction documents, topographic analysis, and an engineering estimate - could take 6 to 9 months.
- Preparing and executing the Public Works construction bidding process could take 3 to 6 months.
- Construction of main sewer lines, predominately on public property or on private property with easements - could take 6 to 12 months.
- A homeowner choosing to connect to sewer mainlines – installing private laterals on your property - could take 3 months.

From the beginning of the annexation process, connecting your house to a sewer – could take 3 months or up to an undefined amount of time if any of the steps above are delayed or not begun.

***Will a connection to the sewer increase my property value?*** Property values are impacted by multiple variables, and it is difficult to determine if any one variable would impact property values. Also, individuals looking to buy property may be interested in being independent of a public agency and not want a sewer connection. At the same time, another buyer may not be interested in maintaining a septic system and want to be connected.

***How will I be notified about other District Board Meetings?*** Sign up to receive information on our website by clicking “Join Our Mailing List” at [www.sycsd.com](http://www.sycsd.com)

**The Santa Ynez Community Services District prepared this **DRAFT** FAQ.**