

## ANNEXATION FAQ's

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ANNEXING PROPERTIES INTO THE CITY OF LARGO

Please see our list below of the most asked questions regarding the annexation process.

Don't see your question answered here? Please don't hesitate to contact us. Please feel free to contact Becky Calomino at 727-586-7360 Option 1 or [bcalomino@largo.com](mailto:bcalomino@largo.com) to obtain an annexation agreement and for any additional questions you may have.

#### What is Annexation?

Annexation is the process set forth in the Florida Statutes that allows properties outside the current city limits to become part of a city. Throughout Pinellas County there are properties that are in unincorporated Pinellas County meaning they are not incorporated into any municipality, regardless of their mailing address, therefore their form of local government is Pinellas County itself. Annexation allows these unincorporated properties to incorporate into a municipality to become a part of the city and receive certain city benefits.

The City of Largo, under Florida State Statutes, has what is called a "Planning Service Boundary", or PSB. **Any** unincorporated property within the PSB is eligible to submit an annexation agreement to incorporate into the City; **however, only properties that are contiguous or "adjacent" to another city property are eligible for official annexation (except for Type A enclaves)**. Staff can advise you whether the property requesting annexation is eligible for official annexation or is in a Type A enclave. View our [Planning Service Boundary map](#).

**Note: The property is still eligible** to receive city-provided trash service and other city services even though the property is not contiguous or "adjacent" to another city property when the property owner signs the annexation agreement. In these cases, the property owner will receive services in exchange for signing the annexation agreement that indicates the owner's intent to petition the city to annex the property when it becomes eligible.

#### What is the annexation process?

**The first step** in the annexation process is for the property owner to sign an annexation agreement to receive certain City of Largo provided services, such as trash, recycling, and solid waste services. The City will prepare and provide the property owner with an Annexation Agreement and Petition for Annexation (if applicable). The annexation agreement and petition need to be signed, witnessed, notarized, and returned to Largo City Hall. **Our office can provide a witness and notary, at no cost, if property owners wish to sign their agreements at City Hall.** This requires an appointment, but generally only takes 15 minutes.

**City of Largo Solid Waste Service for residential properties will be activated within five days of signing the annexation agreement. City staff will arrange for delivery of the garbage and recycling carts and**

**will initiate services on your behalf.** Residential service is \$23.30 a month (billed bi-monthly) and includes twice a week pick-up for regular trash, once a week pick-up for recycling, once a week pick-up for yard waste and four free bulk pick-ups a year. For neighborhood pick up schedule or other information please contact Largo Public Works at 727-587-6760 or [solidwaste@largo.com](mailto:solidwaste@largo.com).

Commercial and multi-family properties will have to call for their rates and set up their accounts directly with Largo Public Works at 727-587-6760 or [solidwaste@largo.com](mailto:solidwaste@largo.com).

By entering into the annexation agreement, the property owner acknowledges and agrees, the City may proceed with an official annexation, which will result in a change of government and the taxes and fees you pay. **The annexation agreement cannot be canceled by the property owner once it is signed.** The agreement remains with the property, so if the property owner were to sell the property, the annexation agreement remains tied to the property and land.

Once the agreement is signed by the property owner and city staff, it is recorded by the County Clerk's office and a recorded copy is mailed to the property owner.

**The second step** is the official annexation. Once started, this second step takes approximately four months to complete.

During the four-month period several tasks are accomplished:

- Photos of your property will be taken.
- City of Largo Community Standards will be consulted to determine if there are any code enforcement or non-conforming land uses or structures.
- Pinellas County Code Enforcement and Zoning Department will be consulted to determine if there are any ongoing or un-resolved zoning issues of code violations effecting the property.
- The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners and the Department of Housing and Community Development will be notified and requested to provide comments.
- City of Largo departments are notified and requested to provide comments.
- Notice is published in the paper on two separate occasions.
- Two City Commission meetings are conducted.

The property owner will receive a letter in the mail notifying them that the City will have two City Commission meetings regarding the property annexation. You may attend these meetings but are not required to.

At the completion of the review process there are two public city commission meetings regarding the annexation of the property. After the property is officially annexed the property is a city property and will begin paying Largo property taxes and fees.

### What benefits do I receive by signing an annexation agreement?

Residents have at their convenience a courteous and professional City Administration that is ready to assist them when needed. We, at the city, would like to point out that the City Commission makes every effort to be responsive to the needs of residents and corporate citizens. This philosophy is generated from the City's deep feeling of community pride that we hope you will share with us.

- You will receive twice weekly trash collection service as well as our new single stream recycling program. This will result in significant monthly savings.
- The city will also **remove the 25% surcharge** you currently pay on your sanitary sewer bill if you are hooked up to our city sewer system.
- If CITY sanitary sewer is available to the PROPERTY, the in-CITY sanitary sewer connection charges shall be applied to the PROPERTY.
- Resident rates to Largo Recreation, Parks and Arts Department are another value-added service for Largo residents. Nationally accredited the Department has received numerous awards for its programs and facilities.
- Access to reclaimed water (if applicable)

### What do the following terms in the Annexation Agreement mean?

**Annexation:** is the process set forth in Florida Statutes that allows unincorporated properties that are outside the current city limits to incorporate and become part of a city. Annexation allows unincorporated Pinellas County properties to incorporate into the City of Largo. As such, the City of Largo would be your local government.

**“Binding upon, and inure to the benefit of, the PARTIES and their respective heirs, successors, or signs”:** refers to the fact that the annexation agreement is also binding to any individuals who inherit or come to own the property, who were not necessarily the signatories of the agreement but now own the property.

**“Shall run with the land”:** refers to the fact that the annexation agreement remains tied to the land (property) even if there is a change in ownership as the land is sold from one owner to another.

### Can I email the Annexation Agreement to staff? Can I have the agreement notarized electronically?

Annexation agreements and petitions are recorded in the Public Records of Pinellas County therefore an original signature on all documents is required. Please make sure to have all property owners sign in the appropriate blocks, have each signature witnessed, and have a notary notarize each property owner’s signature separately in the appropriate blocks. The annexation agreement will have to be mailed or hand-delivered to City Hall.

It will take approximately one month for the document to be recorded, shortly after this period you will receive your copy by mail.

Yes, electronic notarization is permissible.

### What is included in my trash service and how much does it cost?

City of Largo Solid Waste Service for residential properties will be activated within five days of signing the annexation agreement. City staff will arrange for delivery of the garbage and recycling carts and will initiate services on your behalf. Residential service is \$23.30 a month (billed bi-monthly) and includes twice a week pick-up for regular trash, once a week pick-up for recycling, once a week pick-up for yard

waste and four free bulk pick-ups a year. For neighborhood pick up schedule or other information please contact Largo Public Works at 727-587-6760 or [solidwaste@largo.com](mailto:solidwaste@largo.com)

Largo provides a city issued garbage container and a blue recycling container for free. Staff will arrange for the containers to be dropped off so there is no need to contact the Solid Waste Department. When the containers are delivered you will be provided with your pick-up schedule dates. The cost is \$23.30 a month and is billed bi-monthly on your Pinellas County water bill. The following is included in the cost:

- Regular garbage is picked up twice a week.
- Recyclables are picked up once a week.
- Yard Waste is collected once per week as part of your standard curb side service. Please bag or containerize yard waste for easy collection.

I've received a letter in the mail telling me my property is being annexed, do I have to do anything?

No, you do not have to complete anything on your end. When the City has decided to move forward with the annexation of your property you will be notified before and after the annexation is complete via United States postal service. The annexation requires City Commission approval. Two readings are required, a first reading and the second being a public hearing. You do not have to attend the City Commission meetings; however, you are more than welcome if you choose to. After the Commission has approved the annexation, you will be notified by letter of the approved annexation, along with a copy of the ordinance and a brochure on City services and how to get involved in your community.

Is there a way to estimate the difference in annual taxes and fees before and after annexation based on my property information?

Yes, Forward Pinellas has established a [Truth in Annexation](#) worksheet where the property owner inputs their financial information and it will estimate the difference in annual taxes and fees before and after annexation, based on the information you provide. The City has also created a sample Cost Benefit Analysis for the High Point Fire Tax District and Largo Fire Tax District.

What changes after official annexation?

There are properties that have a Clearwater mailing address even though they are in Largo. Following annexation into Largo, these properties maintain their Clearwater mailing address, it does not change.

Eligible household members can vote in local election cycles, apply for Largo grant programs, housing programs and volunteer to sit on advisory boards.

Largo Fire Rescue is your service provider while in unincorporated Pinellas County. Once annexed into the city they remain your service provider, this does not change.

Development standards applicable to the property will be governed by the Largo Comprehensive Development Code. Land use designations, permitting requirements, building codes, etc. will no longer be regulated by the County, you will seek regulation information from the City.

Your water service will always remain with Pinellas County. You and your household members are eligible to participate in city programs.

### My property is within the Largo-Tri-City Special Area Plan, how does that effect my annexation?

Largo utilizes a Future Land Use classification system which provides allowable, conditional, and prohibited land uses for each parcel of land in the city. If a residential or commercial property requesting annexation is within the boundary of the Largo Tri-City Special Area Plan, the property will be subject to an additional process post-annexation referred to as a Future Land Use Map Amendment (FLUMA). It was the original intent of the City that as properties annexed into the City, they would automatically be subject to the development provisions contained within the Largo Tri-City Special Area Plan. However, given Pinellas County's legal position that annexed properties do not automatically come under the Special Area Plan, it was determined that a FLUMA would be required for each property. Therefore, as properties are annexed, the City will automatically initiate the FLUMA process with no action required by the property owner.

When the property is eligible for annexation, the City will implement steps to officially annex the property and will immediately initiate the FLUMA process following official annexation of the property. This process does not require the property owner to do additional work, and the City agrees to pay the application fee for the Future Land Use Map Amendment.

The FLUMA takes approximately four (4) months to complete and requires the city to follow a rigorous process, which includes public hearings. Once the FLUMA is complete and approved, Largo Tri-City Special Area Plan development standards, design guidelines and corresponding increase in densities and intensities will be applied to the property.

Development and redevelopment within an Activity Center is guided by a *Special Area Plan* which designates allowable uses, development standards, and design standards that are supportive of development and redevelopment in an urban, pedestrian-oriented form. Applicable development standards shall be required for all new development and redevelopment in the Largo Tri-City Activity Center to ensure appropriate building form and placement, treatment of the public realm, connectivity, and parking regulation and placement.