



LFP Q&A  
April 1994

## Why can't I just stay unincorporated?

You probably could, for now. To make an informed decision, however, citizens should understand the situation in the Shoreline area. Key factors are:

- King County Comprehensive Plan, 1985;
- Growth Management Act (GMA);
- Countywide Planning Policies (CPP);
- Lake Forest Park Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA);
- Lake Forest Park Proposed Comprehensive Plan, 1994;
- Vision Shoreline Incorporation Petition;
- Statutes governing Boundary Review Board (BRB).

In revising the King County Comprehensive Plan a decade ago, the County Council recognized that county governments were never intended to provide local services in urban areas, but should become more regional in scope. It endorsed the trend that later brought new cities (Federal Way, SeaTac, Burien, Woodinville, Newport Hills) and large annexations (Bothell, Kirkland, Bellevue).

The state Growth Management Act requires cities in growing areas to plan together to prevent sprawl, protect the environment and provide municipal services. In King County, GMA is implemented under Countywide Planning Policies ratified in 1992. One basic policy states that "Cities are the appropriate provider of urban services to urban areas directly or by contract." This means that King County would no longer provide such services as police and street maintenance in our area. There is no specific deadline; planners expect it will happen as soon as cities are willing to provide services.

In compliance with GMA, the LFP Council last May set its Municipal Urban Growth Area, the area LFP is willing and able to serve, and possibly annex if citizens there request it. LFP's MUGA extends south to Seattle along Lake Washington; on the north it follows the county line at Northeast 205th Street from Interstate 5 to 55th Avenue Northeast (Shoreline Schools boundary). When the MUGA is finalized among neighboring cities and the county (probably by mid-summer), LFP determines land-use policy there. LFP's Comprehensive Plan provides for transportation, land use and environmental protection. The City Council will conduct hearings before final action, which is due by July.

Vision Shoreline is a citizen group working to form a new city including the entire Shoreline School District (except LFP). After a successful petition drive last year, a fiscal study was done, with positive findings. The issue will be on the ballot in September.

A state agency, the Boundary Review Board for King County, oversees incorporation and annexations, subject to GMA and other statutes. Recent legislation allows the BRB to consider annexations and incorporations concurrently in certain cases. At a hearing March 22, the BRB voted to eliminate LFP's MUGA from the Shoreline incorporation area. State law and BRB policy discourage unincorporated "islands," which hamper efficient delivery of municipal services.

This Q&A sheet was compiled by Lake Forest Park as a service to neighbors. For further information, call the Boundary Review Board at 296-6800, King County Council at 296-1001, Vision Shoreline at 542-5882, or LFP at 364-7711.



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## **Would annexation change my address?**

If you choose to. With approval from the postmaster, the City uses "Lake Forest Park, WA 98155" as its address, and encourages residents to do so, too. Postal clerks like this, because it gives them more information, but the real key is the ZIP code—98155. When a city meets population and other criteria, an exclusive ZIP code is assigned.

## **Does Lake Forest Park have a leash law?**

No. Ordinances for animal control are the same in LFP as in unincorporated King County. Enforcement here is done by King County animal-control officers under a contract with LFP. You can buy your pet licenses at LFP City Hall.

## **Would annexation affect my water and other utilities?**

Not a drop. Homes in LFP's municipal urban growth area are served by four water districts: Water District 83, Northshore Utility, Shoreline Water District, and the City of Seattle Water Department. Water District 83 patrons may pay bills in LFP City Hall, but it is a separate organization.

Lake Forest Park operates a sanitary sewer system in an area defined in a 1967 agreement with Seattle, King County, Shoreline Wastewater Management and Northshore Utility. The assignment of territory in that agreement remains in effect. Annexation has no effect on sewer service.

The City administers cable television franchises with TCI and Viacom, and regulates basic rates. LFP represents its residents in dealing with cable companies on rates, service and programming; subscribers can call 364-7711 with comments and questions.

LFP residents enjoy favorable rates for trash collection and recycling services under contract with Eastside Disposal. Until that contract is renegotiated in 1997, residents in newly annexed areas will continue under King County code.

Annexation brings no change to other utilities: electricity, natural gas, telephone. LFP does not levy a tax on utilities.

## **Would annexation change our schools?**

No. Lake Forest Park remains part of the Shoreline School District, as always. None of the proposals for annexation or incorporation have any effect on the school district. LFP's Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA) follows the school district's northeast boundary along 55th Avenue Northeast from Lake Washington to the Snohomish County line. The proposed Shoreline incorporation area is the same as the school district, except for LFP and a small area south of the city.

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## Would annexation affect fire service?

Lake Forest Park's potential annexation area includes property in three fire districts: 16, 4 and 5. Property annexed to LFP becomes part of FD 16 under a 1984 agreement.

**FD 16** provides fire prevention, medical aid and fire suppression in a 11-square-mile area with a population of 25,000. It has 1.36 firefighters per 1,000 population, and responded to 1,841 calls in 1993 from its headquarters in Kenmore and a satellite near Juanita Drive.

**FD 4**, based in Richmond Highlands, serves most of Shoreline (13 square miles) and has satellites in Richmond Beach and North City. FD 4's population is 60,000; it has 0.97 firefighters per 1,000 population; it responded to 4,900 calls in 1993.

**FD 5** is a non-operating district in the Briarcrest area which contracts with the City of Seattle and is served from Lake City. FD 5 officials are considering annexation to FD 16.

FD 4 and FD 16 are considering merger, which would require approval by voters. They jointly provide paramedic services, governed by a board made up of one commissioner from each district and one from Lake Forest Park. The medic unit and paramedic personnel are based at FD 4's North City station. Annexation would bring no change to paramedic service in FD 4 or FD 16; FD 5 residents who annex to LFP would be served by paramedics from North City. All districts have mutual-aid agreements now. This means that if a medical or fire emergency is reported in a district where the unit is out, that call is answered from the nearby district. Such arrangements are standard among and fire departments, and would not change under annexation or incorporation.

Primary response times vary according to proximity. To improve response times in the western sector of its service area, FD 16 is building a three-bay station just west of the LFP mall. Lake Forest Park issued a permit in 1988; the Corps of Engineers gave its approval last month. FD 16 officials intend to complete construction by December 1994.

Fire-insurance rates for residential property would not be affected by annexation, according to the Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau. Rates for certain classes of commercial buildings could be affected by as much as 5 percent upon transfer from FD 4 to FD 16, under present insurance-class ratings.

Property tax for fire protection is calculated differently in FD 4 than in FD 16. FD 4 levies the maximum allowable \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value in 1994. Owners of a residence in FD 4 valued at \$150,000 will pay \$225. ( $\$1.50 \times 150 = \$225$ ). FD 16 collects \$0.95488 per \$1,000, plus a charge tied to the benefit of fire service to the specific property. Property of the same value in FD 16 would be taxed about \$187. ( $\$0.95488 \times 150 + \$44.21$  (estimated average benefit charge) =  $\$187.44$ .) Thus, annexation to Lake Forest Park and to FD 16 would result in a reduction in tax for fire protection of about \$38 in 1994 for a typical \$150,000 residence. Properties where bonds have been approved would continue to be charged to retire those bonds. Annexed properties would not be liable for previous debt.

This Q&A sheet has been compiled by the City of Lake Forest Park as a service to neighbors considering annexation. For information on FD 16, call 486-2784. Call FD 4 at 546-5716. LFP City Hall is at 17711 Ballinger Way N.E., 364-7711.



## Will there be a vote on the annexation?

*Your signature on the petition is your vote. State law (RCW 35A.14) provides for two methods of annexation: election or petition. In all recent cases, the petition method has been used by citizens seeking annexation to Lake Forest Park (LFP). The basic requirement is signatures of property owners representing assessed valuation in the area. Also, action is required by the City Council (at two stages), and the Washington State Boundary Review Board for King County (BRB). The following is extracted from the Annexation Handbook of the Municipal Research & Services Center of Washington, in the chapter on the 60 percent petition method for non-charter code cities such as LFP:*

The most frequently used method of annexing unincorporated territory is by petition of the owners of at least 60 percent of the property value in the area.

1. The initiating parties (owners of not less than 10 percent in value of the property for which the annexation is sought) must notify the city of their intention to annex.
2. The City Council meets with the initiating parties to determine:
  - (a) Whether the city will accept, reject or geographically modify the proposed annexation (*At this stage, the Council can increase or decrease the territory.*);
  - (b) Whether it will require simultaneous adoption of zoning regulation (*LFP has not required this, but has provided for zoning hearings after annexation.*);
  - (c) Whether it will require assumption of existing indebtedness (*LFP has no general-obligation debt.*);
3. The Council must authorize circulation of the petition. The petition must:
  - (a) State the legal description of the property;
  - (b) Include a map of the area;
  - (c) State clearly if the Council will require assumption of existing debt and/or the adoption of LFP zoning regulation;
  - (d) Be signed by owners of not less than 60 percent in value of the property.
4. When a legally sufficient petition (60 percent) is filed, the City Clerk submits a Notice of Intent to Annex to the BRB. Citizens may request a formal hearing before the BRB; it may accept, reject or geographically modify the petition, within statutory limits. (*The law now allows the BRB to consider annexations and incorporations concurrently in certain cases, such as here, with a Shoreline incorporation petition covering the same territory as several petitions for annexation to LFP.*)
5. When the BRB has acted, the Council sets a public hearing with public notice, inviting interested persons to voice approval or disapproval of the annexation.
6. After the Council hearing, the Council may approve the annexation by ordinance. It may may not add property at this stage.
7. The Council sets the effective date of annexation, and notifies other agencies (fire districts, county offices such as assessor and elections, and state Office of Fiscal Management). The city conducts a special census of the newly annexed area.

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## How would annexation affect taxes?

CCA, Inc., independent financial consultant, analyzed the impact of annexation to Lake Forest Park on annual property taxes for a residence of \$150,000 valuation, typical for this area. **This table is for comparison purposes only.** It shows what taxes would have been for 1994, with and without annexation. It shows only those taxes that would change with annexation; other items on your property-tax statement that would not change include state school support, local school support, county (services to both incorporated and unincorporated), emergency medical services, special assessments, and port.

PROPERTY TAXES FOR \$150,000 RESIDENCE--1994 LEVY RATES						
	FIRE DISTRICT 4		FIRE DISTRICT 5		FIRE DISTRICT 16	
	Pre-Annex	Post-Annex	Pre-Annex	Post-Annex	Pre-Annex	Post-Annex
Fire Protection	\$225	\$187	\$81	\$187	\$187	\$187
County Roads	\$236		\$236		\$236	
Library Services	\$87		\$87		\$87	
City Services		\$251		\$251		\$251
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$548</b>	<b>\$438</b>	<b>\$404</b>	<b>\$438</b>	<b>\$510</b>	<b>\$438</b>

(1) Tax shown for FD 16 does not include the voter-approved bond issue; this would not be imposed on annexed property. It does include a benefit charge of \$44.21, an average estimated by applying the formula to the average benefit charge for residences of \$150,000 valuation.  
(2) Figures have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

As the table shows, the effect on property tax depends--directly or indirectly--upon which fire district serves the property. Lake Forest Park is in Fire District 16, and all property annexed would become part of FD 16. **Residents of FD 4 would have paid less property tax after annexation.** Taxes for fire protection would go down, and the library tax would be eliminated. **Residents of FD 16 would have paid less property tax upon annexation.** They would remain in FD 16, paying the same for fire protection, but they would not pay the separate library tax. **Residents of FD 5 would have paid more.** FD 5 is a non-operating district in the Briercrest area which contracts with Seattle and is served from Lake City.

LFP residents do not pay a separate library tax; library services are covered in the single tax for city services. LFP residents pay less for Surface Water Management (\$44.07 per parcel in 1994, compared to \$85.02 in unincorporated King County). LFP does not levy a utility tax.

For comparison, here are the most recent levy rates (per \$1,000 of assessed valuation):

	1992	1993	1994
Lake Forest Park	1.67909	1.57691	1.67049
Library	0.53565	0.56134	0.57899
County Road District	1.58019	1.47678	1.57645
FD 4	1.11882	1.05048	1.50000
FD 5	0.57047	0.51093	0.54113
(FD 16 Regular)	(1.00000)	(0.89949)	(0.95488)
(FD 16 Bond)	(0.20207)	(0.21851)	(0.18748)
<b>FD 16 TOTAL</b>	<b>1.20207</b>	<b>1.11800</b>	<b>1.14235</b>

This Q&A sheet has been compiled by Lake Forest Park with data gathered by the independent financial consulting firm, CCA, Inc. For information, call 364-7711.