



# City of Rockdale, Texas

## Annexation FAQs

### Why does the City want to annex my area?

The City Council has determined that it is more beneficial to the Citizens of Rockdale for the City to gain regulatory oversight in areas where growth is anticipated. Without City authority over land use and building construction, an area adjoining the city could potentially be developed in a manner which could prove detrimental to the city. For example, it is typical that annexation strategies focus on highway corridors leading into the city as key areas where an acceptable quality of development is desired. Also, if areas become sporadically populated without adequate infrastructure, then it becomes increasingly difficult to retrofit those areas with infrastructure after that development has occurred. Annexation is the most common process to ensure the efficient extension of services and to promote the wellbeing of cities and their citizens. Provision of an adequate growth base is critical to the future of every city.

As urban areas grow, police, fire, water, sewer and other services must be extended and maintained in an efficient manner to protect the health and safety of the public. This process applies to both existing and future land areas of the city. In short, the City of Rockdale desires to stay well ahead of growth.

### Can I “opt out” of annexation?

If your property currently carries an agriculture exemption with the Milam County Appraisal District, State Law requires a city to offer you a development agreement, which may include an exemption from annexation for a negotiated period of time. You would have the option to accept the offer and be exempted for the agreed period, or reject the offer and be included as part of the annexation.

### Once annexed:

#### Will my property taxes go up?

Yes. The City of Rockdale tax rate is \$0.9118 per \$100 valuation. That equates to \$911.80 annual city tax per \$100,000 assessed property value. All other property taxes (such as County or school districts) are not impacted by annexation. The additional tax dollar amount is far less for those properties carrying an agricultural exemption with the Milam Appraisal District. You are encouraged to consult with the Milam Appraisal District to determine what the city taxes would be for your specific property.

#### When would my property taxes be adjusted?

If annexation is completed before the end of 2018, city taxes will be assessed beginning in 2019.

#### My property is classified with an agricultural exemption with the Milam Appraisal District. Can I keep that exemption status when I’m annexed?

Yes. Being annexed does not affect homestead, ag, or other exemptions currently offered.



Will city services be immediately available?

The city services that are often referred to as “soft” services are available upon the effective date of the annexation. These include police, fire, building inspection services, code enforcement, animal services, and other similar departmental services that do not require infrastructure installations.

The city services that require infrastructure projects, such as water and sanitary sewer, may be made available subject to the service plan as adopted with the annexation. The service plan looks at each area independently to determine what “hard” services shall be provided, including water lines to support fire hydrants in more densely developed areas. These infrastructure capital projects are generally tied to a 2.5 - 4.5 year timeframe as required by State law, unless there are unexpected budgetary constraints.

If my property is annexed, why will the City not provide me all the infrastructure available in developed areas of Rockdale?

How cities grow and how various services are paid is complex. In most subdivisions developed inside the city, all the costs for sewer, water, streets, street lights and street signs are paid for by the developer. The developer then places a share of those costs in the price for each lot. The city taxpayer does not help build new subdivisions.

In newly annexed areas, the current taxpayers of the city are not asked to fund improvements except for a portion of the thoroughfares, water and sewer mains that benefit all city residents. In general, each resident or subdivision is asked to pay for the infrastructure that directly benefit his or her home or business through payment of pro-rata, adjacent mains, and other fee systems.

There are currently areas inside the existing city limits that do not have water, sewer, and/or paved streets. The annexation service plan will attempt to provide “like” services to similar areas that are already inside the city limits.

My street is unpaved. If my property is annexed, when will the City come pave the street?

For most subdivisions developed inside the City, the developer paves the streets and includes the cost in the price of the lot. The city paves unpaved residential streets throughout the city based on annual capital budgetary needs and priorities. Annexed properties that have unpaved streets would fall into this category and be prioritized with the rest of the unpaved streets citywide.

My subdivision has “strip paved” streets. Will the City make our subdivision put in curb and gutter?

No. Routine maintenance and reconstruction will be the responsibility of the City beginning on the effective date of the annexation. Routine maintenance cannot make a good street from a street in poor repair, but all streets will be evaluated and considered for repair and/or replacement.



Some of the major streets in my area are in terrible shape. If those thoroughfares are annexed, when will the facilities be upgraded?

Routine maintenance and construction/reconstruction will be the responsibility of the City beginning on the effective date of the annexation. The thoroughfare system in Rockdale is constructed by funds within the capital improvements projects that are funded by ad valorem taxes. At times, a portion of costs is paid with state or federal funds administered by the Texas Department of Transportation through the county or city. TxDOT-owned facilities are entirely upgraded and maintained with state funds. Paving projects are prioritized throughout the city based on condition and need.

Can I keep farming my land or operate my business?

Yes. When property is annexed, the existing uses are retained as Legal Non-Conforming (grandfathered). If the use of the property changes after annexation, then zoning may become necessary.

When an area becomes part of the City, what is the zoning for different parcels of Land?

All land area within the City of Rockdale is zoned within a particular district described in the zoning code. Major groups of districts include residential, commercial and industrial. The Comprehensive Plan and policies within the zoning code describe how and where these districts should be located relative to other districts.

Article 12.113 of the zoning ordinance stipulates that any area annexed into the City of Rockdale is zoned as "R1" Residential District in the annexation ordinance. All activities and land uses existing at the time of annexation other than "R1" Single Family permitted uses become non-conforming when the ordinance is official. Non-conforming uses may continue indefinitely unless the activity ceases for one year, after which the former use loses non-conforming status. Non-conforming is often referred to as "grandfathered".

In the "R1" Residential District, the uses permitted in that district become legal, conforming uses. These uses include single-family dwelling units, public parks and City recreational facilities, detached garages, defined accessory buildings, and public schools. No future zone change requests are required for these uses. Other proposed activities or land uses would be subject to a zone change request. An amendment to the Comprehensive Plan will be presented during consideration of any area to be annexed. As noted, the Plan then becomes a policy guideline for future zone change requests.

Will I be required to connect to city water and sewer?

No. Over time, certain areas will receive water line extensions installed to provide fire hydrants and fire protection. Sanitary sewer lines are not typically provided through annexation. If city water lines are nearby, a land owner can request to be connected at their own expense.



Can I keep my current electric service provider?

Yes. Electric service areas are not dictated by city limit boundaries.

Will the city repave our old County Roads?

No. Through annexation, the city does accept maintenance responsibility of existing roads and will upgrade as may be deemed necessary through normal annual review of all city streets.

I have a water well. Will the city take over authority of that?

No. Private water wells do not fall under the authority of the City of Rockdale, regardless of their location within the city or county.

Would I be able to burn trash after annexation?

Not without a burn permit from the City of Rockdale.

Does annexation affect deed restrictions?

No, the City typically does not enforce deed restrictions.

Would annexation affect common area ownership? Would private areas remain private after annexation?

Yes, private roads, lakes, or areas designated as HOA common area would remain private after annexation.

How will annexation affect my use of firearms?

Generally, it is unlawful to discharge a firearm within the city limits. There are some exceptions depending on the size of the property and the use and type of firearm. Some areas can be excluded from existing city ordinances but those are looked at on a case by case basis

Will I be able to continue to keep my animals and livestock that I presently have?

Yes, any use of your property for grazing livestock can continue as a non-conforming use. Some areas can be excluded from city ordinances affecting such things as livestock and firearm discharge based on characteristics such as lot size or rural character. The appropriateness of such agreements are considered on a case by case basis at the time of annexation and this process is unrelated to agricultural exemptions or development agreements.

The City has leash laws. How will annexation affect my pets?

City codes require that animals not be allowed to roam at large upon the premises of others or on the streets. This provision would apply upon annexation.