



# Residential Annexation

If your property or your neighborhood is contiguous—or adjacent to—the City of Columbia, you may be eligible for annexation into the City of Columbia. City residents enjoy a high level of service and usually save money compared to their neighbors outside of the City.

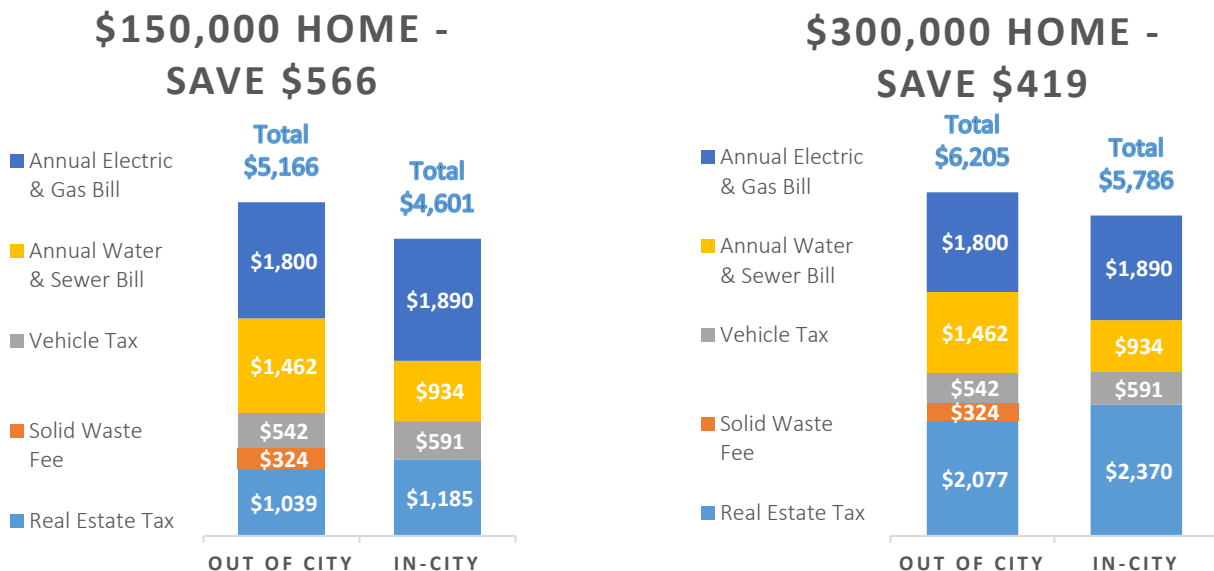
We can't answer all your questions here! Visit [www.ColumbiaSC.gov/annexation](http://www.ColumbiaSC.gov/annexation) or contact us at 803.545.3217 or [annexation@columbiasc.gov](mailto:annexation@columbiasc.gov) for more information.

## What is Annexation?

Annexation is the legal process where land is incorporated into the boundaries of a town or city. In South Carolina, the process starts after petition from property owners or resident voters.

## How do I benefit by annexing?

- **Service** –City residents enjoy an enhanced level of service and available programs, including our accredited Police Department, our fantastic garbage and recycling service, our community and small business programs, and much more!
- **Representation** – As a City resident, your representation in local government increases. You will be represented by a City Council Member for your district, two at-large Council Members, and the Mayor. You keep your County Council Member after annexing.
- **Participation** - In addition to being able to vote in City elections, you are encouraged to participate in one of our over 93 neighborhood associations, apply to serve on one of our boards and commissions, and otherwise join with everyone who makes Columbia great.
- **Savings** - Most homeowners **save money** when they annex. For a modest increase in your tax rate when you annex, the cost of garbage and recycling are bundled in, City-provided water and sewer rates are lower, and the Insurance Safety Office PPO rating is improved. In fact, the average homeowner can expect to **save about \$400-500 each year!**



The examples above are based upon the most recent tax year (2020) for the 1UR and 1LR tax districts and assumes the average residential water & sewer use (8 units/mth), \$20,000 vehicle value, and an average \$150 monthly electric & gas bill. Every homeowner is different - to learn how your unique circumstances would be affected by annexation, contact us or visit [www.columbiasc.gov/annexation](http://www.columbiasc.gov/annexation).

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(803) 545-3217  
[www.ColumbiaSC.gov/Annexation](http://www.ColumbiaSC.gov/Annexation)

## How can I annex my property?

To request annexation, you simply need to contact the Annexation Coordinator at [annexation@columbiasc.gov](mailto:annexation@columbiasc.gov) or (803) 545-3217, who can help you determine if you are eligible for annexation and will work with you to generate a petition for you to sign. If you have neighbors also interested in annexation, ask about a group petition. Either way, City Council needs to review and vote to approve the annexation.

## Will I have to pay two tax bills if I annex?

No, your property tax bill will include City taxes along with the other taxes you pay for County-wide services. Furthermore, unlike in unincorporated areas, there is no added annual solid waste fee on the tax bill for properties in the City of Columbia.

## What is a “Donut Hole”?

A donut hole is a property or group of properties entirely surrounded by the City (or in some cases, the City and another town or city). These are often areas that were developed prior to being adjacent to the City limits, and result in a patchwork of City, County, and private services in the area.



A “donut hole”

## Will annexation change my schools?

No. School districts are separate legal entities, and their boundaries are unaffected by annexation. Likewise, school attendance zones are set by your school district, not the City of Columbia. There are three school districts within the City of Columbia – Richland One, Richland Two, and Lexington-Richland Five.

## Will annexation change the zoning of my property?

In most cases, the zoning district of newly annexed land will be similar to the zoning district prior to annexation. However, the City of Columbia, Richland County, and Lexington County all have different Zoning Ordinances, so in this sense all annexations result in a rezoning, also known as a zoning map amendment. If you have specific questions or plans for your property, please contact us for a consultation about zoning and land use classification for your property.

## What is a declaration of covenant for water or sewer service?

The City is not obliged to provide any services beyond its boundaries. When a property owner wishes to obtain services from the City but it is not within or adjacent to the City limits, the property owner can sign a binding agreement to have the property annexed after it becomes adjacent to the City limits. These documents are recorded at the County Court House and are also known as a “declaration of covenant”.

## If there is a declaration of covenant on my property, when will the City annex my property?

It depends. State law requires that a property be adjacent – or contiguous – to the City limits in order to annex, and it is difficult to predict when your property may become contiguous. Even if your property is contiguous, the City wants to be certain to be able to provide the same high level of service to all our existing and new residents and may wish to wait until conditions warrant. However, if you are interested in annexing, please contact us!

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