

Pflugerville prepares for western expansion

By Christi Covington

Even as Pflugerville's plan for growth focuses on the open land to the east, the city is also making its final move west.

The city is scheduled to annex the remainder of its western jurisdiction during the next three years. More than 5,000 homes between Pflugerville Parkway to the north to near Pecan Street in the south will be formally included in the city limits.

"We are capturing the right to zone it, so we can have land-use control," Pflugerville Planning Director Trey Fletcher said. "That way we can maintain the quality and character of the area as much as any other area of Pflugerville that is already incorporated."

The annexation will encompass Windermere, Heatherwilde, Picadilly Ridge and Springbrook Meadow neighborhoods.

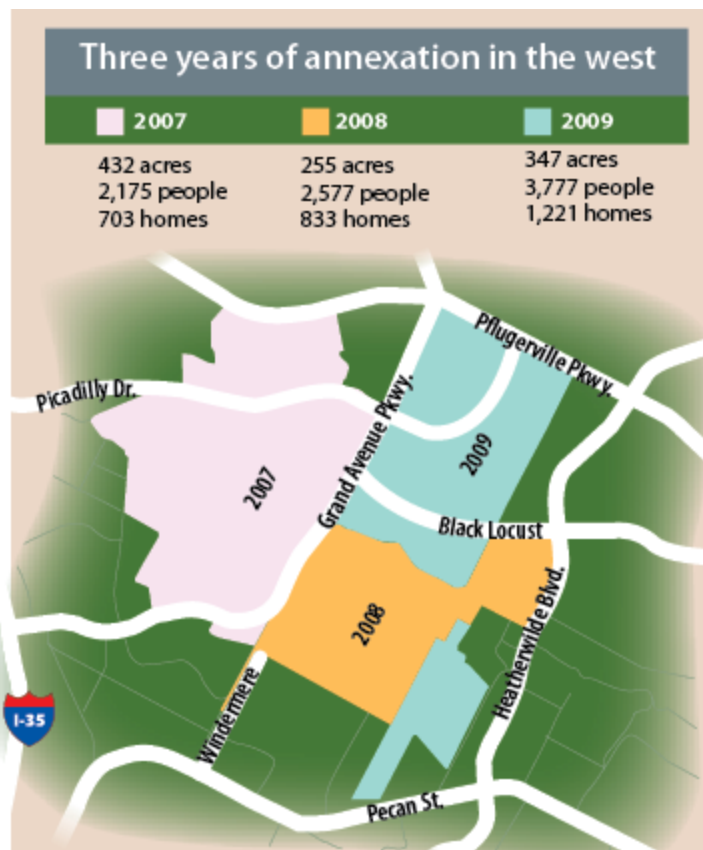
City impact

Once the process is complete, Pflugerville will add more than 8,000 residents from the annexation, motivating the city to begin preparations now.

This year, the police department alone will hire eight more patrol officers, an inspection officer and a detective and buy 10 patrol vehicles at a cost of \$1 million, mostly in anticipation of the annexation, according to city finance director Lauri Gilliam.

The annexation of west Pflugerville began in 2002 with a study that anticipated the city would collect \$4,394,838 in revenue from the neighborhoods, which included the ones scheduled for 2007-2009. In turn, the city would spend \$3,710,321 out of the general funds budget.

Fletcher said ironically many of the residents notified about the annexation thought they already lived in the city limits because their mailing address includes the city name.



However, parts of major corridors such as Grand Avenue Parkway are in the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction, the land Pflugerville had the exclusive right to annex.

That meant residents living in those areas did not pay city property taxes and, in turn, did not receive city services such as police patrol and response.

"The premise of annexation is to recoup the revenue from entities that are using our parks, streets and other services, but not paying for them," Fletcher said.

The property tax bill

Changes in property tax go into effect the tax year following annexation. The city council approves new tax rates every year in late September.

BEFORE ANNEXATION (BASED ON CURRENT RATE)		Actual cost (for a home valued at \$150,000)
Travis County - 0.42160 / \$100		\$632.40
Pflugerville Independent School District - 1.47 / \$100		\$2,205.00
Travis County Health District - 0.06930 / \$100		\$103.95
Travis County Emergency District No. 2 - 0.10 / \$100		\$150
Annual total		\$3,091.35
AFTER ANNEXATION (BASED ON CURRENT RATE)		Actual cost (for a home valued at \$150,000)
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Travis County Emergency District No. 2 - 0.10 / \$100		\$150
City of Pflugerville - 0.619 / \$100		\$928.50
Annual total		\$4,019.85

Planned ahead

The first segment of the western annexation, which includes the Springbrook Meadows and North Park neighborhoods, will be complete this year. As required by state law, the annexation process began three years in advance.

Much of the mostly residential area was developed when it belonged in Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction. The City of Austin eventually released the ETJ to Pflugerville, according to city manager David Buesing.

The neighborhoods are serviced by private utility companies, the Travis County Sheriff's Department and the Travis County Emergency Service District No. 2.

"This area is fairly urban," Fletcher said. "They already have water and utility service. Their fire service by the county will not change since it is the same one the city uses. The most notable thing is when they call 911 they will not get routed to the Sheriff's department, and with the police, our hope is they will get better response time."

During the process, the annexation must get final approval by the city council after at least two public readings, two public hearings and negotiations monitored by a team appointed by the Travis County Commissioners Court. Stakeholders are chosen for the 5-member team.

So far, the negotiation process is complete for the 2007 and 2008 phases, with the 2009 segment preparing to enter this stage.

Earl Wellborn, the president of Windermere Homeowners Association, was a member of a stakeholders' team and said the annexation is an important step for his neighborhood.

"A lot of people do not want to pay city taxes," he said. "But people demand the services associated with it. I can't see us continuing as a donut in the middle of Pflugerville. It is a quality of life issue."

In return

City manager David Buesing points out these residents are not required to pay taxes until the tax year following the year they are annexed.

Some annexed in 2007 may not even pay until 2010, Buesing said, but he warns to prepare.

All three of the annexed areas will receive services including police protection, street maintenance and the use of city recreational facilities. An annual family membership to the Pflugerville Recreation Center costs \$160 for a nonresident. Once the annexation is complete, homeowners will pay \$125 for the same uses.

Due to the negotiations conducted by the team appointed by the commissioners court, the city can grant requests from interested parties affected by the annexation.

In the phase scheduled for this year, one approved request provided for planting trees and shrubs along Victoria Station Boulevard and Royston Lane.

The planning department said the city has between two-and-a-half to four-and-a-half-years to fulfill many of its obligations after the annexation. However, some “day-after services” must happen immediately as soon as annexation is complete.

One example is with the police department. With the final vote for the 2007 annexation scheduled for Dec. 11, residents in Springbrook Meadows can expect to see Pflugerville Police Department on patrol by Dec. 12.

Examples

STREET LIGHTING ALONG GRAND AVENUE PARKWAY

The lighting of Grand Avenue Parkway will be added to the city's Capital Improvement Project list upon annexation.

PARKS

The city will accept parkland from the Windermere Homeowners Association as a part of Pflugerville's park system. The Windermere Board of Directors may choose to withhold the Clubhouse at 16800 Gower Street, the office building at 16804 Gower Street and the pool at 16801 Gower Street.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Trees and shrubs will be planted along Victoria Station Boulevard and Royston Lane.

**Not a complete list. Contact the City of Pflugerville for comprehensive service plans. Visit www.cityofpflugerville.com.*

City services

All services must be offered by the city within two and half years to four and a half years after annexation.

- ✔ **POLICE PROTECTION:** Includes routine patrols, criminal investigations, crime prevention, community services and school programs.
- ✔ **SOLID WASTE COLLECTION:** Includes garbage collection, recycling, bulk item collection, brush collection or chipping for a fee. Residents may use a private provider.
- ✔ **PUBLIC STREETS AND RIGHT-OF-WAYS:** The city provides street repairs, improvements, inspections, street lighting and traffic control devices.
- ✔ **PUBLICLY OWNED PARKS, PLAYGROUND AND SWIMMING POOLS:** The city will maintain and operate publicly owned land facilities within the annexation area.
- ✔ **DEVELOPMENT REGULATION:** The city will enforce zoning, subdivision development, side development and building code regulations.
- ✔ **WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICES:** Most of the area considered for annexation is already serviced by other entities including Windermere Utility Co. Inc and Manville Water Supply Corporation. These entities will continue similar service after annexation. The city will have the ability to review fees.
- ✔ **SPECIAL PROJECTS:** The city agreed to several service requests and committed to resolving them as described in the service plans within three years of annexation unless otherwise noted.