



Annexation

City of Palmer

- The City of Palmer has an estimated 2014 population of 6,301
- Land area of 5.07 square miles
- Persons/sq. mile = 1,243
- Incorporated in 1951
- 1951 population was 890
- Home Rule City
- Ordinance 15 adopted Building Code & Zoning in November 1951

Palmer Annexation History

Year	No.	Type	Acres
1966 to 1970	3	City owned property	72.0
	1	100% Owner & voters	36.0
1972 to 1988	30	100% owner & voters	781.0
	1	Special election (1972)	9.34
1990 to 2003	6	Legislative	1,061.0
2007	1	Proposed for Legislative Defeated at final Council Hearing	3,817
2012	1	100% Owner & voters	0.34

2007 – Why Annexation?

- Limited acres available for new residential and commercial development;
- Residential subdivisions were being developed just outside city limits causing increased demand on City services - Library, Parks and Rec and Police; Fire protection in Greater Palmer Area provided by Palmer Fire & Rescue;
- Desire to plan for and manage future growth in the urbanizing area surrounding the community.

In 2005, City Council retained Northern Economics to assess the costs and fiscal effects associated with potential annexation(s).

Five potential areas totaling 3,817 acres were identified for study as potential annexation areas.


City of Palmer Analysis of Annexation Alternatives was finalized and presented to Council in July of 2006.

The Northern Economics Study anticipated 10+ years for annexation to take place. Full annexation would double the city's population and triple the real property tax base.

After reviewing the analysis in November 2006, Council directed staff to prepare petition for all five potential areas using the Legislative Review process.

First general information meeting for the public was held in February 2007 with the target of having a petition ready for the Local Boundary Commission to process for submission to Legislature in the first ten days of 2008 legislative session.

The proposed annexation area included 731 single family homes, 36 mobile homes, 58 multifamily units; 96 commercial structures, 1,135 acres of farms, and 204 acres of industrial activities.



March 6, 2007, Ordinance 07-007 authorizing a proposal for annexation of territory, approximately 3,817 acres, to the City of Palmer was defeated on a 2 to 3 vote.

- 200 attended public hearing
- Petition with 737 signatures in opposition
- September 2008 RFP for consultant to create an annexation strategy to help guide the expansion of the city boundaries in the coming years.



Consultants gathered information on 2007 annexation effort and on annexation in general:

- Two public workshops – held in facilities outside city limits
- Interviews with individuals
- Focus groups – farmers, community councils, Borough, gravel companies, Trails Council, businesses

What did Palmer learn?

1. Articulate clear goals for proposed annexation;
 - Economic development too vague
2. Proactively address issues created by annexation;
 - Current urban zoning districts not appropriate for rural areas -number of animals, burn barrels, snow machines & ATVs
3. Establish explicit approach to deciding when and where to annex territory .

Action steps taken:

Planning & Zoning Commission assigned task of drafting new Agricultural and Rural Residential Zoning Districts.

Planning & Zoning Commission has created map recommending primary annexation area.

Planning & Zoning Commission has recommended change from current code requirement that all newly annexed areas be zoned T- Transitional District.

- Development of Annexation Petition's Transition Plan should include potential zoning designations for land in proposed annexation.

Staff's lesson - Next time annexation is proposed:
Communication will be first priority – having information on a flyer is not enough.



Questions?