

## ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ANNEXATION TO THE CITY OF OROVILLE



**Q. Will my property taxes go up?**

A. No! You will pay the same amount of property tax that you have been paying to the County. You may actually receive more services for your tax dollars: examples of enhanced services include local police and fire protection services, street lighting (where currently available), and street maintenance services. In addition, some County Service Area fees may be eliminated with annexation.

**Q. Are there other taxes I'll have to pay?**

A. There is at least one County tax you won't have to pay, and there is one City tax you will have to pay. As a City resident, you will no longer have to pay a tax for animal control services. All City residents do pay a Utility User's Tax that applies to telephone, water and cable TV bills. The tax rate is 5% and 4.5% for telecom phone service. The tax also applies to PG&E bills on any amounts that exceed the baseline tax exemption. The City's PG&E baseline tax exemption is \$75 for gas service and \$75 for electric service. A sample calculation of a total monthly Utility User's Tax cost is as follows: for \$150 phone bill (\$6.75 tax); \$40 water bill (\$2.00 tax); \$80 cable TV bill (\$4.00 tax); PG&E bill = \$200 (\$60 gas = \$0 tax; \$140 electric = \$7 tax) – total monthly Utility User's Tax on these sample bills is \$19.75.

**Q. Will I lose any of my property rights?**

A. Restrictions that seem to concern property owners most are restrictions on open burning and keeping of animals. Like Butte County, the City of Oroville allows open burning subject only to obtaining an annual permit. And like Butte County, the City of Oroville allows animals to be kept in all zoning districts, with acreage limitations applicable to large animals such as horses. Other City property restrictions are similar to those of Butte County, although the City of Oroville enforces nuisance violations more vigorously.

**Q. Will I have to utilize City Trash Collection Services?**

A. Yes. Curbside garbage collection service is mandatory in the City of Oroville. For a 96-gallon bin the monthly cost is \$33.16.

**Q. Will I have to connect to the City sewer system?**

A. The City does not require properties to connect to the sewer system just because they have been annexed. The Thermalito Sewer and Water District already serves the area, and that will not change. Many homes operate with a home septic system. If you currently have a septic system, you will **not** be required to connect to sewer. However, if your septic tank system fails to operate under Health Department requirements, and there is a public sanitary sewer within 200 feet of your property line you will be required to hook up to sanitary sewer. Hook-up fees, construction assessments, and other costs are determined at the time of connection.

**Q. Will I have to construct curbs, gutters and sidewalks?**

A. The time of annexation is not the time the City requires property owners to construct sidewalks, curbs, and gutters on their property. For all City residents, installation of these street frontage improvements is required, at the homeowner's expense, when home improvements are undertaken that require a City building permit valued at \$52,000 or more. Actual construction may be deferred in certain circumstances. This policy (OMC 12.12.010) is currently suspended throughout the city at this time.

**Q. Will I have to pay anything to be annexed?**

A. It depends. The City will pay all application fees for annexation for any Thermalito annexation, since the City initiates or sponsors the annexation. Owners of property in other annexation areas may initiate and pay the application fees.

**Q. What's in it for me?**

A. Plenty! There are many City services available to you once your property is annexed:

- **Participation in local government decisions** is one of the best reasons for annexation. As a resident of the City, you can have a voice in and greater control over the decisions made about your community. And, you can run for City offices and commissions. The City is currently transitioning to district-based elections. Given the population of the Thermalito area, there will be at least 2 districts, which provides for two council representatives on the dais. This equates to 1/3 of the voting power of the council.
- **Police protection** is enhanced. Oroville has a full-service Police Department with officers in the community 24 hours each day. The Police Department provides neighborhood police services, real people answering the dispatch phone lines, and responses to emergencies of approximately four minutes. The Police Department is also involved with nuisance abatement, which consists of keeping the streets and alleys free of abandoned vehicles. And the City Police Department responds to all traffic accidents in a timely manner and tries to determine accident causes.
- **Fire protection** is enhanced. Oroville has made a commitment in its General Plan to maintain a first-response fire unit within five minutes travel time, for 90% of fire and medical emergency incidents. Additionally, Fire Department units are located and staffed to provide an effective response force of four fire apparatus units with a minimum of nine personnel to all areas of the City within a maximum of ten minutes travel time, for 90% of all structure fires. Currently this response capability is a result of the interagency South County Fire and Rescue Management Agreement. The City of Oroville's Fire Protection program has achieved a higher fire suppression rating of Class 3; consequently, City residents may enjoy reduced fire insurance costs. The City Fire Department also provides other services for special operations such as water rescue, confined space, hazardous materials, technical rescue, code enforcement, and public education. These services are accomplished through numerous interagency agreements. The City of Oroville's Weed Abatement program has resulted in very little loss or damage to homes within the City boundaries for over 4 decades. A result of the program is when wildland and vegetation fires occur, the fuels are so small that the fire is manageable and extinguished.
- **Public Works** services offer a major advantage to City residents in the area of street maintenance and repair.
- **Animal Control Services** are improved, and you will no longer be charged the annual tax you pay for these services as a County resident.
- **Low Interest funds for Housing Rehabilitation and First Time Homebuyers** is available to qualifying households through the City of Oroville's housing programs.

**Q. What's meant by Self Government and Home Rule?**

A. As a resident of the City, you will have the right to vote in local elections on issues that affect you and your neighbors and can also seek an elected or appointed position if you are inclined. As a voter, you can affect the composition of the City Council, as that governing body is comprised of seven individuals who are elected solely by City residents. Residents in the unincorporated areas of Oroville have one representative on a five-member Board of Supervisors serving the entire County.

**Q. Who should I contact if I have more questions?**

A. Please feel free to call or visit us at the City of Oroville's Planning Department. Our offices are located at 1735 Montgomery Street, and our phone is 530-538-2430. We are open during regular business hours.

**Q. That's it?**

A. That's it! Enjoy your increased services and your better access to Self Government and Home Rule by becoming a resident of the City of Oroville.