

Applying for Annexation to the City of Tucker, Georgia: An Informal Guide

By Libby Howze

Libby Howze is a community leader who, after her neighborhood was not included in the boundaries of the City of Tucker, petitioned the City to have she and her neighbors annexed in. As a result, the Westwood neighborhood and adjacent Wanda Woods were approved for annexation in December 2016.

- Determine if your neighborhood, street or home qualifies for annexation. Go to www.tuckerga.gov and click on the CityMap feature to find where the Tucker city boundary is adjacent to your neighborhood, street or home.
- If you qualify, talk informally with a few neighbors. Gauge their interest in becoming part of Tucker. Identify a core group that supports annexation and is willing to do the work to see it through.
- Meet with the Tucker City Attorney Brian Anderson and the two City Councilors who would represent you. They can be helpful to you throughout the process of annexation. They will review with you the criteria required by the State of Georgia for a neighborhood to be annexed, steps the City will take with DeKalb County after the petition for annexation is presented, a reasonable timeline for completing all the steps, as well as other topics you should know about such as what services Tucker provides, its sources of revenue and plans for growth.
- For a street or neighborhood to be annexed, the core group must obtain signatures from at least 60 percent of the registered voters living there and 60 percent of real property owners. (If an individual property owner desires to be annexed into Tucker and their property is contiguous with the Tucker boundary, they can apply on their own.) Because obtaining signatures can be a time-consuming task, the core group may want to consider going after smaller neighborhood segments if the neighborhood subdivision is large.
- As a core group, develop a plan of action with specific deadlines to shoot for. Everyone is busy, so being clear about what has to happen by when along with assigned responsibilities can help keep the process on track. Here are tasks that you may want to include:
 - Survey the neighborhood using NextDoor or the neighborhood Facebook page, for example, to ascertain initial neighborhood support for annexation. You may want to include the list of benefits your core group has developed.
 - Develop a set of questions neighbors may ask you, such as “will my address change? Will my taxes go up? Where does Tucker get the money to run the city?” Write down answers to those questions so that you are prepared with the facts and confident when you talk with neighbors. Post them on NextDoor as part of your communications plan.
 - Keep neighbors informed about the steps your core group is taking and the progress that is being made. No one likes to be blindsided or to feel they didn’t

know or have a say in what is going on. Communication is valuable for garnering support, understanding questions or fears neighbors may have and being able to address them. Keep Tucker officials informed, too. They can be helpful throughout the process.

- Obtain the plat maps you'll need and create spreadsheets for signatures and tracking progress.
- Celebrate your success and communicate it! You've done great work! Once your petition has been accepted, plan to throw a block party or neighborhood event when you think the timing is right!