

Racial Equity Pocket Questions - Public Hearing on Annexation of Property Contiguous to Town Limits

What are the racial impacts? Local government authority for annexation in North Carolina has been modified in recent years, significantly limiting likely annexations to voluntary, rather than involuntary annexation, with specific provisions pertaining to voluntary annexation by property owners in high poverty or distressed areas. The subject property is not in a high poverty or distressed area. There are currently no persons residing on the property that is the subject of a petition for voluntary annexation and a related petition to amend the zoning map for the same property. Decisions to annex property occurs after a public hearing is held, with notice provided via publication in a local newspaper. Research is needed to evaluate past annexation actions as intentionally exclusionary or having caused racially disparate outcomes.

Who is or will experience burden? Annexation itself can be seen as a burden, since it results in property owners having an additional tax responsibility, commensurate with the Town services made available. Incorporation into the Town limits may also increase development potential or result in increased escalation of property value. In all cases, only petitions for voluntary annexation can be considered, meaning the property owners have requested the action.

Who is or will experience benefit? Properties annexed into the Town limits receive Town services and are responsible for Town property taxes. Residents are eligible to vote in local elections, to run for office, and to participate fully as resident members of advisory boards and commissions. If a local fire district has provided fire service, the town compensate the local fire district with a prorated share of any debt that remains.

What are the root causes of inequity? Root causes of inequity related to governmental actions like annexation include overlooking the interests of historically Black communities/communities of color that may have been located on land considered to be of lower value/development potential or desirability and/or land where less desirable land uses – e.g. large industrial, large commercial or transportation with associated negative environmental impacts – have been allowed to develop; barriers to participation in planning processes and public hearings and decisions, such as access to meeting scheduling and content, lack of BIPOC representation amongst decision makers, and lack of transportation.

What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy? The location of a property might result in higher than normal cost of services and exceed the benefit to the rest of the community of the additional tax revenue.