




C I T Y O F
RENO
Memorandum

DATE: May 18, 2026
TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Jackie Bryant, City Manager 
FROM: Angela Fuss, Development Services Assistant Director
DEPT: Development Services
SUBJECT: Annexation Process Memo

This memo has been prepared to provide the City Council with a broader understanding of how annexation applications are reviewed. While this memo is not intended to be fully exhaustive, it is intended to address and clarify several recurring questions that Council members have raised during previous annexation hearings.

1. Who reviews a request for annexation in the City of Reno?

Response: Staff prepares a staff report, and the City Council is the decision-making body. Annexation applications are reviewed by the Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB), but do **NOT** get reviewed by the Reno Planning Commission.

2. What is the Sphere of Influence boundary?

Response: The Sphere of Influence is the land outside a city's boundaries that the Regional Plan identifies as the area the city is expected to eventually annex and provide services to in the next 20 years.

3. Who has jurisdiction to review land use and building permits if a parcel is in the Sphere of Influence but has **NOT** been annexed?

Response: An interlocal agreement was adopted in 2003 that defines which jurisdiction has land use authority in the Sphere of Influence. For properties in Reno's Sphere of Influence where the City has exerted extra-territorial jurisdiction (see question 5), the City of Reno reviews all building permits and land use entitlements. Washoe County reviews business licenses and has Code Enforcement authority over these parcels.

4. If a property is within the Reno Sphere of Influence and triggers an entitlement, such as a conditional use permit, or a building permit, are they **REQUIRED** to also annex?

Response: No, if the property is within the Sphere of Influence, they are **NOT** required to annex unless a condition of approval is added to a discretionary entitlement (tentative map, conditional use permit, etc.). The primary benefit to annexing is that the City gets the tax revenue. Annexation also triggers that police and fire services are provided through the City and no longer through Washoe County for development approved by the City.

5. What does it mean if a property is within the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ)?

Response: The extra-territorial jurisdiction is the area within the Sphere of Influence that the City has exercised planning and land use responsibilities per NRS 278. An interlocal agreement exists that lays out which processes the City and the County are responsible for. Generally, the City is responsible for discretionary permits (tentative maps, conditional use permits, etc.), master plan amendments, and building permits. Within the extra-territorial jurisdiction, the County is responsible for business licensing and Code Enforcement.

6. Can Reno impose city zoning standards on land that is within the sphere of influence boundary, but not within the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ)?

Response: The majority of land in the Reno Sphere of Influence is also within the extra-territorial jurisdiction boundary. However, there are a few areas, on the southeast side of Reno, where the land is in the Sphere of Influence but **NOT** within the extra-territorial jurisdiction. In these few areas, Reno **cannot** impose city zoning standards or process development applications unless the area is annexed or the interlocal agreement is amended to include the area in the extra-territorial jurisdiction.

7. Can an entitlement application be processed concurrently with an annexation application so that the project can be looked at with the request to annex?

Response: Title 18 identifies the specific types of development applications that may be processed concurrently. For example, a tentative map and a conditional use permit may be reviewed together as a single consolidated application. With respect to annexations, Title 18 requires that an annexation request be reviewed by the City Council concurrently with an application for a zoning map amendment and/or a Master Plan amendment when the annexation includes a proposed change in zoning or land use. If no change to the Master Plan or zoning is proposed, the annexation may proceed on its own. There are no requirements for an annexation application to be processed concurrently with a specific project, such as a conditional use permit.

Annexation applications are distinct from project-based land use applications. Unlike conditional use permits, tentative maps, or site plans, where findings are evaluated in the context of a specific project, annexation findings relate to broader policy considerations such as service delivery, logical city boundaries, fiscal impacts, and consistency with regional planning. Because of this, annexation applications require a definitive “yes” or “no” decision from the City Council and cannot be conditioned.