



City of Snoqualmie

Mill Planning Area Annexation FAQ

Why is the City considering annexing the Mill Site?

The Mill Site is in the City's Urban Growth Area, and the City has been considering potential uses that might occur on the property for a long time. Both the Dirtfish Rally Car School and the Old Mill Adventure Park fit well with the City's focus on tourism. The whole property, as one of the largest remaining undeveloped sites in King County, could be a key part of the City's economic sustainability into the future, affording opportunities for recreation, adventure, an eco-park and green technologies. When King County invited the City to annex the Mill Planning Area, the City considered the pros and cons of annexation, and the overriding consideration for the City is City control of future land uses on the property and ensuring against heavy industrial uses in the future that are permitted by the County zoning.

How can the City annex the property without doing an environmental impact statement?

RCW 43.21C.222 provides that "annexation of territory by a city or town is exempted from compliance" with State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements. Subsequent actions required for any development will be subject to SEPA requirements, which may or may not require an environmental impact statement.

Has the City conducted a fiscal analysis to compare the costs of providing public services to the revenues to be derived from the annexed properties?

No. Whether the City does such a fiscal analysis is discretionary with the City. At the present time, there is no plan of development for the property. The assumptions about future revenues would be far too speculative. The City has considered the pros and cons of annexation, and the overriding consideration is City control of future land uses on the property and ensuring against heavy industrial uses in the future that are permitted by the County zoning.

Once the property is zoned and annexed, won't the property be able to be developed and used for any use allowed by the zoning?

No. The Preannexation zoning ordinance and a Preannexation Agreement with the property owners that the City is requiring prior to annexation will both provide that the only use allowed in the Planned Commercial – Industrial portion of the property is the existing rally car school until an environmental review, an Annexation Implementation Plan and a Planned Commercial-Industrial Plan have been reviewed and approved. Upon annexation, the property will be in "status quo" until these subsequent reviews and approvals have occurred. The Planned Residential portion of the property, which is relatively small, will require environmental review, an approved Annexation Implementation Plan (only one is

required for the planning area as a whole), and an approved Planned Residential Plan. Also, the lack of readily available water and sewer make residential development unlikely to occur until water and sewer service issues are addressed for the planning area as a whole. There are significant development restrictions on the Open Space portion of the property, which would allow only low intensity uses.

Has the City considered the maintenance costs and capital improvement costs associated with having the Meadowbrook Bridge and Mill Pond Road under the City's jurisdiction?

The Meadowbrook Bridge was recently extensively renovated by the County. The truss is estimated not to require any attention for 20 years, and the abutments, which were constructed to be able to accommodate a future two lane truss, for 90 years. Therefore, the financial responsibility for the Meadowbrook Bridge is not expected to be significant. Mill Pond Road is in poor condition, and the City will be considering a number of options if the property is annexed, which could include closing a portion of it to convert to a trail or riverwalk. Although there would be a cost, these activities would be a normal part of the City's public works and parks and trails programs.

We are concerned that the property owner intends to make racing the primary business at the site.

The property owner has informed the City that its primary business is the rally car school, including corporate team building, and use of the site for adventure events. These restrictions are incorporated into the Preannexation zoning ordinance and the Preannexation Agreement being negotiated, until all the conditions for redevelopment of the site, if it is proposed, have been satisfied. The City will not annex the property if the property owner does not execute a City approved Preannexation Agreement, which will include prohibitions on drag racing and NASCAR-type racing. The Planned Commercial – Industrial zoning would not allow converting the primary use of the site to a rally car or motocross race track for professional or amateur racing, and the City would not approve such uses as temporary uses / special events on an on-going basis.

The Dirtfish Rally Car School is an illegal use under King County zoning – how can the City allow it to continue?

The King County zoning for the Mill Site contains a P-Suffix condition (special zoning condition) that required a three-way agreement between the County, the City and the property owner upon "redevelopment" of the property. The initial determination by King County Code Enforcement upon investigating citizen complaints was that the Dirtfish use did not constitute "redevelopment," since "development" is defined by King County as an activity that requires a County permit or approval, and no County permit or approval was required either for the cleaning, painting and re-carpeting of the mill office building or for the business conducted on the premises. This Code Enforcement determination was overruled by the King County Executive Staff. The City agreed with the initial King County Code Enforcement assessment that the Dirtfish use did not constitute "redevelopment," and therefore advised the County that it was not interested in negotiating the agreement called for by the P-Suffix conditions. The County then requested the City to annex the property.

The Dirtfish Rally Car School violates the County noise ordinance, doesn't it?

King County Code Enforcement investigated this complaint and found the allegation was not supported based on decibel readings at the property boundaries. City officials have personally observed the rally cars on the track from various points on the property, and have uniformly concluded that the complaints of "noise impacts" from the regular operations of the rally car school are without merit, as the cars on the track are no louder than vehicles on the passing public roads.

The ESPN Global Rallycross event was extremely noisy and intruded on the tranquility of several neighborhoods – how can the City condone that?

Although the noise from this event did intrude on the tranquility of several neighborhoods, the event was allowed under a temporary use permit issued by King County, which was supported by the City. The assumption that people are entitled to be free of all intrusion on their tranquility is incorrect. Annual events in Snoqualmie, such as the Boeing Classic, the 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament, Railroad Days, Thomas the Tank Engine and other special events necessarily intrude on some people's tranquility to a degree. The City is not obligated to approve any temporary use / special event permit, and it reviews each application on a case by case basis, imposing limits on the number of events, dates and hours of operation, public safety requirements and other mitigations. The City however supports the vision of the Mill Site as an adventure destination to promote tourism for events, at which most events would not have the external impacts of the ESPN Global Rallycross.

Where can we review the Preannexation Agreement and the Interlocal Agreement regarding the annexation?

These documents are still in preliminary draft stage, and as such, are not yet available for public review. They will be posted on the City's web site as soon as they are available for public review, which will be when they are presented to City Council for consideration. This will be well in advance of any public hearings on the documents.

What further opportunities will there be for public comment before the annexation can occur?

Two public hearings are scheduled before the City Council on the zoning ordinance to become effective upon annexation. The zoning to become effective upon annexation is required to be consistent with the land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan. However, the City is currently engaged in consideration of the 2012 amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and all of the land use designation of the Mill Planning Area could be revised. There will be public hearings before the King County Council and the Snoqualmie City Council on the interlocal agreement regarding the annexation. There will be a public hearing before the City Council on the Preannexation Agreement with the property owners. Finally, there will be a public hearing on the annexation ordinance when it is considered. To be notified of future public hearing dates, please email Jodi Warren, City Clerk, at jwarren@ci.snoqualmie.wa.us.

Contact:

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