



A Realistic Candidate for Annexation

Bill Carroll • published in the February 2014 issue

I recently ran into a pleasantly surprising situation. We were preparing plans for a subdivision in unincorporated Pima County with a total of 16 acre-plus lots off of Bear Canyon Road. The only water service provider in the area was Tucson Water and we were notified that we would be required to sign a Pre-Annexation Agreement. For those of you that haven't dealt with these in the past, they essentially state that if in the future the City pursues annexation of the property, that current and future owners are supportive of the effort.

Because the property was low density residential, more than a half mile north of Tanque Verde with nothing but similar large lot residential to the north, I assumed that the City would not be interested in pursuing annexation. After a meeting with the City's annexation staff, I found out I was completely mistaken and that past policies of annexing only sales tax generating parcels have definitely changed. In fact they told us that if we were willing, they would annex us now rather than signing a pre-annexation agreement, the benefit to the City being an increase in State Shared Revenue.

The fact that one of the lots had a domestic well on it which the owner intended to keep, the public roadway had been approved by the County as 24-foot wide strip pavement and there were no required offsite improvements made us feel that we were better off getting approval in the County. After further discussion, the owner agreed to accept annexation—but to have the City delay it until after the approval of all construction drawings.

To our surprise, Tucson Water approved the water system without objection to the ongoing use of the privately owned well. It wasn't until we got comments on the paving plans that we got worried. In spite of the low density, we were told that they would require both additional paving width to accommodate on-street parking and curbs on both sides of the street. Although the entire development is essentially just one long cul-de-sac, the added construction cost would place a burden on the 16 platted lots.

Even more to my surprise the following morning I received an email from Mike Czechowski (Tucson Annexation Project Manager) that our 24 foot strip paving was acceptable to the City and that we should proceed.

I am happy to report that the City's annexation policies are not as they have been in the past, and for that I feel that we should all be thankful!

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