



## CITY OF FAIRBANKS

Terry Strle, Mayor

800 CUSHMAN STREET

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701-4615

OFFICE: 907-459-6793

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tmstrle@ci.fairbanks.ak.us

February 17, 2010

Representative Bob Herron & Representative Cathy Munoz, Co-Chairs  
Representative Cissna, Representative Gardner, Representative Harris,  
Representative Keller, and Representative Millett -  
Members of House Community & Regional Affairs Committee

**RE: HJR 39; City of Fairbanks Annexation**

Dear Representatives:

I plan to testify at the February 23<sup>rd</sup> hearing on this matter. Attached is additional information. The Local Boundary Commission's decision was well-reasoned and supported by an extensive record and exhaustive review. The City Council authorized this very small annexation of the so-called "enclave lots" on Park & Riverside Drives (basically surrounded by the City), and the Fred Meyer Subdivision which is contiguous to the City.

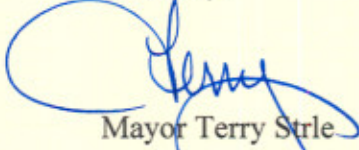
The City followed the procedures authorized by the State's voters, found at Article X, Section 12 of the Alaska Constitution, as well as state statute and regulation. This method was used recently by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and City of Homer without legislative veto. The Fairbanks North Star Borough recently properly applied state statute to annex territory to various fire service areas without an election in order to provide better fire protection.

As the Local Boundary Commission noted:

*"A majority of commission members felt it necessary to consider essential municipal services in a broad sense. The FNSB cannot provide police services, or building and fire code inspection and enforcement. The City of Fairbanks provides these services within its limits and has the capability to extend essential municipal service into the territories proposed for annexation. When considering the basket of essential municipal services, the commission finds that no other city, borough, or borough service area can provide essential municipal services on a more efficient and more effective basis."*

Thank you for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Terry Strle", is written over the printed name "Mayor Terry Strle".

Mayor Terry Strle

cc: ~~Members~~ of Interior Delegation

Attachments:

1. Annexation Fact Sheet.
2. Affidavit of Marc Dumas, MD (uncontested evidence that City can provide high quality emergency medical service to Fred Meyer Subdivision).
3. Comments from City Fire Chief Warren Cummings. (City ability to provide quality fire and EMS to area).
4. Letter of Support from Alaska State Troopers.
5. Letter of Support from Cathy Schulz, Manager of Sophie Station Hotel/Apartments (located farther south on University Avenue).
6. City's Witness List from Local Boundary Commission Hearing



# FACT SHEET

## CITY OF FAIRBANKS ANNEXATION



### ***PURPOSES OF ANNEXATION:***

1. To extend full City services to two areas which are already *de facto* parts of the City and receive benefit of city services. The two areas are referred to as the Fred Meyer Subdivision ("FMS") and the "Enclave Lots." Maps of both areas are attached. The FMS, pictured above, includes three businesses: the Fred Meyer West store, Taco Bell and a branch of Mt. McKinley Bank. The Safeway store and several ancillary retail facilities, in the foreground of the picture, are **within** the City limits.
2. To strengthen the ability of the existing City to provide essential municipal services to the vast majority of Interior residents who live, work, shop, attend schools, or engage in recreation in the City.

### ***ANNEXATION WILL PROVIDE IMPROVED PUBLIC SAFETY:***

1. Marc Dumas MD, an emergency medical specialist, testified that City paramedics provide a higher level of service than UFSA EMT students (from sub-station that is not always staffed). No other doctor testified to the contrary.
2. The FMS is within national response standards for EMS and fire service. The Manager of the Sophie Station Hotel/Apartments – located further south on South University Avenue. – wrote a letter of support, noting the good service they receive.
3. City is the only provider of bank robbery deterrent system to serve banks at FMS.

For additional information please contact Mayor Terry Strle  
[tmstrle@ci.fairbanks.ak.us](mailto:tmstrle@ci.fairbanks.ak.us) 459-6793



4. Any major incident in our community requires mutual aide, which remains in place.
5. **The City Police Department offers a far higher level of police service than provided by the Alaska State Troopers—nearly three times the number of officers per capita.** The Troopers have approximately 52 budgeted Trooper positions for the entire “D Detachment” which includes over 100,000 people in 205,000 square miles with 30 Alaska Native villages and 20 highway communities. The Troopers also submitted a letter of support.

#### ***EXTENSIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT***

- **None of the affected property owners at the Fred Meyer Subdivision filed any written or oral objection to the Local Boundary Commission regarding the annexation.** (*Fred Meyer and Mt. McKinley Bank made comments prior to the petition being filed but took no further formal action during the public process*).
- **On more than 17 occasions**, opportunity was extended to the public to make comments through advertising and/or public meetings. The process has met and exceeded requirements for public involvement and transparency.
- There were **over forty articles** in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* regarding the annexation and several stories on our two local television news stations.
- At the City Council meeting to consider the resolution to annex, only eight people commented, and a mere 13 comments were made during the FNSB’s meeting to consider a resolution in opposition. A total of **30 people commented at the LBC Public Hearing**. Compare that number to the throngs of people who have crammed City and Borough chambers recently regarding air quality, dumpster-diving, cell phone towers, junkyard ordinances or the use of fluoride in the water system.
- The Local Boundary Commission and the City had **direct written communication** with affected property owners on **four separate occasions**.

#### ***MINIMAL IMPACT ON EXISTING BOROUGH***

- The annexation will have a minimal impact on the University Fire Service Area 2010 budget: a 2.38% reduction of **\$52,000** from their \$2,188,040 budget. The University Fire Service area has the **largest budget of the five fire service areas** formed by the Fairbanks North Star Borough.
- The loss of revenue to the Fairbanks North Star Borough is less than **one-quarter of one percent** of their annual 132 million dollar budget.

#### ***ANNEXATION MEETS CURRENT LEGAL STANDARDS SET BY STATUTE & REGULATION***

- This modest annexation followed the same standards recently used – for much larger areas -- by the City of Homer and Ketchikan Gateway Borough. Neither was vetoed by

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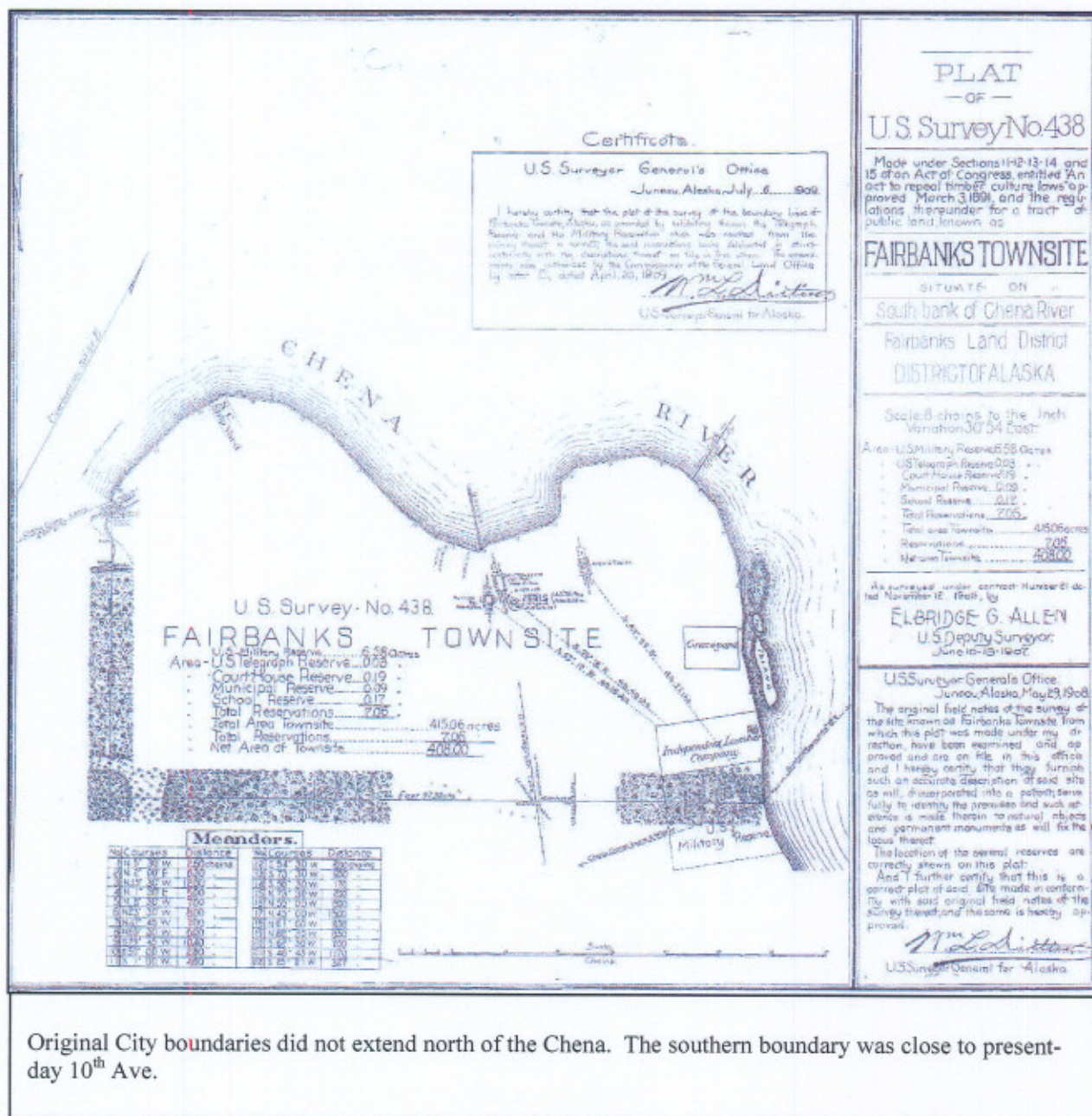
the legislature. Even if legislature wishes to make prospective change, it should not treat this annexation differently than others made under current law.

- Historically, other areas opposed annexation, areas that are now integral parts of the City. The drafters of Alaska's Constitution recognized that requiring voter/owner/borough approval of every effort by a city to annex would lead to weakened cities unable to provide adequate public safety for the community.
- The Fairbanks North Star Borough recently used an analogous statute to expand fire service area boundaries without an election.

Attachments:

Original City Townsite, circa 1908

Map of two areas currently proposed for annexation.

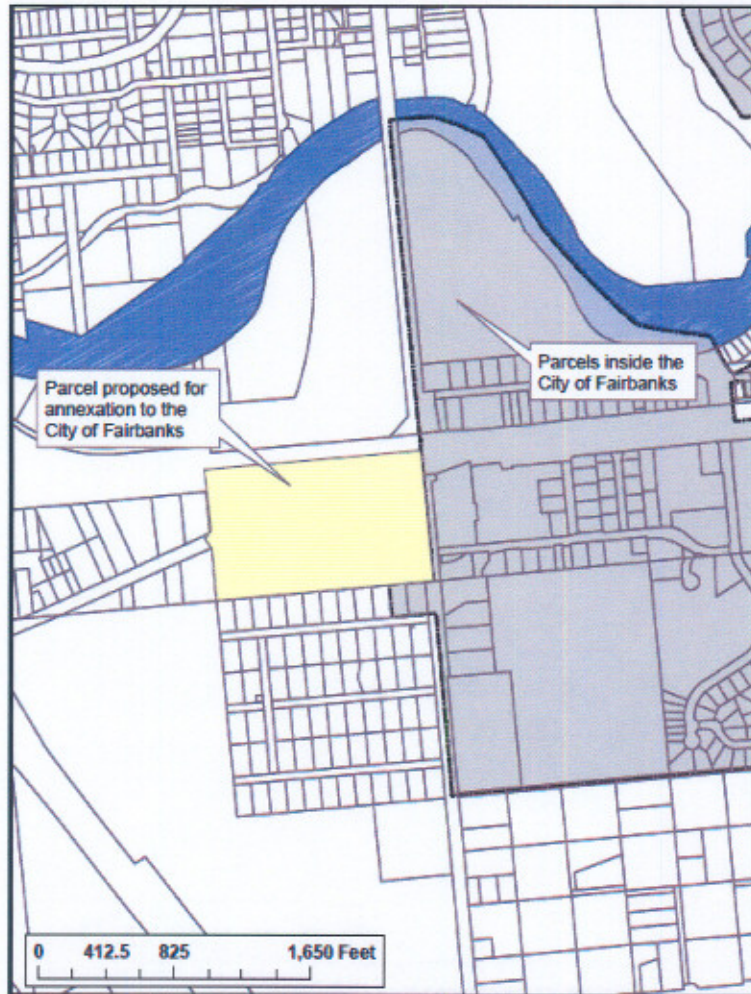


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### **AFFIDAVIT OF MARC DUMAS, MD**

I, Marc Dumas, being first duly sworn on oath, depose and state that:

1. I am a Doctor of Medicine, having received my undergraduate degree at the State University of NY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, NY, and internship and residency training at the Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, PA.

2. Emergency medicine is my area of medical specialty; I am residency-trained and board-certified in emergency medicine. I am a Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians and a Fellow of the American Academy of Emergency Medicine.

3. My employment history can be summarized as follows: emergency physician at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital from 1991 to 2001; practiced specialized sports medicine and orthopedics at Sports-Medicine Fairbanks from 2001 to 2003; served as a flight physician and Medical Director of Guardian Flight, Inc. from 2004 to the present. I also served as the Medical Director of the Yukon Flats Health Center for the last 4 years.

4. I am currently engaged as the Medical Director for the City of Fairbanks Fire Department and have been for the past five years. I am well aware of the training, education, practical experience of the City's paramedics and EMTs. On a weekly basis, I conduct routine training of City EMS staff, review the ambulance responses, and interact with the City EMS staff to the point where I have an informed opinion as to the level of service they provide.

5. The level of skill and training required to become and remain a paramedic is much greater than that required for an EMT III. To become a paramedic requires more than 1,200 hours of classroom study and clinical training. By comparison, only 240 hours are required to be certified as a EMT III

6. In addition to training and education, it is vitally important that paramedics handle a certain volume of patients to maintain their skills set. The City EMS program responded to 3,352 calls in 2008 (roughly one call every three hours); this level of response provides the opportunity for the City paramedics and EMTs to see a wide variety of medical situations.

7. The City EMS program provides a highly qualified service to the patients treated that in many cases has saved lives, reduced suffering and aided to patient treatment. A large part of the City's success is due to the fact that the City provides fulltime paramedic level care and




the fact that at least two paramedics are always on duty. Because the City now employs 17 paramedics, there are usually 2-5 actually on duty; (and sometimes 6).

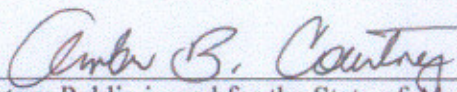
8. Full-time paramedic level EMS service provides a higher level of essential public emergency medical service than EMT level service, even in situations that are not life-threatening.

9. EMT level responders, particularly when new to the field, would not always be able to determine if a patient would be better served by a paramedic.

10. The advantages of offering higher level paramedic level service are significant, and the City EMS could adequately respond to the Fred Meyer Subdivision and offer a higher level of emergency medical care. Even with the current number of paramedics and EMTs, the City of Fairbanks can offer a higher level of EMS service to the Fred Meyer Subdivision than an agency which does not offer full-time paramedic level EMS. To put it colloquially, when your life or the life of a loved one is on the line, who do you want landing your disabled jet on the Hudson River; a pilot with 19,000 hours of stick time and advanced training, or the pilot of a twin engine commuter aircraft with 100 hours in type?

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Marc Dumas, M.D.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this 8th day of May, 2009.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska  
My commission expires: 9/11/2011





## Comments for House Community & Regional Affairs Committee

City of Fairbanks Fire Chief Warren B. Cummings:

I've been employed by the City of Fairbanks since 1972 and have had operational control of the Fire Department since 1994.

The City of Fairbanks currently has 44 employees. The national average "staff per 1000 population" for fire personnel is 1.71. The City of Fairbanks currently exceeds that standard: we are currently staffed at 1.93 per thousand.

In 2008, we had 4186 calls, 834 fire and 3352 ambulance calls. We have a "save rate" of 99.18% on \$140,000,000 worth of property. We averaged 11.5 calls per day, which are chiefly ambulance calls.

A portrait of our staff:

Average of 17 years of experience, 10 with the City of Fairbanks,  
Our 17 Paramedics average eight years of experience as paramedics,  
15 of our employees are from UAF Fire Department/program,  
10 of our employees have been UAF Emergency Service Instructors.

Our response times for Fred Meyer is within National Standard Response Formula. (Note: our vehicles equipped with Opticom system, which automatically changes red lights to green as emergency vehicles approach):

FF Station 1 3.73 minutes  
FF Station 3 3.99 minutes  
National Standards – 4.00 minutes.

A comparison of our request for mutual aid and those made by the University Fire Department are very similar:

<b>5 Year Mutual Aid Request Average</b>	
City	13.7 requests per/1000 calls
University	13.0 requests per/1000 calls

We provide fire code review, inspection and enforcement along with fire investigation.

1. No onsite construction inspections were done for the properties located in the annexation area to ensure compliance with Building Codes.
2. Very few Fire Code inspections by State since completion:  
Fred Meyer last inspected in 2002  
Taco Bell last inspected in 2003  
Mt McKinley Bank Never inspected



The City of Fairbanks has a better chance of inspecting these properties just based on area of coverage. State Fire Marshall covers all of Northern Alaska versus the City of Fairbanks all of the property in the city limits. No different than City Police covering an area versus the State Troopers coverage area.

The City of Fairbanks had the first Class 2 rating in Alaska, but was lowered to Class 4 in the 1980's during the post oil boom downturn. In 1999 we returned to a Class 3. We had expected to be graded this past year but it didn't happen. Next year there will be an upgrade to the ISO schedule that will give bonus points for:

1. Fire Codes
2. Fire Inspections
3. Fire Investigations
4. Fire Prevention Programs

All of which will help the city's rating as they are provided by the City of Fairbanks. Because of our improvements since 1999, we see no problem returning to our Class 2 rating of 1980.

Note: Only 5% of Fire Departments in the nation have an ISO rating of 3 or higher!

The City provides the full package of emergency services:

- Need fire suppression? – got it.
- Need paramedic level ambulance? – got it.
- Need police response with traffic control, interviews, accountability? – got it.
- Need public works – barricades, heavy equipment, plows, steam truck? – got it.
- Need structural inspection from building department? – got it.
- Need electrical or Fire Code electrical inspector? – got it.
- Need coordinated dispatch? – got it.
- Need police or fire investigation? – got it.

We provide a higher level of all essential government services. No other entity can provide the whole package.

We presented supportive testimony from emergency medicine doctor, Alaska State Troopers and the general manager of a hotel located farther from Fred Meyer on University Avenue.





State of Alaska  
Department of Public Safety  
**Division of Alaska State Troopers**

*postmarked 04/21/09*

Sarah Palin, Governor  
Joseph A. Masters, Commissioner

April 16, 2009

Fairbanks City Clerk's Office  
City Hall  
800 Cushman St.  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Subject: Proposed Annexation by City of Fairbanks-Police Services and Protection

To Whom It May Concern,

The Alaska State Troopers has received a copy of the City's Petition to annex two territories in the Fairbanks area: the Fred Meyer Subdivision and the territory known as the "enclave lots" near the Chena River and the vicinity of Park and Riverside.

The City is certainly capable of providing police services and protection to these territories, both of which are currently served by the Alaska State Troopers. In addition, the annexation by the City would relieve the state government of the responsibility of providing local police services. Annexation would enable the Troopers to focus more efforts on the needs outside the city service areas.

Sincerely,

*Audie Holloway*  
Colonel Audie Holloway  
Director

CC: Brad Johnson, Acting Chief, Fairbanks Police Department



# SOPHIE STATION HOTEL

(907) 479-3650 • 1717 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709 • Fax (907) 479-7951

*Fairbanks, Alaska*

RECEIVED

SEP 06 2008

City Mayor's Office

September 4, 2008

Mayor Strle  
City of Fairbanks  
800 Cushman Street  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Re: Fire & Police Protection

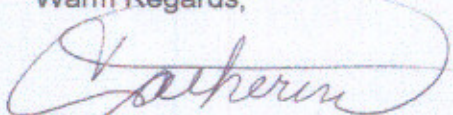
Dear Mayor Strle,

This is to acknowledge the excellent fire and police protection provided by The City Of Fairbanks to Sophie Station Hotel.

As General Manager since 1988, I have had the opportunity to work with a variety of city officials, Battalion Chiefs, and Police Captains. I have always found the service to be prompt, dependable and professional.

Thank you for continuing this fine tradition.

Warm Regards,



Catherine Schultz  
General Manager

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**Local Boundary Commission**  
**2009 Fairbanks Annexation Petition**  
**City of Fairbanks Witness List**  
**Listed in alphabetical order, not order of testimony**  
**It is planned that all witnesses will appear in person**

Name		Area of Substantive Testimony	
Attached Page			Est. time in minutes
CB Bettisworth, Architect, former LBC Member	1	1. Boundary decisions should be made in accord with regulations and not short-term local opposition. 2. Legislative review method. 3. City should expand its boundaries to include urban areas. 4. Territory is compatible and needs City service	15
Patrick Cole, City Chief of Staff	3	1. History of City Annexations & background of this Petition. 2. Research on each applicable standards. 3. Efforts to resolve issues with University Fire Service Area.	10
Warren Cummings, City Fire Chief	5	1. City Fire Department's operational capabilities. 2. Relationship between City and University Fire Department. 3. City Fire Department can meet the unmet fire suppression needs of the enclave lots and the unmet fire prevention & building safety needs of the Fred Meyer Subdivision.	10
Marc Dumas, M.D. Emergency Medicine Physician	7	City paramedics will provide needed paramedic service in the territory to be annexed.	10
Gregg Erickson, Economist, <i>Erickson &amp; Associates</i>	9	Annexation of this compatible territory meets regulatory standards and should be approved.	15
Vic Fischer	17	1. Constitutional preference for legislative review annexation. 2. Constitutional preference that urban territories be annexed to City rather than a service area. 3. This Annexation meets regulatory standards and should be approved.	15
Stephanie Johnson, City Dispatch Center Manager	22	City Dispatch center will provide needed integrated emergency service to the territory to be annexed.	10
James Soileau, City Chief Financial Officer	25	The economy within the proposed expanded boundaries would provide the City with revenues needed to provide essential municipal services on an effective, cost-effective basis and enhance the extent to which the existing city meets the standards for incorporation.	10
Terry Strle, City Mayor	27	1. Efforts to avoid conflict with Borough & Fire Service Area. 2. City boundaries should include territory that meets statutory standards for annexation.	10
Laren Zager, City Police Chief	28	1. City Police will easily be able to handle minor call volume increase. 2. Annexation will relieve the state of the duty to provide police service. 3. City already providing some police service to territory. 2. City is only provider of robbery prevention technology that benefits the territory to be annexed.	10