

Slaughter & Willingham guides clients through the process of **determining whether annexation is right for your city**. Our firm conducts an in-depth annexation feasibility study that will allow you to **make the best, most informed decision** about your community's growth.

Municipalities annex to:

Replenish inventory of vacant, developable land.

Guide the type, location, and quality of development on the city's fringes by applying the city's zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and other codes.

Provide necessary municipal-level services such as police and fire protection, garbage and trash collection, street maintenance and lighting, and water and sanitary sewer.

Protect the city's economic vitality by expanding the city's tax base and revenue streams.

A typical annexation feasibility study by Slaughter & Willingham will include:

- Land Area Definition: We designate and quantify potential annexation areas.
- Demographic Analysis: We determine the annexation area's population by race and voting age.
- Land Use Survey: We survey the annexation area to determine the number and location of structures by land use (residential, commercial, etc.).
- Transportation Inventory: Streets and roads in the annexation area are inventoried to determine street miles and general condition.
- Services and Facilities Inventory: We determine the existing service level for utilities and facilities in the annexation area (police, fire, water, sewer, etc.).
- Plan of Services: We provide the city with a plan for the timely provision of municipal-level services to the annexation area.
- Cost/Revenue Analysis: We conduct a detailed financial analysis of projected revenues and expenditures for the city and the annexation area to determine the financial feasibility of annexation.

Once the annexation feasibility study is completed, city leaders **are equipped to make an informed decision** about the **future of their community**. Leaders are confident in the city's ability to support, fund, and provide services to the annexed area.

When city officials decide to move forward with the annexation process, Slaughter & Willingham assists cities with expert testimony and trial exhibits to support the twelve indicia of reasonableness outlined by the Mississippi Supreme Court.

The annexation process in Mississippi:

Municipalities in Mississippi initiate annexation by adopting an annexation ordinance that specifically describes the area to be annexed and the resulting city after annexation and details the improvements to be made and the services to be provided in the annexation area. Once the board/council adopts an annexation ordinance, a petition must be filed in the Chancery Court requesting annexation approval, and the Court will set a hearing date. The burden of proof is on the municipality to show the annexation is reasonable. Even for annexations with no opposition, the municipality must still prove the annexation is reasonable. For annexations with opposition, a scheduling order and trial date will be set. The Chancery Court then reviews the proposed annexation according to the twelve indicia of reasonableness. An opposed annexation generally has a more extended timeframe before a final decision.