
Re: Opposition to Annexation of Portions of the Urban Growth Area

From David James <mrdauidgjames@gmail.com>

Date Mon 10/13/2025 12:27 PM

To Cassie Frazier <cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

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My letter below was too long for the online submission box.

Chehalis City Council
350 N Market Blvd
Chehalis, WA 98532

Lewis County Board of County Commissioners
351 NW North St
Chehalis, WA 98532

Re: Opposition to Annexation of Portions of the Urban Growth Area

Dear Councilmembers and Commissioners,

I write as a concerned resident to express my strong opposition to the proposed annexation of portions of the UGA. Expanding municipal boundaries before fully reinvesting in and repairing existing infrastructure places Chehalis and its residents at significant risk fiscally, operationally, and socially.

Below I summarize major risks associated with annexation and outward expansion, illustrated by real-world cases. I encourage you to review the attached source list to understand the full context.

Key Risks & Illustrative Examples

- **Fiscal liability & the 'Growth Ponzi Scheme.'** Many municipalities rely on near-term revenues from new development (e.g. impact fees, initial taxes) to extend infrastructure, but over decades the ongoing maintenance and replacement costs overtake revenue.¹ Examples include Kansas City, Spokane, Collin County, Detroit, and Cobb County.² In Houston, the expansion pattern continues to generate long-term liabilities.³
- **Deferred maintenance and crumbling infrastructure.** In Chehalis today, many neighborhood streets, curbs, and sidewalks are visibly deteriorating—cracked pavement, missing ADA ramps, and aging utilities are all symptoms of a city struggling to maintain what it already owns. When presented with a plan for a restored downtown that replaced crumbling sidewalks, roads, and pipes, many councilmembers balked at the cost of maintaining our vital downtown core. Adding miles of new pavement, pipes, and sidewalks without sufficient profitable density will only multiply this problem. Within a generation, these new fringe areas will face the same maintenance backlog our current neighborhoods are experiencing, but with even fewer dollars per foot of infrastructure to sustain them.¹⁵
- **Strain on operating budgets.** Low-density annexed areas often underperform in per-resident revenue yield yet demand full public services. Purcellville, Virginia is considering \$34 million in new debt to maintain expanded infrastructure.⁴
- **Dilution of core revenue productivity.** Central, walkable blocks generally outperform edge development in tax yield per acre. Sprawl tends to shift the tax burden outward, weakening core revenue sources.⁵
- **Increased cost burden and car dependence.** As neighborhoods become more dispersed, residents must drive more, increasing transportation costs that reduce effective affordability. The CNT H+T index shows how these hidden costs erode housing affordability.⁶
- **Low-density additions do not solve housing affordability.** While new subdivisions on the outskirts may appear to 'add housing supply,' they rarely create the kind of attainable housing our workforce and young families need. Low-density, single-family development on large lots is expensive to build and maintain, both for homeowners and for the

city. It primarily produces higher-cost homes while driving up long-term infrastructure and transportation costs for everyone. Strong Towns and other urban finance researchers note that true affordability arises from incremental infill growth—the gradual addition of duplexes, small apartment buildings, and mixed-use housing within existing neighborhoods—not from extending the city’s footprint.¹⁵⁶

- Infrastructure failure and public health risk. Overextension and deferred maintenance can lead to failures with serious public harms. In Flint, Michigan, cost-cutting in water sourcing without proper safeguards led to lead contamination and widespread health and legal consequences.⁷⁸⁹
- Chronic fiscal stress & insolvency. When revenue growth stalls, maintenance burdens dominate. Flint had longstanding structural deficits, pension and legacy cost pressures, and growing infrastructure backlogs—factors that helped precipitate its crisis.¹⁰¹¹

Given these lessons, I respectfully request that you:

1. Pause further annexation and require a comprehensive, independently vetted 30- to 50-year fiscal sustainability study comparing annexation vs. reinvestment/infill.
2. Publish a fiscal productivity map (e.g. using per-acre revenue analysis) to clearly show where the city’s most valuable tax base lies.
3. Adopt a 'fix-it-first / reinvestment' policy: prioritize repairing, maintaining, and densifying existing neighborhoods before extending new liabilities.
4. Integrate a H+T (housing + transportation) lens into affordability planning so that 'affordable' housing truly remains affordable when travel costs are included.

Chehalis has the potential to grow in ways that build strength rather than vulnerabilities. I urge you to proceed cautiously, thoughtfully, and transparently, and to resist annexing edges until we can clearly prove long-term fiscal benefit.

Thank you for your attention and public service.

Attachment A: Source List & Cases

1. Charles Marohn, The Growth Ponzi Scheme: A Crash Course, Strong Towns (2020).
2. Strong Towns, Growth Ponzi Scheme — Case Studies & Examples (Spokane, Cobb County, Collin County, Detroit).
3. Strong Towns, The Growth Ponzi Scheme Revisited: Houston as a Case Study (2025).
4. Strong Towns, Growth Ponzi Scheme Leaves Virginia Town With \$34 Million Dilemma (Purcellville, VA).
5. Urban3 / Strong Towns analyses of revenue per acre in core vs fringe contexts.
6. Center for Neighborhood Technology, H+T Affordability Index.
7. A Case Study of the Flint Water Crisis: Legal Mapping Tools and Lessons Learned, NACCHO / Univ. Michigan (2018).
8. Flint water switch cost analysis and contamination narrative (Harvard “Lethal Water”).
9. Financial Impact of the Flint Water Crisis, University of Michigan / Michigan Journal of Economics.
10. CASE STUDY: City of Flint (MSU) — chronic fiscal stress pre-dating water crisis.
11. MSU and Center for Local Government Finance & Policy, Systems Framework for Meeting Local Government Service Solvency (Flint case).

David James

206-276-0476

175 Crego Hill Rd, Chehalis, WA 98532

mrdavidgjames@gmail.com

From: Karl's Desk II <Karl@bristolproductions.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 10:53 AM
To: Kate McDougall <kmcdougall@ci.chehalis.wa.us>
Subject: Thank you

NOTICE: This message originated outside of the City network - **DO NOT CLICK** on **links** or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe!

Kate,

I just watched the city council annexation meeting from 9/15/25. It looks like there are some tough choices to be made in the near future. I want to thank you asking the important questions during the meeting in order to fill in some on the important blanks rather than just going along with everything that was presented. I know annexation probably sounds good at first blush because of the potential new tax dollars that can be collected. However you were asking great questions about what it will cost to get those dollars. I don't know whether annexation is a good idea or not, but if we can't get the detailed questions answered accurately, it would be hard to make a educated decision. Many communities, such as ours, are facing extremely tough financial times right now, and the economy seems so uncertain. We don't want create a financial burden on our city that would increase our taxes, and possibly reduce the city services we receive. Why annex... what is the upside... what is the downside?

At this stage I don't know what is right or wrong. I do appreciate the work you and the Council, are doing to figure all of this out to make the best informed decision on whether to annex or not.

Regards

Karl Schmidt

30-Day Public Comment Submission

From Chehalis WA <noreply@civicplus.com>

Date Thu 10/16/2025 9:40 AM

To Cassie Frazier <cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

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Submitted on Thu, 10/16/2025 - 9:40 AM

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

First Name

Karl

Last Name

Schmidt

Address (optional)

101 Rainier Ct.

Chehalis, Washington. 98532

Phone Number

[3605703324](tel:3605703324)

Please provide comment/question below. If you require additional space, may email your comment/questions to cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us.

Alderwood heights is a gated community with private roads and gate. We have been told we will be able to keep our roads, and gate private. The city will not own nor maintain them. Is this true?

Type your first and last name below to acknowledge you are submitting public comment to the City of Chehalis.

Karl Schmidt

Receive an email copy of this form.

Yes

Email

karl@bristolproductions.com

30-Day Public Comment Submission

From Chehalis WA <noreply@civicplus.com>

Date Thu 10/16/2025 9:42 AM

To Cassie Frazier <cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

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Submitted on Thu, 10/16/2025 - 9:42 AM

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

First Name

Karl

Last Name

Schmidt

Address (optional)

101 Rainier Ct.

Chehalis, Washington. 98532

Phone Number

[3605703324](tel:3605703324)

Please provide comment/question below. If you require additional space, may email your comment/questions to cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us.

I know of one water system that serves Valley View Estates (some call it Prospect), Alderwood Heights, and about 13 other homes, that will need a costly update triggered by the annexation. This update could have financial and legal implications for the city. Are there other issues like this that you know about, and if so, have you figured these into the cost of annexation? Are there plans for paying for and being able to manage these projects without creating a financial burden by on your tax payers?

Type your first and last name below to acknowledge you are submitting public comment to the City of Chehalis.

Karl Schmidt

Receive an email copy of this form.

Yes

Email

karl@bristolproductions.com

30-Day Public Comment Submission

From Chehalis WA <noreply@civicplus.com>

Date Thu 10/16/2025 9:44 AM

To Cassie Frazier <cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

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Submitted on Thu, 10/16/2025 - 9:44 AM

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

First Name

Karl

Last Name

Schmidt

Address (optional)

101 Rainier Ct.

Chehalis, Washington. 98532

Phone Number

[3605703324](tel:3605703324)

Please provide comment/question below. If you require additional space, may email your comment/questions to cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us.

What are the advantages for the Lewis county residents that will be annexed into the city of Chehalis?
And what are the disadvantages?

Type your first and last name below to acknowledge you are submitting public comment to the City of Chehalis.

Karl Schmidt

Receive an email copy of this form.

Yes

Email

karl@bristolproductions.com

30-Day Public Comment Submission

From Chehalis WA <noreply@civicplus.com>

Date Thu 10/16/2025 9:45 AM

To Cassie Frazier <cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

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Submitted on Thu, 10/16/2025 - 9:45 AM

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

First Name

Karl

Last Name

Schmidt

Address (optional)

101 Rainier Ct.

Chehalis, Washington. 98532

Phone Number

[3605703324](tel:3605703324)

Please provide comment/question below. If you require additional space, may email your comment/questions to cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us.

Do you have to annex the full urban growth area, or can you do selective annexation? If selective, why are you choosing to annex all of UGA.

Type your first and last name below to acknowledge you are submitting public comment to the City of Chehalis.

Karl Schmidt

Receive an email copy of this form.

Yes

Email

karl@bristolproductions.com

30-Day Public Comment Submission

From Chehalis WA <noreply@civicplus.com>
Date Thu 10/16/2025 9:59 AM
To Cassie Frazier <cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

NOTICE: This message originated outside of the City network - **DO NOT CLICK** on **links** or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe!

Submitted on Thu, 10/16/2025 - 9:59 AM

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Today's Date

2025-10-16

First Name

Michelle

Last Name

Weber

Address (optional)

4300 E Camelback Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85018, Arizona. 85020

Phone Number

[602-725-0736](tel:602-725-0736)

Please provide comment/question below. If you require additional space, may email your comment/questions to cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us.

CRG Development is in favor of the annexation, and we look forward to attending the 10/20 public hearing.

Type your first and last name below to acknowledge you are submitting public comment to the City of Chehalis.

Michelle Weber

Receive an email copy of this form.

Yes

Email

weberm@realcrg.com

From: Tim Potter timandkids@icloud.com
Subject: Chehalis Annexation
Date: Oct 14, 2025 at 12:12:51PM
To: timandkids@msn.com

RECEIVED
OCT 15 2025
BY: city hall (SBL)

To City of Chehalis,

Your recent interest in annexing the current Chehalis UGA has come to our attention. It is our intent to ask that our parcels while being the farthest south in your current UGA map not be included with this annexation. We ask that our parcels be rolled back into Lewis County jurisdiction. None of us have any city services other than water and the availability of ever having sewer would only come with a larger expansion of city limits. We live in a rural area of the county and never wanted to be in city limits, we were not asked if we wanted to be in the UGA. As we are the southern most parcels and are basically an island between Jackson Highway and Taylor Rd. We respectfully ask that you relinquish us from your current UGA map and return us to Lewis County jurisdiction. Thank you for this consideration and we will be waiting for your answer.

| <u>Name/Address</u> | <u>Parcel #</u> | <u>DATE</u> | <u>Signature</u> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|
| Timothy Potter | 017848002000 | 10/14/25 | Tim Potter |
| Lisa Potter | 017848008000 | | Lisa Potter |
| 102 Taylor Rd Chehalis | | 10-14-25 | Ashley Harris |
| Ashley Harris | 017848009002 | | |
| Judy Dillworth | 017848004000 | 10-14-25 | Judy Dillworth |
| Debra Harris | 017850003000 | 10 14 25 | M/M W/M |
| M/M W/M | 017850002000 | 10 14 25 | |

From: Tim Potter timandkids@icloud.com
Subject: Chehalis Annexation
Date: Oct 14, 2025 at 12:12:51PM
To: timandkids@msn.com



To City of Chehalis,

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Brian C Davidson
Michelle Davidson
Jim Davidson
Jennifer J Davidson

Parcel #

0178 4800 7002

0178 4800 7001

Tim Potter 360 807 3701

City of Chehalis Annexation - inquiry from resident

From Sabrina Kostick <skostick@ci.chehalis.wa.us>
Date Fri 10/17/2025 9:17 AM
To hilsunny@aol.com <hilsunny@aol.com>
Cc Chehalis City Clerk <cityclerk@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

Hello Chris Hilton,

Thank you for your call to City Hall. The public comment period was opened to collect questions like this. Your questions, as follows, are shared with the City Clerk via this email so they may be addressed. If you have additional information please reply "to all".

- Is Newaukum Golf Course area included in annexation?
- Is there a cost to parcel owners if their property is annexed?
- Is a change in utility service expected (water/sewer/stormwater/garbage)?
- Will property taxes increase?
- Is the City in financial strain?

The City appreciates your feedback, thanks again Chris!

Sabrina Kostick

Administrative Assistant to the City Manager
City Hall - 350 N Market Blvd, Chehalis WA 98532
(360) 345-1042



July 17, 2025

To: City of Chehalis
City Manager

RE: Letter of Support

This letter is to convey our support for the annexation of Lewis County Water & Sewer District #4 (District) by the City of Chehalis.

We are aware that there have been discussions regarding the eventual annexation of the District by the City. The board of commissioners for the District currently support annexation for the following reasons:

1. It doesn't make sense for there to be a separate sewer district within the City's UGA/eventual city limits;
2. The District has no staff and Chehalis already provides contracted operational and maintenance services for the District;
3. The District has had a hard time maintaining a board of three commissioners;
4. The District only has one board member with wastewater expertise and he will not be available in the future due to health reasons;
5. There has been a fairly heavy pressure from developers to permit large scale development within District boundaries. The District has a 4% capacity ownership in the Chehalis Regional Water Reclamation Facility (CRWRF) and as such the District is at its allotted capacity in the CRWRF. The District doesn't see the need to buy additional capacity in the CRWRF from the City for additional development that is in the City's UGA.

We look forward to additional discussion regarding this matter.

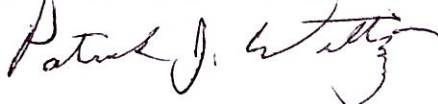
Sincerely Lewis County Water & Sewer District #4 Board of Commissioners


Shiela Unger, President

Cammeron Zuber, Commissioner



Patrick Wiltzius, Commissioner



30-Day Public Comment Submission

From Chehalis WA <noreply@civicplus.com>

Date Sat 10/18/2025 10:23 PM

To Cassie Frazier <cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

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Submitted on Sat, 10/18/2025 - 10:23 PM

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Today's Date

2025-10-17

First Name

Michael

Last Name

Holst

Address (optional)

PO BOX 1471

CHEHALIS, Washington. 98532-0406

Phone Number

[3602195900](tel:3602195900)

Please provide comment/question below. If you require additional space, may email your comment/questions to cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us.

If annexation occurs and housing is constructed, who/what entity will be responsible for the fire hydrants and the sidewalks for those neighborhoods? Will certain areas be reserved for construction of services such as grocery market, fire hubs, police hubs, etc.? What are the plans to increase/fund school busing as the population grows? The present population that pay school taxes/bonds/levies won't want to have this increased to benefit the new population. Thank you for your thoughts.

Type your first and last name below to acknowledge you are submitting public comment to the City of Chehalis.

Michael Holst

Receive an email copy of this form.

Yes

Email

michaelarthur4@comcast.net

July 17, 2025

To: City of Chehalis
City Manager

RE: Letter of Support

This letter is to convey our support for the annexation of Lewis County Water & Sewer District #4 (District) by the City of Chehalis.

We are aware that there have been discussions regarding the eventual annexation of the District by the City. The board of commissioners for the District currently support annexation for the following reasons:

1. It doesn't make sense for there to be a separate sewer district within the City's UGA/eventual city limits;
2. The District has no staff and Chehalis already provides contracted operational and maintenance services for the District;
3. The District has had a hard time maintaining a board of three commissioners;
4. The District only has one board member with wastewater expertise and he will not be available in the future due to health reasons;
5. There has been a fairly heavy pressure from developers to permit large scale development within District boundaries. The District has a 4% capacity ownership in the Chehalis Regional Water Reclamation Facility (CRWRF) and as such the District is at its allotted capacity in the CRWRF. The District doesn't see the need to buy additional capacity in the CRWRF from the City for additional development that is in the City's UGA.

We look forward to additional discussion regarding this matter.

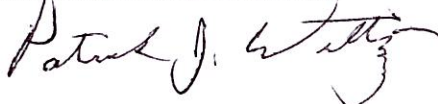
Sincerely Lewis County Water & Sewer District #4 Board of Commissioners


Shiela Unger, President

Cammeron Zuber, Commissioner



Patrick Wiltzius, Commissioner



30-Day Public Comment Submission

From Chehalis WA <noreply@civicplus.com>

Date Mon 10/20/2025 9:03 AM

To Cassie Frazier <cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us>

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Submitted on Mon, 10/20/2025 - 9:03 AM

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Today's Date

2025-10-20

First Name

Kelsi

Last Name

Hamilton

Address (optional)

144 Alderwood Dr
Chehalis, Washington. 98532

Phone Number

[3602696865](tel:3602696865)

Please provide comment/question below. If you require additional space, may email your comment/questions to cfrazier@ci.chehalis.wa.us.

I implore those making decisions on this issue to make sure you have all relevant information and data BEFORE voting on this matter. Citizens get frustrated when governing bodies vote on policies only to learn what is contained or outcomes will be after passage. If you need to slow this process down and wait for all the information I believe that should be done. Our citizens deserve to have an accurate picture of how these changes will impact them financially and for services so they can provide you with accurate feedback before passage. This might be a good thing and it might be a bad thing but none of us truly have enough information to say either way.

I'd ask you to slow this down and get the facts first.

Type your first and last name below to acknowledge you are submitting public comment to the City of Chehalis.

Kelsi Hamilton

Receive an email copy of this form.

Yes

Email

kelsihamilton@hotmail.com