

## Frequently asked Questions:

- Does the City of Cave Springs have the resources to support the added street maintenance and other services in the proposed annexation territory?

The proposed annexation territory includes very close to the same distance in public streets as the area being detached. Included in these amounts are roads which are partially in the county. In the past five years, the City of Cave Springs has completed 4 disaster recoveries, 9 drainage projects and resurfaced a record 34 streets. This is approximately 4 times the number of projects, repairs, maintenance, and improvements of any previous 5-year period, while upgrading equipment for efficiency and reliability. We have 4 planned resurfacing projects and a major sidewalk addition planned for this year. The City of Cave Springs will be able to provide necessary maintenance for the streets and other services in the proposed annexation territory.

- Does Cave Springs have the fire protection resources to support the added houses and area in the proposed annexation area?

Yes, the proposed annexation area in the west is more centrally located to city emergency services and closer than the area out east that is being proposed for detachment. In years past, the Cave Springs Fire Department was a volunteer department. Now the city has full time firefighters on every shift, which has resulted in faster response times. The city also has a new fire station at the corner of Highways 112 and 264. The fire department has mutual aid agreements with the City of Rogers and other area departments. We plan to renew these agreements, and update to provide for the best possible call response by the departments, inside and outside of their jurisdiction. This would allow for both Rogers and Cave Springs residents in the areas to be protected by both fire departments.

Currently, the Cave Springs, Bentonville, Rogers and Centerton fire departments respond to a fire in the area on the first alarm. The City of Cave springs will be able to provide necessary fire service to the proposed annexation area.

- Is Cave Springs already too stretched for resources to be able to repair water and sewer leaks?

The city is not stretched for resources. As with any city in Northwest Arkansas, we have been contending with significant turnover, and the city has to compete with other cities and private employers for prospective employees. The City Council regularly reviews and considers salary and benefits levels to make sure that the city can offer competitive salaries for other employers. With any city that has water and sewer utilities, leaks will occur. The city is taking a major step forward with the current construction of a major sewer transmission

line to the Northwest Arkansas Conservation Authority (NACA) sewer treatment plant. This line is set to be completed late this year and it will allow sewage from the city to be transmitted to a regional sewage treatment facility. It will also allow the city to decommission a current sewage treatment facility that has reached the end of its ability to serve the city. The city is also working with water system consultants to identify and resolve current water leaks and water loss in the city.

- Is the Cave Springs Police Department stretched too thin to support the population in the proposed annexation area?

Cave Springs is ranked second safest city in Arkansas, by Safewise, based on required violent crime reports submitted by police departments across the state. This ranking is weighted per capita, so a small town is at a disadvantage as 1 violent crime in Cave Springs (with a population of 5,495) would be a higher crime rate than 12 violent crimes in Rogers (with a population of 73,000).

The Police Department is not overstretched. The proposed annexations would result in a more compact coverage area for police protection. Also, the Cave Springs Police Department is in closer proximity for the provision of police protection than police coverage in Rogers.

The Cave Springs Police Department has been diligently working on a plan to make sure that there will be appropriate staffing levels in the police department to handle the additional population and school in the proposed annexation area.

- Are Cave Springs resources stretched too far to put a stoplight at the intersection of 112 and 264?

Highways 112 and 264 are in the Arkansas state highway system. The intersection of state highways is controlled by ARDOT. The city has requested a light to be installed at that location going back to when the stoplight was placed at the East Lowell Avenue intersection to the south. ARDOT's past response was that there was not enough traffic to justify such a traffic light. Several months ago, the Cave Springs Mayor had a meeting with ARDOT officials regarding the Highway 112 relocation project and it was reiterated that this intersection was hazardous and needed attention now. The city therefore asked for a temporary light at this intersection until the completion of the Highway 112 relocation project. ARDOT conducted a traffic study at that intersection and agreed that the current traffic justifies a stoplight at the intersection. Cave Springs and ARDOT are now working towards temporary light at that intersection. The city recently met with the engineers and ARDOT and the engineering is nearing completion. Soon a permit will be requested, and the light will be installed. This issue was not a matter of stretched

resources, but rather it was about state control of state highways. Also, keep in mind that the state has a project to complete a new Highway 112 alignment through Cave Springs. This project has been significant, and the city has been working with ARDOT for years to improve the alignment and safety of this project.

- How can Cave Springs provide emergency services to the school, if there is a fire, trespasser, or an active shooter situation? Can the Cave Springs Fire Department provide resources to assist the school?

The Cave Springs Police Department is working with the Bentonville School District to have a school resource officer in place. Evening Star Elementary will be the only school in Cave Springs, so an SRO will not be shared with 2 other elementary schools as occurs now. The Cave Springs Fire Department has full-time firefighters on each shift. We also have mutual aid agreements with other area departments that will cover Evening Star Elementary. A significant event involving the school, would see response from multiple departments. Cave Springs responds to other departments' mutual aid requests and the others do for us.

- With Rogers ISO rating of 1 and Cave Springs' a rating of 4 how can both homes and Evening Star Elementary, have adequate safety? Would the land swap add pressure to emergency response systems, for all Cave Springs residents?

The land swap reduces the fire department's response area, with Cave Springs receiving more centrally located property. The ISO rating of 4 was excellent as a volunteer department. Now, as a fire department with full-time fire fighters on each shift, we have an improved level of preparedness and reduction in response times. Also, the city is planning the purchase of a 100' ladder truck for next year and the Cave Springs Fire Department is working towards a lower ISO rating reassessment.

- Does this set a precedence for the rest of the NWA area?

This annexation does not set an improper precedence. Cities have used the simultaneous detachment and annexation procedure for years to change boundaries to be able to better serve properties. In the past few years, this same procedure has been used by Springdale, Bentonville and Cave Springs to address areas that are better served by other municipalities.

- Is the land swap entirely political with Cave Springs wanting nothing but tax revenue and Rogers not wanting the area west of Highway 112?

The City of Cave Springs was approached with this proposal in mid-February, but for our city the issue goes back further. In the late 1990s, Cave Springs was split in half by a forced de-annexation through a new state law that is often referred to as “Act 779”. This de-annexation removed the middle part of the city and annexed it into Rogers. This is why there is a north and south half of Cave Springs. The de-annexation also left a situation where the borders between the two cities are complicated by a host of appendages and enclaves which makes providing service very difficult for both cities. The de-annexation left Cave Springs in a very difficult and vulnerable position that the city has worked very hard to overcome. Following the de-annexation that cut Cave Springs in half, the state legislature and Governor amended the statute so a city could not be cut in half again. Now if the detachment creates an island, it is not allowed to be considered. For the last 20+ years the city has been trying to be able to reconnect.

The City of Cave Springs is a welcoming place. For our city, this proposal reconnects our northern and southern halves. The western area happens to be an area that we have the ability to more easily serve through our utilities and will allow us to reconnect and focus our infrastructure growth.

- Have you considered both tax revenue and the costs related to implementation and continued maintenance of the land swap area?

Yes, the public works directors, city engineers, city attorneys, and others from both cities have held discussions about services, costs and benefits to both cities and the residents. This effort has been approached by careful preparation.

- Will the required utilities be expensive to connect and mean additional costs to all Cave Springs residents?

The City of Cave Springs will have a 12’ water main within ½ mile of the school before the end of this year. The city will also have multiple projects that will extend sewer services to the area as well. These are projects that were in preparation for years before this current proposal was known or made. An agreement between Cave Springs, Rogers and Rogers utilities is being prepared in order to allow Cave Springs up to 5 years to transfer water and 7 years to transfer sewer services to the City of Cave Springs. Until then, water and sewer service will remain with Rogers, and will be charged an “in-city” rate.

Due to growth, Cave Springs lowered both water rates and property tax rates in the past 2 years. This was a commitment that was made years ago and we are proud of the city for following through with that commitment.

- Would taxes need to be increased for all Cave Springs residents due to the land swap?

Cave Springs property taxes were reduced from 2.75 mills, the lowest in the area, to 2.64 mills a few years ago. This was done based on growth and needs. Cave Springs was the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest growing city in the state during the last census period. Due to sustained growth, and responsible spending, we were able to reduce our property taxes. Much of the infrastructure is already in place in the Scissortail area, and much of the expansion for Cave Springs in that area was already being prepared for. This will extend that coverage area, at a lower cost, since much is already installed, making it plausible that our rates may be able to be reduced a little farther.

- Doesn't the land swap create more questions than answers for the city, which results in more costs for everyone involved.

The cities have more answers than people realize. This was not entered into lightly, or without thought. Change and the unknown can be intimidating, but if you have questions, both cities will be having public hearings at soon to be announced times and locations. Anyone is welcome to call Mayor Noblett by cell phone at 479-644-3149 to discuss any questions or concerns.

- Will this create a negative impact on home values? How can worries about the land swap not prevent some people from looking to move to this area?

The area west of Highway 112 is at the western extent of the City of Rogers. Rogers has stopped development in that area, refusing to annex at least 2 development properties from the county. When a city stops development in an area, property values tend to decline. Cave Springs is currently expanding services into the area, with a focus on development that wants to come into the city. Cave Springs already surpasses Rogers when it comes to property values.

As of February 2024,	Cave Springs	Rogers
Median listing home price	\$589.9K	\$465K
Median listing home price/Sq ft	\$226	\$207
Median sold home price	\$490.2K (+6.5% Since 3/23)	\$428K (- 4.1% Since 3/23)

Cave Springs is Ranked #1 Place in Arkansas to buy a house, #1 Place to raise a family in Arkansas, #6 best suburb to buy a house in America and #2 safest city in Arkansas. The median listing home price per square foot is \$19.00 per square foot higher in Cave Springs than in Rogers and these sell for more on an average of 2 weeks quicker in Cave Springs.

- Why was there an emergency clause contained in the ordinance calling for the detachment of properties?

Ark. Code Ann. § 14-40-2101 controls the process for simultaneous detachment and annexation by two cities. Following the passage of the ordinance calling for the simultaneous detachment of lands, there has to be a public hearing held in within 60 days in the city where the lands are located. The notice of the public hearing, along with a complete legal description, must be published in the newspaper at least 15 days in advance of the public hearing. Following the public hearing at the next regularly scheduled meeting, the city where the lands are located can proceed with an ordinance to concur in the simultaneous detachment and annexation. This process is unaffected by the emergency clause. The purpose of the emergency clause was to be certain that the ordinance would be in effect for the purpose of performing the statutory duties with regard to proposed detachment, including the GIS coordination with the Secretary of State, the publication of the legal notice with a legal description and the public hearing.

- What is the timeline for the rest of the process?

Rogers is planning on holding a public hearing on the proposed detachment of the lands from Rogers to Cave Springs on May 14, 2024. In order to allow people attend both public hearings, the City of Cave Springs is planning on holding a public hearing on the proposed detachment the properties from Cave Springs to Rogers on May 21, 2024. After the public hearings, each city can proceed at the next regularly scheduled meeting to consider an ordinance to concur in the simultaneous detachment and annexation. For both cities, the next regularly scheduled public hearing would be on May 28, 2024.

- What happens if one city votes for the other city votes against the next Ordinance?

Prior the vote to adopt the ordinance to concur, either city could repeal the ordinance that calls for the simultaneous detachment and annexation of lands. If one city adopt an ordinance to concur, and another city fails to adopt an ordinance to concur, the Mayor of the city that adopted the ordinance to concur could veto the ordinance.