

**NORTH HIGHLINE UNINCORPORATED AREA COUNCIL
INTRODUCTION TO
INCORPORATION LEVEL OF SERVICE
August 18, 2005**

DEFINITIONS

Level of Service (LOS)

The extent to which a service is planned, budgeted and/or delivered

LOS Standards

Performance levels set to guide budgeting

LOS Metrics:

How level of service is quantitatively measured

TYPES OF LOS STANDARDS

Standards can be quite **typical** for cities of similar size for some services
. . . and quite **variable** for other services.

LOS Standards <u>Typical</u> Across Cities of Similar Size	
SERVICE	METRIC
City Council	Metrics not widely used: Budgeting levels similar for similar sized cities.
Mayor's Office	
City Clerk	
City Manager	
Office of Management and Budget Analysis	
Legal Services	
Human Resources	

Most cities of the same size (population) use similar levels of service for the functions listed above.

LOS Standards Variable Across Cities

SERVICE	METRIC
Planning & Code Enforcement	Permit turn-around time
	No. of complaints re: code violations
Animal Control	No. of complaint calls per 1000 population.
Parks & Recreation	Acres active/passive/trails park land per 1000 population.
	No. of programs provided
Streets	Traffic capacity measured LOS A-E
	Lane miles of pavement condition, 1-100
Public Works Utilities	No standard metric; varies with in-house construction of CIP, utilities provided, etc.
Police	Dispatched calls for service per capita
	Average response time for emergency Calls
	Average response time for non-emergency Calls
	Percent of criminal cases closed
Fire	Average response time per structure fire
	Average response time per Advanced Life Support (ALS) call
	Average response time per Basic Life Support (BLS) call
Library	# books per capita
	Library square footage per capita
	Size of system with books available
Senior Center	No. of programs provided
	Percent of eligible population served
Other Social Programs	No. of programs provided
	Percent of eligible population served

For these latter more variable services, existing cities can set the levels of service, based on:

- National, state or local policy or regulations
- Past practice or budget decisions (a “*de facto*” LOS)
- Community feedback and/or
- Professional experience (Department Directors, for example.)

In the case of **annexation** to an existing city, an annexing area will usually assume service delivery at the levels of service of the annexing city. In the case of analyzing **incorporation** as a new city, however, no such benchmarks are available, requiring reference to other existing (and perhaps nearby) cities judged to be comparable in some ways to the proposed incorporation area.

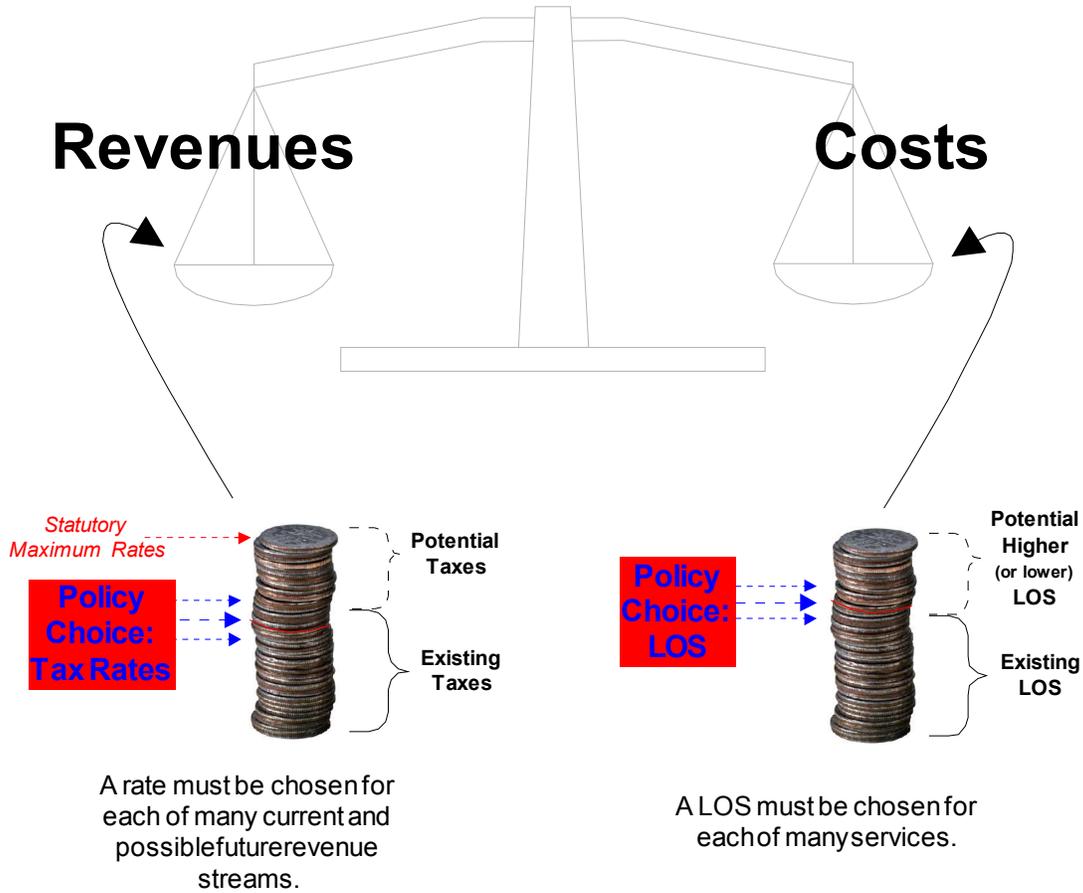
Several of these variable services are likely to remain “as is” under an incorporation option, as the service provider might not end up being the new city:

District boundaries are unaffected by incorporation.	District may be annexed back into by the new City
Water	Fire
Sewer	Library

UAC DISCUSSION ISSUES

UAC input is needed regarding: (1) what levels of service and (2) tax rates to use for in certain service and tax areas to assist the governance study in developing an estimated costs and revenues for the Incorporation Option. It is essentially a balancing of the pain of increased revenues (taxes and fees) and the pleasure of increased services. (See the diagram below.)

BALANCING TAXES AND LEVEL OF SERVICE



Prior governance studies used existing King County levels of service to analyze the cost of incorporation; at issue here is whether this is the same assumption that this study should use. A

detailed paper describing current levels of service, comparative levels of service in Burien and Seattle (where data is readily available) and several cities comparable in size to the population of North Highline will be provided to help address this question. The matrix below provides a framework for working through these issues.

Questions for UAC discussion include:

- Should this study use existing King County levels of service or other levels of service?
- If the latter, then should the study assume that Fire, Library, Water and Sewer would remain served by districts (as is) under incorporation?
- What other levels of service should be established for this study?

LOS Standards <u>Variable</u> Across Cities			
SERVICE	Not Applicable?	Set at Existing (Yes / No)	New LOS (Specify)
Planning & Code Enforcement			
Animal Control			
Parks & Recreation			
Streets			
Public Works (Utilities)			
Police			

LOS Standards <u>Variable</u> Across Cities			
Fire	?		
Library	?		
Senior Center			
Other Social Programs			

SUGGESTED APPROACH

1. This meeting: UAC discussion of general levels of satisfaction (or not) with each type of service now provided by King County.
2. Next meeting: Use public input gathered since this meeting – and detailed paper to be provided - to finalize levels of service for Incorporation Option budget development.