

# ORANGE COMMISSION OKS TERRITORY DEAL WITH ORLANDO

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## Document Text

Orange County commissioners Tuesday inked their half of a deal with the City of Orlando that defines which government provides water, sewer, police and fire services for thousands of residents into the next century.

The plan that commissioners approved 5-2 expands slightly the boundaries for city growth in the next 12 to 24 years. It allows Orlando to annex more land in east Orange County but protects the Dr. Phillips area in southwest Orange from being absorbed by Orlando.

City Council members passed slightly smaller boundaries Monday and are expected to quickly ratify the changes next week. County Chairman Linda Chapin praised the package as an "extraordinary agreement" that serves city and county taxpayers.

Commissioners Tom Staley and Fran Pignone voted against the plan. Both echoed the comments of several citizens and business groups who said the deal was being rushed to completion with little scrutiny or debate.

"There are enough important issues of public concern raised here today that makes me wonder why it's moving so fast," said Doug Head, chairman of the county's Democratic Executive Committee.

Pignone said she wanted more information on how much the city's potential growth will cost the county in property taxes and utility rates.

In response to the concerns, county officials presented studies showing Orange's ability to issue bonds will not be threatened.

County Attorney Tom Wilkes said that although the city can, in theory, more than double in size, it cannot do so without getting existing residents or large landowners to approve the moves.

"Before they could've annexed anywhere in Orange County," Wilkes said. "Under this agreement, they're promising to stay inside this line."

County officials hailed the deal for several other reasons:

The governments have defined water and sewer service areas regardless of future city annexations. That means both can build water and sewer lines without fear of duplication.

Two county areas hurting for centralized sewers, Lake Mann and Washington Park, will be served by the city even if residents can't afford hookups.

County Commissioner Mable Butler, who represents those areas, said, "It's a great day for these residents and a great day for Mable Butler. We've been working on this for years."

The city must try to annex Holden Heights, Lockhart/Fairvilla, Ivey Lane and Lake Margaret/ Conway by 1997. These enclaves are in the county but are surrounded by Orlando, making them hard for Orange to serve.

The big winners Tuesday include the Orlando Utilities Commission, landowner-investor Maury L. Carter and the developers of the Dr. Phillips area.

OUC now has a guarantee it will be able to serve an additional 13,000 acres that one day will have homes and businesses. The city-owned utility is battling Florida Power Corp. for the territorial rights.

Florida Power, which serves most county residents, had urged commissioners to reject the city-county plan, saying it would cost utility customers and taxpayers.

Carter and the Dr. Phillips Corp. also struck last-minute deals.

Half of Dr. Phillips had been in the city's expansion area. But developers didn't want the community split by future annexations.

Commissioners agreed and moved the annexation boundary from Dr. Phillips Boulevard east to the current city-county line at Turkey Lake Road.

That move also benefited Carter, who had been pushing to get approximately 1,000 acres he owns near the posh Lake Nona development included in the city's expansion area. As part of the deal, the city is being allowed to annex Lake Nona, and Carter wanted to join Orlando because he says it can provide his utilities faster.

Having moved the boundary in on the west for Dr. Phillips, commissioners were willing to shift it south and east for Carter. He promised to drop a lawsuit opposing the Lake Nona annexation.

"We wanted to come in, they wanted to stay out," said Carter's lawyer, Duke Woodson. "It sounds like a good deal to me."

### **[Illustration]**

MAP: Orlando/Orange County

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### **Abstract (Document Summary)**

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