



MEMORANDUM
City Manager's Office

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commission
THRU: A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA, City Manager
FROM: Jason Yarborough, ICMA-CM, Deputy City Manager
SUBJECT: Administrative Notice to Sarasota County of Annexation Petitions
DATE: February 26, 2026

This memo explains why it is appropriate—and often necessary—for the City Manager to provide Sarasota County an administrative notification that an annexation petition has been submitted to the City, before the annexation item is placed on a City Commission agenda.

Issue/question raised

A resident has questioned whether the City Manager has the authority to notify Sarasota County of a potential annexation request before the matter is formally heard by the City Commission, and whether such a notification implies City approval or “co-applicant” status.

Background

The January 15, 2026, correspondence to Sarasota County is expressly framed as a *preliminary notification* of a proposed *voluntary annexation* (approximately 3,148 acres, contiguous to the City). The letter also states that public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Advisory Board (LPA) and the City Commission “have not yet been set,” and that the City will provide proper notification consistent with Florida Statutes Chapter 171 once hearings are scheduled.

Administrative notice by the City Manager

1. **It is an administrative communication, not a legislative act.**
 - The City Commission is the decision-maker on annexation; annexation occurs only if the Commission adopts an ordinance after noticed public hearings.
 - A “heads up” letter does not approve annexation, does not establish policy, and does not bind the Commission. It is comparable to other routine intergovernmental notifications staff provides (e.g., courtesy updates on pending items with regional impacts).
2. **It supports due process and orderly scheduling.**
 - Annexation processing has statutory and procedural steps that require lead time (public hearing scheduling, required notifications, compilation of supporting information). Early county awareness reduces last-minute coordination issues and helps avoid avoidable procedural delays.
3. **It is sound intergovernmental practice—especially in a Charter County environment.**

- Sarasota County’s Charter provisions on Future Land Use authority for lands outside the Urban Service Area require coordination and sequencing with the County’s Comprehensive Plan processes. The letter explicitly acknowledges this Charter framework and states the City will follow the County Charter process regarding Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use and zoning designation amendments for lands to be annexed.
- Early notification helps prevent the County from being surprised by a major petition and supports a professional, transparent relationship between governments.

4. It protects City resources and reinforces the City’s neutral posture prior to Commission action.

- The City Manager can set expectations early that (a) the petition has been received, (b) hearings are not scheduled yet, and (c) the County will receive the formal required notice when that phase begins.
- This approach keeps the City in an “administrative intake and process management” role until the Commission provides direction through a public hearing and ordinance vote.

Preliminary notification

• **Does:**

- Alerts the County that a petition has been submitted and provides basic identifying information (acreage, contiguity, legal description).
- Clarifies that hearings are not yet set and that formal statutory notice will occur later in the process.
- Signals that County Charter processes will be respected for future land use/zoning actions where applicable.

• **Does not:**

- Commit the City Commission to approve annexation.
- Approve any development program, density, or unit count.
- Substitute for the public hearing process or public input.

Conclusion

The City Manager should be able to notify Sarasota County that an annexation petition has been received because the communication is administrative, supports due process and scheduling, strengthens intergovernmental coordination, and does not replace or diminish the City Commission’s exclusive legislative authority to approve or deny annexation by ordinance. The recommended guardrails will preserve that administrative function while improving transparency and reducing the risk of misinterpretation by the public.