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# Incorporation

**Q:** What are the benefits of incorporating our town?

**A:** There are a number of significant benefits to incorporation for our community, including:

- *Preserving and enhancing our community* — Incorporation helps us to protect and enhance our special community character. As an incorporated town, our ordinances would supersede County rules. That means we could decide our own destiny, instead of being subject to County ordinances, which aren't written to recognize our particular needs.
- *More accountable government* — Having a local town council will give us a more responsive government that understands this area. We will elect local people who are part of our community rather than being governed by five County Supervisors who oversee the largest county in the continental U.S. (and most of whom have little interest in our mountain communities).
- *Local control of zoning* — With incorporation, local leaders will determine land use and zoning issues like construction, short-term rentals, and revitalization of commercial areas. It won't be left to officials far away.
- *Local dollars spent locally* — Right now, Building and Zoning Fees, Business License Fees and Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT) earned here all go to the County and are spent throughout the 20,000-mile region. Under incorporation, that money would be spent here for the betterment of our community.
- *Improved community identity* — We would have a town with recognized boundaries and status acknowledged by other government agencies. That gives us a seat at the table in speaking for our interests.
- *Strong advocacy* — Our town leaders will have the authority to advocate on our behalf in any number of issues before other agencies and levels of government.
- *Better protection of our resources* — Incorporation offers the best way to gain some oversight of Lake Gregory and help determine and safeguard its future.
- *Improved community safety* — With the projected budget for our town, we anticipate being able to significantly expand law enforcement coverage. Currently, three deputies must span the entire mountain, from Cedarpines Park to Running Springs.

- *More income sources* — Incorporated towns have the ability to obtain Federal funding, grants and water rights. We could seek funding that we cannot receive as an unincorporated area.

**Q: Why incorporate now?**

**A:** At this time, we are facing a unique opportunity to incorporate. Our research is showing that the finances are there to support the new town with our existing tax base. Plus, other funds may be available. A proposed bill currently in the state Legislature (AB818) would return vehicle license fees to newly incorporated towns. And, the Committee is navigating this complicated process with the help of our consultant, the former director of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), the county-wide regulatory agency responsible for coordinating changes in local governmental boundaries.

**Q: What are the proposed boundaries for our town?**

**A:** The town would include the communities and neighborhoods around Lake Gregory, including Crestline, Cedarpines Park, Valley of Enchantment, Crestforest, Dart Canyon, Valley of the Moon, San Moritz and a portion of Twin Peaks west of Grandview Road.

You can see a map of the proposed boundaries [here](#).

**Q: How were these boundaries determined?**

**A:** These communities are in the service area and sphere of influence for Crestline Sanitation District. We considered other options, but ultimately took the counsel of LAFCO to use these guidelines, and from that, the [map](#) was drawn.

**Q: Are there any risks to incorporation?**

**A:** Any major new endeavor carries some risks. Here are a few we have thought about:

- Incorporation requires a grassroots effort fueled by an energetic volunteer movement and popular support. Getting the question on the ballot is costly and will require fundraising.
- The County is experienced in providing services, while the new town would need a fast learning curve. This would be offset by the new Town Council selecting an experienced city manager.
- The operating budget would be lean and require careful management and oversight.

- Without a full infrastructure, the town would need to contract for such services as law enforcement and fire safety. Our proposed budget covers these items.
- Some residents might not like having a town government enforce cleanup or other ordinances. We prefer to have the more local say in how our town is run and its future prosperity than currently available under County control.

## Local Control

**Q:** Is this just another layer of government?

**A:** We believe it is a more efficient use of government. With incorporation, we would transfer the responsibility for specific services from the County of San Bernardino to our own town. These include water, fire, law enforcement, building safety and planning, road, sewer, and parks. We would remain part of the County but be able to retain the Building and Zoning Fees, Business License Fees, and Transient Occupancy Taxes spent in our area.

**Q:** Would our services improve under local control?

**A:** Yes. An incorporated town would be more efficient, streamlined and responsive. San Bernardino County covers 20,000 square miles. County government can't possibly respond to the challenges of a mountain community on a timely basis. By retaining local control of tax revenues, our town management could act faster in our best interests. And residents would have a stronger voice in what happens here.

**Q:** I love our community. I don't want anything to change. Why do you?

**A:** We love this community, too. That's why we want to be able to shape our own future by becoming a legal township. We believe that's our best chance to protect and preserve our identity as a small-town community. Local officials and leaders who come from this area will better understand our values, current issues, challenges, hopes, and common goals.

# Finances

**Q:** Will our taxes immediately go up with incorporation?

**A:** No. We have developed a town budget for the first five years that relies only on the known revenues. And taxes can't be increased without a vote of the people in the incorporated town. However, if we remain solely under County control, we will have no vote on our taxes. We can safely predict that those County taxes will go up — and a portion of those won't go to our town.

**Q:** How would we pay for the services of our town?

**A:** Existing taxes and fees would be transferred from the County to our town. And, as soon as we are incorporated, our town can apply for state and federal funding that is not available to us as an unincorporated area.

**Q:** How will we expand law enforcement, and fund the special services our mountain community needs?

**A:** Our feasibility analysis shows that our existing tax base will cover the expense of increased law enforcement 24/7 and the other services we need, such as snow plowing, fire safety, and road maintenance.

**Q:** Other cities have gone bankrupt. How would we guard against this?

**A:** By electing fiscally responsible local leaders who will: 1) adhere to a frugal, lean budget, and 2) appoint a city manager who is a good steward for our town.

# The Process

**Q:** What are the costs associated with incorporation?

**A:** The application for incorporation must go to the San Bernardino County LAFCO. To get there requires:

- \$6,000 for a map and legal description of the proposed boundaries
- \$20,000 to LAFCO to start the incorporation review process
- \$20,000 in consultant fees
- \$50,000 deposit to LAFCO for a comprehensive fiscal analysis

With election fees, preparation of petitions and other costs, the total could easily reach \$100,000. We are raising funds through seeking tax-deductible donations that enable us to continue this important process. There are individuals who are also organizing some special fundraising efforts. Watch for information on these opportunities.

You can donate [here](#).

**Q:** What would be the name of our town and how is that decided?

**A:** Once incorporation is on the ballot, all registered voters will get a say in the name of our town. When we vote on incorporation, you will get to vote on the name of the town.

**Q:** Will we be able to vote on incorporation?

**A:** Absolutely! Be sure you are registered to vote so you can be a part of this important decision. To register or to check your status, call 800-881-VOTE or visit <https://registertovote.ca.gov>.

## Meet the Committee

**Q:** Who are the members of the Committee to Incorporate Lake Gregory?

**A:** We are a mix of community volunteers, representatives of nonprofit organizations and local business people. We volunteer our time to this effort and other community causes because we love our town.

Steve Garcia, camp director, Thousand Pines Christian Camp

Mike Johnstone, manager, Goodwin & Sons Market

Bill Mellinger, pastor, First Baptist

John Short, attorney, Brown White & Osborn LLP

Penny Shubnell, advocate for seniors

# Next Steps

**Q:** Will you be holding more community meetings?

**A:** Yes. Our next community meetings are Saturday, March 30 at 1 pm and Wednesday, April 3, at 7 pm, both at Lake Gregory Community Church, Crestline. Following these meetings, we will hold a Q&A Community Meeting to answer your questions. Check our [Facebook](#) for updates regularly for the date and location.

**Q:** How many signatures are needed to get on the ballot?

**A:** There are about 6,100 registered voters residing in the proposed area of incorporation. We need to obtain signatures from at least 25% of those voters — about 1,525 — to get on the ballot of the November 2020 election.

**Q:** Where can I learn more about incorporation?

**A:** Here is a [link](#) to our supporting documents and videos. We will be adding to these regularly. You can also visit our [Facebook](#) page. And be sure to attend future community meetings if you can.

**Q:** Where can I sign a petition to get incorporation on the ballot?

**A:** Our canvassers will be in the community through the end of June, and some local organizations will provide opportunities to sign the petition. You can also call us at **909-284-8217**.

**Q:** How else can I support the incorporation effort?

**A:** You can [donate](#) online to help offset the costs of incorporation and get this issue on the ballot. Any amount will help, and it's all tax-deductible. If you prefer to donate by check, please call us at **909-284-8217** or mail your contribution to Incorporate Lake Gregory, PO Box 2924, Crestline, CA 92325.

You can also donate your time to the petition campaign and other incorporation activities. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us at **909-284-8217** or [incorporatelakegregory.org](http://incorporatelakegregory.org).