

FAQ's

How will annexation impact senior citizens?

Enhancing college programs in the community will make higher education more convenient and affordable, potentially increasing the neighborhood's appeal and stabilizing or increasing property values. The HCC Board provides a \$90,000 property tax exemption to homeowners 65 and over to minimize the possibility of property tax increases among those living on fixed incomes. There is an additional 10% exemption or \$5,000, whichever is greater, for those who qualify under the homestead exemption. An educated population is important for all citizens – ensuring a vibrant economy and a safer community.

HCC will make continuing education convenient and affordable to seniors, encouraging them to pursue lifelong learning while providing access to such programs. Current research shows that staying mentally active extends life expectancy and improves the quality of life.

Can you explain how I will benefit from paying taxes to HCC if I do not have children or plan to take classes at HCC?

HCC not only enriches the lives of students and increases their lifetime income, but also generates government revenue, reduces the demand for social services and contributes to the growth of the economy. According to a recent economic impact report, taxpayer's rate of return for every \$1 invested in HCC is \$5.*

While taxes will increase in order to bring the community into the HCC District, the economic stimulus HCC provides will have a significant, long lasting impact on the community. This will positively impact area businesses, the local economy, as well as residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds by providing jobs and contributing to the economic development of the community. HCC provides affordable, quality higher education for the first two years of a student's education.

HCC is working closely with community leaders as well as volunteers and students who believe in HCC, understand the direct correlation of education and the economy, and demand expanded opportunity to higher education. The annexation would allow HCC to improve and increase support to students and the community as a whole. It will also help to ensure a safer community as there is direct correlation between higher education and lower crime.

We trust that as more information is shared, you too will begin to see the importance of institutions like HCC and the incredible return on every single dollar that it is entrusted to spend.

How much will residents' taxes increase?

The average property value of a home in Spring Branch is valued at \$167,960, and this homeowner would pay less than \$140 per year, or the equivalent of 40 cents per day. With only a 40 cent per day investment, students will have their tuition cut in half, approx. \$800 per semester. HCC has no proposed plans for a tax increase after annexation. (See chart for homes valued at various rates.) Without such resources, the college's ability to make capital investments in the community is severely limited.



With the revenue you will be receiving from the community, how much will stay in the community?

The HCC Board of Trustees commits its best effort to use 100% of the tax dollars from annexation to support education in the each of the communities. Local dollars will stay in each community, which will allow HCC to leverage state and federal dollars. Funds from Spring Branch will be leveraged as a startup. If annexation passes, we will be able to expand facilities and increase dual credit enrollment opportunities for high school students.

How have you been working with the community?

This is a community effort. This has great importance to Spring Branch as well as HCC. We are listening to each other very carefully. We are reaching out to the entire community to gather ideas and input. We recognize that for this to succeed long term and for the community to get the full benefit an institution like ours can provide, we must have a solid working relationship. We are working closely with community leaders, volunteers and students who believe in HCC, understand the direct correlation of education and the economy, and demand expanded opportunity to higher education. We are currently working to build upon longstanding, solid relationships and meeting with individuals and all stakeholder groups throughout the community.

What does this mean to Spring Branch?

The people of Spring Branch have an important choice to make about the future of their community. By electing to be part of the HCC district, the community will experience increases in services, programs and facilities designed for and with the community's input, significant reduction in the cost of tuition, expanded dual credit academic programs, an expanded Early College Program, as well as important initiatives driven by businesses and leaders within the community. In sum, this will ensure affordable, high quality college education and career training for the community – which will help to drive the area economy.

Is there opposition to this within the community?

We have worked very hard in the last several years, working with our neighbors and friends in the community to listen very carefully to what they want and need from us. We have many people who support the need to cut tuition by 50% and provide the community with important services, resources and facilities. In our many conversations, we recognize that there will always be individuals who are concerned about increasing taxes or who have personal agendas, but also recognize the vital role an educated and vibrant workforce can play in the community. We will continue to have conversations and work together with leaders around the community to ensure that we succeed in providing the community the very programs, services and partnerships that will help the community prosper.

Once Spring Branch is annexed, who will represent the areas?

Upon annexation, the community will have representation on the HCC Board. An individual who represents the area adjacent to you will serve as interim trustee until the next scheduled election or until HCC redraws trustee district lines. The next time the position is up for a vote, residents will have the opportunity to vote for the candidate of their choice. Redistricting will be done in 2011, based on the 2010 census.

What new workforce programs do you plan to offer at your campuses?

We want to hear from you to find out what types of programs that you and others in the community would like for us to offer. We will hold forums in the community to provide opportunities to solicit and gather input to present to the Board. We look forward to working with you to develop the programs that you need.

If the annexation efforts pass, what type of new things will we see in the communities?

Assuming these are programs and services the community does want, in addition to cutting tuition in half, developing an Early College Program, expanding dual credit opportunities for high school students, and continuing to build out facilities, annexation will allow us to explore other expansion opportunities and new cost-effective programs as the community continues to grow.

How many Spring Branch students are currently enrolled in HCC, what is the potential total savings, and what are some other important facts about the areas?

The following chart provides data on the Spring Branch community:

Spring Branch

Zip codes	77024, 77043, 77055, 77079 , 77080
Total households	62,702 households
Students enrolled in Dual Credit classes	519 students per semester
Students enrolled in regular classes	1,605 students per semester
Amount generated from communities	\$12 million
Potential expansion to serve	15,000 students per semester
Investments by HCC	\$35 million capital investment and \$16 million annual operational investment

Source: Office of IR, Fall 2008