

# Be proud of your hometown. It's a BIG part of what makes you the person you are!



Incorporating a town in North Carolina can have several pros and cons. Here's a breakdown:

## Pros

1. **Local Governance:** Residents gain control over local decision-making, allowing for tailored policies and regulations that reflect the community's needs.
  - a. County elections: Held in even-numbered years, along with statewide and national elections. County elections are partisan, meaning that commissioners, sheriffs, and registers of deeds are elected through partisan elections.
  - b. Policies and regulations can change with each election, so what's promised now may not be true the next 4 year term.
2. **Zoning and Land Use:** Incorporation allows for zoning laws, which can help manage development, protect property values, and ensure orderly growth.
  - a. This same service is provided at the county level.
  - b. This is the MAIN reason they're wanting to incorporate.
3. **Access to Funding:** Incorporated towns can access various state and federal grants and funding opportunities that may not be available to unincorporated areas.
  - a. The Bethlehem Community Plan was developed and approved in 2019 because there wasn't one. In order to be eligible for specific state and federal funding, we had to have one in place. The Bethlehem Community Plan was developed by a 12-person committee, consisting of people from the Planning and Zoning Commission, County Commissioners, County Planning Staff and interested citizens-at-large. This plan had multiple town halls that consisted of ~68 citizens in one, and over ~150 citizens in the second. (see page 5 of plan).
4. **Public Services:** Towns can provide essential services (e.g., water, sewage, police, and fire protection) more effectively and responsively.
  - a. Our county offers ALL municipality services using our current tax base: building code & inspections, street/road maintenance, water (limited areas), sewer (limited areas), police (sheriff), fire protection, solid waste collection (convenience centers), and zoning.
5. **Community Identity:** Incorporation can foster a sense of community identity and pride, bringing residents together.
6. **Economic Development:** An incorporated town may attract businesses looking for a stable and structured environment.
  - a. According to Govpilot.com, "Economic development means more business registration, construction projects, and new constituents moving into your city. An increase in tax income and application fees from construction permits and other licenses will continually flow to your local government for years to come."

## Cons

1. **Increased Taxes:** Incorporation often leads to higher property taxes to fund local services and infrastructure. This can be a tax on property, vehicles, prepared food, animal taxes, and real estate transfers.

**Example 1: Taylorsville Township** est. in 1847: 2.4 sq. mile, population 2,361

- Budget of \$5,609,205
- Taxes- \$.65 county and \$.35 city
- Services Provided: police, water & sewer, street maintenance, garbage pickup, fire/ems
- **Citizen Impact** - If your home value is **\$200K**, you pay \$1300.00 to county tax, and an **additional \$700** to the town of Taylorsville in property tax.

**Example 2: Connelly Springs Township** est. in 1920 and reincorporated in 1989: 5 sq. miles, population 1,529

- Budget of \$865,600.97
- Taxes-\$.56 county, \$.05 city, and \$.10 fire department
- Services: waste management, water and sewer (outsourced to other areas to make money for town), street maintenance, police, fire/ems

**Example 3: Hickory Township** est. 1889: 31.14 sq miles, population 43,490

- Budget of \$122,206,168
- Taxes-\$.3985 county, \$.455 city
- Services: waste management, water and sewer, street maintenance, police, fire/ems, zoning, transportation, parks/recreation, planning & development

2. **Regulatory Burden:** New regulations and ordinances can be introduced, which may restrict property owners or businesses.

- a. **Most Common Examples of Regulations:**

1. **Zoning Regulations:** Zoning is designed to limit growth, but can potentially stop growth. Without growth in our community our taxes will continue to rise, our school systems will continue to perish, and our voice for county, state, and federal funding will continue to be silenced.
  - a. Those for incorporation want to revert zoning back to what it was before May 2024, both the current and previous zoning rules allowed hi-density housing.
2. **Restrict Dogs and Other Animals:**
  - a. This can restrict the breed of dogs, quiet time, etc.
  - b. Farm animals can be restricted to an allotment amount per acre, and/or restricted altogether for some instances (e.g., residential homes).
3. **Restrict the use of Firearms:**
  - a. Hunting will be restricted in all of the rural 23 sq mile township
  - b. This restriction is so restrictive, it limits the use of BB Guns.

4. **Commercial Signage Restrictions:** Towns may regulate the size, type, and placement of signs, which can impact a business's visibility and marketing efforts.
5. **Building Codes:** County and Townships all follow NC Building Code requirements, but often townships will implement additional standards for construction and renovation, affecting how property owners can develop or modify their buildings.
  - a. Examples: outside appearance, building facing, residential designs, etc. Often includes additional regulations and specific rules for different building types
6. **Signage Restrictions:** Towns may regulate the size, type, and placement of signs, which can impact a business's visibility and marketing efforts.
7. **Noise Ordinances:** These can limit the level of noise businesses can produce, potentially affecting operations for industries such as manufacturing or entertainment.
  - a. Quiet hours to regulate loud noises during specific hours like vehicle noise, loud music, barking animals, construction activities,
8. **Business Licenses and Permits:** New requirements for businesses, such as obtaining specific licenses or permits, can create additional costs and administrative burdens.
9. **Parking Regulations:** Towns may enforce minimum parking requirements for businesses, impacting site design and usability.
3. **Administrative Costs:** Running a town requires a municipal government, which entails costs for administration, staff, and operations.
  - a. According to Salary.com, As of October 01, 2024, the average annual pay of a Town Administrator in North Carolina is \$114,682. The average range of Town Administrator salary in NC can between \$107,781 and \$121,219.
  - b. Salary.com also states that other administrative salaries like office managers, clerks, assistants average \$63,932+ per year.
4. **Conflict with County Services:** There may be overlap or conflict with services provided by the county, leading to confusion or inefficiencies.
  - a. Beginning 2000, ALL municipalities in NC must provide:
    - i. There is one service that state law **REQUIRES** each city and town to either *provide* or *arrange* for some other government to provide: enforcement of the State Building Code.
    - ii. Must choose from at least (4) of the following: (i) police protection; (ii) fire protection; (iii) solid waste collection or disposal; (iv) water distribution; (v) street maintenance; (vi) street construction or right-of-way acquisition; (vii) street lighting; and (viii) zoning.
  - a. ALL of the above services are **ALREADY** included in our current tax base within the county **WITHOUT** paying additional tax.
5. **Community Division:** Incorporation can lead to divisions within the community, especially if not all residents agree on the need for it.
  - a. This is disappointing, but true based on responses on social media.
6. **Complexity of Governance:** Residents may have to navigate a more complex governmental structure, which can be challenging and time-consuming.
  - a. Adds another layering of government to our small town.

Incorporating a town can offer significant advantages, but it also comes with challenges that require careful consideration and a community consensus. To incorporate, only 15% of the voting population is required to sign the petition. Once ~1500 signatures are received the articles of incorporation can be filed with the General Assembly. No vote, just 15% signatures...

## **Be careful what you sign. It impacts all of us!!**

**Additional Information can be found at the following:**

- Say No to Incorporation site coming soon to the following: [www.bethlehem.nc.com](http://www.bethlehem.nc.com)
- Bethlehem Against Incorporating Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/GpmazQYqsCmFSkn6/>
- Bethlehem Community Plan:  
<https://alexandercountync.gov/pdf/bethlehem-community-plan.pdf>
- Incorporation of a NC Town:  
[https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/additional\\_files/incorporation07.pdf](https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/additional_files/incorporation07.pdf)
- Summary of NC Municipal Incorporation Procedure:  
<https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/56137>



**No matter what the opposition with **yellow signs** tell you, if you sign the petition you're signing up to incorporate Bethlehem!!!**

**DO NOT SIGN THE  
PETITION!!!**