

BOUNDARY REVIEW BOARDS

WHAT IS A BOUNDARY REVIEW BOARD?

The Legislature established Boundary Review Boards to guide the creation and growth of municipalities in metropolitan areas of Washington State.

There are eighteen counties in the State of Washington with Boundary Review Boards: Benton, Clallam, Cowlitz, Douglas, Grant, Lewis, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Walla Walla, Whatcom, and Yakima.

The Board is a quasi-judicial administrative body empowered to make decisions on such issues as incorporations, annexations, mergers, disincorporations, etc., by cities, towns and special purpose districts. Each Board considers the effects of such actions by a city, town, or special purpose district (sewer, water, fire, drainage improvement, drainage and decking, flood control zone, irrigation, metropolitan park, drainage, or public utility district engaged in water distribution) on area residents. The Board must base its decisions on specific factors and objectives stated in the Boundary Review Board law. It can approve, modify and approve, or deny a proposal. Its decisions are final unless appealed to the Superior Court of the County under the law.

HOW DOES A BOUNDARY REVIEW BOARD PERFORM ITS DUTIES?

Through a process called a Notice of Intention, cities and special purpose districts notify the local Boundary Review Board whenever they propose a change in their corporate boundaries or intend to extend their services outside existing boundaries.

The Board receives the Notice of Intention, notifies all affected governmental agencies and collects subsequent comments. A Request for Review may be filed by:

- An affected governmental unit
- The County legislative body
- A petition of 5% of the registered voters residing within the affected area
- A petition of owners of 5% of the assessed property valuation of the affected area
- A petition of 5% of the registered voters residing within one quarter mile of the proposed action

If 45 days elapses from filing date without jurisdiction being invoked, the proposed action is deemed approved. The initiator may then proceed to finalize the proposal under its pertinent laws. (RCW 36.93.100)

If jurisdiction is invoked, a public hearing conducted, and the Boundary Review Board uses the statutory objectives (RCW 36.93.180) as a basis to approve, modify, or deny the proposal. The Board has up to 120 days, after the filing of the request for review, to make a decision.

A Notice of Appeal of the Board's decision must be filed in Superior Court within 30 days of the Board's decision.

STATUTORY OBJECTIVES

- Preservation of natural neighborhoods or communities
- Use of physical boundaries
- Creation or preservation of logical municipal service areas
- Prevention of irregular boundaries
- Discouragement of incorporation of small towns
- Encourage incorporation of large (10,000 population) urban areas.
- Adjustment of impractical municipal boundaries
- Incorporation or annexation of urban areas
- Protection of agricultural lands and rural lands, which are designated for long-term productive agricultural and resource use by a comprehensive plan adopted by the county legislative authority.
- Consistent with Growth Management Act

This outline is not complete. Please refer to RCW 36.93 and other appropriate laws relevant to specific action.