

Washington State Boundary Review

Washington State Boundary Review Boards were created in 1967 by RCW 36.93. Counties establish boundary review boards – which are independent, quasi-judicial entities – to implement RCW 36.93, county wide planning policies, and the Growth Management Act (GMA).

BRB Members: citizens appointed by elected officials—city officials, Washington State Governor, county executives, and special purpose districts.

Purpose: fair and impartial inter-governmental decision process for citizens, cities, towns, counties, special purpose districts, and private parties on boundary issues.

- Annexations
- Incorporations, disincorporations
- Jurisdictional boundary line establishment, changes, disputes

Duties:

- Independent, quasi-judicial review and analysis of boundary issues
- Resolve disputes for cities, counties, districts, citizens and private parties in accessible public forum
- Ensure adequate public services and orderly growth in the Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)
- Provide timely decisions in quasi-judicial format, appealable to Washington State Superior Court
- Staff assistance for cities, towns and special purpose districts to meet legal requirements

Decisions: must be consistent with objectives and factors in RCW 36.93, Growth Management Act, regional and local plans and policies.

Counties with Boundary Review Boards



Boundary Review Boards (continued)

RCW 36.93 – Boundary Review Board Enabling Act

RCW 36.93.170 – Factors to be considered by Board:

1. Population...territory; land uses; comprehensive plan and development regulations; likelihood of growth in ten years
2. Municipal Services: current and future needs...cost...adequacy...
3. Effect of proposal on adjacent areas, mutual economic and social interests, local governmental structure on proposal.

RCW 36.93.180 – Objectives of Boundary Review Board:

1. Preservation of natural...communities.
2. Use of physical boundaries (e.g., roads, water bodies, terrain)
3. Creation and preservation of logical service areas
4. Prevention of abnormally irregular boundaries
5. Discouragement of multiple incorporations of small cities
6. Dissolution of inactive special purpose districts (Water, Sewer or Fire Districts)
7. Adjustment of impractical boundaries
8. Incorporation or annexation of urban unincorporated areas
9. Protection of agricultural, rural and resource lands

PROCESS:

- All parties have equal standing
- Information and data submitted by all parties are given public review
- Under RCW 36.93, government agencies and community members may invoke jurisdiction (request a public hearing)
- Review and decisions are made in a public forum with all parties present. RCW 36.93 Factors & Objectives and other pertinent regulations are evaluated during hearing and decision-making
- Decisions are appealable to Washington State Superior Court
- Decisions result in moving a proposal forward for a jurisdiction's administrative decision or a public vote. Where elections occur, the decision rests with voters in the affected area

CONTACTS:

Lenora Blauman, Staff Contact for Washington State Association of Boundary Review Boards

(206) 477-0634 – lenora.blauman@kingcounty.gov

Mike Shaw, Washington State Association of Boundary Review Boards Consultant

(206) 595-6108 – michael_shaw@comcast.net

Website: www.wsabrb.org