

# Petition Methods of City Annexation



Washington State Boundary Review Board for King County  
June 11, 2026

# *Cities and Towns*

## 60% Direct Petition Method a/k/a “Old Petition Method”

- Invalidated from 2002-2004 by WA State Supreme Court, which then reversed itself. Petition threshold was 75% originally, but it is now 60%
  - [\*Grant County Fire Protection Dist. v. Moses Lake\*](#) (2002)
  - [\*Grant County Fire Protection Dist. v. Moses Lake\*](#) (2004)
- Available to code cities, non-code cities and towns
  - [RCW 35.13.125-.160](#) for non-code cities and towns
  - [RCW 35A.14.120-.150](#) for code cities

# *Cities and Towns*

## 60% Direct Petition Method a/k/a “Old Petition Method” Process

- 10% of property owners notify the city’s legislative body of their intent to commence annexation proceedings
- Within 60 days, the legislative body must set a date for a meeting with the parties to:
  - Accept, reject or geographically modify the proposal
  - Determine whether it will require a simultaneous adoption of proposed zoning regulation
  - Determine whether it will require the assumption of any portion of existing city indebtedness
- Legislative body’s determinations are not appealable

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## 60% Direct Petition Method a/k/a “Old Petition Method”

### Process

- If approved by the legislative body, a petition may be submitted
- The petition must be signed by 60% of the property owners OR 50% of the property owners if 80% of the boundaries is contiguous with the boundary of the city, with some exception if the boundary is between two counties
- A petition must set forth a description of the property according to government legal subdivisions or legal plats and also must be accompanied by a map which outlines the boundaries of the property to be annexed.
- If a legislative body has required the assumption of any portion of city indebtedness by the area annexed or the adoption of a proposed zoning regulation, these facts, together with a quotation of the minute entry of these requirements must be set forth in the petition.

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## 60% Direct Petition Method a/k/a “Old Petition Method” Process

- Whenever the 60% Petition is filed, the city legislative body may hold a public hearing regarding the annexation proposal
  - Public notice requirements
- The city legislative body may then vote to effect annexation by ordinance
  - The legislative body may choose not to annex all of the territory, but cannot add territory at this point
  - The ordinance needs to include an effective date
    - Required documentation must be sent to the Washington State Office of Financial Management within 30 days of the effective date per RCW 35.13.260 and RCW 35A.14.700.

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## 60% Direct Petition Method a/k/a “Old Petition Method”

### Other Considerations

- The King County Assessor’s Office certifies petitions for city annexations per [RCW 35A.01.040](#) and [RCW 35.21.005](#)
- Timing of the Notice of Intention
  - [RCW 36.93.090](#)

Whenever any of the following described actions are proposed in a county in which a board has been established, the initiators of the action shall file within one hundred eighty days a notice of intention with the board: PROVIDED, That when the initiator is the legislative body of a governmental unit, the notice of intention may be filed immediately following the body's first acceptance or approval of the action...

(1) The: (a) Creation, incorporation, or change in the boundary, other than a consolidation, of any city, town, or special purpose district;

- [Snohomish County Fire Prot. Dist. No. 1 v. Wash. State Boundary Review Bd.](#), 117 P.3d 348 (2005)

- “...we hold that the filing of the 75 percent petition is the "proposed" action that commences the 180-day period prescribed in RCW 36.93.090 for notifying the boundary review board.” <sup>¶ 13</sup>

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## Alternative Petition Method

### Process

- Available to code cities, non-code cities and towns
  - [RCW 35.13.410-.460](#) for non-code cities and towns
  - [RCW 35A.14.420-.450](#) for code cities
- Not commonly used
- Very similar to “60% Petition Method” but includes requirements that registered voters and property owners be signers of the “majority” petition
  - Adopted by Legislative when “Old Petition Method” was invalidated by WA Supreme Court

# Resources

- [OFM Annexations](#)
- MRSC Annexations
  - [Annexation Methods by Cities and Towns](#)
  - [Annexation Handbook](#)