



Boundary Change FAQs

WHAT IS A SERVICE AREA?

A service area is a taxing jurisdiction within the borough that has been established to provide a special service such as road maintenance or fire protection.

HOW ARE THE BOUNDARIES OF A SERVICE AREA DECIDED?

The service area sponsor and staff in the Rural Services Division draft the preliminary boundary. Staff completes a technical review and the site visit to ensure that certain criteria are considered.

WHAT KIND OF CRITERIA ARE CONSIDERED?

- ◇ Can the Borough provide the service requested?
- ◇ Can the area be annexed to an existing service area or does a new service area need to be formed.
- ◇ Are all properties included in the boundary that will benefit from the service?
- ◇ Depending on the type of service requested, criteria might be more specific. For example, a road service area will include the following specific criteria:
 - ✓ What is the access to the area?
 - ✓ Are the roads public or private?
 - ✓ Are the roads built as shown on the plats?
 - ✓ Were the roads built to subdivision standards?
 - ✓ If roads were not built to subdivision standards, were they constructed prior to 1969 and are they used for year-round automotive access?

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO GAIN SUPPORT? THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- ◇ Has the neighborhood collected donations by "passing the hat" or tried a neighborhood road maintenance agreement?
- ◇ Is there sufficient support from the residents to pay taxes for road maintenance?
- ◇ Can the proposed area support an additional mill levy higher than the current Service Area mill rate to bring roads up to existing Service Area standards?
- ◇ The Sponsor should, on a continual basis, discuss public road maintenance with the residents of the existing Service Area **and** the proposed area for annexation. The purpose is to gain support from the residents to eventually grant the Borough the power to maintain the roads. Many Sponsors in the past have circulated flyers, held meetings, etc. to ensure proper information is available for residents to make informed decisions.

WHAT STEPS ARE INVOLVED IN BECOMING PART OF A SERVICE AREA?

The sponsor submits a completed application to the Rural Services Division prior to the application deadline. After the request has been reviewed, staff will prepare a petition, map of the proposed annexation, and a current tax roll of property owners. These materials are given to the sponsor.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PETITION?

The petition is a means to involve property owners in the request for a service area. Once the required signatures are obtained, it serves as evidence that there is sufficient interest to proceed with the request.

WHO CAN SIGN THE PETITION?

Any legal property owner as shown on the current property tax roll, within the area proposed for annexation, may sign the petition.

HOW MANY SIGNATURES ARE REQUIRED?

A majority (50% + 1) of the property owners in the proposed service area or the proposed annexation **must** sign the petition for the process to move forward.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The petition signatures are verified by the Borough Clerk to confirm that the required number of signatures are affixed, and are those of valid property owners within the area proposed for annexation to the proposed service area. Rural Services staff prepares a report, an appropriate boundary map, and ordinance that are presented to the Borough Assembly for action. An informational public meeting is held for all affected owners.

IS A PUBLIC HEARING HELD?

All affected property owners are sent written notification of when the ordinance is to be considered by the Assembly. If an annexation to an existing service area is proposed, the Commissioners of that service area are notified as well. Public testimony from all interested parties, both pro and con, is taken at the time the ordinance is considered for adoption. After consideration of the issues presented, the Assembly takes action on the ordinance, which may be passed as presented, amended, or defeated. If the ordinance is adopted, an election date is set. The results of election are a simple majority of those who vote.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ELECTION?

Alaska state statutes require two elections if a boundary change is recommended: one election of the voters in the existing service area and one election of the voters in the proposed area. Both elections must pass for the change to take place.

WHO CAN VOTE IN THE ELECTION?

Any qualified voter who lives within the boundaries of the proposed service area or proposed annexation can vote. A qualified voter is anyone who is over 18 years of age, a registered voter, and lives in the proposed or parent service area at least 30 days before the election.

WHO OPERATES SERVICE AREAS?

The Borough Mayor appoints volunteers to serve as commissioners. These appointments are confirmed by the Borough Assembly. People who apply for commission seats must be registered voters living within the boundaries of the service area. The volunteer commissioners manage service area business.

WHAT ARE COMMISSIONERS' DUTIES?

- ◇ Arrange for work to be performed
- ◇ Inspect work and authorize payment for services
- ◇ Recommend an annual budget
- ◇ Develop long range plans for maintenance
- ◇ Meet with residents to discuss plans and share information

HOW ARE SERVICE AREAS FUNDED?

- Depending on the type of service area, there may be a combination of funding sources available:
- ◇ Mill levy
 - ◇ Interest earnings
 - ◇ State Grants
 - ◇ A special assessment