

**RCW 35A.12.180 Optional division of city into wards.** At any time not within three months previous to a municipal general election the council of a noncharter code city organized under this chapter may divide the city into wards or change the boundaries of existing wards. Unless the city is dividing into wards or changing the boundaries of existing wards under RCW 29A.92.040 or 29A.92.110, no change in the boundaries of wards shall affect the term of any councilmember, and councilmembers shall serve out their terms in the wards of their residences at the time of their elections: PROVIDED, That if this results in one ward being represented by more councilmembers than the number to which it is entitled those having the shortest unexpired terms shall be assigned by the council to wards where there is a vacancy, and the councilmembers so assigned shall be deemed to be residents of the wards to which they are assigned for purposes of those positions being vacant. The representation of each ward in the city council shall be in proportion to the population as nearly as is practicable.

If the city is dividing into wards or changing the boundaries of existing wards under RCW 29A.92.040 or 29A.92.110, all council positions are subject to election at the next regular election.

Wards shall be redrawn as provided in chapter 29A.76 RCW. Wards shall be used as follows: (1) Only a resident of the ward may be a candidate for, or hold office as, a councilmember of the ward; and (2) only voters of the ward may vote at a primary to nominate candidates for a councilmember of the ward. Voters of the entire city may vote at the general election to elect a councilmember of a ward, unless the city had prior to January 1, 1994, limited the voting in the general election for any or all council positions to only voters residing within the ward associated with the council positions. If a city had so limited the voting in the general election to only voters residing within the ward, then the city shall be authorized to continue to do so. [2019 c 454 s 7; 2015 c 53 s 53; 1994 c 223 s 34; 1967 ex.s. c 119 s 35A.12.180.]

**Retroactive application—Effective date—2019 c 454:** See notes following RCW 29A.92.050.