

Chapter 39.89 RCW
COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FINANCING

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RCW 39.89.010 Declaration—Purpose. (1) It is declared to be the public policy of the state of Washington to promote and facilitate the orderly development and economic stability of its communities. Local governments need the ability to raise revenue to finance public improvements that are designed to encourage economic growth and development in geographic areas characterized by high levels of unemployment and stagnate employment and income growth. The construction of necessary public improvements in accordance with local economic development plans will encourage investment in job-producing private development and expand the public tax base.

(2) It is the purpose of this chapter:

(a) To encourage taxing districts to cooperate in the allocation of future tax revenues that are used to finance public improvements designed to encourage private development in selected areas, in particular in those local governments that are located adjacent to another state or international border;

(b) To assist those local governments that have a competitive disadvantage in its ability to attract business, private investment, or commercial development due to its location near a state or international border; and

(c) To prevent or arrest the decay of selected areas due to the inability of existing financial methods to provide needed public improvements, and to encourage private investment designed to promote and facilitate the orderly redevelopment of selected areas. [2001 c 212 § 1.]

RCW 39.89.020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Assessed value of real property" means the valuation of real property as placed on the last completed assessment roll.

(2) "Increment area" means the geographic area from which taxes are to be appropriated to finance public improvements authorized under this chapter.

(3) "Increment value" means 75 percent of any increase in the true and fair value of real property in an increment area that is placed on the tax rolls after the increment area is created.

(4) "Local government" means any city, town, county, port district, or any combination thereof.

(5) "Ordinance" means any appropriate method of taking legislative action by a local government.

(6) "Permanently affordable housing" means housing, regardless of ownership, for which there is a legally binding, recorded document in effect that limits the price at which the owner may sell or restricts the occupancy of the unit to a qualified, low-income household, for a period of at least 40 years for a property used for shelter or rental housing, or for a period of at least 25 years for a property to be owned by a low-income household. These documents include, but are not limited to, affordability covenants, deed restrictions, and community land trust leases. Resale restrictions exercised by providers of permanently affordable housing can include, but are not limited to:

(a) Continuous ownership of land by a public entity or nonprofit housing provider with a lease allowing ownership of the structure by an income-eligible household;

(b) A nonpossessory interest or right in real property, such as a deed restriction, restrictive covenant, resale restriction, or other contractual agreement, that ensures affordability.

(7) "Public improvement costs" means the costs of: (a) Design, planning, acquisition, site preparation, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, improvement, and installation of public improvements; (b) purchasing, rehabilitating, retrofitting for energy efficiency, and constructing housing for the purpose of creating or preserving permanently affordable housing; (c) relocating, maintaining, and operating property pending construction of public improvements; (d) relocating utilities as a result of public improvements; (e) financing public improvements, including interest during construction, legal and other professional services, taxes, insurance, principal and interest costs on general indebtedness issued to finance public improvements, and any necessary reserves for general indebtedness; (f) assessments incurred in revaluing real property for the purpose of determining the tax allocation base value that are in excess of costs incurred by the assessor in accordance with the revaluation plan under chapter 84.41 RCW, and the costs of apportioning the taxes and complying with this chapter and other applicable law; and (g) administrative expenses and feasibility studies reasonably necessary and related to these costs, including related costs that may have been incurred before adoption of the ordinance authorizing the public improvements and the use of community revitalization financing to fund the costs of the public improvements.

(8) "Public improvements" means:

(a) Infrastructure improvements within the increment area that include:

- (i) Street and road construction and maintenance;
- (ii) Water and sewer system construction and improvements;
- (iii) Sidewalks and streetlights;
- (iv) Parking, terminal, and dock facilities;
- (v) Park and ride facilities of a transit authority;
- (vi) Park facilities and recreational areas;
- (vii) Stormwater and drainage management systems; and
- (viii) Permanently affordable housing; and

(b) Expenditures for any of the following purposes:

(i) Providing environmental analysis, professional management, planning, and promotion within the increment area, including the

management and promotion of retail trade activities in the increment area;

(ii) Providing maintenance and security for common or public areas in the increment area; or

(iii) Historic preservation activities authorized under RCW 35.21.395.

(9) "Regular property taxes" means regular property taxes as defined in RCW 84.04.140, except: (a) Regular property taxes levied by port districts or public utility districts specifically for the purpose of making required payments of principal and interest on general indebtedness; and (b) regular property taxes levied by the state for the support of the common schools under RCW 84.52.065. Regular property taxes do not include excess property tax levies that are exempt from the aggregate limits for junior and senior taxing districts as provided in RCW 84.52.043.

(10) "Tax allocation base value" means the true and fair value of real property located within an increment area for taxes imposed in the year in which the increment area is created, plus 25 percent of any increase in the true and fair value of real property located within an increment area that is placed on the assessment rolls after the increment area is created.

(11) "Tax allocation revenues" means those tax revenues derived from the imposition of regular property taxes on the increment value and distributed to finance public improvements.

(12) "Taxing districts" means a governmental entity that levies or has levied for it regular property taxes upon real property located within a proposed or approved increment area.

(13) "Value of taxable property" means the value of the taxable property as defined in RCW 39.36.015. [2022 c 38 § 1. Prior: 2020 c 280 § 1; 2001 c 212 § 2.]

RCW 39.89.030 Authority—Conditions. A local government may finance public improvements using community revitalization financing subject to the following conditions:

(1) The local government adopts an ordinance designating an increment area within its boundaries and specifying the public improvements proposed to be financed in whole or in part with the use of community revitalization financing;

(2) The public improvements proposed to be financed in whole or in part using community revitalization financing are expected to encourage private development within the increment area and to increase the fair market value of real property within the increment area;

(3) Private development that is anticipated to occur within the increment area, as a result of the public improvements, will be consistent with the countywide planning policy adopted by the county under RCW 36.70A.210 and the local government's comprehensive plan and development regulations adopted under chapter 36.70A RCW;

(4) Taxing districts, in the aggregate, that levy at least seventy-five percent of the regular property tax within which the increment area is located approves the community revitalization financing of the project under RCW 39.89.050(1); and

(5) In an increment area that includes any portion of a fire protection district as defined in Title 52 RCW, the fire protection district must agree to participate in the community revitalization

financing of the project under chapter 212, Laws of 2001, for the project to proceed. Approval by the fire protection district shall be considered as part of the required participation by taxing districts under subsection (4) of this section. [2002 c 12 § 1; 2001 c 212 § 3.]

RCW 39.89.040 Coordination with other programs—Improvements by private developer must meet applicable state and local laws. (1)

Public improvements that are financed with community revitalization financing may be undertaken and coordinated with other programs or efforts undertaken by the local government and other taxing districts and may be funded in part from revenue sources other than community revitalization financing.

(2) Public improvements that are constructed by a private developer must meet all applicable state and local laws. [2002 c 12 § 2; 2001 c 212 § 4.]

RCW 39.89.050 Procedure for creating increment area. Before adopting an ordinance creating the increment area, a local government must:

(1) Obtain written agreement for the use of community revitalization financing to finance all or a portion of the costs of the designated public improvements from taxing districts that, in the aggregate, levy at least seventy-five percent of the regular property tax on property within the increment area. A signed, written agreement from taxing districts that in the aggregate levy at least seventy-five percent of the regular property tax within the increment area, constitutes concurrence by all taxing districts in the increment area in the public improvement and participation in the public improvement to the extent of providing limited funding under community revitalization financing authorized under this chapter. The agreement must be authorized by the governing body of taxing districts that in the aggregate levy at least seventy-five percent of the regular property tax on property within the increment area;

(2) Hold a public hearing on the proposed financing of the public improvement in whole or in part with community revitalization financing. Notice of the public hearing must be published in a legal newspaper of general circulation within the proposed increment area at least ten days before the public hearing and posted in at least six conspicuous public places located in the proposed increment area. Notices must describe the contemplated public improvements, estimate the costs of the public improvements, describe the portion of the costs of the public improvements to be borne by community revitalization financing, describe any other sources of revenue to finance the public improvements, describe the boundaries of the proposed increment area, and estimate the period during which community revitalization financing is contemplated to be used. The public hearing may be held by either the governing body of the local government, or a committee of the governing body that includes at least a majority of the whole governing body; and

(3) Adopt an ordinance establishing the increment area that describes the public improvements, describes the boundaries of the increment area, estimates the cost of the public improvements and the portion of these costs to be financed by community revitalization

financing, estimates the time during which regular property taxes are to be apportioned, provides the date when the apportionment of the regular property taxes will commence, and finds that the conditions of RCW 39.89.030 are met. [2001 c 212 § 5.]

RCW 39.89.060 Public notice—Notice to officials. The local government shall:

(1) Publish notice in a legal newspaper of general circulation within the increment area that describes the public improvement, describes the boundaries of the increment area, and identifies the location and times where the ordinance and other public information concerning the public improvement may be inspected; and

(2) Deliver a certified copy of the ordinance to the county treasurer, the county assessor, and the governing body of each taxing district within which the increment area is located. [2001 c 212 § 6.]

RCW 39.89.070 Apportionment of taxes. (1) Commencing in the calendar year following the passage of the ordinance, the county treasurer shall distribute receipts from regular taxes imposed on real property located in the increment area as follows:

(a) Each taxing district shall receive that portion of its regular property taxes produced by the rate of tax levied by or for the taxing district on the tax allocation base value for that community revitalization financing project in the taxing district, or upon the total assessed value of real property in the taxing district, whichever is smaller; and

(b) The local government that created the increment area shall receive an additional portion of the regular property taxes levied by or for each taxing district upon the increment value within the increment area. However, the local government that created the increment area may agree to receive less than the full amount of this portion as long as bond debt service, reserve, and other bond covenant requirements are satisfied, in which case the balance of these tax receipts shall be allocated to the taxing districts that imposed regular property taxes, or have regular property taxes imposed for them, in the increment area for collection that year in proportion to their regular tax levy rates for collection that year. The local government may request that the treasurer transfer this additional portion of the property taxes to its designated agent. The portion of the tax receipts distributed to the local government or its agent under this subsection (1)(b) may only be expended to finance public improvement costs associated with the public improvements financed in whole or in part by community revitalization financing.

(2) The county assessor shall allocate twenty-five percent of any increased real property value occurring in the increment area to the tax allocation base value and seventy-five percent to the increment value. This section does not authorize revaluations of real property by the assessor for property taxation that are not made in accordance with the assessor's revaluation plan under chapter 84.41 RCW or under other authorized revaluation procedures.

(3) The apportionment of increases in assessed valuation in an increment area, and the associated distribution to the local government of receipts from regular property taxes that are imposed on

the increment value, must cease when tax allocation revenues are no longer necessary or obligated to pay the costs of the public improvements. Any excess tax allocation revenues and earnings on the tax allocation revenues remaining at the time the apportionment of tax receipts terminates must be returned to the county treasurer and distributed to the taxing districts that imposed regular property taxes, or had regular property taxes imposed for it, in the increment area for collection that year, in proportion to the rates of their regular property tax levies for collection that year. [2001 c 212 § 7.]

RCW 39.89.080 General indebtedness—Security. (1) A local government designating an increment area and authorizing the use of community revitalization financing may incur general indebtedness, and issue general obligation bonds, to finance the public improvements and retire the indebtedness in whole or in part from tax allocation revenues it receives, subject to the following requirements:

(a) The ordinance adopted by the local government creating the increment area and authorizing the use of community revitalization financing indicates an intent to incur this indebtedness and the maximum amount of this indebtedness that is contemplated; and

(b) The local government includes this statement of the intent in all notices required by RCW 39.89.050.

(2) The general indebtedness incurred under subsection (1) of this section may be payable from other tax revenues, the full faith and credit of the local government, and nontax income, revenues, fees, and rents from the public improvements, as well as contributions, grants, and nontax money available to the local government for payment of costs of the public improvements or associated debt service on the general indebtedness.

(3) In addition to the requirements in subsection (1) of this section, a local government designating an increment area and authorizing the use of community revitalization financing may require the nonpublic participant to provide adequate security to protect the public investment in the public improvement within the increment area. [2001 c 212 § 8.]

RCW 39.89.090 Conclusive presumption of validity. A direct or collateral attack on a public improvement, public improvement ordinance, or increment area purported to be authorized or created in conformance with applicable legal requirements, including this chapter, may not be commenced more than thirty days after publication of notice as required by RCW 39.89.060. [2001 c 212 § 9.]

RCW 39.89.100 Revenue bonds. (1) A local government may issue revenue bonds to fund revenue-generating public improvements, or portions of public improvements, that are located within an increment area and that it is authorized to provide or operate. Whenever revenue bonds are to be issued, the legislative authority of the local government shall create or have created a special fund or funds from which, along with any reserves created pursuant to RCW 39.44.140, the principal and interest on these revenue bonds shall exclusively be payable. The legislative authority of the local government may

obligate the local government to set aside and pay into the special fund or funds a fixed proportion or a fixed amount of the revenues from the public improvements that are funded by the revenue bonds. This amount or proportion is a lien and charge against these revenues, subject only to operating and maintenance expenses. The local government shall have due regard for the cost of operation and maintenance of the public improvements that are funded by the revenue bonds, and shall not set aside into the special fund or funds a greater amount or proportion of the revenues that in its judgment will be available over and above the cost of maintenance and operation and the amount or proportion, if any, of the revenue previously pledged. The local government may also provide that revenue bonds payable out of the same source or sources of revenue may later be issued on a parity with any revenue bonds being issued and sold.

(2) Revenue bonds issued pursuant to this section are not an indebtedness of the local government issuing the bonds, and the interest and principal on the bonds shall only be payable from the revenues lawfully pledged to meet the principal and interest requirements and any reserves created pursuant to RCW 39.44.140. The owner or bearer of a revenue bond or any interest coupon issued pursuant to this section shall not have any claim against the local government arising from the bond or coupon except for payment from the revenues lawfully pledged to meet the principal and interest requirements and any reserves created pursuant to RCW 39.44.140. The substance of the limitations included in this subsection shall be plainly printed, written, or engraved on each bond issued pursuant to this section.

(3) Revenue bonds with a maturity in excess of thirty years shall not be issued. The legislative authority of the local government shall by resolution determine for each revenue bond issue the amount, date, form, terms, conditions, denominations, maximum fixed or variable interest rate or rates, maturity or maturities, redemption rights, registration privileges, manner of execution, manner of sale, callable provisions, if any, and covenants including the refunding of existing revenue bonds. Facsimile signatures may be used on the bonds and any coupons. Refunding revenue bonds may be issued in the same manner as revenue bonds are issued. [2002 c 12 § 3.]

RCW 39.89.900 Supplemental nature of chapter. This chapter supplements and neither restricts nor limits any powers which the state or any local government might otherwise have under any laws of this state. [2001 c 212 § 10.]