

**Chapter 36.55 RCW**  
**FRANCHISES ON ROADS AND BRIDGES**

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**RCW 36.55.010 Pipe line and wire line franchises on county roads.** Any board of county commissioners may grant franchises to persons or private or municipal corporations to use the right-of-way of county roads in their respective counties for the construction and maintenance of waterworks, gas pipes, telephone, telegraph, and electric light lines, sewers and any other such facilities. [1963 c 4 s 36.55.010. Prior: 1961 c 55 s 2; prior: 1937 c 187 s 38, part; RRS s 6450-38, part.]

**RCW 36.55.020 Cattleguards, tramroad, and railway rights.** Any board of county commissioners may grant to any person the right to build and maintain tramroads and railway roads upon county roads under such regulations and conditions as the board may prescribe, and may grant to any person the right to build and maintain cattleguards across the entire right-of-way on any county road, under such regulations and conditions as the board may prescribe: PROVIDED, That such tramroad or railway road shall not occupy more than eight feet of the county road upon which the same is built and shall not be built upon the roadway of such county road nor in such a way as to interfere with the public travel thereon. [1963 c 4 s 36.55.020. Prior: 1941 c 138 s 1; 1937 c 187 s 39; Rem. Supp. 1941 s 6450-39.]

**RCW 36.55.030 Franchises on county bridges.** Any board of county commissioners may grant franchises upon bridges, trestles, or other structures constructed and maintained by it, severally or jointly with any other county or city or town of this state, or jointly with any other state or any county, city or town of any other state, in the same manner and under the same provisions as govern the granting of franchises on county roads. [1963 c 4 s 36.55.030. Prior: 1937 c 187 s 40; RRS s 6450-40.]

**RCW 36.55.040 Application—Notice of hearing.** On application being made to the county legislative authority for franchise, it shall fix a time and place for hearing the same, and shall cause the county auditor to give public notice thereof at the expense of the applicant, by posting notices in three public places in the county seat of the county at least fifteen days before the day fixed for the hearing. The county legislative authority shall also publish a like notice two times in the official newspaper of the county, the last publication to

be not less than five days before the day fixed for the hearing. The notice shall state the name or names of the applicant or applicants, a description of the county roads by reference to section, township and range in which the county roads or portions thereof are physically located, to be included in the franchise for which the application is made, and the time and place fixed for the hearing. [1985 c 469 s 49; 1963 c 4 s 36.55.040. Prior: 1961 c 55 s 3; prior: 1937 c 187 s 38, part; RRS s 6450-38, part.]

**RCW 36.55.050 Hearing—Order.** The hearing may be adjourned from time to time by the order of the board of county commissioners. If, after the hearing, the board deems it to be for the public interest to grant the franchise in whole or in part, it may make and enter a resolution to that effect and may require the applicant to place his or her utility and its appurtenances in such location on or along the county road as the board finds will cause the least interference with other uses of the road. [2009 c 549 s 4094; 1963 c 4 s 36.55.050. Prior: 1961 c 55 s 4; prior: 1937 c 187 s 38, part; RRS s 6450-38, part.]

**RCW 36.55.060 Limitations upon grants.** (1) Any person constructing or operating any utility on or along a county road shall be liable to the county for all necessary expense incurred in restoring the county road to a suitable condition for travel.

(2) No franchise shall be granted for a period of longer than fifty years.

(3) No exclusive franchise or privilege shall be granted.

(4) The facilities of the holder of any such franchise shall be removed at the expense of the holder thereof, to some other location on such county road in the event it is to be constructed, altered, or improved or becomes a primary state highway and such removal is reasonably necessary for the construction, alteration, or improvement thereof.

(5) Counties shall, in the predesign phase of construction projects involving relocation of sewer and/or water facilities, consult with public utilities operating water/sewer systems in order to coordinate design. [2007 c 31 s 6; 1963 c 4 s 36.55.060. Prior: 1961 c 55 s 5; prior: 1937 c 187 s 38, part; RRS s 6450-38, part.]

**RCW 36.55.070 Existing franchises validated.** All rights, privileges, or franchises granted or attempted to be granted by the board of county commissioners of any county prior to April 1, 1937, when such board of county commissioners was in regular or special session and when the action of such board is shown by its records, to any person to erect, construct, maintain, or operate any railway or poles, pole lines, wires, or any other thing for the furnishing, transmission, delivery, enjoyment, or use of electric energy, electric power, electric light, and telephone connection therewith, or any other matter relating thereto; or to lay or maintain pipes for the distribution of water, or gas, or to or for any other such facilities in, upon, along, through or over any county roads, are confirmed and declared to be valid to the extent that such rights, privileges, or franchises specifically refer or apply to any county road or county

roads, or to the extent that any such county road has prior to April 1, 1937, been actually occupied by the bona fide construction and operation of such utility, and such rights, privileges, and franchises hereby confirmed shall have the same force and effect as if the board of county commissioners prior to the time of granting said rights, privileges, and franchises, had been specifically authorized to grant them. [1963 c 4 s 36.55.070. Prior: 1937 c 187 s 41; RRS s 6450-41.]

**RCW 36.55.080 Record of franchises.** The board of county commissioners shall cause to be recorded with the county auditor a complete record of all existing franchises upon the county roads of its county and the auditor shall keep and maintain a currently correct record of all franchises existing or granted with the information describing the holder of the franchise, the purpose thereof, the portion of county road over or along which granted, the date of granting, term for which granted, and date of expiration, and any other information with reference to any special provisions of such franchises. [1963 c 4 s 36.55.080. Prior: 1937 c 187 s 42; RRS s 6450-42.]