

**GOVERNMENT REVIEW STUDY COMMISSION  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
418 EAST SECOND STREET  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2025  
5:30 PM**



- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Communications from the Public - (This time is set aside for the public to comment on items that are either on the agenda, but not a public hearing or on items not on the agenda. City officials do not respond during these comments but may respond or follow-up later on the agenda or at another time. The presiding officer has the option of limiting such communications to three minutes depending on the number of citizens who want to comment and the length of the meeting agenda)
- 3) Approval of July 2, 2025, Minutes
- 4) Public Hearing
  - a) Local Government Study Commission Final Report
- 5) Communication to or from Study Commissioners
- 6) Next meeting: TBD
- 7) Adjournment

**GOVERNMENT REVIEW STUDY COMMISSION**  
**WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 2025**  
**7:00 PM**

1) Call to Order

Commissioner Chair McDowell called the meeting to order. Commissioners present were Alessi, Dugan, Whitman, Wurster, Ex-officio/City Clerk Howke, City Manager Smith, City Attorney Jacobs. Approximately 9 people were in the audience.

2) Communications from the Public - (This time is set aside for the public to comment on items that are either on the agenda, but not a public hearing or on items not on the agenda. City officials do not respond during these comments but may respond or follow-up later on the agenda or at another time. The presiding officer has the option of limiting such communications to three minutes depending on the number of citizens who want to comment and the length of the meeting agenda)

None

3) Approval of Minutes

a) May 7, 2025

**Commissioner Wurster made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alessi to approve May 7, 2025, minutes. The motion carried.**

b) May 13, 2025

**Commissioner Wurster made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Whitman to approve May 3, 2025, minutes.**

**Commissioner Alessi made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wurster to include the discussion pertaining to section 2.02(11) of the Charter in the minutes.**

*Ex-officio/City Clerk Howke reviewed the recording. During this meeting the Commissioners continued their review of the Charter starting with Articles III through VI. The discussion for Section 2.02(11) was discussed and summarized in the May 7, 2025 minutes.*

**The motion to amend and approve the amended minutes carried.**

c) June 4, 2025

**Commissioner Wurster made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Whitman to approve June 4, 2025, minutes.**

**Commissioner Alessi made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wurster to include the discussion pertaining to section 2.02(11) of the Charter in the minutes.**

Page 2, Commissioner Alessi – 1) Separability vs. Severability 2) Recommend City Council implement or repeal Section 2.01(a)&(b) and Section 2.02(11) *go to state law because it seems it would be better flushed*

*out and we can use state law standards and if it comes to litigation there is not the friction there. It is complicated unless we had a lot more time to explain that to the voters. It could confuse people.*

**Commissioner Dugan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wurster to make a correction on page 3, third paragraph, Dugan ~~stated this could be studied for another year but is skeptical that there would be enough time~~ doubted if another year would be sufficient time to convince skeptical commissioners.**

**The motion to amend the minutes and approve the amended minutes carried.**

d) June 11, 2025

**Commissioner Whitman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Dugan to approve June 11, 2025, minutes. The motion carried.**

4) Public Hearing

a) Local Government Study Commission Tentative Report

Commissioner Chair McDowell presented the Tentative Report that is provided in the packet on the website.

Commissioner Whitman spoke about his recommendations that are included in Appendix B of the report. Recommendation 1) after visiting with city staff, it is a recommendation for the majority of members on vacant boards and committees, besides those applicable to statutory law, have demonstrable experience to the subject matter; 2) require all vacant boards and committees to be recorded with audio and/or video; 3) expanding those that are eligible to serve on vacant board and committees in regards to residency, recommending residency within the Whitefish School District #44. This would allow those who work in Whitefish and have kids that go to Whitefish the ability to serve on a committee.

Commissioner Alessi spoke about her recommendations that are included in the report. Recommendation 4) recommending the Council implement or repeal Section 2.02(11) as it pertains to citizen's standing committee or board of three to five members. There are twelve standing committees, and this section may not be needed. If we don't need it then it should be repealed. If there is a desire for it, then it should be implemented. It is not good to have something in the Charter that is mandatory that is not implemented. Commissioners are recommending the Council to take that upon themselves to take that to a vote before the citizens. 5) recommending Council to correct Article VI, Section 6.03, to change the title "Separability" to standard legal clause "Severability".

Commissioner Dugan presented a detailed summary of public feedback from the survey, emphasizing that the main report lacked a comprehensive narrative on the essay-style responses (over 1,000 received).

He advocated for the inclusion of common themes and potential recommendations such as:

- Term limits for mayor and/or city council.
- Consideration of at-large versus districted (ward-based) elections.

Survey Question: *Would a change in the number of council members or their term of office improve representation?*

- Term limits were frequently raised, though not directly prompted.
- Out of 223 responses: ~45% said "yes", ~42% "no", remainder were unsure—indicating potential need for broader public input.

Dugan highlighted that the commission met regularly but less often than the 2015 Study Commission. He felt the one-year timeline was insufficient for a thorough review.

On ward-based elections:

- Survey results showed a near split (54% favored at-large, 46% favored ward-based).
- Dugan felt this justified putting the question to voters.

On government structure:

- ~75% expressed satisfaction with the current form, though it's unclear if all respondents understood the structure.
- Another survey question indicated ~64% of respondents favored at least some changes, conflicting with the commission's recommendation of no changes.

Dugan felt this discrepancy warranted the creation of the Minority Report and suggested all narrative comments and survey question summaries be included in the official record.

Commissioner Alessi commented that one of the limitations of the survey was that there were 300 responses. She saw a number of individual survey responses, but when they were coalited the essay responses were tallied up together. We had some surveys indicate the same thing as they wanted a ward based or more council members and term limit. They mentioned it more than once. The survey counts responses not individuals. That was part of the reason why she wasn't interested in including those things in the report.

Commissioner Dugan stated he did not count responses for multiple questions, only for those that were the most frequent. And he didn't count multiple responses in the same narrative question.

Commissioner Wurster asked, and Commissioner Dugan explained that out of 223 total survey responses, 63 specifically mentioned term limits. The responses were generally favorable, with many suggesting terms of two or six years. Roughly 45% believed term limits could improve representation, while about 42% disagreed. However, Dugan admitted the data was not cross-referenced.

Commissioner Wurster raised concerns about the reliability of the survey, viewing it more as a straw poll due to the absence of standard statistical tools like margin of error and cross-tabulation. He cautioned that interpreting the percentages could be misleading and noted that around three-quarters of respondents preferred no change to the current form of government. Among the remaining quarter, half were driven by interest groups focused on Impact Fees and proposed a change from the city manager system to a strong mayor and town hall model. The other half supported Commissioner Dugan's proposed ballot changes. Wurster emphasized that these results likely reflected organized advocacy rather than broad public support, stating he hadn't encountered any significant grassroots push for these changes during the study.

Wurster criticized the Minority Report for including data on incumbency and re-election that he felt were derived solely from Dugan's post-vote personal research, not public input. When Wurster questioned the impartiality of the report, Dugan invoked a point of order to clarify that state law permits minority reports without a commission vote. Wurster ultimately concluded that the report lacked objectivity and stated he would not be signing onto it.

Commissioner Dugan said that the survey conducted was not statistically significant. He emphasized that since the commission's role is to refer questions to the electorate—not to enact laws directly—the survey's relevance is limited. He noted that the commission is not providing voters with the opportunity to decide on certain themes that emerged during public engagement, which consisted solely of the survey. The minority

report highlights these themes, underscoring concerns about the lack of voter input on them. Dugan added that if the electorate opposes a measure, they will simply vote it down.

Commissioner Chair McDowell opened the Public Hearing.

Marti Brandt, Armory Road, expressed support for the Commission's recommendation to expand board positions for county residents impacted by city legislation, citing their current lack of representation. She emphasized the need for board members with relevant experience and endorsed the clarity improvements in Appendix B. Marti advocated for including the Minority Report in the final submission to City Council, aligning with Commissioner Dugan's position that public backing should determine its inclusion. Prompted by the Tentative Report, she reviewed all community survey responses and praised Whitefish residents' civic engagement. She noted significant dissatisfaction with local government, citing that 64% of respondents expressed a desire for change. Marti recommended including a summary of survey questions in the final report to better reflect public sentiment. She encouraged further input and clarity on term limits and ward-based elections, and pointed out the survey's limited renter participation, urging improved representation of their perspectives going forward.

Lina Camero voiced support for Appendix B recommendations #1 and #2, endorsing the idea that volunteer board and committee members should possess relevant expertise. She strongly backed recording requirements, sharing that she regularly relies on recordings and prefers them over written summary minutes. Lina emphasized that recording technology has existed since the 1920s and should be formally recognized.

She also advocated for the inclusion of the Minority Report, speaking from her experience as someone frequently in the minority. After completing the committee survey, Lina expressed discomfort with labeling public engagement as "special interest mobilization." While recognizing the super majority's opposition to the Minority Report, she stressed its importance in capturing excluded perspectives.

Richard Hildner identified a discrepancy in the number of survey respondents—286 counted versus the previously cited 300—and raised concerns about the sample size's ability to accurately reflect public sentiment. He questioned the reliability of the survey, citing the potential for duplicate submissions.

Referring to page 11, Richard emphasized the importance of thoughtfully addressing gender representation in the updated terminology concerning the City Administrator. On page 17 of the Minority Report, he challenged the clarity of a survey item containing two distinct questions, suggesting it may confuse respondents.

He questioned the inclusion of a Town Hall government model on page 19, noting that such a structure is not permitted in municipalities over 1,000 residents and may mislead participants. He also highlighted the absence of data on Whitefish's voting population and turnout rate, expressing interest in better understanding what proportion of the community is represented in the survey.

On term limits, Richard argued that elections already provide a means of limiting terms and hoped this view would gain broader recognition. Finally, he recommended reconsidering the use of SD #44 as a boundary criterion, pointing out its extended reach to Glacier High School and questioning its continued relevance.

Mallory Phillips expressed appreciation for the inclusion of the Minority Report and survey responses in the final report. As a resident in her 30s earning under \$50,000 annually and struggling with housing affordability, she voiced frustration over the city's dismissive tone toward public engagement. Mallory cautioned that such attitudes discourage participation, create apathy, and suppress voter turnout. She urged commission members to reflect on their role in fostering meaningful engagement. Citing the process she observed, Mallory questioned the value of contributing public feedback when it risks being disregarded. She

noted that the survey responses were not originally intended for inclusion and emphasized that omitting the Minority Report would overlook critical perspectives from the government review study approved by voters.

There being no further public comment, Commissioner Chair McDowell closed the Public Hearing and turned matters over to the Commissioners for consideration.

**Commissioner Wurster made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alessi to adopt the Tentative Report to include Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C.** Commissioner Wurster asked and Ex-officio Howke stated there was discussion to include the survey with the Final Report which would include all the comments provided in the survey.

**Commissioner Dugan, seconded by Commissioner Whitman, moved to include the Minority Report's term limits proposal as a ballot question in the Tentative Report, recommending a maximum of three consecutive Council terms.** Commissioner Dugan stated the question of term limits is simple to understand. He does not think that it requires extensive study. He thinks breaking the city into wards would require significant study for the Commissioners to be responsible for putting it on the ballot. **The motion failed 3-2 with Commissioners Dugan and Whitman voting in favor.**

**The original motion to adopt the Tentative Report carried 4-1 with Commissioner Dugan voting in opposition.**

#### 5) Communication to or from Study Commissioners

Commissioner Whitman addressed the recurring discussion around statistics and relevancy, stating he felt qualified to comment. He explained that statistical relevancy is typically determined using methods like a P test, but noted that without the necessary input data, the relevancy of the current dataset can't be definitively assessed. Despite this limitation, he cautioned against disregarding the data, describing it as the clearest input received from the public. Whitman also urged against making assumptions about special interest groups, referencing the Community Development Board's approval of a rewrite from such a group, with some edits reportedly not being reviewed. He emphasized that this kind of oversight contributes to public distrust and disengagement and stressed the importance of taking community input seriously.

Commissioner Alessi noted that some survey responses appeared to reflect repeated input from individuals particularly invested in specific topics. She acknowledged the presence of participants strongly attached to a particular outcome but expressed concern that there didn't seem to be sufficient broad community support to justify placing the issue on a ballot.

Commissioner Wurster expressed agreement with Commissioners Dugan and Whitman, noting that the survey was not intended to be statistically valid but rather a way to gauge community sentiment. He valued the input received and advocated for a more extended, two-year study process to allow for deeper public engagement. He regretted the reliance on a single survey and suggested that monthly meetings would have better solicited input. Acknowledging the challenge of engaging the public, he described the survey as a useful starting point, though unverifiable on its own. He emphasized that his main objective on the commission is to encourage public participation and voiced strong support for including both the Minority Report and survey results in the final report.

Commissioner Dugan acknowledged that while the Commission did solicit public input, he felt that feedback was not meaningfully utilized. He pointed out that, although commissioners are volunteers, the process involved taxpayer funding and staff time—raising concerns about the return on that investment. He cited

rising housing costs and downtown business closures as urgent issues and criticized the Commission for not presenting the full picture.

Referring to 64% of survey respondents who expressed support for change, he argued that denying them the chance to vote is regrettable. He challenged the framing of statistical relevance, suggesting the discussion wouldn't arise if the survey results aligned with certain viewpoints. He asserted that elections are the true measure of public sentiment and advocated using the ballot to address these questions.

Describing the survey as the only form of public input in the process, he found it troubling that discomfort with its findings led to questioning its legitimacy. He expressed disappointment in the Commission's overall commitment and outcome, saying more could have been accomplished without extending the timeline—only with stronger dedication.

Commissioner Chair McDowell noted that Montana is the only state whose 1972 Constitution mandates a voter review of local government every ten years—an exceptional feature. However, he observed that public understanding of this process is lacking. He expressed concern over the small survey sample size, stating that 300 participants is not substantial. While he appreciated the suggestions presented, he was disappointed by the limited public participation.

6) Next meeting: August 6, 2025, at 5:30pm

7) Adjournment

Commissioner Chair McDowell adjourned the meeting at 8:05pm.

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Kevin McDowell - Chair

Attest:

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Michelle Howke, Whitefish City Clerk

**CITY OF WHITEFISH STUDY COMMISSION**  
**TENTATIVE REPORT**  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

*To the Citizens of the City of Whitefish*

The Whitefish Local Government Study Commission (Study Commission) elected by the voters on November 5, 2024, present this report to you, the citizens of this city.

The purpose of the Study Commission, as defined in state law, is “to study the existing form and powers of local government and procedures for delivery of local government services and to compare them with other forms available under the laws of the state.” After completing these two phases of the study it is the responsibility of the Study Commission to submit a report recommending one of three options; 1) no change, 2) propose an amendment to the existing form of government, or 3) offer an alternative form of government to the qualified electors.

This Study Commission sought advice and information from members in the community. Commissioners solicited opinions and recommendations from local government officials, community organizations, and citizens. All Study Commission meetings were open to the public. Commission members appeared before various community organizations to explain the work of the commission and to hear the viewpoints, ideas, and concerns of those present. The Study Commission held an open house and conducted a survey of the citizens’ attitudes to determine community opinion that elicited responses.

Our recommendations reflect the thoughts and opinions of those who participated in public hearings, those who attended our regular meetings, and those who responded to the survey, in addition to the independent efforts of the Study Commission.

## II. REPORT SUMMARY

### **Findings of the Study Commission:**

After a study of the city government including one collective interview session where the Mayor and a majority of Council members were present, followed by a collective session where the City Manager and many department directors, were present, discussion with numerous citizens, an open house, and receiving results of the community survey before, during and after a public hearing, the Whitefish Local Government Study Commission recommends making no changes to the Whitefish City Charter. This recommendation was made by majority of the Study Commission but it was not unanimous as found in Appendix C: Minority Report.

Final results of the community survey are provided below:

**Q1 Are you satisfied with the current form of local government?**

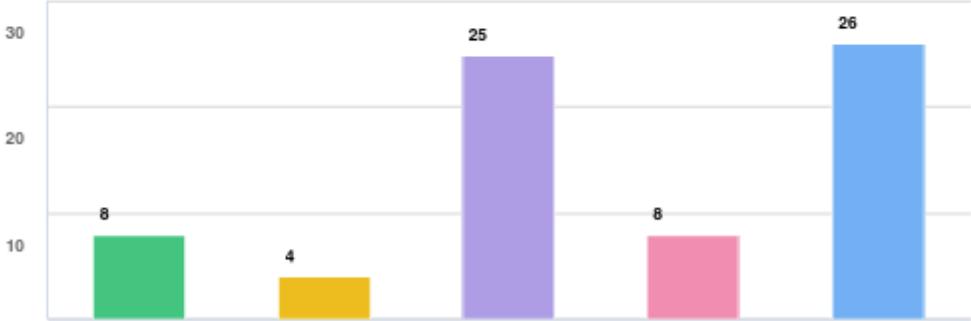


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (286 response(s), 13 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q2 If you answered 'No' above, what form do you suggest: (If you answered 'Yes' above, skip to #4)**



**Question options**

- Commission
- Commission-Chairman
- Commission-Executive (Mayor)
- Commission-Manager (no Charter)
- Town Meeting

Optional question (71 response(s), 228 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

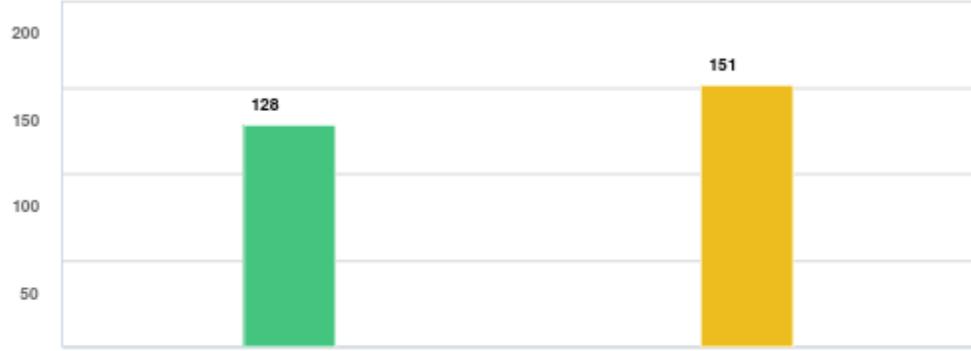
**Q6** Should the elected officials of your city government run for office on a partisan (with political party label) or on a nonp...



**Question options**  
● Partisan ● Nonpartisan

*Optional question (283 response(s), 16 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q7** Should the elected officials of your city government run for office in districted (ward based) or at-large elections?



**Question options**  
● Wards ● At-large

*Optional question (279 response(s), 20 skipped)*  
*Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q8** According to the current charter, the Zoning Administrator is hired by and reports to the City Manager. Would you prefer th...

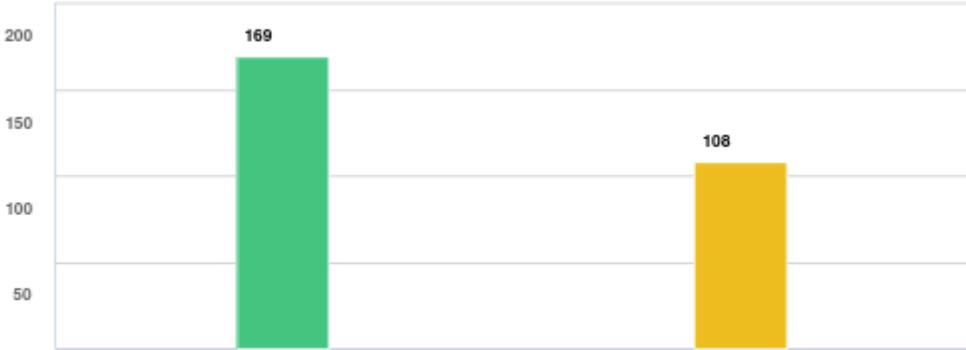


**Question options**

Yes No

*Optional question (278 response(s), 21 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q10** In providing essential services, does your local government make reasonably good use of the taxes and fees it collects?

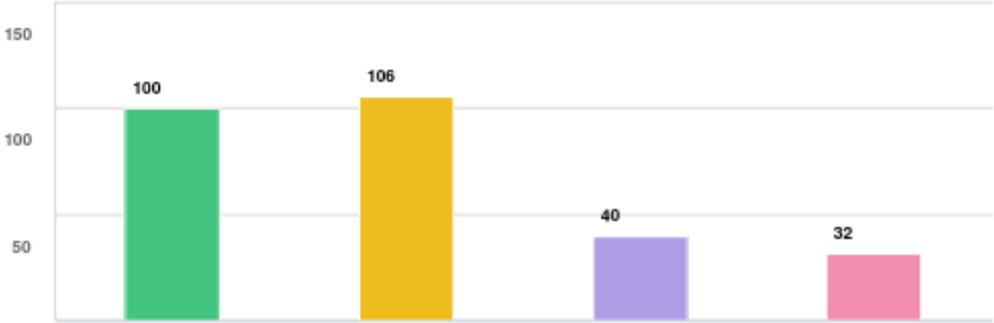


**Question options**

Yes No

*Optional question (277 response(s), 22 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question*

**Q11** | If I had to vote tomorrow, I would vote to:



**Question options**

- Keep town government the same as it is now
- Make a few changes in the Town government
- Make major changes in the Town government
- Completely change the form and powers of the Town government

Optional question (278 response(s), 21 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

### **III. COMPARISON OF THE EXISTING PLAN OF GOVERNMENT AND THE PROPOSED PLAN OF GOVERNMENT**

#### **A. Existing Form – Whitefish City Charter**

The Study Commission proposes no changes to the City Charter described in Appendix A.

#### **B. Recommendations and Reasons**

The Study Commission proposes the recommendations to the Whitefish City Council set forth in Appendix B.

#### **C. Minority Report**

#### **D. Community Survey**

**APPENDIX A:**  
**Certificate Establishing the Existing Form of Government**  
**for the City of Whitefish**

The government of the City of Whitefish shall remain organized under the following provisions of 7-3-701, MCA et. Seq., which authorizes the Charter form of government:

**PREAMBLE**

We, the people of the city of Whitefish, Montana, in accordance with article XI, section 5 of the Montana Constitution, and in accordance with title 7, chapter 3, part 7 Montana Code Annotated 1979, in order to modernize our form of local government, increase its efficiency and to provide for local self-determination, do hereby adopt this charter.

**Article I**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Section 1.01: Powers Of the City: The city of Whitefish shall possess self-government powers and have all powers not prohibited by the constitution of Montana, the laws of Montana or this charger.

Section 1.02: Interpretation Of Powers: The powers and authority of the city of Whitefish shall be liberally construed. Every reasonable doubt as to the existence of a power or authority shall be resolved in favor of the existence of that power or authority.

Section 1.03: Charter Supremacy: As provided in article XI, section 5 of the constitution of Montana, and title 7, chapter 3, part 701(2), Montana Code Annotated 1979, provisions herein establishing an executive, legislative and administrative structure and organization are superior to statutory provisions.

Section 1.04: Intergovernmental Cooperation: As provided by article XI, section 7 of the constitution of Montana, unless prohibited by law or this charter, the city of Whitefish may:

1. Delegate any of its power to;
2. Delegate any of its functions to; or
3. Cooperate in the financing of any services with any one or more local government units, school districts, the state or the United States/

Section 1.05: Oath Of Office: Before entering upon the duties of office, all elected city officials shall take and subscribe the oath of office as prescribed in article III, section 3 of the constitution of Montana. (January 5, 1981)

## **Article II**

### **CITY COUNCIL**

#### Section 2.01: Composition, Election, Qualifications, Compensation, Removal, Filling Of Vacancies:

1. There shall be a city council of six (6) members, three (3) of whom shall be elected every two (2) years. (January 5, 1981)
2. All Council members shall be elected at large and be a qualified voter of the city of Whitefish and that the three (3) candidates for council receiving the most votes at each biannual election shall be elected to the office of city council. (Amended November 1985)
3. Members of the council shall be elected for terms of four (4) years on a nonpartisan basis.
4. Members of the City Council may receive compensation, such as a salary, stipend, City-paid health insurance, per diem, or mileage allowance, all as set by resolution after a public hearing.
5. a. The office of a council member shall become vacant upon his death, resignation, removal from office in any manner authorized by law or forfeiture of his office;  
b. A council member shall forfeit his office if he:
  - i. Loses his eligibility for election to his council seat;
  - ii. Violates any express prohibition of this charter;
  - iii. Is convicted of a felony;
  - iv. Without council approval, fails to attend three (3) consecutive regularly scheduled council meetings.

#### Section 2.02 Powers And Duties Of The Council:

1. The city council shall be the legislative and policy determining body of the city of Whitefish. Except as prohibited by the constitution of the state of Montana, the laws of the state of Montana or this charter, the council shall provide for the exercise of all powers of the city and for performance of all duties and obligations of the city.
2. The council shall appoint or remove the city administrator with the concurrence of four (4) of its members.
3. The council shall adopt an annual budget by ordinance.
4. The council shall provide for an independent annual audit of all city accounts and may provide for such more frequent audits as it deems necessary. If the state makes such an audit, the council may accept it as satisfying the requirements of this section.
5. The council shall adopt by ordinance and maintain an administrative code and a personnel system as provided in article IV of this charter.

6. The council may make investigations into the affairs of the city and the conduct of any city department, office or agency and for this purpose may subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and require the production of evidence.
7. In the event of vacancy, the council shall, within thirty (30) days, by majority vote of the remaining members, appoint a person, eligible to hold such council seat, to fill the vacancy until the next regular city election at which time the remainder of the terms shall be filled as provided by law.
8. The council shall be the judge of the election and qualifications of its members and of the grounds of forfeiture of their office and for that purpose shall have power to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths and require the production of evidence. A member charged with conduct constituting grounds for forfeiture of his office shall be entitled to a public hearing on demand, and notice of such hearing shall be published in a manner consistent with state law. (Effective 1-5-1981)
9. A mayor shall be elected every four (4) years, at large on a nonpartisan basis. The mayor shall preside at meetings of the council, shall be recognized as the head of the city government for all ceremonial purposes ( or may delegate this duty) and by the governor for the purposes of military law. The mayor shall have no administrative duties. The mayor shall vote in the case of tie votes on the council. (Effective 1-5-1981; amd. Approved by voters 11-7-2006, eff. 1-2-2007)
10. The council shall elect from among its members a deputy mayor who shall act as mayor during the absence or disability of the mayor and, if a vacancy occurs in the office of the mayor, shall become mayor for the remainder of the unexpired term. (Effective 1-5-1981)
11. The council shall appoint a citizen's standing committee or board of three (3) to five (5) members who shall serve at the will of the council for the purpose whereby citizens or other interested parties may first submit or present their proposals for action of the city council for study, review and recommendations by the committee or board to the council as a whole. This provision shall not prohibit the appointment of ad hoc committees by the mayor or council.
12. The council shall create and establish a board of park commissioners pursuant to and subject to all the provisions of MCA sections 7-16-4201 through 7-16-4226. (Amended by voters 11-1985, eff. 1-1-1986)

Section 2.03: Restrictions On The Council:

1. Except where authorized by law, no council person shall hold any other city office or city employment for compensation
2. Neither the council nor any of its member shall in any manner dictate the appointment or removal of any city administrative offices or employees whom the administrator or any of his subordination are empowered to appoint, but the council may express its

views and fully and freely discuss with the administrator anything pertaining to appointment and removal of such officers and employees.

3. Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations under article II, section 2.02 of this charter, the council or its members shall deal with officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the administrator solely through the administrator, and neither the council nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.

Section 2.04: Council Procedure, Public Participation:

1. Council procedures shall be as prescribed by state law.
2. The council shall meet at least once per month in regular session.
3. The council shall determine its own rules and order a business and shall provide for the keeping of minutes of its proceedings.
4. All meetings shall be open to the public except in such circumstances as are prescribed by state law.
5. All documents and records of the council shall be public records and shall be made available for examining or copying. (January 5, 1981)

**Article III**

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

Section 3.01 : Appointment And Removal, Qualifications, Compensation

1. The city administrator shall be appointed by the council for an indefinite term on the basis of merit only. The council shall fix his compensation.
2. The city administrator need not be a resident of the city at the time of his appointment but may reside outside the city while employed only with the approval of the council.
3. The council may remove the city administrator from office at any regularly scheduled or special meeting.

Section 3.02: Acting City Administrator: By letter filed with the mayor, the administrator shall designate, subject to approval of the council, a qualified city administrative officer to exercise the powers and perform the duties of administrator during his temporary absence or disability. During such absence or disability, the council may revoke such designation at any time and appoint another officer of the city to serve until the administrator shall return or his disability shall cease.

Section 3.03: Duties Of The City Administrator

1. The city administrator shall be the chief administrative officer of the city. He shall be responsible to the council for the administration of all city affairs.
2. The city administrator shall:

- a. Direct, supervise and administer all departments, agencies and offices of the local government until except as otherwise provided by this charter, law or ordinance;
  - b. Carry out policies established by the council;
  - c. Prepare the council agenda
  - d. Report to the council and recommend measures on the affairs and financial condition of the local government as the council may require;
  - e. Execute bonds, notes, contracts and written obligations of the council, subject to the approval of the council;
  - f. Attend council meetings and may take part in the discussion, but may not vote;
  - g. Prepare and present the budget to the council for its approval and execute the budget adopted by the council; (January 5, 1981)
  - h. Except for city attorney and municipal court judge, appoint, suspend and removal all employees of the city unless otherwise provided by law or ordinance; provided, however, that in the case of the appointment of chief of police for the city, the police commission of the city shall review all applicants for the position and make its recommendations to the city administrator; (Amended November 1985; effective January 1, 1986; amd. Approved by voters 11-3-2009)
  - i. (Rep. by voters 11-3-2015)
  - j. Submit recommended changes in the administrative code or the personnel system to the council. (January 5, 1981)
3. The city administrator shall not delete any of the duties and responsibilities in this section without consent of the council except as otherwise provided by this charter, law or ordinance. (January 5, 1981; amd. Approved by voters 11-3-2015)

#### **Article IV**

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS**

##### Section 4.01 : General :

1. The council may establish city departments, offices or agencies in addition to those created by this charter, and may prescribe the functions of all departments, offices and agencies.
2. All departments, officers and agencies under the direction and supervision of the administrator shall be administered by an officer appointed by and subject to the direction and supervision of the administrator. With the consent of the council, the administrator may serve as the head of one or more such departments, offices or agencies or may appoint one person as the head of two (2) or more of them.

Section 4.02: Legal Officer: There shall be a legal officer of the city, appointed by the city council, who shall serve as chief legal advisor to the council, the administrator and all city

departments, offices and agencies, shall represent the city in all legal proceedings and shall perform any other duties prescribed by ordinance.

Section 4.03: Administrative Code: The administrative code shall provide the complete plan of organization and structure of the city government and shall include:

1. The department organization of the government, the nature and scope of each department and all required rules and procedures for department operation.
2. Comprehensive budget procedures for the government.
3. Procedures regarding boards, commissions or any other government activities.

Section 4.04: Personnel System : The city personnel system shall include a salary schedule, provisions for vacations, sick leaves, insurance and other benefits for all persons in accordance with the provisions of this charter; procedures for employees to have an opportunity to be heard upon their request pending discharge, suspension or any designated disciplinary action and shall provide for such other procedures as necessary for an efficient personnel system. (January 5, 1981)

## **Article V**

### **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS, INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM**

Section 5.01: Elected Offices: The procedure for the election of all elected city officials shall be as prescribed by law for nonpartisan elections. The procedure for recall of all elected city officials shall be as provided by law.

Section 5.02: Initiative And Referendum: The procedure for initiative and referendum shall be as provided by law. (January 5, 1981)

Section 5.03: Reapportionment Of Wards: (Repealed November 1985; effective January 1, 1986)

Section 5.04: Redistricting: (Repealed November 1985; effective January 1, 1986)

## **Article VI**

### **MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

Section 6.01: Amendment Of Charter: This charter may be amended only as provided by state law.

Section 6.02: Effective Date: This charter shall become effective on January 5, 1981.

Section 6.03: Separability: If any provision of this charter is held invalid, the other provisions of this charter shall not be affected thereby. If the application of the charter, or any part of its provisions, to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the application of the charter and its provisions to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby. (January 5, 1981)

## APPENDIX B:

Although the Study Commission is not recommending changes to the City Charter itself, it offers the following five recommendations to the City Council for consideration as administrative or policy-level improvements:

1. **Committee Membership Criteria:** Subject to all applicable laws, rules and regulations, for those Committees that do not already have them, the Study Commission recommends that City Council establish qualifications for a majority of committee appointments that include relevant experience or expertise in the subject matter of the committee. [Commissioner Whitman – unanimous concurrence)
2. **Recording Requirements:** Subject to all applicable laws, rules and regulations, for those Committees that do not already do so, require that all board and committee meetings be recorded with audio and/or video, and that recordings be made accessible to the public and retained as required law. It is further recommended that the City Council make an actual contemporaneous recording of the official record of such board and committee meetings, which recordings would prevail over summary written minutes if and when questions about the proceedings arise. (Commissioner Whitman – unanimous concurrence with additions.)
3. **Residency Flexibility:** Subject to all applicable laws rules and regulations, amend city policy by appropriate means to permit qualified board and committee members who reside within School District #44, but have relevant expertise or community ties to serve. (Commissioner Whitman – unanimous concurrence)
4. **Implement or Repeal Section 2.02(11):** Recommend that City Council either implement or repeal. Section 2.02(11) which currently reads:

11. The council shall appoint a citizen’s standing committee or board of three (3) to five (5) members who shall serve at the will of the council for the purpose whereby citizens or other interested parties may first submit or present their proposals for action of the city council for study, review and recommendations by the committee or board to the council as a whole. This provision shall not prohibit the appointment of ad hoc committees by the mayor and council.

The Study Commission recommends that City Council either implement or repeal article II, Section 2.02, 11 because this mandatorily worded provision is not currently adhered to by the City Council. (The origin of this with some alteration may or may not reside in Section 7-3-317 MCA which discusses a 3-member Community Councils that are either elected or authorized by ordinance.)

The current provision requires City Council to create a “citizen’s standing committee or board of three (3) to five (5) members who shall serve at the will of the council for the purpose whereby citizens or other interested parties may first submit or present their proposals for actions of the city council for study, review and recommendations by the committee or board to the council as a whole.”

The Study Commission recommends that the City Council bring itself into compliance with the City Charter by either implementing or repealing this Charter provision. (Commissioner Alessi – unanimous concurrence)

5. Correct article VI, Section 6.03: It is recommended that the title “Separability” be changed to “Severability” reflecting the clause’s nature as a standard severability provision. (Commissioner Alessi – unanimous concurrence)

We, the Study Commissioners of the City of Whitefish do hereby certify these recommendations to the City Council.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Whitefish City Hall this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SEAL  
ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Whitefish City Clerk

Whitefish Study Commission

## APPENDIX C

### Whitefish Study Commission

#### Minority Report

We, the undersigned members of the Whitefish Study Commission, met to study the existing form and powers of the city government and the procedures for the delivery of local government services and compared them with other forms available under the laws of the state of Montana. Though a majority of the Study Commission agreed that no changes should be made, we believe that public feedback obtained through the Study Commission's survey of community members indicated a preference that the Study Commission discuss, research, and consider placing the following questions on the ballot:

- 1) Term limits for the Mayor and/or City Council.
- 2) At-large versus districted (ward-based) elections for City Council.

Additionally, we believe that the extensive narrative answers provided by community members on the survey should be summarized in the Study Commission's report, in order to provide a report that is complete and reflective of the Study Commission's entire body of work. Since there was minority support for such recommendations, we submit these opinions in the form of this minority report.

Regarding the question of term limits, some background information is necessary to explain the sentiment held by some community members. The City of Whitefish was able to compile records of Mayors and City Councils from 1976 to the present day with election results from 1985 to the present day, excluding 2005. These election records reveal that 30 incumbent City Councilors have run for re-election since 1985 with 22 of those winning re-election and retaining their seat. Of the incumbent candidates who lost re-election, 7 of them were beaten in an election and 1 of them tied with another candidate and lost his seat via Mayoral appointment to break the tie. 5 of the 8 incumbent candidates who were beaten lost their elections between the years of 2001 and 2009. No incumbent City Councilor has been beaten in an election since 2009. It is possible that some of these numbers would change if 2005 election data were available. Mayoral elections were not reviewed for this report.

Prior to 2019 (and dating back to 1985), only one candidate had attempted to run for a 3rd consecutive term on the Whitefish City Council. This candidate ultimately lost this bid for re-

election to a 3rd consecutive term. In 2019, a candidate ran for and won re-election to a 3rd consecutive term on the Whitefish City Council. This candidate subsequently ran for and won re-election to a 4th consecutive term on the Whitefish City Council in 2023. Candidate filing for the 2025 election has now closed, and one incumbent candidate is running for a 4th consecutive term on the Whitefish City Council, having been re-elected to a 3rd consecutive term in 2021.

Since 1985, an average of 1.5 incumbent candidates have run for re-election during each election cycle. During the most recent and upcoming election cycles, in 2023 and 2025, all 3 incumbent candidates have run for re-election in each election. Since 1986, the Whitefish City Council has been made up of members serving their 1st or 2nd consecutive term in office. In June 2025, the Whitefish City Council is composed of members serving in their following terms:

- 1) 1st term in office, running for re-election
- 2) 1st elected term in office (previously appointed to complete a term), running for re-election
- 3) 2nd consecutive term in office
- 4) 2nd consecutive term in office
- 5) 3rd consecutive term in office, running for re-election
- 6) 4th consecutive term in office

Given this lack of turnover on the Whitefish City Council in recent years compared to the historical average, it is perhaps not surprising that the issue of term limits was raised repeatedly in survey responses to the Study Commission despite not being directly prompted. Public support for term limits was most prevalent in the answers to survey question #5, which read:

*“Would a change in the number of council members or a change in their term of office improve effective representation of neighborhoods and communities?”*

In the responses from the public for this question, the phrase “term limits” appeared at least 63 times (out of 223 total responses). This phrase also appeared in the narrative answers to other survey questions, though some of these were provided by the same respondents. In addition to this, ~45% of survey respondents answered generally “yes” to this question (indicating a belief that a change in the number of council members or their terms of office would improve representation), ~42% of survey respondents answered generally “no” to this question, and ~12% of survey respondents answered generally “unsure” to this question. We, the minority members of the Study Commission, believe that this distribution of responses rises to the level of a

recommendation to voters where the entire electorate can weigh in on term limits for the City Council and/or Mayor in the November 2025 election. At a minimum, this question should have been considered and studied by the Study Commission prior to recommending no changes to Whitefish's Local Government.

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Survey question #7 asked, "*should the elected officials of your city government run for office in districted (ward-based) or at-large elections?*" Of 279 responses received, 45.9% indicated a preference for ward-based elections and 54.1% indicated a preference to maintain the current at-large (citywide) election system. We, the minority members of the Study Commission, believe that this distribution of responses warrants additional study on the merits of both ward-based and at-large elections. This may also rise to the level of a recommendation to voters where the entire electorate can weigh in on ward-based versus at-large elections in the November 2025 election, however, at the very least, the Whitefish City Council should make an effort to study this issue and report findings by December 2026.

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Finally, we, the minority members of the Study Commission, believe that narrative survey responses received from community members should be summarized.

First, though 73.4% of survey respondents indicated in question #1 that they are satisfied with the current form of Whitefish's local government (Charter Form, further organized as a commission-city manager plan under the city's charter), this does not indicate a preference for no changes within the structure of Whitefish's local government. When asked directly in question #11, only 36% of respondents indicated a preference to "keep town government the same as it is now," while 64% of respondents indicated a preference for few changes to completely changing the form and powers of government.

Lastly, narrative answers provided by survey respondents can be informative to gauge public perception of Whitefish's local government, and can be used by the City Council to inform the body's decision-making in the future. Some common themes emerged, and these are summarized below:

- 1) There were respondents who indicated dissatisfaction with the current city manager system, as well as with perceptions of high taxes and unfair calculations of fees, particularly impact fees. Based on the Study Commission's interview session with city department directors, the city is well-aware of these complaints from this group of residents, which have been ongoing for some time. The city has taken steps to mitigate these concerns.
- 2) Some respondents indicated a preference for a Town Meeting Form of local government. Though this may be the preference of some in the community, it should be noted that this option is only available to incorporated cities and towns in Montana with a population of fewer than 2,000 residents, making Whitefish ineligible to adopt this form of local governance (7-3-601, MCA).
- 3) Some respondents expressed concern with high housing costs and a lack of affordable housing as well as perceptions of poor infrastructure maintenance.
- 4) When contemplating whether Whitefish's local government is representative of the whole community, survey respondents indicated:
  - a) Mixed opinions, with some respondents indicating that the local government is representative and others indicating a perception that the local government caters to specific groups, such as wealthy residents, developers, or tourists.
  - b) Inadequate representation of working class residents, renters, or long-term locals.
  - c) Perceptions of political bias toward a specific ideology.
  - d) Concerns about barriers to public participation, such as a lack of childcare during meetings, inconvenient meeting times, and inadequate outreach by the city to underserved communities and constituents.
  - e) Concerns about the volunteer nature of the City Council and Mayor leading to less representative candidates for city council seats. It should be noted that the Whitefish City Council did adopt a compensation package for the City Council and Mayor during its June 16, 2025 regular meeting.
- 5) Many respondents indicated a preference for term limits for local government elected officials and for ward-based representation rather than the current at-large system. Concerns were also expressed by other respondents about finding candidates to run for office if term limits were imposed or if elections were conducted by wards.
- 6) Some respondents opposed changing the size of the City Council, while other respondents indicated a preference for adding an additional 1-2 council members to improve overall representation.
- 7) Some respondents indicated a desire to change the length of terms, with some of these indicating a preference for shorter terms and others indicating a preference for longer terms. Many respondents felt that the current 4-year term length was sufficient.
- 8) Some respondents feel that residents of areas adjacent to the city but outside of the city limits should have greater representation.

- 9) Some respondents suggested simplifying the city’s charter, addressing substance abuse issues, improving the city’s zoning policies, reducing law enforcement budgets, and ensuring that councilmembers are long-term residents of Whitefish.

We recommend that the City Council consider and address these issues and themes that emerged through the Local Government Study process. Though not all of these suggestions and comments are actionable or should be acted upon, we find that it is important to listen to and comment on these various issues raised by citizens through public outreach conducted by the Study Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

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Whitefish Study Commissioners

# Local Government Review Commission Community Survey

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## SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

22 June 2023 - 15 May 2025

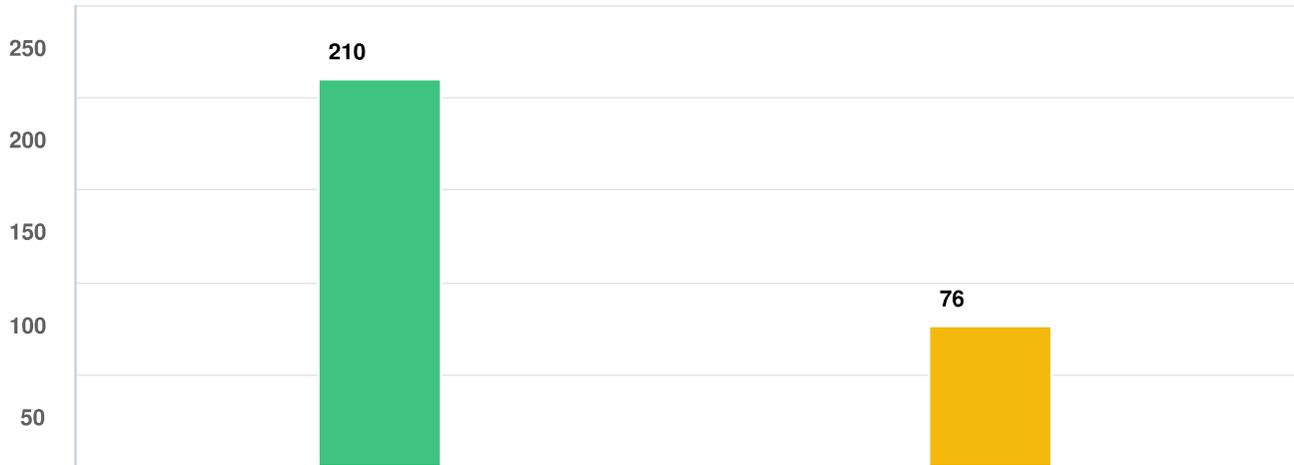
**PROJECT NAME:**

Local Government Review



SURVEY QUESTIONS

**Q1 Are you satisfied with the current form of local government?**

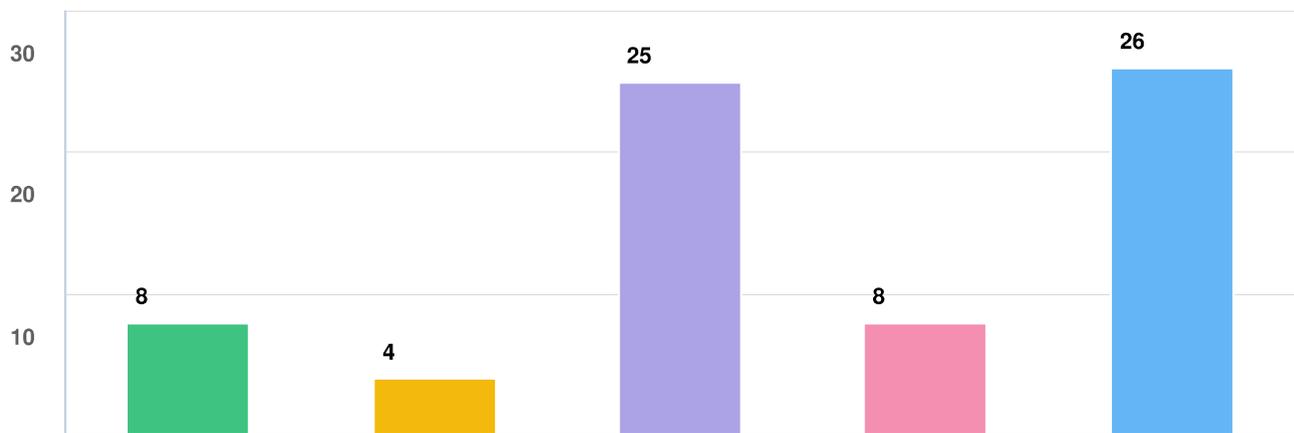


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (286 response(s), 13 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q2 If you answered 'No' above, what form do you suggest: (If you answered 'Yes' above, skip to #4)**



**Question options**

- Commission
- Commission-Chairman
- Commission-Executive (Mayor)
- Commission-Manager (no Charter)
- Town Meeting

Optional question (71 response(s), 228 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q3 | To assist in understanding your opinion on the form of local government, please describe your answer to #2 in more detail below:**

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:06 PM

I believe the city manager has too much centralized power in the current form. A commission would take away the concentrated power.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:09 PM

Don't get all snooty and bureaucratic. I just want a council that supports the community better. I don't even bother complaining about anything anymore because it's useless. Most people that have lived here more than about 6 years or so feel the same way.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:14 PM

I think the local government is ok their hands are tied by state laws when it comes to what they can do. A council- executive is ok.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:55 PM

Taxes are super high and roads need repair Voices of tax payers should matter Now all we get is a chance to give our opinion and counsel just does what they want anyway

Anonymous

4/07/2025 03:07 PM

Our city is too complex to go to a system that does not have skilled non-partisan professionals making most of the decisions. I do wish we had a better way of communicating with constituents in a timely manner-Kalispell has a Social Media Officer for instance, or other cities have Mayors who are the spokesperson for the city-but maybe if we do gets wards in place that will help. The risk I see with no or very poor compensation is that citizens won't be able to volunteer, so the staff will steer the decision making, and most of them live out of city limits now, so don't have a pulse of the town, or a vested interest, or even some resentment as to who they serve.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:03 PM

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Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:03 PM

The people who do the work need to report the elected representatives of the people. A city manager reporting to the city council is the best option in my opinion.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:35 PM

Whatever is in place now is broken. Any alternative would be better than the current admin.

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Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:36 AM

Commission-Manager (No Charter): Commission sets policy, and a professional manager runs day-to-day operations. Brings in expertise; helps with grants, budgeting, infrastructure. Best for small towns starting to grow or needing more professional administration without rewriting a charter. Cons: Costs more as it requires a larger tax base or budget.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 12:23 PM

The city manager cannot be held accountable by the voters and is abusing that shield with messing with impact fee numbers to create illegal revenue streams.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 01:35 PM

The current council members. In the majority, have been in office too many terms. They only represent a minority of residents and continually push their own political ideology instead of what is wanted by the majority of citizens. They give the middle finger to those who they disagree.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:30 PM

Need the public's input instead of the current situation where they do whatever they want

Anonymous

4/08/2025 04:55 PM

Our current mayor/city manager form of government has served us well and nothing has been presented to indicate a need for change.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 06:34 PM

City council is too powerful and doesn't listen to the people. You all are to liberal for this part of Montana.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 11:35 PM

Not enough public input for the permits of various types to be given out. Short term rentals have ruined neighborhoods. Neighbors are afraid to tell the city for risk of retribution.

Anonymous

4/09/2025 02:46 PM

In the town meeting form of local government, eligible town residents directly participate in an assembly to determine their town's governance, debating and voting on policy decisions, ordinances, taxes, budgets, and other legislative matters

Anonymous

4/10/2025 01:07 PM

No City Manager! Need someone running the City that is an elected official reporting to We The People.

Anonymous

I don't think we need a mayor and no city manager. That way there is

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4/10/2025 09:38 PM

one person held accountable and do the job . We don't need to pay 2 people to do it.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 11:00 AM

A council manager is the best form of govt.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 11:18 AM

Term limits - all WF elected officials be subject to term limits. 8 years should be the maximum for Council members and the Mayor. Ideally, a ward system in the City instead of having all of the power centered in a small area of the city. The City Manager power, and authority REDUCED! TERM LIMITS on all Whitefish Council members and the Mayor.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 12:21 PM

I think the mayor should be more accountable and an elected official should be making more of the decisions that the unelected city manager makes.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 05:46 PM

The city council (and even this survey) uses complex language and processing just to understand what you're saying. It's not really assessable which tracks with limited outreach to young people , renters, or Spanish speaking communities. The feedback process often favors people who already have time and power (although it's nice to have them streamed there's room for growth). Speaking of voting rights and access more work to partner with school or community orgs and underserved communities to boost civic participation.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 12:05 AM

It is very obvious that there is corruption going on in the Whitefish city council.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 07:02 AM

Need elected official making major recommendations and decisions, not an appointed Manager

Anonymous

4/12/2025 10:13 PM

There's go to be a single boss whose accountable. Otherwise it's just finger pointing and no one ever knows why everything is a mess

Anonymous

4/15/2025 01:39 PM

It would be easier to answer this question if there was a brief (1-2 sentences) description of what is different about these types of gov't vs what we currently have. I don't understand how these are different - are they better? maybe? who knows?

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Anonymous

4/17/2025 11:56 AM

City council would be best with community oversight to prevent the current level of corruption going forward.

Anonymous

4/18/2025 11:52 AM

Executive position need to be elected. Current city manager is not qualified nor is she elected by the residents of Whitefish

Anonymous

4/19/2025 06:56 PM

As is but term limits

Anonymous

4/20/2025 08:58 AM

I grew up in New England with town meeting. It is a great way to let people voice there concerns. There were 3 council members, not one mayor

Anonymous

4/20/2025 09:30 AM

I think it's important that local government members moving forward are ELECTED by Whitefish residents. The commission- executive (Mayor) would accomplish this. Also, I think there should be shortened term limits on service.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 12:37 PM

I need to research these options more to provide more info.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 01:30 PM

Because we need to stop the rich from running us out of town!

Anonymous

4/21/2025 02:24 PM

I don't know what the difference is between these options

Anonymous

4/21/2025 05:27 PM

Decentralize the power. Let anyone come up with suggestions from the community and we can vote on it.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 09:49 AM

This form of government allows more of a voice for neighborhoods.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 11:08 AM

I believe Whitefish has reached both the population and complexity of operations to move on to a more responsive and effective form of governance

Anonymous

4/22/2025 02:14 PM

Listen to people more

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Anonymous

4/24/2025 02:49 PM

The is excellent communication amongst staff and between staff and council. In addition, the public has countless opportunities to interact with staff and council.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:03 AM

I understand the local government and there way that they contribute to us as citizens to make Whitefish a better town.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:28 AM

I believe that a public at large vote is beneficial for a government that weighs efficiency and democracy.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:51 PM

Twoud be more tuff

Anonymous

4/26/2025 07:29 AM

While there are definite pros of the current system, with the City Manager being a non-political figure who helps guide decision-making in Whitefish, there is value in the mayor having more power to impact choices than they currently have.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:11 AM

A Series of Weekly Town halls with votes to those who participate in person.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:58 AM

The Town Meeting form gives power directly to the people. Instead of handling decision-making to a small group of elected officials, who may act behind closed doors or prioritize special interests, residents themselves will vote on budgets, ordinances, and key policies. This ensures transparency, accountability, and community control. I feel right now the best solution is more democracy, not less.

Anonymous

4/27/2025 03:54 PM

Members on counsel sitting too long and not listening to members or community as we grow

Anonymous

4/28/2025 08:07 AM

We need a two-year term for each council member and a four-year term for the mayor. We also need more low-income housing. We are being pushed out by the rich, and need help protecting those in trailer courts. For example, Forest Acres' new owners raised the rent from \$450 to \$650, and only a year later, raised it again to \$879. Our area has many elderly people and families with children, and there is no help when rent is raised beyond our means. We either give up our trailers because we cannot afford to move them, or there is no help

for us. They made us sign agreements stating we cannot take them to court, and they have taken our signed leases and never returned them, so we do not have a lease in our possession. Also, we could use a stop sign or flashing red light to slow down cars on Highway 93 so we don't get hit when we try to cross. Sometimes we have to wait up to 10 minutes during high traffic.thank you for your time .  
Owens.off 93

Anonymous

4/28/2025 09:01 AM

Executive shall or may appoint direct report assistance executive has final, shared or no executive veto power. Executive presents to or develops with the commission of budget. Executive has exclusive supervision of a boards and departments are limited by ordinance. Financial officer, treasure is elected, appointed, or selected commission member elected at large by districts or combination, partisan or nonpartisan, local government, elections, elected commission chair by commission or selected by ordinance.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 10:59 AM

The local government does not adapt to changes in population. Need to build a second elementary school, fix the lights downtown, create more jobs that pay a liveable amount, etc.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 12:55 PM

A charter form of government with an elected executive who is accountable to the voters/ citizens. Further the charter should require that the budget and key policy changes should require a majority vote by the voters.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 01:25 PM

Why so few options? Formally elected Executive with a board or council to advise and approve policy.

Anonymous

5/01/2025 11:30 AM

City council

Anonymous

5/01/2025 12:12 PM

If I sent a previous version of this document, I apologize. This is the updated version. It will be sent to the commissions individual emails as well. Whitefish Montana Impact Fee Abuses FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF CLAIM Since at least 2019, the City of Whitefish has engaged in a sustained and unlawful practice of overcharging property owners through improperly calculated impact fees. These overcharges are the result of serious and repeated errors, omissions, and misrepresentations made by the City and its hired consultants during the impact fee calculation and implementation process. The City's actions represent clear violations of Montana law and 5th Amendment Constitutional property rights of

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affected owners. I. Discovery of Impact Fee Irregularities (2019–2021) In 2021, Whitefish property owners Paul Gillman and Bill Burg identified significant discrepancies in the impact fees assessed by the City since 2019. After extensive analysis, Gillman and Burg concluded that the City’s 2018 impact fee study, initially prepared by FCS Group, and significantly modified by the Whitefish City Manager, contained multiple fundamental errors that resulted in substantial overcharges to developers and homeowners. These findings were documented and formally presented to the Whitefish City Council. The Council rejected the concerns without initiating any independent investigation. II. Class Action Litigation and Settlement (2022–2024) Following the City’s refusal to act, Gillman and Burg assisted a group of overcharged builders and homeowners in preparing a legal challenge. In February 2022, a Class Action lawsuit was filed in Montana district court: Beck et al. v. City of Whitefish. Gillman and Burg acted as unpaid consultants to plaintiffs’ counsel, supplying the technical analyses originally presented to the City. In late 2023, the court certified the class and upheld nearly all of the plaintiffs’ motions. The City appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, which summarily denied the appeal. In early 2024, a United States Supreme Court decision affirmed key legal principles supporting the plaintiffs’ claims. Shortly thereafter, and just weeks before trial, the City and FCS Group entered into a settlement agreement totaling \$1.4 million. As a result, approximately 450 property owners (representing over 700 individual homeowners and businesses) received refunds for unlawful impact fees collected between 2019 and 2023. III. New Impact Fee Scheme (2024) and Continuing Harm Despite the litigation and settlement, the City of Whitefish hired a new consultant—TischlerBise, Inc.—in 2023 to recalculate impact fees, the highest of which were for water and sewer infrastructure. These new fees were adopted and imposed beginning in 2024. Subsequent analysis revealed that the 2024 impact fee calculations contain even more significant errors than those litigated in Beck et al.. These include flawed methodologies, data manipulation, and inaccurate assumptions that collectively result in substantial overcharges to property owners. Gillman and Burg documented these issues in new reports and presented them to the City Council. Once again, the Council declined to investigate or independently verify the concerns. The new fees are estimated to result in overcharges exceeding \$7 million, with individual property owners being charged over \$6,000 more per home than permitted under lawful standards. IV. Basis for Federal Jurisdiction We assert that federal jurisdiction is proper under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343 based on the following: 1. Federal Class Action and Takings Clause Violations A certified class action was previously filed in the United States District Court for the District of Montana (Missoula Division), alleging unlawful impact fee assessments imposed by the City during the period of 2019 through 2023. Discovery revealed at least twelve (12) distinct miscalculations

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in impact fees, each of which resulted in overcharges favoring the City. The nature and consistency of these errors support a reasonable inference of deliberate misconduct. These actions constituted violations of the Fifth Amendment's Takings Clause. The existence of uncompensated takings was recognized by the federal court, and the legal validity of such claims was subsequently affirmed by the United States Supreme Court in *Sheetz v. County of El Dorado*, \_\_\_ U.S. \_\_\_ (2024). Plaintiffs collectively sustained damages estimated at approximately Four Million Dollars (\$4,000,000.00).

2. Continuation of Unlawful Practices in 2024 Fee Structure Despite the findings and proceedings in the prior litigation, the City adopted and implemented a 2024 impact fee structure that reflects a continued pattern of excessive and unlawful charges. Preliminary analysis suggests that the City's practices will unlawfully extract approximately Six Million Dollars (\$7,000,000.00) in fees over the next five (5) years, again disproportionately burdening property owners and developers in violation of federal constitutional protections.

3. Interstate Activity and Out-of-State Consultant The City engaged TischlerBise, Inc., a consulting firm with principal offices in Maryland and an additional location in Boise, Idaho, to assist in the development and implementation of its impact fee schedules. The involvement of out-of-state commercial actors in the formulation of the disputed fee structure constitutes interstate activity, thereby supporting federal subject matter jurisdiction.

4. Federal Contractor and Ongoing Federal Interests One of the named class plaintiffs in the original action was a HUD-affiliated contractor that incurred tens of thousands of dollars in losses related to unlawful impact fees and recovered only twenty-five percent (25%) of such damages. Additionally, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), through the Whitefish Housing Authority, is currently involved in federally funded development projects in the City of Whitefish, all of which are subject to the City's 2024 impact fees. The involvement of federal funds and interests further supports the exercise of federal jurisdiction in this matter.

**SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED IMPACT FEE OVERCHARGES**

The following issues were either initially reported to the City or later uncovered during the Discovery phase of the Class Action lawsuit by the plaintiffs' attorneys and their experts. Notably, every issue identified served to benefit the City—none favored the affected property owners. The pattern and consistency of these problems make it highly improbable that they were the result of random errors or simple oversight. Rather, the evidence suggests a deliberate and coordinated effort by certain Whitefish officials to defraud hundreds of property owners. This scheme is estimated to have cost residents approximately \$3-4 million between 2018 and 2023, with projected overcharges reaching \$7 million from 2024 to 2028.

A. 2018 FCS Group Impact Fee Calculation Errors (See: "Summary of 2018 Impact Fee Problems.docx")

1. Manipulated fixture unit counts used in fee calculations.
2. Fees charged for a non-compliant project that did not

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meet state requirements and was never constructed. 3. Faulty collection charts that inflated water and sewer fee amounts. 4. Unsubstantiated construction costs totaling approximately \$10 million. 5. Artificially inflated water demand estimates contradicted by the City's own reports to state agencies, resulting in doubled fee assessments. B. 2024 TischlerBise Impact Fee Calculation Errors (See: "Summary of 2024 Impact Fee Problems.docx") 1. Manipulation of data by the City and consultant resulting in at least \$5,000 in excess charges per home. 2. Fees charged for a non-compliant project (10 year out City Hall expansion) that did not meet state requirements and may never be constructed and thus never meeting the fair and proportional Constitutional test. 3. Total projected overcharges to property owners exceed \$7 million in five year period. FILE FOLDER ORGANIZATION Each folder below contains documents that support the 2 summary problem reports. Specific supporting documents are provided in each of these 2 folders. The original supporting documents folder contains City reports as well as Class Action discovery information and spreadsheets used to create our detailed reports. Folder Videos contains one file with a document containing links to 2 videos. These videos can be provided in mp4 format if the links are not sufficient. • INTRODUCTION – describes brief history and impact fee abuses • Summary of 2018 Impact Fee Problems.docx • Summary of 2023 Impact Fee Problems.docx • 2018 FCS Whitefish Impact Fee Problems • 2023 TischlerBise Impact Fee Problems • Whitefish Impact Fee Videos • Folder – 2018 FCS Impact Fees • Folder – 2023 TischlerBise Impact Fees • Folder – Videos • Folder – Original Supporting Documents

Anonymous

5/02/2025 04:31 AM

The current form does not speak in the best interest of someone like me.

Anonymous

5/02/2025 10:11 AM

Any form that requires more voter accountability

Anonymous

5/03/2025 07:43 AM

Too much power is concentrated in the City Manager position, who is an unelected official. Whitefish authority is too centralized and we need to take away this concentrated power. REMOVE CITY ATTORNEY, who is not qualified and has demonstrated she is over her head.

Anonymous

5/05/2025 02:29 PM

Mayor is an absolute joke and unfortunately anyone qualified will never run.

Anonymous

I think the commission/city manager decision making for important

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5/06/2025 06:44 AM

items is a thoughtful, effective way to get things done. I do think some things like zoning regulations need updating so the items these decision makers are handling aren't so restrictive and bog down the process.

Anonymous

5/06/2025 11:16 AM

Listen to public input and move forward based on public opinion, not as the commission or council believes to know better than the voice of the citizens.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:52 AM

Town meetings faster transparency and build strong relationships between the citizens and the leaders.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 07:16 PM

Accessibility to City meetings, access to information, ability to learn about the governing on Facebook and other media.

Anonymous

5/10/2025 09:34 AM

Continue rate increases beyond reasonable, allowing city manger to move out of city to avoid increased fees. The fact that the council needs a raise to afford the rate increases! Did you all forget about the locals who work to support the town and tourism who can't at the fee increase also why are we the highest in the state does it make the council proud?

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:15 AM

Some of the decisions made by the commission are questionable. When asked about it, the commissioners mostly react very defensive instead of providing clarifications.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:16 AM

Locals have more say

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:42 AM

After attending a recent city council meeting, I felt the council and city staff members were informed and engaged in smart two way dialogue amongst themselves and community members.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:05 PM

This should be an all community event. Not just special interest groups.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:10 PM

We are not totally dissatisfied with the current form, but sometimes the council seems biased toward the tourists, the tourists and foo foo businesses and generally transforming our town into some sort of destination tourist local, including advertising as such. The common

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long-term resident has little say in how the town is run, which is usually in favor of some high dollar business entity or developers.

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:07 PM

People get to vote for the mayor!

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:17 PM

We have not done a good job with this form! Good & poor managers! Too much latitude \*\*hand written comment, not legible\*\*

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:22 PM

All fees in this town are way overpriced. Water, sewer, garbage. Stop trying to make this town what you want and not what it is!

Anonymous

5/15/2025 07:03 PM

The Whitefish government is seems far superior to most of the other local governments with which I am familiar.

**Optional question** (71 response(s), 228 skipped)

**Question type:** Essay Question

#### Q4 | Is the local government representative of the whole community? Please describe...

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:03 PM

I believe so

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:06 PM

No, again, I believe representation only comes from a few government members that do not respect all points of view. I also believe the current government caters towards making whitefish a premier, high end tourist destination to the detriment of long term locals.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:07 PM

No, those integrated in the community but living in the doughnut cannot vote in city elections.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:09 PM

Nope. It caters to developers. You've built so much crap that doesn't fit with the 'character of the city' that the authenticity of the town is stone dead.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:20 PM

Yes

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Anonymous  
4/07/2025 01:22 PM

No, term limits is an absolute necessity, especially if we begin paying city councilmen. Also, I feel that certain city councilors make their political orientation waaaaaay too obvious. This badly hurts the City when dealing with the county and state officials.

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 01:22 PM

No, no representation south of 13 street.

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 01:27 PM

Yes

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 01:55 PM

No Working class is being pushed out and taxes are going higher and higher

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 02:07 PM

I feel that at times political party leanings get in the way of representing the entire community.

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 02:12 PM

Yes. At large representatives represent the entire community.

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 02:17 PM

Too many business owners. Local government should have a wider variety of occupations

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 02:40 PM

Absolutely not. We need something that gives representation to the 40-45% of voters who are center-right. The current election of 7 at-large councilors almost guarantees 6-7 liberal councilors (even though the voter base is, maybe 55% liberal).

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 02:46 PM

No. It's obviously very left-wing, which is not representative of the whole community.

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 02:52 PM

Yes

Anonymous  
4/07/2025 03:07 PM

Yes, but no compensation and very low compensation for a quarter time job means that this is still a volunteer position so in the future we will see people who are retired, wealthy, more men and very few women or people in the working classes. There is already a sense of privilege and a power structure based on how men lead so I am not optimistic about finding good leaders.

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Anonymous

4/07/2025 03:57 PM

I believe so.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:03 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:03 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:16 PM

Yes

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:35 PM

Population, age and priorities have changed. Why does WF keep functioning in an antiquated way?

Anonymous

4/07/2025 05:03 PM

Age, sex, and economic differences are not always represented. However, those changes can and do happen in elections.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 09:11 PM

Yes absolutely

Anonymous

4/07/2025 09:51 PM

It's a tough question and depends on the perspectives of a lot of different people. Personally, I'm sad that we're losing our personality. Specifically, people don't say hello to one another anymore, or way when someone lets you turn ahead of them. Does our local government do anything about this? Of course not. Are we being dominated by crazy real estate growth and development - absolutely. Am I happy about how it's handled? Absolutely not. But the worst part is that the doesn't seem to be a direction of where Whitefish WANTS to go. Why must we have such a high level of development? Why can't we try to stay small?

Anonymous

4/08/2025 06:23 AM

I do feel that our local government could be more representative, and that it often caters to a few loud voices in the room on issues. This is not abnormal for local governments generally, but finding ways to involve new voices and perspectives in elected seats can help to make our local government more representative.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 07:09 AM

No. The local government is more driven by the Almighty Dollar, than by the needs of its citizenship.

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Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:10 AM

Yes

Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:26 AM

Yes

Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:51 AM

For the most part I believe it is. I don't think there is good representation of young people struggling with housing - but our local government seems more engaged than others with regards to this issue.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:17 AM

Small town so six people of various ages and demographics can represent the community. We do need more young people on there, hopefully council pay will help with that.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:27 AM

Yes

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:36 AM

Local government can be representative of the whole community—but Whitefish is not, at least not anymore. Special interest parties have redirected priorities. Local decisions are dominated by a small, well-connected group (business owners, wealthy families, or political insiders).

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:54 AM

I believe so

Anonymous

4/08/2025 12:23 PM

No. Whitefish has a highly activated liberal activist block of voters who turn out for all elections in Whitefish and function more as a tyranny of mob rule than a majority. This is because they are often gravely misinformed due to local media censorship, intimidation online from the mob of people who try to inform. It's leftover from the staging of a nazi presence in 2016, when a local woman was harassed online by an extremist website of non locals affiliated with ONE local man, not a host of local antisemites. This activist group was a fake grassroots front for an extremist leftist takeover of all political control in whitefish. They aggressively demand submission from all of whitefish to all liberal democrat positions. Their voting block protects brazen corruption, actually is specifically racketeering, at the City, obfuscated between the city attorney, council, manager and consulting firm Tischler Bise..

Anonymous

4/08/2025 01:35 PM

Absolutely not. They represent a small but vocal minority instead of the balance of citizens. Whitefish has a far reaching reputation as left loony statewide and beyond.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 01:49 PM

As best as it could be, those who chose not to get involved are making that choice.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 02:12 PM

Perhaps. Now, yes

Anonymous

4/08/2025 02:24 PM

I think it is. Without being actively involved in the government, I do believe Whitefish is represented well, considering the challenges of a highly varying population.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:30 PM

No. They constantly violate the law

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:31 PM

No, they seem to be only concerned with the ultra-wealthy and tourists

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:37 PM

No. They only care about their left leaning ideology. They do not listen to other points of view.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:54 PM

No - City Council is not representative of the majority of residents and workers here in Whitefish. We need a more diverse sample of the population (service industry, low- to mid-level employees, non-business owners, non-retired, renters, etc.).

Anonymous

4/08/2025 04:24 PM

Seems to be.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 04:55 PM

Yes. The current system works well and represents the community.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 05:24 PM

I believe it is.

Anonymous

NO

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4/08/2025 06:34 PM

Anonymous

4/08/2025 08:18 PM

No. Allowing 1-2 city council positions for people who live in the school district, but not in city limits, would help. In addition, paying council members will help represent working people (not just the retired or wealthy).

Anonymous

4/08/2025 11:35 PM

No, only the wealthy have an opinion. They get away with things a small homeowner can't get a permit for.

Anonymous

4/09/2025 02:46 PM

a local representative fails to adequately represent the whole community when using at-large elections, which can weaken the representation of specific groups, or when council members prioritize their district's interests over the city's overall good.

Anonymous

4/09/2025 02:53 PM

Yes.

Anonymous

4/09/2025 04:13 PM

Yes

Anonymous

4/10/2025 11:03 AM

The fact that the city council can make the decision to damage the Whitefish river to put a bike path in is absurd. Destroy nature for human use! Also, many people use the river. Who is representing those people in this issue?!

Anonymous

4/10/2025 01:07 PM

No, Council is too concentrated geographically and needs to represent the entire City.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 04:31 PM

I don't believe so, however, I think this is due to lack of interest / participation by people in the community.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 04:50 PM

I would say that it is manly for Tourism and special interest fringe of Whitefish.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 06:50 PM

I believe it tries, but there is probably more representation from folks with money than those who don't have much, since they have more opportunity to share their voice.

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Anonymous  
4/10/2025 09:38 PM

Well the city manager doesn't not live in Whitefish so how does that qualify her to represent the people that live and pay the taxes in Whitefish.

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 05:25 AM

no

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 06:26 AM

No - I think they try but at the end if the day the side with \$\$.

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 08:28 AM

Yes

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 08:35 AM

Yes

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 11:00 AM

Yes

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 11:18 AM

No. We need Wards.

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 12:21 PM

No! They have their chosen, carefully selected "stake holder" groups that exhibit their bias every time a "consensus" is required for one of their proposals.

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 05:46 PM

Not really -everyone cares about climate action in the community yet implementation is still lagging (a lot of recommendations haven't really been adapted). We're still pretty reliant on fossil fuels for city operations. Past that climate equity and resilience (especially for low-income people) isn't really centered in the plan. No- not when it comes to class, age, renters, seasonal workers, BIPOC or dogs. Which is a huge portion of the workforce I represented. Past that low income residents and service workers are left out of decisions, Igbtq+ fold and repo advocistes have a cultural presence but no formal power. As a renter we are constantly gettting left out of policies that directly affect us.

Anonymous  
4/11/2025 09:36 PM

Probably yes, but there needs to be a greater outreach and communication plan to render visible to the community what is happening in the city.

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Anonymous

4/12/2025 07:02 AM

NO we need a Ward system

Anonymous

4/12/2025 11:48 AM

No. They don't care about those of us who rent nor do they represent our interests.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 10:13 PM

Now? Or should it be? The local government should represent the people who pay taxes to live there

Anonymous

4/13/2025 09:49 AM

Yes

Anonymous

4/14/2025 10:28 AM

No, it lacks representation for the younger generation and the working class community.

Anonymous

4/15/2025 06:46 AM

No it is based on who/what makes the most money. Doesn't look at infrastructure when it approves all the new building.

Anonymous

4/15/2025 01:39 PM

No, City Council and Committees do not reflect what our community looks like.

Anonymous

4/16/2025 07:24 AM

Yes

Anonymous

4/16/2025 01:06 PM

At times. Many residents feel they are not represented, because they and people like them are busy raising kids and trying to stay afloat, don't have the spare time (or money) to run for council or participate in the various committees.

Anonymous

4/16/2025 01:43 PM

While I know this is hard, it would be helpful to have younger people on city council. And at least at the moment, more women.

Anonymous

4/16/2025 01:58 PM

Yes.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 09:17 AM

No - very left leaning council. Could use more conservative voices.

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Anonymous

4/17/2025 10:32 AM

I believe it is

Anonymous

4/17/2025 11:56 AM

No less than one third of registered voters bother to vote!

Anonymous

4/17/2025 02:16 PM

Absolutely

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:06 PM

If it was representative, there would be more women. I wonder why more women don't step up?

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:15 PM

Yes, I believe the local government goes above and beyond serving the citizens of Whitefish to the best of their abilities.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:44 PM

Absolutely not. The current majority of the Whitefish City Council does not represent the citizens of this community. Their decisions consistently reflect their personal beliefs and business interests rather than the voices and concerns of the people they're supposed to serve. As City Council members, their primary responsibility is to represent their constituents not to push their own agendas. Unfortunately, there's a clear disconnect between the council and the everyday residents of Whitefish. What makes it even more frustrating is that not a single one of them is a true local. They've all moved here from large metropolitan areas and are now trying to bring those big-city ideas into a town that has always thrived on its own unique identity. Whitefish deserves leadership that actually listens, understands, and represents the people who call this place home not just those who want to reshape it into something it's not.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 05:43 PM

No it's not, it main focus on rich, tourist, and downtown buisness. They forget about the ones that built the town

Anonymous

4/17/2025 06:33 PM

It is representative of those who participate through voting, attending meetings, providing comments, volunteering on boards and committees, and staying engaged.

Anonymous

4/18/2025 11:52 AM

No

Anonymous

I believe so. There is a wide range of people with varying

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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4/18/2025 10:10 PM

backgrounds moving Whitetish forward to better the community.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 11:39 AM

Prefer council members to be elected by wards in which candidates live.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 04:20 PM

Definitely not always.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 04:35 PM

Current representation seems to serve well all neighborhoods, communities of people with common interests, and general public interests.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 05:18 PM

Yes

Anonymous

4/19/2025 05:54 PM

Left-leaning with a worldly bias

Anonymous

4/19/2025 06:27 PM

Yes except for low income seasonal workers

Anonymous

4/19/2025 06:56 PM

Yes

Anonymous

4/19/2025 07:10 PM

No, the more affluent dominate local government.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 08:34 PM

I think so. As long as both rep and dem are on council than yes.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 08:13 AM

Yes they are

Anonymous

4/20/2025 08:33 AM

I don't think there is any government in existence that is representative of the whole community

Anonymous

4/20/2025 08:58 AM

Take out parties to represent everyone

Anonymous

I don't believe this is the case as outlined in answers below.

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4/20/2025 09:30 AM

Anonymous

Yes

4/20/2025 09:42 AM

Anonymous

Yes

4/20/2025 11:00 AM

Anonymous

We are with whitefish for mail, school and fireservice only. We have limited opportunity to vote or voice our concerns. I would like to see more outreach to the surrounding whitefish community that is not within the citY limit.

4/20/2025 11:42 AM

Anonymous

No. They have completely approved the change of whitefish from 15 years ago. They pushed out all locals and affordability.

4/20/2025 12:37 PM

Anonymous

No..they cater to the rich

4/20/2025 01:30 PM

Anonymous

There is definitely a skew towards the wealthier citizens of whiteifsh. At the same time, we have a good mix of people - most of whom have been here for over 10 years. In the past, people who haven't been here for long struggle to win elections.

4/20/2025 07:00 PM

Anonymous

I feel people that are wealthier get more say in what gets approved by the council.

4/21/2025 10:47 AM

Anonymous

Yes

4/21/2025 11:01 AM

Anonymous

no opinion

4/21/2025 11:13 AM

Anonymous

It would be beneficial for the residents just outside of the Whitefish City limits to have representation on some of the many City issues that they are not able to vote for. Many of the city services apply to them, but they are not able to vote directly for them. Some municipalities allow for this.

4/21/2025 01:21 PM

Anonymous

Absolutely not. We need more working class representation.

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4/21/2025 02:24 PM

Anonymous

No. They represent whoever gives them money.

4/21/2025 05:27 PM

Anonymous

Local government is very much controlled by long standing Whitefish families

4/22/2025 07:55 AM

Anonymous

Yes, the local government is representative of the whole community. Through our nonpartisan election process, city council and mayoral candidates are able to express their fitness or lack of fitness to serve. Voters are given a fair chance to elect those whom they see fit, and there is a process for recall for those elected officials who appear unfit.

4/22/2025 08:19 AM

Anonymous

Yes

4/22/2025 09:49 AM

Anonymous

No, I do not believe this to be the case.

4/22/2025 11:08 AM

Anonymous

Yes, the public is open to participate and attend all meetings related to City operations and government.

4/22/2025 11:57 AM

Anonymous

No, as the 'doughnut' residents are not considered and we have no say in Whitefish business, even if we own and run a Whitefish business

4/22/2025 12:47 PM

Anonymous

Yes...

4/22/2025 01:00 PM

Anonymous

Yes

4/22/2025 01:01 PM

Anonymous

No, there is no council representation south of 13th street

4/22/2025 01:15 PM

Anonymous

Strange question. Did it come from someone wanting to turn this great town into a mess like Chicago, Baltimore, or Detroit? If that someone seeks to put the town down, they should vote with their feet. Seattle has the welcome mat out.

4/22/2025 01:31 PM

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Anonymous

4/22/2025 02:14 PM

No mainly liberals and money talks

Anonymous

4/22/2025 02:22 PM

Yes

Anonymous

4/22/2025 05:07 PM

Yes

Anonymous

4/23/2025 09:31 AM

No, the government is focused on the city of Whitefish tourism and the wealth is provided. I have to drive to Kalispell to avoid the city taxes. I can buy the same pair of pants at the Toggery in Kalispell for less money than in Whitefish. The government is not considering the year round residents who work here.

Anonymous

4/23/2025 04:31 PM

No, feel there are a few active citizens driving the agenda. Most citizens not engaged.

Anonymous

4/23/2025 06:50 PM

Yes

Anonymous

4/24/2025 02:21 PM

No, but I do not think that is possible to achieve unless people of different ages, races, genders, neighborhoods, abilities, etc run for council.

Anonymous

4/24/2025 02:49 PM

I don't believe that is possible. For this to be true would be to assume that the current council members all had 100% support. However, council members are elected through a democratic process, which means each member represents the majority of the community.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 08:56 AM

yea

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:00 AM

depends. cause they have their own opinion and if they are in power they can do what they want with the information given from the people.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:00 AM

I would say that yes it represents the whole community because they hear everyone's sides and point of view. People have a voice and

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Speak on what they believe.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:01 AM

yes because we have opinions from all of us, and its not a huge city so its easier to notice everyone in the community

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:01 AM

Yes

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:02 AM

It is fairly representative of the whole community

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:02 AM

Yes, due to the guidelines of both the charter and the active community involvement. Also Whitefish does does not have wards but rather an all inclusive election.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:03 AM

Yes, We have a good amount of people that live in the town of Whitefish so we get lots of people with different opinions and lots of opportunity to discuss.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:05 AM

They could do a better job of representing the interests of the working class.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:42 AM

Yes I think it does a good job representing the values of the people of Whitefish.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

Yes the local government is doing a good job representing our whole community, focusing on problems that there is public discourse around not just random things.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

Yes, everyone gets a voice I feel like.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

Yeah, its a small community.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:47 AM

I don't know enough to accurately answer this. Perhaps information should be shared through the mail detailing major events in the whitefish government

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:47 AM

I don't have enough information on the topic to give a answer.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:23 AM

No, I think it is lacking the voices of the younger group.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:24 AM

Yes because the people representing it are voted on by the people

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:24 AM

I think the community is fairly well represented, however I do worry about the economic imbalance a tourist town like whitefish attracts

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:25 AM

No, the demographics are very lopsided to older generations.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:25 AM

Yes

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:25 AM

I don't think so because not many people participate in meetings and in the local politics. But everyone is welcome so its their fault.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:27 AM

No, I do not believe that it is representative of the whole community. The group that I believe is really underrepresented are the service workers, who range in all ages. However, this would be a very hard group to reach out to or to get to participate in the government.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:28 AM

Yes its pretty representative because the community can vote on basically anything. The charter system where you can add an "amendment" to the laws and it can get updated easier.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:50 PM

yes

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:51 PM

Yeah kinda

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:52 PM

I'm not sure, it's only 5 people at this point, and our population is growing rapidly. so it may be time to consider we are not having everyone's views at the table.

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:52 PM

Mostly

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:53 PM

Yes, I believe that the current local government is representative of the whole community because I think that the people of the community are represented fairly well.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:54 PM

Yes from what I can tell

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:55 PM

Yes, any person is welcome to go to the city hall and vote.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:07 PM

For the most part, it could possibly have more representation for medium to low income groups.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:47 PM

I think the local government is representative of the whole community because even though we have low participation rates in our government, its likely because people are satisfied with their government.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:47 PM

Not everyone or every thought will be fully represented but it can always be improved

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:47 PM

The local government tries to be representative of the whole community, but in general it's difficult to really take into consideration of everyone's needs in the community due to the sheer number of people within the city.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:49 PM

It is a representation of most of the community. However, there are smaller groups of people such as minorities or people who live close to/below the poverty line who are not represented as well. Much of our interests are represented by the wealthier population who have time to attend meetings and address issues.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 02:54 PM

As far as I know there are representative of the whole community.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 07:29 AM

No. Quite regularly my friends and other people that I talk to in their 20s,30's and 40's feel as if they have little to no voice in what

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happens in Whitetfish. When attending Kalispell City Council meetings it is apparent how much more representative their city council is by income and age demographics. If we want people to feel like they have a voice in what happens in their community, the city council needs to reflect that.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:11 AM

No the council generally just gives into moneyed interests.

L.Miller

4/26/2025 11:16 AM

I would like to see younger people involved in the government.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:58 AM

No! While our current government includes the mayor & city council, recent actions, like affordable housing, tourism impact on our community, increase in Impact Fees amid legal disputes, and city council compensation represent a government not for the people.

Anonymous

4/27/2025 09:05 AM

No they only cater to the rich and the tourist, the locals and people who have lived here for years not so much .

Anonymous

4/27/2025 12:42 PM

I think so

Anonymous

4/27/2025 03:54 PM

No They take comments and then do their own thing

Anonymous

4/28/2025 08:07 AM

No thay are not .I've already stated.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 09:01 AM

No. Our current local government represents special interests, and does not represent the interests of the electorate.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 10:59 AM

It's fine.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 11:08 AM

I don't think the fiscally conservative members of this community are well represented on the current city council or by city management.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 12:55 PM

No. They seem more like an insular cabal most focused on their personal agendas and the desire of their in-group. Very little of

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substance is really referred to the voters. Voter input is summarily received and apparently dismissed. Certain councilors seem to believe their wishes are higher than the law (I've attended committee meetings where a committee member stated 'counselor x' said we don't need to follow the law).

Anonymous

4/28/2025 01:25 PM

Not really. They seem disconnected. They seem beholden to a few. Don't seek broad input from across the continents

Anonymous

4/28/2025 02:45 PM

Yes, all citizens have the right to vote for their choice of counsellors and can voice their views on any issue in a public forum.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 02:52 PM

For the most part yes. I am sure there are people who feel unheard.

Anonymous

4/29/2025 11:47 AM

The city caters too much to developers, businesses, and organizations that favor growth. These people have the time and motivation to engage frequently with city government. The vast majority of the citizenry are too busy living our lives to actively engage in politics let alone the minutiae of city government. We are happy living in a quiet small town. While we regret that there are some people are locked out of living in Whitefish, in order to have a quiet small town, it necessarily means restricting development and the influx of people. City officials need to understand that there is nothing wrong with wanting a quiet little town.

Anonymous

4/29/2025 02:48 PM

I believe the local government does not represent the whole community. Elected officials seem to prioritize their own personal beliefs or agendas rather than actively listening to and reflecting the diverse views of the people they were elected to serve. There needs to be more focus on community input and transparency.

Anonymous

4/30/2025 12:45 PM

Not sure, the roads should be in a lot better shape for this high-end community though.

Anonymous

5/01/2025 11:30 AM

As best they can

Anonymous

5/01/2025 12:12 PM

No. The same politically persuaded, uninformed group is represented by all but one member.

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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Anonymous

5/02/2025 04:31 AM

No. Answered on question #3.

Anonymous

5/02/2025 10:11 AM

No. It responds most to a small influential group.

Anonymous

5/02/2025 02:10 PM

They have been elected by the community so they represent the community.

Anonymous

5/02/2025 04:35 PM

yes

Anonymous

5/03/2025 07:43 AM

NO. We need a ward system that allows voters in their own district to select representatives. Council members have had too much power individually for too long.

Anonymous

5/05/2025 02:29 PM

NO

Anonymous

5/06/2025 06:44 AM

I believe so. I also believe they should be paid.

Anonymous

5/06/2025 11:16 AM

No, council believe they know best and disregard public opinion.

Anonymous

5/06/2025 11:28 AM

I don't believe so.

Anonymous

5/06/2025 11:39 AM

Yes

Anonymous

5/07/2025 02:12 PM

Mostly—always depends on the number of people willing to run for council (the more candidates, the more representation there is likely to be of different factions of the community.) Just as important as that is voter turnout—I'm always discouraged by low voter turnout on elections (all election, all issues...)

Anonymous

5/08/2025 09:58 AM

Yes.

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:52 AM

No. We need the commissioners to have jobs that represent a cross-section of jobs in Whitefish.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:54 AM

Yes, I believe so

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:57 AM

No, it appears outsiders have more control over those who live here all the time.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 12:00 PM

Are we sure that all members are legal citizens of the US?

Anonymous

5/08/2025 07:16 PM

I believe so, but am often concerned about infrastructure issues and concerns about being over-run by corporate priorities.

Anonymous

5/09/2025 01:53 PM

Yes, the local government is an exceptional representation of our community and cares deeply for all the people who live and work here

Anonymous

5/10/2025 09:34 AM

No! locals who have grown this town for decades are being forced out! One example \$200.00year round for water is ridiculous and now and 18% increase who try living on a budget

Anonymous

5/11/2025 07:55 PM

Sure doesn't seem like it.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:05 AM

No

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:07 AM

I personally don't know

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:15 AM

No, it is not. The local governments manager levels tend to cater to their good old boys club and approve questionable requests and do not follow through with the general rule enforcement for their buddies.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:16 AM

No

Anonymous

I feel their focus is mostly on city limits and is less interested in rural

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5/12/2025 10:42 AM

Whotefish.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:46 AM

No, but that's not really possible

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:47 AM

Absolutely not! Not to the fullest extent it could be. There is racial discrimination, homophobia, and trans rights discrimination abortion discrimination. They need more recognition. More rights!!!

Anonymous

5/12/2025 11:02 AM

yes

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:02 PM

No. It is mainly older males. Would be awesome to have more of a female representation and a wider age range.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:05 PM

No. Only special interest groups.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:10 PM

See answer to number three above.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 03:42 PM

Not as of now. Many people are voicing their concerns but I feel many of their concerns/complaints are not legitimate.

Anonymous

5/13/2025 07:52 PM

The local government is representative of those who participate in the community, not necessarily the whole community

Anonymous

5/14/2025 02:24 PM

How it can be when all community members do not participate community meetings, including myself. Maybe an incentive such as a tax break, trash fee break, etc. for those who attend.

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:07 PM

No

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:17 PM

No!! They do not represent the citizens. They rep "the City"

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:22 PM

No! Everything is money, money, money! Stop stealing from the citizens!

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Anonymous

5/15/2025 08:48 AM

No. It's focused on a small set of businesses and business unions, and the benefit of City employees.

Anonymous

5/15/2025 01:49 PM

Yes. Should be.

Anonymous

5/15/2025 03:04 PM

Long-time residents not considered

Anonymous

5/15/2025 07:03 PM

Yes

**Optional question** (228 response(s), 71 skipped)

**Question type:** Essay Question

**Q5 | Would a change in the number of council members or a change in their term of office improve effective representation of neighborhoods and communities? Please describe...**

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:03 PM

I don't think so

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:06 PM

I think having 1-2 council members that work or own business in whitefish, even if they live out of town would be beneficial.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:07 PM

Undecided

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:09 PM

Doubt it, you'd just get more suck-ups to developers and liberal organizations on the council.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:20 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:21 PM

Yes ... Councilors should be limited to serving two consecutive terms.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:22 PM

3 or 4 term limit max for mayor with maybe 2 term limit for regular city councilors.

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Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:22 PM

Yes. Need a form of Council that represents all areas. Precincts with a Council member from each.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:27 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:55 PM

Not sure but things are not working now and mayor and posse have had reigns way too long

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:07 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:12 PM

More representatives would be obviously be more representative, but it would take away the feeling of a small town and tight community.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:17 PM

We have a good number of council members, there should not be more. Whitefish isn't that big, more council members will just be less efficient.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:40 PM

Doubtful. If we increased it to 11 councilors....9-10 of them would be left (or center-left) given the at-large election system.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:46 PM

Yes. Members should be limited to 2 terms, and should have their political affiliations made public.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:52 PM

I don't think so

Anonymous

4/07/2025 03:07 PM

Wards may help. I do think term limits (two max) could help because then succession planning would be more urgent. I also like the idea of the Deputy Mayor formally transitioning to Mayor. Some people come onto Council with years of experience and good historical knowledge of our town but we also get people who run on one issue (potholes, the 1 percent tax, STR recently) and the depth of knowledge makes for a steep learning curve. Councilors could be assigned mentors if needed. Because we get sued regularly and are seen as innovative Council decision making is really important for our town to succeed, and leaders are hired to think, but training sessions could help (ethics, parliamentary procedure, MCA, agency alliances, public

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speaking, etc)

Anonymous

4/07/2025 03:57 PM

I think the current number is adequate.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:03 PM

There should be term limits

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:03 PM

no

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:16 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:35 PM

Priorities are jobs, housing and economy. Why does Central Avenue have so many vacant stores? Greed would be the answer. Tax incentives for local merchants who can provide local or state made goods. Landlords are killing our town. Keep it local. They just seem to want mega-leases which can only be offered by national chains.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 05:03 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 09:11 PM

Good now

Anonymous

4/07/2025 09:51 PM

Nope. More does not equal "Better".

Anonymous

4/08/2025 06:23 AM

I think that it could be beneficial to have an odd number of councilors to avoid situations in which there is a tie. Having a stronger mayor with a different term length, like 6 years, could be a benefit as well.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 07:09 AM

No change in number, definite term limits. Especially Mayor.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:10 AM

No

Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:26 AM

No because more would make consensus challenging

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Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:51 AM

I don't think it would. I'd rather not 'over saturate' the city council. I'd be worried about extremists from either side being able to get onto council if we did that.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:17 AM

Probably not.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:27 AM

No

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:36 AM

I'm more concerned about the fact that some council members—and possibly the city attorney—are aligned with agendas that lack transparency. It's important that we hold our representatives accountable and consider new leadership where necessary.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:54 AM

Unsure

Anonymous

4/08/2025 12:23 PM

I am not sure if term limits would help. Not if members of the hard left faction keep getting the spots. It's almost like you have to appoint at least three conservatives, since they can't win because the leftist mobs objective is to control. They cannot be swayed or appealed to based on logic, thrift, common good because they are radicalized. They don't care about logistical functions of a community. They don't value that. That's why corruption has flourished, its an arraignment to protect each other's interests between the city and the mob.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 01:35 PM

I believe 100% that one of the most critical needs for Whitefish is term limits for elected members. I believe that there is a lot going on behind the scenes that negatively impact us all.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 01:49 PM

There should be term limits, 12 years max. please do not add to the council, nothing would get accomplished in my opinion

Anonymous

4/08/2025 02:12 PM

I think the number is sufficient

Anonymous

4/08/2025 02:24 PM

No

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:30 PM

No

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:31 PM

Unknown, would depend on who would be willing to run for the offices.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:37 PM

Replace all of them.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:54 PM

Term limits would help to at least spark change and encourage long-time Councilmembers to step down and welcome new members, but some sort of stipend or flexibility for full-time workers making average or below average local wages feels crucial. City Council elections naturally attract individuals with means given it is a volunteer position that would be hard for many folks to accommodate while trying to make ends meet, especially with a full-time job (possibly not a classic 9-5) and/or children.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 04:24 PM

No

Anonymous

4/08/2025 04:55 PM

No. The current number of council members is appropriate until the next government review in 10 years.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 05:24 PM

I think 6 council members is a good number.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 06:34 PM

Maybe

Anonymous

4/08/2025 08:18 PM

No

Anonymous

4/08/2025 11:35 PM

No. Just get people who represent the basic homeowner. Oh, that might be hard to find, because all the family homes were bought out from under the renters planning to buy that year or the next. People saved for years to buy, covid and terrible city planning ruined their plans. Well done, hats off to the rich..

Anonymous

4/09/2025 02:46 PM

The effectiveness depends on how those changes are implemented and the specific context of the community. A larger council can lead

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to increased bureaucracy, slower decision-making, and potentially less accountability.

Anonymous

4/09/2025 02:53 PM

No

Anonymous

4/09/2025 04:13 PM

No

Anonymous

4/10/2025 01:07 PM

Term limits need to be implemented. No one should serve more than 8 years on the Council or Mayor position.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 04:31 PM

Term limits and amount of council members is appropriate.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 04:50 PM

I just believe all, Whitefish residents should be involved in community local operations, elections, laws.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 09:38 PM

No

Anonymous

4/11/2025 05:25 AM

no

Anonymous

4/11/2025 06:26 AM

Change in term limits

Anonymous

4/11/2025 08:28 AM

No

Anonymous

4/11/2025 08:35 AM

No. I do not think enough qualified candidates want to run.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 11:00 AM

6 council and one Mayor with term limits. 7 commissioners

Anonymous

4/11/2025 11:18 AM

Term limits - all WF elected officials be subject to term limits. 8 years should be the maximum for Council members and the Mayor. Ideally, a ward system in the City instead of having all of the power centered in a small area of the city. The City Manager power, and authority

REDUCED. TERM LIMITS on all Whitetish Council members and the Mayor.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 12:21 PM

Yes, term limits are definitely required!

Anonymous

4/11/2025 05:46 PM

I think city council is at large so it's harder for folks without money or name recognition to have a harder time winning. Meetings are often at inconvenient times for workers, caregivers, and families. As it is everything is all intimidating, overly formal, or disconnected for everyday survival in this capitalistic hellscape. Childcare, transportation, and tech assess are barriers enough for most people if they even trust the process enough to overcome that. It would be cool if there was advisory members for lgbtq+, indigenous, or renter communities. Maybe a youth and equity committee, if there's budget offering childcare and food at the meetings, host listening session with community orgs, making city docs readable, visual, and multilingual. Canadite forms might help state the candidates values clearly to voters because nonpartisan is best but I fear informal party backing.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 09:36 PM

A larger council would have the potential of improving representation.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 12:05 AM

Yes. Give them a term limit.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 07:02 AM

Need term limits - two 4 year terms at most. No more 20 - 30 year members on the Council

Anonymous

4/12/2025 11:48 AM

Nope. Nor should they be payed.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 10:13 PM

Take it down to zero

Anonymous

4/13/2025 09:13 AM

Yes - more would be better

Anonymous

4/13/2025 09:49 AM

No

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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Anonymous 4/14/2025 10:28 AM	I think adding more seats could open up opportunities for better representation.
Anonymous 4/15/2025 06:46 AM	Yes
Anonymous 4/15/2025 01:39 PM	no
Anonymous 4/16/2025 07:24 AM	No
Anonymous 4/16/2025 01:06 PM	Perhaps two year terms...mayor as well.
Anonymous 4/16/2025 01:43 PM	I think we could have at least 2 more council members to improve representation. I don't have an opinion about terms. Maybe 3 years is better to encourage participation?
Anonymous 4/16/2025 01:58 PM	No need to change.
Anonymous 4/17/2025 09:17 AM	Shorter terms and a mayoral term limit would help.
Anonymous 4/17/2025 10:32 AM	Perhaps term limits would be beneficial
Anonymous 4/17/2025 11:56 AM	Absolutely! We need term limits 2 to 3 terms especially in light of recent efforts to adopt monetary compensation.
Anonymous 4/17/2025 12:55 PM	yes! term limits are needed. 2 terms only
Anonymous 4/17/2025 02:16 PM	No
Anonymous 4/17/2025 04:06 PM	More members might allow more representation but you want to be able to reach a consensus and not have overly long meetings. I wouldn't have more than eight. As to ward-based, that might get every neighborhood involved, but what if nobody from a

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neighborhood wanted to participate?

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:15 PM

I feel there should be an age limit or term limit, so younger citizens with fresh ideas have a chance to participate.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:44 PM

Yes, I believe implementing term limits for City Council members would improve representation of neighborhoods and communities. When individuals hold a seat for too long, they often become disconnected from the people they're supposed to represent and more focused on maintaining their position than serving the public. Term limits would create more opportunities for fresh perspectives, new voices, and better alignment with the evolving needs of Whitefish residents. It would also help prevent the consolidation of influence and encourage more accountability among council members. Ultimately, we need leadership that reflects the diversity and values of our community not the same few voices cycling through year after year.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 05:43 PM

Yes i think their should be a term limit on it so we can get some new blood in there

Anonymous

4/17/2025 06:33 PM

No. Simply changing the number of City Council members and the duration of their terms does not mean there would be more representation of certain neighborhoods or communities.

Anonymous

4/18/2025 11:52 AM

term limits

Anonymous

4/19/2025 11:39 AM

Limit council members to two four-year terms.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 04:20 PM

Yes. Both more members and shorter terms.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 04:35 PM

Perhaps more frequent turnover of council members would end up serving more communities of people and more public interests. What I like most about current council terms is the shared institutional knowledge of what's already been tried, failed, or succeeded, along with the nuances inherent in each of those categories.

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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Anonymous

4/19/2025 05:54 PM

no

Anonymous

4/19/2025 06:27 PM

No

Anonymous

4/19/2025 06:56 PM

5 or 7

Anonymous

4/19/2025 07:10 PM

Yes, term limits.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 08:34 PM

No

Anonymous

4/20/2025 07:55 AM

Term should be 2 years/and only serve for 2 terms

Anonymous

4/20/2025 08:13 AM

I do not believe that the number of council member or their terms should be changed.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 08:33 AM

I think the number and term limits are fine right now.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 08:58 AM

Shorter terms

Anonymous

4/20/2025 09:30 AM

Yes, I think there is an imbalance in the representation currently. I think greater community representation is important based on neighborhood census population. The council members as well as any appointed officials should reside in the neighborhoods/communities they represent. Waivers should not be granted to offer exceptions to this rule. Term limits are important.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 09:42 AM

No

Anonymous

4/20/2025 11:00 AM

No change

Anonymous

No, we need local people running our local government. Not people

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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4/20/2025 01:30 PM

from out of state. I understand change, I understand growth, but not at the expense of native Whitefish residents. All this government is doing is running locals out of town with the taxes & the allowance of people with money to build & do what they want. They are not building for anyone except their own capital gain

Anonymous

4/20/2025 07:00 PM

Whitefish is a small city, the issues north of the viaduct are similar to those south of the viaduct, and the issues on the west side of town are similar to those in the avenues. I think it would be difficult to find people to run if there were a geographic requirement.

Anonymous

4/21/2025 10:47 AM

More council members representing all of the citizens in the city.

Anonymous

4/21/2025 11:01 AM

One additional member, 7 total would provide more coverage

Anonymous

4/21/2025 11:13 AM

no opinion

Anonymous

4/21/2025 01:21 PM

A change in term limits for council members to a longer term may provide a better knowledge of ongoing issues and decisions.

Anonymous

4/21/2025 02:24 PM

I don't know.

Anonymous

4/21/2025 05:27 PM

Term limits. Do your best to improve this place with the time you have then get out and get on with your life.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 07:55 AM

Appoint reps from specific neighborhoods

Anonymous

4/22/2025 08:19 AM

No. Our size of population is fairly represented by 6 council members and a mayor. A 4 year term is a reasonable time for an elected official to serve, as it gives them time to understand the job, and have an impact on the local government process.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 09:49 AM

Yes - Give more of a voice to the people of Whitefish and less to special interest groups.

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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Anonymous

4/22/2025 11:08 AM

Yes, this would make sense

Anonymous

4/22/2025 11:57 AM

Perhaps having council members from various neighborhoods would provide better representation. Or councilors from different walks of life, ie: teacher, business, public service, service industry, real estate, retired, student.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 01:00 PM

No

Anonymous

4/22/2025 01:15 PM

Yes, term limits and wards so all areas of city have a voice. People like Andy Feury, Frank Sweeney shouldn't be on the Council for years upon years.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 01:31 PM

No. Would more council voices help L.A.? They will not help Whitefish, either. If something is not broken, don't fix it.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 02:14 PM

Yes shorter terms

Anonymous

4/22/2025 02:22 PM

No

Anonymous

4/22/2025 05:07 PM

No

Anonymous

4/23/2025 09:31 AM

The council is controlled by the Democratic Party in all the elections.

Anonymous

4/23/2025 04:31 PM

Yes, Limit to two terms

Anonymous

4/23/2025 06:50 PM

No

Anonymous

4/24/2025 02:21 PM

No, I think our small community can be represented in the current number of seats on our council. I think current term limits are appropriate for council members to become familiar with their position and process.

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Anonymous

4/24/2025 02:49 PM

No. The current number of council members is appropriate for the community size and and I don't think Whitefish could handle, or pay for, additional elections.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 08:56 AM

idk

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:00 AM

perhaps but then it gets too complicated

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:00 AM

I don't think so because it seems to be working for us now.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:01 AM

maybe more members would create more diversity in the community and provide more opinions

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:01 AM

Yes, give the Mayor more than tie breaking power in votes

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:02 AM

If another council member or two were added, it would probably represent more people.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:02 AM

I feel there should be a few more council mebers and each should represent sections within city of Whitefish. It would help to bring certain interests from all over the city into one conversation.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:03 AM

It really depends on what policy that is being changed which could impact our neighborhoods and communities.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:05 AM

If you create wards to isolate the wealthiest neighborhoods so that those parts of the community aren't over-represented, that would be good.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:42 AM

Maybe making a separation in the elections and changing them from at large to by wards, allowing for each different section to be properly represented.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

improve

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

No it's good

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

I can't think of any differences that would be positively made with more or less city council members. I think the fact that it is an even number of people, allowing a tie, is kind of strange.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:47 AM

not sure

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:47 AM

I think the more the better because we could have people doing something on each part of the city.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:23 AM

Limiting terms may help to bring younger voices into the process.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:24 AM

Maybe but I feel that the current amount already does a sufficient job

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:24 AM

I think term limits are a good idea in any form of government, it's important to have new perspectives and ideas

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:25 AM

Yes, it could open up council to more perspectives while keeping veteran members.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:25 AM

No

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:25 AM

I don't think so.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:27 AM

I don't believe so. I think the current number of council members is adequate.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:28 AM

Yes, because it could open up new positions while still maintaining veteran members. Which again weighs consistency which = efficiency and also allows new positions.

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:50 PM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:51 PM

Improve gives more say to voters

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:52 PM

I think a number in council members would improve the effectiveness, however the 4 year term is perfectly fine. people in power need to have a steady limit, and this is already set. no need for change.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:53 PM

I think that more council members would allow more people's thoughts and ideas to be represented.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:54 PM

I don't think it needs much improvement

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:55 PM

With more council members we could have a wider range of representation throughout the community, and shorter terms would allow people to have more control over who is in office.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:55 PM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:07 PM

Change in term limits wouldn't affect representation of neighborhoods. If you elected more council members you will only have better representation for neighborhoods if they are from them.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:47 PM

Personally, I think it is fine as is because we don't run into many problems with our representation today.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:47 PM

A change in the number of council members could improve effective representation as long as the area they represent is different. It will help get more thoughts involved without getting every single person's voice heard (since a couple thousand opinions are difficult to listen to)

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:47 PM

A change in number to a large amount of council members would improve effective representation of neighborhoods and communities, as long as there is also a way for those who are representatives also don't get overlooked in their ideas.

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:49 PM

It wouldn't necessarily make all representation be equal, but having people who are most set or representing a specific group of people such as the minorities, it may increased their voice

Anonymous

4/25/2025 02:54 PM

I believe a term limit would either help introduce new ideas and from more representation locally but it would also take away from the good councilmen and limit their ideas.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 07:29 AM

Yes. I think that term limits would create more opportunities for representation. Currently, the city council members do not represent parts of our community. Term limits can make a council more representative by encouraging regular turnover in leadership. When officials stay in office for long periods, they can become less responsive to the changing needs of neighborhoods and communities. Term limits help open opportunities for new voices, ideas, and perspectives to emerge — especially from groups that have been underrepresented. They prevent political "insiders" from holding on to power indefinitely and make it easier for people from different backgrounds to compete for office. This can lead to a council that better reflects the diversity, priorities, and experiences of the whole community.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:11 AM

Remove them and have town halls

L.Miller

4/26/2025 11:16 AM

Probably not.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:58 AM

Yes, a change in the number of city council members or their terms can improve effective representation, especially if done with the goal of increasing diversity, accountability, and responsiveness.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 10:37 PM

a change in their term of office, less years

Anonymous

4/27/2025 12:42 PM

Not necessarily

Anonymous

4/27/2025 03:54 PM

No We need a completely new system given our growth and taxes need to be assessed way less often

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Anonymous

4/28/2025 08:07 AM

They must be from no outsiders.and a far council member like thous that will represent the poor then thous with means.ive been here 39 years and I've seen it change very much .high cost.high rent.you can't even get into studio with out it being in the thousands .montana is not for the rich only the poor been here first and we're being pushed out.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 09:01 AM

Yes, A change in term of office would improve effective representation.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 10:59 AM

Yes, more people but the same length terms.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 11:08 AM

No. We definitely have enough overhead and spending as it is.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 12:55 PM

A term limit in line with other Montana offices should be expected as a norm. Neighborhoods should be represented but not communities as it is a meaningless term in politics today.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 01:25 PM

The number seems right. Would support up to 8 years of as an officeholder

Anonymous

4/28/2025 02:45 PM

No

Anonymous

4/28/2025 02:52 PM

Yes, I think maybe two more members might bring more diversity in opinions.

Anonymous

4/29/2025 11:47 AM

No

Anonymous

4/29/2025 02:48 PM

I believe implementing term limits could improve representation. It often feels like the same individuals cycle through local government roles, which can lead to a lack of fresh ideas and broader perspectives. I want to be represented by someone who truly listens to the voice of the entire community—not just their close circle of like-minded friends. New voices and viewpoints are essential for effective and inclusive leadership.

Anonymous

no

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4/30/2025 12:45 PM

Anonymous

Possibly longer terms

5/01/2025 11:30 AM

Anonymous

No

5/01/2025 12:12 PM

Anonymous

Start from scratch can em all. Require a max income amount to make decisions for others.

5/02/2025 04:31 AM

Anonymous

No. I would put more issues to the voters, even if only advisory votes.

5/02/2025 10:11 AM

Anonymous

No change.

5/02/2025 02:10 PM

Anonymous

no

5/02/2025 04:35 PM

Anonymous

We need term limits to keep our Council representing all of us, not just a few elites.

5/03/2025 07:43 AM

Anonymous

Terms

5/05/2025 02:29 PM

Anonymous

I think it's fair now. I worry two year terms result in things changing too often and being confusing.

5/06/2025 06:44 AM

Anonymous

Not sure.

5/06/2025 11:16 AM

Anonymous

The number of council members is fine. I'm not in favor of adding or reducing. Yes, I believe there should be term limits.

5/06/2025 11:28 AM

Anonymous

No

5/06/2025 11:39 AM

Anonymous

No

5/07/2025 02:12 PM

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Anonymous

5/08/2025 09:58 AM

No. Current number is sufficient.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:52 AM

No

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:54 AM

No, it's fine as is

Anonymous

5/08/2025 12:00 PM

No

Anonymous

5/08/2025 07:16 PM

No. I like the number we have and the length of terms served.

Anonymous

5/09/2025 01:53 PM

No

Anonymous

5/10/2025 09:34 AM

Yes vote yearly and listen to community input and not just do as please regardless if legal or not

Anonymous

5/11/2025 07:55 PM

Number of council members is fine. There should be term limits as well. Also, just because the rest of the state pays their councilors does NOT mean Whitefish should change how things have been done to conform with others. It is a voluntary position.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:05 AM

I feel a Ward system may better suit our needs as a very diverse community economically speaking.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:12 AM

I believe as our town grows, we need to increase the number of council members that are elected by the community.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:15 AM

Yes, an increase in members and a change to their terms would be more effective. Also considering whitefish locals outside of city limits for certain government committee positions would be helpful, considering that the city approved the city manager to live outside of the city limits.

Anonymous

Yes

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5/12/2025 10:16 AM

Anonymous

I'd like to see better representation of rural Whitefish in the council.

5/12/2025 10:42 AM

Anonymous

No, I don't think so.

5/12/2025 10:46 AM

Anonymous

Yes it would prove effective. Much like a dirty diaper council members must be changed often as well. So yes a change is term is absolutely necessary.

5/12/2025 10:47 AM

Anonymous

no

5/12/2025 11:02 AM

Anonymous

Not sure. I am guessing a lot of younger people are unable to run for office because it is a big time commitment and most have full time work and kids. Do we offer paid for health insurance for our council members? What perks do they get? Do we advertise any of this when we are looking for more spots to fill?

5/12/2025 01:02 PM

Anonymous

They need just to be non biased.

5/12/2025 01:05 PM

Anonymous

We are not sure what would correct the situation.

5/12/2025 01:10 PM

Anonymous

This is a tough one. Experience is important but I also believe that change can be good.

5/12/2025 03:42 PM

Anonymous

Not necessarily

5/13/2025 07:52 PM

Anonymous

Ward system would have to be vollied.

5/14/2025 05:07 PM

Anonymous

Only way to represent the citizens/neighborhoods is by WARDS!

5/14/2025 05:17 PM

Anonymous

Term limits and people who actually care about this community, not what they are trying to make it! You are destroying what is here! You

5/14/2025 05:22 PM

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don't care!

Anonymous

5/15/2025 08:48 AM

No. Community based voting would be a disaster.

Anonymous

5/15/2025 01:49 PM

Don't think so

Anonymous

5/15/2025 03:04 PM

No change

Anonymous

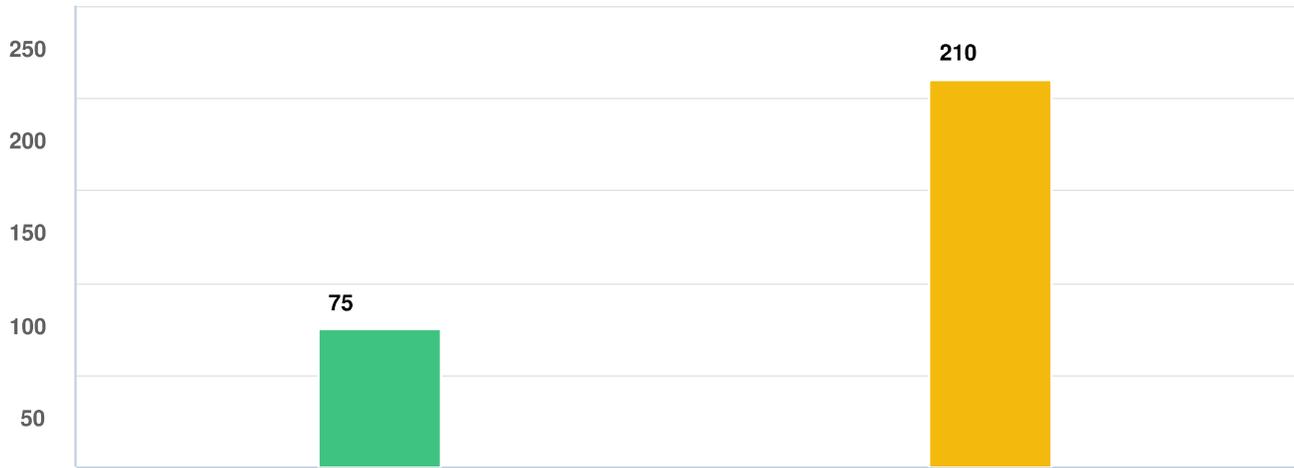
5/15/2025 07:03 PM

Not necessarily.

**Optional question** (223 response(s), 76 skipped)

**Question type:** Essay Question

**Q6** Should the elected officials of your city government run for office on a partisan (with political party label) or on a nonp...

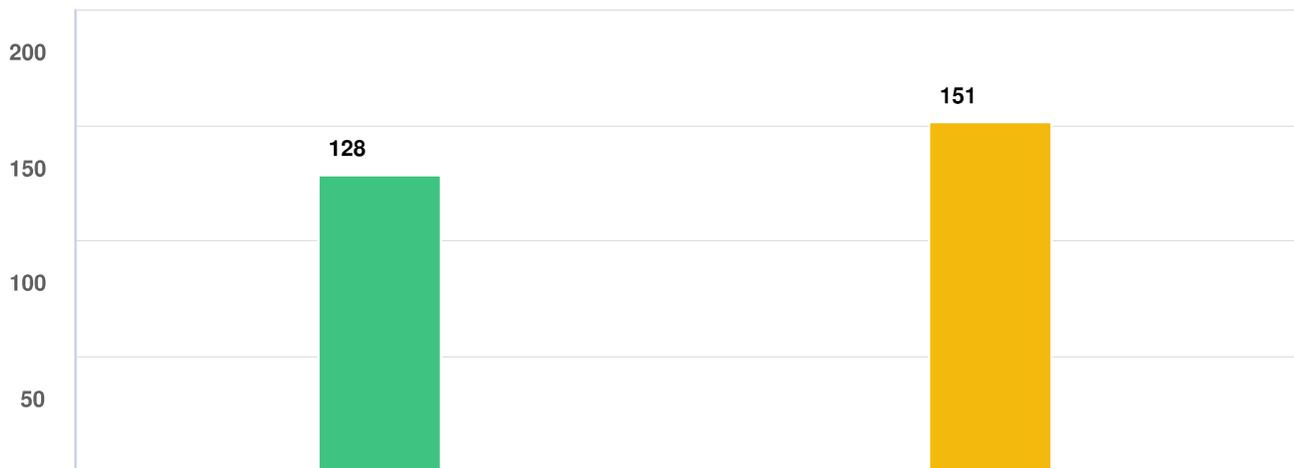


**Question options**

- Partisan
- Nonpartisan

Optional question (283 response(s), 16 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q7** Should the elected officials of your city government run for office in districted (ward based) or at-large elections?

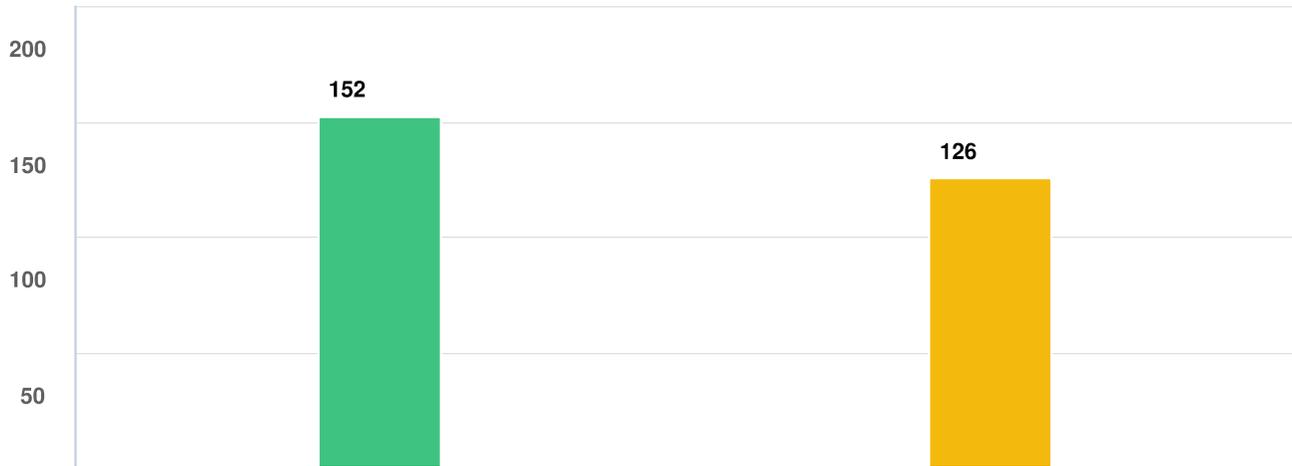


**Question options**

- Wards
- At-large

Optional question (279 response(s), 20 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q8** According to the current charter, the Zoning Administrator is hired by and reports to the City Manager. Would you prefer th...



**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (278 response(s), 21 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q9** Do you have any other suggested changes to improve the local government's representation of the whole community? Please describe...

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:03 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:07 PM

Have someone advising the council who represents residents adjacent to the city but outside city limits.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:09 PM

Don't hedge the building restrictions for the fantasy of affordable housing which just caters to disingenuous developers. And, for the love of God start patrolling the streets way more for speeding!!!!

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:14 PM

I think whitefish has grown enough so we can have wards and people accountable to represent you and not just at-large members

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:20 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:22 PM

3 or 4 term limit for mayor with maybe 2 term limit for regular city councilors.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:22 PM

Get the rubber stamp, developer, builder council members off the Council.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:55 PM

Really LISTEN so we feel heard rather than nodding and then doing what you want not caring about the people or what we value

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:40 PM

Since City Council meetings are difficult for parents to attend, we need to make the Council more representative of Whitefish's population.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:46 PM

It should be unlawful/prohibited for Council to approve projects that are not affordable within the current budget.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:52 PM

None

Anonymous

4/07/2025 03:07 PM

We have a weakness in how we interact with the county and our state and federal representatives and the City Manager has the purview to bring issues up to ask for help at a higher level. I think this should be changed so the City Manager cannot act in a biased or partisan manner and maybe have the Mayor and Council have the discernment authority instead.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 03:57 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:03 PM

None

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:35 PM

The city manager makes a staggering salary (the highest in the state) and doesn't live in the community. Why is that? What does she do to command a huge big city, corporate style salary? The city has already been caught and charged in a class action suit for corruption. Why should we trust our current governance arrangements?

Anonymous

Zoning should be done by the county.

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4/07/2025 07:45 PM

Anonymous

4/07/2025 09:51 PM

Absolutely. Who doesn't. Whitefish can do MUCH better at educating and involving the community. I'm pleased they are using social media but it could be done much more effectively and in a more engaging manner. Selfishly, do I believe that a new member of the community should have as much say as someone who has lived here 25 years? No. I don't. It's not the most democratic style, but it would better maintain the City's values and "brand." Require local voters be here at least 4-5 years before having a vote or running for office.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 06:23 AM

A reasonable effort should be undertaken to investigate the merits of term limits as incumbency can be a significant barrier to electing new people who may provide better representation for certain segments of the community who are persistently underrepresented or without representation inside city hall. The commission should also investigate having a stronger mayor who can and does introduce policy and acts as a separate branch of government from the council.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 07:09 AM

Run Partisan. Anyone with a brain can already tell. So for those that can't, it may tip the scales.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:10 AM

Re view how park board is ran

Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:26 AM

Suggest each council member be available for "meet & greet" once a month (perhaps 2/session) so residents can chat directly & get to know council representatives. The mayor used to do this pre Covid.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 09:51 AM

We can nit-pick all day about little details we don't like. But at the end of the day, Whitefish is an amazing place that people from all over the country envy. A lot of that is due to the track record of this town putting the right people in charge at the right times. Don't try to fix something that isn't broken.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:17 AM

You would never be able to hire a zoning administrator that reported directly to the City Council unless they had a healthy (100K plus) severance package

Anonymous

Anonymous tip: There is a significant issue with substance abuse

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4/08/2025 10:36 AM

among certain local groups in Whitefish. Cocaine use, specifically, is prevalent among the middle-class and high-income locals and social circles at the Whitefish Golf Course—where it is part of the culture during and after rounds of golf. Concerns have been raised about the drug use among employees of Sage & Cedar. The Pin & Cue and Buster's are routine gathering spots for individuals who do cocaine and drink heavily, every day, and drive impaired—to the point of 'blackout' drunk. Given the seriousness of these allegations, it may be time for the city to look more closely at these patterns and consider proactive measures—such as increased law enforcement presence to address the dark underbelly of this community.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 12:23 PM

Maybe each elected official should have a political opposite Siamese twin that runs in a separate election. Maybe only the elected official has the right to vote, but at least there will be reorientation of a kind of the conservatives and forced, unobstructed deliberation at work sessions and meetings so conservatives aren't relegated to two minutes of Robert's rules and angry letters that go ignored. There would be confrontation and discussion that is desperately needed to get to the best solutions for everyone. It would be a completely new concept, but that's okay. The old way doesn't have remedies appropriate for the times we are in. We have to get creative.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 01:35 PM

The three minute limit to comment, without a chance to raise questions, is a farce and certainly isn't representative government!

Anonymous

4/08/2025 02:24 PM

no

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:30 PM

Fire all of them

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:54 PM

While I don't believe there's a perfect answer about the Zoning Administrator's direct reporting status, they should be reviewed on a yearly basis and be required to publicly report progress and department work plans.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 04:24 PM

No

Anonymous

4/08/2025 05:24 PM

I believe that the present local government serves the citizens of Whitefish well. I have found the City Council dedicated, accessible and receptive.

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Anonymous

4/08/2025 06:34 PM

If you've been here more than twenty years you get 2 votes otherwise only one.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 08:18 PM

As stated, I would like to have a few council positions for people who live close but outside city limits. I'm not sure this is within the scope of the study, but I wish it was easier to participate. This would help me feel better represented. Some ideas: publish meeting agendas more than one week beforehand so people have time to schedule accordingly. Make sure that meetings on important topics occur after work hours so people can attend. Enable remote participation for community development meetings. More community engagement activities, like the Tap House meetings mentioned above.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 11:35 PM

Quit approving multi dwelling compounds, apartments and townhomes, condos. We hate them, they ruin the landscape and don't add to the value. No family said ever "we want to be in our neighbors back yard" Give people some f'ing space. Why did they move here if they were trying to get "out of town"??? And crush in with the prop lines?

Anonymous

4/09/2025 02:46 PM

no

Anonymous

4/10/2025 01:07 PM

Need a Consumer Complaints Department along with an "independent" oversight on ALL fees and taxes levied that has citizen representation.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 04:50 PM

No more behind doors lawfare. All residence involvement.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 09:38 PM

We have more home of value in Whitefish and the property taxes are ridiculous and the person who bought there property for 80000 dollars and now they say it's 10 to 15 times that can't afford the taxes .

Anonymous

4/11/2025 05:25 AM

no compensation for council members. wish i could vote myself a raise!

Anonymous

4/11/2025 11:00 AM

I prefer a council manager to focus on efficiency and non partisanship

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Anonymous

4/11/2025 11:18 AM

Less power not more. Term limits - all WF elected officials be subject to term limits. 8 years should be the maximum for Council members and the Mayor. Ideally, a ward system in the City instead of having all of the power centered in a small area of the city. The City Manager power, and authority REDUCED. TERM LIMITS on all Whitefish Council members and the Mayor.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 12:21 PM

I think they all need to be investigated for conflicts of interest with regard to zoning and planning boards, along with any large projects that are awarded.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 05:46 PM

I like the idea of public interest scorecard on housing, climate, equity, etc make elections more accessible! Also rank choice voting and making to where you don't have to be rich to run ( campaign finance reform or public funding )

Anonymous

4/11/2025 09:36 PM

Improve how communication flows to the community. Also, I think that the "Ward" concept could help improve representation of places like "The Mountain," "City Beach," "Golf Course," Downtown, etc.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 12:05 AM

I would like to see our elected officials do what's best for the city and all homeowners and not do what's best for big business owners who seem to get things done the way they want because they have deep pockets.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 07:02 AM

We need TERM LIMITS

Anonymous

4/12/2025 10:13 PM

Fix the roads. Stop trying to solve housing and environmental and a bunch of stuff that is low on the list for our city Just cut taxes and deregulate and try to figure out how to fix pot holes and plow the road worth a damn

Anonymous

4/15/2025 06:46 AM

Look at the wants and needs of the community as a whole not just approving items that increase funds.

Anonymous

4/15/2025 01:39 PM

It should be a Council goals to have the Committee reflect the Community. There should be other methods to reach out to the Community to encourage a more diverse group of citizenry to volunteer for our Committee versus the standard approach (WF Pilot

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and City webpage)

Anonymous

4/16/2025 07:24 AM

No

Anonymous

4/16/2025 01:43 PM

I do think some type of compensation including salary or stipend and health benefits, similar to neighbors towns, is a good idea. It is a lot of time to sit on the council and that should come with better compensation.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 11:56 AM

We desperately need oversight of our elected officials and city manager has too much piwer.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 12:55 PM

term limits

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:06 PM

Maybe the stipend that council members will get will help.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:15 PM

Rotate committee members more frequently.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:44 PM

Yes, I believe local government needs to do a better job of engaging with the working-class community and making it easier for everyday people to have their voices heard. Many residents don't have the time or flexibility to attend long meetings in person, and too often, public comments seem to be brushed aside rather than truly considered. Implementing more accessible tools like online polling, surveys, and interactive forums, similar to this one would give a broader cross-section of the community a chance to participate meaningfully. If we want true representation, we need to meet people where they are, listen to them, and actually incorporate their input into decision-making not just go through the motions.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 11:39 AM

Fully implement Montana Land Use Planning Act to restrict Council-level review of land uses approved by planning staff and community development board to questions involving legality of staff actions.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 04:35 PM

It seems you take great care to reach out to all Whitefish residents and their communities.

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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Anonymous

4/19/2025 06:56 PM

Term limits

Anonymous

4/19/2025 08:34 PM

No

Anonymous

4/20/2025 07:55 AM

Voting by wards

Anonymous

4/20/2025 09:30 AM

In summary, term limits, wards, greater accountability and transparency is important.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 11:00 AM

No

Anonymous

4/20/2025 01:30 PM

They need to represent the community as a whole. Come out with a regular audit of what our resort tax is being used for

Anonymous

4/21/2025 11:01 AM

No

Anonymous

4/21/2025 01:21 PM

City Councilors should occasionally visit the all the departments that operate within the city to become familiar with the innerworkings of the services and expertise they provide.

Anonymous

4/21/2025 05:27 PM

Repeal the resort tax. Eliminate property taxes. I shouldn't have to rent property I own from the government.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 08:19 AM

We should consider term limits. While we value the experience and expertise of a long-serving council member or mayor, a representative democracy is strengthened by having new voices at the table. We place faith in the voters to choose among the new candidates those who best represent their interests.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 11:57 AM

Council members from various neighborhoods would provide better representation or councilors from different walks of life, ie: teacher, business, public service, service industry, real estate, retired, student.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 01:15 PM

Wards

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Anonymous

4/22/2025 01:31 PM

Not knowing who has a festering need to push a agenda on the city, I can't put forth my best suggestions. I suspect that this complainant is (1)financed by a non-profit organization (trust-fund families and foreign billionaires) or (2)a billionaire developer wanting to take the town citizens to the cleaners. Whitefish needs a police report on what we face.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 02:14 PM

The mask mandate was insane

Anonymous

4/22/2025 05:07 PM

No

Anonymous

4/24/2025 02:49 PM

Creating wards would divide Whitefish, and I definitely don't support this.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 08:56 AM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:00 AM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:00 AM

no I think everything is working

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:01 AM

I don't have any

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:01 AM

Clear guidelines on how city residents access city officials.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:02 AM

N/A

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:05 AM

They need to defend us from the hundred-millionaires and billionaires. They aren't corrupting the government, but they are putting development pressure on the city that does not benefit the working-class community character of the city.

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

Please fix monegan road...

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

Get rid of resort tax

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

More community outreach. I had no idea this was even happening

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:47 AM

less taxes

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:47 AM

None

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:24 AM

Maybe it's time to limit the number of dispensaries

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:25 AM

none

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:27 AM

I think it's doing great as of now. If people believe that they aren't heard, they should participate more in the many public meetings and votes. It shouldn't be solely the job of the government to reach out to these people.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:28 AM

No

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:50 PM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:51 PM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:53 PM

No I don't have any other suggested changes.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:54 PM

no

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:07 PM

Possibly more council members, or more diverse ones.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:46 PM

No but I am glad you came in to talk to us at the high school. I feel like a lot of people significantly under value the municipal government.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:47 PM

none

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:49 PM

Most of the local government needs to be people who have spent most of their lives in whitefish or Montana and understand the dynamic of our city. People on the council should not be people who come from Texas and California that have no idea how to deal with the dynamic of whitefish.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 02:54 PM

No specific changes I just suggest an emphasis on showing that they can be represented. FIX THE POT HOLES at night if you have to.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 07:29 AM

Currently so much of the ways in which government makes decisions is dependent on who shows up at City Hall, which ignores the reality of what barriers exist for many community members to regularly engage in local government matters-working during meeting times, lack of reliable transportation, childcare, etc. Not sure if there is a way to change things in the ways in which government functions-such as requiring childcare be provided at low cost during public meetings, doing more of the public engagement meetings in different venues-such as the Middle School Auditorium, open houses at places like the Whitefish Community Center, local pubs, etc. Currently, many people do not even bother engaging in local government because they feel like their voices do not matter, but if government shows up in the places people are or acknowledges the barriers, then more people may be interested in engaging.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:11 AM

yes, a town hall where we vote on whitefish laws that only people who show up in person can vote.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:58 AM

Yes, my answer to #7, if we continue with a Commission-Executive form of government, I think a hybrid system might be a better approach. Allowing some council members to be from districts and others elected city wide.

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Anonymous

4/26/2025 10:37 PM

fees and permits cost too much stop allowing more new housing tracts to be built

Anonymous

4/27/2025 12:42 PM

Strive to get more younger residents of Whitefish. After all it's their future!!

Anonymous

4/27/2025 03:54 PM

No

Anonymous

4/28/2025 08:07 AM

Stop charging taxes for waste full things.you already been found out thou the courts .and you no what I mean wind mill power .

Anonymous

4/28/2025 09:01 AM

I would suggest that the local government focus on its basic responsibilities like fixing roads, improving general basic services like garbage and stop focusing on special interest issues, and ideological issues.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 11:08 AM

While I appreciate our city employees, city council needs to take a harder line on ongoing annual wage increases. These add up over time and seem way out of line with other local city/county staff and Whitefish workers also. Does our city manager still make more than the Governor? How much more? Would be a big positive step to see city managers report at each city council meeting what steps they've taken since the last council meeting to actually SAVE taxpayers money and how much.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 12:55 PM

As stated above, more issues and the budget should be referred to the voters. Councilors should swear to uphold relevant statutes of MCA and county and city law. They should focus on delivering basic services and providing protection and not micro manage citizens especially in the use of their own property.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 01:25 PM

No

Anonymous

4/28/2025 02:45 PM

No.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 02:52 PM

We need to pay council members a monthly stipend. I know we are in the process of figuring this out. It should be in the \$750-\$100 range.

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Anonymous

4/29/2025 02:48 PM

I believe some current officials are more focused on pushing their own agendas than truly representing the broader community. It often feels like dissenting opinions are dismissed, and public input isn't genuinely considered. To improve representation, we need leadership that values open dialogue, respects differing viewpoints, and prioritizes the needs of all residents—not just those who agree with them. Fresh leadership with a collaborative approach would be a welcome change.

Anonymous

4/30/2025 12:45 PM

quit accepting high density building proposals, its making our town look like Crap!

Anonymous

5/01/2025 12:12 PM

Please review the above document.

Anonymous

5/02/2025 04:31 AM

Require a maximum yearly income amount to be able to make decisions on the behalf of others. Ex: if someone's annual income is above \$60,000 they can not be involved in decision or policy making.

Anonymous

5/02/2025 10:11 AM

More voter input into key decisions, especially the budget.

Anonymous

5/02/2025 11:57 AM

elected or appointed officials should be equally divided between political parties or nonpartisan

Anonymous

5/03/2025 07:43 AM

Need a Consumer Affairs office that can handle complaints. This needs to be outside the control of the Council, Mayor and Manager. They should have authority to mediate or arbitrate complaints. City attorney reporting to the City Manager has been a disaster for any challenges to City authority. The attorney should be independent with a clear charter to protect the City and its citizens, not the City Manager.

Anonymous

5/05/2025 03:06 PM

Sorry I already completed the survey but I have a new comment. I'm not sure if this is something that can be changed locally but I wish there were positions on local government boards for those who live outside city limits but within the school district.

Anonymous

5/06/2025 06:44 AM

Adjust zoning to meet the chamber's of this growing community. We need more housing and services and zoning change seems key to

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that

Anonymous

5/06/2025 11:16 AM

Observe and act on the public opinions.

Anonymous

5/06/2025 11:28 AM

In favor of wards in order to represent the different areas of the city.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 09:58 AM

There are far too many law enforcement officers in this community. The level of "crime" does not warrant such a bloated police budget. Their sole purpose seems to be making their presence known to a law abiding public and issuing minor traffic citations.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:52 AM

Please simplify the charter of the city for the common citizen to be cleaner and easier to read.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:54 AM

No, none

Anonymous

5/08/2025 12:00 PM

The members should be full-time residents of Whitefish and have lived here at least 5 years before holding any office.

Anonymous

5/10/2025 09:34 AM

Remember this is Montana and not try and drive the city to follow big city regulations We choose not to live like that

Anonymous

5/11/2025 07:55 PM

Quit changing Whitefish. Elected officials should strive to keep Whitefish as similar as possible to when they moved here. Again, quit changing it.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:07 AM

Too many residents don't educate themselves on how our city government works.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:15 AM

Treating all requests and applications the same.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:02 PM

Although I think the Zoning Administrator should report to the City Manager like it is set up now, I think there is a LOT of room for improvement with our current Administrator. I mean a LOT. And that's putting it nicely.

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Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:05 PM

More transparency and honesty.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:10 PM

Put more emphasis on the long-time locals and working residents rather than tourism, tourism businesses, and developers.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 03:42 PM

More communication in a way that is accessible to all.

Anonymous

5/14/2025 02:24 PM

Easier attainable information on meetings before and after.

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:07 PM

WARDS

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:17 PM

Wards

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:22 PM

City manager must go! We do not need a manager and a mayor!

Anonymous

5/15/2025 08:48 AM

The city manager should be removed. A city manager position should be eliminated.

Anonymous

5/15/2025 07:03 PM

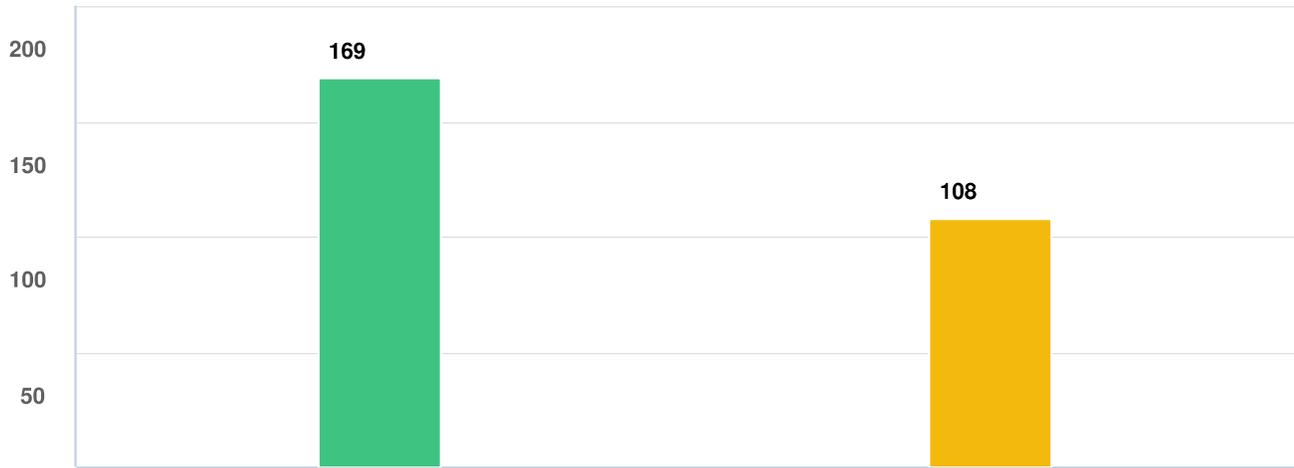
No.

**Optional question** (141 response(s), 158 skipped)

**Question type:** Essay Question

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**Q10** In providing essential services, does your local government make reasonably good use of the taxes and fees it collects?

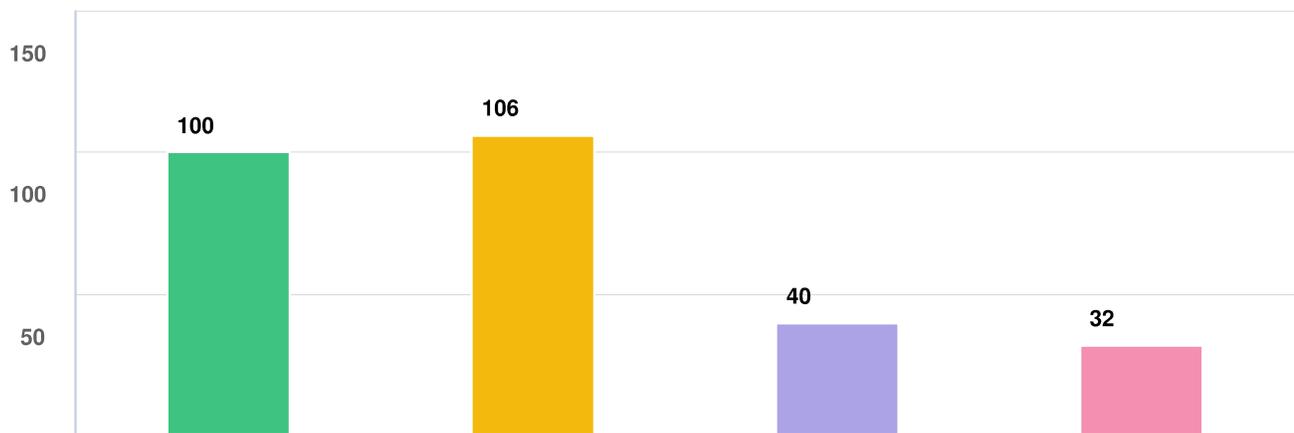


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (277 response(s), 22 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q11** If I had to vote tomorrow, I would vote to:



**Question options**

- Keep town government the same as it is now
- Make a few changes in the Town government
- Make major changes in the Town government
- Completely change the form and powers of the Town government

Optional question (278 response(s), 21 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q12 | Do you have any other comments or recommendations you want the Local Government Review Study Commission to consider? Please describe...**

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:03 PM

No

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:09 PM

1. Term Limits (like 1 term). 2. No pay. It's volunteer government. 3. The Mayor has been in way too long and that is just corrupt. I'd rather my cat be Mayor at this point. Seriously.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:14 PM

I think they do a good job with what they have. It is a thankless job but I can feel their frustration sometimes

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:20 PM

I would like to see a plan developed that carefully restricts and manages growth

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:22 PM

Our growth policy is ridiculous. Council does not represent the residents that built this town. Nothing but another Aspen with a local government who caters to developers. By the way, how many of the current City Staff live within the City limits? Only 2, therefore the staff has no stake hold in the City or its future. But hey let's give them another 8% raise!!!!

Anonymous

4/07/2025 01:27 PM

The survey was a waste of taxpayer money.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 02:52 PM

I think a bigger pro blem is many citizens don't pay attention or don't understand how city runs. I've overheard many wf local of a certain persuasion just want no rules, think the council is getting paid under the table, bribed for their vote, etc... And they don't take the time or have no desire to educate themselves on how city government runs. They want to "expose" What really doesn't exist. With that in mind, it doesn't matter what you do to improve, if they continue with those hateful attitude towards the council (authority).

Anonymous

4/07/2025 03:07 PM

Strengthening local control is essential if there is any way to do that. The legislature consistently interferes with our local decisions with housing for example, and zoning, and it wastes alot of time and money to go backwards.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 03:57 PM

None.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 04:35 PM

When will a convention center be built? Why are there so many empty store fronts on Central Avenue? Local residents should be exempt from any "resort tax" while dining, shopping, etc. You are just driving local consumers to Kalispell.

Anonymous

4/07/2025 09:51 PM

More viaducts over the rails. Better plowing of downtown roads  
Stricter limitations on dispensaries Change the liquor laws/licenses, or at least lobby state governing bodies. Have a "Hotels" liquor license that is specific to actual hotels. Product un-developed land within Whitefish. Take an ownership position in Big Mountain. Look at the success of the Green Bay Packers.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 06:23 AM

No

Anonymous

4/08/2025 07:09 AM

Frivolity with our tax dollars on unneeded/unwanted projects, lack of Common Sense, me first attitude with no willingness to give/cooperate, dishonest city attorney,making decisions based on personal gain, get rid of the parks department (put it under public works), revert Resort tax back to property tax relief and road maintenance (no Whitefish trail unless in city limits)

Anonymous

4/08/2025 08:41 AM

Tax out of state ownership within 3 miles of city hall. Add a VRBO tax within 3 miles of city hall. Use those funds to subsidize local workforce housing -- those that want to work local, live local. Also, unrelated to that, debate changing alley traffic direction to alternate each block, post signage about its use, potentially add speed bumps - all to make alley's more safe.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 10:36 AM

n/a

Anonymous

4/08/2025 12:23 PM

Thank you for asking. Please study the illicit actions of Dana smith, the impact fees and the new per gallons water issue with respect to state laws. There is no oversight in Montana for corrupt municipalities. You are the only voice we have. The people need to have a way to be included in deliberation of planning and policy. Various citizen points of view need to be assessed for value and contribution objectively and when some people are screaming uncle, it needs to be listened to, and not ignored by the council just because

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they can. Maybe just have times of pause and inactivity so the citizens can catch their breath. To much change all the time, and that includes the constant attempts to revolutionize neighborhoods with high density apts, or condos, makes the community a relentlessly anxiety provoking place to live. Let's stop revolutionizing endlessly and just relax. Let's help more restaurants start so there are more places to eat as all the second home condos go up. No more tourist children crying in 90 degrees because their parents can't find a place to eat in the summer. We are growing disproportionately and thus have become a tourist trap. I would love a community pool, personally. All kinds of really poor communities all over Montana have an outdoor pool. The lake is for tourists. I would love to help fundraise for a community pool. I think there needs to be more gratitude and focus on the families and children of whitefish and not as much attention on the very loud 20 something crowd. I don't just mean recognition of kids in the paper, I mean the infrastructure of the community needs to represent children more. A splash pad at Baker, and by the skate park. This benefits mental health. Young children and mothers are have the least amount of value to the power structure in whitefish. If you want proof, look at the gazebo at soroptomist park, kids can eat paint chips, but the bridge isn't pretty enough? It's honestly appalling.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 02:24 PM

Reference question 11, I believe some tax dollars are frivolously spent on un-needed projects, while the roads are atrocious. I also believe the city needs to quickly explore the option of adding a second north-south roadway to ease the congestion on Wisconsin/Baker avenue.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:30 PM

Quit wasting our tax money by having to hire attorneys because you violated the law . Quit overcharging the fees

Anonymous

4/08/2025 03:31 PM

Stop allowing developers to buy their way out of building low income houses for residents. stop allowing Airbnb and VRBO houses in residential neighborhoods

Anonymous

4/08/2025 08:18 PM

Already addressed above.

Anonymous

4/08/2025 11:35 PM

You ask what we locals who have been here 40+ years, get you really don't care. We don't want condos, multimillion dollar homes, high property taxes because of that and the attitude that because we don't build a \$\$\$\* house out opinion doesn't matter. We want our tax dollars to go to education, speak to the senators about that, road

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construction, where are the tax dollars? Lower prop taxes, rich pay less than a family of 3, fix the damn roads!! You have been collecting and distributing that money for so many years we should have golden roads. But no, where IS the money going???

Anonymous

4/09/2025 07:20 AM

Why was there no link to the forms of local government and their description under Montana law in this survey? Since the options are heavily limited, the options should have been easier available from within the survey.

Anonymous

4/09/2025 02:46 PM

Has happiness improved? Are all these rules and regulations worth it? Overregulation, particularly in areas like zoning, housing, and business, can lead to increased costs, reduced flexibility, and potentially stifle innovation and economic growth, which can negatively impact residents' well-being. This can manifest in higher housing costs, limited job opportunities, and a general feeling of being constrained, which can contribute to lower levels of happiness. Sound familiar?

Anonymous

4/10/2025 01:07 PM

We need a truly independent City Attorney that does not report to any other administrative position - perhaps reporting to the Commission or Council. They need to be well versed on State and local laws and not just a shield for city administrators or employees but looks out for the well being of local residents.

Anonymous

4/10/2025 09:38 PM

If our levy stay the same and we keep adding more house and business why are not our property taxes going down. Because the levy collects the same amount whether there is 10 house or 100 houses . So something is wrong with the way things are being managed.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 11:00 AM

Is there a general plan? Where do we see ourselves in 2030 , 2040 and so on

Anonymous

4/11/2025 11:18 AM

Less power not more. Term limits - all WF elected officials be subject to term limits. 8 years should be the maximum for Council members and the Mayor. Ideally, a ward system in the City instead of having all of the power centered in a small area of the city. The City Manager power, and authority REDUCED. TERM LIMITS on all Whitefish Council members and the Mayor.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 12:21 PM

No one acknowledges or discusses the fact that our city government and all other incorporated towns are actually corporations and they run the city as such, i.e they are loyal to the corporation and not the citizens who elect them. I also think that if you live outside the city limits, (and have a 59937 zip code) but are affected by their policies, mandates, ordinances and regulations etc that you should have a say in who is elected.

Anonymous

4/11/2025 05:46 PM

Geographical districts would be great and a larger council could allow more diversity of perspectives

Anonymous

4/12/2025 12:05 AM

I would really like them to consider saving our Whitefish River instead of fighting to destroy it.

Anonymous

4/12/2025 07:02 AM

TERM LIMITS!

Anonymous

4/12/2025 10:13 PM

Whitefish is nothing like the town I grew up in. Stop trying to turn it into some progressive model. Leave people alone and you focus on your job of running this small town instead of trying to advance adendas

Anonymous

4/16/2025 07:24 AM

No

Anonymous

4/16/2025 01:06 PM

Stop using City money (taxes) to fund the Whitefish Convention & Visitor Bureau as the damage that has been done to this City the past few years cannot be undone.

Anonymous

4/16/2025 01:43 PM

No

Anonymous

4/17/2025 11:56 AM

Water dept fees impact fees and city managers role in them

Anonymous

4/17/2025 02:16 PM

answer to number 9 is a bit confusing without the knowledge of the powers and oversight of the zoning administrator so i cannot answer yes or no to that questions perhaps an insert as to a job description of this position would help

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Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:06 PM

I think the missing piece is people in the community participating. From outside, the City seems insular, complex and bureaucratic. I'm sure there are good reasons for the way public input is sought, but it looks confusing unless you educate yourself. I wish there was a way for people to know how easy it is to positively engage with the City. It's like you need a citizen advocate to help people navigate their interactions with the city - an ambassador or something like that.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:15 PM

Allow more funding to certain departments so they're able to hire more staff.

Anonymous

4/17/2025 04:44 PM

Yes. I encourage the Commission to take a close and honest look at the current City Council and ask: Are they truly representing the majority of Whitefish residents, or are they prioritizing their own special interests? Too often, decisions seem to benefit a narrow group rather than reflecting the broader needs and values of the community. I also believe the city should consider hiring a communications liaison. It shouldn't be difficult for citizens to find out what's going on in their local government. Important information should be readily available and easy to understand, not hidden deep on a website or shared only at meetings that many working-class residents can't attend. A dedicated communications role could ensure timely updates are pushed out through social media, the local newspaper, and the City's website, making local government more transparent and accessible to everyone. Most importantly, the voices of true locals and legacy families, the people who have built and sustained this community for generations should carry real weight in decision-making. Their experiences, values, and connection to this place matter, and they deserve to be heard.

Anonymous

4/18/2025 11:52 AM

We need term limits for WF politicians

Anonymous

4/18/2025 10:10 PM

We will need to keep looking toward the future of Whitefish and manage the growth with balanced spending on city services. Having managed expectations to provide the best service that the people expect.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 11:39 AM

The city charter should institutionally limit the council's and mayor's involvement in policy implementation so they can focus on long term policy development. The city suffers from its policy makers' reactive efforts to micromanage (and create a costly and uncertain planning environment) rather than proactive efforts to address community adaptation to the pressures of rapid population growth. A self

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government charter should not result in an exclusive focus on how local policies affect development patterns within the city's planning jurisdiction. The city's charter should require its policy makers to consider how restrictive and costly local zoning and planning requirements incentivize development in areas beyond its jurisdiction.

Anonymous

4/19/2025 04:35 PM

Many thanks to all council members and all other residents who donate their time, knowledge, and expertise. We

Anonymous

4/19/2025 06:56 PM

Unfortunately conservative members of the community lack representation

Anonymous

4/19/2025 08:34 PM

No

Anonymous

4/20/2025 07:55 AM

Nonpartisan for all elections. Make the districts/wards so that the person elected is in tune with that districts/ward needs, problems, etc.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 08:33 AM

It would be nice to know how often it is that city council makes recommendations based on people they like (ie the Averills, Foley, Goguen, etc) as opposed to everyone else. Seems like those three mentioned above never have any problems getting things approved by the city whereas everyone else magically runs into huge problems.

Anonymous

4/20/2025 11:00 AM

Consider raising the pay for city councilors to encourage more people to serve

Anonymous

4/20/2025 01:30 PM

Build affordable housing for the people. It's sad that over 50% of workers in Whitefish cannot afford to live in Whitefish. Also, the people who have a 2nd home here should be taxed twice the rate everyone else is getting taxed because they are the reason why we don't have housing here. The reason we have so many apartments here is because those with 2nd homes are using them as VRBO or vacation rentals!

Anonymous

4/20/2025 07:00 PM

Given the changes in state law, it might make sense to look closer at having the zoning administrator report directly to the city council.

Anonymous

4/21/2025 01:21 PM

It seems to me that the city should be more concerned about the number of city employees who are unable to reside and work in

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Whitefish.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 08:19 AM

If it were not for a state prohibition, I would be in favor of ranked-choice voting for our city council and mayoral elections.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 11:57 AM

Preparing for the future, not only the Vision 2045, but enabling development and infrastructure to move the town toward 2045. Update City services and modernization of interaction of residents with government.

Anonymous

4/22/2025 12:22 PM

make Whitefish where people can afford to live not for just the ultra rich

Anonymous

4/22/2025 01:15 PM

Quit catering to developers

Anonymous

4/22/2025 01:31 PM

Local citizen school volunteers must clear a police record check before allowed in the schools. That same courtesy should be extended to anyone who feels local government does not listen to them. Who are these people?

Anonymous

4/22/2025 02:14 PM

Locals should be number one priority. Working class

Anonymous

4/23/2025 04:31 PM

Term limits; Establish pay consistent with other Montana cities our size; more public / transparency on budget income / expenses

Anonymous

4/24/2025 02:21 PM

Combining committees to have more effective and cohesive understanding of city projects and goals. This would also help streamline recommendations to council. An example would be Climate Action Plan Committee and Sustainable Tourism Management Plan Standing Committee.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 08:56 AM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 08:58 AM

Agricultural Zoning and keeping valuable farm land around

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Local Government Review Commission Community Survey : Survey Report for 22 June 2023 to 15 May 2025

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:00 AM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:00 AM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:01 AM

Traffic issues, parking issues around schools, housing issues for public servants and young adults.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:02 AM

Take into consideration the essay contributions to city government provided by Mr. Webb's U.S. Government classes, and whether or not some may be contributory to the goals of the commission.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:05 AM

Forget about the climate action plan until people can afford to live here.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

No, doing a good job, keep Muhlfeld in office

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:45 AM

No, Whitefish rocks!

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:47 AM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 09:47 AM

None

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:25 AM

none

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:27 AM

No I don't, you're doing great! :)

Anonymous

4/25/2025 11:28 AM

Less menial police activity. I realize in a town like this there's not much crime but seriously context matters. The barely visible decals on the police vehicles is sneaky and trap like.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:50 PM

no

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Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:51 PM

no

Anonymous

4/25/2025 12:53 PM

No I don't have anything else at this time.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:07 PM

I don't think so.

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:47 PM

none

Anonymous

4/25/2025 01:49 PM

I think when we look at whitefish, we need to worry more about catering to the people who already live here. We do not need to worry about how to improve the tourism industry - because it is already thriving and there are people who have lived their whole lives getting forced out. We need to be able to create affordable options for them and not cater to the rich visitors.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 07:29 AM

Look into where are the communities that have the highest trust in the government? What are those communities doing to create trust in their government officials? Too often people talk about local government in terms of conspiracy theories-this is a signal of distrust. Local government is often the most responsive form of government, and where people can learn to appreciate and trust government.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:11 AM

Make short term rentals illegal in homes.

Anonymous

4/26/2025 11:58 AM

I strongly urge the Local Government Review Study Commission to recommend a complete overhaul of our current form of government. The existing Commission-Executive structure has failed to reflect the will and needs of the community. Decisions are made with limited transparency, and residents have lost trust due to backroom deals, unfair utility fees, and a lack of real accountability. I recommend transitioning to a Town Meeting form of government, which would return power directly to the people. If that is not feasible, then at a minimum, I support: Switching to district-based elections to ensure all neighborhoods are fairly represented. Making the Zoning Administrator accountable to the City Council or subject to public oversight. Requiring nonpartisan elections to reduce political influence and increase focus on local issues. Reviewing the size and terms of

the council to promote diverse, responsive leadership. Above all, I want a government that serves all residents, openly, fairly, and with integrity.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 08:07 AM

Think I said what needed to be said.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 09:01 AM

Michael, extra comment is that local government has overreached their authority in taxing and zoning, and has made it very difficult for homeowners To enjoy their properties, that they have worked very hard to purchase, as they wish. It seems that the local government believes that they have the purview to exceed the law, and they are not following the statutes of Montana and they are overreaching and controlling private property as they see fit.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 11:08 AM

Time for city council/managers to think harder about pennies and dollars like taxpayers and us business owners have to. Lots of talk about affordable housing etc but where is visible effort to keep city's costs, charges, and taxes to taxpayers down.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 12:55 PM

Stop with the performative statements, fix the roads, pickup the trash (recycling and leaves) and ask first how to do more with less. Today I see a lot of self interest and not public service.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 01:25 PM

How does whitefish government compare to others. I'd like to see an annual report grading the city and setting goals for improvement to be addressed. Then have many public meetings to discuss with voters.

Anonymous

4/28/2025 02:52 PM

I want our city law enforcement to only have interaction with Boarder Patrol or any Federal immigration entity when it is absolutely necessary. I have zero interest in Whitefish PD bringing Boarder Patrol or ICE into a situation practically not for language translation. I want Whitefish PD to be focused on reducing vaping amounts kids, distracted drivers, speeding and driving while under the influence.

Anonymous

5/01/2025 12:12 PM

Please figure out a solution that stops the above listed corruption. This directly contributes to the lack of housing, making building second residences on WR-2 lots difficult via unlawful fee collecting.

Anonymous

5/02/2025 04:31 AM

\*ahem internal affairs investigation

Anonymous

5/02/2025 11:57 AM

the charter is up for review and can be rewritten into laymens terms.

Anonymous

5/03/2025 07:43 AM

Repeat that we need Term Limits on all elected officials and remove City Manager!

Anonymous

5/06/2025 11:28 AM

I believe there should be term limits for the mayor and city council.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 09:58 AM

Whitefish police/municipal court budget needs to be cut. We need more bike paths and to discourage people from driving vehicles everywhere to reduce congestion in the summer. After the defective trash cans and I was told recycling would be next on the agenda, but 3 years later, whitefish has no recycling facility. Businesses need to pick up trash in front of their storefront. Fewer cops and more city employees picking up litter.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:52 AM

Transparency is important. There should be no closed deals.

Anonymous

5/08/2025 11:54 AM

No

Anonymous

5/08/2025 12:00 PM

Make the charter more readable. Also there are women on the council NOT just men....needs to be gender nuetral.

Anonymous

5/09/2025 01:53 PM

I doubt many will get to this survey who are the actual backbone of the community reliant on the work council has done to protect them. I'm talking the many who survive in the visitor economy in one or another. We are VERY lucky.

Anonymous

5/11/2025 07:55 PM

In years past, there has always been a dog catcher. Why now, with such an increase in population, and dogs, does the city not employ a dog catcher? There are now many unleashed dogs as well as owners that do not pick up after their dogs in public places. We're literally going to the dogs! Regarding question #15 below, why does the number stop at "more than 20?" As hinted above, I believe there is a real lack in our elected government's willing to listen to those who have been here FAR beyond the 20 years. We've seen the drastic changes in our once great small town of Whitefish at the hands of those what wish to change it to something else. Likely something

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similar to where they came from???

Anonymous

5/12/2025 10:15 AM

Hire a qualified and experienced city manager and review the law before implementing new fees and taxes.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:02 PM

Is there a way to tax people with 2nd and 3rd homes a non-primary home tax? Something that would get these people to carry more of the burden they put on our town with Short Term Rentals, increase in home prices due to the large high-end homes being built, etc. All the things that make it difficult for the rest of us to live continue to live here.

Anonymous

5/12/2025 01:10 PM

Some corrective action may be needed but should use baby steps to change.

Anonymous

5/13/2025 07:52 PM

Make the charter more readable and update the language.

Anonymous

5/14/2025 02:24 PM

Thank you first and gratefully appreciate my housing after no-fault car accident causing flattening of my spinal cord etc: \*WFHA and NWCAP and the new housing Whitefish entities need to gain oversight of Sec 8 or voucher housing apartment managers actual management AND get feedback from tenants every 3 months about how their manager manages within the rules i.e. guarding against favoritism, gang agenda, dominancy, bias and even hate trying to make someone bad who is not, yet needs work order request accomplished without payback retaliation. \*There is little oversight of their behavior in regards to tenants once the money is doled out. Not just the math & paperwork (I have seen falsifying by omission to cover their dirty deeds trail & it hurts to be treated that way & a constant writing records and taking pictures to verify correctly; no climate to heal instead worsen), but the civility and respect including meeting laws such as RAR, Reasonable Accommodation Requests for disability. Withholding services as revenge and even sabotaging what HUD implemented because they (management) did not have "say", "I have say" power trips. Patti Ruiz at Mountain Apts 430 Colorado is well known by attorneys and online as venomous bully for the sake of power completely disregarding true reasonable needs (now Bonnie at Alpenglow says she/P.R. is a model manager making a conflict of interest and Tamarack management not returning my calls ): ). I have asked since 2019 after collusion trying to say I tampered (which I then had mini-stroke for being threatened eviction (Lori Collins was part of this and needed to be removed) and yelled at etc WITH NO BACK UP SUPPORT to

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protect my representation) when HUD Inspectors had previously approved and handyman goes behind them removing accommodations already granted. Most people run and end up on the street bcz she tries to sully their name, albeit there are a few bad eggs, but after almost 10 years I have seen much and experience my own rut with her/Ruiz- Commerce Dept has recently helped to provide heat when 23 degrees and MAG has intervened---THAT IS A BIT MUCH to have to go that route after much pain & suffering!! Anyway I have much documentation bogged down in FHEO HUD which has been ransacked, right, so now you see how the operation/management runs here with no one to address these issues. No one should have to live under so much duress bcz someone supposedly in charge, mental health requires meanness to feel worthy or boss.

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:07 PM

The city has grown so much there now is very different areas with different problems. Each area should be represented!

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:17 PM

Hold your "public" meetings on public property, not at a politically oriented private business!!

Anonymous

5/14/2025 05:22 PM

Stop catering to the rich! Where is the money paid by developers to not have affordable housing go? Oh and as far as public safety goes. It's not being dealt with!!!

Anonymous

5/15/2025 08:48 AM

Remove the city manager position. City staff must be accountable to the people, and having an unelected executive prevents that.

Anonymous

5/15/2025 03:04 PM

Keep current form of government, but improve

Anonymous

5/15/2025 07:03 PM

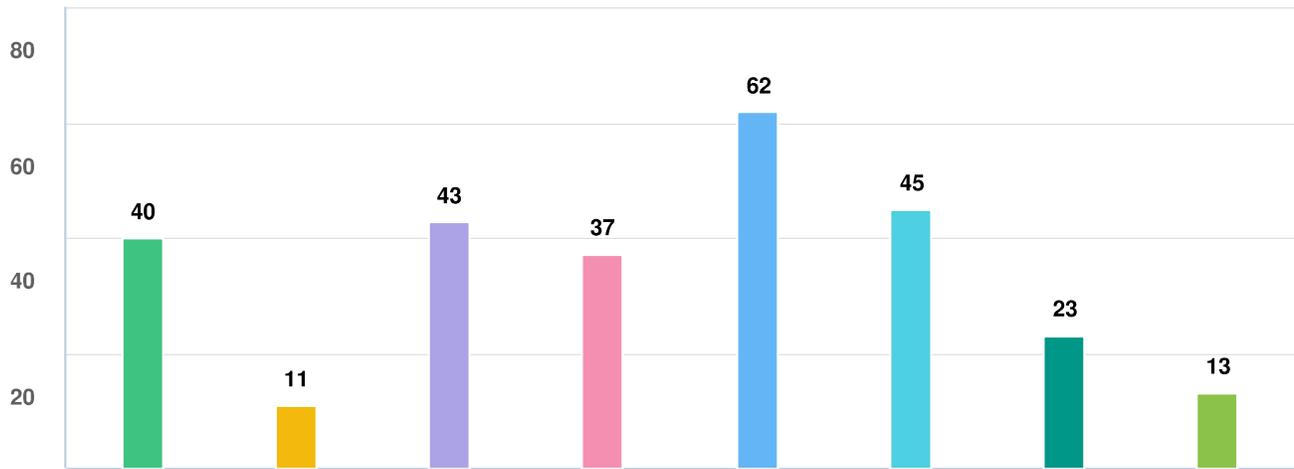
No.

**Optional question** (111 response(s), 188 skipped)

**Question type:** Essay Question

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**Q13** What is your age?

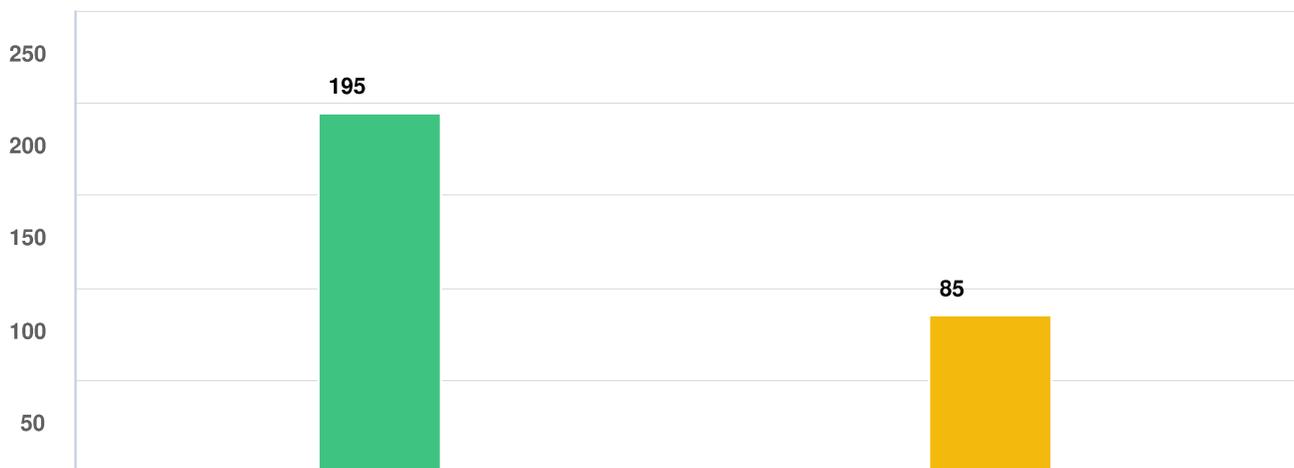


**Question options**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 or older
- Prefer not to say

Optional question (274 response(s), 25 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q14** Do you live within Whitefish city limits?

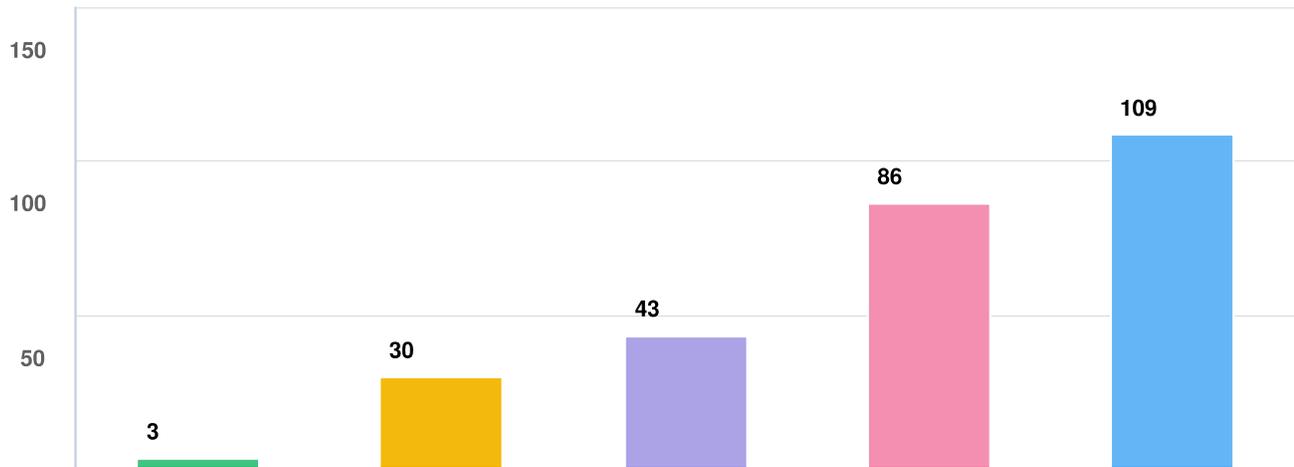


**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (280 response(s), 19 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q15** How long have you lived in Whitefish?

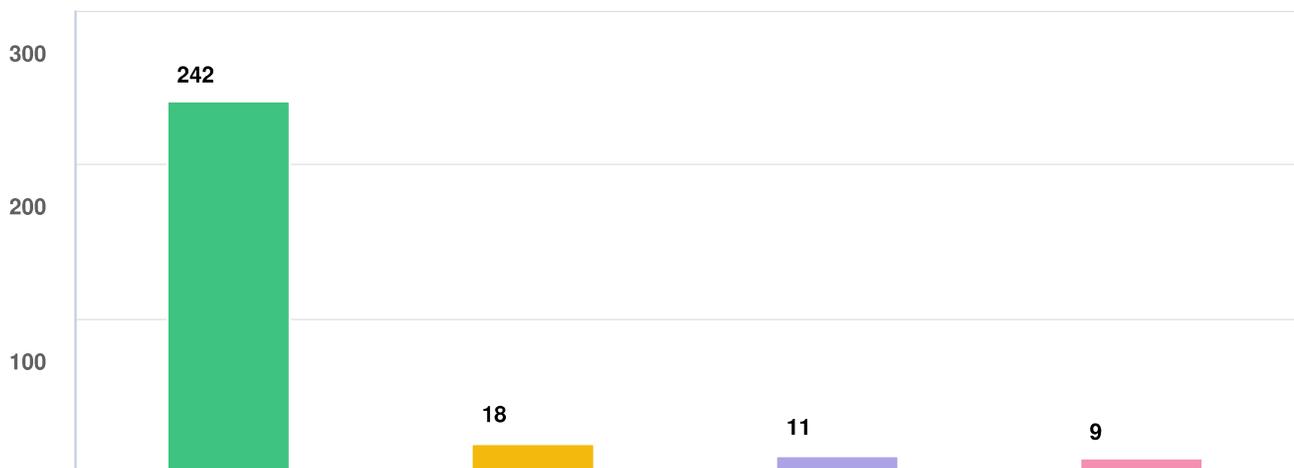


**Question options**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

Optional question (271 response(s), 28 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q16** Do you own or rent your home?

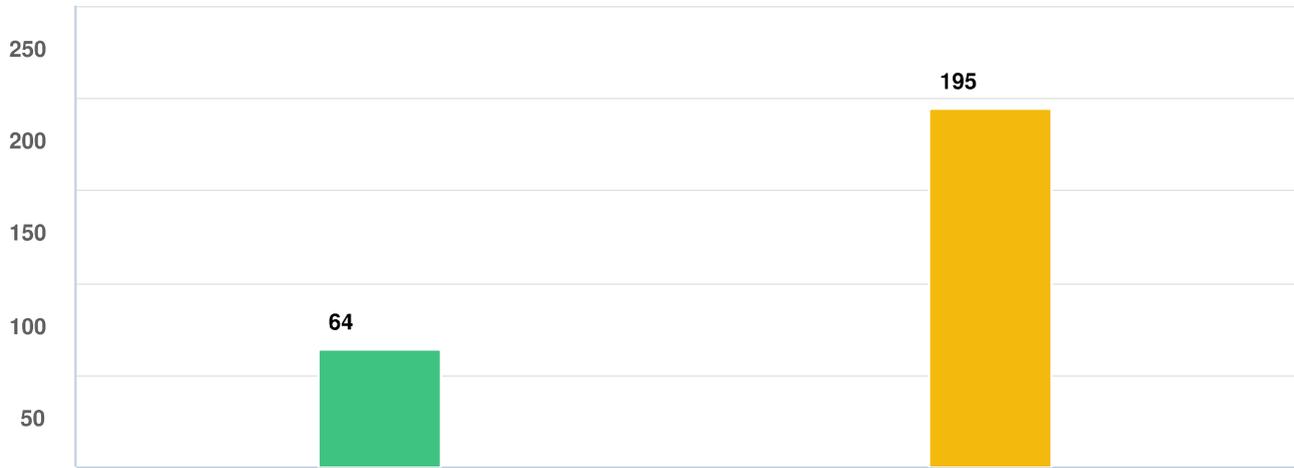


**Question options**

- Own
- Rent
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Optional question (280 response(s), 19 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q17 Does your household make more or less than the Median Household Income (\$71,110) in Whitefish?**



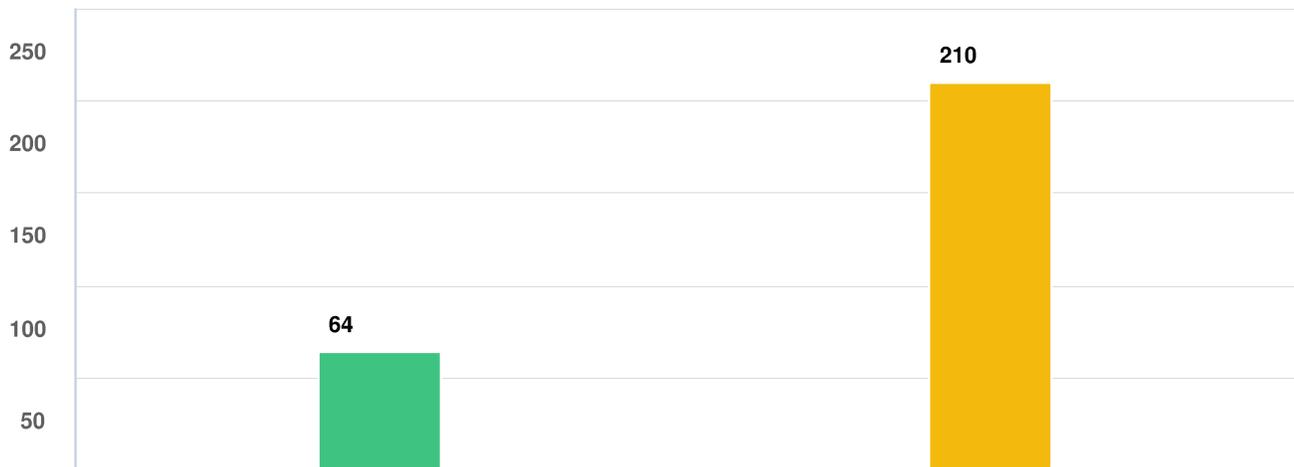
**Question options**

- Less than
- More than

Optional question (259 response(s), 40 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

**Q18 Do you own or represent a business in the city limits of Whitefish?**



**Question options**

- Yes
- No

Optional question (274 response(s), 25 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question