

City of Sidney – Local Government Review Board Survey

1. Awareness of the Review Process

Context: Every ten years, Montana cities may conduct a Local Government Review to decide if changes should be made to their form or powers of government.

Before this survey, were you aware that Sidney voters approved a Local Government Review to examine how our city government is structured?

Answer: Yes or no

2. Understanding of the Current Government Form

Context: Sidney currently operates under a Mayor–Council form of government. The Mayor is the chief executive, and the City Council serves as the legislative body.

How well do you understand the roles and powers of the Mayor and City Council under Sidney’s current government structure?

Answer: Sliding Scale

3. Views on the Current Form of Government

Context: The Mayor–Council system is one of several options allowed under Montana law. Other cities use a Council–Manager form, where a professional city manager handles daily operations under Council oversight.

Do you believe Sidney’s current Mayor–Council form of government best fits the city’s size, needs, and future direction?

Answer: Yes or no

4. City Government Structure

Context: The Local Government Review may examine whether Sidney’s current form (Mayor-Council system) best serves the community, or whether changes might be beneficial.

How familiar are you with Sidney’s current form of government and how decisions are made?

Answer: Sliding Scale

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5. Balance of Power and Oversight

Context: In some city structures, power is more centralized in the mayor's office; in others, it's shared or delegated to an appointed manager.

How should the balance of power between elected officials (Mayor and Council) and appointed staff (City Administrator/Manager) be structured?

Answer: Comment Box

6. Representation and Decision-Making

Context: City Councils can be elected by wards (geographic areas) or at large (citywide). Representation methods affect accountability and diversity of viewpoints. Currently the City of Sidney has 3 wards, with two Councilmembers representing each ward.

How do you feel City Council members should be elected?

Answer: Ward or At Large

7. Local Powers and Autonomy

Context: Cities in Montana can adopt self-government powers under a charter, which allows more local control over policies, taxation, and regulations (within state limits).

Would you support Sidney adopting a self-government charter to give the community more local decision-making authority?

Answer: Yes or No

8. Checks and Balances

Context: The Review Board is examining whether the current structure provides appropriate checks and balances between branches of local government.

Do you think Sidney's current system provides adequate oversight between the Mayor, City Council, and administration?

Answer: Yes or No

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9. Citizen Participation in Government Structure

Context: Any future change in Sidney's form or powers of government would require voter approval. The Review Board wants to know how residents prefer to be involved in that process.

How would you prefer to receive information and provide input if changes to Sidney's form of government are proposed?

Answer: Newspaper, Social Media, City Website, Other:_____

10. Vision for Sidney's Governance

Context: This Review is about shaping how Sidney's government will operate for the next generation.

In one or two sentences, how would you describe your ideal vision for how Sidney's local government should be structured and operate in the future?

Answer: Comment Box