

BILLINGS

2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

VOTER GUIDE

YOUR SECRET BALLOT MEANS IT'S YOURS TO DECIDE.
We hope that this independent, local, nonprofit-prepared info helps.



FORWARD MONTANA

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WHO IS FORWARD MONTANA?

Forward Montana is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization dedicated to training, mobilizing, and electing a new generation of progressive leaders in Montana. Since our establishment in 2004, we've grown into the largest youth civic engagement organization in Montana, with year-round staff in Billings, Bozeman, Missoula, and the Flathead Valley.

We build political power with and for young Montanans by driving a culture of civic engagement and by electing leaders and passing policies that are representative of the needs and vision of our generation. We envision a Montana where young people's voices lead and serve our communities, where both politics and policies reflect our generation's values, and where all people have equal opportunities for just and sustainable futures.

To create this guide, we sent each candidate a questionnaire. N/R indicates an unanswered question or lack of sufficient evidence to confidently assess the candidate's position.



ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 2ND.

★ OCTOBER 13: BALLOTS ARE MAILED OUT.

This is an all mail-in election. If you don't receive your ballot by October 20, check in with the Yellowstone County Elections Office at **(406) 256-2740**.

★ NOVEMBER 1 @ 12 PM: VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE.

Not sure if you're registered to vote?

Check your registration status at app.mt.gov/voterinfo/.

You must be registered to vote by 12 PM on November 1 to cast a ballot in the municipal election. Voter registration forms can only be submitted in-person at the county elections office during the late registration period: October 5–November 1.

★ NOVEMBER 2 @ 8 PM: BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED.

Completed ballots may be returned by mail or in person and must be received by the **Yellowstone County Elections Office on 217 N. 27th St., Room 101** by November 2 at 8 PM. If you're mailing your ballot, make sure to put a stamp on your envelope and mail it by October 26, i.e., seven days before the election.

Remember, ballots received late won't count!

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO LOCAL CONTROL IN MONTANA?

#DYK: During the 2021 legislative session, multiple bills were passed that stripped local governments of their authority to address the most pressing issues facing our communities.

The legislature and Governor's office passed bills that take away our local government's ability to address the affordable housing crisis by removing inclusionary zoning. The legislature also voted to limit local health departments' abilities to combat the COVID-19 pandemic by outsourcing public health decisions to state-level elected officials and the legislature.

Read on to find out if your candidates for office support these efforts.

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

City councillors craft and vote on city policies and budgets to represent the interests of the residents of their wards. They hold the Mayor accountable and ensure that Billings residents' interests are represented.

WARD 1



ED GULICK

Endorsed by: Montana Conservation Voters; Montana Rural Voters Action Fund



STEPHANIE KRUEGER

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WARD 2



FRANK EWALT*

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing



JENNIFER OWEN

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WARD 3



DENISE JOY*

Endorsed by: Montana Conservation Voters; Montana Rural Voters Action Fund



CHARLIE LOVERIDGE

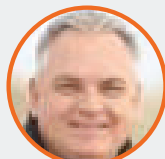
No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WARD 4



MARY HERNANDEZ

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing



DANIEL TIDSWELL

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing



TIM WARBURTON

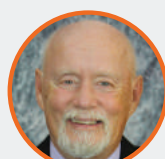
No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WARD 5



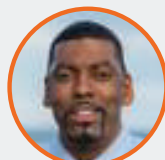
TOM RUPSIS

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing



DENNIS L. ULVESTAD

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

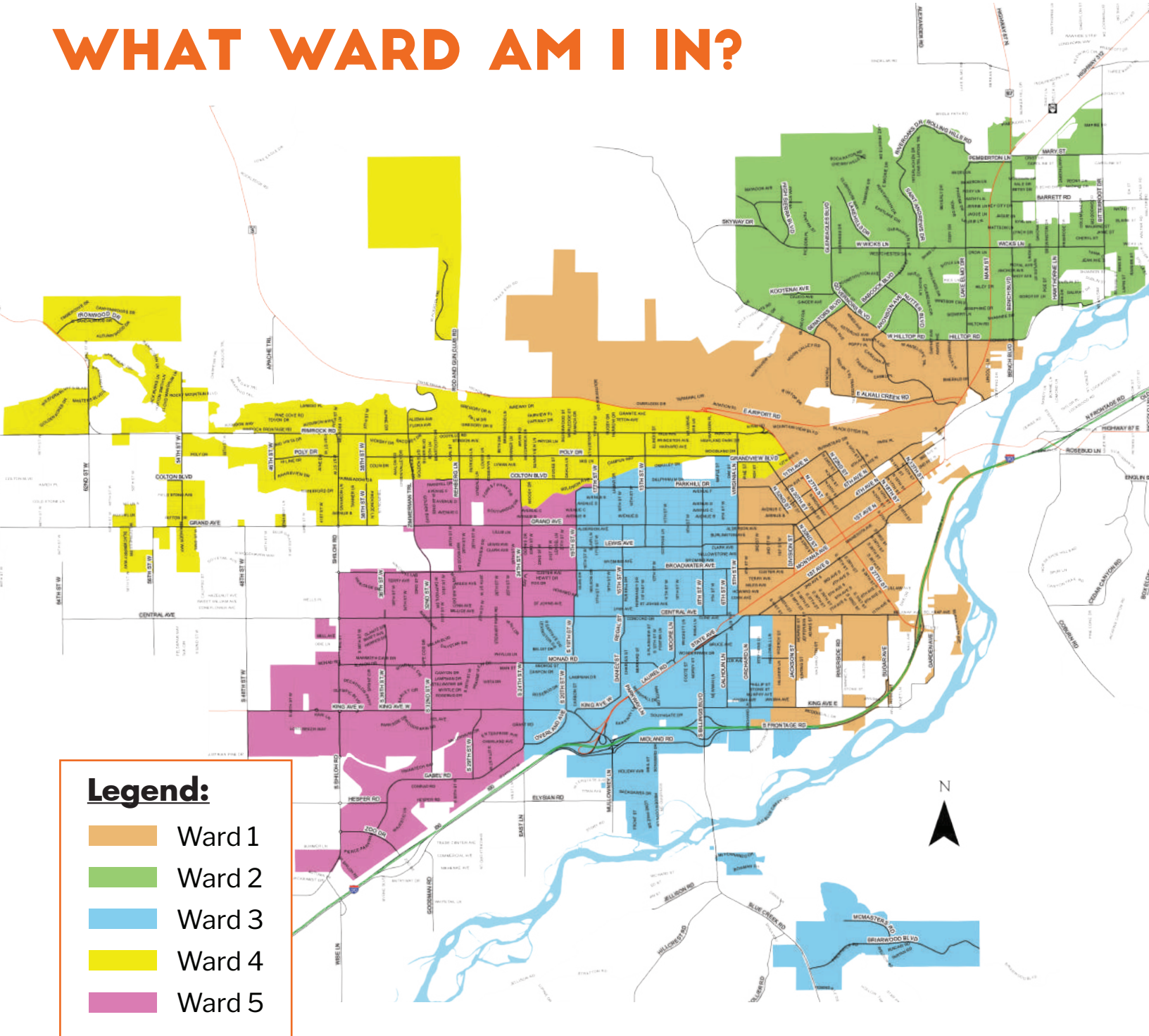


FRED WILBURN

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

***INCUMBENT**

WHAT WARD AM I IN?



WHAT DO THE CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES SUPPORT?

WARD I



Gulick

Krueger

Identify what you think the minimum wage in Billings should be.

\$11.05

N/R

Do you support increased funding for community programs and resources that provide services to our houseless neighbors?

YES

N/R

If elected, would you support a city-initiated policy to transition to 100% net clean electricity by 2030, as other municipalities across the state have done?

YES

N/R

Do you support citywide policies that would make Billings a more welcoming community for LGBTQ+, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people?

YES

N/R

Do you support efforts at the state level to diminish local authority over issues like housing?

NO

N/R

WARD 2

WARD 3

WARD 4

WARD 5



Ewalt

Owen

Joy

Loveridge

Hernandez

Tidswell

Warburton

Rupsis

Ulvestad

Wilburn

\$10

N/R

\$15

N/R

\$15

N/R

\$15

\$8.75

N/R

N/R

N/R

N/R

YES

N/R

YES

N/R

YES

N/R

N/R

N/R

NO

N/R

YES

N/R

YES

N/R

YES

N/R

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N/R

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N/R

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N/R

YES

N/R

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N/R

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N/R

NO

N/R

NO

N/R

N/R

N/R

*N/R = NO RESPONSE

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES: Q&A

What is your vision for public safety in Billings?

WARD 1

ED GULICK:

To meet immediate needs, I support the public safety mill levy, which has a good, holistic approach that addresses some root causes. But for the long term, the city needs much more mixed-use, higher-density development in downtown and along the arterials to support excellent public safety services and parks and trails. I want to champion that type of development in Billings through master-planning and sound transportation system decisions.

STEPHANIE KRUEGER:

We must work with neighbors and business owners to create the type of community we want. Whether it is cleaning up graffiti like our Southside Task Force is doing or finding ways to bring art into our industrial areas like the EBIRD, TIF, neighborhood watch groups, or growing community gardens, each positive idea implemented will help make Billings a place where people want to live. We must also support our police, firefighters, and first responders.

WARD 2

FRANK EWALT:

Priority dispatch, available jail space for Billings City inmates, have the corrections facility at Deer Lodge limited to 200 bus tickets (destination Billings) for pre-releasees and parolees down from the upper 600s now (Bozeman gets less than 50) per year.

***WARD 2 CANDIDATE JENNIFER OWEN DID NOT RESPOND.**

WARD 3

DENISE JOY:

Public safety in Billings should be considered peace oriented. To maintain the peace and safety of our city, we need community-oriented police organization. Police can prevent crimes by being accepted and welcomed in the community and by the people they serve. Communities should trust police because of their commitment to the public, regardless of race, religion, gender, or other defining characteristics. Police that are culturally sensitive and competent.

***WARD 3 CANDIDATE CHARLIE LOVERIDGE DID NOT RESPOND.**

WARD 4

MARY HERNANDEZ:

In general, my vision would have firefighters available for fire and serious public safety calls, EMT units for medical emergencies, and a police department that spends adequate time addressing and reducing violent crimes. Additionally, the police department would work with substance abuse courts and area agencies to address and help reduce minor crimes and the associated social issues contributing to crime. The public would be aware of expected results.

TIM WARBURTON:

An approach that includes housing the homeless, providing adequate mental health and substance abuse counseling and treatment, and using our scarce jail space for the most violent offenders. We could use an increase in our police force with a focus on community policing.

***WARD 4 CANDIDATE DANIEL TIDSWELL DID NOT RESPOND.**

WARD 5

TOM RUP SIS:

Reverse rising crime rate by: implementing recommendations in CPSM report; passing Citizens Police Advisory Board, passing public safety mill levy; diverting cases from police when specialized social services can address an issue; engaging police with community organizations and businesses to address localized crime issues; and supporting efforts to address mental health, substance abuse, and housing through Continuum of Care and Substance Abuse Connect.

***WARD 5 CANDIDATES DENNIS L. ULVESTAD
AND FRED WILBURN DID NOT RESPOND.**

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES: Q&A

What is the single most impactful policy or action our municipality could take to support more affordable renting opportunities for low- and middle-income folks?

WARD 1

ED GULICK:

Increasing housing affordability requires having a greater range of housing types, including mixed-use, higher-density units. Not everyone needs a yard that adds cost to single-family houses. But more than affordable housing, we need affordable living, which includes the costs of utilities and transportation. An impactful action the city can take is to improve bus service, as higher-density corridors develop to reduce the required number of vehicles per household.

STEPHANIE KRUEGER:

The City Council will need to look at how current policies impact the builders, developers, and investors in Billings. Too many government regulations will destroy productivity and growth and will cause builders, developers, and investors to look elsewhere to build and invest. It is important to allow our free markets to function unencumbered so that supply and demand can function properly and our inventory for housing and rentals can increase, ultimately resulting in more affordable housing.

WARD 2

FRANK EWALT:

This is driven by private enterprise, the cost of land, infrastructure costs, building material costs, and management fees. Major projects do get some tax incentives.

***WARD 2 CANDIDATE JENNIFER OWEN DID NOT RESPOND.**

WARD 3

DENISE JOY:

To optimize HUD funding available along with the County Housing Authority work with Section 8. To address neighborhood concerns and explain the benefits of having Section 8 housing to gain greater acceptance of rental housing. To work with qualified, responsible developers to create the rental housing. Using our council approval for rental housing to maintain high levels of quality development. To create an affordable housing policy for the city.

***WARD 3 CANDIDATE CHARLIE LOVERIDGE DID NOT RESPOND.**

WARD 4

MARY HERNANDEZ:

City zoning regulations could require a quarter of land (or % deemed appropriate) be used for multiple family units. This could provide affordable rental units while remaining profitable for a developer. Ideally these units are located near parks and work sites, thus reducing the need for additional public transit. Locating businesses that include neighborhood markets would increase quality of life for low- and middle-income families.

TIM WARBURTON:

We need champions for tax reform in elected office to reduce the burden our system places on property owners, which in turn increases all housing costs. We need a local option tax and creative ideas to incentivize being a property owner who provides affordable housing and prioritizes community investment over profit.

***WARD 4 CANDIDATE DANIEL TIDSWELL DID NOT RESPOND.**

WARD 5

TOM RUP SIS:

Our most likely action in Billings would be to use TIF funds and policies to support developers building affordable rental housing in the TIF districts. This could be through interest-free loans, reduced permitting fees, and/or zoning exceptions such as eliminating parking requirements. I also think we should be engaging with Trust Montana to understand how we could put the Community Land Trust model to work in Billings.

***WARD 5 CANDIDATES DENNIS L. ULVESTAD AND FRED WILBURN DID NOT RESPOND.**

RESOLUTION NO. 21: MARIJUANA DISPENSARIES IN BILLINGS

Resolution No. 21 will determine if recreational marijuana dispensaries are allowed within Billings city limits. This ordinance does not affect medical marijuana dispensaries.

A VOTE YES MEANS:



Voting YES on Resolution No. 21 will permit recreational-use dispensaries within the city of Billings, honoring the decision made by voters in the 2020 election to allow recreational use of marijuana across Montana.

A VOTE NO MEANS:



Voting NO on Resolution No. 21 will NOT permit recreational-use dispensaries within the city of Billings.

PUBLIC SAFETY MILL LEVY

The public safety mill levy is an investment in public safety across Billings.

A VOTE YES MEANS:



Voting YES on the public safety mill levy will result in a property tax increase of about \$100 per year (based on a median home value of \$217,000), increasing funding for the police department (\$2.45 million), fire department (\$1.5 million), legal/courts/code enforcement (\$1.45 million), ongoing public safety needs (\$1.3 million), and mental health and substance disorder services (\$415,000).

A VOTE NO MEANS:



Voting NO on the public safety mill levy will maintain the status quo and provide no additional funding to any of the listed departments or services.

