

Planning & Building Department: 2015 Annual Report

City of Whitefish

2015 Growth and Transitions

Whitefish, Montana continues to be a place where everyone wants to call home. Its also a place where people are willing to invest. The Planning and Building Department had another exceptionally busy year in 2015. Commercial construction activity saw its biggest increase in a while. Residential new construction was down a bit from last year, but we still permitted sixty seven new residential dwellings in the city. We also reviewed 22 million worth of commercial projects over the course of the year, which is the most since 2005, and have several more large commercial projects on the horizon for 2016.

For long range planning, in 2015 the Planning Office completed an update of the Downtown Master Plan and a new Highway 93 West Corridor Land Use Plan. Both of those plans went through extensive public involvement and do a good job balancing commercial growth opportunities and economic development with protecting residential neighborhoods and character. We are also moving ahead with a Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Plan this winter, as well as working on the implementation elements of those adopted plans. We are also working to address affordable housing issues in our community, as there is a huge shortage of available service workers.

Current planning, the permitting of subdivisions, conditional use permits, and other types of land use applications, continued to be busy in 2015. Both Senior Planner Wendy Compton-Ring and planner Bailey Minnich worked extremely hard last year assisting developers and reviewing projects. We saw twice as many preliminary plats and conditional use permits in 2015 from the prior year, but the rest of the land use permitting activity was nearly identical. Several new subdivisions were approved, with 20 new lots preliminary platted and 48 lots going to final plat.

2016 brings heavy hearts, as Chief Building Official Virgil Bench lost his fight with cancer on January 11. As a building official for the city since 1990, Virgil spent over 25 tireless years protecting the safety of our community and integrity of its buildings. He was always fair and consistent with contractors, and he trained his excellent staff to do the same. The building inspectors have threatened to outfit their city vehicles with "What Would Virgil Do?" bumper stickers, as that has been an all too common question around our offices since he went on medical leave last summer. His wry sense of humor and cantankerous but lovable spirit will be greatly missed. The City of Kalispell is graciously assisting us with our commercial plan reviews for the time being, until we can get someone certified for commercial reviews on staff. Inspectors Tad Lisowski and Phil Holmes have been busting their tails to stay on top of the extra inspection work load. Our invaluable Linda Brosheit was promoted as she stepped up to educate herself on handling residential plan reviews and inspections, which has been hugely helpful. This fall we were also fortunate to hire the always-smiling Ashley Sellwood as our highly competent new receptionist and permit technician.



Virgil Bench

All in all, 2015 was an interesting and busy year, and we look forward to bigger and better things in 2016!

Dave Taylor, AICP, Director

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Special points of interest:

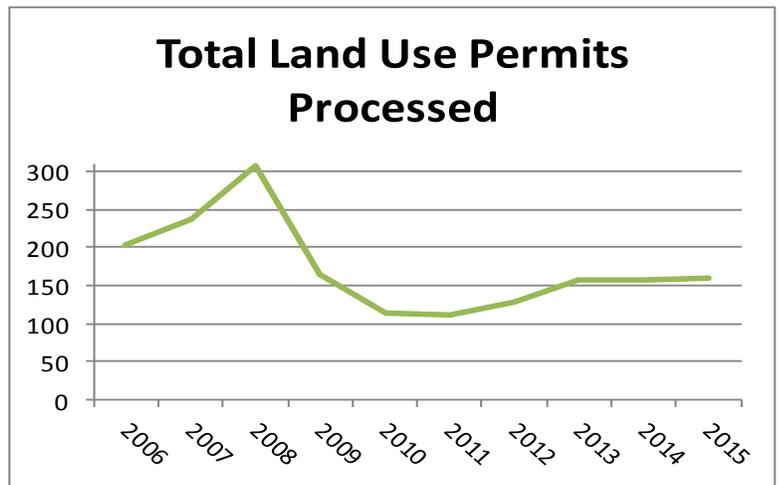
- 16.7 acres annexed
- 20 lots preliminary platted
- 48 lots final platted
- 20 conditional use permits
- 38 architectural reviews
- 4 variances
- 38 lakeshore permits
- 25 sign permits
- 100 code violations resolved
- 48 single family building permits
- 4 new commercial building permits

2015 Land Use Permit Activity

Total land use permit activity continues to remain steady for the third year in a row. The Planning Department processed a total of 159 permits in 2015, an increase of 0.06% from 2014 and a 30% increase from a 2011 low.

In addition, the department processed 37 sign permits and 25 temporary sign permits, which is the same as the previous three years.

There are a number of large projects on the horizon, so we anticipate 2016 to be another business year for the Planning Department.

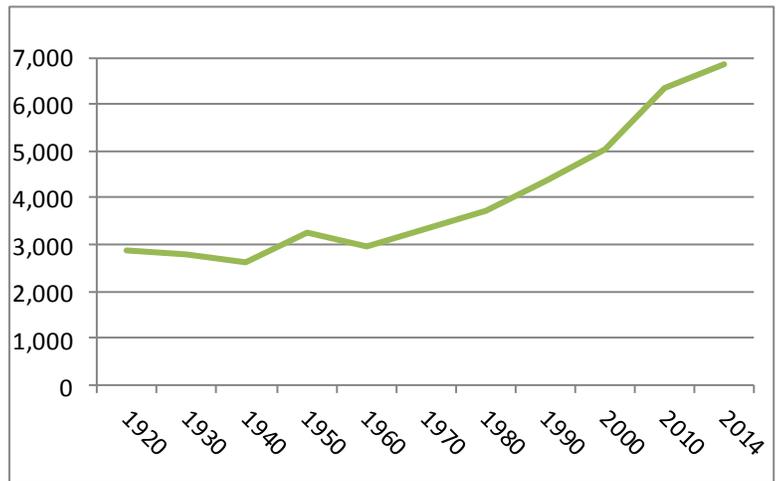


Land Use Permits: 2006-2015

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Preliminary Plat Applications	15	19	5	5	4	1	1	6	5	12
Final Plat Applications	20	19	15	5	4	1	1	5	5	6
Conditional Use Permit	13	9	7	6	5	9	13	15	11	20
Planned Unit Development	2	5	2	2	2	1	3	3	4	0
Architectural Review	36	38	17	15	20	14	22	21	31	38
Zone Change	8	3	6	1	0	4	0	6	9	5
Variance	8	5	9	2	5	8	4	7	2	4
Water Quality Permits			144	41	10	8	11	11	3	1
New Food Vendor Permit				4	1	1	3	2	2	3
Temporary Use Permit	0	0	0	3	1	5	7	5	3	2
Short-Term Rental Permit								1	5	3
Floodplain Permit	2	5	4	6	1	1	5	4	1	2
Lakeshore Permit	84	78	54	47	35	28	40	40	41	38
Subdivision Exemption		40	31	17	21	20	13	25	29	17
Zoning Text Amendment	12	17	11	8	4	7	5	2	5	4
Subdivision Text Amendment	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Growth Policy Amendment	1	0	3	1	0	2	0	2	1	2
Total Land Use Permits Processed	202	238	308	164	114	112	129	156	158	159

Population Growth

According to the July 1, 2014 US Census Bureau estimate for Whitefish for 2014, 507 people have moved to Whitefish since the 2010 census. This is a 7.98% increase in population. Flathead County grew by 4.39% and the State of Montana grew by approximately 3.45% since the 2010 census.



	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014
Whitefish	2,803	2,602	3,268	2,965	3,349	3,703	4,368	5,032	6,357	6,864
Flathead County	19,200	24,271	31,495	32,965	39,460	51,966	59,218	74,471	90,928	94,924
Montana	537,606	559,456	591,024	674,767	694,407	786,690	799,065	902,195	989,415	1,023,579

Annexation: 2006-2015

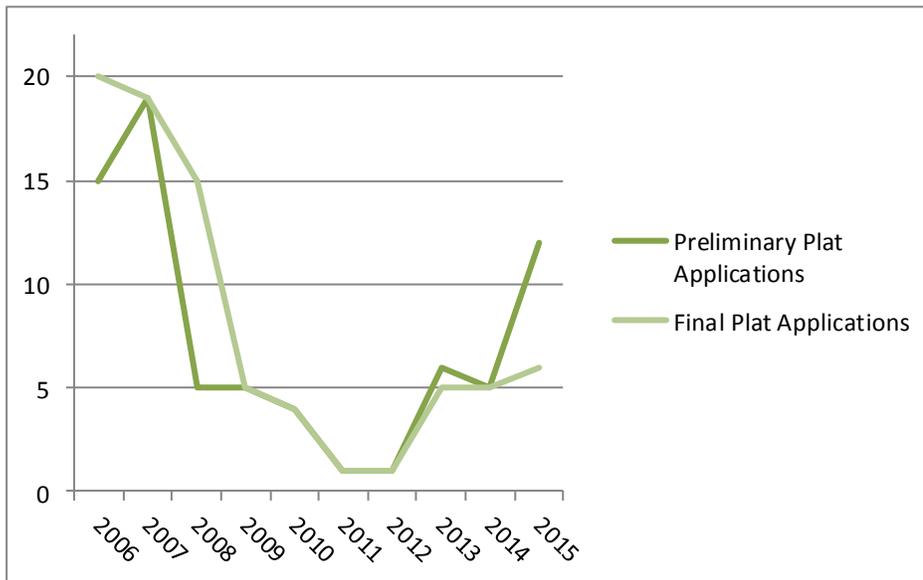
The City of Whitefish expanded its boundaries by 16.7 acres in 2015. Over the past decade, the city has expanded its boundaries by approximately 554 acres.

2006	52
2007	32
2008	360
2009	0.34
2010	3.52
2011	4.65
2012	28.827
2013	2.02
2014	53.934
2015	16.7

Subdivision Activity: 2006-2015

Preliminary plat activity continued to increase this past year. The city reviewed 12 applications for a total of 20 lots. Also, final plat applications increased with 6 reviewed for a total of 48 lots final platted in 2015.

2016 looks to be another busy year for subdivision activity with a number of larger subdivisions potentially submitting for final plat.



Maple Ridge, off Haugen Heights, is working toward final plat.

City of Whitefish

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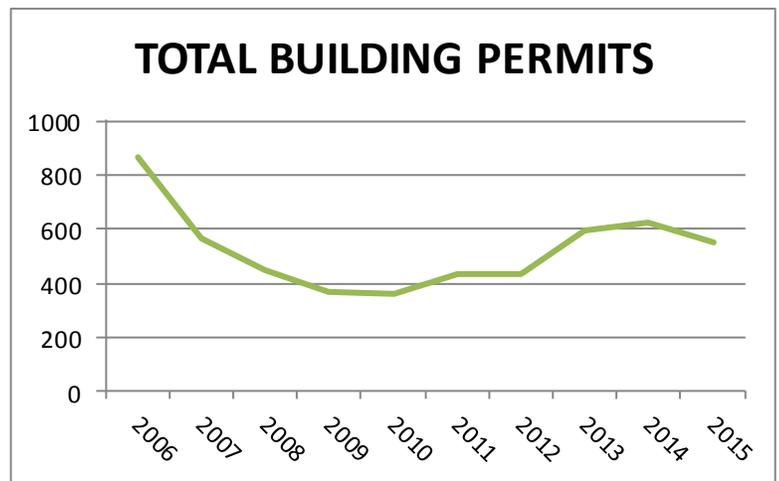
www.cityofwhitefish.org



New downtown boutique hotel under construction

Building Permit Activity

New construction continued to boom, with only a slight drop off from 2014's numbers. We anticipate more commercial activity for 2016, as well as more multi-family projects to try to address Whitefish's affordable housing crisis.



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Single Family Residential	60	22	26	14	23	36	51	75	72	48
remodel - SFR	57	41	73	59	61	66	75	68	65	55
addition - SFR	25	25	25	27	16	17	25	14	27	31
Townhouse/Duplex	42	20	8	0	0	2	6	6	6	12
remodel - TH/DU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1
addition - TH/DU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multifamily (units)	34	32	0	0	3	0	3	0	15	7
remodel - MF	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	0
addition - MF	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	136	74	34	14	26	38	60	81	93	67
Commercial	9	10	4	3	1	3	2	5	2	4
remodel - com	14	6	18	23	36	30	22	40	28	22
addition - com	0	1	3	2	4	2	0	8	8	7
TOTAL COMMERCIAL	23	17	25	28	41	35	24	53	38	33
Electrical permits	262	180	154	135	137	156	159	176	184	170
Mechanical permits	247	190	137	112	77	107	97	134	157	144
Plumbing permits	203	108	102	77	79	95	95	148	152	139
TOTAL PERMITS	871	569	452	366	360	431	435	592	624	553