



Home Rule Referendum FAQs

At the general election on November 6, 2018, the City Council would like you to vote on whether the City of Zion should become a home rule unit of government or should continue to be a non home rule unit of government.

What does it mean if I vote Yes?

Voting yes on this referendum question means you want the City of Zion to become a home rule unit of government. By state statute, the City of Zion is currently a non-home rule unit of government as it does not meet the population threshold of 25,000 residents.

What does it mean if I vote No?

Voting no on this referendum question means you are opting to have the City of Zion retain its status as a non home rule unit of government. If the City of Zion ever reaches a population of 25,000 residents, the City will become a home rule unit of government automatically.

What is Home Rule?

In Illinois, home rule is the State constitutional authority of local governments to self-govern provided the General Assembly did not explicitly limit that power or maintain the exclusive exercise of authority in a specific area. Essentially, home rule communities may do anything they deem necessary, unless the state specifies they cannot. This is contrary to non-home rule communities which only have the authority that is specifically granted to them under state statutes. Having home rule authority results in decision making being shifted from the state level to the local level.

How Can a Community Become Home Rule?

A municipality can become a home rule unit of government in one of two ways. First, municipalities with populations over 25,000 are automatically granted home rule status. For communities under this population threshold, such as the City of Zion, they can put a referendum question on a ballot and let the voters decide.

How Many Communities are Home Rule in Illinois?

Currently there are 215 Home Rule Communities in Illinois.

How Many Communities are Home rule in Lake County?

Currently there are 19 Home Rule Communities in Lake County.

What Limitations Do Home Rule Municipalities Have?

One example of a limitation is that home rule municipalities cannot issue debt with a maturity period longer than 40 years. Further, the General Assembly can vote at any time to impose additional limits on home rule units.

What are the potential advantages of Home Rule?

The City would have more flexibility and authority to address local issues as they present themselves. Additionally, while no formal plans have been established, the City Council has endorsed a list of possible actions and outcomes including but not limited to:

1. Provide a stronger response to specific issues related to crime free housing to discourage the use of residential properties as a haven for criminal activity and drug related offenses.
2. Reduce property tax burden on residents by shifting tax burden to non-residents. This could be done through multiple ways including a 1% increase in sales tax.
3. Opt out of state unfunded mandates as they are created.
4. Modify the zoning and planning process.

What are the Potential Disadvantages of Home Rule?

Typically, home rule municipalities have broad taxing and regulation authority, including the ability to increase property taxes without a referendum, to issue an unlimited amount of debt, to create new taxes and fees, and to regulate property.

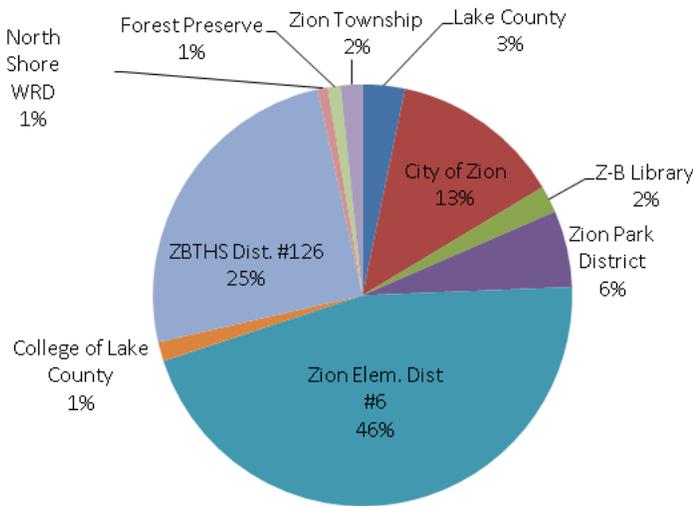
Because of these concerns, the City Council is committed to passing a resolution of broad restrictions on home rule authority, if the referendum is passed. This resolution will commit the existing City Council to continue to follow the property tax caps, to issue debt within current restrictions, and to conduct public hearings if any new taxes are approved or any existing taxes are increased.

How Do Residents Oversee the Use of Home Rule?

Residents oversee the use of home rule through the normal election process. Every two years, 50% of the commissioners are elected and every four years the Mayor is elected. Additionally, participating in City Council and Committee meetings is another forum in which to enact oversight. Citizens have the right at every meeting to address the governing body. Furthermore, all ordinances are published, discussed, and acted upon in open session and all agendas and ordinances are posted on the City’s website at least 48 hours before a vote. Finally, voters can file a petition to rescind Home Rule by referendum.

Your Property Tax Bill Breakdown

Below is an illustration of how property taxes are distributed to the taxing bodies within the City of Zion. By state law, property tax payments are collected by the Lake County Clerk and distributed to the taxing bodies.



Based on the pie chart, if you paid \$5000 in property taxes, this is how much each taxing district would receive:

Zion Elem. Dist #6	\$	2,279.07
ZBTHS Dist. #126	\$	1,255.77
City of Zion	\$	658.95
Zion Park District	\$	293.07
Lake County	\$	162.83
Zion Benton Library	\$	103.58
Zion Township	\$	84.20
College of Lake County	\$	73.49
Lake County Forest Preserve	\$	49.05
North Shore WRD	\$	39.98

Home Rule Information Meetings

The City of Zion will host three informational meetings concerning this referendum question. Residents are encouraged to attend one or more of the community meetings. These informational meetings will be held at Zion City Hall, Council Chambers, 2828 Sheridan Road in Zion on the following dates and times:

- **Thursday, September 20, 2018**
6:00pm to 8:00pm
- **Monday, October 15, 2018**
12:00noon to 2:00pm
- **Saturday, October 27, 2018**
10:00am to 12:00noon