



MEMO

TO George Lahanas, City of East Lansing

FROM Rory Neuner, Maggie Pallone, and Patrick Lyons, Public Sector Consultants

DATE Tuesday, March 6, 2018

SUBJECT Community Engagement Results—Instant Voting and Survey Results

This memo outlines the results from two recent community input opportunities facilitated by Public Sector Consultants (PSC), including an instant voting exercise conducted during the February 22, 2018, City of East Lansing Budget Priorities Community Engagement meeting as well as an online survey that was open between Friday, February 23, 2018, and Sunday, March 4, 2018.

Approximately 40 individuals voted in the in-person, instant survey, and 311 individuals responded to the online survey. With the exception of a test question in the instant survey, both the instant survey and the online version asked the same substantive questions of participants. Responses to each question are provided below, with the instant voting results listed first, followed by the online survey results. Items that received the highest number of votes are indicated in blue, and brief analysis of the results for each question is also provided. PSC conducted this analysis without input from City of East Lansing staff.

Question A: Approximately 88 percent of previous survey respondents indicated some form of support for new revenue. If the city pursues additional sources of revenue, would you like to see it dedicated to a specific category, such as public safety or parks?

Instant voting results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
Yes	20	51.3
No	19	48.7
Total votes	39	

Online survey results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
Yes	169	56.1
No	132	43.9
Total votes	301	

In both instances of data collection, a slight majority of participants were in favor of new revenue going toward a specific category or function rather than being used by the city without restrictions.

Question B: Based on the previous question, to which category would you prefer new revenue be dedicated, if any?

Instant voting results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
General city uses (current operations, legacy costs, and/or infrastructure)	17	47.2
Public safety operations	7	19.4
Parks and recreation operations	2	5.6
Legacy costs (underfunded retirement benefits)	5	13.9
Infrastructure (streets, parks, and/or government facilities)	5	13.9
Total votes	36	

Online survey results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
General city uses (current operations, legacy costs, and/or infrastructure)	47	15.7
Public safety operations	29	9.7
Parks and recreation operations	30	10.0
Legacy costs (underfunded retirement benefits)	32	10.7
Infrastructure (streets, parks, and/or government facilities)	55	18.4
I do not support new revenue being dedicated to a specific source.	49	16.4
I do not support new revenue.	57	19.1
Total votes	299	

In both instances of data collection, no clear majority emerged from respondents on where to dedicate new revenue. Nearly 20 percent of the online participants would prefer that no new revenue be collected. Note: The options “I do not support new revenue being dedicated to a specific source” and “I do not support new revenue” were not options in the instant voting exercise.

Question C: Generally speaking, which of the following new sources of revenue do you most support?

Instant voting results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
Millages (5.4 mill increase)	2	5.3
Income tax (1 percent income tax with 5.4 mill reduction)	24	63.2
A combination of millages and an income tax (0.75 percent income tax and 2.5 mill reduction)	10	26.3
No revenue	2	5.3
Total votes	38	

Online survey results

Options	Votes	By Percentage ¹
Millages (5.4 mill increase)	51	17.0
Income tax (1 percent income tax with 5.4 mill reduction)	95	31.7
A combination of millages and an income tax (0.75 percent income tax and 2.5 mill reduction)	74	24.7
No revenue	80	26.7
Total votes	300	

Respondents were significantly more in favor of raising revenue through an income tax or income tax and millage combination than an increase in millages alone. A much larger proportion of online survey respondents supported no revenue increases than the instant voting respondents.

Question D1: If the city were to pursue new revenue in the form of millage increases, which do you prefer? For this vote, please indicate your first-place selection.

Instant voting results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
General operating—2.4 mills (Headlee override)	22	73.3
PA 345 Fire Fighters and Police Officers Retirement Act—3 mills	6	20.0
Authority: EMS/Fire or Parks and Recreation—3 mills	2	6.7
Debt millage: City infrastructure (TBD)	0	0.0
Total votes	30	

Online survey results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
General operating—2.4 mills (Headlee override)	90	36.0
PA 345 Fire Fighters and Police Officers Retirement Act—3 mills	37	14.8
Authority: EMS/Fire or Parks and Recreation—3 mills	61	24.2
Debt millage: City infrastructure (TBD)	62	24.8
Total votes	250	

¹ Note: Due to the way these percentages round as presented, the total for these voting results does not add to exactly 100 percent.

Question D2: If the city were to pursue new revenue in the form of millage increases, which do you prefer? For this vote, please indicate your second-place selection.

Instant voting results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
General operating—2.4 mills (Headlee override)	4	14.8
PA 345 Fire Fighters and Police Officers Retirement Act—3 mills	12	44.4
Authority: EMS/Fire or Parks and Recreation—3 mills	6	22.2
Debt millage: City infrastructure (TBD)	5	18.5
Total votes	27	

Online survey results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
General operating—2.4 mills (Headlee override)	37	15.1
PA 345 Fire Fighters and Police Officers Retirement Act—3 mills	71	29.0
Authority: EMS/Fire or Parks and Recreation—3 mills	68	27.8
Debt millage: City infrastructure (TBD)	69	28.2
Total votes	245	

Based on the results from questions D1 and D2, respondents agreed that the two top preferences for using millages were to support the general operating fund through a Headlee Amendment override, followed by a millage based on PA 345—the Fire Fighters and Police Officers Retirement Act.

Question E: If the city were to seek voter approval of an income tax, which of the following options would you most support?

Instant voting results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
Unrestricted (for general city use without time limit)	20	52.6
Specified purpose (legacy costs, infrastructure, public safety operations)	6	15.8
Specified time limit (automatically expires in ten or 15 years)	7	18.4
Specified purpose and time limit	5	13.2
Total votes	38	

Online survey results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
Unrestricted (for general city use without time limit)	66	23.5
Specified purpose (legacy costs, infrastructure, public safety operations)	44	15.7
Specified time limit (automatically expires in ten or 15 years)	27	9.6
Specified purpose and time limit	144	51.2
Total votes	281	

Based on these results, very different preferences emerged between instant voting respondents and the online respondents. Respondents who attended the community meeting in person were largely in favor of placing no restrictions on the revenue from the potential income tax, whereas the online respondents overwhelmingly stated they would like to see the income used for a specific purpose *and* have a built-in sunset.

Question F: If the city were to seek voter approval for an income tax, which of the following time restrictions (if any) would you most support? Note: This would only apply to the first \$5 million of new revenue.

Instant voting results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
No time limit	17	44.7
Ten-year expiration, unless renewed by voters	9	23.7
Fifteen-year expiration, unless renewed by voters	12	31.6
Total votes	38	

Online survey results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
No time limit	81	30.8
Ten-year expiration, unless renewed by voters	151	57.4
Fifteen-year expiration, unless renewed by voters	31	11.8
Total votes	263	

Similar to Question E, a smaller proportion of instant voting respondents preferred restrictions on the time or eligible uses of potential income tax revenue than did the online respondents.

Question G: If the city were to seek voter approval for an income tax, which of the following spending restrictions (if any) would you most support?

Instant voting results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
City operations (public safety)	10	29.4
Legacy costs	4	11.8
No restrictions	20	58.8
Total votes	34	

Online survey results

Options	Votes	By Percentage
City operations (public safety)	102	39.7
Legacy costs	59	23.0
No restrictions	96	37.4
Total votes	257	

Based on these results, the online survey respondents slightly favored an income tax being used to fund public safety, but in both surveys, a significant proportion of respondents were interested in seeing an income tax without restrictions. In both cases, limiting the income tax to legacy costs was the least favored option.