

**Do you have any other comments or suggestions to share with the City about its budget priorities, including ideas for other potential reductions or sources of revenue?**

A city Income tax is the fairest way for the city to gain enough revenue. The property taxes are already among the highest in the state. Additional property taxes will be a great hardship on property owners living on fixed incomes. I suggest a second ballot vote on income tax.

Build and run a city owned mini storage in the northern tier. Storage is a premium, lucrative business that can be provided to residents as a service while bringing in revenue. Research other services that are known to generate positive revenue. Cost recovery for fire and police services. Many communities bill for false alarms or private property vehicle incidents. Those who use the service frequently should pay a premium. Often insurance companies will reimburse for services rendered.  
<https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/department-administration/cost-recovery-for-fire-based-emergency-response-services>

- Work to see how police and fire services can continue to be or further be shared with other communities in the region. -

-City Councillors should not be paid until they actually make decisions. In 2014, Ruth Beier ran on an election promise of cutting spending. Nothing meaningful has happened since her election. Not pointing fingers, but enough of the empty promises from all of the City Council. Frigging do something.

-Heavily fine student areas (M.A.C. Ave., Harrison/Grand River Ave., Delta Triangle, East Bailey etc) for unkempt yards/streets/driveways/alleys esp. after trash truck pickups, -Have downtown biz owner/mgrs/staffs be responsible for clearing/upkeep of sidewalks in front of their biz-heavy fines if not implemented -Ask for community volunteers for median upkeep, decorative planters on city property etc rather than city workers- use city workers for something else -Really feel that heavy fines in student areas could be better utilized, student housing areas/apts are not kept to the same standards as the rest of EL. Sororities and frats make a stinking mess of our streets and sidewalks.

1. cut the benefits not the jobs - reduce defined contribution match to 5% from 10% , cut hsa contributions 2. cut anything art related downtown 3. allow overnight parking with a permit in neighborhoods away from the students where parking isn't an issue 4. cut anything we do for MSU 5. make police/fire employees pay more into retirement pension system and raise age to collect to 59.5

1. Share with the people how much each type of employee actually costs the city in a year in combined salary, benefits and most importantly the cost of pension liability. Simply put - in addition to the benefits recieved on an annual basis, what is the year cost of the pension liability the city is taking on for each employee. This should be calculated on the basis of current actuarial costs to achieve the retirement over the supposed lifetime of the individual (actuarial tables) and on the basis of current market returns. This total figure should be an annualized on the basis of the years of service needed to receive this benefit. It is only when costs are clearly articulated to the people that we can judge the actual cost incurred to the city for different types of employees and how many we can afford. As it stands - we do not know how much a police officer, fire employee, clerk etc actually costs the city per year when pension obligation is accounted for. This is madness. 2. The description of the current benefit situation of city employees is vague in a way that is odd. The terms used are "New employees are enrolled in a hybrid plan" - what has been not said is that new employees are barred from joining the existing defined benefit plans. In short, I read this as stating the new employees are enrolled in the plan but can choose to enroll themselves into the existing defined benefit plan. The language used gives me the impression that something is being hidden. This may not be the case but it appears this way. 3. Why is there no discussion as to increased pension contributions from city employees currently enrolled in defined benefit plans. In other jurisdictions where financial emergencies have occurred, reduced pension plans for new hires were coupled with increased pension contributions from government employees. See the civil service in Ireland. It is unclear why I have to pay extra into a 401k due to reduced returns yet existing employees are not asked to do the same. This is perplexing.

1. Stop funding of pensions/health care for former employees. Force them to switch to personal retirement funds like most people. 2. Stop development of more apartment complexes within city limits. As a long time resident, these type of developments are making me think of leaving the City. 3. Work more closely with MSU to help cover costs of game day weekend emergency calls and strain on first responders. 4. Annex part of Hawk Nest neighborhood into the East Lansing school district. It is currently split in half with Lansing and it's ridiculous that next door neighbors that both live in the City don't attend the same district. The EL school district is missing out on over 150 homes (and adding more) of revenue in a major growing neighborhood.

1) Every winter the citizens are reminded of the sidewalk clearing policy. We support this policy and abide by this policy but routinely see blocks worth of unshoveled sidewalks and the policy seems to go unenforced (especially while students are away for almost a month over the holidays). I have always thought that consistent enforcement via ticketing (which is supposedly the fine for not clearing in 24 hours) would either finally get property owners (landlords) to take care of it or generate the funds needed to clear them with a four-wheeler plow. 2) My husband and I are proud residents of the Bailey Neighborhood. Our house's proximity to downtown East Lansing was the No. 1 selling point and we TREASURE our community. In our minds the day we closed on the house almost 10 years ago was being able to walk downtown to the spring & summer festivals. Having said that, the fact that East Lansing continues to resist the idea of adult beverages at these events continues to blow my mind. I am not naive to the long and complicated history this town and gown has with alcohol. But taking a step back and looking around this state at all of the wonderful festivals in all the other cities, why not join the rest of society. Think of the local brewery involvement, think of the Michigan craft beer scene with places like Founders and Bells and Shorts wanting to sponsor, think of the northern Michigan wines at the Jazz Festival. Not to mention, Art Fest, GLFF, these events happen when the majority of students are gone and our townies are enjoying one another downtown! There must be a way to generate amazing revenue and attract more people to our great town without it turning in to your tailgate fears. I'm willing to help.

A significant decrease in city expenditures on policing, especially monies dedicated to new equipment.

A walkable City needs good sidewalks year around

Address the pension issue.

All departments need to cut expenses

All East Lansing tax dollars going to MSU must be reported to all tax payers. When I ask employees at City Hall, they have no clue how to answer.

All optional items should be eliminated before public safety and then if necessary sell Hannah. I did vote for income tax and as majority of voters did not I think sent message that do not want any optional activities, etc. that cost money.

Allow potential developers some more freedom. There is so much vacant space that has potential. Maybe trash service every other week like recycling. But please do not close the Hannah Center or Aquatic center. That is a huge draw for young families (mine included). A great thing for the aquatic center would be to extend hours/season. There have been many times where I would have taken my family after work but they close early.

Although there has been some improvement, I believe, the city is still spending far too much to encourage what is, these days, called "development." In point of fact, what goes by that name has turned out to be the construction of unattractive--indeed quite often ugly--buildings that will house primarily students. Furthermore, these structures are poorly constructed, will probably not hold up well, and may ultimately fail financially for lack of an audience. The university clearly cannot continue to add to its enrollments, especially given current events. So only so much housing is needed. Most importantly, as recent studies and comments by police and fire department officials indicate, these tall buildings add enormously to the costs of fire and police protection. So they are, in the not very long run, undoubtedly a net loser for the city budget.

Any options for county wide revenue for festivals and recreation facilities, similar to the Zoo?

Any reductions or full support for Seniors programs will have an adverse effect on a segment of the city's population that is already having financial difficulties due to inflation, increasing medical costs, and slow growth of Social Security payments.
As allowed by law, no city employees should be hired or continued in a defined benefit plan. All should be on 401K plans and should contribute to healthcare and pension costs as found in similar private sector positions.
As I stated. With the proper direction a proper Aquatics Center we can bring Revenue from All over the Nation. We can run National AAU/USA Swimming and Diving events. NCAA Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Events. Mid West Similar Events year round. American Red Cross Training. Local Rehabilitation. Local Fund Raising Events, and a place for MSU to Rent so they don't have to build one in the Future! This needs to be an indoor Center Like Holland's and Livonia's but even more robust like the Schroder Aquatics Center Near Milwaukee, Wisconsin 's.
As mentioned, we recently relocated from Johns Creek GA. Johns Creek has some of the best schools in the country and is the most affluent city in the state of Georgia. We did not relocate for work, we could have moved anywhere. We chose East Lansing as the place to call home (also my wife's hometown) and the place to raise our four kids. I'm invested in making East Lansing a great place and believe it can be the best, safest and more vibrant community in mid-Michigan. A combination of reducing some frivolous expenses, privatizing necessary activities and seeking additional sources of revenue is the answer. Unfortunately I was unable to attend either of the budget meetings but plan on getting very involved in helping to make East Lansing a great place. I believe one answer to this lies in attracting some larger development that will bring in not only tax revenue but attract more permanent residences and families that plan on being here for the long-haul.
Ask for support of specific initiative problem with previous income tax vote was that it was too vague and there is not. A lot of trust in government
Ask voters to pass special dedicated millage tax increase earmarked for police/fire/ems.
Be more judicious in handing out property tax breaks to developers.
Bring more developments and parking to downtown.
Cambridge Mass has a deal with Harvard University in which the U pays the city an annual sum to cover city costs associated with university events. You should try to figure out how much of your budget costs are the result of student riots and parties, game day traffic management and so forth and try to get an allowance from them
Charge for parking on Sunday. No more TIF giveaways. Relax building restrictions and make it easy for developers to build. Requiring a set aside for senior housing and the 50/50 rule just makes it harder to develop. We should welcome developers who want to build without the use of TIF with open arms, more development with less open spaces = more revenue. This isn't difficult. Make East Lansing an easy place to do business in, and the revenue will come. And when that revenue comes, spend it on infrastructure. No more pet projects such as the failed Avondale Square (\$5 million shortfall!), and the Evergreen properties.
Charge MSU for Fire and Police services
Citizens did not fully understand the dire implications of our budget crisis when the recent income tax proposal was on the ballot. I suggest that a reduced income tax proposal be presented. Basic infrastructure services, safety, and public works should be maintained at current levels or close to that. I would support a requirement that enhancement activities, such as festivals and sports facilities, be self-supporting.
Citizens voted to reduce property tax and not have an income tax. It's folly to try to pursue scenarios that increase taxes. Voters clearly voted to reduce expenses. Given that East Lansing schools are worse than neighboring districts, I think you run the significant chance of reducing permanent residents in EL by increasing property taxes or imposing an income tax and penalizing EL citizens with punitive cut-backs to services.
City employees need to contribute more to their retirement, the city needs to contribute less. City attorney retainer is much too high, reduce it. Place a surplus on all MSU events and tickets sold that will go to the city.
City funding should focus on public safety, essential services, and parks and recreation. Funding to festivals should not be a priority in relation to other items. Several similar festivals around the state are funded through private donations and corporate sponsorship.
City of east Lansing is spending over its means Privatize all aquatics, softball fields Be in the business of being a city instead of providing recreation Stop garbage pick up
Close soccer complex and investigate sale to 3rd party. Investigate sale of aquatic center to 3rd party. Don't eliminate, but greatly reduce community events. Eliminate Public Art Fund. Cancel LEAP. Keep all public safety and road/sidewalk maintenance as is. Get \$\$ from MSU for EL's continued provision of emergency services.
Closing high-level amenities like the aquatic center and softball/soccer complex and Hannah Center would be a huge mistake.
Commitment of city leaders to create a plan and stick with it for several years to raise revenues and improve property values, bringing in business and revenue streams. Find some model cities that have fixed their problems, understand their practices and policies, create a plan that fits with EL. Cuts may be necessary for now, but there must be a way forward that preserves the essence and allure of East Lansing while also building a financial and cultural future.
Concentrate on neighborhood issues rather than festivals, etc if a choice must be made
Consolidate district court under the county.

Cut everything
Cut PACE and let officers pick up that responsibility. Stop the pension plan immediately similar to what MSU did back in the 70's. Charge every rental property \$100 per licensed occupant space annually, "a renters users fee" to live in EL and benefit from our services. Start enforcing code violations in areas other than just around the student rentals, our neighbor on Abbey road has had his trash and recycling containers out since Christmas, his grass was well over a foot tall most of the summer. We have called it in with little or no change.
Cut police, consolidate resources anywhere possible, cut staff and implement lean management principals using technology.
Cut, cut, cut. In addition raise the cost of rental licenses so landlords pay a fee per the number of individuals the units is licensed for. So if something is licensed for 50 they pay a fee for 50 people vs a unit that is licensed for 3. Reopen discussion with MSU. Please don't raise our property taxes or try to implement another type of tax. Our property values will be affected by any increased in tax related to principle home ownership.
Do not cut parks and rec programs. Do let the free market dictate the new projects in our town without tifs. Do not renew George Lahanas contract as he has severely underperformed. Continue with full funding the Hannah center pool and the soccer complex.
Do not reduce SOC funds, such as Hannah pool, soccer complex, etc.
Do not sell or privatize the water system Thank you very much
Do not try for the income tax again. The "cleverness" of the idea was not based in reality of dealing with the behemoth of MSU and having them adequately pay for the increased police and fire costs on a regular basis and the cost on home football Saturdays. Deal with the issue straight up. You have a majority of the Board of Trustees as Democrats and ended up negotiating publicly. Negotiate and cut a deal. It's called leadership. Go back and deal with it again. Blackmail didn't work. Now go get the \$2 million you could have had, supplement with a tax that goes directly to the problem. Stop trying to instill fear, lead. The income tax exempted those on Social Security and those on pensions. Retired citizens in \$500,000 houses and retirement incomes above \$100,000 would have gotten a property tax break and paid nothing in additional income tax. The middle class family in this town can't bear the brunt of the tax burden. I understand legally that is what had to happen, but do not put it back on the ballot.
Don't be afraid of medical marijuana opportunities. It is a well regulated industry, and other states and municipalities are making huge gains by embracing the industry. This is a very large city, plenty of room of the free market to operate but at the same time be respective of zoning.
Don't let Chamber of Commerce dictate revenue source. We need an income tax!!
Don't fear progress in partnership with private entities when bringing potential revenue streams. The city council is often seen as an overly burdensome obstacle to conducting business.
During the Bulk Leaf Pick UP, start the program 2 weeks later. There are very few fallen leaves at the first pickup time. Then the last pickup would be 2 weeks later (which has been needed the past few years) and regularly scheduled, cutting down the expense of a 4th pickup and costs associated with it. This would save some money with very little inconvenience to citizens. Seems common sense to me and I don't understand why it hasn't been implemented already.
During the East Lansing Arts Festival, get a raffle license and sell tickets at one of the informational tables. Could be a 50/50 raffle. You already have volunteers staffing the tables anyway (you can be selective about who those volunteers are, like graduates of the EL Citizens Police Academy). Try to get residents to opt-in and provide their email addresses, so that the Dialog and other communications could be sent out electronically. You would still need to at least twice a year have folks re-confirm they still live at a certain address in EL, and then if no one opts-in for that address, then you would know you would still need to mail the Dialog to those addresses. It might cut in half the # of printed copies you need.
East Lansing
East Lansing already has the 4th highest taxes in the state of Michigan, it's time to take a hard look at painful reductions so residents aren't footing the bill for the City's years of incompetent money management. Private citizens work very hard to get raises from their employers and can't just tell them 'well I just want to buy this cool festival so I deserve a raise.' If East Lansing can't afford to do some things, taking more money from citizens is not the way to fix it. City government can't please everyone with the way they operate - stop trying to make every voice happy, focus on basic services - police, fire, trash, roads - the rest is not necessary. If you can't afford it, stop trying to make the citizens foot the bill for things non-citizens think are cool.
East Lansing infrastructure is awful and deterioration causes increased risks. We cannot grow and improve with a good base.
East Lansing property taxes are so high that if an income tax is imposed, people will move out of the city to one of the surrounding communities. All the art festival and commissioning of art should go.
Eliminate all arts funding, and city recreation programs, any grants to 3rd party c3 or c4 operated programs, etc.

Eliminate festival funding, public art fund, dialog, annual calendar & report. Eliminate support of Community Agency Funding and park stewardship.
Eliminate tax incentives to city development projects that reduce tax revenue.
Encourage (rather than discourage) independent businesses in downtown by making rents affordable; this will encourage more local spending, boost morale and establish character for our town, it's turning into a strip mall downtown, nobody wants to spend time there. Look at precedents from successful cities; I know there are a lot of people afraid to think outside the box here but if done right marijuana subsidies could help. Do not cut things like recycling, festivals or other programs that would take away from our identity or put us further behind the rest of the world.
Events, Park & Rec facilities are what make it East Lansing a good place to live. Cutting those would really cut the quality of life here.
Everyone in my family, including our 18 year old daughter, all voted for the income tax. And speaking for myself, I still support finding other sources of revenue. However, just like with our home budget, we've also made cuts to not only make ends meet but to also save. I would like to see income designated to specific services in combination with cuts to some extraneous, albeit fun/nice, services and offerings here in East Lansing.
Find a creative way to pass revenue increases onto Michigan State and their students. I feel we pay our fair share as permanent citizens.
Find a way to turn over street maintenance and snow plowing to MSU. We should not be responsible for anything at all to MSU if they do not pay taxes. We should also only allow these services and Fire/EMS/Police if they pay for it.
Fire the City Manager and pay a monkey to do the job better.
Fire the mayor and city manager.
fire yeardon; try again to hire an employee (gotta cost less than half a million, not count court fees to defend his decisions)
First, by all means, please stop funding festivals and public art that are not money-generators, even indirectly through downtown business sales, hotel occupancies, etc. These are not essential city services. The big events would get sponsorship from local businesses/individuals. Some may go away, but there is enough going on here, especially in the summer. That said, I think the city is misinterpreting the results of the income tax revenue. For all intensive purposes, the vote was split. The city doesn't have a "mandate" to reduce services. Many of us would prefer revenue generation, particularly generation that captures funds from the university (and those who live, work, etc. there). I also see things that would hurt revenue: Reducing, for example, the desirability of downtown, which is already hampered by construction and a lack of parking. The city must also consider that if too drastic of cuts, or the wrong cuts, are made, it's doing to depress property values, hurting the existing tax base, and leading to a flight of residents to surrounding communities. I think there are also a lot of common-sense ways to generate revenue that would likely make everyone happy: The system of night parking in this city is nuts! Charge a yearly fee for an overnight permit for home owners. One permit might cost \$50 bucks, the second permit maybe \$35 dollars. Like other cities, there should also be permits/fees for things like the dog park. Could only have permits for two overnight cars. It would save staff time of fielding phone requests, enforcement, etc., while raising revenues. The city also needs to look for efficiencies within current staffing levels. The police, for example, sure enjoy wasting resources goofing around on Facebook. Most of your community does not enjoy/appreciate their sophomoric humor. I don't think the city has done enough to cut costs without cutting services; to find efficiencies within current services; and then to think more creatively about sources of revenue.
Focus on reform and making government more efficient.
focus police efforts on things that actually make EL safe, not on MIPs or drug possession cases or shutting down parties
Force MSU to fund more city services! Redo tax vote, for example.
From what I have heard, the festivals are not generating money. It would be beneficial to cut these completely.
Funding for all festivals (art, jazz, folk fest, winter fest) could be cut and dollars raised totally through private funding and donations.
Get money from MSU.
Get MSU and it's football fans to pay for EMS, parking, clean up whatever way you can!!!
Get out of all of the artsy fartsy stuff! The city cannot be everything to everyone. We will reject an income tax and property tax increases and will vote against anyone who supports either or both. LEAD! Thanks
Get that city income tax passed.
Go back to MSU and ask for reasonable funding amounts...if Dr. Simon was at \$2-3 million...take it and then work on finding other options.
Go back to voters again. Maybe they now realize the dire state we are in.
Grants are the way to go for the things that really matter.

Growing our local economy and tax base provides the least painful solution. The only way this can happen is by attracting large-scale employers to our down town area. Instead of paying developers to add student housing, we should be laser-focused on recruiting companies that offer jobs to down town East Lansing. Keeping more MSU graduates as long term residents is the goal, and employment is the means to achieve that goal. I live in Meridian Township with an East Lansing address. I see first hand that Granger does a wonderful job picking up solid waste. Privatization would save the city a lot of money. I also see my neighbors making whatever choice makes sense to them with regard to leaf pick-up. Some pay for a service, some rake their own and till into the garden, some mow the leaves into the lawn as compost, others pay Granger to pick up. The bottom line is that this is a huge use of city resources that is completely unnecessary. Thank you for the opportunity to join in this difficult discussion. Please contact me directly if I can be of any assistance. Respectfully, Abraham H Cuddeback 662.425.0961

Had more items than listed under #6 1) Close MSU Fire Station 2) Reduce hours at Aquatic Center and possibly increase entrance fee for out of city residents 3) Reduce bulk leaf pickup to one time a fall / later in the fall 4) Put Dialogue Newsletter online only 5) Eliminate City Annual Calendar and put report online

Hannah Center is the thing our kids use the most in the this community. It is one of the things that makes living in this town special. You'd be crazy to consider closing it. IMPOSE A \$100 PER RENTER ANNUAL RENTAL TAX

Hannah is a gem in our community and should stay open. Childcare makes money and should be allowed to stay

Hannah pool and center are an important part of this town. Cutting programs that make EL desirable will continue to encourage families to look elsewhere.

Have employees contribute more to their pensions

Have MSU pay for our Downtown Cleanup from their pocketbook, not ours, since they are the ones always making the messes. Also, MSU Fire.

Have students fees at MSU pay more for CATA and concurrently reduce taxes residents pay to support CATA.

Headlee override

How do I do #3?

How would a street light assessment work? If I have a street light in my home's parkway frontage, do I get to foot the whole bill for its operation and maintenance, or would it (and others) be pro-rated to all property owners somehow?

I am concerned about reductions for the Hannah Center and Hannah center pool

I am for reductions which could be reinstated cheaply once we solve the revenue problem and against cuts (eg. to the library, soccer, aquatic and softball facilities) that would be expensive, complicated due to contractual obligations, or impossible to reinstate. I think support for the arts could be managed through donations; likewise, support for some of our festivals and events and even some parks projects. Mostly, I hope we try again on increasing taxes. I believe that our little city has been well managed and that the headwinds we face in legacy costs and poor investment returns are a fact of life across the country. We at least do not have our heads in the sand.

I am grieved that the income tax did not pass. EL is a wonderful town, and it would be a shame to give up any of the services and amenities. Incidentally, I am a member of St Paul Lutheran Church, and am not aware that our Food and Personal Needs Pantry receives support from the city, unless perhaps indirectly...I believe it is all funded by church and community members. Staffing is all volunteer.

I am happy to pay more taxes to support the things in East Lansing that I love: the parks, recreation and community centers and complexes. (I also wouldn't mind paying slightly higher fees for those things, or having their hours be slightly reduced--1 hour cut from the Aquatic Center is probably okay). But please don't close these things! For families in East Lansing they are crucial! (more crucial than public art, for example, which I never look at)

I am very opposed to slashing or eliminating programs and/or facilities that focus on childrens needs

I appreciate the idea of finding out the services most valued by our city but am uncomfortable with the idea of the specific cuts that you have listed. It seems to me that some of the areas that get the least amount of money are the people who need it most. Overall, I would support trying to raise money by any means and if necessary reduce hours or services but not eliminate them. Of course, we could eliminate support for our East Lansing festivals, they are not necessary but like all the other possible 'losers' in this discussion, they are an important part of the culture of this town. When the cultural heart of a place is lost I've seen that it is almost impossible to recreate later.

I believe that the City should attempt to pass the income tax proposal again with a more detailed explanation of the impacts of not passing the income tax.

I believe the hierarchy of priorities should be as follows: Public safety is #1. If we don't have a safe community, no one will want to be here and all of the other items will fall behind. After that, cleanliness is a second priority. If we have trash everywhere (which our younger community members are bad at) no one is going to want to live here either. Then comes the community services - taking care of those in our community less fortunate. If we can meet these obligations, then we can spend more money on enrichment activities - like the festivals/etc. Other line items/suggestions it seems like should be making money not losing it. For example, the farmer's market. That should be a money maker for the city. There are numerous entities that want to sell and should pay for the privilege.

I do not believe this had to be an all or nothing approach. I do think there are many inefficiencies in the city and it may be time to look at reducing hours at Hannah so that it is available during peak hours. Or look at Hannah as a mixed use building where part of the vastly unused areas are commercial ventures.

I do not have enough information to make more suggestions. Thank you for providing the Hannah Center for us, as well as the opportunity to give our input.

I don't believe we should reduce police, fire, or EMS staffing. Beyond that all other extra expenditures should be cut. The fact that plowing private sidewalks is even on the list is ridiculous, that service should have already been discontinued. Subsidies to art and music festivals should stop if the city cannot afford them. Additionally, the water park shouldn't operate if it cannot pay for itself, just like any private business. I'm not sure it was necessary to hire a private consultant group to facilitate the discussion, our elected officials should be taking the lead there. I am happy these discussions are happening, it think these options should all have been discussed prior to placing the income tax on the ballot.

I don't like facing any of the proposed cuts but realize that the city must take action. I voted for the income tax and would do so again. Almost my entire work life was in Lansing where I paid their tax. I was saddened that MSU employees didn't see the benefits to them of the extra income.

I don't live in EL anymore Because I can't afford it. Would love to go back but in can't do it on a working class income

I don't understand why municipal bankruptcy hasn't been seriously discussed. That seems to be the only option that actually permits a reduction in our pension obligations, which are the primary driver of the fiscal crisis. Every solution put forward so far, both reductions in services and tax increases, puts the burden almost entirely on the current and future residents of East Lansing. The younger you are, the more recently you purchased your home, the greater your burden. I'm willing to do my part to help solve the problem by paying more and receiving less. Why are those retirees, many of whom stopped working here long before I arrived, not put in a similar position of paying more and receiving less as well?

I feel that the Hannah community center is a very cherished part of this community and do not think it should be closed.

I feel there are groups within the City administrative structure that could be run with fewer personnel.

I forgot to mention DO NOT CUT THE FOLK FESTIVAL

I genuinely believe that MSU treats us like a tap for amenities and a sink for their problems.

I have been told that the city owns the home behind City Hall and lets Michigan Energy Options operate out of it rent-free. I wonder if that is even legal - if true, they should simply sell the home.

I have had experience with the City regarding budget matters. My experience is that the City lacks transparency regarding finances and budget and the City fiscal practices lack fidelity. My suggestion is to overhaul the fiscal processes and practices to ensure accuracy, transparency and honesty in all fiscal practices.

I have heard that employees do not contribute to retirement plans. If this is true, that must be changed. I have worked for 35 years and always contributed to my retirement plan (a 401k); many corporations and institutions only offer retirement plans with an employee match. If the City of East Lansing is not requiring employee contributions I strongly suggest that the city change the policy so employees contribute. It is my understanding that the current financial challenge is largely due to unmet funds to pension liabilities. It makes sense to me that revenue to support these pensions funds should at least be a partial obligation of the employees and not be solely subsidized by tax payers. None of the solutions offered creative ways to raise additional tax revenues by attracting more businesses or other means. If done well, this might be a way to increase income and thus minimizing cuts in services. How is increasing tax revenue being addressed? At one point, prior to the vote on the income tax, I understood that MSU offered the city \$20 million. As I understand it, this offer was refused by the city. I don't know if this was a one-time offer or if sustained payments from MSU can be negotiated. The city might consider resuming discussions with MSU about additional payments to the city as warranted. I hope the City of East Lansing is being more creative than the list of options suggests.

I have lived in East Lansing for 30 years and have enjoyed the amenities it has to offer. Unfortunately, in part because of poor decisions made regarding employee retirement programs, we can no longer afford a lot of the 'extras' and must do some right sizing of our expectations and live within our means. Our taxes burden is too high.

I hope you seek an income tax again. I do not believe the city did a good job with education. I live in Whitehills, which must be a good part of your tax base, and kept waiting for an informational meeting but saw none promoted. Instead, I was inundated with information from the opposition. I am sure that the city did not have the money for those types of initiatives, but what you did have that other outsiders did not was relationships. I do not know that those were fully leveraged.

I propose asking again for a income tax. I think the previous effort was poorly planned and executed. I actually support the idea, with some modifications (protections for student income, for example), but voted against the proposal as it came to a vote shortly after the announcement of the Center City plan, in which a vast sum of money was given to a private developer for a project no one but the developer wanted. There was no public outcry over the condition of those buildings. So, I saw that as the city giving away millions for something unnecessary, and then turning around and crying poverty. That makes so little sense to me. Now, I realize the funds may be different, etc. I get it, but if I have to spend my time teasing that out, I'm not going to do it. I have far too many things to do rather than that math. So, come up with a better promotional plan, and try again. And this time, don't give away a bunch of money right before. In fact, stop giving away so much TIF money altogether. Growth for the sake of growth shouldn't be a goal or strategy. Lastly, dedicated revenue streams might be a good alternative. That piecemeal approach is kind of annoying, but if it solves the problem, then so be it.

I suggest another income tax vote proposing a maximum of 1/2% for anyone employed in East Lansing regardless of residence or 1/2% for residents and 1/4% for non-residents.
I supported the income tax and still think it makes the most sense. I think bringing a time limited proposal back again would be a good idea. Also, I would contribute to a fundraising for money to help get the message out. The reduction options are basically all bad!
I think it is appropriate to make some cuts in a budget shortfall, but I mostly recommend increasing revenue. I am open to voting on an income tax again. Other options should be pursued, including getting more money from MSU. Thanks for putting this survey out there!
I think that many voters had no idea of the impact, when they failed to turn out and vote for the income tax. Now that there is more awareness of potential cuts, can the income tax proposal be placed on the ballot again? Most voters did not vote against it, they simply failed to vote at all.
I think that the City should consider not contributing 3 million per year to reduce the underfunding of the pension plans. The City should attempt to make cuts that would allow it to increase contributions, but right now the consequences for not hitting that 3 million per year number are low. In future years, we may see the state step in to help with the problem or the returns on the pension plan may reduce the amount of the underfunding.
I think the biggest problem you had with the income tax proposal was communications and I realize that was the point of the community forums (which I, unfortunately, was not able to attend - but I did study the materials and options online). I feel the city does have a good story to tell. However, the fact that all three revenue-raising options are on the city council agenda before the report from Public Sector Consultants is delivered confirms my gut feeling that this has all been a dog and pony show. You should be ashamed of yourselves.
I think the city needs to re-open labor contract negotiations, in order to discuss increases in employee contributions to pensions. Our employee contribution rates are shockingly low compared to other cities in Michigan. For example, in Grand Rapids, police and firefighters contribute in the range of 9-10% to pension system- <a href="http://grpensions.org/wp-content/uploads/PF-Handbook-Updated-2016_12.pdf">http://grpensions.org/wp-content/uploads/PF-Handbook-Updated-2016_12.pdf</a> Battle Creek has recently increased the contribution for firefighters to 11%. East Lansing's low employee contribution rates are not sustainable, and we will not be able to support a well funded retirement system in the long run without increasing employee contributions. Sharing cost burdens with employee contributions is regarded as good practice by experts in the field- <a href="http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/humanresources/benefits/lessons-pensions.pdf">http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/humanresources/benefits/lessons-pensions.pdf</a>
I think the Council should consider another ballot initiative on increasing taxes and adding income tax to non-residence. The City needs to do a better job of educating the Community about why the tax is necessary. Non-resident groups had the loudest voice about why the initiative should be defeated, and their voices were heard. We pay some of the highest property taxes in the state. I am happy to pay those taxes to get the services--most especially the parks and rec facilities. If these services are cut, many will consider moving out of East Lansing. Other sources of revenue should be considered--MSU should pay for use of City services, including public safety services.
I think until the hard work I have described is done, it will be difficult to propose new revenue sources but AFTER you can show residents that you have made the REAL effort, City Council could propose any number of revenue options including an income tax, Headlee override or dedicated millages for police/fire, parks/rec. I do think unique financing arrangements/partnerships should be explored or reexamined for the library and parks and recreation.
I think we need to reintroduce a city income tax while systematically making budget cuts. Re-engaging with MSU may be warranted. We have information from the last ballot proposal about which neighborhoods voted for and against the city income tax. We should use this information to engage those neighborhoods that voted no and identify how to better write the proposal. In addition, voter data might better help determine where more community outreach and education is needed in regard to the proposal.
I think you're doing a difficult job. I'm sorry you and city staff get so much crap from the community.
I trust the City Council will deliberate with good faith and transparency.
I understand that the basis for this crisis is the city's cost of funding its pension obligations. Is it possible to renegotiate those obligations in light of the city's money problems?
I very much appreciate bulk leaf collection and sidewalk snow removal, but those are things citizens could and would pay more for or do themselves pretty easily, whereas we cannot maintain parks or the Hannah Center or provide public safety ourselves. I still believe that the community does not want to lose many of the wonderful facilities, programs and services East Lansing provides and would be willing to pay increased tax under the right circumstances. The last vote directly followed failed negotiations with MSU and citizens did not trust that the city was handling its finances responsibly.
I voted for the income tax. Do not cut police and fire protection. MSU students are not going to suddenly not party, not start fires, and not protest.
I voted for the plan proposed by Council and believe it remains the best option. In the long run, it is critical that EL not fall into a downward spiral of counter productive cost cutting. The problem I had in completing this survey is that no assessment of the benefits and costs of the program options was provided. This prevented me from selecting to cut the least efficient programs on the list. I assume that Council members are in a better position than me to make cuts if necessary to do so.
I want the city to focus on public infrastructure and safety which serves all members of our communities and focus the cuts in the programs and activities that are the nice extras for the community. I enjoy the festivals and have taken classes at Hannah but if the money isn't there they are the things that should be cut first.

I will gladly support a millage for public safety and parks and rec. Unfortunately there are trust issues between residents and the city specifically because of support of downtown developments that are not ultimately in the city's best interest. An income tax feels like a blank check. Millages for dedicated services are a better fit as the city rebuilds trust with its residents.
I work for a state government agency that has had severely restricted funding for many years. It has been the goal of the agency to find economies, efficiencies and innovations to reduce overall costs for many years. There are MANY changes that can be undertaken to reduce costs before laying off employees or reducing services. LED lights, double-sided printing default settings, electronic signature of documents, refinancing debt when rates are low, leaving positions vacant when employees leave or retire and redistributing the duties, for example; there may be services that you provide that people would pay a fee for; maybe you can consolidate things like park maintenance working with other nearby communities to achieve economies of scale. I sympathize with East Lansing's budget problems, and I encourage you to make every cost-saving change you can, document it, and publicize it on your web page so people understand that you are really working to make the best use of their tax payer funding. You can find MDOT's report on this at <a href="http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_CumulativeListofEfficiencies_450744_7.pdf">http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_CumulativeListofEfficiencies_450744_7.pdf</a> ; it's dry reading, and mostly transportation related, but it might give you some ideas.
I would be happy to increase property taxes or vote on exiting millages. I would NOT vote yes on a permanent income tax.
I would be much more willing to vote for an income tax if we would identify the individuals who put us in this financial situation, and then make sure those same people are nowhere near the continued management of this city.
I would encourage the City to put the income tax on the ballot again and highly advertise the potential cuts if it doesn't pass. I think the more concrete evidence of why the City needs this source of revenue, the better.
I would lean toward reducing items that can/should be supported by the University. I think that they could provide all of the funding for the Community Relations Coalition since they don't have much involvement in off-campus housing. The CRC is a good program that benefits both the University and the City, but the University has more resources to support that effort. I feel the same way about the police department. They are valuable! However, some universities have their police officers patrol the areas around campus. Would it be possible for there to be more of a partnership between the ELPD and the MSUPD so that MSU would be patrolling the downtown and student dominated neighborhoods? I would also love to see PACE provide a more friendly - security guard and visitor ambassador role instead of just being ticket writers. I think that there are best practices in other communities that we could learn from. This could reduce the need for so many police on the streets.
I would not give up on the tax increase vote - if it could be put on the ballot again, the outcome might be different now that people hopefully see what is at stake...
I would not want to see the Hannah Community Center closed. Could the upper level be used to generate revenue?
I would strongly encourage the city to look at its Police, Fire, and Municipal vehicles and equipment and see what is actually needed. It now wonder the city is short on funding when I see brand new trucks and equipment driving around. Brand new. Pace officers driving new F 150 4 wheel drive trucks. I work with law enforcement, and fire dept agencies in 19 states. I can tell you most of them do not have brand new equipment. They make do with what they have. Maintain, and repair equipment where they can and buy new when its absolutely needed. I think if we looked at what we already have, we may be able to find areas of savings without resorting to layoffs. Quite simply are we actually looking at lower cost alternatives?
I would support a city sales tax to help generate additional revenue.
I would vote for an income tax increase if the specific steps that have been taken to address the legacy cost issues -- retirement benefits, retiree health benefits -- would be better explained.
I'd add by ending the city plowing of private sidewalks, would also end the damage the plow crew does every year to both the city side of the walk and the homeowner of the walk. Why do plow operators insist on tearing up the grass, knocking snow back onto already shoveled walks and packing it down making it much more difficult to remove?.
I'd like to see how many retirees we are supporting, versus how many employees we're paying. I would not be surprised if we had more pensions to pay than people actually working.
If City Council wants people to vote for more revenue, it has to stop wasting money on favoritism for things like the City Attorney's retaining wall and sidewalk (or settling the case instead of having the city attorneys pay) and on the Center City District deal.
If I had known more about these costs and revenues, I might have voted differently on the income tax. That's partly my own fault, but I also think the city could have provided more of this information in advance of the election.
If the city is going to keep the Aquatic and Hannah Centers open, then greatly increase/implement user fees to help defray the cost to the general fund.
Implement Fire/police - volunteer program to supplement lost staff. Also start charging landlords for city services used - snowplow, excessive police calls, pace calls. We lost millions due to Cedar village riots - yet landlord made no effort to help improve area or to advert the incident
In typical fashion, the list suggests closing or eliminating services rather than option to scale back, across the board.
Income tax for city

<p>Increase cost of parking/enforcement of parking: a friend's town in NY recently changed their downtown street parking away from meters (where people can share the cost of parking with the next vehicle) to machines that require license plate numbers, so that each new person has to pay (the overlap can increase revenue). Also, perhaps you can increase any sin taxes. Related - I notice there aren't any medial marijuana dispensaries in EL. I like this, but in desperate times, perhaps a few could be let in, with very high taxes.</p>
<p>Increase revenues from parks and recreation programs, senior program, etc. to pay larger share of costs</p>
<p>Insisting developers with ideas come with money and stop granting delayed tax revenue in the first place otherwise known as TIFs I believe.</p>
<p>Instead of paying \$150K to record meetings, partner with MSU to have interns from Communications record them.</p>
<p>Is it possible to reduce trash pickup from once a week to twice a week? Is possible to reduce recycling pickup from once every two weeks to once every three weeks or once a month?</p>
<p>Is the city losing federal funding because of Sanctuary status? I don't have information to base an opinion, this is more of a question. I recall some news about this last year. If the city is in need of revenue, this seems contradictory if the city is choosing this elective status. Any budgetary issue is going to be a potential lightning rod, the city need to make sure the residents of EL are receiving the full value of living in the city with the revenue we contribute.</p>
<p>Is there any cuts that can be made to current retirees healthcare? I would hate to go back on promises, however I know so many retirees (especially from Fire) who have such generous benefits and retired very young. It continues to hamstring the city. I would like to see additional revenue, but the cuts have to go along with it to prove to the community that revenue is being balanced and not just going to police and fire pensions and health. I have a family and we still need good services for sports, festivals in order to make it a good place to live. I sympathize with the City, it is a difficult position and one that current staff probably didn't cause, it was from years of give aways to the unions.</p>
<p>Is there any kind of opportunity to partner with MSU for any additional funding, or put the income tax proposal on the table again, and try for that again? As MSU faculty, one thing we love about being at MSU is living in East Lansing. I love the small-town feel of East Lansing and the community that is built through recreation and parks and associated programming.</p>
<p>It is inconceivable that the city has a pension debt of \$90 million on a plan that merely covers 600 people. I believe in defined benefit pension plans. I believe that those who are first responders and who work in city government should have the benefit of a pension. But, the city needs to look deeply at its assumptions and rework benefits so as to bring this underfunding level to a more reasonable amount. Residents should be made fully aware of what the pension formula is, how many years of salary are factored into the formula, etc. City of East Lansing should only do that which local government should do (street maintenance, parks and rec) and let the private sector and the market handle everything else.</p>
<p>It is my belief that some further reductions can be made even with a reconsideration and approval of a local income tax, to assure greater efficiency. I also believe the DDA should not have the tax capture authority it currently has and that the monies from all of our businesses belong in a fund that is overseen and controlled by our elected officials.</p>
<p>It is vital that the city recognizes that the population of EL is mobile. People choose to live here and pay high taxes because of the services provided. Without the joy of a walkable community (the ability to walk to arts events and the farmers market) we might as well live in Okemos. Hard as it will be, new revenues need to be found and those need to not alienate MSU.</p>
<p>It's a difficult job. Thank you for your service. But one caution: it seems to me that the worst case scenario will be for EL to retain it's high property taxes, while delivering sub-township-level services. I don't think people will flee EL due to high taxes (or even an income tax), but high taxes plus lost services that they could get in Meridian or Delhi townships might produce such flight.</p>
<p>It's a tough situation. The City can't be all things to all people. . . . maintain safety, maintain quality of life. Services that impact the fewest people should be trimmed. And we need to be more careful in considering how the big bucks are spent on development, property purchases, etc.</p>
<p>Join CADL.</p>
<p>Keep sports related facilities open as it helps do develop a community. Tournaments are held at all locations and brings in additional revenue to the downtown area.</p>
<p>KEEP THE HANNAH CENTER.</p>
<p>Law enforcement and fire should always be a priority. Safety and care of any communities citizens should never be compromised.</p>
<p>Look at regionalizing services with Lansing and other townships, including fire/EMS, garbage and recycling, and library services.</p>
<p>Look carefully at city owned property for potential sale and stop giving tax breaks to developers</p>
<p>Look into merging the library into the Capital Area District Library system.</p>
<p>Make all of the cuts except solid waste.</p>
<p>Make developers pay more tax!</p>
<p>Make sensible reductions first and make them well known to regain public trust that the city is being sensitive to taxpayers before pursuing additional revenue options. Keep in mind the very high total property tax burden for EL residents and the negative impact that has on home ownership, especially first-time home buyers. EL needs to be an affordable option to attract and retain young talent.</p>

<p>Many business owners bring lots of people, and lots of profits. Put them on the spot and send them nice letter to donate vs sending them a bigger tax bill. When I get a bill including a 15% tip, I and many around me ONLY pay that, when I get a bill with no Tip, we easy do the 20%. on the grand total. When someone asks for donation, we send them, when get a tax bill we go to find a way to reduce it.</p>
<p>Many people using Patriarch Park during the busy summer months are from outside East Lansing. Perhaps a user fee for families from outside the city would generate revenue? Perhaps % reductions to the listed programs can be made without cutting them entirely or compromising safety. Ask MSU to provide their fair share of funding to support the community (whose services they use). Is there an option for a second vote for the 1%/0.5% income tax? I fully support 'sharing the load' that way.</p>
<p>Many people who voted "No" to the income tax proposal did so because they believe part of East Lansing's budgetary issues stemmed from mismanagement. There was no guarantee that income tax funds would be used properly. I suggest items A &amp; B from your potential revenue list - let voters approve WHAT their money will be used for, and it will be more likely to pass.</p>
<p>Merge services with Meridan township and okemos</p>
<p>Most residents support life/public safety first and foremost and did not appreciate the threats to this core service if a tax was not passed. Poor execution and a rush to the ballot frustrated many residents.</p>
<p>MSU has chosen to take advantage of its position in the community for years. I dislike the assumption that the people of East Lansing ought to forego those community services that make our city great simply because the University's soon-to-be-ex leadership and board of trustees won't pony up and contribute their fair share (relative to the costs they force the city to incur). If there is pain to be felt, it should be felt by those who put us in this position. Where should you make cuts? Our behemoth resident to the south, that's where.</p>
<p>My family of 5 school age children lives and thrives in East Lansing specifically because of the many ammenities offered to us in the area. We LOVE the Hannah Center and swim, attend basketball games/practices, watch plays, attend summer camps, attend pottery classes, and practice soccer there. Meeting friends at the Aquatic Center during the summer is one of our favorite activities. We practically live at the Soccer Complex during the Fall and Spring seasons, with 4 kids playing on 3 different teams. We are active, avid runners and bikers and enjoy the use of passable sidewalks throughout the city and especially on the Northern Tier Trail. We love taking our dog to the dog park and on walks in that area. We spend many hours enjoying the library each month and my teenage daughter LOVES meeting her friends there and using the makers space. All this to say, our city's parks, green spaces, and meeting spaces are VERY important to us and make up the vibrant experience we've had as a family for 9 years in East Lansing. I hope you'll consider the importance of all these spaces to my family and other families in the area as you're making difficult budget cuts.</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>Need to find ways for MSU to pay a fair share of city services. It may be worthwhile to have them take a larger share of the events and festivals. They have a lot of under utilized space on most weekends and plenty of parking. The city should still benefit from the draw of people. It may also be worthwhile to allow some limited street parking overnight at a very large cost. A limited number of parking stickers could be sold at a high price via lottery.</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>No calendars</p>
<p>No increased taxes (income, property, etc). Cut de-prioritized services/employees until you save the desired amount (e.g., \$5 Mil). Police/Fire services/staff have a higher value then most services/staffing and should not be cut before other lower value services/staff (e.g., library, city administration, maintenance).</p>
<p>No more property tax increases. However, as a senior, I am not opposed to paying a city income tax AND having no reduction in my current property taxes. Is it legal to have either income or property taxes on an ability to pay basis. (Probably not) For those who cannot pay, no income tax. For those who can, no property tax reduction and pay an income tax. Looking at the map of where voters did not pass the income tax proposal, it would seem that in at least one notable area, people have a lot more money than I do, but are unwilling to support the City through an income tax as my friends and I are.</p>
<p>Not a resident, but work in EL. I would gladly pay part of my taxes to EL. I know the tax issue did not pass, but is there a way for individuals to do this anyway?</p>
<p>Not that I think that you will listen to this any more than you have to anyone who has appeared before the council in the past to comment on its poor decisions, but yes. If developers want to build on private property, and the project comports with the Master Plan and zoning requirements, they can do it on their own dime. DO NOT GIVE ANY MORE HANDOUTS TO DEVELOPERS. This has had a deleterious effect on the city budget, not to mention the ridiculous look of our city. Empty retail on the lower levels of buildings, and city-subsidized student housing. Disgusting. You all ought to be ashamed of yourselves. No wonder the citizens do not want to go downtown. There isn't much that isn't slanted to students.</p>

<p>Open the city for business! Go through every ordinance and cut out frivolities that are barriers to doing business in this city. Anyone that wants to develop or do business here is subject to the councils ridiculous scrutiny. Let the open market decide what is successful and what isn't. When business is successful tax revenues will grow rapidly. The market needs to decide what is successful in this town. It is not the city's job to pick winners and losers. That is why everyone with an idea goes to Grand Rapids or Ann Arbor. They don't want to be told how much food they need to sell before people can drink, how many 55+ year olds are needed to live in a condo, and other nonsense when they start a business. Cut red tape and the tax revenues will follow.</p>
<p>Other proposed cuts to the city are abhorrent. Services for the elderly, poor, and children, and recognition of people who make East Lansing great will gut our community and everything good about it.</p>
<p>Outsource legal services</p>
<p>outsource trash and recycling to grainger</p>
<p>Over the last few decades, the City has dedicated a huge amount of time and money into trying to "recreate" the downtown. Our downtown is and always will be a destination primarily for students and visiting alum. Most residents I know are fine with that. No amount of city sponsored festivals, fireplaces, ice rinks, Buzz, etc is going to change that. City resources should no longer be used to help developers build more and more apartment buildings, all targeted for students, while our neighborhoods suffer. Our infrastructure needs are great – sewers, streets, sidewalks, lack of a group insurance for those in flood plains – those should be the priority if you want to attract and maintain residents.</p>
<p>People live in East Lansing for its amenities. I love the soccer complex, the parks, and the opportunities to head downtown for a variety of festivals. Consider how any changes would affect residents' perceived quality of life in the city.</p>
<p>Perhaps some fees for services could be implemented. For example, I would be willing to pay for a library card despite what we already pay in taxes for the library. If people want leaf pickup and snow plowing of private sidewalks, they can pay for them. Also, is there a reason that MSU cannot be billed for the fire station? All of us are paying the taxes while MSU benefits, free of charge, if I understand correctly. I know the agreement was rejected by the MSU board, but what if the city bills the university? And certainly employees could pay more toward their retirement and existing benefits could be cut. That is not popular and I get that, but many, many employees of other entities have had to experience it. I know I have. My retirement benefits will not be what they were purported to me when I first hired on.</p>
<p>Place waste and recycling costs on property tax bill, like Lansing. Then increase the cost of the services.</p>
<p>Please consider reducing hours/days at major facilities (Hannah, soccer, softball) rather than closing them outright.</p>
<p>Please consider the income tax again- we supported it the first time and will support it again. Increase in mills and property tax will only put the burden back on property owners- there are many residents who are renters that are able to help contribute via income tax. Please do not just put more of a burden on property owners.</p>
<p>Please do not close the Hannah pool unless there is a different location for elementary club kids to practice.</p>
<p>Please do not close the Hannah Pool, the softball or soccer complexes, or the aquatic center. These things make EL a great place to live.</p>
<p>Please do not eliminate Hannah Community Center or close the EL soccer complex/softball complex. With the connections East Lansing has to teams that play at these parks, I think it helps the economy to keep these up and running as well as maintaining youth development programs in the city.</p>
<p>Please do not penalize your tax base with another increase of property taxes. You will drive homeowners away to both or meridian township where they can say they live in east Lansing with the same 'benefits' or access due to close proximity but don't have to pay the outrageous rates. Please continue to pursue funding sources from MSU for the burden caused from the influx of people attending, working on and visiting EL. We are already going to be paying for the new schools which will be a huge nuisance for families that have to endure the transition. East Lansing is no longer a desirable place to live due to the high taxes.</p>
<p>Please do NOT shut down the pool. Many families use it and it would be devastating if the pool was closed.</p>
<p>Please prioritize budget items that maintain and protect the infrastructure of East Lansing- those that directly benefit residents the most - our parks, library, street Maintenance etc. while I love the Art Festival etc. it seems that those are areas where we in East Lansing are subsidizing the entertainment of people from throughout the region. Let the residents of Okemos, DeWitt and Bath pay for their own amusement.</p>
<p>Please prioritize what makes living here great -- our wonderful facilities and programs. If we need to pay privately for mundane services like trash removal or snow removal, fine. Perhaps we could raise bonds for specific infrastructure projects, like we did with the schools, to alleviate some of the budget pressure. For example, it would be a large upfront cost to bury the electrical wires, but then we would not longer have to allocate funds every year for tree trimming. So, a bond campaign could result in a major improvement in the community AND budget savings. Please look for win-win options like this.</p>
<p>Please pursue revenue sources.</p>
<p>Please renew discussions with MSU</p>
<p>Please try income tax again. Maybe some minds have been changed. Maybe more people will come out and vote. And, sadly, MSU now has other things to worry about than fighting an EL income tax.</p>

Please use the utmost caution before running off to cut services that make the city a great place to live. Businesses are willing to sponsor some of these signature events. The City should aim to get more partnerships with businesses to fund them and should not fund them at all.
Plowing sidewalks only creates headaches for the property owners and packs down the snow. It is very unhelpful to have the plow ruin the careful cleaning that diligent homeowners do.
Possible revenue source from renting spaces in Hannah Community Center long term - private offices? Increase event rental income through marketing.
Prioritize safety. There are a lot of things on the list that are nice to have, but the city can live without.
Protect platforms for community involvement and activity.
Put a set of criteria in place to use as a way to make decisions. For example -- how does this item help attract young families to the city? How does this item create a livable and attractive community.
Raise money off of the 50,000 students we host. The university has found a way to make money from their students hand over fist. Bike registration, mo-ped registration, etc. The city should get creative and create things like registration fees for their cars and street parking. Please quit trying to pass the burden of paying to protect and police MSU's profit stream on the backs of permanent residents. Please recognize we are essentially your customers. I often feel the city and council itself takes that fact for granted. We make a choice to live in E.L.. Most of us have the means to move to surrounding communities. I never here ideas to raise revenue through the 50,000 students who show up every fall. Thank you for the forum.
Raise of this price of riding of CATA. Let the students who attend MSU pay a market rate for dependable quality transportation. The elephant is room is ongoing debt service to retirees. If possible, consider a change especially for those who no longer live in East Lansing.
Raise property tax as long as all property commercial and private are affected Over ride Headlee Amendment again as long as private and commercial interests share in footing the bill.
Raise taxes if necessary, but cut the festivals till we're fiscally healthy. If we have to pay the piper, then let's don't dance. Also, go hat in hand to MSU and ask for help. And whose idea was that stupid aquatic center?
Raise the retirement age. Move current employees out of pension system. Be open and transparent about the budget and current employee benefits. Please make significant cuts before asking for new revenues. I will not vote for a tax increase until the court operations are consolidated.
Raise user fees for facilities, classes etc. to market driven rates based on the cost of providing service.
Pursue sponsorship for teams, facilities to assist with maintenance. Cut the fluff, newsletters, calendars, etc. Cut funding for non-city entities, we pay taxes to fund our city operations, not to fund outside organizations. Limit funding to 1 festival (art festival makes most sense) and if necessary cut that. Continue to purse funding from MSU for a reasonable share of their public safety/infrastructure costs.
Re-open negotiations with MSU. I am beyond angry with the city for turning down several funding proposals from MSU.
Rebuild the relationship with MSU. Ask to share cost of DPS.
Reduce pay and pension of city employees
Reduce tax incentives to developers--let development potential rise or fall on it's own merits.
Reducing is not the only way to solve the problem, People can pay more on some interested event to support them keep going.
Renegotiate ongoing legacy costs
Renegotiate with MSU. Why is this not even on the table????
Rethink the policy of granting tax abatements to attract new businesses and construction.
Review going back to MSU and open discussion on the 2 million per year for 10 years they offered.
Run it like a business, not a government (if its budgeted...spend it.)
See above. Please examine practices at more successful cities and compare.
Sell city owned Evergreen properties. Inventory all existing city owned open space and park properties to see if any should be sold to put them to higher and better use.
Sell Hannah Community Center to ELPS for \$2 million. The district can turn it into an elementary school to serve the Glencairn neighborhood. The city would benefit from the revenue, and the school district would benefit from the savings of having to build a new structure on Harrison and Saginaw.
Sell the aquatic center. And the softball complex. Find info on how the Kenneth Hope Complex manages their facilities and determine ways to make the EL Soccer Complex more profitable.
Sell the parking decks/lots to third party and generate royalties without the maintenance cost.
Should have accepted offer from MSU, otherwise try again on the 1% income tax
Shutting down community centers and spaces the public uses( like soccer complex, softball complex, swimming pools is a mistake. They are a reason that people like East Lansing!
small cuts in all areas except police and fire
Special assess property owners where the city plowing private sidewalks. Create a Business Improvement District or Principal Shopping District to assess to replace city's portion of maintenance and PACE for downtown.
Staff in all departments are awesome. Allow the current staff to suggest improvements. Take suggestions from the 100+ board and commission volunteers. We all love the City, but may have a more tame vision for our future. Our vision is family homes and walkable neighborhoods.
Stop blaming others for your past financial mismanagement or current pension liabilities. Other cities in Michigan have the same issues. How about a dedicated mileage for public safety? Meridian Township just passed one in 2017. Look at what are the absolute necessities like public safety, roads and public works, fund those first. Everything else is a bonus.

<p>Stop finding ways to waste money and trim unnecessary services. The city does not need an aquatic center and an indoor Hannah pool. The city needs to limit spending on things that do not generate money for the city. Focus on public safety, infrastructure and sidewalk maintenance, and critical services. If people want something like a Jazz Festival--find sponsors to pay for it. Stop wasting tax money.</p>
<p>Stop giving breaks to developers. They all get rich while communities suffer.</p>
<p>Stop hiring consultants. Start factoring in all costs for projects. Let the free market dictate development in our city.</p>
<p>STOP tax incentives that only support new development and not the rest of the city. We do not need another parking garage to maintain, for example.</p>
<p>Switch to 401k, 403b, etc. and employees fund their own retirement.</p>
<p>Taxes are already high and MSU is already donating a large annual sum to East Lansing. Please make changes in the way funds are used. Budgeting isn't the problem--overspending the budget is.</p>
<p>The budget priorities of this existing city council are not consistent with their constituents. Regardless of how the city got into the situations they are in, they do not focus on solutions, only pointing the finger at past regimes (while continuing to make the same mistakes) and kick the problem down the road. We need to eliminate the legacy costs for pensions and health care spending by transferring it to private means. While there may be legal issues to process, these need to be explored and executed. The city council members also need to work with MSU and identify reasonable means to recover expenditures from the university. This adversarial relationship that continues to exist is not healthy for the city of East Lansing. I have read statements from city authorities that the City of East Lansing is trying to compare themselves to Chicago, IL and we need larger buildings and spaces so we can be as attractive to young families as that. I'm sorry, but I moved from Chicago, IL to be in the city of East Lansing because it was not a large metropolis. It is a quiet community that always prided itself on being a partner with MSU and its citizens. We want to stay a small community and do not want the influence of the big city imposed upon us. I think some folks that hold public positions have lost touch with what this community is and are pushing personal agendas.</p>
<p>The city employees of East Lansing needs to be reminded that it is the residents who pay your salaries. Our number one priority is safety. Rather than have the police spend time ticketing residents for parking errors and minor traffic violations, please have them prioritize safety. We have experienced multiple car break-ins in the Glencairn neighborhood, along with having a bike stolen from the middle school bike rack (it was locked) and have been accosted (mugged) by a drugged out college student in front of my house!</p>
<p>The city has plenty to cut with grants to various groups, cuts to festivals and other areas that don't impact the majority of services.</p>
<p>The city needs to explain how it has restructured retirement programs for any new staff so that we don't keep extending the unfunded liability issue. It's my understanding that every police chief gets a full pension and benefits upon retirement. I also think that the city could rely on a volunteer corps to provide some services - like maintenance of the various parks and the soccer/softball facilities. Perhaps promoting days of service for residents and ELPS students. The city also needs to reduce red tape and nonsensical ordinances such as the 50-50 rule, percent for the Arts, and some of the requirements mandating that housing meet certain non-student thresholds. The market will dictate what will be successful in downtown EL. I'd like to see some restaurants and shops show up in the many vacant storefronts in downtown EL but firmly believe the City's ridiculous rules is a major deterrent to business. The result is major missed opportunities for new revenue. The city needs to continue to pursue other cost-sharing mechanisms with the University. City Council and certain residents of this town need to recognize that MSU is the lifeblood of this community. Without it we don't exist. I understand that dealing with the students can be challenging but that doesn't mean the City should enact ordinances and rules that seem to spite them. The city needs to promote more student housing in downtown. Not only will this have the much-desired benefit of reducing traffic, but it will create the necessary density to support more restaurants and businesses in the downtown corridor. If this Council proceeds with any measure to increase our property taxes we will move out of the City. They need to find a way to work within their means while addressing the structural issues that got them into this mess in the first place. They need to eliminate useless regulations that stifle business growth, achieve certification through the Redevelopment Ready program offered by the MEDC, embrace the students and the University and find a way to share costs, evaluate current retirement packages and whether they can be restructured/renegotiated, consider privatizing certain functions, and establishing a volunteer program for certain functions currently being performed by City staff (such as park clean up and maintenance).</p>
<p>The City needs to go back to the table with MSU to get some revenue from them.</p>
<p>The city should actively attempt to attract corporation to move within the city limits to generate new revenues</p>
<p>The City should be looking at dedicated millages, like Parks and Rec, Public Safety, and Infrastructure. No one trusts Council with their tax money. Nice job promoting your TIF's while acting as though we are broke. And it was quite insincere to lease Lot 1 instead of face a public vote for its sale. We pay attention and we don't forget.</p>
<p>The dog park could become fee-based, like Lansing's. Raise user fees slightly at Hannah and the Aquatic Center, though I realize this could drive users away, leading to little or no net revenue.</p>
<p>The Hannah center is a great community resource for all ages so I am against cutting that. I think corporate sponsorships could be utilized for events or user feed. As for PACE, if they are not covering their costs, I think technology could replace the humans more efficiently b</p>

<p>The hannah center pool is utilized as a swim program that has grown in huge amounts over the past few years with a swim program for all ages. Trojan Aquatics has been amazing for our community and over 300 families are involved with it. Losing the community center pool would leave us with only the high school pool which is at capacity for time. Please do not cut the community center pool or the Aquatics center!</p>
<p>The options given on you list seem rather limited. For example - is it a matter of closing the Hannah Center altogether, or could it be restructured to reduce costs? This list seems very stark. And ultimately it doesn't seem to contain enough to close the budget gap. My question is: why isn't MSU contributing more to the city? There should be specific projects and items that they could contribute to, if not a lump sum of money. An example from elsewhere: UNC-CH student funds paid for the Chapel Hill bus service altogether - there is no fee for any rider. Similar joint projects seem like they could be possible. Is there a way MSU could partner to support the Hannah Center? For the record, I did in fact vote for the income tax, in spite of the fact it would cost me more than I am being taxed currently. The city council and officials acting as if we are spoiled children who won't pay for things makes me very irritated. I am on your side here and that attitude is very alienating.</p>
<p>The parking is not easily accessible on or off the MSU campus</p>
<p>The presence of MSU students for 9 months of the year adds significant cost to public safety, street maintenance, and park maintenance. I would like to see a financial commitment from the University to share in financial responsibility for these services.</p>
<p>The public library is an ESSENTIAL resource for citizens of East Lansing BUT there are other options besides a city funded/managed library. The ELPL could become a district library, allowing it to grow and adjust to meet community needs while reducing a burden on city staff. A win-win!</p>
<p>The survey and supporting documents focus too much on cutting services, and the list of options feels vindictive against the community for not supporting the income tax proposal. There is not enough around how to increase revenues. The city said it increased user fees, but that it did not do enough to offset the balance. Why aren't rates for services and room rentals at Hannah set closer to making it financially solvent, same with the aquatic center, softball fields, and soccer complex? The city's effort to cut \$3 million or to raise \$5 million is a confusing position, with a big difference between the two! This should be better communicated to residents why these are different numbers, or just focus on raising or cutting one number of the other. I think there is a lack of trust between residents and City leadership/management. The city would do well to identify how to increase this trust. This will be essential if the council decides to try again with a tax increase to increase revenues.</p>
<p>The tax was a good idea, but we just got a big increase for a school bond. Bad timing.</p>
<p>There are a lot of people that go to Hannah Center and enjoy their services. Maybe it could be a more pay as you go place or sell to a company that can still keep it open for paying customers. Maybe there are volunteers that would like to donate to keep it open. It is not an essential service the city should be funding.</p>
<p>There are so many options on the Potential Reductions and Revenue List that it was hard to choose just 3. The newsletter and calendar? Put those things online. Contributions to festivals? 150k to tape city council meetings? I can't believe that those things are on the same list as cutting public safety personnel and should have been cut years ago.</p>
<p>There is an opportunity to charge more per use for many park and recreation and city services. The rental license renewal fee should be increased to cover the costs associated with the burden of the many rental properties for students that we have.</p>
<p>There is nothing more important than our youth and their proper development because they are going to be taking over tomorrow what we do today</p>
<p>there is so much building of apartments and condos in town this should be increasing the expected revenue from all of the licensing and inspection fees charged</p>
<p>This city should show MORE stewardship to its citizens who pay the taxes, not MSU. That school has shown how deplorable it is, even with all the money this city has thrown into it.. for once, be fair to the residents.</p>
<p>This information is very helpful. Maybe the income tax vote would have passed if this info was available preciously. Isn't there a lot of new income from all the recently built apartments in the area? Rather than close facilities for youth, I would raise the rate to use those facilities.</p>
<p>This is a basic want vs need question. Reduce spending on wants and raise revenue to cover cost of needs.</p>
<p>This is tough, and I don't have any experience in this area. However, I hope you all the best and that you are able to figure out budgeting that doesn't make our community become "Oh, I remember when EL was great." Again, toughest on you guys, I am sure. Sorry.</p>
<p>This survey will result in cherry picking the reductions that will have the least impact on the responder's quality of life in EL. Closing Hannah results in a huge saving but will result in the same outcry that closing schools did. Clearly, new revenues need to be a part of the solution which will require that residents have a clear understanding through direct and simple language that allows them to understand what they gain by a yes vote and what they lose by a no.</p>
<p>Time to review wages and benefits particularly health benefits to reduce cost</p>
<p>To whatever extent possible, reform/amend/change the pension/retirement system. Yes, those people served but we have to live here now and we need to compromise. If residents all move away, there really won't be any money to fill city coffers. No idea to what extent reform/amendment/change is possible, pain of doing that aside.</p>

<p>We need to get back the full revenue sharing we are owed by the STATE I think the EL tax should have been approved by voters and think maybe enough was not done to talk with voters in the two areas of EL that defeated the proposal.</p>
<p>We would much prefer to seek alternative sources of revenue than decrease the services available. Closing the Hannah Center would be terrible. Closing the library would be terrible.</p>
<p>What frustrates me about the city's budgetary concerns is that Council doesn't appear to be treating the city's money (our tax dollars) with the same type of respect that they'd treat their own money. From the perspective of someone who's looking in from the outside, there doesn't appear to be much price-comparison shopping going on by the Council for the services that the city receives. For example, how did Council justify spending a whopping \$154,000 for filming meetings? This is something that could easily be done extremely inexpensively with a smart phone and uploaded via Facebook Live or Youtube Live, etc. Given the fact that MSU is in our backyard, is there not a student who'd jump at the opportunity to put that experience on their resume (or possibly receive extra credit for it, etc)? I think that if the Council shows that it's taking serious steps to reduce current extraneous spending (i.e. eliminating funding for festivals that aren't profitable, selling off properties that aren't bringing in at least enough money to break even, etc), then they may be able to resume discussion of a city-wide income tax. When an income tax is brought back into the discussion, I think Council will need to specify that the income tax revenue will be earmarked for pensions and that, as soon as the pensions are fully funded, the income tax goes away.</p>
<p>When a water main broke in our yard in November, I was surprised to see how many workers showed up after the fix and just stood around.</p>
<p>While I could support some revenue enhancements on a smaller scale, I would urge the city to respect the voice of the voters who have already rejected an income tax proposal with its accompanying property tax reduction. I have lived in East Lansing for over eleven years, but the introduction of such a tax would have me immediately looking for a new residence elsewhere, as my family would no longer be able to afford living here. Many of us live in very modest housing where the property tax reduction would do little to offset the significant tax increase, and this would endure until we left the city. On a personal note, I have purchased a home in East Lansing twice, both purchases led to significant increases in city revenue, as both homes' prior taxable values had been significantly higher than what the city had been allowed to collect due to Headlee. I would expect this to continue as property value continues to rise and homes in similar situations change hands, allowing the city to collect the maximum amount.</p>
<p>While I will not pretend to know everything about the budget for the city of East Lansing, if cuts have to be made there have to be more options than just immediately attacking anything to do with health and wellness.</p>
<p>Why are you only looking at reducing or cutting services or amenities? Why aren't you looking at employee contributions to health insurance and pensions? Why aren't you considering selling of assets such as the aquatic center or Hannah community center?</p>
<p>Why are you plowing sidewalks for people? Shouldn't they do that? I have to shovel my sidewalk.</p>
<p>Why are you snow-plowing PRIVATE drives?</p>
<p>Why limit us to three items in question #6? I would additionally eliminate a great many other items, including item numbers: 6, 9, 16, 17, 28, &amp; 33.</p>
<p>Why not claw back TIF funds? If the city is willing to break its contract with residents, why not break its contracts with developers, too?</p>
<p>Why not one employee cut from every single office listed on the City of East Lansing website departments page. That would be 28 employees at an average of 90,000. would be \$2,520,000. You should refrain from cuts be of services to the people paying the taxes and cut from within. This questionnaire is skewed in that it only looks at the problem from a reduction of services to the tax payer or an increase in taxes to those already overly burdened by taxes, and not from the perspective of the elimination of internal waste and redundancy of the bureaucracy.</p>
<p>With some of the highest taxes in the area, I am frustrated and believe the city needs to be more efficient in how it operates and has not been. Cutting back on some services instead of cutting them completely is preferable. There are no cuts listed on the Potential Reductions and Revenue List to the city's administrative staff and I think consolidation and reduction of those jobs should be on the table and also achievable. I was not able to attend the meetings but see no mention of how many people utilize services and that should be a key indicator of what programs to reduce or cut. Value for our tax dollars needs to remain high to keep residents in the city and property values up; failure to properly prioritize and do this will impact revenues for the future.</p>
<p>You charge more for parking than what you used to, and you didn't work with the University when it offered some money.</p>
<p>You could increase some fees. Raise Hannah center membership a little, raise aquatic center a little. Charge small fee for leaf pickup, etc.</p>
<p>You need to stop spending on all of the unnecessary services that no one wants. You need to stop preying on poor college students with your ridiculous parking tickets.</p>
<p>You will have to cut extra services that are not necessities instead of raising taxes.</p>