



MEMO

TO George Lahanas, City Manager, City of East Lansing

FROM Maggie Pallone and Rory Neuner, Public Sector Consultants (PSC)

DATE January 17, 2018

SUBJECT Community Engagement Meeting #1—Survey Results

We are pleased to share results from the survey conducted last week’s City of East Lansing Budget Priorities Community Engagement meeting, the first of two such meetings this month. A total of 85 surveys were collected at this meeting. This memo provides results and analysis on responses to survey questions 2 through 5 only; PSC will share complete results and analysis of all survey questions following the second meeting, and will then share aggregated survey results from both community engagement meetings and the online survey in our final report.

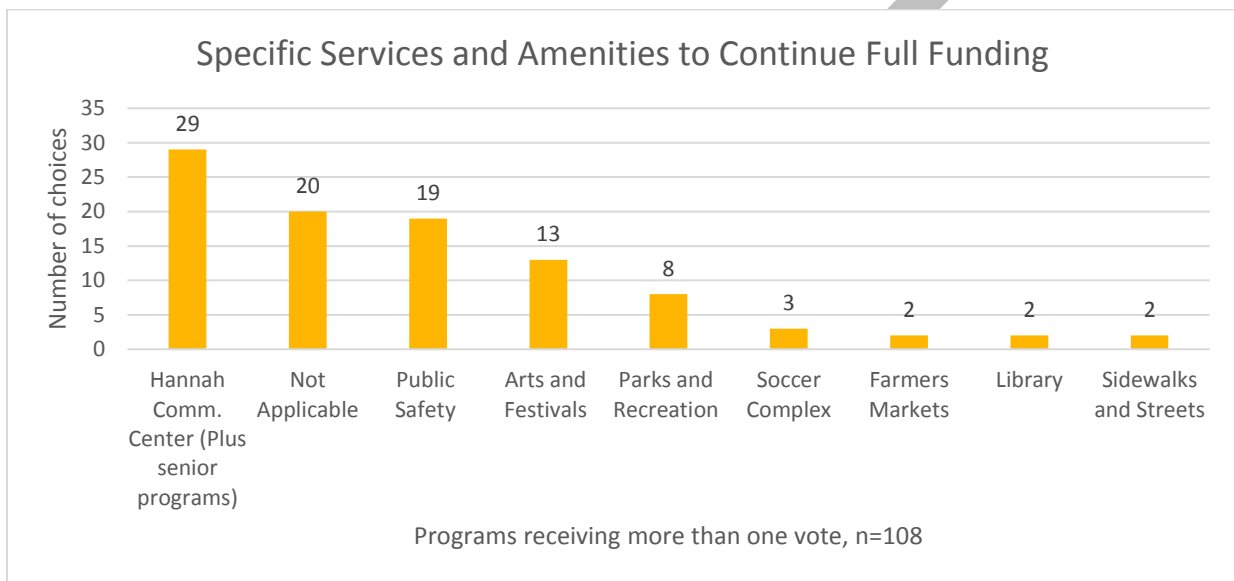
Question 2: *Please rank the following City of East Lansing services and amenities according to their value to you. Rank items 1 through 6, with 1 being the most valuable and 6 indicating the least value.*

Question 2 asked participants to give a general ranking of city services and amenities. Among the six items ranked by participants in question 2, Public Safety received the most top ranking votes, garnering a total of 75% of the first-place votes. To analyze the aggregate rankings, we assigned a point score to each ranked item – a 1st place ranking was assigned five points, and a 6th place ranking was assigned zero points. The following table shows the total score for each item.

Program	Total score
<i>Note: A 1st place ranking was given 5 points and a 6th place ranking was given 0 points.</i>	
Public Safety	305
Streets and Sidewalks	192
Parks and Recreation Facilities	178
Solid Waste and Recycling	155
Library	130
Festivals and Events	73

Question 3: *Are there specific services and amenities that you would support receiving continued full funding, despite potential reductions?*

Responses to question 3 were open-ended, but PSC categorized and aggregated similar responses. The most often cited service and/or amenity mentioned was the Hannah Community Center, followed by full funding for public safety. Other programs that received at least one vote are shown in the chart below.



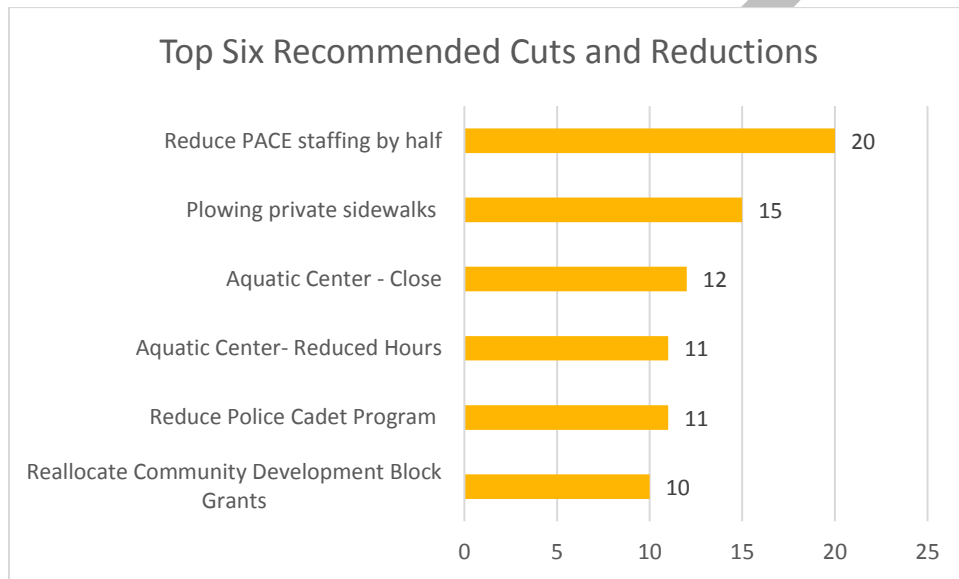
Question 4: *Based on the information presented tonight, which of the following options do you most support?*

Question 4 was a multiple-choice question with three options, displayed below. Out of 79 responses to this specific question, the majority supported a mix of cuts and new revenue. The percentages of votes for each option are provided below.

- Pursue new sources of revenue only, without reductions to current services and amenities (44%)
- Pursue both a mix of new sources of revenue and reduce some services and amenities (52%)
- Reduce services and amenities only, and do not pursue any new sources of revenue (4%)

Question 5: *If the City of East Lansing is forced to make reductions to any of the services and amenities included in the Reductions List provided tonight, please indicate three specific items you would cut or reduce.*

Question 5 directed participants to indicated three specific items from the list of Potential Reductions provided at the meeting. We thought it important to note that 28 surveys indicated no response to this question. This number is higher than any specific cut. For those participants that did complete this question, the top six responses are listed below.



City of East Lansing Budget Priorities

Report on Findings

February 2017





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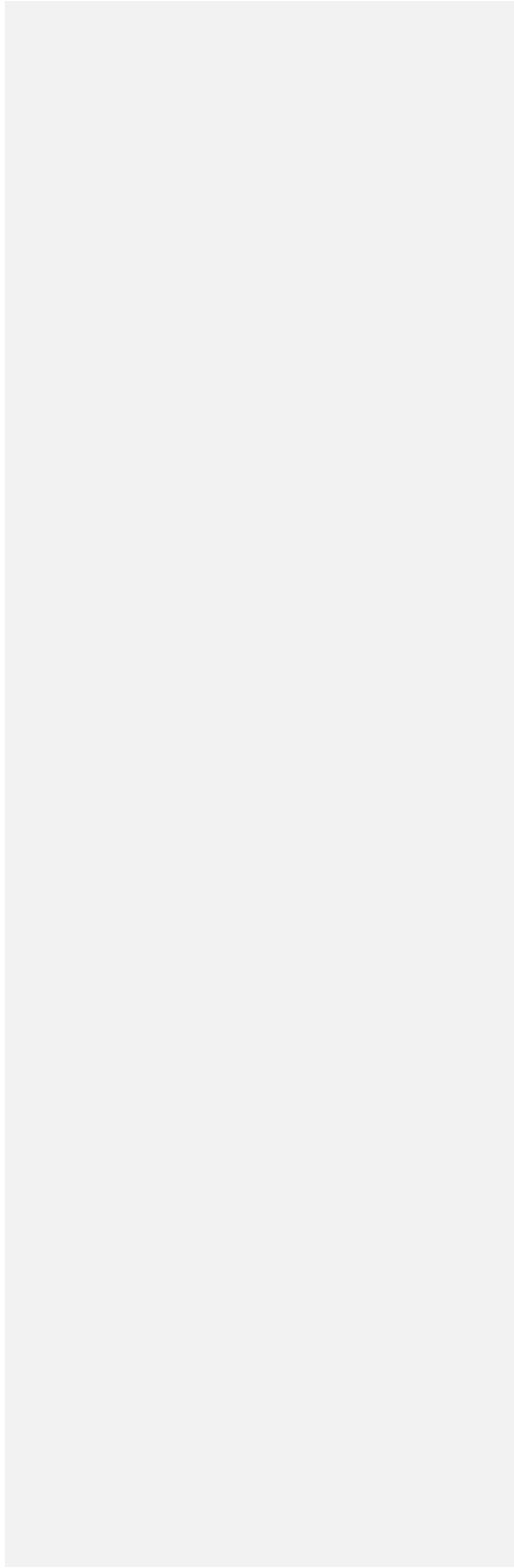


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INTRODUCTION

The City of East Lansing is finalizing its budget for the upcoming fiscal year, and City staff and the City Council are seeking community input on potential changes. In January 2018, the City retained Public Sector Consultants to help design a community input process that demonstrated current budget constraints, showcased potential options for service reductions and additional revenue, and gathered valuable input on residents' preferences.

This report documents the outcomes of that process, including data collected at two City of East Lansing Budget Priorities Community Engagement meetings, facilitated by PSC, as well as an online survey, also conducted by PSC.

The primary source of data for this report is surveys collected from residents and other concerned citizens. A total of 174 surveys were collected between the two community input meetings, and total of 794 surveys were collected online.

This report describes our methodology for designing the community input process and the surveys, and provides results and analysis of survey responses, including results for select questions at each unit of analysis. The report also provides aggregated survey results from both community engagement meetings and the online survey, as well as observations of outside factors influencing this process, and recommendations for the City's future budget priorities.

METHODOLOGY

As highlighted above, the City of East Lansing asked PSC to design a community input process that demonstrated current budget constraints, showcased potential options for service reductions and additional revenue, and gathered valuable input on residents' preferences.

To begin this process, PSC met with City staff to gather information on the overall goals of this community engagement process, as well as current budget constraints, and options for potential cuts and/or additional revenue generation options. Grounded with a solid understanding of the various options being considered, PSC developed a meeting agenda, designed to for use in both community input sessions.

Given the gravity of decisions about the future of public services in the City of East Lansing, we utilized a three-phased approach to facilitation and data collection. First, we aimed to ground stakeholders with relevant, fact-based information on the current status of the City's budget and on feasible service reductions and revenue options. This was accomplished through a presentation given by the City Manager. Second, we wanted residents and other stakeholders to engage in a dialogue about this information with their neighbors. This was accomplished through small group discussions. Finally, we asked residents and stakeholders to combine their understanding of the facts of the matter with their own vision for the future of the City to give thoughtful, meaningful input on the City's priorities. This was accomplished by ending the community input sessions with a survey that allowed participants to express their individual priorities for potential service reductions and revenue options.

The community meeting agenda was intended to be engaging and participatory to ensure adequate public input. PSC was not responsible for creating any meeting content – we merely synthesized and edited content provided by City staff and the City Council. PSC then facilitated the two community input sessions, held on January 10 and January 18, 2018.

The last stage of this work was to gather the input collected across the two meetings to generate this final report of findings, to be distributed to the City Council. Two data collection instruments were developed to gather community input: one, a paper-based survey that was distributed to participants present in-person at one of two community meetings held in January 2018, and two, an online survey that was made available on Friday, January 19, 2018 through January 28, 2018.

A final version of the paper-based survey is included in the appendix of this report. The survey instruments were designed to complement the approach to facilitation outlined above; the survey asked first about general service priorities (vision), and then, based on a grounding in the City’s current budget constraints and potential reduction and/or revenue options, the survey asked respondents to identify specific cuts and items to be protected. Finally, it asked for general comments.

SURVEY RESULTS

The following details the results collected from the paper-based and online surveys mentioned above. Results are organized by question.

RESIDENTIAL STATUS

Survey Question: Do you currently reside in the city of East Lansing?

The first question asked participants whether or not they are a current resident of the City of East Lansing. The majority of respondents were East Lansing residents, with 88.8 percent of the total survey responses coming from residents. Additionally, a small percentage (3.6 percent) of respondents chose to not answer this question and 7.5 percent of respondents identified themselves as non-residents. In order to ensure that the findings in this report reflect the values of East Lansing taxpayers the responses from individuals who responded as non-residents, or who did not answer this question, were dropped from the data analysis.

Figure 1. Respondents Residency Results – All Surveys

Response	Meeting One	Meeting Two	Online Survey	Total
Resident	71 (89.9 %)	88 (92.6%)	701 (88.3%)	860 (88.8%)
Non-resident	7 (8.7%)	7 (7.4%)	59 (7.4%)	73 (7.5%)
No Response	1 (1.3%)	--	34 (4.3%)	35 (3.6%)
Total	79	95	794	968

PRIORITIZING SERVICES

Survey Question: Please rank the following City of East Lansing services and amenities according to their value to you. Rank items 1 through 6, with 1 being the most valuable and 6 indicating the least value.

The next question asked participants to give a general preference ranking of city services and amenities. To analyze the aggregate rankings, we assigned a point score to each ranked item – a 1st place ranking was assigned five points, and a 6th place ranking was assigned zero points. The following table shows the total score for each item by session. In each case, Public Safety received the highest ranking.

Session One: Among the six items ranked by participants, Public Safety received the most top-ranking votes.

Figure 2. Ranking of Services According to Personal Value - Session One, Scored

Program	Total Score
Public Safety	305
Streets and Sidewalks	192
Parks and Recreation Facilities	178
Solid Waste and Recycling	155
Library	130
Festivals and Events	73

Session Two: In the second meeting, Public Safety again received the most top-ranking votes, while Solid Waste and Recycling and Streets and Sidewalks swapped positions.

Figure 3. Ranking of Services According to Personal Value – Session Two, Scored

Program	Total Score
Public Safety	345
Solid Waste and Recycling	211
Parks and Recreation Facilities	201
Streets and Sidewalks	189
Library	142
Festivals and Events	97

Online Survey: In the online survey, Public Safety again received the most top-ranking votes, garnering a total of 2503 points from resident 701 respondents.

Figure 4. Ranking of Services According to Personal Value – Online Survey, Scored

Program	Total Score
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Public Safety	2503
Streets and Sidewalks	2068
Solid Waste and Recycling	1823
Parks and Recreation	1718
Library	1522
Festivals	568

SACRED COWS

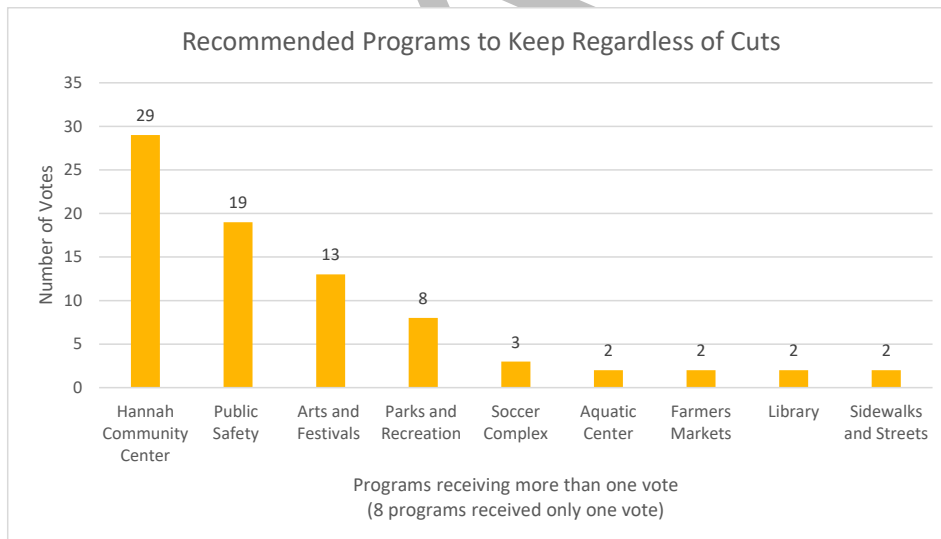
Survey Question: Are there specific services and amenities that you would support receiving continued full funding, despite potential reductions?

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Responses to the next were open-ended, but PSC categorized and aggregated similar responses.

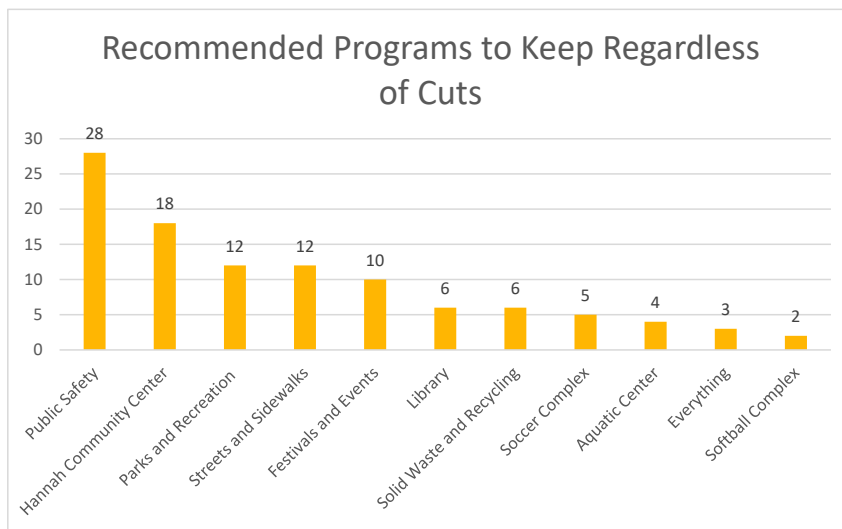
Session One: The most often cited service and/or amenity mentioned was the Hannah Community Center, followed by full funding for Public Safety. Other programs that received at least two votes are shown in the chart below.

Figure 5. Chart of Recommended Programs to Keep - Session One



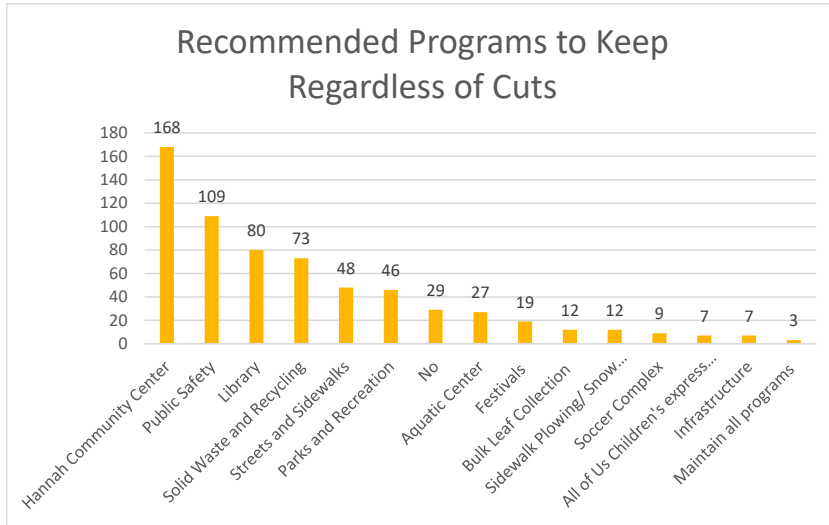
Session Two: In the second meeting, the most often cited service and/or amenity mentioned was Public Safety followed by the Hannah Community Center – swapping the top two priorities from session one. Other programs that received at least two votes are shown in the chart below, including multiple respondents who wanted to keep “everything” and do not support any new cuts.

Figure 6. Chart of Recommended Programs to Keep - Session Two



Online Survey: Once again, the Hannah Community Center and Public Safety remain top priorities for East Lansing citizens; who would like to see these programs maintained regardless of potential budget cuts.

Figure 7. Chart of Recommended Programs to Keep - Online Survey



RECOMMENDED BUDGET RECONCILIATION STRATEGY

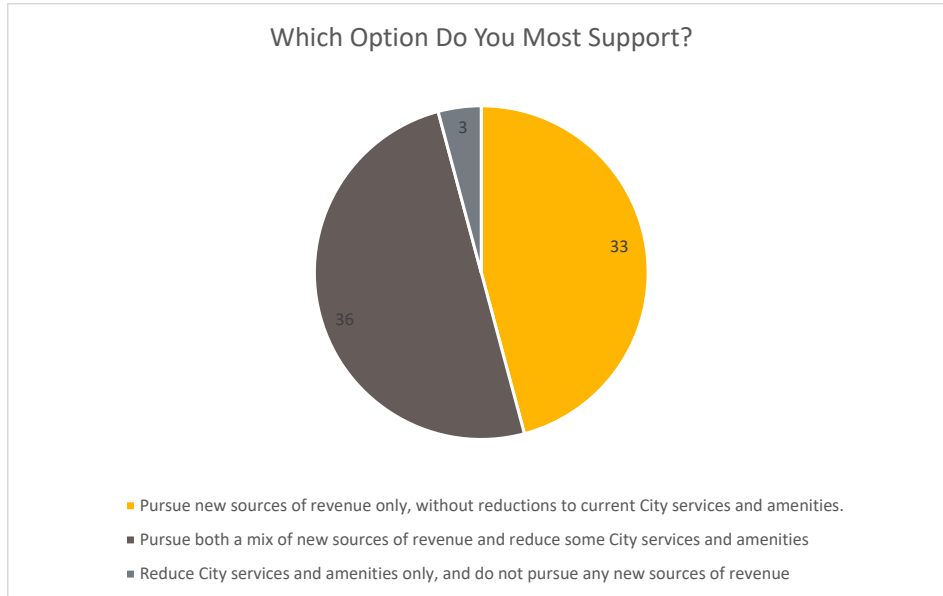
Survey Question: Based on the information presented (tonight), which of the following options do you most support?

To determine the strategy preference of citizens, this question was a multiple-choice question with three options, each displayed below.

Session One: Out of 72 responses to this specific question, the majority supported a mix of cuts and new revenue. The percentages of votes for each option are provided below.

- a. Pursue new sources of revenue only, without reductions to current services and amenities (45.8%)
- b. Pursue both a mix of new sources of revenue and reduce some services and amenities (50%)
- c. Reduce services and amenities only, and do not pursue any new sources of revenue (4.2%)

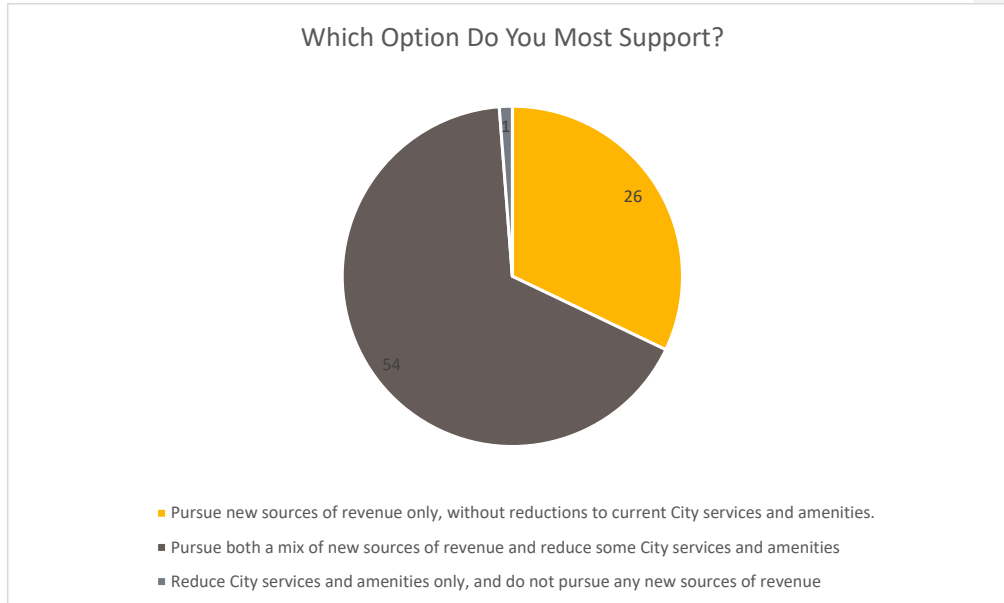
Figure 8. Respondents View on the Appropriate Strategy for the City of East Lansing – Session One



Session Two: Out of 81 responses to this specific question, the majority supported a mix of cuts and new revenue. The percentages of votes for each option are provided below.

- a. Pursue new sources of revenue only, without reductions to current services and amenities (32.1%)
- b. Pursue both a mix of new sources of revenue and reduce some services and amenities (66.67%)
- c. Reduce services and amenities only, and do not pursue any new sources of revenue (1.2%)

Figure 9. Respondents View on the Appropriate Strategy for the City of East Lansing – Session Two

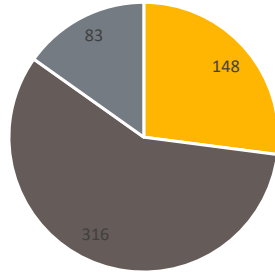


Online Survey: Out of 701 responses to the online survey, the majority of residents supported a mix of cuts and new revenue. However, 15.17 percent of respondents favored a strategy of only making reductions to services and amenities. This is significantly higher than the percentages reported from individuals who attended the two in person sessions in which only 4.2 and 1.2 percent of respondents favored cuts only. The percentages of votes for each option are provided below.

- Pursue new sources of revenue only, without reductions to current services and amenities (27.06%)
- Pursue both a mix of new sources of revenue and reduce some services and amenities (57.77%)
- Reduce services and amenities only, and do not pursue any new sources of revenue (15.17%)

Figure 10. Respondents View on the Appropriate Strategy for the City of East Lansing – Online Survey

Which Option Do You Most Support?



- Pursue new sources of revenue only, without reductions to current services and amenities
- Pursue both a mix of new sources of revenue and reduce some services and amenities
- Reduce services and amenities only, and do not pursue any new sources of revenue

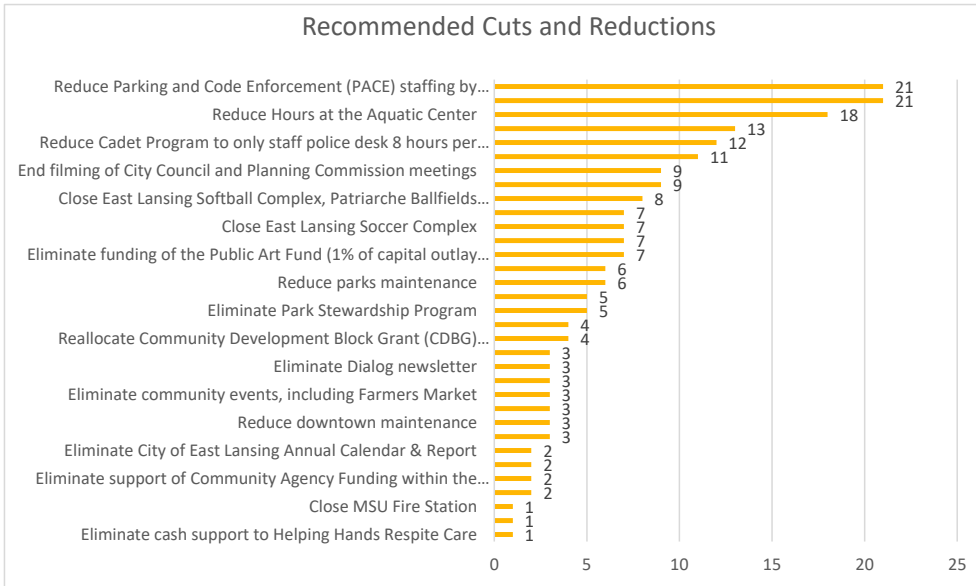
RECOMMENDED CUTS

Survey Question: If the City of East Lansing is forced to make reductions to any of the services and amenities included in the Reductions List provided tonight, please indicate three specific items you would cut or reduce.

This question directed participants to indicate three specific items to reduce from a provided list of *Potential Reductions*. This list was provided at the meeting and via a hyperlink through the online survey. Across all three data collection opportunities, the most popular response was to reduce PACE staffing.

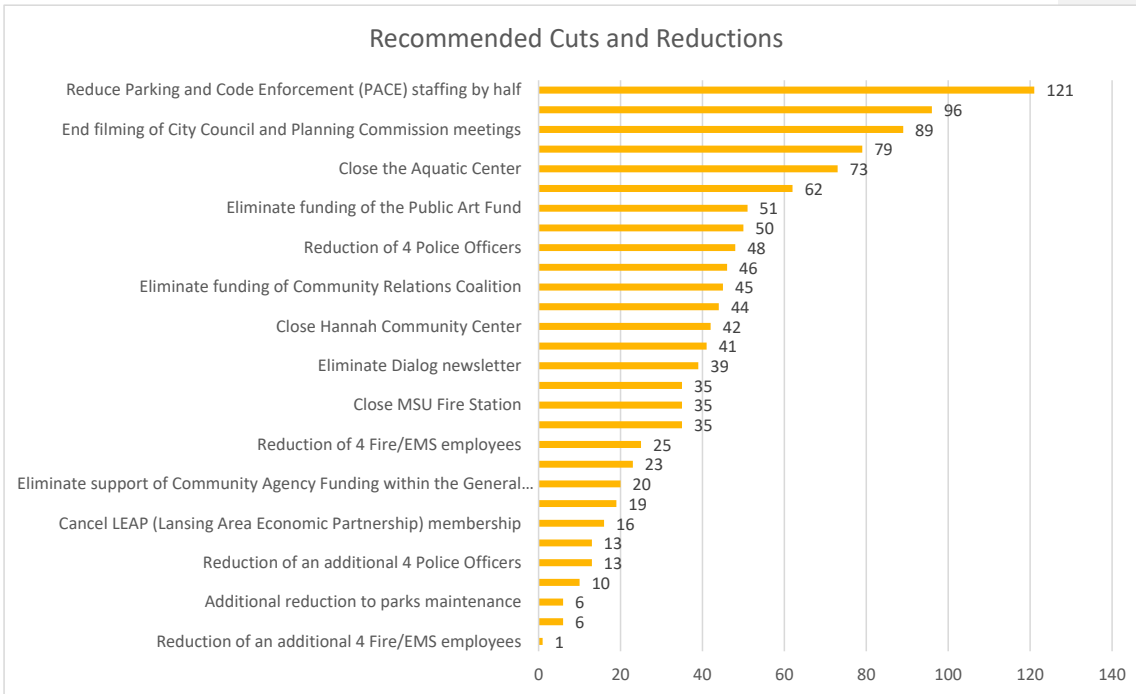
Session Two

Figure 12. Recommended Cuts and Reductions - Session Two



Online Survey

Figure 13. Recommended Cuts and Reductions- Online Survey



ANALYSIS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

We want to call attention to two separate events that may have significantly impacted the results of the online survey. First, on January 23rd, 2018, while the survey was still in the field, the City of East Lansing released an agenda for an upcoming City Council meeting. Included in this meeting agenda was the discussion of four potential revenue generating ballot questions, including a second attempt at establishing an income tax in East Lansing. The question of whether East Lansing should increase revenues or cut programs to remedy its budget shortfall was central to this project, and the agenda released on the 23rd may have influenced some resident opinions on the best path forward.

We at PSC were concerned that the appearance of a decision to favor revenue generation over cuts, or even a mixed strategy, may have impacted how respondents answered the survey. To account for this, PSC analyzed the online survey data in two parts, both before and after the release of the City Council meeting agenda. Through this analysis, it became evident that the responses remained consistent across both samples, and in this report the online survey results are presented as one.

Second, a key topic of the City Manager's budget presentation was the willingness and ability of Michigan State University to negotiate payments in lieu of taxes with the City of East Lansing. This was also a common topic of conversation observed at the community input sessions. Given

that MSU President Lou Anna Simon resigned from her post on January 31, 2018, a development that garnered national media attention, we want to highlight that resident opinions about MSU's ability and / or willingness to negotiate with the City may be in flux. Given the profile of these developments and their implications on MSU's fiscal stability over the next several years, we recognize that survey results may reflect shifting attitudes about MSU's ability to negotiate payments in lieu of taxes with the City of East Lansing.

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CITY OF EAST LANSING BUDGET PRIORITIES SURVEY

1. Do you currently reside in the city of East Lansing?

Yes No

2. Please rank the following City of East Lansing services and amenities according to their value to you. Rank items 1 through 6, with 1 being the most valuable and 6 indicating the least value.

Public safety

Festivals and events

Streets and sidewalk maintenance

Solid waste and recycling

Park and recreation facilities

Library

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3. Are there specific services and amenities that you would support receiving continued full funding, despite potential reductions?

4. Based on the information presented tonight, which of the following options do you *most support*?
- a. Pursue new sources of revenue only, without reductions to current services and amenities
 - b. Pursue both a mix of new sources of revenue and reduce some services and amenities
 - c. Reduce services and amenities only, and do not pursue any new sources of revenue

5. If the City of East Lansing is forced to make reductions to any of the services and amenities included in the Reductions List provided tonight, please indicate three specific items you would cut or reduce. *Please refer to the handout to guide your decision.*

- 1. Item # _____
- 2. Item # _____
- 3. Item # _____

6. Are there *other* services and amenities not on the Reductions List provided tonight that you recommend cutting and/or reducing funding to?

7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions to share with the City about its budget priorities?

8. Optional: Please provide your name and address. The City or City Council may choose to follow up with you based on comments or answers provided above.

REFERENCES

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