



Citizens for  
**East Lansing's**  
**Future**

East Lansing City Council  
410 Abbot Road  
East Lansing, MI 48823

February 28, 2018

**Re: East Lansing must make structural reforms prior to increasing taxes**

Dear Council members:

Citizens for East Lansing's Future (CELf) is a bipartisan coalition of East Lansing residents, small business owners, workers and community leaders — all whom are united in wanting to see East Lansing prosper. To do that, city leaders must make much-needed reforms to ensure the city's long-term financial viability.

We understand the financial stress the city finds itself in, and we believe it is partly attributable to external factors — but also substantially due to inaction by city officials, who for too long have kicked the can down the road instead of making tough choices.

The City Council recently held community engagement sessions to ostensibly seek citizen input on budget priorities. However, despite all of the input from residents, some city officials remain fixated on new revenues and revenues alone.

We believe the city must demonstrate action on reforms first — before asking residents to pay even more in taxes. Citizens feel the same way, as they just last November rejected city officials' proposal for a new income tax.

Please see the following page for our recommendations for reforms that should be made *before* asking citizens to increase taxes.

Sincerely,

*The residents, neighborhood leaders, business owners, labor union members, Democrats, Republicans, independents, conservatives, moderates and progressives who comprise Citizens for East Lansing's Future*

# Reforms before revenues

## Recommendations for East Lansing

**Legacy costs:** It's imperative that the city protects current retirees' pensions while using the collective bargaining process to find substantial cost savings for all current and future city employees.

- Reconvene the East Lansing Financial Health Review Team and update the team on the city's current financial situation. Have the team provide recommendations for reforms to city's pension plan and other post-employment benefits (OPEB) that do not incorporate revenue options.
- Seek additional assistance from East Lansing residents and businesses with expertise in pension and OPEB negotiations.

**Consolidation and collaboration:** The city should seek public-private partnerships, remove unnecessary regulations that impede economic growth and job creation, and pursue regional partnerships to consolidate and streamline services.

- Seek public-private partnerships for all festivals that East Lansing supports.
- Remove the 1 percent art fund requirement for capital outlay projects, and instead work with the Arts Council of Greater Lansing and the Lansing Economic Area Partnership on public art projects.
- Stop plowing private sidewalks.
- Reduce PACE staffing by half.
- End bulk leaf pickup.
- Seek a public-private partnership for solid waste collection.
- Consolidate 54-B District Court with Ingham County court operations.
- Move City Hall offices and the Police Department to Hannah Community Center, and sell the current City Hall property.
- Turn over operation of the city library to CADL.
- Contract with the Ingham County Sheriff's Department for lockup services.
- Regionalize the aquatic center, softball complex and soccer complex.
- Contract with the Ingham County Road Department for plowing services and road maintenance.