

CHANGE FOR LANSING'S FUTURE

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This Advisory Committee includes individuals that are current or former leaders of neighborhood associations, neighborhood groups, and neighborhood watches in the City of Lansing. Many others not listed also provided feedback and input. This vision will continue to evolve throughout the campaign.

Neighborhoods

While economic development is a necessary focus for Lansing, we also need a stronger approach to Neighborhood Revitalization. The City of Lansing has access to a number of great development tools (grants, programs, etc.) aimed at rehabilitating and revitalizing our neighborhoods, but we need to do a better job of educating residents about options and promoting their use. As mayor, I will focus on creating a comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Program that better utilizes existing programs and takes steps toward creating relevant new ones. I will also engage with the neighbors and will meet regularly with residents in each of the wards of the city. Part of our approach must involve better utilizing the enterprise zone tool allowed under state law and the number of federal-level programs accessible to our residents (including federal grants), which will allow us to do things like abate the hazards and safety concerns present in so many of Lansing's homes. We need to establish a thoughtful, consistent plan for housing development that addresses all of the residents we serve, including the homeless, low-income families, young talent, and seniors. That well-crafted plan ought to issue housing tax credits and project abatements based on proven need in Lansing and it must empower us to become better stewards of city-owned properties. I look forward to promoting neighborhood revitalization to our residents in a way that mirrors our efforts to promote economic development tools to our businesses.

Roads and Sidewalks

While I will address roads in the City Services portion of this Vision document, it is important to acknowledge that fixing local roads and sidewalks is a necessary component of neighborhood revitalization as well. Resources are limited with road reconstruction very expensive. But it is necessary to work on a plan to fix many of the local roads. We must also review the impacts of heavy trucks on our local and major roads, and attempt to mitigate that damage.

We know there is a problem. We know that many roads need to be fixed. But we don't have all the information. We base road repairs on a complaint-driven process, but our roads are to then point where there are too many poor roads to complain about. We must create a system of priority (utilizing existing rating systems) where the worst roads are fixed first.

I will create a Neighborhood Road Inventory that will index the potholes and road damage. I will also create a pothole patrol utilizing existing city resources already travelling our roads to log all the damaged roads into the inventory. Once that is complete, my administration will discuss the conditions of the roads neighborhood-by-neighborhood to determine proper and acceptable solutions.

Residents also deserve to know what roads are being fixed and what is being done with state and local millage dollars. Citizens constantly inquire why the shape of the roads is so bad, and want to know what is being fixed in Lansing. I would like to prioritize dollars to fix our roads, which will happen with a comprehensive budget review, but I will also find out where the current dollars are going and how they are being spent.

Sidewalks are also getting worse and worse. I will ensure that the City is fixing sidewalks, which we have a requirement under law to do if the gap between the sidewalk is large.

Constituent Services Division:

While I will address constituent services in the City Services portion of this vision document, it is important to specify that we must also serve our citizens better. I will pursue creation of a formal Constituent Services position to respond to resident concerns directly and cut through red tape and navigate through the necessary city

departments or receive referral to another agency such as BWL, Ingham County, and many others. I will implement transparency in city government so residents know where how their tax dollars are being utilized.

Neighborhood Rehabilitation and Revitalization

Lansing needs to create a comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Program to help our neighborhoods in the same way that we help our businesses. We need a whole neighborhoods approach. This includes looking at all components of neighborhoods including housing, commercial activity, schools, parks, and other amenities that our residents desire and demand. Parks are especially important and we must effectively utilize our Parks millage and the expertise of our Parks Board to ensure we have great recreation and natural places for our residents and families. We must also address the issues of trash in our streets, and ensure that we are keeping our neighborhoods clean. After a comprehensive review of City departments, I will ensure there is single focus for neighborhoods in my office and Administration through a Director of Neighborhood Service whose responsibility is to focus on the quality of life in all our neighborhoods and build the social infrastructure of our city. This person will regularly meet with neighborhood groups, and will join me in regular meetings in each of the wards.

New and Improved Housing

I plan to retool and better make use of the current Single Family Housing Rehabilitation Grant & Loan Program, where residents can receive grants and utilize federal dollars to improve their homes. This program, available through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, qualifies residents for a grant of up to \$10,000. Through a combination of grants and 0% interest loans (up to \$30,000), city homeowners can use funding to make health and safety improvements to their homes (things such as roofs, siding, etc.) and, upon completion of those projects, can then make weatherization and energy efficiency improvements. Some neighborhood organizations actively promote this grant and loan program but it is not currently promoted by any particular city agency. I will task our neighborhood and planning staff to promote usage of this program throughout the community. Additionally, we can work through neighborhood groups and energy companies to conduct energy audits for high energy usage in neighborhoods.

Lansing should also better utilize the enterprise zones allowed for under state law. In these areas, the city can allow residents to make improvements to their homes without having to pay more in taxes as a result of those improvements. Unfortunately, this program requires that housing be valued at \$80,000 per year—a number that hasn't been increased in 20 years and results in few people able to benefit from the law. I have introduced legislation to remove that out-of-date dollar amount and will better make use of this program once that happens.

I plan to create a Lansing Residential Rehabilitation Program to empower homeowners in more distressed areas to rehabilitate their homes. Homeowners would be able to utilize already available federal dollars along with local tax relief made available through this new law. Allowing individuals to update and modernize their homes in this way would raise property values as housing stock increases and neighborhoods adopt a more upgraded look and feel.

Lansing must review its approach to new housing. We must balance affordable housing and housing for young professionals with market rate housing that will ensure we can fund our city services. Some stakeholders claim that our community has a compelling need for affordable housing (whether for low income residents or for young professionals just starting out), while others insist that we ought to continue developing more market-rate housing aimed at capturing taxes and attracting millennials to the area. One thing is clear: Looking ahead, we need a thoughtful, consistent plan. We must do a study of the availability and need for affordable housing vs. market-rate housing in Lansing. Previous studies have suggested a need for more affordable housing in the Greater Lansing area, but parameters typically include many surrounding communities that do not have much established affordable housing. We cannot make decisions for Lansing based on broad conclusions like this.

Instead, we need a clear understanding of what we actually need, then a plan that moves us forward based on our own realities.

We need to fully review and update our policies on city-owned housing properties where the City of Lansing serves as a landlord. Properties like the South Washington apartments have attracted too much controversy over the years (poor housing conditions, illegal activities within the apartment building, etc.). Lansing must be committed to ensuring we have good landlords, and must certainly not act as a bad landlord itself.

Lansing must better utilize available federal funding for our housing builds and development. Right now, a big hurdle to our ability to secure important funding is a shortage of grant-writing within our city staff, and we have lost out on opportunities to secure federal grants as a result. Equally troubling is the fact that we continue to leave significant state and federal dollars on the table. We should collaborate with the state housing authority to ensure we do everything possible to capture these important housing dollars for Lansing. We could also centralize grant writing so that we don't have multiple departments working on the same grant.

We also must ensure we have safe rentals. We want to support our good actor landlords who follow the rules and provide safe rentals, while also address those rentals that are not up to code in our community. Poorly maintained rental housing are a threat to the renters, and bring down property values to the rest of the neighbors in the neighborhood. Rental property information must be available on the city assessor website, and those with continual and multiple violations must face consequences such as fines. I want to help landlords that are having problems so we don't have tenants evicted, but these renters deserve appropriate and safe housing and these landlords must bring properties up to code or face repercussions. Additionally, abandoned houses are dangerous and unsightly in our neighborhoods and must be addressed. I will work with the neighborhood associations and watches as well as other community partners (such as the Ingham County Land Bank) and public safety to identify and take care of these problems.

I will review Code Compliance and ensure the licensing and inspecting of rentals is working effectively. Inspections must be completed and rental certificates should be valid and up-to-date before properties are rented out; it is the city's responsibility to ensure that those in rental homes in our community are safe. Among other things, that commitment to safety includes carefully inspecting and addressing electrical, mechanical, fire alarm, emergency exit, lead paint, and other health-related issues. I have fielded many complaints from residents about the city allowing homes to be rented out that pose clear fire or health hazards to our renters. We also need to equip our inspectors with modern communication tools and consider an online permitting system. Lansing inspectors are in the field most of the day, making it difficult to connect with residents. Updating this system will ensure timely communication with businesses and residents, and ensure those with problems will come back under compliance. Many other cities (Pittsburgh, for example) have adopted more updated approaches in this area (allowing text messages to inspectors, etc.), which has allowed inspections to happen on a much more reasonable timetable.

Marijuana and Liquor

Lansing must regulate marijuana dispensaries. This will be addressed in the Economic and Community Development section of this Vision document. It is important to note, though, that marijuana dispensaries on our commercial corridors and centers need to be regulated. We don't want to be known as "High Lansing" as the billboards label us. We need to regulate the number of dispensaries and the density of dispensaries. No neighborhood should have an overabundance of these on their commercial corridors. While we should ensure that people who need marijuana for medical purposes are able to conveniently access it, we must accomplish this without negatively affecting our neighborhoods (strong smells, traffic, crime, etc.). This is why I supported state legislation prohibiting large grow operations in our neighborhoods. We must respect the right to grow under

current law, but we also must make sure our small growers are not creating these same problems in our neighborhoods.

We must also control the many liquor stores in Lansing. I want to allow businesses and competition, but too many liquor stores in one area can negatively affect the property values and desirability of people to live and move into neighborhoods. We must work with our neighborhood leaders and groups when reviewing existing liquor stores and when new ones seek to open.

Controlling Neighborhood Threats & Building Community Resilience

I will make combatting health threats to our residents in neighborhoods a priority. We should help those in flood plains to understand and be prepared for weather incidents. We need to support residents in assessing and mediating risk to prevent emergencies as well as aggressive and appropriate emergency response, whether this is a wide scale incident or local incident. We have an effective emergency management team which needs the flexibility and preparation to respond. We need to sustain our public safety for our residents and ensure that our police and fire and EMS have the ability and capability to protect our residents.

Lead paint and lead dust in homes is a tremendous problem in the City of Lansing, which presents a health risk to all our residents—especially unborn and young children. An alarming number of our youth are testing positive for high concentrations of lead in their blood, too often due to older apartments and homes that still contain lead paint. I will work with council to ensure inspections of paint in older apartment buildings during license renewals so that we know which apartments in our community pose a lead risk to children and families.

We will also continue to proactively utilize the offerings available through the Lead Safe Lansing Program to help protect residents from the effects of lead. This program offers up to \$16,000 in grant funds to remediate lead-based paint from homes or apartments, with additional funding available, if needed, to complete remediation efforts. Residents living in apartments or houses built prior to 1978 who have a child under the age of six or are pregnant may qualify for the program.

Last summer we received \$2.3 million in federal funding for the city's "Get Out the Lead" initiative and have recently started putting those funds to use. Lead Safe Lansing will continue to work with many community organizations to effectively promote these resources. City staff will also proactively work to help our families initiate cleanup efforts, and will collaborate with Lead Safe Lansing to help identify problems and educate residents regarding risks of lead exposure and the resources available to them.

The City also must aggressively pursue federal dollars made available to Michigan for lead exposure. This funding is an important investment in preventing lead's short and long-term health effects. We could use it to permanently eliminate or enclose lead-based paint and lead dust, replace fixtures, test samples, and remove or cover lead hazards in the soil. That money could also be used to further support the work of Lead Safe Lansing. Houses, apartments, and other residential structures will also be eligible for expanded lead abatement services if a resident is pregnant or is under the age of 19 and qualifies for Medicaid or CHIP. We must also be ready to pursue State of Michigan funding for communities with high risk of lead exposure.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Neighborhoods with strong social infrastructure, where neighbors know and look out for one another, are critical to our success as a city. We must continue to assist our formal and informal neighborhood groups through the City. Our neighborhood groups serve critical functions and do terrific work internally on behalf of their residents, and the City should provide resources for these groups to continue this work.

We must also assist and coordinate our neighborhood watch organizations. We need our city residents to know what crime is happening by working closely with the police, and by watching over each other and reporting crime in the neighborhoods. Our police officers do a great job working with our neighborhood organizations and watches, and this must continue to be a focus. The Director of Neighborhood Services will work directly with the Lansing Police Department's Community Police to support neighbors in these efforts.

Schools in Neighborhoods

While much of the school portion of this vision document will be addressed in the City and Schools section of this Vision document, it is necessary to mention the importance of our schools to our neighborhoods. School buildings are critical civic anchors in our neighborhoods. Through our formalized relationship with the Lansing School District, we will advocate for joint usage agreements where possible, to maximize schools for community use.

We also must continue to protect our students and communities by continuing to allow community police officers in our schools and having a police presence where necessary near our schools in our neighborhoods. We will continue, and expand as necessary, the school watch program and increase the presence of volunteers serving in this capacity. Where vacant schools now stand, we will work with developers, partners, and neighbors to find appropriate tenants as quickly as possible, so that they do not become blighted properties in the center of our neighborhoods.

Commercial Activity in Neighborhoods

We need to help revitalize our commercial strips and areas in our neighborhoods. More attention is needed on areas like Logan Square in the southwest area of Lansing, the Saginaw Oakland Commercial strip, and many of the small strip commercial areas throughout the city. Economic and community development can't just be focused in the downtown. It must help to create walkability throughout Lansing, which includes our corridors and commercial centers throughout the City of Lansing. Increasing commercial activity in smaller commercial hubs will keep more consumer dollars in our local neighborhoods and prevent the "economic leakage" that currently takes place because services aren't available close by. This will be further addressed in the Economic and Community Development section of this Vision document.

Homelessness and Whole Person Approach

Lansing needs to be a leader on addressing homelessness in our community and step up as a partner throughout the region. We have tremendous partners and resources in place and must make a point to utilize street outreach programs, emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and the housing voucher program. I will continue to work with the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness to address these areas of concern and help the neediest among us.

Homelessness does not happen in a vacuum; those experiencing homelessness don't just need housing, they also frequently need to be connected with other public health and human service programs in order to thrive (especially programs that address mental illness). We must utilize a "whole person approach" to coordinate these internally and with the various resources available through the county, state, and private sources (similar to what has been done in Boulder, CO). A community needs assessment would be a good tool to utilize in this effort.

Seniors

While we need to attract and retain talent, we also need to ensure that we are providing for the seniors who are choosing to make our region their home. In addition to being welcoming, it's important that we have the services and infrastructure in place that will ensure they're able to comfortably and successfully enjoy our community. This includes providing a variety of recreational opportunities, transportation options, quality basic and preventative medical care, and other necessities. As mayor, I will make this a priority for the city and partner with

surrounding communities, Ingham County, and the state as well. My administration will review and update our services and policies to make sure our current and future senior residents have access to all that Lansing has to offer.