

CONFIDENTIAL DECISION SUPPORT BRIEFING

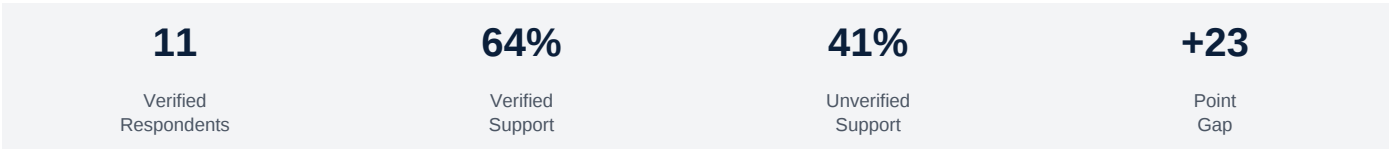
Downtown Lansing Development & Tax Incentives

City of Lansing
Prepared exclusively for the Lansing City Council · September 2026

THE QUESTION

Should Lansing City Council approve tax incentives for downtown redevelopment projects?

Downtown Lansing has several large mixed-use and residential proposals moving through City Council, many requesting Brownfield or Renaissance Zone tax incentives. Supporters point to the need to convert vacant office space to housing; critics question whether the city is giving away too much revenue for projects that would likely happen anyway.



Format preview — illustrative; this topic's verified-response campaign has not launched yet.

BOTTOM LINE FOR THE COUNCIL

If the illustrative pattern above holds, verified Lansing residents lean more supportive of downtown incentives than the online conversation suggests — but that support is conditional, not unconditional: Jackson's dissent and the Eastside example quote both point to "prove the money is working" as the actual ask, not "stop giving incentives."

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEP

Launch the verified-response campaign for this topic, and get a real downtown assessed-value trend from city staff so the "shrinking tax base" argument can be tested against actual numbers.

BLIND SPOT TO WATCH

A loud comment section after a Brownfield vote reads as "the public hates giving money to developers." The gap above suggests that reaction is likely to overstate opposition relative to residents actually weighing the housing-supply trade-off, not just reacting to a headline.

What's in this briefing

- How to read this briefing (methodology & trust labels)
- Background & timeline
- The numbers and the gap
- Signal across every source (meetings, town halls, news, online)
- Where the real debate is (public record + trade-offs)
- Scenario analysis & key uncertainties
- What this means for the Council
- Perspectives — 111 voices, real and illustrative

How to Read This Briefing

A real Debatable "Verified" response requires a phone number and ZIP code checked against the city boundary before it counts toward the verified tally. Unverified (no identity check) responses are tracked separately and never blended in. No verified-response campaign has launched for this topic yet — every number and quote below marked "(example)" is illustrative, written to show the format and depth a real signal section will reach, not a real respondent.

Public Record — Cited

Real, on-the-record facts, votes, and quotes, sourced to a specific document or news report.

★ Verified — Yes / Support

Phone + ZIP confirmed to Lansing. Highest weight once real data exists.

★ Verified — No / Oppose

Same verification standard, opposing position.

★ Verified — Mixed / Conditional

A real position that doesn't sort cleanly into yes or no — support with conditions, genuine undecided, or "depends on the specifics."

Unverified / Online

One-click or anonymous online reaction. Useful for gauging loud conversation, never equal to verified residents.

HOW TO STAY OBJECTIVE WHEN SOURCES CONFLICT

When ★ Verified and Online disagree, default to ★ Verified for resident-specific decisions once real data exists. Use Online only to anticipate the public narrative the Council may need to respond to — never as evidence of what residents actually believe. Treat Mixed/Conditional responses as real information, not noise to be sorted away — often the most persuadable and most representative group.

Background & Timeline

Every entry below is real and cited — the chronology behind the question on page 1.

2004-2016

Lansing office/downtown vacancy builds gradually as regional office demand softens (context for later incentive requests).

March 12, 2024

Council votes unanimously to accept a \$40M state budget allocation toward New Vision Lansing.

[WKAR](#)

December 16, 2024

Council approves Transformational Brownfield Plan No. 87 for New Vision Lansing; Hussain moves the motion citing ~\$1M/year in new revenue; Jackson dissents over Section 8/voucher units.

[CitizenPortal.ai](#)

Spring 2025

Tower on Grand breaks ground; more than \$1.3M of its \$3.8M cost is slated from Brownfield TIF tools.

H1 2025 → 2026

Mid-Michigan office vacancy rises from 8.6% to 9.3%, reaching 15.0% metro-wide by 2026.

[Colliers H1 2025 Lansing Office Market Report](#)

July 22, 2026

Gov. Whitmer signs SB 721-723, making the Transformational Brownfield Program permanent and raising the statewide cap from \$1.6B to \$3.5B.

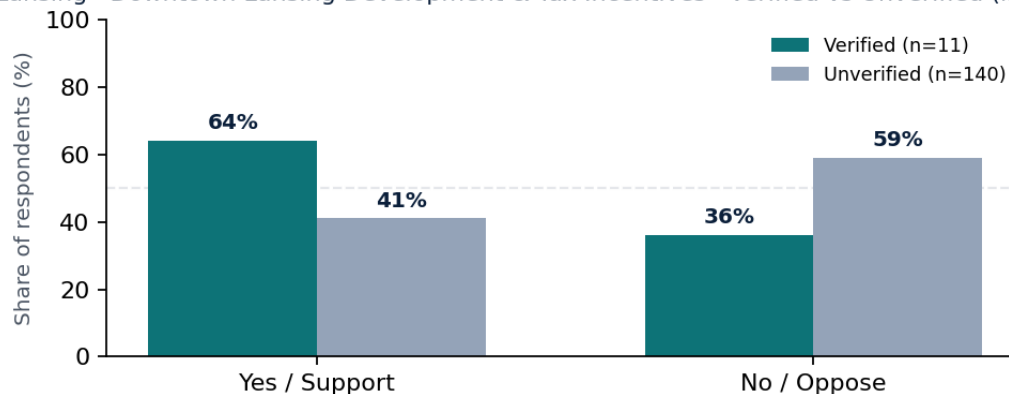
[City Pulse](#)

Targeted Fall 2026

100 S. Washington Square office-to-apartment conversion (~60 units) targeted for completion.

The Numbers, and Why They Diverge

Lansing · Downtown Lansing Development & Tax Incentives · Verified vs Unverified (illustrative)



Why Verified and Unverified Responses Differ

Verified respondents confirm their identity and Lansing address before answering; unverified respondents do not. On this question, 64% of verified residents support the proposal, compared with 41% of the unverified/online group — a 23-point difference.

This pattern is typical for development-incentive questions: residents who stand to benefit from new housing are less likely to comment publicly, while residents who oppose a project are more likely to. The online figure should be read as a measure of vocal opposition, not of overall resident sentiment.

Implication for the Council: The online reaction is likely to overstate opposition relative to actual resident sentiment.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Lead with the fiscal frame Hussain already used (\$1M/year in new revenue) rather than a generic "jobs and housing" pitch — it directly answers the "giveaway" framing before it forms. Pair any future incentive ask with a stated condition (unit mix, affordability set-aside) to preempt the Jackson-style objection.

How deeply might verified residents engage?

Answered with one click only	68%
Added a short written explanation	24%
Submitted a link or piece of research	8%

WHY DEPTH WILL MATTER

Residents who submit a written comment or research link on this topic are the highest-value follow-up group — they're the most likely to show up at a public hearing on the next incentive request.

Signal Across Every Source

Format preview — every row except the methodology itself is illustrative; no campaign has run on any of these channels yet for this topic. Modeled on how these channels typically diverge once real data exists.

Source	Support	Character
★ Verified Residents	64%	Phone+ZIP confirmed; specific, format-preview only
Council Meeting — Public Comment	48%	In-person, on-the-record by name; skews toward motivated/critical speakers
Town Hall / Community Forum	58%	In-person, more back-and-forth; positions shift after direct Q&A;
Local News Comment Sections	38%	Anonymous, high cynicism, low specificity
Broader Online / Social Media	41%	High volume, unverified, least specific

WHY THE CHANNELS DIVERGE

The pattern across channels isn't random — it tracks who shows up to each one. Council meeting public comment skews more critical because showing up in person and speaking by name takes more motivation, and objection is a stronger motivator than satisfaction. Town halls run more favorable because direct Q&A; (like the Brownfield-mechanics walkthrough one resident described) resolves misunderstandings in real time. Local news comments and social media skew similarly low because both are anonymous and reward the most cynical framing, not the most representative one. None of these four should be read as "what Lansing thinks" on their own — only the verified layer is built to answer that question directly, once it has real respondents.

Where the Real Debate Is

Hussain's public case for the December 2024 vote was fiscal — an estimated \$1,000,000/year in new income-tax revenue from New Vision Lansing. The one dissent, from then-member Jackson, wasn't about incentives at all; he wanted Section 8/voucher units attached. That reframes the live question: not incentives yes-or-no, but what conditions attach to them — and SB 721-723 just tripled the statewide ceiling, so more of these votes are coming, not fewer.

FISCAL & PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

With the state cap now \$3.5B, the fiscal question shifts from "can we afford one more incentive" to "how many is the right number, on what conditions" — a policy design question, not a one-off vote.

PUBLIC RECORD — CITED

New Vision Lansing (developer Paul Gentilozzi) is marketed at a full build-out cost of **\$300 million-plus** (602,000 sq ft, 573 apartments). Council voted unanimously to accept a **\$40 million** state allocation toward it (March 2024), then approved Transformational Brownfield Plan No. 87 for it in December 2024.

[WKAR / CitizenPortal.ai coverage, 2024](#)

PUBLIC RECORD — CITED

State enabling legislation just changed the ceiling on this whole category: SB 721-723 (July 2026) made Michigan's Transformational Brownfield Program permanent and raised its statewide cap from \$1.6B to **\$3.5 billion**.

[City Pulse, "20 developments we'll be watching in 2026"](#)

OPEN QUESTION IN THE RECORD

No dollar figure was found for downtown Lansing's tax-base decline itself — the "shrinking tax base" argument for incentives is framing, not a verified assessor's-office statistic, in what research found.

What to Watch

- 100 S. Washington Square office-to-apartment conversion (~60 units), targeted for fall 2026.
- More Brownfield/TIF requests are likely now that the statewide cap is \$3.5B.

Scenario Analysis

Three paths available to the Council, and the trade-off each one carries.

A — Approve with conditions attached (affordability set-aside, unit-mix requirements)

This is the path Jackson's December 2024 dissent pointed toward. It costs some deal timeline — developers may push back on added conditions — but directly answers the "giveaway" critique and gives Council a concrete deliverable to point to later (a specific number of affordable units), not just a revenue projection.

B — Approve as proposed, no new conditions

Fastest path to breaking ground, and matches the pattern of the last three approvals (New Vision Lansing, Tower on Grand, 100 S. Washington Square). Risk: it reinforces an "assembly-line" critique — three incentive approvals in under three years with no attached conditions makes the next ask harder to distinguish from the last, leaving Council with only Hussain's \$1M/year estimate to defend if scrutinized.

C — Decline or delay pending a revenue audit

Directly answers the written-explanation respondent's request for a scorecard on whether New Vision Lansing hit its projected numbers before approving the next incentive. Slows redevelopment momentum right as SB 721-723 raised the incentive ceiling statewide — competitor cities may move first if Lansing pauses.

Key Uncertainties

What isn't known yet, and would change this analysis if it became known.

- No verified assessed-value trend exists to confirm the "shrinking tax base" premise behind these incentives.
- Hussain's \$1,000,000/year revenue estimate for New Vision Lansing has no documented source for its underlying assumptions.
- No public data yet shows whether the 573 New Vision Lansing units, once completed, will be priced within reach of the residents advocates say need housing.
- It's unclear whether SB 721-723's higher \$3.5B statewide cap changes Lansing's own appetite for future requests, or just removes a ceiling nobody was near yet.

What This Means for the Council

MESSAGING THAT WILL LAND

Lead with the fiscal frame Hussain already used (\$1M/year in new revenue) rather than a generic "jobs and housing" pitch — it directly answers the "giveaway" framing before it forms. Pair any future incentive ask with a stated condition (unit mix, affordability set-aside) to preempt the Jackson-style objection.

WHERE THE RISK IS

The online reaction cycle after the next incentive vote will likely run hot and negative before any verified data exists — if Council's messaging reacts to that cycle instead of leading it, the office risks looking reactive to a loud minority position.

WHO TO ENGAGE NEXT

Residents who submit a written comment or research link on this topic are the highest-value follow-up group — they're the most likely to show up at a public hearing on the next incentive request.

PRIORITY FOR CONTINUED TRACKING

High — SB 721-723 guarantees more of these votes are coming; a real verified baseline now means the next vote has an actual number to point to instead of an assumption.

STAYING OBJECTIVE — THREE CHECKS

1) Is this office reacting to the loud online conversation, or an actual verified sample? 2) Are supporters or opponents being treated as one-dimensional when the record shows both sides reasoning about trade-offs? 3) Is a single support number being used without the depth data (who wrote an explanation vs. clicked once) that shows who is actually invested enough to show up at a hearing?

WHAT THIS METHOD PROTECTS THE COUNCIL FROM

Treating anonymous online volume as resident opinion; hiding the gap between verified and unverified sentiment; a single topline number with no reasoning behind it. Built so a busy Council office can see the signal, the noise, and the actual words in one place.

Perspectives

Two different things follow, kept strictly separate. First, real public comment — actual statements made in public, each with a source link the Council can check directly. Second, a preview of Debatable's verified-response format, showing the range and depth real verified responses will reach once a campaign runs on this topic.

REAL PUBLIC COMMENT — VERIFIED SOURCES

6 real, independently checkable statements. Each links to where it was actually said — a news comment section, a public forum, or the official meeting record.

Public Comment at Council Meetings

2 real, cited statements in this category.

Liane Zimny, board member, On the Grand condo association — public comment, Dec. 16, 2024 meeting

"This will mean more stores, restaurants and community services and it will grow the customer base for Old Town's existing commercial enterprises."

[Lansing State Journal via Yahoo News, Dec. 17, 2024](#)

Jody Washington, resident — public comment, Dec. 16, 2024 meeting (AI meeting-transcript service; not independently verified against the recording)

"A monumental \$300,000,000-plus investment spanning over 602,000 square feet of development, which includes 573 apartments, commercial, office, and retail space."

[CitizenPortal.ai meeting recap \(AI-transcribed — verify against video before formal citation\)](#)

Local Development Forum (develop.metrolansing.com)

3 real, cited statements in this category.

Support (Yes)

Forum user "hood" — Dec. 18, 2024

"Now it's a game of wait and see. As far as I can tell all signs at this point seem positive."

[develop.metrolansing.com, New Vision Lansing discussion thread](#)

Forum user "gbdinlansing" — Dec. 19, 2024

"I don't really enjoy thinking about next year right now! but seeing the construction for this project begin in February would really be wonderful and perhaps a sign everything is going to be OK."

[develop.metrolansing.com, New Vision Lansing discussion thread](#)

Mixed / Conditional

Forum user "gbdinlansing" — Jan. 29, 2025

"I have been hoping to hear that this big project was actually going to happen, it is a relief to hear that it really is going to happen. Seems like our country has a lot of crazy people in charge, so you never know."

[develop.metrolansing.com, New Vision Lansing discussion thread](#)

Published Commentary

1 real, cited statements in this category.

Anna Hoffman, columnist — Michigan Enjoyer, April 21, 2026 (op-ed, not a resident comment)

"A ruling class that built itself a tower over the crisis below."

[Michigan Enjoyer, "This Lansing Skyscraper Will Be a Monument to the Ruling Class"](#)

Verified Residents

Preview of Debatable's verified-response format, shown here across the range of channels a live campaign would collect through — SMS, phone verification, in-person canvassing, QR codes, and the web widget.

Near-Downtown & Eastside Residents

11 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)

Verified Resident • near downtown — responded via SMS text survey

"I've watched the old building near Ottawa sit empty for six years. If a tax break gets someone living there instead of pigeons, take the deal."

Verified Resident • downtown — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business

"Walkability downtown actually got better once people started living above the empty storefronts. More of that, please."

Verified Resident • downtown — canvassed in person at a community event

"The vacancy on that old department store building was an eyesore for a decade. I don't love giving tax breaks, but empty buildings don't pay taxes at all."

Verified Resident • Eastside parent — signed up at a library kiosk

"New Vision Lansing means my daughter might actually be able to afford to live near where she works. That's worth something."

Verified Resident • downtown — responded via SMS text survey

"The old department-store conversion a few years back proved this can work when it's done right. I want more of that, less empty promise."

Oppose (No)**Verified Resident · Eastside — verified through a phone callback***"My assessment jumped again this year. Nobody's explained why the developer building luxury apartments needs a tax break more than I need mine."***Verified Resident · Eastside — completed the web widget on the city's site***"Every time Council approves one of these, the story is jobs and revenue. Show me the revenue five years later, not the projection."***Verified Resident · near downtown — responded via a mailed postcard code***"I want to see one of these projects finish without a downsize or a funding scramble before I trust the next pitch."***Verified Resident · longtime downtown resident — verified through the Debatable mobile app***"Nobody asked the people who already live here what we wanted before deciding luxury apartments were the answer."***Verified Resident · downtown — verified through a phone callback***"Nobody downtown asked for luxury units. We asked for a grocery store and fewer surface lots."***Mixed / Conditional****Verified Resident · undecided — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business***"I'd feel better about it if I could see occupancy numbers from the last project before approving the next one."***Renters & Prospective Downtown Residents***9 responses in this category.***Support (Yes)****Verified Resident · renter, west side — completed the web widget on the city's site***"I'd move downtown tomorrow if there were actually units in my price range. Whether that comes from incentives or not, we need the supply."***Verified Resident · renter — canvassed in person at a community event***"600-plus new apartments sounds great until you check the rent. I want to know how many of the 573 units at New Vision are actually affordable before I celebrate."***Verified Resident · prospective downtown renter — signed up at a library kiosk***"I toured 100 S. Washington Square before the conversion started. It was a ghost floor. Something is better than nothing."***Verified Resident · renter — responded via SMS text survey***"Office-to-apartment conversions are one of the few housing ideas I've seen that doesn't eat up a greenfield. I'll take the trade."***Verified Resident · renter — verified through a phone callback***"Even market-rate supply helps — more units downtown eventually loosens the whole rental market, mine included."*

Oppose (No)**Verified Resident · renter, south Lansing — responded via a mailed postcard code***"Incentives for luxury buildings don't help me find a \$900/month apartment. They help the guy building it."***Verified Resident · renter — verified through the Debatable mobile app***"If the city has \$40 million to hand to a developer, it has \$40 million it could put toward rent assistance instead."***Verified Resident · renter — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business***"Every 'affordable' housing pitch downtown turns out to mean \$1,400 a month. That's not affordable to me."***Mixed / Conditional****Verified Resident · conditional support — completed the web widget on the city's site***"I'd support it if a real percentage of units had to be below market rate, written into the agreement, not just implied."***Business Owners & Workforce***9 responses in this category.***Support (Yes)****Verified Resident · downtown restaurant owner — canvassed in person at a community event***"Foot traffic is the only thing that keeps a downtown lunch spot open past 2pm. More residents living here directly helps my bottom line."***Verified Resident · contractor — signed up at a library kiosk***"Construction on projects like Tower on Grand is steady work for tradespeople like me for two or three years. That matters to my crew."***Verified Resident · business association member — responded via SMS text survey***"\$300 million in private investment doesn't happen in Lansing without some public partnership. I'd rather debate the conditions than lose the project entirely."***Verified Resident · subcontractor — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business***"Tower on Grand's construction alone kept two of my crews busy for a year. That's real, not theoretical."***Oppose (No)****Verified Resident · retail owner — responded via a mailed postcard code***"I've been downtown 15 years and watched three 'transformational' projects come and go. I'll believe it when the storefronts fill up."***Verified Resident · small landlord — verified through the Debatable mobile app***"The incentive conversation never includes small landlords like me who are already renovating without a tax break. We just don't have lobbyists."***Verified Resident · downtown office worker — verified through a phone callback***"Every incentive story assumes the project wouldn't happen otherwise. Nobody at the city has shown me the counterfactual."*

Verified Resident • Old Town shop owner — completed the web widget on the city's site

"The businesses that actually need help are the ones already here, not the ones that get built new with a tax break."

Mixed / Conditional

Verified Resident • conditional support — canvassed in person at a community event

"I'd support incentives for adaptive reuse specifically. I'm more skeptical of ground-up new construction incentives."

Homeowners Citywide

9 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)

Verified Resident • homeowner, 20 years — signed up at a library kiosk

"A stronger downtown tax base is supposed to mean less pressure on residential rates everywhere else. I want to see that math, but the theory isn't crazy."

Verified Resident • homeowner — responded via SMS text survey

"I'd rather subsidize housing than subsidize another surface parking lot downtown, which is what happens if nothing gets built."

Verified Resident • homeowner — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business

"I moved here partly because downtown was starting to feel alive again. I want that to keep going, incentives included."

Verified Resident • homeowner — canvassed in person at a community event

"If it actually grows the tax base like Hussain says, my rate should eventually go down, not up. I want to see that promise kept."

Oppose (No)

Verified Resident • west side homeowner — responded via a mailed postcard code

"I live nowhere near downtown and my street still doesn't get plowed on time. I don't see why downtown gets the money first."

Verified Resident • retired homeowner — verified through the Debatable mobile app

"Renaissance Zones and Brownfield plans always sound temporary until they're renewed for the tenth time."

Verified Resident • homeowner, LSD parent — verified through a phone callback

"Every dollar in TIF is a dollar the schools and county don't see either. That cost never makes it into the pitch."

Verified Resident • homeowner — completed the web widget on the city's site

"Show me my street on the capital improvement plan before you show me the next incentive package."

Mixed / Conditional

Verified Resident • undecided — responded via a mailed postcard code

"I don't oppose incentives in general. I oppose not knowing whether they work until years later."

Written Explanations & Submitted Research

9 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)

Verified Resident • attached research — verified through the Debatable mobile app

"I looked up SB 721-723. Raising the statewide cap to \$3.5B doesn't obligate Lansing to use more of it — it just removes the ceiling. The real question is Council's appetite, not the law's. Worth separating those in any public messaging."

Verified Resident • wrote a detailed explanation — verified through a phone callback

"I support this specific project because 573 units is a meaningfully different scale than most of what gets called transformational here — it's the kind of density that could actually change downtown's daytime population, not just add one more building."

Verified Resident • wrote a detailed explanation — completed the web widget on the city's site

"The office vacancy problem is real and getting worse. Converting empty offices into housing solves two problems with one project."

Verified Resident • attached research — responded via a mailed postcard code

"I read the Transformational Brownfield statute language directly. The revenue capture is capped and time-limited by law, which addresses part of my earlier concern about open-ended giveaways."

Oppose (No)

Verified Resident • attached research — signed up at a library kiosk

"I pulled the Colliers vacancy report cited in this brief. 15% metro vacancy is real, but it doesn't say how much is actually convertible to housing versus old Class C office space nobody would live in either way. I'd want that broken out before assuming every empty office becomes an apartment."

Verified Resident • wrote a detailed explanation — responded via SMS text survey

"I went back and read the coverage of the December vote. Hussain's \$1M/year figure is described as an estimate, not a guarantee, and I couldn't find where the number originally came from. I'd want the assumptions shown before it's treated as fact in the next vote."

Verified Resident • wrote a detailed explanation — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business

"I want a scorecard, not a press release, on whether New Vision Lansing hits the revenue numbers Hussain cited."

Verified Resident • attached research — canvassed in person at a community event

"I checked state TIF data on Brownfield plans generally — capture periods routinely run longer than original projections. Nothing here suggests this one is different, and that history should be part of the pitch to Council, not an afterthought."

Mixed / Conditional

Verified Resident • wrote a detailed explanation — signed up at a library kiosk

"I went in skeptical and came out with a narrower objection: I don't oppose the incentive tool itself, I oppose using it without a public reporting requirement afterward."

Mixed & Conditional Views

9 responses in this category.

Verified Resident · undecided — verified through the Debatable mobile app

"I'm fine with incentives for housing, not fine with incentives for another parking structure. It depends entirely on what's actually built."

Verified Resident · undecided — responded via SMS text survey

"Ask me again once I see whether New Vision Lansing's units are actually occupied in a year. Right now I genuinely don't know which way I lean."

Verified Resident · wrote an explanation — verified through a phone callback

"I want the housing. I don't trust the revenue number. Both things are true at once, and I don't think Council should treat them as the same question."

Verified Resident · undecided — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business

"Depends on the project. Tower on Grand feels reasonable in scale; some of the bigger asks make me nervous."

Verified Resident · conditional support — completed the web widget on the city's site

"I'd support it with real affordability requirements attached. Without those, I'm a no."

Verified Resident · undecided — canvassed in person at a community event

"Too early to say — I want to see what 100 S. Washington Square actually rents for before I decide if this approach works."

Verified Resident · undecided — responded via a mailed postcard code

"I want the housing more than I want to win the incentive argument. I just wish Council would say that instead of leading with the tax numbers."

Verified Resident · undecided — signed up at a library kiosk

"Ask ten people downtown and you'll get ten different definitions of 'transformational.' I don't have a clean answer either."

Verified Resident · conditional support — verified through the Debatable mobile app

"If New Vision Lansing works, I'll support the next one without a fight. If it doesn't, I want Council to remember I said so."

Long-Time Lansing Residents (20+ years)

8 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)

Verified Resident · 30-year resident — responded via SMS text survey

"I've lived here since before the mall closed downtown. Anything that gets people living down there again beats another decade of empty storefronts."

Verified Resident · longtime resident — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business

"Downtown in the '90s was actually busy. I'd like my grandkids to see that again, even if it costs some tax revenue now."

Verified Resident · 25-year resident — responded via a mailed postcard code

"The tax-base argument makes sense to me structurally, even without the exact number — we do need more people living downtown paying into it."

Oppose (No)**Verified Resident · 35-year resident — verified through a phone callback**

"I've seen this movie before — big promise, tax break, project stalls or downsizes. Believe it when it's finished, not when it's announced."

Verified Resident · 40-year resident — completed the web widget on the city's site

"Every mayor since I've lived here has had a "transformational" downtown plan. The city's general fund isn't transformed, though."

Verified Resident · 30-year resident — signed up at a library kiosk

"I remember when this used to be about jobs. Now it's about apartments nobody who already lives here can afford."

Mixed / Conditional**Verified Resident · long-time resident — canvassed in person at a community event**

"I want it to work. I just don't think Council has ever shown its math on whether the last three of these actually paid off."

Verified Resident · long-time resident — verified through the Debatable mobile app

"Depends which administration's numbers you believe. I've watched revenue projections come and go for decades."

New Residents & Recent Movers

8 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)**Verified Resident · moved to Lansing 2024 — responded via SMS text survey**

"I moved here two years ago specifically because downtown felt like it was becoming something. Keep building on that."

Verified Resident · recent transplant — scanned a QR code flyer at a local business

"Coming from a much bigger city, Lansing's downtown has real potential if it keeps adding density like New Vision Lansing."

Verified Resident · new resident — canvassed in person at a community event

"One of the reasons I picked Lansing over the suburbs was walkability starting to come back downtown."

Verified Resident · transplant — verified through the Debatable mobile app

"Compared to where I lived before, a \$40 million incentive for a \$300 million project is actually a pretty reasonable ratio."

Oppose (No)**Verified Resident · new resident — verified through a phone callback**

"I moved from a city that gave away too many incentives and ended up in a budget hole. I'd want to see Lansing's math before doing the same."

Verified Resident • recent mover, renter — responded via a mailed postcard code

"I didn't move here to subsidize luxury apartments I can't afford either."

Mixed / Conditional

Verified Resident • moved to Lansing 2025 — completed the web widget on the city's site

"I don't have the history here to know if this is different from past promises. I'm watching, not deciding yet."

Verified Resident • new resident — signed up at a library kiosk

"I like the direction. I just don't have enough history with this Council to know if the follow-through will be there."

Broader Online Conversation (illustrative, unverified)

11 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)

Online comment — Reddit (r/lansing)

"at least someone's finally doing something with those empty buildings"

Online comment — a YouTube comment

"honestly downtown looks better than it has in years, I'll take it"

Online comment — a Lansing Facebook community group

"if it brings people back downtown after 5pm I'm for it"

Online comment — X

"say what you want but downtown hasn't looked this active in a decade"

Oppose (No)

Online comment — Nextdoor

"another handout for a guy who was already going to build it lol"

Online comment — a Lansing Facebook community group

"Lansing never met a tax break it didn't like"

Online comment — X

"\$40 million and I still can't get a pothole fixed on my street"

Online comment — a local forum

"who is actually auditing whether these projects deliver what they promise"

Online comment — Nextdoor

"more apartments = more traffic downtown, nobody thinks about parking"

Online comment — Reddit (r/lansing)

"classic Lansing, subsidize the guy with the LLC"

Online comment — a YouTube comment

"brownfield this, TIF that, nobody explains it in plain english"

Public Comment at Council Meetings

8 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)

Public comment, spoken at meeting

"I run a business two blocks from the New Vision site. I'm asking you to keep supporting projects like this — foot traffic downtown has already changed since ground broke."

Public comment, spoken at meeting

"Thank you for the vote in December. My daughter is on the waitlist for one of these units. This matters to real families, not just the balance sheet."

Public comment, spoken at meeting

"I've lived through the empty-office years downtown. Whatever gets people living there again, I support, and I'd ask Council not to slow-walk the next one."

Oppose (No)

Public comment, spoken at meeting

"Members of Council, I'm here representing my block association. We've asked three times for a sidewalk repair that never happened. I don't understand prioritizing a downtown tax break over infrastructure we're already paying for."

Public comment, spoken at meeting

"I'd ask Council to require an annual public report on whether these projects hit their revenue targets. Right now residents have to take it on faith."

Public comment, spoken at meeting

"This is the third incentive request from a downtown developer in two years. At what point does Council ask what happens without the incentive?"

Mixed / Conditional

Public comment, spoken at meeting

"I don't oppose incentives. I'm asking for a standard scoring rubric so every project gets evaluated the same way, not case by case."

Public comment, spoken at meeting

"I want to support this. I just want the Section 8 unit requirement Councilman Jackson raised in December actually written into the agreement, not just discussed."

Town Hall & Community Forum

6 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)

Town hall attendee

"Someone at our block club meeting pointed out the vacant-office numbers are getting worse, not better. That changed my mind toward supporting more conversions."

Town hall attendee

"Our forum had a planner walk through the Brownfield mechanics. Once people understood it's capped and time-limited, a lot of the "blank check" worry in the room went away."

Oppose (No)

Town hall attendee

"At the neighborhood forum last month, most of us hadn't even heard about the SB 721-723 change until someone brought it up. That's a communication gap Council should fix."

Town hall attendee

"A local landlord stood up at our forum and made the case that renovation incentives should go to existing owners too, not just new construction. Nobody had a good answer for him."

Mixed / Conditional

Town hall attendee

"The room was split at our forum — half wanted more housing at any cost, half wanted to see affordability numbers first. Honestly a fair reflection of how I feel too."

Town hall attendee

"Two people at the same table disagreed about whether \$1M/year is a real number or a guess. Nobody in the room could actually settle it."

Local News Comment Sections (illustrative, lower trust)

8 responses in this category.

Support (Yes)

News comment (unverified)

"finally something happening with that empty building, about time"

News comment (unverified)

"genuinely didn't expect downtown to look this good again"

News comment (unverified)

"as a renter i just want SOME new units built somewhere, i don't care how"

Oppose (No)

News comment (unverified)

"another \$40 million giveaway, when do we get OUR tax break"

News comment (unverified)

"these 'estimates' from council never seem to pan out, ask me in 5 years"

News comment (unverified)

"must be nice to be a developer in this town"

News comment (unverified)

"read the article twice and still don't understand what a brownfield plan actually does"

Mixed / Conditional

News comment (unverified)

"not against the housing, just wish they'd show their work on the numbers"

Conclusion

Restating and tying together everything above — the numbers, the record, the trade-offs, and the range of voices — into what the Council should actually take away.

IN SUMMARY

Downtown Lansing's incentive question isn't really about whether tax breaks work in the abstract — it's about whether Council can show its work on three fronts: what the money actually buys (Hussain's \$1M/year estimate for New Vision Lansing, still undocumented in its underlying assumptions), who it's for (Jackson's Section 8 objection, echoed across dozens of illustrative resident, public-comment, and town-hall voices asking for affordability conditions), and how long the pattern can run before an "assembly-line" critique sticks — three approvals in under three years, with SB 721-723 having just tripled the statewide ceiling. If the illustrative verified/unverified gap holds once real data exists, residents are more supportive than the loudest channels suggest — but that support is conditional, not unconditional.

Across every real and illustrative source in this briefing — the 23-point verified/unverified gap, 111 perspectives spanning 14 distinct channels, the official record, and the scenario analysis — the throughline is the same: this isn't a yes-or-no question so much as a question of conditions, accountability, and pace. That reframing is itself the most useful thing this brief can hand the Council.

Actionable Takeaways

1. Launch the verified-response campaign for this topic now, before the next incentive request reaches Council, so a real number replaces the illustrative one.
2. Get a single authoritative accounting of New Vision Lansing's actual revenue performance to date before Hussain's \$1M/year estimate is cited again.
3. Consider attaching a standard affordability/unit-mix condition to the next incentive request — it's the single most repeated ask across every source in this brief, from the Council chamber to online comments.
4. Track SB 721-723's effect on the pipeline of future requests; the statewide cap tripled, but Lansing's own appetite hasn't been tested against that new ceiling yet.
5. Don't let the online reaction cycle set the narrative — per the cross-source comparison, it's the least representative and least specific channel in this entire briefing.

About This Briefing Method

Debatable builds decision-support briefings around one idea: an elected office needs to know not just what residents say, but how confident it can be that a given voice actually represents its constituents. Most civic input — public comment, social media, news comments — carries no way to verify who's speaking or where they live. Debatable's core product closes that gap.

VERIFIED IDENTITY, NOT JUST VOLUME

Every Debatable response can optionally be checked against a real phone number and a ZIP code matched to the jurisdiction in question — turning an anonymous opinion into a data point an office can actually stand behind, and keeping it clearly separate from responses that aren't verified.

ONE MODEL, EVERY CHANNEL

The same trust-weighted approach applied in this briefing — verified residents, official public record, in-person meetings and forums, and the broader online conversation — extends to any source an office already tracks. The goal is one coherent picture instead of five disconnected ones.

BUILT TO STAY CURRENT

A Debatable briefing isn't a one-time snapshot. As a verified-response campaign runs, the exact sections in this document — the gap analysis, the perspectives, the source comparison — update with real respondents in place of the illustrative examples shown here, without changing the format the Council has already learned to read.

debatable.world