The below document was provided by the Humane Society of Huron Valley and reflects the organization's position on deer management. This document was not produced by the City of Ann Arbor.

Urban deer, that move in smaller territories, feed on plants and are now naturally more habituated to humans, have become a significant concern in some Ann Arbor neighborhoods. As such, Ann Arbor's "deer problem" is currently that of deer exceeding their social carrying capacity (human tolerance) within small pockets of the City. We know from aerial estimates and the health of the population there is not a biological overpopulation. We also know that complaints come largely from neighborhoods near parks and nature areas near the Huron River in Wards 1 and 2. Ann Arbor's vast park system, growing development and increasing human population has set the stage for human/animal conflict by confining and channeling the movement of these "edge dwellers" (animals that live on the edge of nature and neighborhoods) closer to human homes.

The most significant problem with Ann Arbor's approach to addressing these concerns was a lack of data and clear goals, and is still a solution searching for a problem. Even the MDNR was surprised at the speed at which Ann Arbor arrived at the decision to cull, stating communities typically study deer challenges for years before proceeding with any strategy. To fully understand challenges and determine the most effective approaches, Ann Arbor needs objective baseline data, tracked over time in a consistent manner. Effective strategies are driven by goals that include specific metrics based on that baseline data and informed by wildlife experts. (Extrapolations from studies done in national parks, university nature preserves or even urban locations that do not closely mimic the characteristics of Ann Arbor are not useful in understanding or addressing Ann Arbor's unique challenges.)

Whether lethal or nonlethal, strategies aimed at managing population numbers is a large and uncertain undertaking that will become a permanent line on the city budget. Although the vacuum effect is denied by some, it is undeniable that culls cause community strife, pitting neighbor against neighbor—taking attention away from more critical community matters. Further, they must be repeated year after year. Ann Arbor is not an island, and deer are a native species living throughout the country, state and county. Artificial, sudden population reduction makes available food more plenty, allowing the current population to benefit from less competition and higher caloric intake so that they can reproduce at greater rates, and make room for deer from outside the City to migrate in at faster rate. A successful strategy must include changes to human behavior and manmade conditions that make our community so inviting to deer. By making the issue "too many deer", we have oversimplified the situation and solution, thereby accomplishing little more than a political quick fix.

Ann Arbor needs a consistent public policy approach to wildlife concerns that continually assesses whether it is encouraging conflict or coexistence. Education is our most powerful tool. Understanding trends, behaviors and habits of urban deer will increase tolerance and the success of strategies used to manage frustrations. This understanding and consideration can be used from a larger perspective as well. From fence ordinances to prescribed burns to new development encroaching on wildlife habitat—the impact on deer movement, behavior and visibility should be considered in all city planning, along with ways to minimize harmful effects.

The City has an ornithologist and herpetologist on staff, but no wildlife specialist or even animal control officer who can assist residents with concerns. In terms of expenditure of resources, in 2016 Ann Arbor spent as much to kill 63 deer as it did to provide life-saving animal services to hundreds of lost, abandoned and abused dogs and cats.

We cannot turn back the clock. Love them or hate them, urban deer are here to stay. In terms of harm to biodiversity, there is no greater impact than humans. Pollution, including the vast use of pesticides and herbicides, loss of habitat and global warming are, by far, the main culprits. While there may be a few city parks where "over-browsing" is a concern, in a community of 135,000 residents and 40,000 students, how does killing a few dozen deer make a real difference? Further, not only do a large percentage of City residents and visitors enjoy deer as part of the natural landscape, but also deer contribute positively to the ecosystem, spreading seeds and enriching the soil for new life.

Ann Arbor's history of nonviolence, tolerance and respect for nature should help guide an approach consistent with our City values of peaceful co-existence with wildlife. When we walk out of our backdoors we are not just stepping into our yards, we are stepping into the natural world, home to so many species that are a vital part of the ecosystem. Rather than being stuck in an endless, controversial and expensive cycle of attempted eradication, we should focus on effective approaches that also support peaceful co-existence. HSHV recommends affordable and easily implemented education, combined with site and problem specific mitigation efforts, driven by clear data and specific goals, as a truly successful model of urban wildlife conflict management – one in which we can all be proud.

Problem	Measurement Tool/Data	Goal	Nonlethal Solutions
Deer-Vehicle Collisions (DVCs)	- Total # of DVCs in the City limits - Use GIS data to determine problem areas or "hot spots" - Comparison to DVCs in surrounding areas - Comparison to total collision rate in the City limits - Cost of property damage (verified through repair bills and/or insurance claims) - Total number of injuries and severity of injuries - Number of dead deer picked up by AAPD - Number of complaints to HSHV on injured deer	Determine goal for rate of DVCs in the City limits	- Driver education on defensive driving techniques (educational programs, materials, website, etc.) - Road sight line improvements based on GIS data, trimming back foliage and improved lighting in hot spots - Improved signage warning drivers of deer in hot spots - Implement tools that keep deer away from the road – fencing and deterrents
Human Health (Lyme Disease)	Use data from the CDC, MDARD and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to determine risk level and sources of risk	Minimize risk by following state public health and CDC recommendations on managing risk level	- Deer are one of 100 species that carry the black-legged tick, responsible for spreading Lyme Disease. Removing one host species does not eliminate or reduce risk, and culls are not recommended by Lyme Disease organizations or the CDC. The main vectors believed to be central to the spread of Lyme Disease are small mammals, specifically the white-footed mouse, but may also include birds. - Protect predator species that naturally keep small mammal population in check: cats and coyotes. Ban hunting of coyotes in the City limits.
Deer Health	Use data from the DNR and MDARD to determine risk of CWD and other highly contagious conditions	Follow recommendations from the DNR	Maintaining a non-migratory herd protects the population from new disease (creating a hole in the population allows deer from outside the area to move in, with the potential of bringing in new disease)
Landscape Damage	- Use a city-wide survey to determine level of concern around deer that measures overall quality of life and resident complaints/concerns (by just focusing on deer you create a perception that deer are a problem) - Track number of complaints, nature of complaints, amount of damage (verified), type of plants, and location - Survey citizens making complaints on types of prevention efforts used & assemble, review and communicate data on measures that work - Use GIS mapping to determine problem areas - Review fencing policies in neighborhood hot spots	Determine recommendation for reduction in percent/number of complaints	- Provide education on deer-resistant gardening that includes planting different plants, using deterrents and fencing - Enforce feeding ban on intentional feeding and discourage unintentional feeding (of plants highly attractive to deer) - Institute City ordinances to help prevent neighborhood bans on fencing

*If Ann Arbor decides that a population count is valuable based on the complaint that there are "too many deer," then whatever method is used should be used consistently to get a sense of location and fluctuation over time.