

## Durand: CPA will be good for Marlborough's economy

**By Bob Durand/Guest columnist**

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As the principal author of the Community Preservation Act (CPA), I knew CPA would help preserve the high quality of life we all enjoy as Massachusetts residents. I also knew the law would act as an economic engine for cities and towns by virtue of the projects they would fund with CPA.

Since Republican Gov. Paul Cellucci signed CPA in 2000, 143 communities have voted to adopt the act, which places a modest surcharge of up to three percent on property tax bills. The result has been nothing short of phenomenal. Community raised money backed by state matching and other leveraged funds have preserved 13,333 acres of open space, created 4,231 affordable housing units, completed 2,083 historic projects and 646 recreation projects.

On Nov. 2, we Marlborough voters can approve this landmark smart growth tool. Question 4 on our ballot will ask us to approve a 2 percent surcharge, with exemptions for the first \$100,000 of residential value, along with exemptions for senior and low income homeowners. As a result, the average Marlborough homeowner will pay about \$58 a year, or 16 cents a day, as the local contribution. CPA will raise about \$1.2 million in revenue for us and will trigger a state match of about 30 percent for an additional \$333,000 for Marlborough.

CPA funds will provide a ready pool of funds to help the city preserve and enhance open space, recreational assets and historic resources. It will also create affordable housing that will help make sure Marlborough's local zoning will continue to be the governing authority over affordable housing developments. From a quality of life perspective, the CPA would be a good deal for Marlborough because all of the money raised here would be spent here, on projects we approve, based on our priorities.

Less often mentioned is how much economic activity in the form of jobs and business spending the CPA creates or leverages. Taking housing as an example, a study from UMass Boston found that the creation of some 3,000 affordable homes with support of CPA funds has generated 5,490 jobs across the state, along with \$312 million in income and \$20 million in increased revenue for local governments. In turn, the people living in those homes helped create an additional 5,270 jobs, \$279 million in income and \$40 million in revenue for local governments.

Harder to measure directly but no less impressive has been CPA's impact on the \$15.1 billion Massachusetts tourism industry, the \$6 billion agriculture sector and the \$12 billion forestry sector. CPA has been instrumental in communities' ability to support these sectors through the preservation of historic resources, and the protection and/or creation of parks, forests and farmland. CPA spending on all projects statewide to date has been in the vicinity of \$781 million.

In fact, in this turbulent economic period, CPA projects have been largely the only way communities have been able to take on capital projects without resorting to Proposition 2 1/2 overrides or debt exclusions.

It is worth noting that in addition to creating local jobs and income for local businesses, the economic activity CPA would create in Marlborough would serve to protect and enhance our quality of life in this wonderful city we call home. This in turn would benefit not only those of us who choose to live here, but also our business community as it seeks to attract and retain employees who will want to live, work and raise their families here.

With that in mind, I respectfully ask my fellow Marlborough voters to join with me in voting in favor of CPA, Question 4 on the ballot, when we go the polls this Nov. 2. The quality of life we protect will be our own.

*Bob Durand lives in Marlborough. He is a former state senator and former state secretary of environmental affairs.*

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