

## Our View: Vote yes on Community Preservation Act in New Bedford

Posted Oct. 26, 2014 @ 12:43 am

Just because there are no signs around New Bedford opposing local Ballot Question 5 does not mean those in favor have a shoo-in election ahead of them.

Supporters of the Community Preservation Act — including The Standard-Times — know that the opposition doesn't need to be organized, because the CPA is easily labeled as “another tax.”

But the CPA is not another tax. In fact, allowing the city's cultural, recreational and historical assets to crumble without taking advantage of the CPA is a non-monetary tax upon every resident, and it cuts at the quality of life for children, seniors, veterans, businesses and more.

Furthermore, because the state fund that matches the CPA is now fed from across the commonwealth, New Bedford taxpayers are already contributing, but will reap no benefits until the CPA brings those dollars back home.

Nearly half of the towns in Massachusetts have adopted the CPA, and none has rescinded it, though a couple places have tried. In some places, it's taken two or more votes; but everywhere it's been adopted, the residents now have at their disposal the opposite of an unfunded mandate from Beacon Hill: The community determines which projects are worthy, disburses money raised from those who can afford it and is enhanced by a partial match from the state fund. Then it is directed to projects by those who were elected to do so.

These dollars, dearly earned by residents, act as seed money on projects and attract private donations, as well as state and federal grants. The average New Bedford homeowner would pay an extra \$18 per year, the average New Bedford business owner \$60 per year, and those dollars with the state match alone would immediately turn into more than \$100. They have the potential to grow much more with other private and government funds.

And what those dollars buy is quality of life: restored historical buildings, including private structures like the First Baptist Church; more public housing; more open space (how long has the city waited for a good dog park?); and more playgrounds and ball fields.

No, New Bedford, this is not “another tax.” This is wisely setting aside some of your hard-earned money for the betterment of your family, your neighbors, your whole city.

The Standard-Times wholeheartedly endorses a Yes vote on Ballot Question 5 on Nov. 4.