Vote YES on Question 5 this November 4

A Good Deal for Arlington

Let’s make our money work harder for the things we love: open spaces, honoring our history, affordable housing, and community recreation.

Voting Yes on Question 5 is a smart way to safeguard quality of life in Arlington, not just for us today, but for our children and grandchildren tomorrow.

Question 5 responds to pressure that threatens the heart of many communities. Housing prices crowd out families and seniors, and fiscal crises bump history, housing, and open space to the bottom of the list.

The proposal is fiscally responsible, fair, and smart. It takes advantage of a state law that comes with partial state funding.

Arlington would keep local control through Town Meeting. The price is small, with full exemptions available for moderate-income seniors and low-income households.

Vote YES on Question 5 and keep Arlington great!
**About Question 5**

**Q: What would Question 5 do?**

A: On November 4, Arlington voters will decide whether to fund historic preservation, affordable housing, and open space with a small surcharge on the property tax. If approved, there will also be additional funding from the state.

**Q: Why is this needed?**

A: Long-term quality-of-life priorities are important for Arlington, but they are often neglected in the face of short-term budget pressures.

The Legislature has recognized this as a problem for many cash-strapped communities, which is why it established this local-option funding mechanism. As an incentive, the state provides funds for towns that opt in.

Under the state law—the Community Preservation Act—funds raised could only be spent on historic preservation, affordable housing, open space, and recreation. Within those restrictions, Town Meeting would decide how to use funds raised to preserve Arlington's quality of life.

**Q: How would Question 5 pay for community preservation?**

A: Question 5 proposes a surcharge of 1.5%, with many exemptions. The first
$100,000 of assessed value will be exempted for all properties. Low-income homeowners and low- and moderate-income seniors would be completely exempt.

The contribution by the average homeowner will amount to about $86 per year for a home valued at $515,000.

Q: How much would this raise?
A: As proposed, the surcharge would raise about $1.1 million annually. To this local contribution would be added a partial match by the state Trust Fund, which has varied from year to year from a high of 100% to a low of just under 30%.

Last year’s match was more than 50%. It would have provided an additional $570,000 to Arlington’s local fund.

Q: What’s next?
A: This plan will be Question 5 on our ballot for the general election on November 4th. A majority of Arlington voters answering “Yes” to this question will adopt the plan.

Here are links to the complete text of Question 5 and to the Community Preservation Act.

Further information about legal requirements, exemptions, costs per taxpayer, and state matching funds on this details page.
Arlington Community Preservation Act Ballot Question Committee
Joseph A. Curro, Jr. and Susan Stamps, Co-Chairs
Christine C. Carney, Treasurer

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How Question 5 works

Q: What can money from Question 5 be used for?
A: State law restricts money raised under the Community Preservation Act to the following purposes:

- Restoring and preserving historic buildings such as Town Hall, the Senior Center, libraries, schools, and historic sites, structures and artifacts, including historic documents;
- Creating or refurbishing ball fields, playgrounds, and walking trails;
- Preserving land for conservation, recreation, wildlife habitat, and flood control;
- Creating or rehabilitating more affordable housing for local residents, including supportive housing for seniors.

The three core areas under the law—Open Space and Outdoor Recreation, Affordable Housing, and Historic Preservation—must each be allocated at least 10% of the funding received each year. The remaining 70% of the funds can be spent, or reserved for future projects, in any of these three areas.

Q: Does that mean the town must spend 30% of the funds each year? The town can bank these expenditures for later years. For example, if a
significant historic preservation project were envisioned, a portion of the Historic Preservation allocation could be accumulated for that purpose.

Similarly, a major open space acquisition could be funded over a period of years, with each year’s set-aside satisfying the minimum requirement. In effect, the requirement for 10% to be allocated to each purpose area is over the long run.

Q: Who decides how the money gets used?
A: The law requires Town Meeting to create a local Community Preservation Committee. This board is charged with making recommendations on Community Preservation Act projects to Town Meeting each year.

The committee must include a representative from each of the Housing Authority, Historic Commission, Conservation Commission, Redevelopment Board, and Parks & Recreation Commission, with as many as four other positions determined by the community.

Arlington can, for example, include representatives of the Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee.

Each year, Town Meeting reviews committee recommendations, and has the authority to reject, approve, or reduce funding proposals for recommended projects. No CPA projects can be funded without a favorable vote of Town Meeting.

Q: How does the surcharge work?
It is not a 1.5% tax (which would more than double the tax rate!). It is a surcharge of 1.5% on the real estate tax, after the following exemptions:

- The first $100,000 of assessed property value is exempted for all property owners—residential as well as commercial and industrial. So a property assessed at $400,000 would be surcharged as if it were assessed at $300,000; a $700,000 property as $600,000.
- Low-income homeowners and low and medium-income senior homeowners are entirely exempt from the surcharge.
Question 5 includes every exemption allowed under the law.

Q: Do I qualify for an exemption?
A: Everyone qualifies for the exemption of the first $100,000 of assessed value. For low-income homeowners and low- to moderate-income senior homeowners, the income limits for full exemption are currently as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household size</th>
<th>Senior (60+) maximum income</th>
<th>Low-income maximum income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$65,870</td>
<td>$52,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$75,280</td>
<td>$60,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$94,100</td>
<td>$75,280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These exemptions are based on annual median incomes and are subject to change over time. For more information, please review the 2014 Community Preservation Act Affordable Housing Income Limits table.

In general if you are exempt from property taxes, you are exempt from the surcharge.

Q: By how much will my property taxes increase?
A: For the average Arlington homeowner, a 1.5% surcharge means less than $86 a year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessed Value</th>
<th>Approx Annual Surcharge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>$103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can estimate your own surcharge: take the assessed value of your home and subtract the $100,000 exemption; multiply by the current tax rate of $13.79 per thousand; and then by 1.5%

Q: How much money will this raise?
A: About $1.1 million a year. This does not include any distribution that Arlington would receive each year as its share of the state Community Preservation Act Trust Fund.

Q: How much will the state match?
A: The state Trust Fund is funded by charges imposed at the Registries of Deeds on every recorded real estate transaction. Since those include those in Arlington, we’ve been subsidizing the communities that have already adopted Community Preservation Act plans of their own!

There is no guarantee of the amount of the state match, which is dependent on both the amounts collected in fees, and on the number of communities participating.

The past two years the Legislature has augmented the Trust Fund with additional support, reflecting the success of the program and the number of constituent cities and towns participating.

Historically, the state match has varied from 100% in the early days of the program, to a low of about 27% in 2011. Last year’s contribution was about 52%.

So at the all-time low, Arlington’s match by the state would have been around $300,000. At last year’s rate, it would have been about $570,000.

Q: Can we change the plan once we adopt it?
A: Yes. Once adopted, a Community Preservation Act proposal must be in force for five years. After that time, the surcharge percentage and exemptions can be amended through the same ballot-question process.

The Act can also be revoked, although no community in the state has ever opted to do so. In fact, several have voted to increase their CPA contribution after a few years of experience with its benefits.

Q: Doesn’t our existing capital budget cover these investments?
A: Arlington’s capital budget already provides some funding for playgrounds and fields and renewal of historic buildings such as Town Hall and the Senior Center, limited by the competing demands of public health and safety, schools and public works.

The capital budget provides little funding for preservation of other historical assets and no funding for protection of open space, or for affordable housing. Question 5 can provide a steady source of funding for these community investments.

**Q: Can Question 5 help relieve our other budgets?**
The Selectmen have proposed that Question 5 and our capital-planning process work together. Some items in the existing Capital Plan are Community Preservation Act-eligible, and the Selectmen have recommended that such projects be considered for funding by Question 5.

Doing so would take advantage of the state match: any project shifted to CPA would be paid partly by the state funds. This would provide a savings to the capital budget, and the Selectmen recommend that any savings be transferred directly to the Override Stabilization Fund. That in turn would delay or reduce the need for a future tax increase.

All recommendations for CPA projects, including any proposed to be shifted from the existing capital plan, will be reviewed by the newly created Community Preservation Committee. In the end Town Meeting has the final word on all expenditures from CPA just as it does on all other Town funds.

**Q: Why now?**
A: In 2012 the Community Preservation Act was made more favorable to mature and largely built-out communities like Arlington. Previously, the funds could only be used to acquire new open space. The amendments allow for the funds to be used to improve existing parks, open space and athletics fields.

Also, protection of our few sensitive remaining open spaces (the Mugar parcel in
East Arlington for example) has long been a community goal.

The Community Preservation Act is a potential resource for that purpose, but the changes in the Act also give us the flexibility to address active recreational needs in our parks and playgrounds.
Supporters

Yes on Question 5 is grateful for the public support of the following individuals, organizations and elected officials. We are also pleased to note that the following town boards have voted to endorse adoption of the Community Preservation Act.

**Individuals**
- Ellen Aamodt
- Nellie Aikenhead
- Robin Alpern
- Angela Alton
- Jim Ampe
- Adam Auster
- Steve Austerer
- Kerry Austin-Smith
- Joan Axelrod
- Laura Bagnall
- Carol Band
- Sheri Baron
- Wesley Beal
- David Bean

**Elected Officials**
- Senator Ken Donnelly
- Representative Sean Garballey
- Representative Dave Rogers
- Joe Curro, Selectman
- Dan Dunn, Selectman
- Diane Mahon, Selectman
- Kirsi Allison-Ampe, School Committee
- Judson Pierce, School Committee
- Paul Schlichtman, School Committee
- Cindy Starks, School Committee
- Jennifer Susse, School Committee
- Jeff Thielman, School Committee

**Town Boards**
Conservation Commission
Historical Commission
Robbins Library Board of Trustees
Historic Districts Commission
Open Space Committee
Cyrus Dallin Art Museum Board of Trustees
Sustainable Arlington
Reservoir Committee of Vision 2020
Fiscal Resources Task Group of Vision 2020
Spy Pond Committee of Vision 2020

Organizations
League of Women Voters of Arlington
Arlington Historical Society
Arlington Land Trust
Old Schwamb Mill Preservation Trust
Housing Corporation of Arlington
Mystic River Watershed Association
Friends of Spy Pond Park
Friends of Arlington Great Meadows
YourArlington.com
Friends of Waldo Park

Individuals, continued
Amy Copperman
Barbara Costa
Mary Cummings
Jonathan Davey
Evelyn Delori
Paul DeStefanis
Sue Doctrow
Jason Donnelly
Susan Dorson
Julie Dunn

- Monday, October 20th, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. at Hardy Elementary School
- Thursday, October 23rd, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. at the Arlington Senior Center
- Sunday, October 26th, 2:00 - 3:30 at 20 Westminster Avenue

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Pamella Endo           |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Laura Fairbanks        |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
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| Ann Fitzgerald         |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Danuta Forbes          |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Vicki Ford             |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Lisa Fredman           |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Christie Getto Young   |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Jen Goebel             |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Deb Goldsmith          |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Jim Gomes              |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Lisbeth Gronlund       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Sharon Grossman        |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Kim Haase              |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Ned Hall               |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Eric Helmuth           |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| AA Hopeman             |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Jim Hopper             |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Peter Howard           |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Jennifer Irvine        |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Gordon Jamieson        |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Leonard Kardon         |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Karen Kelleher         |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Lowry Keyes            |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Christian Klein        |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Ed Koenig              |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| George Laite           |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Suzanne Leone Linder   |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Joshua Lobel           |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Jason Loeb             |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Julie Lucey            |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Melissa MacDonald       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| Stephanie Marlin-Curiel |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
Arlington Community Preservation Act Ballot Question Committee
Joseph A. Curro, Jr. and Susan Stamps, Co-Chairs
Christine C. Carney, Treasurer
Vote YES on Question 5 this November 4

Events

When: Monday, October 20th, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Where: The cafeteria at Hardy Elementary School
52 Lake St, Arlington, MA 02474
Join us for a presentation from Katherine Ross of the State Community Preservation Act Coalition.

When: Thursday, October 23th, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.
Where: Arlington Senior Center
27 Maple St, Arlington, MA
Join Senator Ken Donnelly for a forum on the Community Preservation Act.

When: Sunday, October 26th, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Where: 20 Westminster Avenue
20 Westminster Avenue, Arlington, MA
Arlington Community Preservation Act Ballot Question Committee
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Christine C. Carney, Treasurer

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About us

The campaign for Question 5 is coordinated by the Arlington Community Preservation Act Ballot Question Committee.

Contact us at contact@arlingtoncpa.org.

Joseph A. Curro, Jr. and Susan Stamps, Co-Chairs
Christine C. Carney, Treasurer
I Heard That...

...these things aren’t really necessary in Arlington.

A responsible government takes care of basic needs such as public education, public safety, public works and public health. These things are indeed necessary -- but they're not sufficient to maintain and foster a vibrant, desirable community that respects its heritage and offers a quality of life that its residents value highly. It must also protect its cultural legacy, preserve its natural and recreational resources, and ensure that those who struggle can find affordable places to live.

The Community Preservation Act allows towns like Arlington to protect these qualities that are too often neglected.

...my taxes will go up dramatically.

Less than a quarter a day -- $86 a year - for the average Arlington household.

If adopted by Arlington voters, the Community Preservation Act will allow a surcharge of 1.5% to be levied on residential and commercial property. All taxpayers would receive an automatic exemption on the first $100,000 of their property value. And low and moderate-income seniors and all low-income...
residents would qualify for complete exemptions from the surcharge.

To estimate the potential impact on your household check out our online Calculator.

...we’re stuck with it forever.

The Community Preservation Act allows communities to withdraw from participation after five years.

No city or town has ever opted to do so.

...it hurts lower income residents.

Protection for low-income residents is a critical part of the Community Preservation Act. A four-person family with income below $75,280 is entirely exempt. Use our online Calculator to see exemptions for other household sizes.

...it’s especially bad for seniors.

In fact, the exemptions are even greater for seniors.

Our seniors are protected by an exemption for not only low-income but also moderate-income households. And ‘seniors’ for purposes of the exemption are age 60 and older, so the exemption will apply to many residents.

Any home owned or occupied by an individual 60 or older, living alone, and earning less than $65,870, would qualify for a full exemption; for couples, the income limit is $75,280. (To estimate the impact on you, see our online Calculator.)

Of particular interest to many seniors are some of the project areas that might be considered under the Community Preservation Act like historic preservation efforts for buildings such as the Senior Center.

...we’ll get nothing from the State.
For more than a decade, Arlington residents have been paying recording fees to the Registry of Deeds for every real estate transaction. Part of these fees has funded a State match to Community Preservation Act communities. However, because Arlington has not adopted the Community Preservation Act, we have not received a dime.

By adopting the Community Preservation Act, Arlington will get a share of both recording fees and additional amounts appropriated by the Legislature.

The level of the state contribution is not guaranteed. During the history of CPA it has ranged as low as 27% -- at that level, we would gain about $300,000 per year in state funding. At last year's rate of 52% we would have received about $570,000.

...this is bad for the schools.

Over the past year the Town has reinforced its commitment to our schools to address growing enrollment and rising special education costs. Adoption of Community Preservation Act takes nothing away from this commitment.

...it’ll make it harder to get the high school rebuilt.

We need to rebuild our high school, a debt exclusion will be required, and five years from now the voters will make that decision. We trust the voters of Arlington to help shape our community’s future. Just as Community Preservation Act earns us state help in preserving our community, the state will be a partner in the future of Arlington High School.

...Community Preservation Act can’t fund parks, playgrounds and playing fields.

Originally, that was true. In 2012 Community Preservation Act was changed by the legislature to allow for investment in building and renewing outdoor recreation facilities. That change is one of the reasons that Community Preservation Act now makes sense for Arlington.
Town Meeting gets to decide. Town Meeting will create a Community Preservation Committee which is charged with recommending projects each year. And just as it does on all other Town spending, Town Meeting will have the final say.

...that Community Preservation Act will hurt our budgets.

On the contrary, it will help.

By funding some existing projects through Community Preservation Act funds -- and taking advantage of the state contribution -- we can help relieve our budgets by freeing general tax revenues for other purposes.

...that our capital budget already covers these areas

The presence of a recreation project in the Capital Plan is no guarantee that that project will be funded when scheduled. These projects are often bumped by higher-priority projects. For example, in 5 out of the last 15 years when Robbins Farm had a project in the 5-year capital plan, the project was pushed back in the plan.

Arlington’s capital budgets include no funding at all for community housing or for open space protection.
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