

SELECT BOARD MEETING

Monday, November 10, 2025

Select Board Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA 02420 - Hybrid Participation*
6:30 PM

AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments are allowed for up to 10 minutes at the beginning of each meeting. Each speaker is limited to 2 minutes for comment. Members of the Board will neither comment nor respond, other than to ask questions of clarification. Speakers are encouraged to notify the Select Board's Office at 781-698-4580 if they wish to speak during public comment to assist the Chair in managing meeting times.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS AND LIAISON REPORTS

1. Select Board Member Announcements and Liaison Reports
2. Lexington High School Project Update to Select Board

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1. Town Manager Weekly Update

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve: One-Day Liquor Licenses - Spectacle Management, Inc., 1605 Massachusetts Avenue
 - Friday, November 14, 2025 - Voctave
 - Saturday, November 15, 2025 - Jim Brickman
 - Saturday, November 29, 2025 - Preservation Hall Jazz
 - Sunday, December 14, 2025 - Eileen Ivers
 - Thursday, December 18, 2025 - Canadian Brass
 - Sunday, December 21, 2025 - Irish Christmas
2. Approve: One-Day Liquor Licenses - St Brigid Parish, 1989 Massachusetts Avenue
 - Taste of Italy Fundraiser - Saturday, November 15, 2025
3. Approve: Select Board Minutes
 - September 8, 2025 Select Board
 - September 15, 2025 Select Board
 - September 29, 2025 Select Board
 - October 6, 2025 Select Board
4. Accept: Select Board Committee Resignation
 - Housing Partnership Board: Sarah Morrison
5. Approve: Select Board Committee Appointment
 - Housing Partnership Board: Russell P. Tanner
6. Approve: Proclamation
 - Employee Recognition Day

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

1. Public Hearing: FY2026 Tax Classification Presentation 6:45pm
2. Review: Amended Housing Partnership Board Committee Charge 7:15pm
3. Update: Vision for Lexington Report on Local Election Voter Participation Analysis 7:25pm

ADJOURN

1. Anticipated Adjournment 7:45pm

Meeting Packet: <https://lexington.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/>

*Members of the public can attend the meeting from their computer or tablet by clicking on the following link at the time of the meeting: <https://lexingtonma.zoom.us/j/82013535294?pwd=mGvKYC9PHOT8ByUHHa0a18jNRhRXpf.1>

Phone +1 646 876 9923

Meeting ID: 820 1353 5294

Passcode: 848540

An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations:
<https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Select Board will be held on Monday, November 17, 2025 at 6:30pm via hybrid participation.

*Hearing Assistance Devices Available on Request
All agenda time and the order of items are approximate and
subject to change.*


Recorded by LexMedia

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Select Board Member Announcements and Liaison Reports

PRESENTER:

Jill Hai, Select Board Chair

ITEM NUMBER:

LR.1

SUMMARY:

Under this item, Select Board Members can provide verbal updates, make announcements, as well as comment on any additional points or concerns.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

FOLLOW-UP:

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Lexington High School Project Update to Select Board

PRESENTER:

Joe Pato, Select Board Member

ITEM NUMBER:

LR.2

SUMMARY:

Under this standing item, the Select Board will share general updates on the Lexington High School Project, including progress reports, key milestones, and upcoming actions. This item is intended to provide regular updates to the community on the project's status and next steps.

Public comment will not be taken on this item.

For additional information and live updates, visit the project website: www.lhsproject.lexingtonma.org

For 11/10/2025: The consulting team and staff to address some of the comments and questions raised at town meeting and that were circulating on social media in the aftermath of the meeting. The slide presentation is attached to the packet and two video segments will be loaded to the project website.

Lexington High School Project FAQ Videos

Table of Contents

Part 1

- Question: What is Construction Management at Risk (CMR)?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 1:00 Minute Mark | Slides 2-4
- Question: What are the Town's Financial Risks with CMR?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 6:06 Minute Mark | Slides 5-6
- Question: How is the Project Budget Controlled after the Debt Exclusion Vote?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 7:55 Minute Mark | Slides 7-11
- Question: To what extent do Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Projects experience cost overruns?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 14:26 Minute mark | Slides 12-13
- Question: To what extent do Lexington Projects experience cost overruns?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 17:05 Minute Mark | Slides 14-15
- Question: What is the MSBA Failed Vote Policy?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 18:05 Minute Mark | Slides 16-18

Part 2

- Question: Which fields are impacted by construction laydown activities?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 00:45 Minute Mark | Slides 20-21

- Question: What are the implications if FEMA does not redraw the floodplain map?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 2:03 Minute Mark | Slides 22-24
- Question: Characterize EEA Request regarding floodplain construction
- Time Stamp & Slides: 5:15 Minute Mark | Slides 25-26
- Question: Why is the triangle parcel across Worthen Road not utilized for this project?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 6:18 Minute Mark | Slides 27-29
- Question: How is the Town addressing parking and traffic issues at the existing high school?
- Time Stamp & Slides: 7:28 Minute Mark | Slides 30-31

SUGGESTED MOTION:

FOLLOW-UP:

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
Responses to TM Questions	Backup Material

Lexington High School FAQs

Project Finances & Risk Management



What is Construction
Management at Risk (CMR)?

What is Construction Management at Risk (CMR)?

A **Construction Manager at Risk**, or **CMR**, is a **construction delivery method** authorized by **Massachusetts General Law Chapter 149A**.

Under this approach, the Town hires a qualified **construction management firm** based on **qualifications and price**, not low bid alone.

The CMR is brought on **during design** to provide:

- **Cost estimates** at each design milestone
- **Scheduling** to maintain target completion
- **Logistical input** to ensure GMP includes all associated costs
- **Constructability reviews** to reduce change orders

Once the design is complete, the CMR provides a **Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP)** for construction.

- GMP Model **shifts financial risk** to the construction manager, who agrees to complete the project for a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP)
- The CMR is responsible for managing **cost**, **schedule**, and **construction** of the project to ensure it's completed within the agreed-upon budget.
- The Town pays the **actual cost of the work plus a fixed fee, not to exceed** that GMP, except for approved scope changes.
- This gives the Town **cost certainty before construction begins**.

Who is Turner Construction the CMR?

Turner is a North American-based, international construction services company and a leading builder in diverse market segments. The company has earned recognition for undertaking large and complex projects, fostering innovation, embracing emerging technologies, and making a difference for its clients, employees, and community. With 39 business units and over 11,000 employees, the company completes \$17 billion of construction on 1,500 projects each year. Turner offers clients the accessibility and support of a local firm with the stability and resources of a multi-national organization.

Turner Boston

- Established in 1909 with the 1st project being a 10,000 seat colonnade that was added to Harvard Stadium built 7 years prior.
- Staff – 475
- Carpenters and Laborers – 340
- Over 1 Billion of work per year in Greater Boston and Northern New England

CMR K-12 Projects

- **Wellesley High School** – Returned 30% of CM Contingency. 95% Owner Contingency unused
- **Concord-Carlisle High School** – 38% of CM Contingency used on changes. 21% Owner Contingency used for changes. 79% Owner Contingency unused
- **Josiah Quincy Upper School** – 33% of CM Contingency used on changes and 16% of Owner Contingency used for changes. 84% of Owner Contingency unused

What are the Town's Financial
Risks with CMR?

What Are the Town's Financial Risks With CMR?

Spending and borrowing limits - Town Meeting and voters set a **maximum** borrowing authorization

- The requested amount of \$659.7Million is the established cap for this project

The Project Team cannot exceed that amount without:

- A new Town Meeting vote, and
- A new town wide ballot debt exclusion election would be required if additional funds are requested

This process ensures full public control of any future appropriations

What costs of the project is the Town responsible for:

- MSBA has committed to contributing up to \$121.7 million in grant funds for the project
- With our partnership with the MSBA, certain aspects of the project will not be eligible for reimbursement. All those costs that are not eligible, are the financial responsibility of the Town
- **Owner-directed scope changes after GMP**
- These would be for very small scale changes to the bid design such as relocating a wall, or finish changes. These changes would be funded through the owners contingencies.

How is the Project Budget
Controlled after the Debt
Exclusion Vote?

How is the Project Budget Controlled after the Debt Exclusion Vote?

Construction Cost Controls (CMR & GMP)

- The CMR provides a **Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP)** once design is finalized
- **Change orders** can **only be approved for specific, pre-defined reasons**—such as unforeseen site conditions, code changes, or Town-approved scope adjustments
- All change orders **must be reviewed** by the **OPM, Designer, and DPF**
- **CMR Contract** includes protection for the town for **schedule and cost adherence**, with Liquidated damages, and clearly defines **non compensable items**.
- **Built-in contingencies** protect against inflation and unforeseen conditions

Town Oversight

- Ongoing review by:
- **Department of Public Facilities**
- **Monthly budget reporting Permanent Building Committee**

MSBA Oversight

- MSBA reimburses **36.95 % of eligible project costs**
- Reviews **each monthly pay requisition**, cost code, and contingency use
- Reviews **each Change Order** for accuracy
- Provides an additional **layer of financial accountability** beyond the Town

C.5b Bloom – SD Pricing

Description	Cost
Construction Cost	\$534.1M
Soft Cost	\$94.5M
Owner Contingency (Construction and Soft Cost)	\$31.1M
Total Project Budget	\$659.7M
Anticipated MSBA Grant	\$121.3M
Mass Save	\$4.5M
LABBB Contribution	\$1M
Anticipated District share	\$532.9M

Notes:

- Total Project Budget Contingency \$124.3

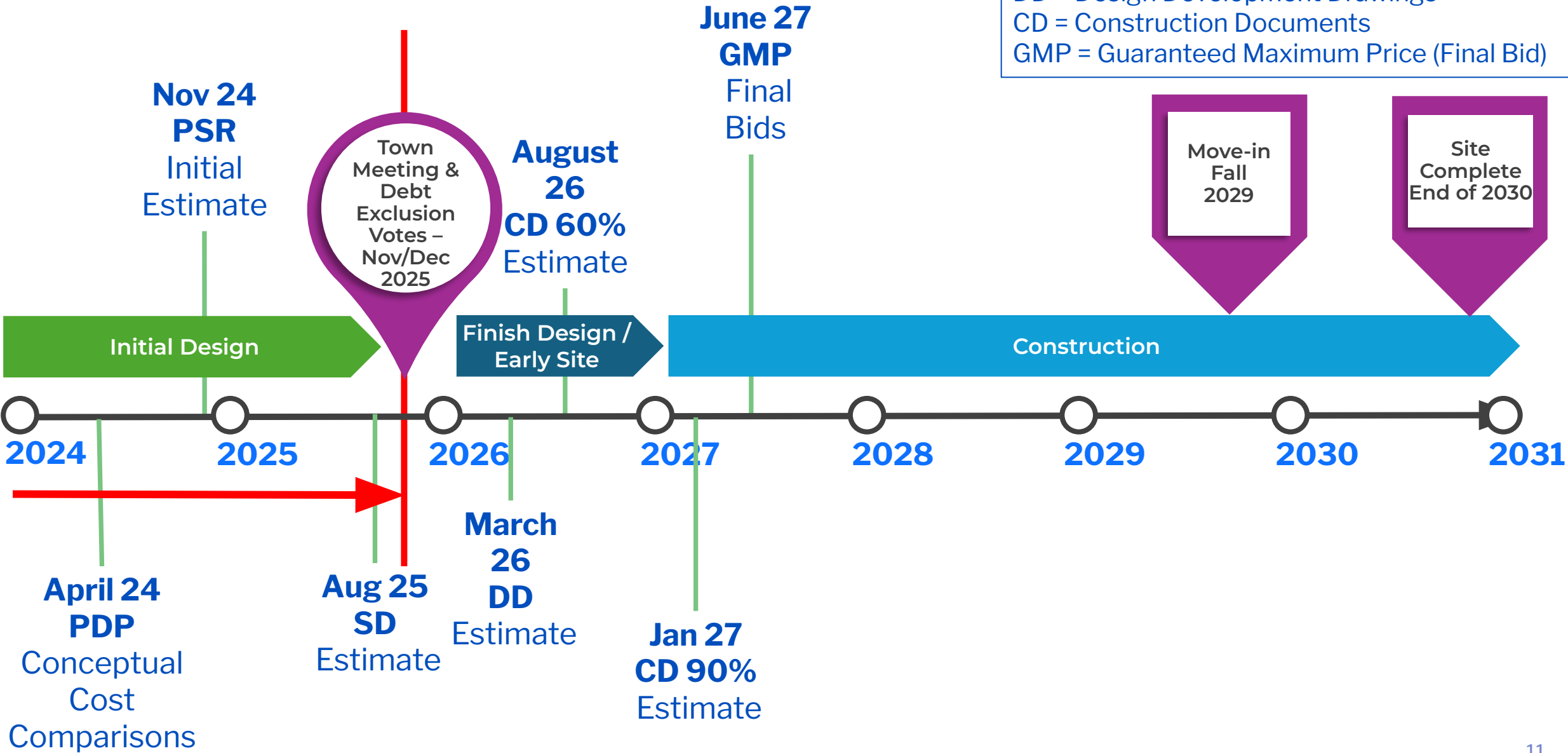
C.5b Bloom – Contingencies

Contingency	
Design Contingency (in GMP)	\$38.4
Escalation Contingency (in GMP)	\$33.7
Tariff Contingency (in GMP)	\$8.4
CM Contingency (in GMP)	\$12.7
Owner (Construction Contingency) (in Total Project Budget)	\$26.7
Owner (Soft Cost) Contingency (in Total Project Budget)	\$4.4
Total	\$124.3

- All Contingencies listed here are **included** in the Total Project Budget of \$659.7M.
- All Contingencies developed based on industry standard % typically used on most MSBA projects
- All **unused** Contingencies are **savings that are returned to Owner**, are **not borrowed** by the town, and **reduce to Total Project Budget**

LHS Anticipated Project Timeline - Estimating

- PDP = Preliminary Design Program
- PSR = Preferred Schematic Report
- SD = Schematic Design Drawings
- DD = Design Development Drawings
- CD = Construction Documents
- GMP = Guaranteed Maximum Price (Final Bid)



To what extent do
Massachusetts School Building
Authority (MSBA) Projects
experience cost overruns?

To What Extent Do MSBA Projects Experience Cost Overruns?

MSBA projects rarely experience overruns due to:

- **Total project budget** accounting development
- **Contractual requirement** for CMR/OPM/Designer
- **Contingency** layers
- Mandatory MSBA, Designer, OPM, and DPF **cost reviews** for all changes
- Use of **Guaranteed Maximum Price**
- **CMR Delivery method** is a collaborative and transparent "open book" cost tracking

To what extent do Lexington
Projects experience cost
overruns?

To What Extent Do Lexington Projects Experience Cost Overruns?

Joseph Estabrook Elementary School

- MSBA Project \$43.4M Total Project Budget
- Under budget with project savings of **\$600K**

Maria Hastings Elementary School

- MSBA Core Project \$65M Total Project Budget
- Under budget with project savings of **\$1.7M**

Lexington Police Station

- Solar Ready Police Station approved Budget \$34.5M
- Police Station completed under Budget by **\$1M**
- Solar canopy costs exceeded original estimates of \$3.2 by \$1.2M

Clarke & Diamond Middle Schools

- CMR Project \$62.2M Total Project Budget
- Under budget by **\$3M**

Lexington Fire Station

- Approved Budget \$20M Budget
- Under budget by **\$1.1M**

Lexington Children's Place

- Approved Budget
- Under budget by **\$300K**

What is the MSBA Failed Vote
Policy?

MSBA Failed Vote Policy

In the event that a school district fails to approve funding for a proposed project within the 120-day deadline, by no later than 10 business days following the failed vote, the school district must submit to the MSBA a plan that: (1) presents the vote results, (2) explains the school district's understanding of the reason(s) for the failed vote, and (3) sets forth the school district's plan to remedy the failed vote and a suggested timeline for such a remedy. The MSBA will review the plan and determine whether it can continue to set aside MSBA funds for the proposed project. However, a failed local vote likely will result in the school district being required to submit a new Statement of Interest to the MSBA and await a second invitation from the MSBA to enter the feasibility study phase of the MSBA's process.

MSBA Failed Vote Policy

What happens after a failed vote?

If the initial local vote fails, the MSBA allows one limited resubmission within a defined window (within **120 days**). If that also fails, the **project is closed** in the MSBA system, and the **Town would have to restart** the multi-year process from the beginning, including submitting statements of interest, eligibility, and feasibility.

If the debt exclusion fails, can the Town create a new project?

No. The MSBA's "Failed Vote Policy" limits any resubmission to the same project scope previously approved by the MSBA Board. Only minor adjustments (e.g., timeline updates or reduced scope within the same site plan) may be considered — not a new design or program.

Does the Department of Revenue (DOR) allow cost increases without new votes?

No. Per DOR guidance, any increase in borrowing authority for a debt-excluded project requires **new Town Meeting authorization** and **a new ballot vote**.

Within the already-approved amount, the Town may manage **minor cost fluctuations** through existing contingencies, bid savings, or project scope adjustments—but it **cannot exceed** the total voter-approved borrowing authorization.

Lexington High School FAQs

Project Design & Construction



Which Fields are impacted by
Construction Laydown
activities?

Which Fields Are Impacted by Construction Laydown Activities?

Impacted Fields

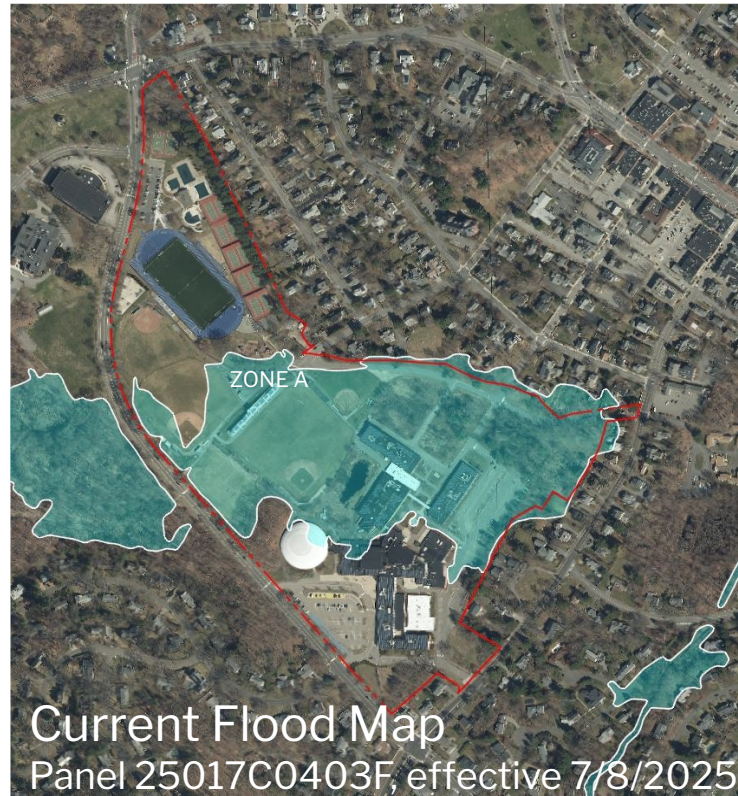
- C3 Baseball Field
- C4 Ball Field
- Crumb Football field
- Practice field/throwing area
- No additional fields are required for parking or laydown.
- The work will be performed within the site fence.
- Designated work zones will be set up for utility and site improvement work on Park Drive, Worthen Road, and Waltham Street, in addition to the areas for the relocated skate park and throwing cage.



What Are the Implications if
FEMA Does Not Redraw the
Floodplain Map?

What Are the Implications If FEMA Does Not Redraw the Floodplain Map?

- The current flood map indicates a Zone A on the Project Site
 - Zone A: Areas with 1% annual change of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage [more commonly known as the 100-year floodplain]. Because detailed analyses are not performed for such areas, no depths of base flood elevations are shown within these zones.
 - *FEMA Glossary of Terms*, <https://www.fema.gov/about/glossary>
- The Project completed a Flood Study and submitted it to FEMA via Letter of Map Change (LOMC)
- There is no reason to believe FEMA will deny the LOMC to amend the maps because a flood study was performed which demonstrates the flood zone area is substantially less.



What Are the Implications If FEMA Does Not Redraw the Floodplain Map?

- Upon review, FEMA may request revisions to the flood study.
 - This could include changes to the base flood elevation which may require raising the grade around the site
 - Costs for additional mitigation would be covered through project contingencies
- The project will still be required to comply with Article 31 of the Lexington Zoning Bylaws and the Wetlands Protection Act
- A Flood Study would be required to establish a base flood elevation (BFE).
 - The Flood Study was completed already, and it identifies the extent and base flood elevation of the floodplain.
 - The proposed first floor of the high school is located approximately 4.8' above the base flood elevation
- Work within the floodplain would be permitted through the Lexington Conservation Commission, including compensatory storage analysis across the limit of work, providing equivalent flood storage in the proposed conditions (after the project is constructed) as compared to existing conditions (before construction begins)
 - The project incorporates compensatory storage for a small area of floodplain (based on revised map) that exists so that no loss of flood volume occurs after construction.

Characterize EEA Request regarding Floodplain Construction

Characterize EEA Request Regarding Floodplain Construction

The Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) issued a Certificate after review of the Expanded Environmental Form (EENF)

- The certificate states that if the submitted Letter of Map Change (LOMC) is accepted by FEMA, the proposed utility yard will be located within the 100-year floodplain

The Project team is aware of this and included several mitigation measures in the project design and budget relative to the floodplain:

- Relocating the area of floodplain away from the utility yard and HS building
- Providing compensatory flood storage
- Maintaining the piped connection to the culvert
- Raising the grade approximately 4-6' in the footprint of the new high school
- Establishing a first floor elevation of the high school approximately 4.8' above the floodplain

Why Is the Triangle Parcel
across Worthen Road not
utilized for this Project?

Why Is the Triangle Parcel Across Worthen Road Not Utilized for This Project?

The “Triangle Parcel” (ID 41-120) was initially investigated by the Project team as it is town-owned and under care, custody, control and management of the School Committee



Why Is the Triangle Parcel Across Worthen Road Not Utilized for This Project?

- Wetlands were flagged on the parcel and included on the Order of Resource Area Delineation (OARD), received from Lexington Conservation Commission
- Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) requires Massachusetts Historic Commission (MHC) to review the project and through that review it was discovered that an Indigenous Archeological Site exists on the parcel
- Given the extent of wetlands and the MHC determination, the Project team concluded it was not advantageous to consider the parcel for development because of additional cost and additional permitting requirements without any benefit to the Project
 - No construction laydown or temporary parking will be located on the parcel
 - No permanent parking will be located on the parcel
 - Opportunities to realign Worthen Road are not efficient and would not offer any benefit to the Project site



How is the Town addressing
Parking and Traffic issues at the
Existing High School?

How Is the Town Addressing Parking and Traffic Issues at the Existing High School?

- Quantity of parking spaces today: **450 spaces**
 - Zero student parking
- Quantity of parking spaces proposed: **500 spaces**
 - Zero student parking
 - 50 additional spaces will accommodate Central Office in the new school building
- **The Transportation Safety Group** (TSG) has been actively looking for improvements in both safety and parking in the area:
 - Parking restrictions have been placed on Parker Street (trial)
 - Speed zone restrictions are in place on Worthen Road (20 MPH)
 - Satellite Parking at Lincoln field is being explored
- **A Traffic Study** was completed for the Proposed project:
 - The study concluded that the proposed project will have **no change** on the current conditions at the 3 major intersections surrounding the school **as the volume of traffic will remain unchanged.**

Thank You

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Town Manager Weekly Update

PRESENTER:

Steve Bartha, Town Manager

**ITEM
NUMBER:**

TM.1

SUMMARY:

Under this item, the Town Manager can provide verbal updates, make announcements, as well as comment on any additional points or concerns.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

FOLLOW-UP:

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Approve: One-Day Liquor Licenses - Spectacle Management, Inc., 1605 Massachusetts Avenue

PRESENTER:

Jill Hai, Select Board Chair

ITEM NUMBER:

C.1

SUMMARY:

Category: Decision-Making

Spectacle Management, Inc. is requesting **six** One-Day Liquor Licenses to serve beer and wine at Cary Hall, located at 1605 Massachusetts Avenue, for their Concert Series. The concerts are scheduled for the following dates and times:

- Friday, November 14, 2025 - Voctave, from 6:00 - 10:00 pm
- Saturday, November 15, 2025 - Jim Brickman from 6:00 - 10:00 pm
- Saturday, November 29, 2025 - Preservation Hall Jazz from 6:00 - 10:00 pm
- Sunday, December 14, 2025 - Eilleen Ivers from 2:00 - 6:00 pm
- Thursday, December 18, 2025 - Canadian Brass from 6:00 - 10:00 pm
- Sunday, December 21, 2025 - Irish Christmas from 6:00 - 10:00 pm

The request has been reviewed by the Police Department, Fire Department, and Grounds Division, all of whom have no concerns.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Move to approve six One-Day Liquor Licenses for Spectacle Management, Inc. to serve beer and wine at Cary Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue, for their Concert Series on November 14, 15, 29 & December 14, 18, 21, 2025.

Move to approve the consent.

FOLLOW-UP:

Select Board Office.

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
 Spectacle Event Diagram	Backup Material

Cary Concert Hall Area

Cary Hall Lobby Area

*Area where beer, wine and snacks will be served

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Approve: One-Day Liquor Licenses - St Brigid Parish, 1989 Massachusetts Avenue

PRESENTER:

Jill Hai, Select Board Chair

ITEM NUMBER:

C.2

SUMMARY:

Category: Decision-Making

St. Brigid Parish, located at 1989 Massachusetts Avenue, is requesting a One-Day Liquor License to serve beer and wine at its “Taste of Italy” community event and fundraiser. The event will take place in the Parish Hall on Saturday, November 22, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

To approve a One-Day Liquor License for St. Brigid Parish, 1989 Massachusetts Avenue, to serve beer and wine at its “Taste of Italy” event on November 22, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM, in accordance with all applicable regulations.

Move to approve the consent.

FOLLOW-UP:

Select Board Office.

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Approve: Select Board Minutes

PRESENTER:

Jill Hai, Select Board Chair

ITEM NUMBER:

C.3

SUMMARY:

Category: Decision-making

The Select Board is being asked to approve the following minutes:

- September 8, 2025 Select Board
- September 15, 2025 Select Board
- September 29, 2025 Select Board
- October 6, 2025 Select Board

SUGGESTED MOTION:

To approve and release the following minutes:

- September 8, 2025 Select Board
- September 15, 2025 Select Board
- September 29, 2025 Select Board
- October 6, 2025 Select Board

Move to approve the consent.

FOLLOW-UP:

Select Board Office.

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
 DRAFT 09082025 Select Board Minutes	Backup Material
 DRAFT 09152025 Select Board Minutes	Backup Material
 DRAFT 09292025 Select Board Minutes	Backup Material
 DRAFT 10062025 Select Board Minutes	Backup Material

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Monday, September 8, 2025

A meeting of the Lexington Select Board was called to order at 6:30p.m. on Monday, September 8, 2025, via a hybrid meeting platform. Ms. Hai, Chair; Mr. Pato, Mr. Lucente, Mr. Sandeen, and Ms. Kumar, were present, as well as Mr. Bartha, Town Manager; Ms. Axtell, Deputy Town Manager; and Ms. Katzenback, Executive Clerk.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Exemption 3: Discuss Strategy with Respect to Potential Litigation - Lexington High School Project
2. Exemption 3: Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining (LMEA, LMMA, Fire, Police Superior, and Crossing Guard Unions)

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and by roll call, the Select Board voted 5-0 to enter into Executive Session 3 to discuss Strategy with Respect to Potential Litigation - Lexington High School Project and to discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining (LMEA, LMMA, Fire, Police Superior, and Crossing Guard Unions) at 6:33pm. Further, the Chair declared that open meeting discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and litigating position of the Town.

Board returned to open session at 8:15pm

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Williams, 8 Stratham Road, stated that, regarding the high school project, he feels the outcome of the current legal challenge to Bloom is irrelevant to the choices the Town is facing. He expressed concern that Bloom design cannot be built because the Town has feasible alternatives to building on the park and playground.

Peter Kelley, 24 Forest Street, stated that he is funding legal work to understand the exact history of the fields included in the proposed location for a new High School building. Augustus Scott, in 1910, was the first to start an effort to organize the park with a swimming hole. Mr. Scott gifted land, what is now considered to be the park and playground area, to the Town. There was a contract made between Augustus Scott and the Town of Lexington that, in receiving the land, it would always be park and playground land, and Mr. Kelley feels that contract cannot change.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS AND LIAISON REPORTS

1. Select Board Member Announcements and Liaison Reports

Nothing additional at this time.

DOCUMENTS: Liaison Reports-Joe Pato-2025-08-18

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1. Town Manager Weekly Update

Mr. Bartha stated that the Town received a letter from McGregor Legere & Stevens PC on August 14th regarding the topic previously mentioned by Mr. Kelley. Town Counsel does not agree with the positions

within that letter and a draft letter on this will be circulated to the Board. This Friday will be a celebration marking the 10th Anniversary of the Lexington Community Center.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

1. Communications Advisory Committee (CAC) Update: Verizon License Renewal Process

Ken Pogran, CAC Chair, explained that the Verizon Cable License is due to expire on October 30, 2026. Verizon is one of three cable television providers in Lexington. The Verizon license is rather unique in that all of the other cable licenses have been for 10 year terms. Verizon got a 15 year initial license in 2006 and five years ago, when their license came up for renewal, they specifically requested only a five year renewal term. The Select Board is the issuing authority for cable television licenses. The Communications Advisory Committee conducts the license renewal process on behalf of the Town. The proposed contract will likely carry over the proposed five year term and a provision that Verizon insisted on five years ago, their ability to terminate the license early after providing appropriate notice for the Town. The Committee plans to ask Verizon for additional HD PEG channels and a large grant for PEG capital.

The Board thanked Mr. Pogran and the CAC for all of its work.

DOCUMENTS: Update on Verizon Cable License Renewal Process

2. Approve: Donation and License Agreement Between Lexington Pickleball Club and Town of Lexington

Ms. Hai explained that the Lexington Pickleball Club (“LPC”) requested permission from the Recreation Committee to pursue making enhancements to the tennis courts at Adams Park, through the form of a gift to the Town. The Recreation Committee voted unanimously on May 21, 2025, to “recognize the continued collaboration with the LPC and approve LPC to proceed with Option B in the relining presentation, as presented, for the relining of the pickleball lines at the Adams Courts with construction to take place during the 2025 season. The attached memo/presentation and Donation and License Agreement provide an overview of the implementation and management of this gift. With the attached Donation and License Agreement, the Town is authorizing the Lexington Pickleball Club, at the Pickleball Club's own cost, to proceed with adjustment of the fence and the painting of pickleball court lines on the existing surface of the tennis courts at Adams Park. Town Counsel has reviewed this agreement. At a future date, as defined in the agreement, the Select Board will vote to formally accept the donation.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve and authorize the Town Manager to sign and execute the Donation and License Agreement between the Lexington Pickleball Club and the Town of Lexington.

DOCUMENTS: 2025.09.08 Select Board Request - Adams Donation, 2025.09.08 Lexington Pickleball Club Proposed Donation Memo/LPC Adams Relining Presentatio, Adams Park Courts LPC Donor License Agreement

3. Joint Meeting: Select Board, Appropriation Committee & Capital Expenditures Committee

- Review: Capital Financing Plan for Debt Exclusion Projects

Present for the Appropriation Committee (AC): Mr. Padaki, Vice Chair; Mr. Levine; Mr. Michelson; Mr. Ahuja; Ms. Verma; and Ms. Yan

Present for the Capital Expenditures Committee (CEC): Mr. Lamb, Chair; Ms. Beebee; Mr. Boudett; Ms. Rhodes; and Mr. Rubenstein

Carolyn Kosnoff, Assistant Town Manager for Finance, presented an update of the financing plan and taxpayer impact for the LHS Building Project. Out of the total cost of the project, the Town will bond approximately \$547M. The remainder of the project will be funded through an MSBA grant and a small contribution for the lab program. The Mass SAVE rebates are not incorporated at this time. In February 2026, approximately \$20M will be bonded. This is the amount believed to be reimbursed for the MSBA grant. This project is planned to be financed on a level payment structure over 30 years. The first bonds in February 2026, February 2027, February 2028, and February 2029 are all anticipated to be level payment at 30 years. The February 2030 bond is estimated at approximately \$56M, modeled as a 15 year bond. The primary reason for this is that not all components of the building will have a life of 30 years. A 4% rate is estimated for the bond, though this may not necessarily be the coupon rate every year.

Mr. Michelson (AC) asked when the MSBA payments will start to be received. Ms. Kosnoff stated that the project team will submit reimbursement requests for eligible expenses to the MSBA. MSBA has already been reimbursing for this project, and this will continue throughout. Mr. Michelson asked if the first bond issue will cover the architectural costs and items that occur prior to that start of construction. Ms. Kosnoff stated that, if the debt exclusion vote passes and the project moves forward as planned, the bond in February will cover all of the costs that have happened to date, including the feasibility study and all of the design work. It will also be expected to cover the work that will occur until the end of the fiscal year. The anticipation is that another a bond anticipation note will then be issued to cover the spending for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Lucente stated that, in June 2027, it seems that there will be \$78M borrowed. He asked if less will be borrowed, as the Capital Stabilization Fund will be used to fund it, or if the Town will be borrowing the amount and then paying it back. Ms. Kosnoff stated that the Town will be borrowing the amount and paying it back. The Capital Stabilization Fund will be paying down the tax rate at whatever the debt service of the project will be. There will not be a principal payment on that. There will only be interest.

Mr. Padaki (AC) stated that the project has roughly a 10% contingency built into it. As the construction drawing documents are drawn up, the contingency begins to get smaller, and he asked if there is a way to reflect that in the spreadsheet. Ms. Kosnoff stated that the assumption is that every dollar of the contingency will be spent, though this will be an evolving process.

There was a request to have a link to the assessed value of properties available through the proposed calculator, and that the calculator be promoted to the public.

Ms. Verma (AC) asked if increasing property values was taken into account for the calculator. Ms. Kosnoff stated that the calculator does not take into account an increase in home values. It assumes over the life of the model that home values stay the same.

Taylor Singh, 40 Hancock Street, made suggestions regarding the graphs and tables to make them clearer for the public.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, asked about the policy decisions being made, and if they were made by staff or the Board. Ms. Hai stated that she believes the Board had this conversation at one of the recent finance summits. There was consensus at the summit to have Ms. Kosnoff proceed under these assumptions. The groups had discussed how to deploy the Capital Stabilization Fund and the level payment versus level principal.

Olga Gutttag, 273 Emerson Road, expressed concern regarding the increase to property taxes due to the Town's capital needs. She asked if it would be possible to produce a similar model showing the operating budgets over the next number of years.

The AC and CEC adjourned their respective committees at 9:33pm.

DOCUMENTS: LHS Debt and Taxpayer Impact, LHS Project Taxpayer Calculator

4. Discussion: Proposed Select Board FY26-FY27 Goals

The Select Board continued its discussion on the development of their FY26–27 goal areas and performance goals. This conversation follows up on the Board's initial work during its July 17, 2025 work session, where members began identifying priorities and key areas of focus. The Board agreed to send comments on this document to staff for review by the full Board.

DOCUMENTS: Working Draft of Select Board Performance Goals 2025-2027

5. Approve: Town Manager Review Process

Ms. Hai stated that, at the July 7, 2025 meeting, the Board began discussion of the Town Manager review process, considering the format and evaluation criteria, and established the following general timeline for the annual review and performance evaluation:

- By end of summer: Finalize the evaluation process and form
- September–October: Conduct the evaluation process (self-evaluation, Board input, collation)
- By November: Complete and deliver the final review and feedback

At the August 4, 2025, Board meeting, a proposed evaluation form was discussed and distributed post meeting to the Board for any edits. No suggested edits were submitted.

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve the Town Manager evaluation form and process, as presented.

DOCUMENTS: Proposed Performance Evaluation Form, Proposed Performance Evaluation Process

6. Update: Committee Member Training

The Board heard an update regarding the Board and Committee Bootcamp being held on October 4, 2025, from 8:00am - 11:30am in Battin Hall. This training is being designed as an interactive seminar to strengthen the work of boards and committees. Practical tips and tools and best practices will be provided in the areas of:

- Serving with Integrity and Effectiveness
- Navigating Lexington's System of Government and Collaborating Across Committees
- Leading Inclusive and Productive Meetings

DOCUMENTS: Draft Agenda Board & Committees Bootcamp

7. Consideration: Removal of Tree Committee Member for Violating Guidelines for Civil Discourse in the Board/Committee Handbook

This item was not taken up at this time and may be rescheduled at a future date.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve: License for Public Entertainment on Sunday - Lexington Community Farm, 52 Lowell Street

- Annual Harvest Festival: Sunday, October 5th, 2025

Move to approve a Sunday Entertainment License for Lexington Community Farm for the purpose of providing live music for patrons of the annual 'Harvest Festival' on Sunday, October 5, 2025 from 1:00pm -4:00pm at 52 Lowell Street.

2. Approve: One-Day Liquor License - Lexington Community Farm, 52 Lowell Street

- Annual Harvest Festival: Sunday, October 5th, 2025

Move to approve a One-Day Liquor License for the Lexington Community Farm for the purpose of serving beer in a beer garden at the Lexington Community Farm, 52 Lowell Street to participants of the Harvest Festival on Sunday, October 5, 2023 from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

3. Approve: Select Board Committee Reappointments

This item was pulled for a separate vote.

4. Accept: Select Board Committee Resignations

- Town Celebrations Committee - William Glen Bassett
- Semiquincentennial Commission - Jane Hundley

To accept the resignation of William Glen Bassett from the Town Celebrations Committee and Jane Hundley from the Semiquincentennial Commission, effective September 30, 2025.

DOCUMENTS: 2025.08.14 William Glen Bassett - Town Celebrations Committee_Redacted;
2025.07.10 Jane Hundley - Semiquincentennial Commission

5. Approve: Proclamations

- Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Constitution Week
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Dyslexia Awareness Week
- Suicide Prevention Month

To approve and sign a proclamation annually recognizing the month of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month & Dyslexia Awareness Month. To recognize the month of September as Suicide Prevention Month and the week of September 17-24, 2025 as DAR Constitution Week in the Town of Lexington.

DOCUMENTS: 09082025 DAR Constitution Week Proclamation, 09082025 Domestic Violence Awareness Month Proclamation, 09082025 Dyslexia Awareness Month Proclamation, 09082025 Suicide Prevention Month Proclamation

6. Approve: Select Board Minutes

To approve and release the following minutes:

- June 30, 2025 Joint Meeting

- July 21, 2025 Select Board
- August 4, 2025 Select Board
- August 18, 2025 Select Board

DOCUMENTS: DRAFT 06302025-Joint SB-SC Minutes, DRAFT 07212025 Select Board Minutes, DRAFT 08042025 Select Board Minutes, DRAFT 08182025 Select Board Minutes

7. Approve: Water and Sewer Adjustments

Move to approve the consent.

DOCUMENTS: WSAB Jul 17,2025

8. Approve: Select Board Report for FY25 Annual Town Report

To approve the Select Board Report, as proposed, for the Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Town Report, and further to authorize the Chair and/or Executive Clerk to make any necessary final editorial corrections and insert any missing dates or figures as needed.

DOCUMENTS: DRAFT FY 2025 Select Board Report, redlined DRAFT FY 2025 Select Board Report - edits since 8-18-25 version

9. Approve: Updated Pledge of License and Inventory Document for the Liquor License Transfer Application - Neillio's Wine and Spirits, 55 Bedford Street

To approve 55 Bedford St LLC d/b/a Neillio's Wine and Spirits submission of the required updated paperwork to be sent to ABCC for ABCC's reconsideration of 55 Bedford St LLC d/b/a Neillio's Wine and Spirits Package Store Liquor License transfer application.

DOCUMENTS: updated Pledge of License and Inventory document

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda #1, 2, and 4-9, as presented.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approve: Select Board Committee Reappointments
Mr. Pato recused himself from this item.

- Board of Appeals - Martha C. Wood
- Board of Appeals Associates:
 - o Jeanne K. Krieger
 - o Patricia S. Nelson
 - o Katheryn A. Roy
 - o Thomas Shiple
 - o Jennifer L. Wilson
- Communications Advisory Committee:
 - o David J. Buczkowski
 - o Kenneth T. Pogran
 - o Rita Vachani
- Design Advisory Committee

- o Ian Adamson
 - o Hema Bhatt
 - o Christopher A Johns
 - o Minhaj Kirmani
 - o Danit Netzer
 - o Steven A Vincent
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
 - o Samuel Ang
 - o Mitch Tyson
- Fence Viewers:
 - o David E. Burns
 - o Dawn E. Mckenna
- Greenways Corridor Committee:
 - o David M. Frohman
 - o Keith Ohmart
 - o Stephen S. Perkins
 - o Michael Tabaczynski
- Housing Partnership Board:
 - o Nanette M. Byrnes
 - o Harriet J. Cohen
 - o Margaret Heitz
 - o Ravneet Grewal
- Lexington Bicycle Advisory Committee:
 - o David Armstrong
 - o Sarah Anne Hews
- Lexington Center Committee:
 - o Jeffrey L. Lyon
 - o Jonathan Wheeler Wakelin
- Lexington Council for the Arts:
 - o Lisa Hebert
 - o Claudia A. Lach
- Lexington Human Rights Committee - Rachel K. Levy
- Lexington Scholarship and Education Fund Committee:
 - o Julie Hackett
 - o Raquel Leder
- Sustainable Lexington Committee:
 - o Cynthia E. Arens
 - o Andrew S. Joynt
 - o Todd A. Rhodes
- Tourism Committee:
 - o Melissa Robbins Clifford
 - o Margaret E. Coppe
 - o Gardy Desrouleaux
 - o Bebe H. Fallick
 - o Marie-Tristan Rago
- Town Report Committee:
 - o Gloria A. Amirault
 - o Beverly Liu
 - o Susan H. Myerow
 - o Ragan Robertson

- o Vicky Sax
 - o Karyn Zhao
- Transportation Advisory Committee:
 - o Pamela B. Lyons
 - o James Luker
- Tree Committee - Rachel Summers
- Vision for Lexington Committee - Margaret E. Coppe
- Water and Sewer Abatement Board - Loren Wood

To reappoint the board and committee members with term expirations as indicated on the attached list titled *2025 September Board Committee Reappointments to be effective on October 1, 2025*.

DOCUMENTS: 2025 September Board Committee Reappointments

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 4-0 to approve the Consent Agenda #3, as presented.

ADJOURN

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:03p.m.

A true record; Attest:
Kristan Patenaude
Recording Secretary

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Monday, September 15, 2025

A meeting of the Lexington Select Board was called to order at 6:30p.m. on Monday, September 15, 2025, via a remote meeting platform. Ms. Hai, Chair; Mr. Pato, Mr. Lucente were present, as well as Mr. Bartha, Town Manager; Ms. Axtell, Deputy Town Manager; and Ms. Lino, Select Board Assistant.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve: Battle Green Use Request
 - Wedding Photographs: Saturday, October 4, 2025

To approve the Battle Green Use Request for wedding photographs on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM, for a party of approximately 15–20 participants and up to 50 spectators, including the use of cameras, tripods, and light reflectors.

2. Approve: Proclamation Request
 - Temple Isaiah's 65th Anniversary Commemoration

To approve the Proclamation recognizing the 65th Anniversary of Temple Isaiah.

DOCUMENTS: 09152025 Temple Isaiah Proclamation

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 3-0 to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

1. Special Town Meeting 2025 Call for Special Town Meeting 2025-2
 - Review and Approve Town Moderator Letter
 - Review Special Town Meeting 2025-2 DRAFT Article List

Ms. Axtell reviewed the timing for Special Town Meeting 2025-2, which will begin on November 3rd as a hybrid meeting. The draft warrant will be shared with the Board on September 29th, and the Board will vote on the Warrant on October 6th.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, stated that the debt exclusion vote is very important to the Town and may require that people be in-person at Special Town Meeting, in order to not be distracted by joining remotely. She asked the Board to consider sending out information indicating the importance of attending the meeting in-person, if at all possible. Ms. Hai noted that the Board cannot change its rules regarding hybrid Town Meeting protocol but noted that Town Meeting Members may use their lists to make clear the importance of attending in-person.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 3-0 to call for a Special Town Meeting 2025-2 to begin on Monday, November 3, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in Battin Hall of the Cary Memorial Building, and to accept the Moderator Request Letter dated, August 26, 2025, and include it in the warrant.

Ms. Axtell reviewed the draft Article list. Citizen petitions will be available to the Board on September 29th. The TMMA will hold an information night regarding the High School articles and any citizens petitions on October 15th. The Board discussed that it may wish to have a presentation on the revolving

fund expenditure amounts. The direct link to the High School project information page will be placed on the Board's agenda moving forward.

DOCUMENTS: 2025-2 Moderator Letter, STM 2025-2 Draft Article List

ADJOURN

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 3-0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:51p.m.

A true record; Attest:
Kristan Patenaude
Recording Secretary

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Monday, September 29, 2025

A meeting of the Lexington Select Board was called to order at 6:30p.m. on Monday, September 29, 2025, via a remote meeting platform. Mr. Pato, Mr. Sandeen, and Ms. Kumar, were present, as well as Mr. Bartha, Town Manager; Ms. Axtell, Deputy Town Manager; and Ms. Katzenback, Executive Clerk.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Patrick Mehr, 31 Woodcliffe Road, expressed concerns regarding the proposal for the new high school, using the Bloom design. . He feels the Bloom design breaks up the open space of the center fields, and it will be difficult to get Article 97 approved. He requested that the Select Board not put a debt exclusion out to the voters for Bloom. Second, he asked to have a two phase solution designed at minimal cost to alleviate overcrowding. Third, he asked that the Board convince the MSBA to approve a higher design enrollment than 2,395 due to the thousands of new MBTA dwellings to be built in Lexington.

Paul Cooke, 8 Parker Street, expressed concern the Town would proceed with the Bloom plan at great cost for 2,400 students, when in ten years, he feels there is a great likelihood that the school will have an enrollment approaching 3,000. He urged the Board to vote no on the upcoming debt exclusion matter.

Jim Williams, 8 Stratham Road, stated that he feels the Select Board has an obligation to state explicitly whether the Town believes that the fields on which Lexington High School project design, Bloom, proposed to be built are or are not protected by Article 97 and to do so before asking Town Meeting and the public to vote on the project.

Mr. Pato noted that assertions have been made during these statements which are not necessarily accurate.

Olga Gutttag, 273 Emerson Road, repeated her request for the Town to prepare and post as soon as possible scenarios for Lexington's operating budgets for the next 3, 5, 10, and 15 years, modeling the budgetary impact of an increase in population. She asked that the Board reconsider its support of advancing with Bloom. Lexington badly needs a modern high school, but stated she feels the Bloom is not the right solution.

Bob Beckwitt, 3 Eliot Road, stated he is confident that the Town will see a significant increase in student population. He urged the Select Board to table the decision to ask for a debt exclusion and instead ask the architects to redesign the school to absorb this population increase and at a lower cost per square foot.

Taylor Singh, 40 Hancock Street, stated that the entire process to build the new Lexington High School has been extraordinarily transparent and inclusive. The project design Bloom has a three pronged plan for expansion and can house over 3,000 students. Alternatives to the current plan have all come in at a higher cost. Not following this plan will jeopardize over \$110M in MSBA reimbursement.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS AND LIAISON REPORTS

1. Select Board Member Announcements and Liaison Reports

Mr. Sandeen stated that he was invited by the Governor to attend the solar summit today. Also, Chief McLean will be speaking at a domestic violence awareness event on October 30th, at 6pm in the Lexington Community Center. It is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Ms. Kumar noted that there will be a boot camp for board and committee members this Saturday at Battin Hall in the Cary Memorial Building.

DOCUMENTS: Liaison Reports-Joe Pato-2025-08-18

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1. Town Manager Weekly Update

Mr. Bartha explained that the Board received a draft letter for consideration. The Minuteman Area Group on Interlocal Cooperation (MAGIC) seat on the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is up for election this year. Lexington's Assistant Planning Director, Megan Roche, is interested in that seat, with full support of Carol Kowalski and Abby McCabe. The deadline for application is October 6, 2025.

DOCUMENTS: 2025 MPO Statement of Candidacy

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve: One-Day Liquor License - Wilson Farm, 10 Pleasant Street
 - 2nd Annual Beer Garden Event - Thursday, October 2, 2025 & Friday, October 3, 2025. Rain Date: Saturday, October 4, 2025.

To approve a One-Day Liquor License for Wilson Farms to serve beer outside their farm greenhouse #7, 10 Pleasant Street on Thursday, October 2, 2025 & Friday, October 3, 2025 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Rain date requested for Saturday, October 4, 2025 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

2. Approve: One-Day Liquor License - Lexington History Museums, 1 Bedford Street
 - Annual Buckman Tavern Halloween Murder Mystery Fundraiser - Sunday, October 19, 2025

To approve a One-Day Liquor License for Lexington History Museums to serve beer and wine at the Annual Buckman Tavern Halloween Murder Mystery Fundraiser on October 19, 2025, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, at 1 Bedford Street, in accordance with all applicable regulations.

3. Approve: One-Day Liquor License(s) - Galaray House, 1720 Massachusetts Avenue
 - 'First Friday' Monthly Art Shows - Friday, October 3, 2025, Friday, November 7, 2025 & Friday, December 5, 2025
 - Monroe Art Center Art Walk Reception - Thursday, October 9, 2025
 - Galaray House After Hours - Thursday, October 23, 2025
 - Gift Fest - Thursday, November 20, 2025

To approve 3 One-Day Liquor Licenses for the Galaray House, 1720 Massachusetts Avenue, to serve beer & wine for their 'First Fridays' events on October 3, 2025, November 7, 2025, and December 5, 2025 from 5:00pm to 8:00pm.

To approve a One-Day Liquor License for the Galaray House, 1720 Massachusetts Avenue, to serve beer & wine for their Monroe Art Walk event on Thursday, October 9, 2025 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

To approve a One-Day Liquor License for Galaray House, 1720 Massachusetts Avenue, to serve beer and wine at "Galaray House After Hours" on October 23, 2025, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

To approve a One-Day Liquor License for the Galaray House, 1720 Massachusetts Avenue, to serve beer & wine for their annual 'Gift Fest' on Thursday, November 20, 2025 from 5:30pm to 8:30pm.

4. Approve: Battle Green Use Request - Toby Sackton
 - Public Rally, No Kings Day - Saturday, October 18, 2025

To approve the Battle Green Use Request submitted by Toby Sackton for a Public Rally, “No Kings Day”, on October 18, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, including the use of a small sound stage with speakers and microphone, with required police details as outlined.

DOCUMENTS: No Kings Day - Request Letter

5. Approve: Select Board Committee Reappointments
 - Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee - Richard L. Canale
 - Board of Appeals Associates - Scott E. Cooper
 - Housing Partnership Board - Sarah Morrison
 - Lexington Center Committee - Upasna Singh Chhabra
 - Lexington Council for the Arts - Thelma Goldberg
 - Noise Advisory Committee:
 - o Benjamin Lees
 - o Elaine Rudell
 - Tourism Committee:
 - o Marsha E. Baker
 - o Pamela H. Fowler
 - o Ting Fang
 - Town Report Committee - Varshagouri Ramanathan
 - Transportation Advisory Committee - Sally Castleman
 - Vision for Lexington - Marian A.O. Cohen

To reappoint the board and committee members with term expirations as indicated on the attached list titled *2025 September Board Committee Reappointments to be* effective on October 1, 2025.

DOCUMENTS: 2025 September Board Committee Reappointments

6. Approve: Water and Sewer Adjustments

To approve the consent.

DOCUMENTS: Amened WS WSAB amount

7. Approve: Eagle Scout Commendation Letters - Brendan Lee & Atticus Oliver

To approve and sign a letters of commendation congratulating Brendan Lee and Atticus Oliver of Boy Scout Troop 160 for attaining the highest rank of Eagle in scouting.

DOCUMENTS: Eagle Letter - Brendan Lee – 160, Eagle Letter - Atticus Oliver- 160

8. Approve: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for LMEA, LMMA and Crossing Guards (SEIU 888) Unions

To approve and authorize the Town Manager to sign the Memorandum of Understandings between the Town and the Lexington Municipal Management Association for the contract period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028, the Lexington Municipal Employees Association for the contract period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028 and the SEIU Local 888 Lexington Crossing Guards for the contract period of July 1, 2025.

DOCUMENTS: LMEA MOU, LMMA MOU, Crossing Guards MOU

9. Approve: Regulatory Agreement 17 Hartwell Avenue (Forty Seven Affordable Units)

To approve the Regulatory Agreement for the rental development at 17 Hartwell Avenue, between the Town of Lexington, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, and 17 Hartwell JV LLC as proposed and further to authorize the Town Manager to execute the agreement.

DOCUMENTS: Cover Memo Regulatory Agreement 17, Regulatory Agreement_Lexington 17 Hartwell

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 3-0 to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

1. Approve: Modifications to Schematic Design on the Lowell Street Affordable Housing Project

Dave Traggorth, Causeway Development, presented the Modifications to Schematic Design on the Lowell Street Affordable Housing Project to the Select Board.

Ms. Kowalski stated that the modifications seem to be an advantage for the development and for the entire community. Staff had no concerns and, in fact, felt it was an improvement from the standpoint of fire and conservation.

Elaine Tung, Affordable Housing Trust, stated that the Affordable Housing Trust feels that the modified design meets the criteria to a greater extent than the original design as proposed.

Ms. Kumar stated that the revised plan appears to address all the concerns raised by residents, and the Town's departments. The development feels thoughtfully planned, retains the number of units in the original plan, and advances housing diversity.

Mr. Pato stated that in the previous scheme there was a clearly identified pedestrian access heading toward North Street, but this is no longer called out in the revised scheme. Mr. Traggorth stated that there will still be a path up to the new crosswalk.

Mr. Sandeen explained that stakeholder and neighbor feedback was received including requests for additional parking spots on site, maximizing preservation of trees on site, increasing buffer zones between the buildings, conducting additional review on stormwater compliance, and a request to reduce the total number of buildings. All of those items are reflected in the new design. The new design allows for a backyard for families and children, and fewer retaining walls to allow access to the woodlands. This is an incredibly beautiful design, but is also beautiful from a sustainability perspective. It will be a passive house design, with great thermal comfort and resilience, using solar energy system on the roof to provide all the HVAC electricity, eliminating heating and cooling bills for the residents. He supports the new design.

Mark Lang, 2 Opi Circle, stated that this is a classic example of inside politics. The developer failed to produce a stormwater plan but has been able to get the Town to rally around what is supposedly a better design. The developer determined that they could build a permeable road, but would cost millions of dollars, so they changed the design to something that is very much compromised. The Town, which is so focused on the number of units versus the fit with the community, has voted for it. He stated that Mr. Sandeen is on the Affordable Housing Trust and the Select Board which Mr. Lang believes to be a conflict of interest. There has been no community outreach since April. This is a significant design change, not a modification. In regards to the RFP, the selected proposer is required to conduct a community engagement process as it develops and refines designs for the site. The developer has certainly refined the design of the site and has not received any community input. It is inappropriate for the Select Board to vote on this without receiving community input. The redesign proves what neighbors have been saying from the start, the project is too big for the site. The original plan could not support 40 units, so it was abandoned. Instead of reducing the units, they changed to a terrible design. The community building was originally one story on the corner of Lowell Street and North Street. Now it is proposed to be 3.5 stories, a towering building on one of the most dangerous intersections in Town. He asked that the Select Board not vote on this tonight, and put it before the community for input, as they promised they would do.

Dawn McKenna, Precinct 6 Town Meeting Member, stated that she was fully in support of this project. In reviewing the two proposals, they are substantively different. The Select Board, especially with missing members, should not vote on this tonight. The Board promised that there would be good public input, and this should include meeting with the neighborhoods and notifying all of Town Meeting regarding the substantive change.

Mr. Sandeen noted that the formal approval process for this project has not yet started. The first part of the approval process including reaching out to the public is when a comprehensive permit application is submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals, and that is still to come. There will be additional opportunities for public comment during that process.

Ms. Kowalski stated that every session of the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing on this application will likely include opportunities for comment. This will be a robust process. Mr. Traggorth noted that the process will also include a third party peer review.

Ms. Kowalski stated that every session of the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing on this application will likely include opportunities for comment. This will be a robust process. Ms. Kowalski stated that the new design with the fewer retaining walls, contiguous play area, with the buffer zone, makes for what in her professional opinion is a better plan, not just for the residents, but for the wetlands resource area, and to make a more beautiful plan. Mr. Traggorth noted that the process will also include a third party peer review of the traffic study and stormwater plan and will share that information with the public.

Mr. Pato suggested that formal approval of this item be moved to the Consent Agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Traggorth stated that it is a matter of competitiveness, to the degree possible, to get the process moving through the ZBA. This will make the application more competitive, as a funding round will be announced sometime this fall and it will be important that the project be in the public process with the ZBA. There was agreement on the Board to move forward with a vote this evening.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 3-0, as required under the land disposition agreement, to accept the modifications to the schematic design plans as presented tonight.

DOCUMENTS: Lexington Parcel 68-44_AHT Presentation, Lexington Modification Letter, Memo to Select Board re. Causeway Development Design Modification

2. Acceptance of Land Donations (Parcels 22-147A, 22-63 and portion of 22-140) and Approval of Trail Easement (crossing Parcel 22-147)

Mr. Pato explained that the Board is being asked to accept the gift of land by voting to approve the donation agreements and to approve a trail easement agreement. These are being proposed from Bill and Sheila Widnall and the Widnall Trust for parcels located off Summit and Follen Road. The Select Board extends its sincerest thanks to the Widnall family for this generous gift to the Town of Lexington and its residents.

Charlie Wyman, Conservation Commission, explained that the Commission will be voting to accept the gift of land and the easement at their Tuesday, September 30th meeting. The Planning Board will vote the ANR for Lot 140 at an upcoming meeting as well. The closing is scheduled for October 15th. The overall transaction involves gifts in fee of Parcels 22-63 and 22-147A, a trail easement from Summit Road to Parcel 22-63 across Bill and Sheila Widnall's house lot (22-147), and a gift in fee of a portion of Parcel 22-140, owned by the Widnall Family Trust Conservation, who worked with Town Counsel to obtain the necessary documents.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 3-0 to vote as follows with respect to the following parcels of land in Lexington, Middlesex County, Massachusetts:

(i) Parcel 147A on the Town of Lexington Assessor's Map 22, consisting of approximately 7,901 square feet and shown as Parcel 3 on that certain plan entitled "Plan of Land in Lexington, MA" dated September 9, 2022 and recorded with the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds (the "Registry") as Plan 803 of 2022 and described in that certain Deed to William S. Widnall and Sheila E. Widnall (hereinafter together, "Widnall") recorded with the Registry in Book 81021, Page 338 (hereinafter, "Parcel 147A");

(ii) Parcel 63 on the Town of Lexington Assessor's Map 22, consisting of approximately 61,184 square feet and described in that certain Deed to Widnall recorded with the Registry in Book 14344, Page 112 (hereinafter, "Parcel 63"); and

(iii) A portion of Parcel 140 on the Town of Lexington Assessor's Map 22, which portion is shown as "Parcel 26C, Not a Buildable Lot, Area = 8309 S.F." on that certain plan entitled "Plan of Land, Parcel 22-140, Follen Road ~ Lexington, MA Prepared for Town of Lexington MA" by GCG Associates, Inc." dated September 22, 2025 to be recorded with the Registry (hereinafter, "Parcel 26C"). Parcel 140 is owned by Ann Widnall Vawter, Trustee of the Widnall Family Trust u/d/t dated July 8, 1981 recorded with the Registry in Book 14344, Page 106, as amended of record (the "Trust"), by virtue of a Deed dated July 8, 1981 and recorded with said Deeds in Book 14344, Page 110.

(a) To approve that certain Real Property Donation Agreement by and between Widnall and the Town of Lexington, acting by and through its Conservation Commission, for Parcel 147A and Parcel 63, and that certain Real Property Donation Agreement by and between the Trust and the Town of Lexington, acting by and through its Conservation Commission, for Parcel 26C, both substantially in the form presented to the Board at its September 29, 2025 meeting;

(b) To approve the deeds to Parcel 147A, Parcel 63, and Parcel 26C to the Town of Lexington, acting by and through its Conservation Commission, substantially in the forms presented to the Board at its September 29, 2025 meeting, with final changes to be made by the Town Manager or the Chair of the Conservation Commission in their reasonable discretion in consultation with Town Counsel;

(c) To approve that certain Easement Agreement to be granted by Widnall to the Town of Lexington, acting by and through its Conservation Commission, on a portion of Parcel 147 on the Town of Lexington Assessor's Map 22, commonly known as 22 Summit Avenue, substantially in the form presented to the Board at its September 29, 2025 meeting, with final changes to be made by the Town Manager or the

Chair of the Conservation Commission in their reasonable discretion in consultation with Town Counsel; and

(d) To authorize the Town Manager to take all actions on behalf of the Town that are reasonably necessary, in the judgment of the Town Manager, to complete the acquisition of Parcel 147A, Parcel 63, and Parcel 26C, and accept and enter into the Easement Agreement, all in accordance with the Real Property Donation Agreements, including without limitation, executing and delivering deed acceptances, easement acceptances, closing forms, affidavits, documents and settlement statements.

DOCUMENTS: Widnall Presentation.pptx, Proposed Widnall Family Conservation Gifts, Select Board Vote, Proposed Deed for 147A and 63, Deed from Trust for Follen Road, Easement Agreement, Trust Donation Agreement- signed by Town, Widnall Donation Agreement- signed by Town, ANR for proposed parcel 26C (a portion of 140)

3. Lexington Human Rights Committee (LHRC) Recommendation for Reaffirming the 2018 'Safe and Welcoming Community Resolution' Policy

Todd Burger and Judith Glixson, Lexington Human Rights Committee, presented the LHRC's request for the reaffirmation of the Town's commitment to a safe and welcoming community. "The Moral Imperative demands that all people, regardless of immigration status, be afforded basic human rights and treated with dignity and respect. Numerous accounts have documented the lack of due process in immigration enforcement, inhumane detention conditions, and the devastating impact of family separation, particularly involving young children. These practices stand in direct opposition to our shared values of justice, equity and compassion. It is therefore incumbent upon us to reaffirm and uphold these values within our community and within our means, by ensuring that the rights and dignity of all who live, work and visit here are respected and protected."

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 3-0 to reaffirm the 2018 Resolution adopted under Article 34 to make Lexington a Welcoming, Inclusive, and Safe Community.

DOCUMENTS: 2025 LHRC - Recommendation for Reaffirming the 2018 Safe Communities Act Resolution, LHRC Motion

4. Review: Special Town Meeting 2025-2 Draft Warrant and Special Election 2025 Draft Warrant

Kelly Axtell, Deputy Town Manager, reviewed the Draft Special Town Meeting 2025-2 Warrant and the Draft Special Election 2025 Warrant with the Select Board.

DOCUMENTS: DRAFT 2025-2 STM Warrant

ADJOURN

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 3-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:06p.m.

A true record; Attest:
Kristan Patenaude
Recording Secretary

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Monday, October 6, 2025

A meeting of the Lexington Select Board was called to order at 6:30p.m. on Monday, October 6, 2025, via a hybrid meeting platform. Ms. Hai, Chair; Mr. Lucente, Mr. Pato, Mr. Sandeen, and Ms. Kumar, were present, as well as Mr. Bartha, Town Manager; Ms. Axtell, Deputy Town Manager; and Ms. Katzenback, Executive Clerk.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ranjeeta Khetan, representing the PTO Board, spoke in favor of the Vote Yes for Lexington campaign. The current High School is overcrowded, outdated, and beyond its lifespan. The proposed project is ready, and delaying will only cost more in time and money. She asked the Board to allow the Town the chance to vote.

Nichola Sykes, 12 Bellflower Street, spoke in favor of the proposed High School design. She liked seeing the proposed community spaces and the design element of the quad that is protected from the outside. Cost is a factor, but the bigger picture needs to be considered. The current plan has been well thought out and vetted, with many excellent professionals working on it. Other plans have been examined and found to cost more, take longer, and serve fewer stakeholder needs, as well as not meeting the educational objectives.

Taylor Singh, 40 Hancock Street, stated that the Select Board created the LHS Project School Building Committee (SBC) which held its first meeting in July of 2023. Establishing an SBC is a required part of the MSBA building process. It is a collaborative body composed of Town and school staff, members of the community, and representatives of the owner's project manager and design teams.

Elizabeth Warren, 9 Fulton Road, noted that Town investigations are sensitive and need to remain confidential. Her focus is more on Town policy and process. She asked the procedure and disciplinary remedies for violation of civil discourse guidelines. Harassment Policy 26A clearly states basis and remedy for violations, and that includes a third party investigation. She asked what mechanisms may be in place when harassment complaints filed are not consistent with the Policy.

Sarah Carter, 5 Spencer Street, voiced her appreciation for the School Building Committee (SBC). The SBC has done a great job taking input from many different groups throughout the process. The SBC put forward a plan that balances the idea of not over building with working to keep the cost as low as feasibly possible to build the school the Town needs for generations to come.

Meg Muckenhoupt, 19 Whipple Road, stated that the Bloom design for the proposed High School project providing a great, flexible space that will meet the community needs. She asked the Board to support to plan in place.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS AND LIAISON REPORTS

1. Select Board Member Announcements and Liaison Reports

Nothing additional at this time.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1. Town Manager Weekly Update

Mr. Bartha stated that the State is a participant in a new round of opioid settlement funds. He recommended the Town participate in the process once again. The Board agreed.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve: Select Board Committee Appointment
 - Town Report Committee: Asiya Karim

To appoint Asiya Karim to the Town Report Committee to fill a term ending on September 30, 2026, to be effective immediately.

DOCUMENTS: Town Report Committee - Asiya Karim - Application & Resume_Redacted

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

1. Amendment to §192 Traffic Rules and Orders: Sylvia Street Traffic Restriction

Ross Morrow, Assistant Town Engineer, explained that the Board is being asked to vote to amend Traffic Rules and Orders: *Chapter 192-62 Certain Turns Prohibited Schedule 6 Prohibited Turns* to add a turn restriction from Mass Ave onto Sylvia Street. This restriction is recommended to minimize cut-through traffic during the morning peak commute hours from 7:00 AM - 8:30 AM, Monday through Friday, year-round. The feedback from residents was almost exclusively positive for this proposal after a pilot study.

Mr. Pato stated that some residents asked about lowering the speed limit along the street or considering a similar proposal in the afternoon. Mr. Morrow stated that this road already falls under the Town's 25mph limit. Lowering it further would be difficult but could be studied. A similar proposal for the afternoons could also be considered.

Barrett Bryan, 29 Sylvia Street, stated that he is thankful for the proposal. He would also like to see sidewalks down the street at some point in the future. He noted that the school bus comes anywhere from between 8:25AM-8:40AM.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve the amendment to Chapter 192-62, *Certain Turns Prohibited*, Schedule 6 *Prohibited Turns*, to restrict turns from Massachusetts Avenue onto Sylvia Street, prohibiting right turns eastbound and left turns westbound between 7:00 AM and 8:30 AM, Monday through Friday, year-round.

DOCUMENTS: Presentation - Sylvia Street Turn Restriction, 10062025 TSG Memo to SB - Sylvia Street, 10062025 - Sylvia Street Code Amendment (Signature Document)

2. Accept: Cedar Street Sidewalk Easements

Mr. Morrow explained that through the design phase of the Cedar Street sidewalk project, it has been identified that due to the variable width of the public right-of-way (ROW) and other constraints, the

proposed sidewalk could not be constructed fully within the ROW. The project team approached the two property owners of 67 and 75 Cedar Street to discuss their willingness to provide easements for the purpose of allowing a portion of public access sidewalk to be built on their property. Both property owners agreed to provide easements. The Board is being requested to accept the easements over 67 Cedar St and 75 Cedar Street or sidewalks.

The Board thanked the residents who opted to grant the easements for their generosity.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to accept the easements over 67 Cedar Street and 75 Cedar Street substantially in the form presented, with final changes to be made by the Town Manager in his reasonable discretion in consultation with Town Counsel; and to authorize the Town Manager to take all actions on behalf of the Board that are reasonably necessary in his judgment to complete and effectuate the acceptance of the easements.

DOCUMENTS: Cedar Easements

3. Update: Council on Aging Proposed Committee Charge Amendments

Dana Bickleman, Director of Human Services, explained that the Council on Aging Board is returning to the Select Board with its proposed charge, which was first presented on June 3, 2024. Following that presentation, the Board received redlined revisions from Town Counsel. These edits have been incorporated, and the updated charge is now being presented for the Select Board's review and consideration. It has also been determined that the revised charge must receive approval at Town Meeting. The Council on Aging Board plans to bring the charge forward for consideration at the Spring 2026 Annual Town Meeting.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to accept changes to the Council on Aging committee charge as presented.

DOCUMENTS: COA board changes. Clean, COA Board changes. redlined

4. Discussion: 2026 Patriots' Day Celebration Dates

Ms. Hai explained that, by statute, the Commonwealth observes Patriots' Day on the third Monday in April. Locally, the Town Celebrations Committee coordinates community events in recognition of this holiday. For 2026, the statutory holiday falls on Monday, April 20, 2026. The Town Celebrations Committee has submitted a proposal recommending that the Town's traditional Patriots' Day events, parade, ceremonies, and related activities, be held instead on Saturday, April 18, 2026. The considerations for this proposal include logistics and participation as Saturday scheduling may allow greater participation from residents, families, and visitors who may not be available on a weekday. Also, regional considerations include that holding the events on Saturday may reduce overlap with larger regional commemorations and the Boston Marathon, which occurs on Patriots' Day Monday. The Select Board is asked to discuss and decide whether to authorize the Town Celebrations Committee to hold the 2026 Patriots' Day events on Saturday, April 18, 2026, instead of Monday, April 20, 2026.

Mr. Lucente stated that there was a much larger crowd that attended the event last year when it was on a Saturday versus a Monday. He expressed concern with making sure there is a way to pay for the event in full if it is moved to Saturday. He suggested waiting for financial data before making a decision.

David Pinsonneault, Public Works Director, stated that Police, Fire, and DPW are concerned that they may not be able to obtain the resources needed if the event is held on a Monday. There is more staff availability in the departments for a Saturday.

David Grabel, 125 Reed Street and co-chair of the Town Celebrations Committee, agreed with the statements made by the DPW regarding the Saturday preference. The Committee is looking to present the best possible parade to the largest number of people at a benefit to the Town. He encouraged the Board to make a decision on this as soon as possible. Mr. Grabel confirmed the Town Celebrations Committee will operate within approved funds for the FY2026 Patriots Day budget and scale the event by managing expenses.

Ms. Kosnoff stated that staff is still considering budgetary impacts regarding this proposal. The Committee gave staff the guidance that it should consider approximately 75% of the crowd seen this past year if a Saturday event is decided on. The four major expenses from last year's event were the audio visual equipment, the transportation, the day of event managing, and the advertising portion. These four things will likely not be able to be completed to the same level as last year due to the available funding.

Cerise Jalelian, Town Celebrations Committee, explained that there will be crowds around for this event and safety is paramount. She requested that the Board make a decision as quickly as possible. The Committee will work within any financial constraints.

Fire Chief Sencabaugh agreed that the public safety resources needed from the State and federal side will not be available on Monday, as they are committed to the Boston Marathon.

Mr. Pato stated that it appears from a safety perspective there is a distinct advantage for retaining the event on Saturday. It seems this effectively would be true going forward, though this decision does not need to be made tonight. He stated that there should be a plan to scale the event back, if held on a Saturday, to fit within the budget.

Mr. Sandeen stated that holding the event on Saturday could lead to there being events on both Saturday and Monday. He would like one day to be chosen for the events.

Steve Cole, 49 Balfour Street and Captain of the Lexington Minutemen, stated that the Minutemen have met with the 10th Foot, the Historical Society, Police, Fire, and DPW. From a reenactment standpoint, the Minutemen want to do it on Saturday this year. It would like to consider moving back to Monday after this year.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, stated that the purpose of Patriots Day is to honor what happened in Lexington and to make sure the world is aware of it. It is not Marathon Monday; it is Patriots Day on which the marathon takes place. The Town will lose that narrative if it keeps the event on Saturday. This takes the focus off the birthplace of American liberty, which is where it should be on that day. She stated that it is much more expensive for people to attend on a Saturday night than a Monday. There will be a big turnout this year because of the 250th celebration. She asked the Board to go back to the original route for the event.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to authorize 2026 Patriots' Day events to be held on Saturday, April 18, 2026, instead of Monday, April 20, 2026.

DOCUMENTS: Recommendation to hold 2026 Patriots Day Celebration on Saturday, Memo from Lexington Minute Men

5. Special Town Meeting 2025 -2 and 2025 Special Election

- Select Board to Call Special Election
- Article 97 Discussion
- Select Board to Sign Combined Election and Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 97 Discussion

Mina Makarious, Town Counsel, explained that, in terms of Article 9 - Home Rule Legislation for New Lexington High School in the Town Meeting Warrant, there is a matter that is leading to the possibility for two different types of language for the Warrant. The Board needs to determine how to advance the request to Town Meeting and if there needs to be a request for Article 97 legislation to the State legislature. Town Meeting has to authorize the transfer of the land currently under the Bloom plan. Through due diligence, it became clear that there is a 1961 legislation authorizing the Town to use the land that is made up of a parcel in the middle of the high school campus for playground, park, and school purposes. There is a legal position that this already authorizes the construction of a school there. It is clear that the land has been in use for decades as park and playground purposes, and that this is the understood purpose of the property. The suggestion is to ask the legislator to confirm that the land can be used for school purposes and make clear the commitment to use the adjoining land for park and playground purposes.

Town Counsel Makarious explained that requesting Article 97 relief from the legislature requires first going to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs under the Public Land Protection Act for a review process. The legislation does not enshrine property into a park or playground use. The legislation's only task is to remove existing protections, if any. In this case, this would be on the land that is currently used for park purposes. No legislation is necessary for a town or a state agency to dedicate land for a park.

Mr. Lucente stated that he would like to go forward with the Article 97 process. He would also like the plans to have very prescriptive direction from Town Meeting that the land will be placed into that protected status. The legislation from 1961 is new information, but Article 97 was enacted in 1972. This land has been used for recreation over many years, and the Town has invested millions for it to be used as such.

Mr. Pato stated that the intention is to take existing playing fields and recreate them at the same quality or better. There is no change to the plan that is in the proposal to move forward. Those properties were protected under a special act that granted recreation, open space, and school purposes. It is honoring what was originally set down to do to have exactly the restrictions moved from one plot to the other. There is no intention to abandon the plan to recreate the fields.

Town Counsel Makarious explained that the typical Article 97 legislation, says nothing about what is happening with the land being swapped. The intention of the Article 97 legislation from the State is not to protect land; it is to affirm that there is an ability to use land that was protected. This is what the Town would be seeking as a confirmation and the 1961 legislation does that. The Town has to decide if it wants to affirm this position with the potential risk that the legislature may take its time to make the decision or proceed without that affirmation. If the Town chooses to dedicate the land, that has more to do with the Town Meeting vote, than with the legislature. If the Town does through the Article 97 process, there needs to be clear indication that it is dedicating the land.

Mr. Sandeen suggested the Town has two choices before us and has to weigh why the Town would go through an additional approval cycle, now that it has been discovered under the 1961 legislation that there is additional flexibility and the ability to move the project forward without it. He suggested that the Town should choose to go through that approval cycle because it has been telling stakeholders, residents, and

our design team for five years that the Town would go through this approval cycle. While it could be nice to have the additional flexibility and one less set of approvals, he recommended that the Town continue moving forward with the Article 97 process, because that's what we have been communicating for the last five years and a deviation from that plan at the last moment could raise concerns.

Ms. Hai agreed that this was the representation made to the public throughout the process. She stated that she supports the project, in large part, because of the guarantee made to bring the fields back. She sees no reason to not go through the process to both be true to that word and to offer the additional protection on the field. She supports keeping the Article 97 language and process in the warrant.

Ms. Kumar stated that she sees the importance to following through with what was told to the residents, but she also feels that the residents are very intelligent. They understand that there is now different information available than there was five years ago. She is comfortable moving forward with the Article 97 process.

Mr. Pato stated that there is no material change being proposed except to add another hurdle outside of local control. There is value in retaining local control, but he will not stand in the way of the Article 97 process.

Olga Guttag, Emerson Road, asked the Board to not put in Articles 8 and 9 onto this Warrant. She feels that before going out for a debt exclusion for Bloom design the Board should ask the architects to work through a stage project design to a budget.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve and sign Town Meeting 2025-2 Warrant including Article 9 wording, as presented by Town Counsel and discussed, subject to any scrivener's errors, Counsel amendments, or others by management, as necessary within non-substantive changes.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to call the Special Election for December 8, 2025.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to approve and sign the Special Election Warrant and authorize staff to make non-substantive edits as necessary or as recommended by Town Counsel or Bond Counsel.

DOCUMENTS: Election Warrant and 2025-2 Special Town Meeting, Election Warrant and 2025-2 Special Town Meeting with No Art 97 homeRule

The Board took a brief recess.

6. Board Discussion: Recommendation to Consider Removal of a Tree Committee Member

Ms. Bartha explained that an independent investigator was hired by the Town this spring to review concerns and complaints that had been filed regarding Gerald Paul's conduct as a member of the Tree Committee and his treatment of Town staff. A summary of relevant excerpts from the investigative report's executive summary are provided below:

This investigator finds sufficient evidence to conclude that Mr. Paul violated the Guidelines for Civil Discourse for all Select Board appointed committee members by continuing to pursue information regarding the Tree Warden's enforcement of the Tree Bylaws after the DPW Director, Town Manager, Select Board and the Middlesex District Attorney's office found insufficient evidence of any intentional

wrongdoing. Instead of looking at how to improve the processes of enforcing the bylaws, Mr. Paul instead has insisted on repeatedly attacking employees' personal integrity. Furthermore, while the rest of the Tree Committee members seem ready to move forward and look ahead rather than back, Mr. Paul refused to do so. His inability to "agree to disagree" and move on is detrimental to the relationship between the Tree Committee and the Tree Warden/DPW. Based on the findings of fact and conclusions, this investigator recommends that the Select Board consider Mr. Paul's removal from the Tree Committee.

Gerry Paul, 43 Highland Avenue, explained that he has 11 months left on his term for the Tree Committee and has been on the Committee for 20 years. He explained that continuing to pursue information is not a violation of the guidelines. Making public records requests is not a violation of the guidelines for civil discourse. In Massachusetts, people have a right to make public records requests. A vote to remove him would require the belief that pursuing information is a violation of the guidelines for civil discourse, even when the pursuit has been shown to be proper and warranted. It would require a belief in allegations made against him that have been shown to be false and unsubstantiated, and the belief that the extreme step of removal from a committee is appropriate action for supposedly violating recommendations in the guideline.

Ms. Hai noted that, due to the threat of litigation on the matter, the Board will not respond directly to any of the information. The Board has received and read the materials submitted. The Select Board has a fiduciary obligation to ensure that all municipal employees are treated fairly and appropriately in the execution of their professional duties.

VOTE: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 that, based on an independent investigator's conclusion that Gerald Paul violated the Guidelines for Civil Discourse, which stemmed from an investigation to review concerns and complaints that had been filed regarding Mr. Paul's conduct as a member of the Tree Committee and his treatment of Town staff, the Select Board voted 5-0 to remove Mr. Gerry Paul from the Tree Committee, effective immediately.

DOCUMENTS: DRAFT 2025-2 STM Warrant

ADJOURN

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 9:19p.m.

A true record; Attest:
Kristan Patenaude
Recording Secretary

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Accept: Select Board Committee Resignation

PRESENTER:

Jill Hai, Select Board Chair

ITEM NUMBER:

C.4

SUMMARY:

Category: Decision-Making

Resignation:

Housing Partnership Board

The Select Board is being asked to accept the resignation of Sarah Morrison from the Housing Partnership Board effective immediately.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

To accept the resignation of Sarah Morrison from the Housing Partnership Board effective immediately.

Move to approve the consent.

FOLLOW-UP:

Select Board Office.

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
 2025.11.03 Sarah Morrison - Housing Partnership Board_Redacted	Backup Material



Sarah Morrison resignation from Housing Partnership Board

From director

Date Mon 11/3/2025 11:22 AM

To Jill Hai

Cc Wendy Manz <wendy_manz@yahoo.com>; ; Samantha Lino
<slino@lexingtonma.gov>;

Dear Jill,

I am writing to submit my resignation from the Housing Partnership Board to the Select Board.

The evening meetings are difficult for me to attend due to family commitments. I plan to continue a close relationship with the HPB as a an informal LexHAB liaison. LexHAB supports the appointment of Russ Tanner, LexHAB Board member to the Housing Partnership Board.

Please let me know if there is any additional information you need.

Best,

Sarah

Sarah Morrison
Executive Director
LexHAB

Sent from my iPhone

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Approve: Select Board Committee Appointment

PRESENTER:

Jill Hai, Select Board Chair

ITEM NUMBER:

C.5

SUMMARY:

Category: Decision-Making

Appointment:

Housing Partnership Board

- The Select Board is being asked to appoint Russell P. Tanner to the Housing Partnership Board to fill a term ending on September 30, 2028.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

To appoint Russell P. Tanner to the Housing Partnership Board to fill a term ending on September 30, 2028, effective immediately.

Move to approve the consent.

FOLLOW-UP:

Select Board Office.

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Type

Application Form

Profile

Attendance to a regularly scheduled meeting of the board or committee of interest is strongly encouraged when considering applying for membership. All committee meetings are open to the public and are posted at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting in our www.lexingtonma.gov/calendar.

If you are appointed to the board or committee for which you have applied, information from this application will be used to contact you regarding your appointment from the appointing authority as well as the Town Clerk’s Office. Please do not offer information on this application you would prefer we not use.

Applications will be kept on file and considered as vacancies occur for up to six months unless otherwise noted.

If you have any questions or need more information regarding the completion of the application, please contact either the Select Board Office at 781-698-4580 or the Town Manager’s Office at 781-698-4540.

Russell	P	Tanner
First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name

Nickname

Preferred Title (i.e. Mr., Ms., Mx., Dr., Rev)

Mr.

Email Address

Alternate Email Address (Optional)

Ave		
Home Address	Suite or Apt	
Lexington	MA	02421
City	State	Postal Code

Length of Residence in Lexington (Note: ZBA requirement is a minimum of 8 years)

21 years

What Precinct do you live in?

☒ Precinct 4

Home: (781)	
Primary Phone	Alternate Phone

Self
Employer

N/A
Job Title

Work Address

Ave, Lexington, MA, USA

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Housing Partnership Board: Submitted

Interests & Experiences

Please tell us about yourself and why you want to serve.

Special Training and/or Qualifications

Housing development and real estate planning professional for 42 years. Master's degree in Urban Planning, current Board member of LexHAB.

Upload a Resume

Why are you interested in serving on a board or commission?

I am interested in the Town's efforts to plan and promote diverse and affordable housing. I will bring to the Board my experience and perspective with experience in affordable housing, senior housing, and community development, plus I will be an effective representative of LexHAB at meetings.

How did you hear about the board or commission for which you are applying?

At a recent housing event in Town, I was asked by Wendy Manz to apply.

Have you recently attended any meetings of the board or committee for which you are applying?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Have you confirmed your availability to attend the board or committee's meetings? (i.e. can attend at the time the committee regularly meets)

☒ Yes ☐ No

Do you currently serve on another board or committee?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please list date of most recent Conflict of Interest Law Training.

None on file

Russell Tanner
Ave.
Lexington, MA 02421

Independent development consultant for mixed-income and affordable housing planning, financing, and project management work, working with nonprofit organizations, public housing authorities and private developers.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Former Director of real estate activities for a well-established nonprofit organization in Boston, including initiating and planning complex new construction and renovation projects, recapitalization and long-term planning for existing properties, and new project development. Expanded Real Estate staff from two to seven professionals covering a full range of activities and disciplines.
- Residential development planner, project manager and team manager with over thirty years of experience in multifamily and senior housing development in for-profit and nonprofit sectors.
- Extensive local permitting for residential development, including Chapter 40B comprehensive permits, special permits, and environmental permitting for residential properties. Seven projects permitted through the City of Boston Article 80 and ZBA Process.
- Expertise in Low Income Housing Tax Credits for multifamily housing, tax-exempt financing, public housing mixed-finance programs, and other state, federal and local programs for producing affordable housing.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2021 – Present **Independent Consultant.**

Clients include the Somerville Housing Authority, DREAM Development, LLC., Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, Civitas Builders, and Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation.

2019 -- 2021 **Executive Vice President,**
Dakota Partners, Inc., Waltham, MA

Head of affordable housing development for a private developer and general contractor with active projects in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Managed a team of six experienced professionals to implement projects with site control and

preliminary commitments for funding.

- 2010 – 2019 **Vice President/Director of Real Estate,**
Madison Park Development Corporation, Roxbury, MA
- Oversight and project management for established nonprofit organization with over 1,300 units of rental housing and ongoing new construction, renovation and projects. Major projects include low-income homeownership and rental development, and thorough modernization of existing properties through recapitalization and thorough renovation.
- 2000 – 2010 **Independent Real Estate Consulting**
R. Tanner Consulting, Lexington, MA
- Independent development consultant for project planning, permitting, financing and project management for residential development. Chapter 40B consulting for nonprofit and for-profit developers. Projects include for-sale, rental and assisted living developments ranging in size from four units to 289 units. Consulting engagement included varied communities such as Cambridge, Somerville, Newton, Brookline, Concord, and Dartmouth, Massachusetts.
- 2001 – 2009 **Partner, Rising Tide Development LLC**
- Partner in mixed-income residential projects in Lexington, Sudbury, and Sherborn, Massachusetts.
- 1997 – 2000 **Vice President of Development**
HLA Senior Living Developers, Wellesley, Mass.
- 1985 – 1997 **Director of Housing Development,
Project Manager**
The Community Builders, Inc., Boston, Mass.

SELECTED PROJECT LIST:

- **Waterworks II, Somerville, MA:** Secured and closed on financing for this 21-unit subsidized senior housing project, developed and owned by the Somerville Housing Authority. Recently completed construction, TDC of \$20,000,000.
- **Melnea Cass Apartments, Roxbury, MA:** Concept, site assembly, permitting, planning and financing for 76-unit mixed-income new construction project in Lower Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. The project includes 33 replacement units for public housing arranged with the Boston Housing Authority. Completed under budget and nearly on time in 2019. TDC of \$38.7 Million.
- **9 Williams Street, Roxbury, MA:** Historic renovation and adaptive reuse of a late-19th century light industrial building into 30 units of mixed-income housing and ground floor retail. Responsibilities included all aspects of acquisition, permitting, financing and construction oversight. Financing included arranging direct funding from a private luxury development to create affordable housing. TDC of \$16.0 Million. Completed in 2017.
- **Smith House and Dewitt Center, Roxbury, MA:** This project involved refinancing and complete renovation of an occupied 132-unit elderly housing property. Smith House was modernized from an independent elderly building into a service-enriched building serving the needs of its very low-income aging residents. Dewitt Center is a new 23,000 s.f. community center planned and built under common ownership with Smith House and thereby funded partially with LIHTC equity. TDC is \$56.0 Million. Both buildings were completed in 2018.
- **St. Botolph Terrace Apartments, Boston, MA:** Acquisition, financing and renovations for 52-unit subsidized apartment building in Boston's South End. Negotiated favorable terms with the owner and engaged with building residents to support the acquisition. Acquired in 2013, completed renovations in 2016.
- **Capen Court Redevelopment, Somerville, MA:** Financing, permitting and project management for 95-unit supportive housing development involving conversion of state public housing to private financed new development. Undertaken in conjunction with the Visiting Nurses Association of New England. Client: Somerville Housing Authority. Completed in May, 2010.

- **Jacobs Pond Estate, Norwell, Mass:** Planning, local permitting and construction oversight for an age-restricted condominium development including affordable housing units. Successfully addressed various environmental and design concerns of local boards and neighbors. Developed for HLA Senior Living. (Completed in 2001.)
- **Notre Dame du Lac, Worcester, MA:** Renovation and new construction to create a 108-unit assisted living residence and special care unit on behalf of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Development manager responsible for program and design oversight, zoning and environmental permits. Managed a “fast track” permit, design and financing process which allowed construction to begin within nine months of project conception. (Construction completed in 2000.)
- **Ledgewood Commons, Dartmouth:** Permitting and financing assistance for 100-unit mixed-income rental development. Client: Well Built Homes, Dartmouth, MA. (Phased completion from 2006 through 2012.)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS and ACTIVITIES

Community Development, Inc., Board Member

Lexington Housing Assistance Board, Board Member

Charlesbank Homes Foundation, Board Member

EDUCATION

Master of City Planning,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1983

Bachelor Degree, Urban Studies
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1983

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Approve: Proclamation

PRESENTER:

Jill Hai, Select Board Chair

ITEM NUMBER:

C.6

SUMMARY:

Category: Decision-Making

The **Town Manager's Office** is requesting that the Select Board approve and sign a proclamation in honor of Employee Recognition Day, which is to be held on Thursday, November 20, 2025. The proclamation honors all Town employees, and recognizes employees with 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 40 years of service.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

To approve and sign a proclamation for Employee Recognition Day to honor all Town employees and to recognize those employees with 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 40 years of service.

Move to approve consent.

FOLLOW-UP:

Select Board Office.

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
 2025 Employee Recognition Day	Backup Material



Town of Lexington, Massachusetts

SELECT BOARD OFFICE

PROCLAMATION

Whereas: the Select Board, in appreciation of the faithful and competent service of its employees;
and

Whereas: the Town of Lexington is fortunate in having a capable and dedicated staff that serves its citizens with distinction. The Board is taking this opportunity to make a special note of appreciation for the efforts of the employees who help make Lexington the community it is.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, THE SELECT BOARD of the Town of Lexington, Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim November 20, 2025, as

Employee Recognition Day

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have set our hands and caused the seal of Lexington to be affixed herewith on the 10th of November 2025.

JILL I. HAI, CHAIR

JOSEPH N. PATO

DOUGLAS M. LUCENTE

MARK D. SANDEEN

VINEETA A. KUMAR

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Public Hearing: FY2026 Tax Classification Presentation

PRESENTER:

ITEM NUMBER:

I.1

SUMMARY:

Category: Hearing

This is the first meeting in the process of setting the FY2026 tax rates. The Board of Assessors and the Assistant Town Manager for Finance will present the FY2026 tax classification options and preliminary tax rates for the Select Board's consideration. The attached Fiscal Year 2026 Tax Classification Packet includes a summary of these options and supporting exhibits.

This agenda item also serves the purpose of a tax classification hearing for the Board to take public comments on the tax classification options. The attached Fiscal Year 2026 Tax Classification Packet was posted to the Town's website for public review beginning on November 7th, and the public hearing was advertised via newspaper, website and constant contact.

It is proposed that the Board vote on the FY2026 tax classification options at an upcoming meeting scheduled for November 17, 2025. At that time, the Board will take four votes, which are described in the memorandum in the attached Fiscal Year 2026 Tax Classification Packet. The votes are to:

- Establish a residential factor;
- Determine whether to adopt the Open Space Discount;
- Determine whether to adopt the Residential Exemption and, if so, the percentage (up to 35 percent);
- Determine whether to adopt the Small Commercial Exemption

SUGGESTED MOTION:

No vote is requested for this agenda item.

FOLLOW-UP:

Vote of Tax Classification Options on Monday, November 17, 2025.

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

6:45pm

ATTACHMENTS:

Description		Type
	FY2026 Tax Classification Presentation	Presentation
	FY2026 Tax Classification Packet	Cover Memo

Town of Lexington



FY2026 Tax Rate Classification Hearing

November 10, 2025



Calculating the FY2026 Tax Rate

- The Town's tax rate is calculated per a prescribed formula:

$$\frac{\text{Tax Levy}}{\text{Assessed Value (by class)}}$$

- FY2026 Tax Levy (levy limit) = **\$265,340,792**
- FY2026 Total Assessed Values = **\$19,201,000,943**
- FY2026 Tax Rate (before shift or classification options) = \$13.82 per \$1,000 in value (compared to \$13.87 in FY2025)



FY2026 Tax Levy

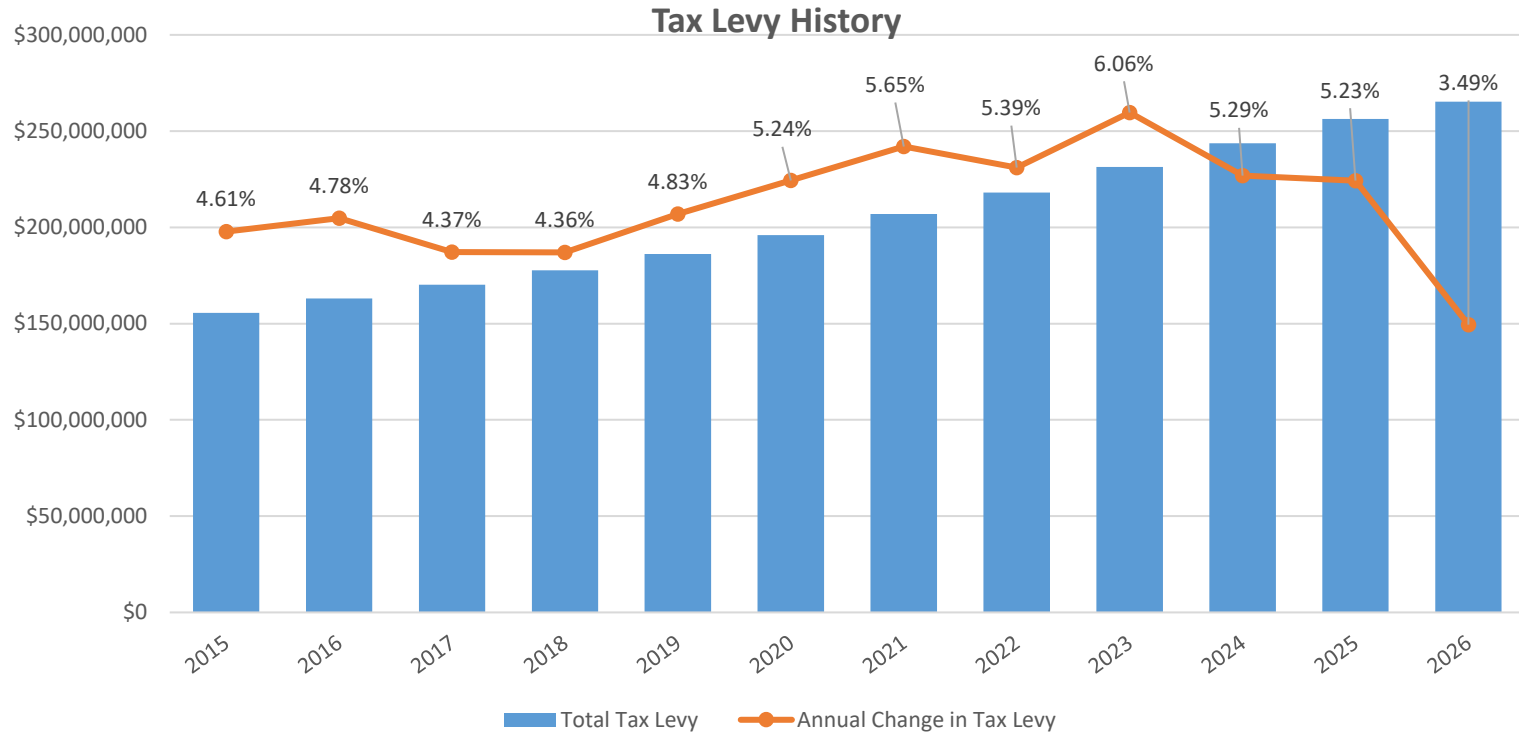
	Tax Levy	% Change
FY 2025 Levy Limit	\$ 239,807,038	
FY 2025 Excluded Debt	\$ 16,591,920	
FY 2025 Maximum Allowable Levy Limit	\$ 256,398,958	
Plus: Prop 2 1/2 Increment (FY2025 Levy Limit x 2.5%)	\$ 5,995,176	2.34%
Plus: FY2026 New Growth Increment	\$ 3,331,122	1.30%
Plus: Debt Exclusion Increment (Change vs. FY2025)	\$ (384,464)	-0.15%
FY2026 Maximum Allowable Levy Limit	\$ 265,340,792	3.49%

- The Town's FY2026 Operating Budget, as voted at the 2025 Annual Town Meeting, and adjusted at the Fall Special Town Meeting, is based on the FY2026 Levy Limit.
- Increase in Max Allowable Levy Limit excluding New Growth = 2.19%

*See Exhibit A of the attached Classification Packet for additional information on the Tax Levy



Town of Lexington

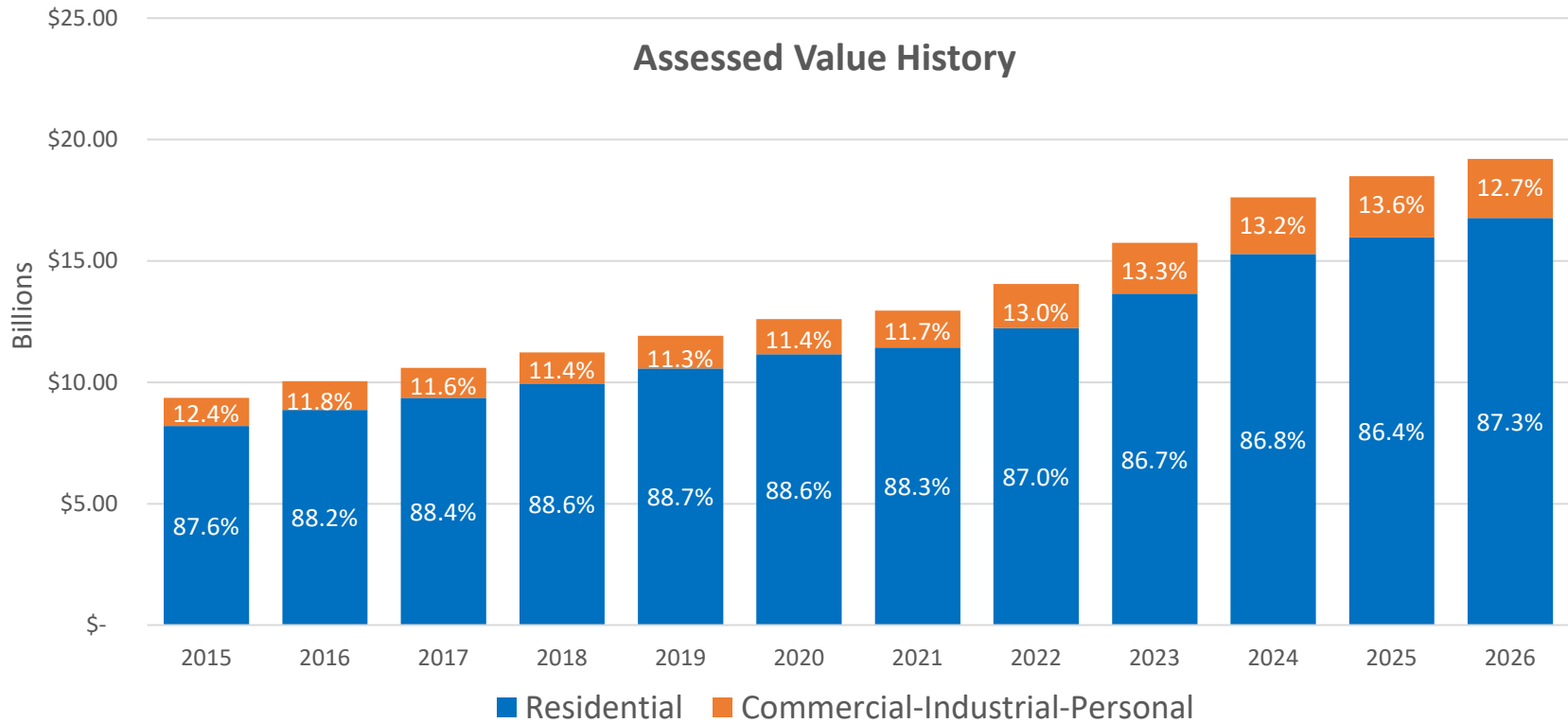


	FY2025	FY2026	% Change
Maximum Allowable Levy Limit	\$ 256,398,958	\$ 265,340,792	3.49%

*See Exhibit B of the attached Classification Packet for a 25-year trend in the Tax Levy



Town of Lexington



	FY2025	FY2026	% Change	FY26 % of Total Value
Residential Valuation	\$ 15,977,353,073	\$ 16,767,119,583	4.9%	87.3%
Comm + Indl + PP Valuation	\$ 2,510,409,460	\$ 2,433,881,360	-3.1%	12.7%
Total Valuation	\$ 18,487,762,533	\$ 19,201,000,943	3.9%	100%

*See Exhibit B of the attached Classification Packet for additional information on Assessed Values



Property Values by Class (Exhibit D)

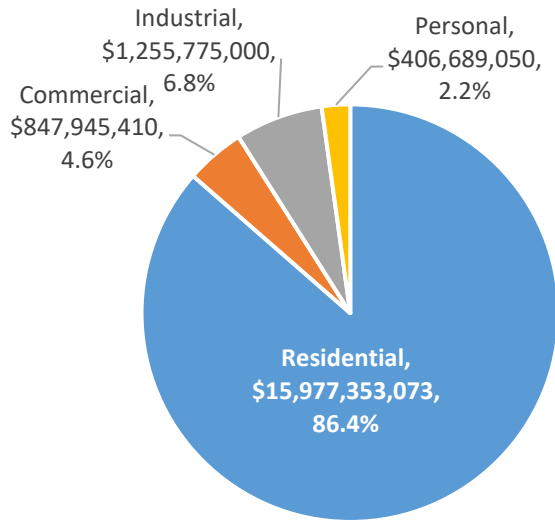
	Assessed Residential (R)	Assessed Commercial (C)	Assessed Industrial (I) ¹	Personal Property (P)	Subtotal C + I + P	Total Assessed R + C + I + P
1 FY 25 Assessed Value	\$15,977,353,073	\$847,945,410	\$1,255,775,000	\$406,689,050	\$2,510,409,460	\$18,487,762,533
2 FY 26 Assessed Value	\$16,767,119,583	\$847,548,050	\$1,164,707,000	\$421,626,310	\$2,433,881,360	\$19,201,000,943
3 \$ increase	\$789,766,510	(\$397,360)	(\$91,068,000)	\$14,937,260	(\$76,528,100)	\$713,238,410
4 % increase	4.94%	-0.05%	-7.25%	3.67%	-3.05%	3.86%
5 FY 26 New Levy Growth	\$176,706,600	\$736,128	\$0	\$47,491,420	\$48,227,548	\$224,934,148
6 FY 26 Assessed Value less New Levy Growth	\$16,590,412,983	\$846,811,922	\$1,164,707,000	\$374,134,890	\$2,385,653,812	\$18,976,066,795
7 Incr./Decr. vs. FY 25 (\$) [w/o New Levy Growth]	\$613,059,910	(\$1,133,488)	(\$91,068,000)	(\$32,554,160)	(\$124,755,648)	\$488,304,262
8 Incr./Decr. vs. FY 25 (%) [w/o New Levy Growth]	3.84%	-0.13%	-7.25%	-8.00%	-4.97%	2.64%
9 FY 25 share of total value	86.42%	4.59%	6.79%	2.20%	13.58%	100.00%
10 FY 26 share of total value (without New Levy Growth)	87.43%	4.46%	6.14%	1.97%	12.57%	100.00%
11 Change in Share of Value (FY26 vs FY25)	1.01%	-0.12%	-0.65%	-0.23%	-1.01%	

1) Industrial Values are net (reduced) by the exempt amount of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreements

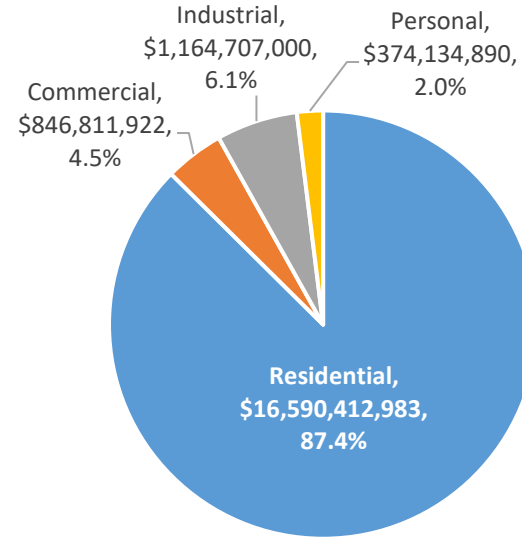
- Value without New Levy Growth represents appreciation/(depreciation) in market value (lines 7 & 8)
- Residential new growth remains steady; residential assessed values continued to increase due to increased sales prices in calendar year 2024.
- Commercial values declined slightly and experienced little growth for FY2026. Industrial values experienced a 7.25% decrease in market value with no new growth. Industrial market values may continue to decline in over the next couple years.
- Personal Property depreciates in value over time; new value is captured as personal property assets are replaced



Town of Lexington



FY 2025 Assessed Value



FY 26 Assessed Value - Without New Growth

Fiscal Year	Residential VALUE	C+I+P VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	RESIDENTIAL % VALUE	C+I+P % VALUE	C+I+P FACTOR
2017	\$9,361,100,630	\$1,228,355,980	\$11,922,400,013	88.4%	11.6%	1.75
2018	\$9,952,138,700	\$1,275,161,860	\$11,922,400,014	88.6%	11.4%	1.75
2019	\$10,570,638,820	\$1,351,761,195	\$11,922,400,015	88.7%	11.3%	1.75
2020	\$11,160,005,132	\$1,438,342,965	\$12,598,348,097	88.6%	11.4%	1.75
2021	\$11,434,037,932	\$1,518,730,905	\$12,952,768,837	88.3%	11.7%	1.75
2022	\$12,224,559,111	\$1,820,375,860	\$14,044,934,971	87.0%	13.0%	1.75
2023	\$13,645,487,139	\$2,099,699,600	\$15,745,186,739	86.7%	13.3%	1.75
2024	\$15,289,843,165	\$2,328,326,345	\$17,618,169,510	86.8%	13.2%	1.75
2025	\$15,977,353,073	\$2,510,409,460	\$18,487,762,533	86.4%	13.6%	1.75
2026 Without Growth	\$16,590,412,983	\$2,385,653,812	\$18,976,066,795	87.4%	12.6%	TBD



Tax Classification Options for Select Board Vote:

- 1. Selection of a Shift Factor** – from 1.00 flat tax rate up to 1.75 shift
- 2. Selection of a Discount for Open Space** –Not applicable as Lexington does not have property classified as Open Space
- 3. Residential Exemption** – up to 35% exemption for owner occupied residences
- 4. Small Commercial Property Exemption** – up to 10% exemption for small commercial properties



Selection of a Tax Shift Factor

- The Board may elect a Shift factor from 1.00 to 1.75 (see Exhibit A of Tax Classification Packet for a presentation of shift factors).
- A shift factor of 1.00 indicates a 'single' tax rate where Residential and Commercial-Industrial-Personal (CIP) classes pay the same rate per \$1,000 in value.
- A factor above 1.00 shifts a portion of the tax levy from the Residential class to the Commercial-Industrial-Personal (CIP) property class, therefore decreasing the Residential tax rate and increasing the CIP tax rate.
- In FY2025 Lexington's shift factor was set at the maximum 1.75, and has been at that level since FY2015 (see Exhibit C of Tax Classification Packet for a history of shift factors).



Selection of a Residential Shift Factor

Impact of Shift Factors (Exhibit A)

FACTOR		% SHARE OF LEVY		TAX LEVY		TAX RATE		% LEVY CHANGE:		
C-I-P	RESID	C-I-P	RES	C-I-P	RESID	C-I-P	RESID	C-I-P	RESID	COMMENTS
1.000	1.000	12.7%	87.3%	\$ 33,634,080	\$ 231,706,712	\$13.82	\$13.82	-44.8%	18.6%	SINGLE RATE
1.200	0.971	15.2%	84.8%	\$ 40,360,896	\$ 224,979,896	\$16.58	\$13.42	-33.7%	15.1%	
1.300	0.956	16.5%	83.5%	\$ 43,724,304	\$ 221,616,488	\$17.96	\$13.22	-28.2%	13.4%	
1.400	0.942	17.7%	82.3%	\$ 47,087,712	\$ 218,253,080	\$19.35	\$13.02	-22.7%	11.7%	
1.500	0.927	19.0%	81.0%	\$ 50,451,120	\$ 214,889,672	\$20.73	\$12.82	-17.2%	10.0%	
1.600	0.913	20.3%	79.7%	\$ 53,814,528	\$ 211,526,264	\$22.11	\$12.62	-11.6%	8.3%	
1.650	0.906	20.9%	79.1%	\$ 55,496,233	\$ 209,844,559	\$22.80	\$12.52	-8.9%	7.4%	
1.700	0.898	21.5%	78.5%	\$ 57,177,937	\$ 208,162,855	\$23.49	\$12.41	-6.1%	6.5%	
1.710	0.897	21.7%	78.3%	\$ 57,514,277	\$ 207,826,515	\$23.63	\$12.39	-5.6%	6.4%	
1.720	0.895	21.8%	78.2%	\$ 57,850,618	\$ 207,490,174	\$23.77	\$12.37	-5.0%	6.2%	
1.730	0.894	21.9%	78.1%	\$ 58,186,959	\$ 207,153,833	\$23.91	\$12.35	-4.5%	6.0%	
1.740	0.893	22.1%	77.9%	\$ 58,523,300	\$ 206,817,492	\$24.05	\$12.33	-3.9%	5.8%	
1.750	0.891	22.2%	77.8%	\$ 58,859,641	\$ 206,481,151	\$24.18	\$12.31	-3.4%	5.7%	FY 26 MAX SHIFT
Prior FY (2025) >						\$24.26	\$ 12.23			

- At a 1.00 shift, each property class pays a share of the Tax Levy equal to the percentage of assessed value – this is a single tax rate of \$13.82
- At a 1.75 shift, 9.5% of the total Tax Levy has shifted from the Residential class to the C-I-P class.
- At a max 1.75 shift, the Residential Levy will increase by 5.7% and the C-I-P Levy will decrease by 3.4% (total Levy increase of 3.5%)



Impact of Shift Factors (Exhibit D-1)

RESIDENTIAL PARCELS		RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE						
SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING (# props = 9,068)	(Prior Year)	Net of New Growth >>>		Single Family		Single Family		Single Family
<i>(Does not include Resid Condos, Apts., 2-3 family, etc)</i>	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$628/sf is Avg. across Single Family Dwellings	\$1,578,591	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor	1.75	1.65	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)	\$12.23	\$12.52	\$12.41	\$12.39	\$12.37	\$12.35	\$12.33	\$12.31
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)	\$19,306	\$20,512	\$20,348	\$20,315	\$20,282	\$20,249	\$20,217	\$20,184
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26	Not applicable	\$1,206	\$1,042	\$1,009	\$976	\$943	\$911	\$878
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26	Not applicable	6.2%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	4.9%	4.7%	4.5%
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)	3.9%							
RESIDENTIAL MISC (Resid Condos, Apts, 2-3 Fam) (# props = 1,367)	Resid Misc	Net of New Growth >>>		Resid. Misc		Resid. Misc		Resid. Misc
<i>(Incls Resid. Condos, Apart. Bldgs., 2-3 family, but NOT land, NOT Mixed Use)</i>	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$460 /sf for Avg Property in Category	\$1,178,163	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor	1.75	1.65	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)	\$12.23	\$12.52	\$12.41	\$12.39	\$12.37	\$12.35	\$12.33	\$12.31
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)	\$14,409	\$14,630	\$14,513	\$14,490	\$14,466	\$14,443	\$14,419	\$14,396
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26	Not applicable	\$221	\$104	\$81	\$57	\$34	\$10	-\$13
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26	Not applicable	1.5%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	-0.1%
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)	-1.3%							



Town of Lexington

Impact of Shift Factors (Exhibit D-1)

COMMERCIAL PARCELS		(Prior Year)	COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE						
LARGE OFFICE BLDG (# props = 21)		Large Office	Net of New Growth >>>		Lg. Office		Lg. Office		Lg. Office
(Gen. Offices (incl. Prof Med/Law/etc.); all greater than 20,000 sqft GBA)		FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$205/sf for Avg Property in Category		\$14,451,619	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor		1.75	1.65	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)		\$24.26	\$22.80	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)		\$350,596	\$340,609	\$350,931	\$352,995	\$355,059	\$357,124	\$359,188	\$361,252
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-\$9,987	\$335	\$2,399	\$4,463	\$6,528	\$8,592	\$10,656
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-2.8%	0.1%	0.7%	1.3%	1.9%	2.5%	3.0%
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)		3.4%							
SMALL & MEDIUM OFFICE BLDG (# props = 34)		Sm & Med Office	Net of New Growth >>>		Sm & Med Office		Sm & Med Office		Sm & Med Office
(Gen. Offices (incl. Prof Med/Law/etc.); all smaller than 20,000 sqft GBA)		FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$227/sf for Avg Property in Category		\$1,428,400	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor		1.75	1.65	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)		\$24.26	\$22.80	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)		\$34,653	\$34,294	\$35,333	\$35,541	\$35,748	\$35,956	\$36,164	\$36,372
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-\$359	\$680	\$888	\$1,095	\$1,303	\$1,511	\$1,719
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-1.0%	2.0%	2.6%	3.2%	3.8%	4.4%	5.0%
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)		2.3%							
TOWN-WIDE (TYPICAL) RETAIL (# props = 74)		All Town Retail	Net of New Growth >>>		All Town Retail		All Town Retail		All Town Retail
(Retail, Restaurants, & Banks, but not Retail Condos)		FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$288/sf for Avg Property in Category		\$1,905,658	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor		1.75	1.65	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)		\$24.26	\$22.80	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18
Avg. Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)		\$46,231	\$45,215	\$46,586	\$46,860	\$47,134	\$47,408	\$47,682	\$47,956
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-\$1,016	\$354	\$628	\$902	\$1,176	\$1,450	\$1,725
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-2.2%	0.8%	1.4%	2.0%	2.5%	3.1%	3.7%
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)		5.5%	clude vacant land, condos, parking lots, or Exempt parcels. (Also, other parcels left out of analysis if market valuation procedures differed markedly from						
OFFICE & RETAIL CONDOS (# props = 241)		Comm. Condo	Net of New Growth >>>		Comm. Condo		Comm. Condo		Comm. Condo
(Office Condos and Retail Shop Condominiums are included here)		FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$228/sf for Avg Property in Category		\$355,519	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor		1.75	1.65	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)		\$24.26	\$22.80	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)		\$8,625	\$8,140	\$8,387	\$8,436	\$8,485	\$8,535	\$8,584	\$8,633
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-\$485	-\$238	-\$189	-\$139	-\$90	-\$41	\$9
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-5.6%	-2.8%	-2.2%	-1.6%	-1.0%	-0.5%	0.1%
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)		0.4%							
INDUSTRIAL PARCELS		(Prior Year)	INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE						
LAB / OFFICE Combinations incl. LAB CONDOS (# props = 23)		Lab / Office	Net of New Growth >>>		Lab / Office		Lab / Office		Lab / Office
(Bio or Chem Laboratory, or Medical Use is Primary)		FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$484/sf for Avg Property in Category		\$54,983,870	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor		1.75	1.65	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)		\$24.26	\$22.80	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)		\$1,333,909	\$1,147,373	\$1,182,142	\$1,189,096	\$1,196,050	\$1,203,003	\$1,209,957	\$1,216,911
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-\$186,535	-\$151,767	-\$144,813	-\$137,859	-\$130,905	-\$123,951	-\$116,998
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26		Not applicable	-14.0%	-11.4%	-10.9%	-10.3%	-9.8%	-9.3%	-8.8%
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)		-8.5%							



Option to Adopt a Residential Exemption

- The Board may elect to adopt a residential exemption of up to 35% of individual residential home values. This increases the tax rate per \$1,000 of value, but exempts the selected percentage of value from being taxed.
- The Residential Exemption has a 'break-even' point where lower valued homes would experience a reduction in taxes, and higher value homes would experience an increase in taxes. (see Exhibit G of Tax Classification Packet)
- The exemption would not reduce the Tax Levy or shift the Tax Levy to the C-I-P class; it will be re-distributed to other Residential rate payers.
- The exemption would only apply to owner-occupied residences; non eligible parcels would pay the higher tax rate.

In 2018 the Select Board appointed a special Residential Exemption Policy Study Committee which ultimately advised against implementing the standard Residential Exemption in Lexington. The Committee's final report was published in April 2019 and is available in the Town's Archives:

<https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2056/2019-Residential-Exemption-Committee-Report-PDF?bidId>



Option to Adopt a Residential Exemption

Example of 20% Exemption

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
EXAMPLES OF ASSESSED VALUE	PRELIMINARY TAX RATE @ 1.75 SHIFT	ANNUAL PROPERTY TAX BILL	EXEMPTED ASSESSED VALUE @ 20 % EXEMPTION	NET ASSESSED VALUE ¹	DERIVED TAX RATE	NET TAX BILL	Taxation \$ Change (g-c)	Taxation % Change (h/c)
\$600,000	\$12.31	\$7,389	\$306,697	\$293,303	\$14.83	\$4,349	-\$3,040	-41.14%
\$800,000	\$12.31	\$9,852	\$306,697	\$493,303	\$14.83	\$7,314	-\$2,537	-25.75%
\$1,000,000	\$12.31	\$12,315	\$306,697	\$693,303	\$14.83	\$10,280	-\$2,035	-16.52%
\$1,100,000	\$12.31	\$13,546	\$306,697	\$793,303	\$14.83	\$11,763	-\$1,783	-13.17%
\$1,200,000	\$12.31	\$14,778	\$306,697	\$893,303	\$14.83	\$13,245	-\$1,532	-10.37%
\$1,300,000	\$12.31	\$16,009	\$306,697	\$993,303	\$14.83	\$14,728	-\$1,281	-8.00%
\$1,400,000	\$12.31	\$17,241	\$306,697	\$1,093,303	\$14.83	\$16,211	-\$1,030	-5.97%
\$1,500,000	\$12.31	\$18,472	\$306,697	\$1,193,303	\$14.83	\$17,694	-\$778	-4.21%
\$1,600,000	\$12.31	\$19,703	\$306,697	\$1,293,303	\$14.83	\$19,176	-\$527	-2.67%
\$1,700,000	\$12.31	\$20,935	\$306,697	\$1,393,303	\$14.83	\$20,659	-\$276	-1.32%
\$1,800,000	\$12.31	\$22,166	\$306,697	\$1,493,303	\$14.83	\$22,142	-\$24	-0.11%
\$1,809,727	\$12.31	\$22,286	\$306,697	\$1,503,030	\$14.83	\$22,286	\$0	0.00%
\$1,900,000	\$12.31	\$23,398	\$306,697	\$1,593,303	\$14.83	\$23,625	\$227	0.97%
\$2,000,000	\$12.31	\$24,629	\$306,697	\$1,693,303	\$14.83	\$25,107	\$478	1.94%
\$2,500,000	\$12.31	\$30,787	\$306,697	\$2,193,303	\$14.83	\$32,521	\$1,735	5.63%
\$3,000,000	\$12.31	\$36,944	\$306,697	\$2,693,303	\$14.83	\$39,935	\$2,991	8.10%
\$5,000,000	\$12.31	\$61,573	\$306,697	\$4,693,303	\$14.83	\$69,590	\$8,017	13.02%

*See Exhibit G of the attached Classification Packet, or MA DOR calculator for additional information on the Residential Exemption:

<https://dls-gw.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Analysis.ResExemptionCalc>



Option to Adopt a Small Commercial Exemption

- The Board may elect to adopt a Small Commercial Exemption of up to 10% of the value of Small Commercial properties.
- The exemption would apply to properties in the Commercial class that meet the following criteria:
 - Property value less than \$1,000,000
 - Business employs less than 10 employees (regardless of the location employees work from)
- The exemption would not reduce the Tax Levy; it would be re-distributed to other rate payers in the Commercial-Industrial classes.
- The exemption would be realized by the owner of the property, who may not be the occupant of the property. There is no requirement for pass-through.
- Town Staff performed a deep dive analysis of the Small Commercial Exemption in June 2024. As reported, the benefits of a small commercial exemption should be weighed against the implementation challenges.



Tax Relief Programs

Lexington offers a variety of tax relief programs, including **tax exemptions** for elderly, veteran, surviving spouse, and blind residents. The Town also administers a **senior tax deferral program**.

For additional information on these programs, please review the Town's tax relief brochure:

<https://www.lexingtonma.gov/168/Elderly-Other-Tax-Relief>

For questions or program assistance, please contact:

- Lexington Assessors Office: 781-698-4578, or
- Human Services Department: 781-698- 4840

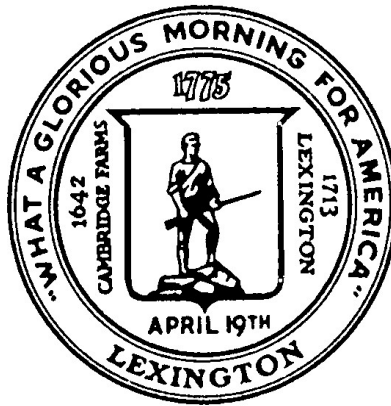


Questions & Discussion

TOWN OF LEXINGTON

Fiscal Year 2026

Property Tax Classification Data Packet



Prepared for the Lexington Select Board

Prepared by: Lexington Assessors Office

Members of the Board

Chairman, Gregory A. Johnson

Member, Edmund C. Grant

Member, Casimir R. Groblewski

Contributing Staff

Carolyn Kosnoff, Asst. Town Manager for Finance

Robert F. Lent, Director of Assessing

Michael Golden, Asst. Director of Assessing

Property Tax Classification Hearing
November 10, 2025

MEMO

To: Lexington Select Board
From: Lexington Board of Assessors
Subject: FY2026 Lexington Property Tax Classification Meeting

Date: November 10, 2025

This memo is intended to provide the Select Board with the necessary information to conduct a Public Hearing and Informational Session on the tax classification options available under Massachusetts General Laws.

The classification amendment requires the Lexington Select Board to consider four (4) selections with respect to the setting the **FY2026** Lexington tax rate. The decision of the Select Board for each alternative must be submitted to the DOR on MA State form LA-5. The four (4) selections are:

1. Selection of a residential factor
2. Selection of a discount for Open Space
3. Residential exemption
4. Small commercial property exemption

1. Selection of a residential rate factor.

(Class 1: Residential; Class 2: Open Space; Class 3: Commercial; Class 4: Industrial, etc.)

Per MA State Law, the Lexington Select Board may choose to adopt a **residential rate factor**, which will increase the tax rate applied to the commercial, industrial, and personal property (C-I-P) classes, by a factor (multiplier) of **up to a maximum of 1.750**. Adopting such a factor will shift a larger portion of the overall Lexington tax levy to the commercial, industrial, and personal property classes (CIP), thereby reducing the portion of the tax levy borne by the owners of residential property.

Attached Exhibit A & Exhibit B demonstrate the effect that several possible “factor” choices will have by identifying the tax levy percentage borne by each class of properties through the resulting tax rates. Some 108 of the 351 communities in Massachusetts have adopted this process of tax classification.

2. Selection of a discount for Open Space.

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59 Sec. 2A defines Class 2 Open Space as:

"..land which is not otherwise classified and which is not taxable under provisions of chapters 61, 61A, or 61B, or taxable under a permanent conservation restriction, and which land is not held for the production of income but is maintained in an open or natural condition and which contributes significantly to the benefit and enjoyment of the public."

The Lexington Select Board may choose to adopt an exemption, **discounting the assessed value of Open Space** to a maximum of 25% for any property that is classified as Open Space. The Board of Assessors has not identified any property in Lexington that meets the definition of Open Space according to the statute, therefore adopting/not adopting this exemption will have no impact on the town's tax classification.

To: Lexington Select Board
From: Lexington Board of Assessors
Subject: FY 2026 Lexington Property Tax Classification Meeting

Date: November 10, 2025

3. Residential exemption.

The Lexington Select Board may choose to adopt a maximum exemption of up to 35% (prior to FY2016 the maximum was 20%). If adopted, this **tax relief would apply only to the principal residence of taxpayers (owner-occupied and primary domicile).**

If this exemption were adopted, the residential properties that are assessed at a value below the “break-even valuation” point would realize a reduction in taxes while the residential properties assessed at a value above the “break-even valuation” point must pay additional taxes to compensate. See attached Exhibit G for a hypothetical application of the residential exemption.

The funding for this exemption/tax relief for qualified applicants would be borne amongst the other properties of the within the **same Residential classification**. Non-owner-occupied properties (in particular, apartment buildings and vacant land) would experience a substantial increase in taxes. [Note: “The Residential classification” includes over 10,000 parcels: single family dwellings, two & three family dwellings, vacant land, multi-dwelling parcels, residential condos, and apartment buildings.]

According to Mass.gov statistics, sixteen (16) communities in the Commonwealth of MA (typically those with a substantial base of residential rental units) have decided to offer the residential exemption: Barnstable, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Nantucket, Provincetown, Somerset, Somerville, Tisbury, Truro, Waltham, Watertown, and Wellfleet.

In 2018, the Select Board formed an Ad Hoc Residential Exemption Policy Study Committee to examine if adopting a residential exemption would serve the interests of the Lexington community. In their final report delivered to the Select Board in April, 2019, the Committee advised that adopting the Massachusetts local option residential exemption was not recommended. The committee suggested other courses of action for tax relief, such as promoting existing programs for tax deferrals, exemptions, and credits, as well as exploring special legislation for means-tested or other age-based tax exemptions.

4. Small commercial exemption.

The Lexington Select Board may choose to adopt a **small commercial exemption** of up to 10% of the property valuation for commercial (*not industrial*) property that meets the requirements of the law.

To qualify, eligible businesses must have occupied the property as of January 1st, and the business occupant must have had no more than ten (10) employees (as certified by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development) during the previous calendar year, **and the parcel must have an assessed valuation of less than \$1,000,000 during the Fiscal Year**. In FY2026, approximately 80 commercial properties (including commercial condos) in Lexington have a value under \$1,000,000.

If adopted, staff would proactively apply this exemption to all properties that meet both eligibility criteria. The funding for this exemption/tax relief for qualified applicants would be borne by the other properties of the **Commercial-Industrial (C-I) classes**, resulting in an overall increase in the Commercial and Industrial tax rates. The property owner would realize the tax exemption under this option.

To: Lexington Select Board
From: Lexington Board of Assessors
Subject: FY 2026 Lexington Property Tax Classification Meeting

Date: November 10, 2025

According to Mass.gov statistics, fifteen (15) communities in the Commonwealth of MA have decided to offer the small commercial exemption: Auburn, Avon, Bellingham, Berlin, Braintree, Chelmsford, Dartmouth, Erving, New Ashford, North Attleboro, Seekonk, Somerset, Swampscott, Westford, and Wrentham.

EXHIBIT A: ALTERNATIVE TAX RATE SCENARIOS FOR FY2026

FY2025 to FY2026 Change in Levy Limit and Values

	FY2025	FY2026	% CHANGE
Maximum Allowable Levy Limit	\$ 256,398,958	\$ 265,340,792	3.49%
Tax Levy (FY25 as actual, and FY26 as Levy Limit (TBD))	\$ 256,305,562	\$ 265,340,792	3.53%
Residential Valuation	\$ 15,977,353,073	\$ 16,767,119,583	4.94%
Comm + Indl * + PP Valuation	\$ 2,510,409,460	\$ 2,433,881,360	-3.05%
Total Valuation	\$ 18,487,762,533	\$ 19,201,000,943	3.86%
Residential Tax Rate	\$ 12.23	T.B.D.	T.B.D.
Comm / Indl / PP Tax Rate	\$ 24.26	T.B.D.	T.B.D.

*Industrial valuation is adjusted for T.I.F. agreements, as reported on LA-4

FY 2025 Levy Limit (A)	\$ 239,807,038	N/A
FY 2025 Excluded Debt (B)	\$ 16,591,920	N/A
FY 2025 Maximum Allowable Levy Limit (A) + (B)	\$ 256,398,958	N/A
Plus: Amended New Growth	\$ -	0.00%
Plus: Prop 2 1/2 Increment (FY 2025 Levy Limit (A) x 2.5%)	\$ 5,995,176	2.34%
Plus: New Growth Increment (from FY 2026 DOR LA-13)	\$ 3,331,122	1.30%
Plus: Override	\$ -	0.00%
Plus: Debt Exclusion Increment (change vs. FY 2025)	\$ (384,464)	-0.15%
FY2026 Maximum Allowable Levy Limit	\$ 265,340,792	3.49%

FACTOR		% SHARE OF LEVY		TAX LEVY		TAX RATE		% LEVY CHANGE:		COMMENTS
C-I-P	RESID	C-I-P	RES	C-I-P	RESID	C-I-P	RESID	C-I-P	RESID	
1.000	1.000	12.7%	87.3%	\$ 33,634,080	\$ 231,706,712	\$13.82	\$13.82	-44.8%	18.6%	IF @ SINGLE RATE
1.050	0.993	13.3%	86.7%	\$ 35,315,784	\$ 230,025,008	\$14.51	\$13.72	-42.0%	17.7%	
1.100	0.985	13.9%	86.1%	\$ 36,997,488	\$ 228,343,304	\$15.20	\$13.62	-39.3%	16.9%	
1.150	0.978	14.6%	85.4%	\$ 38,679,192	\$ 226,661,600	\$15.89	\$13.52	-36.5%	16.0%	
1.200	0.971	15.2%	84.8%	\$ 40,360,896	\$ 224,979,896	\$16.58	\$13.42	-33.7%	15.1%	
1.250	0.964	15.8%	84.2%	\$ 42,042,600	\$ 223,298,192	\$17.27	\$13.32	-31.0%	14.3%	
1.300	0.956	16.5%	83.5%	\$ 43,724,304	\$ 221,616,488	\$17.96	\$13.22	-28.2%	13.4%	
1.350	0.949	17.1%	82.9%	\$ 45,406,008	\$ 219,934,784	\$18.66	\$13.12	-25.4%	12.6%	
1.400	0.942	17.7%	82.3%	\$ 47,087,712	\$ 218,253,080	\$19.35	\$13.02	-22.7%	11.7%	
1.450	0.935	18.4%	81.6%	\$ 48,769,416	\$ 216,571,376	\$20.04	\$12.92	-19.9%	10.8%	
1.500	0.927	19.0%	81.0%	\$ 50,451,120	\$ 214,889,672	\$20.73	\$12.82	-17.2%	10.0%	
1.550	0.920	19.6%	80.4%	\$ 52,132,824	\$ 213,207,968	\$21.42	\$12.72	-14.4%	9.1%	
1.560	0.919	19.8%	80.2%	\$ 52,469,165	\$ 212,871,627	\$21.56	\$12.70	-13.8%	8.9%	
1.570	0.917	19.9%	80.1%	\$ 52,805,506	\$ 212,535,286	\$21.70	\$12.68	-13.3%	8.8%	
1.580	0.916	20.0%	80.0%	\$ 53,141,847	\$ 212,198,945	\$21.83	\$12.66	-12.7%	8.6%	
1.590	0.914	20.2%	79.8%	\$ 53,478,188	\$ 211,862,604	\$21.97	\$12.64	-12.2%	8.4%	
1.600	0.913	20.3%	79.7%	\$ 53,814,528	\$ 211,526,264	\$22.11	\$12.62	-11.6%	8.3%	
1.610	0.911	20.4%	79.6%	\$ 54,150,869	\$ 211,189,923	\$22.25	\$12.60	-11.1%	8.1%	
1.620	0.910	20.5%	79.5%	\$ 54,487,210	\$ 210,853,582	\$22.39	\$12.58	-10.5%	7.9%	
1.630	0.909	20.7%	79.3%	\$ 54,823,551	\$ 210,517,241	\$22.53	\$12.56	-10.0%	7.7%	
1.640	0.907	20.8%	79.2%	\$ 55,159,892	\$ 210,180,900	\$22.66	\$12.54	-9.4%	7.6%	
1.650	0.906	20.9%	79.1%	\$ 55,496,233	\$ 209,844,559	\$22.80	\$12.52	-8.9%	7.4%	
1.660	0.904	21.0%	79.0%	\$ 55,832,573	\$ 209,508,219	\$22.94	\$12.50	-8.3%	7.2%	
1.670	0.903	21.2%	78.8%	\$ 56,168,914	\$ 209,171,878	\$23.08	\$12.48	-7.8%	7.0%	
1.680	0.901	21.3%	78.7%	\$ 56,505,255	\$ 208,835,537	\$23.22	\$12.46	-7.2%	6.9%	
1.690	0.900	21.4%	78.6%	\$ 56,841,596	\$ 208,499,196	\$23.35	\$12.44	-6.7%	6.7%	
1.700	0.898	21.5%	78.5%	\$ 57,177,937	\$ 208,162,855	\$23.49	\$12.41	-6.1%	6.5%	
1.710	0.897	21.7%	78.3%	\$ 57,514,277	\$ 207,826,515	\$23.63	\$12.39	-5.6%	6.4%	
1.720	0.895	21.8%	78.2%	\$ 57,850,618	\$ 207,490,174	\$23.77	\$12.37	-5.0%	6.2%	
1.730	0.894	21.9%	78.1%	\$ 58,186,959	\$ 207,153,833	\$23.91	\$12.35	-4.5%	6.0%	
1.740	0.893	22.1%	77.9%	\$ 58,523,300	\$ 206,817,492	\$24.05	\$12.33	-3.9%	5.8%	
1.750	0.8911315	22.2%	77.8%	\$ 58,859,641	\$ 206,481,151	\$24.18	\$12.31	-3.4%	5.7%	FY 26, IF MAX SHIFT
Prior FY (2025) >						\$24.26	\$12.23			

*Proposition 2.5 potential increment is calculated from the previous year's levy limit before adding excluded debt.

EXHIBIT B: HISTORICAL LEVY LIMIT SUMMARY (Most Recent 25 Years)

FY	MAX. ALLOWABLE LEVY	RESID VALUE	C+I+P VALUE	TAXABLE TOTAL VALUE	RESIDENTIAL		C+I+P		C+I+P FACTOR
					% VALUE	%LEVY	% VALUE	%LEVY	
2001	\$68,753,066	\$4,200,706,000	\$814,607,290	\$5,015,313,290	83.8%	74.0%	16.2%	26.0%	1.60
2002	\$72,024,765	\$4,706,431,500	\$911,710,050	\$5,618,141,550	83.8%	73.7%	16.2%	26.3%	1.62
2003	\$75,793,067	\$5,186,133,750	\$897,438,810	\$6,083,572,560	85.2%	74.9%	14.8%	25.1%	1.70
2004	\$82,109,040	\$6,018,408,000	\$892,768,060	\$6,911,176,060	87.1%	76.7%	12.9%	23.3%	1.80
2005	\$91,165,834	\$6,275,351,000	\$870,816,360	\$7,146,167,360	87.8%	78.1%	12.2%	21.9%	1.80
2006	\$94,751,711	\$6,823,275,250	\$862,993,280	\$7,686,268,530	88.8%	80.0%	11.2%	20.0%	1.78
2007	\$101,074,790	\$7,135,277,500	\$923,957,080	\$8,059,234,580	88.5%	80.1%	11.5%	20.0%	1.74
2008	\$110,222,125	\$6,945,049,000	\$984,115,350	\$7,929,164,350	87.6%	78.9%	12.4%	21.1%	1.70
2009	\$116,411,032	\$6,991,353,500	\$1,042,254,630	\$8,033,608,130	87.0%	78.0%	13.0%	22.1%	1.70
2010	\$121,765,514	\$6,896,447,750	\$995,142,860	\$7,891,590,610	87.4%	78.6%	12.6%	21.4%	1.70
2011	\$127,955,723	\$6,953,985,750	\$1,019,733,440	\$7,973,719,190	87.2%	77.6%	12.8%	22.4%	1.70
2012	\$134,337,548	\$6,974,904,000	\$1,051,783,320	\$8,026,687,320	86.9%	77.7%	13.1%	22.3%	1.70
2013	\$141,639,397	\$7,196,488,310	\$1,111,468,450	\$8,307,956,760	86.6%	77.3%	13.4%	22.7%	1.70
2014	\$148,770,138	\$7,411,620,000	\$1,143,975,350	\$8,555,595,350	86.6%	77.3%	13.4%	22.7%	1.70
2015	\$155,635,871	\$8,197,256,180	\$1,162,358,910	\$9,359,615,090	87.6%	78.3%	12.4%	21.7%	1.75
2016	\$163,074,847	\$8,862,601,990	\$1,185,945,695	\$10,048,547,685	88.2%	79.3%	11.8%	20.7%	1.75
2017	\$170,196,002	\$9,361,100,630	\$1,228,355,980	\$10,589,456,610	88.4%	79.7%	11.6%	20.3%	1.75
2018	\$177,624,815	\$9,952,138,700	\$1,275,161,860	\$11,227,300,560	88.6%	80.1%	11.4%	19.9%	1.75
2019	\$186,201,054	\$10,570,638,820	\$1,351,761,195	\$11,922,400,015	88.7%	80.2%	11.3%	19.8%	1.75
2020	\$195,949,768	\$11,160,005,132	\$1,438,342,965	\$12,598,348,097	88.6%	80.0%	11.4%	20.0%	1.75
2021	\$207,014,709	\$11,434,037,932	\$1,518,730,905	\$12,952,768,837	88.3%	79.5%	11.7%	20.5%	1.75
2022	\$218,176,731	\$12,224,559,111	\$1,820,375,860	\$14,044,934,971	87.0%	77.3%	13.0%	22.7%	1.75
2023	\$231,395,607	\$13,645,487,139	\$2,099,699,600	\$15,745,186,739	86.7%	76.7%	13.3%	23.3%	1.75
2024	\$243,646,076	\$15,289,843,165	\$2,328,326,345	\$17,618,169,510	86.8%	76.9%	13.2%	23.1%	1.75
2025	\$256,398,958	\$15,977,353,073	\$2,510,409,460	\$18,487,762,533	86.4%	76.2%	13.6%	23.8%	1.75
2026	\$265,340,792	\$16,767,119,583	\$2,433,881,360	\$19,201,000,943	87.3%	TBD	12.7%	TBD	TBD

Notes:

Maximum Levy is equal to the actual Levy for all prior years, and the maximum allowable levy for the current year. Maximum allowable levy and Levy may differ due to rounding.
C - I - P value has been reduced by the portion of assessed value that is not taxable due to TIF agreements.

EXHIBIT C: HISTORY OF AVERAGE SINGLE FAMILY ASSESSED VALUE AND PROPERTY TAX - Most Recent 25 Years

Fiscal Year (*)	SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING VALUATION	NUMBER OF SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS (SFD)	SFD VALUE (AVERAGE)	PERCENT CHANGE OF ASSESSED VALUE	TAX RATE	AVERAGE ANNUAL TAX BILL	PERCENT CHANGE TAXES	C - I - P FACTOR	LEXINGTON TOWNWIDE TAXABLE TOTAL
2002	\$4,225,339,000	8,845	\$477,709		\$11.28	\$5,388.56		1.62	\$ 5,618,141,550
2003	\$4,693,071,000	8,898	\$527,430	10.4%	\$10.95	\$5,775.36	7.2%	1.70	\$ 6,083,572,560
2004	\$5,456,206,000	8,887	\$613,954	16.4%	\$10.47	\$6,428.09	11.3%	1.80	\$ 6,911,176,060
2005	\$5,687,532,000	8,899	\$639,120	4.1%	\$11.34	\$7,247.62	12.7%	1.80	\$ 7,146,167,360
2006	\$6,206,172,000	8,910	\$696,540	9.0%	\$11.11	\$7,738.56	6.8%	1.78	\$ 7,686,268,530
2007	\$6,499,630,000	8,917	\$728,903	4.6%	\$11.34	\$8,265.76	6.8%	1.74	\$ 8,059,234,580
2008	\$6,262,572,000	8,922	\$701,925	-3.7%	\$12.52	\$8,788.10	6.3%	1.70	\$ 7,929,164,350
2009	\$6,274,760,000	8,934	\$702,346	0.1%	\$12.97	\$9,109.43	3.7%	1.70	\$ 8,033,608,130
2010	\$6,184,505,000	8,944	\$691,470	-1.5%	\$13.86	\$9,583.77	5.2%	1.70	\$ 7,891,590,610
2011	\$6,234,563,000	8,949	\$696,677	0.8%	\$14.40	\$10,032.15	4.7%	1.70	\$ 7,973,719,190
2012	\$6,251,243,000	8,963	\$697,450	0.1%	\$14.97	\$10,440.82	4.1%	1.70	\$ 8,026,687,320
2013	\$6,441,950,000	8,978	\$717,526	2.9%	\$15.20	\$10,906.40	4.5%	1.70	\$ 8,307,956,760
2014	\$6,658,875,000	8,996	\$740,204	3.2%	\$15.51	\$11,480.56	5.3%	1.70	\$ 8,555,595,350
2015	\$7,385,759,000	9,003	\$820,366	10.8%	\$14.86	\$12,190.65	6.2%	1.75	\$ 9,359,615,090
2016	\$8,008,381,000	9,025	\$887,355	8.2%	\$14.60	\$12,955.39	6.3%	1.75	\$ 10,048,547,685
2017	\$8,415,787,000	9,029	\$932,084	5.0%	\$14.49	\$13,505.90	4.2%	1.75	\$ 10,589,456,610
2018	\$8,938,050,000	9,021	\$990,805	6.3%	\$14.30	\$14,168.51	4.9%	1.75	\$ 11,227,300,560
2019	\$9,486,786,000	9,030	\$1,050,585	6.0%	\$14.12	\$14,834.27	4.7%	1.75	\$ 11,922,400,015
2020	\$10,011,844,000	9,048	\$1,106,526	5.3%	\$14.05	\$15,546.69	4.8%	1.75	\$ 12,598,348,097
2021	\$10,221,948,000	9,057	\$1,128,624	2.0%	\$14.39	\$16,240.90	4.5%	1.75	\$ 12,952,768,837
2022	\$10,904,445,000	9,058	\$1,203,847	6.7%	\$13.80	\$16,613.09	2.3%	1.75	\$ 14,044,934,971
2023	\$12,203,384,000	9,058	\$1,347,249	11.9%	\$13.00	\$17,514.24	5.4%	1.75	\$ 15,745,186,739
2024	\$13,682,230,000	9,059	\$1,510,347	12.1%	\$12.25	\$18,501.75	5.6%	1.75	\$ 17,618,169,510
2025	\$14,309,924,000	9,065	\$1,578,591	4.5%	\$12.25	\$19,337.74	4.5%	1.75	\$ 18,487,762,533
2026	\$15,023,268,000	9,068	\$1,656,734	9.7%	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	\$ 19,201,000,943
* All values above include new growth value.					(most recent 5 years, including FY 2026)				
				5 yr total:					
				5 yr average:					

EXHIBIT D: VALUES BY CLASS: FY2025 TO FY2026 ¹

	Assessed ALL Residential (R)	Assessed Commercial (C)	Assessed Industrial (I) ²	Commercial + Industrial Combined (C + I)	[Business Assets] Assessed Personal Property (P) ³	Subtotal C + I + P	Total Assessed R + C + I + P
FY 25 Assessed Value	\$15,977,353,073	\$847,945,410	\$1,255,775,000	\$2,103,720,410	\$406,689,050	\$2,510,409,460	\$18,487,762,533
FY 26 Assessed Value	\$16,767,119,583	\$847,548,050	\$1,164,707,000	\$2,012,255,050	\$421,626,310	\$2,433,881,360	\$19,201,000,943
\$ increase (net of TIFs)	\$789,766,510	(\$397,360)	(\$91,068,000)	(\$91,465,360)	\$14,937,260	(\$76,528,100)	\$713,238,410
% increase (net of TIFs)	4.94%	-0.05%	-7.25%	-4.35%	3.67%	-3.05%	3.86%
FY 26 New Levy Growth	\$176,706,600	\$736,128	\$0	\$736,128	\$47,491,420	\$48,227,548	\$224,934,148
FY 26 Assessed Value less New Levy Growth	\$16,590,412,983	\$846,811,922	\$1,164,707,000	\$2,011,518,922	\$374,134,890	\$2,385,653,812	\$18,976,066,795
Incr./Decr. vs. FY 25 (\$) [w/o New Levy Growth]	\$613,059,910	(\$1,133,488)	(\$91,068,000)	(\$92,201,488)	(\$32,554,160)	(\$124,755,648)	\$488,304,262
Incr./Decr. vs. FY 25 (%) [w/o New Levy Growth]	3.84%	-0.13%	-7.25%	-4.38%	-8.00%	-4.97%	2.64%
FY 25 share of total value	86.42%	4.59%	6.79%	11.38%	2.20%	13.58%	100.00%
FY 26 share of total value (without New Levy Growth)	87.43%	4.46%	6.14%	10.60%	1.97%	12.57%	100.00%
Change (FY 26 less FY 25)	1.01%	-0.12%	-0.65%	-0.78%	-0.23%	-1.01%	

¹ As of October 29, 2025, the FY2026 assessed values in Lexington were approved by MA State DOR/DLS .

² The Industrial property assessed value above is reported here as NET, rather than as GROSS, as it does not include **\$12,912,000** of assessed Industrial Value that has been exempted from local taxation per Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements. These TIFs have been reviewed and fully accepted by the State of MA.

³ The substantial year-on-year change in Personal Property is directly attributable to MA State depreciation schedules for this class of property, plus associated New Levy Growth (NLG) for the category.

EXHIBIT D-1: LEXINGTON - FY 2026 Tax Rate Shift Options & Property Comparisons

(New Levy Growth [i.e. new construction] was removed from the new FY2026 assessed values in order to compare the annual change in market value.)

RESIDENTIAL PARCELS			RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE															
SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING (# props = 9,068) (Does not include Resid Condos, Apts., 2-3 family, etc.)			Single Family FY 2025		FY 2026		Single Family FY 2026		FY 2026		Single Family FY 2026		FY 2026		Single Family FY 2026		FY 2026	
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$628/sf is Avg. across Single Family Dwellings			\$1,578,591		\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	\$1,639,000	
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor			1.75	1.65	1.66	1.67	1.68	1.69	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75				
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)			\$12.23	\$12.52	\$12.50	\$12.48	\$12.46	\$12.44	\$12.41	\$12.39	\$12.37	\$12.35	\$12.33	\$12.31				
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)			\$19,306	\$20,512	\$20,480	\$20,447	\$20,414	\$20,381	\$20,348	\$20,315	\$20,282	\$20,249	\$20,217	\$20,184				
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	\$1,206	\$1,174	\$1,141	\$1,108	\$1,075	\$1,042	\$1,009	\$976	\$943	\$911	\$878				
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	6.2%	6.1%	5.9%	5.7%	5.6%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	4.9%	4.7%	4.5%				
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)			3.9%															
RESIDENTIAL MISC (Resid Condos, Apts, 2-3 Fam) (# props = 1,367) (Includes Resid. Condos, Apart. Bldgs., 2-3 family, but NOT land, NOT Mixed Use)			Resid Misc FY 2025		FY 2026		Resid. Misc FY 2026		FY 2026		Resid. Misc FY 2026		FY 2026		Resid. Misc FY 2026		FY 2026	
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$460/sf for Avg Property in Category			\$1,178,163		\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000	\$1,169,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor			1.75	1.65	1.66	1.67	1.68	1.69	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75				
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)			\$12.23	\$12.52	\$12.50	\$12.48	\$12.46	\$12.44	\$12.41	\$12.39	\$12.37	\$12.35	\$12.33	\$12.31				
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)			\$14,409	\$14,630	\$14,607	\$14,583	\$14,560	\$14,537	\$14,513	\$14,490	\$14,466	\$14,443	\$14,419	\$14,396				
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	\$221	\$198	\$174	\$151	\$128	\$104	\$81	\$57	\$34	\$10	-\$13				
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	-0.1%				
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)			-1.3%															
				This category does not include vacant land, Mixed Use, unique use properties, or Exempt parcels.														
COMMERCIAL PARCELS			COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE															
LARGE OFFICE BLDG (# props = 21) (Gen. Offices (incl. Prof Med/Law/etc.): all greater than 20,000 sqft GBA)			Large Office FY 2025		FY 2026		Lg. Office FY 2026		FY 2026		Lg. Office FY 2026		FY 2026		Lg. Office FY 2026		FY 2026	
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$205/sf for Avg Property in Category			\$14,451,619		\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000	\$14,938,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor			1.75	1.65	1.66	1.67	1.68	1.69	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75				
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)			\$24.26	\$22.80	\$22.94	\$23.08	\$23.22	\$23.35	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18				
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)			\$350,596	\$340,609	\$342,674	\$344,738	\$346,802	\$348,867	\$350,931	\$352,995	\$355,059	\$357,124	\$359,188	\$361,252				
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-\$9,987	-\$7,922	-\$5,858	-\$3,794	-\$1,729	\$335	\$2,399	\$4,463	\$6,528	\$8,592	\$10,656				
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-2.8%	-2.3%	-1.7%	-1.1%	-0.5%	0.1%	0.7%	1.3%	1.9%	2.5%	3.0%				
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)			3.4%															
SMALL & MEDIUM OFFICE BLDG (# props = 34) (Gen. Offices (incl. Prof Med/Law/etc.): all smaller than 20,000 sqft GBA)			Sm & Med Office FY 2025		FY 2026		Sm & Med Office FY 2026		FY 2026		Sm & Med Office FY 2026		FY 2026		Sm & Med Office FY 2026		FY 2026	
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$227/sf for Avg Property in Category			\$1,428,400		\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000	\$1,504,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor			1.75	1.65	1.66	1.67	1.68	1.69	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75				
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)			\$24.26	\$22.80	\$22.94	\$23.08	\$23.22	\$23.35	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18				
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)			\$34,653	\$34,294	\$34,501	\$34,709	\$34,917	\$35,125	\$35,333	\$35,541	\$35,748	\$35,956	\$36,164	\$36,372				
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-\$359	-\$152	\$56	\$264	\$472	\$680	\$888	\$1,095	\$1,303	\$1,511	\$1,719				
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-1.0%	-0.4%	0.2%	0.8%	1.4%	2.0%	2.6%	3.2%	3.8%	4.4%	5.0%				
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)			2.3%															
TOWN-WIDE (TYPICAL) RETAIL (# props = 74) (Retail, Restaurants, & Banks, but not Retail Condos)			All Town Retail FY 2025		FY 2026		All Town Retail FY 2026		FY 2026		All Town Retail FY 2026		FY 2026		All Town Retail FY 2026		FY 2026	
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$288/sf for Avg Property in Category			\$1,905,658		\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000	\$1,983,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor			1.75	1.65	1.66	1.67	1.68	1.69	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75				
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)			\$24.26	\$22.80	\$22.94	\$23.08	\$23.22	\$23.35	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18				
Avg. Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)			\$46,231	\$45,215	\$45,489	\$45,764	\$46,038	\$46,312	\$46,586	\$46,860	\$47,134	\$47,408	\$47,682	\$47,956				
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-\$1,016	-\$742	-\$468	-\$194	\$80	\$354	\$628	\$902	\$1,176	\$1,450	\$1,725				
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-2.2%	-1.6%	-1.0%	-0.4%	0.2%	0.8%	1.4%	2.0%	2.5%	3.1%	3.7%				
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)			5.5%															
				This category does not include vacant land, condos, parking lots, or Exempt parcels. (Also, other parcels left out of analysis if market valuation procedures differed markedly from mainstream retail norms.)														
OFFICE & RETAIL CONDOS (# props = 241) (Office Condos and Retail Shop Condominiums are included here)			Comm. Condo FY 2025		FY 2026		Comm. Condo FY 2026		FY 2026		Comm. Condo FY 2026		FY 2026		Comm. Condo FY 2026		FY 2026	
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$228/sf for Avg Property in Category			\$355,519		\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000	\$357,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor			1.75	1.65	1.66	1.67	1.68	1.69	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75				
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)			\$24.26	\$22.80	\$22.94	\$23.08	\$23.22	\$23.35	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18				
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)			\$8,625	\$8,140	\$8,189	\$8,239	\$8,288	\$8,337	\$8,387	\$8,436	\$8,485	\$8,535	\$8,584	\$8,633				
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-\$485	-\$435	-\$386	-\$337	-\$287	-\$238	-\$189	-\$139	-\$90	-\$41	\$9				
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-5.6%	-5.0%	-4.5%	-3.9%	-3.3%	-2.8%	-2.2%	-1.6%	-1.0%	-0.5%	0.1%				
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)			0.4%															
INDUSTRIAL PARCELS			INDUSTRIAL REAL ESTATE															
LAB / OFFICE Combinations incl. LAB CONDOS (# props = 23) (Bio or Chem Laboratory, or Medical Use is Primary)			Lab / Office FY 2025		FY 2026		Lab / Office FY 2026		FY 2026		Lab / Office FY 2026		FY 2026		Lab / Office FY 2026		FY 2026	
FY 26 Assmt. @ ~\$484/sf for Avg Property in Category			\$54,983,870		\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000	\$50,320,000
Tax Burden "Shift" Factor			1.75	1.65	1.66	1.67	1.68	1.69	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.74	1.75				
Tax Rate (per \$1K of Ass'd value)			\$24.26	\$22.80	\$22.94	\$23.08	\$23.22	\$23.35	\$23.49	\$23.63	\$23.77	\$23.91	\$24.05	\$24.18				
Average Tax Bill (based on Avg. Ass'd Value)			\$1,333,909	\$1,147,373	\$1,154,327	\$1,161,281	\$1,168,235	\$1,175,188	\$1,182,142	\$1,189,096	\$1,196,050	\$1,203,003	\$1,209,957	\$1,216,911				
\$ Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-\$186,535	-\$179,582	-\$172,628	-\$165,674	-\$158,720	-\$151,767	-\$144,813	-\$137,859	-\$130,905	-\$123,951	-\$116,998				
% Tax differential between FY25-FY26			Not applicable	-14.0%	-13.5%	-12.9%	-12.4%	-11.9%	-11.4%	-10.9%	-10.3%	-9.8%	-9.3%	-8.8%				
% value FY 25 (w/growth) vs. FY 26 (without growth)			-8.5%															
				This category includes only Large Office buildings that have a significant Life Science Laboratory component.														

Note: Tax Increment Financed [TIF] properties: 1) Shire @ 200, 300, & 400 Shire Way, and 2) uniQure (~ 55% of 113 Hartwell Ave) are shown above in INDUSTRIAL Lab/Office Combo category as "NET Avg. Assessment", which is: a) less Avg. New Levy Growth for the category, and b) less Avg. TIF reduction -- so that only taxable dollars appear in tax chart above.

EXHIBIT E: TAX FACTORS AND TAX RATES - AMONG COMMUNITIES w/ COMPARABLE C/I/P VOLUME in MA, AND vs. CONTIGUOUS COMMUNITIES

Note: The data displayed here is from prior years is available to Lexington via DOR/DLS Gateway on-line, but it is always in arrears.

COMPARABLE "COMMERCIAL VALUE" COMMUNITIES

State	Rank	MUNICIPALITY	FY2025	FY2024			FY2025		
			<u>Comm - Indl - Pers</u>	<u>RESIDENTIAL</u>	<u>C - I - P</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>RESIDENTIAL</u>	<u>C - I - P</u>	<u>RATE</u>
			<u>ASS'D C-I-P</u>	<u>RATE/K</u>	<u>RATE/K</u>	<u>SHIFT</u>	<u>RATE/K</u>	<u>RATE/K</u>	<u>SHIFT</u>
	1	Boston	\$72,346,183,125	\$10.90	\$25.27	1.750	\$11.58	\$25.96	1.750
	2	Cambridge	\$36,106,476,976	\$5.92	\$10.46	1.379	\$6.35	\$11.52	1.397
	3	Waltham	\$7,113,007,493	\$9.64	\$20.71	1.747	\$9.82	\$21.04	1.740
	4	Worcester	\$5,121,219,066	\$13.75	\$30.04	1.749	\$13.19	\$28.61	1.740
	5	Somerville	\$4,669,360,607	\$10.52	\$18.20	1.750	\$10.91	\$18.92	1.750
State		XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX
Rank									
	13	Brookline	\$3,040,443,552	\$9.77	\$16.41	1.750	\$9.87	\$16.56	1.748
	14	Barnstable	\$2,591,241,332	\$6.65	\$5.92	1.000	\$6.94	\$6.10	1.000
	15	Nantucket	\$2,573,621,664	\$3.13	\$5.30	1.699	\$3.28	\$5.56	1.699
	16	Plymouth	\$2,560,508,076	\$12.87	\$12.87	1.000	\$12.69	\$12.69	1.000
	17	Lexington	\$2,510,409,460	\$12.25	\$24.20	1.750	\$12.23	\$24.26	1.750
	18	Billerica	\$2,475,459,663	\$11.29	\$25.09	1.749	\$11.37	\$25.27	1.749
	19	Marlborough	\$2,365,382,542	\$10.24	\$17.66	1.439	\$9.86	\$16.96	1.450
	20	Andover	\$2,324,722,074	\$12.88	\$25.48	1.695	\$12.49	\$24.31	1.670
	21	Everett	\$2,121,759,582	\$11.46	\$24.00	1.750	\$11.39	\$23.00	1.749

The EIGHT (8) CONTIGUOUS COMMUNITIES to LEXINGTON

State	Rank	MUNICIPALITY	FY2025	FY2024			FY2025		
			<u>Comm - Indl - Pers</u>	<u>RESIDENTIAL</u>	<u>C - I - P</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>RESIDENTIAL</u>	<u>C - I - P</u>	<u>RATE</u>
			<u>ASS'D C-I-P</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>SHIFT</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>SHIFT</u>
	3	Waltham	\$7,113,007,493	\$9.64	\$20.71	1.747	\$9.82	\$21.04	1.740
	7	Burlington	\$3,632,265,530	\$8.94	\$25.81	1.706	\$8.66	\$25.47	1.726
	10	Woburn	\$3,138,461,237	\$8.06	\$19.72	1.750	\$8.54	\$20.41	1.750
	17	Lexington	\$2,510,409,460	\$12.25	\$24.20	1.750	\$12.23	\$24.26	1.750
	51	Bedford	\$1,279,367,239	\$11.88	\$26.70	1.750	\$12.04	\$27.12	1.750
	84	Arlington	\$813,725,053	\$10.59	\$10.59	1.000	\$10.77	\$10.77	1.000
	113	Belmont	\$623,105,768	\$10.56	\$10.56	1.000	\$11.39	\$11.39	1.000
	132	Winchester	\$490,149,001	\$11.33	\$10.81	1.000	\$11.09	\$10.60	1.000
	252	Lincoln	\$109,857,288	\$12.89	\$19.70	1.499	\$12.81	\$19.55	1.498

EXHIBIT F: TOP 25 MASS. COMMUNITIES BY TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE

MA DOR - Division of Local Services

MA Municipal Databank / Local Aid Section

Fiscal Year 2025 Assessed Values by Class

Note: The data displayed here is from prior years is available to Lexington via DOR/DLS Gateway on-line, but it is always in arrears

Statewide Ranking	Municipality	Most Recent DOR-Approved Fiscal Year	Residential	Open Space	Commerical Property Values	Industrial Property Values	Personal Property for Commercial Use	Comm + Indl + Pers Prop (C - I - P)	Total Assessed Values	Resid & Open as % Total Value	C - I - P as % of Total Value
1	Boston	2025	154,028,711,454	0	61,184,889,270	1,475,114,285	9,686,179,570	72,346,183,125	226,374,894,579	68	32
2	Cambridge	2025	40,134,122,674	0	14,876,049,975	18,693,244,738	2,537,182,263	36,106,476,976	76,240,599,650	53	47
3	Newton	2025	38,643,809,347	0	2,556,400,353	231,494,300	608,274,200	3,396,168,853	42,039,978,200	92	8
4	Nantucket	2025	36,278,294,289	2,743,300	1,852,105,293	79,792,883	641,723,488	2,573,621,664	38,854,659,253	93	7
5	Brookline	2025	29,951,077,622	0	2,609,331,135	20,916,000	410,196,417	3,040,443,552	32,991,521,174	91	9
6	Barnstable	2025	22,187,815,827	0	1,893,583,522	106,279,900	591,377,910	2,591,241,332	24,779,057,159	90	10
7	Somerville	2025	19,837,451,029	0	3,688,084,737	429,666,600	551,609,270	4,669,360,607	24,506,811,636	81	19
8	Worcester	2025	19,207,533,542	0	2,932,861,967	872,623,099	1,315,734,000	5,121,219,066	24,328,752,608	79	21
9	Quincy	2025	20,401,358,256	0	2,446,514,370	247,995,400	655,024,800	3,349,534,570	23,750,892,826	86	14
10	Falmouth	2025	20,481,865,725	4,504,500	968,511,943	135,144,700	397,629,740	1,501,286,383	21,987,656,608	93	7
11	Waltham	2025	13,073,469,020	0	5,354,230,429	1,016,065,734	742,711,330	7,113,007,493	20,186,476,513	65	35
12	Lexington	2025	15,977,353,073	0	847,945,410	1,255,775,000	406,689,050	2,510,409,460	18,487,762,533	86	14
13	Plymouth	2025	15,621,834,377	0	1,447,900,079	480,347,744	632,260,253	2,560,508,076	18,182,342,453	86	14
14	Wellesley	2025	15,677,785,000	0	1,673,322,000	8,530,000	172,881,960	1,854,733,960	17,532,518,960	89	11
15	Needham	2025	14,002,216,972	0	1,499,785,024	174,726,704	429,826,950	2,104,338,678	16,106,555,650	87	13
16	Medford	2025	14,073,568,245	0	1,273,301,269	201,942,000	275,538,390	1,750,781,659	15,824,349,904	89	11
17	Framingham	2025	12,568,817,087	0	2,091,401,624	486,688,490	500,953,570	3,079,043,684	15,647,860,771	80	20
18	Arlington	2025	14,620,586,615	0	558,650,253	29,121,000	225,953,800	813,725,053	15,434,311,668	95	5
19	Lynn	2025	13,267,717,345	0	822,052,183	238,127,606	480,579,949	1,540,759,738	14,808,477,083	90	10
20	Edgartown	2025	13,456,257,503	0	651,766,390	7,995,600	316,637,880	976,399,870	14,432,657,373	93	7
21	Lowell	2025	12,317,496,259	0	734,768,380	426,130,632	510,926,820	1,671,825,832	13,989,322,091	88	12
22	Springfield	2025	10,443,372,537	0	1,707,395,046	327,636,000	1,040,947,610	3,075,978,656	13,519,351,193	77	23
23	Andover	2025	10,852,450,460	0	842,920,155	1,091,316,400	390,485,519	2,324,722,074	13,177,172,534	82	18
24	Weymouth	2025	11,350,760,736	0	920,170,674	454,203,700	321,498,060	1,695,872,434	13,046,633,170	87	13
25	Brockton	2025	11,139,988,461	0	1,186,110,674	243,280,840	416,660,530	1,846,052,044	12,986,040,505	86	14

EXHIBIT G: IMPACT ANALYSIS of residential property tax: the possible adoption of a **20%** RESIDENTIAL EXEMPTION

RESIDENTIAL EXEMPTION WORKSHEET	
FISCAL YEAR 2026 INFORMATION	
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL (ASS'D) OVERALL VALUE	\$16,767,119,583
TOTAL # RESID. PARCELS	10,934 (Includes over 500 unbuildable (mostly small) parcels of land.)
AVG. RESIDENTIAL PARCEL	\$1,533,484.51
EXEMPTION Percentage >>	20% (Up to a 35% "Max" Resid Exemption is allowed by MGL)
EXEMPTION \$ AMOUNT	\$306,697
EST. # OF EXEMPT (Principal Resid.) PARCELS	9,265 Town estimate: # of non-owner occupied parcels >>> 1,669
TOTAL VALUE MADE EXEMPT by this clause	\$2,841,546,789
RESID. RATE (Calc'd, but not yet voted upon)	\$12.31 (<Note: This Rate is from Exhibit A.)
TOTAL RESID. REVENUE "redirected" (tax dollars)	\$206,481,151
NEW RESID. OVERALL ASSESSED VALUE	\$13,925,572,794
NEW (Derived by formula) RESID. RATE	\$14.83

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
EXAMPLES OF ASSESSED VALUE	PRELIMINARY TAX RATE @ 1.75 SHIFT	ANNUAL PROPERTY TAX BILL	EXEMPTED ASSESSED VALUE @ 20 % EXEMPTION	NET ASSESSED VALUE ¹	DERIVED TAX RATE	NET TAX BILL	Taxation \$ Change (g-c)	Taxation % Change (h/c)
\$400,000	\$12.31	\$4,926	\$306,697	\$93,303	\$14.83	\$1,383	-\$3,542	-71.91%
\$500,000	\$12.31	\$6,157	\$306,697	\$193,303	\$14.83	\$2,866	-\$3,291	-53.45%
\$600,000	\$12.31	\$7,389	\$306,697	\$293,303	\$14.83	\$4,349	-\$3,040	-41.14%
\$1,000,000	\$12.31	\$12,315	\$306,697	\$693,303	\$14.83	\$10,280	-\$2,035	-16.52%
\$1,100,000	\$12.31	\$13,546	\$306,697	\$793,303	\$14.83	\$11,763	-\$1,783	-13.17%
\$1,200,000	\$12.31	\$14,778	\$306,697	\$893,303	\$14.83	\$13,245	-\$1,532	-10.37%
\$1,300,000	\$12.31	\$16,009	\$306,697	\$993,303	\$14.83	\$14,728	-\$1,281	-8.00%
\$1,400,000	\$12.31	\$17,241	\$306,697	\$1,093,303	\$14.83	\$16,211	-\$1,030	-5.97%
\$1,500,000	\$12.31	\$18,472	\$306,697	\$1,193,303	\$14.83	\$17,694	-\$778	-4.21%
\$1,600,000	\$12.31	\$19,703	\$306,697	\$1,293,303	\$14.83	\$19,176	-\$527	-2.67%
\$1,700,000	\$12.31	\$20,935	\$306,697	\$1,393,303	\$14.83	\$20,659	-\$276	-1.32%
\$1,800,000	\$12.31	\$22,166	\$306,697	\$1,493,303	\$14.83	\$22,142	-\$24	-0.11%
\$1,809,727	\$12.31	\$22,286	\$306,697	\$1,503,030	\$14.83	\$22,286	\$0	0.00%
\$1,900,000	\$12.31	\$23,398	\$306,697	\$1,593,303	\$14.83	\$23,625	\$227	0.97%
\$2,000,000	\$12.31	\$24,629	\$306,697	\$1,693,303	\$14.83	\$25,107	\$478	1.94%
\$2,500,000	\$12.31	\$30,787	\$306,697	\$2,193,303	\$14.83	\$32,521	\$1,735	5.63%
\$3,000,000	\$12.31	\$36,944	\$306,697	\$2,693,303	\$14.83	\$39,935	\$2,991	8.10%
\$5,000,000	\$12.31	\$61,573	\$306,697	\$4,693,303	\$14.83	\$69,590	\$8,017	13.02%

¹ Resid. Exemption, per MGL, may not reduce taxable value of property to less than 10 percent of its full and fair cash value.

****BREAK-EVEN ASSESSED VALUE; NO TAX IMPACT. \$1,809,727**

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Review: Amended Housing Partnership Board Committee Charge

PRESENTER:

Wendy Manz, Housing Partnership
Board Chair

ITEM NUMBER:

I.2

SUMMARY:

Category: Decision-making

The Housing Partnership Board (HPB) is recommending updates to its committee charge and seeks Select Board approval.

The HPB's current charge provides for 13 voting members, including designated representatives from the Planning Board, Council on Aging (COA), Lexington Housing Authority (LHA), and Lexington Housing Assistance Board (LexHAB). The HPB proposes adjustments to reflect current participation and strengthen coordination among housing entities:

1. **LHA Representation:** Convert the LHA seat from a voting member to a liaison position, as the Authority has been unable to appoint a voting representative for over a year. This change would ease participation demands and open a voting seat for another appointee.
2. **Affordable Housing Trust (AHT):** Establish a formal liaison seat for the AHT, recognizing the value of their ongoing informal participation and alignment of housing policy efforts.
3. **COA Representation:** Convert the COA seat from a voting member to a liaison position, formalizing the current arrangement with a COA representative who participates regularly but cannot serve as a voting member.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Move to (approve) the amended Housing Partnership Board Committee Charge as proposed.

FOLLOW-UP:

Select Board Office

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

7:15pm

ATTACHMENTS:

Description		Type
❏	Memo - HPB Request to Update Charge	Backup Material
❏	2025.11.10 Proposed Amended Housing Partnership Board Charge	Backup Material
❏	2025.11.10 Proposed Amended Housing Partnership Board Charge - Redline	Backup Material

Contact Us - Select Board

Your Name: Wendy Manz
Your Email: wendy_manz@yahoo.com
Subject: Proposed changes to the Housing Partnership Board Charter

Message:

The current HPB Charter calls for 13 voting members, of whom four are designated to represent the Planning Board, the Council on Aging, the Lexington Housing Authority and the Lexington Housing Assistance Board (LexHAB).

1. For more than a year the Lexington Housing Authority has been unable to name a voting member or send a representative to HPB meetings. The HPB proposes that the LHA seat on our board become a liaison rather than a voting member, to lessen the burden on that person and to free up a seat for a voting member.

2. The AHT sends an informal liaison to HPB meetings, which is a valuable connection with that group. The HPB proposes that a formal liaison position be created for the AHT.

3. The former member representing the COA has resigned, and the COA has been sending a representative to HPB meetings who is unable to commit to a voting membership, but has been acting as informal liaison. The HPB proposes that the COA seat become a liaison seat, formalizing her position.

Thank you for your consideration of these changes.

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Members: 13 voting members

Liaisons: 6, as noted below

Members Appointed By: Select Board

Length of Term: Three years for voting members

Appointments Made: September 30, or as required

Meeting Times: As posted

Quorum: Quorum shall be a majority of members serving

Description: The Charge of the Housing Partnership Board is to promote and support production and preservation of housing, including low and moderate income, older persons, and workforce housing. The Housing Partnership Board will bring together committees, groups, and housing advocates to create a unified and focused approach to achieve housing goals in Lexington.

Responsibilities: The Housing Partnership Board will work with other community organizations to support housing goals. The Housing Partnership Board will support these goals by taking the following actions:

1. Identify local, state, and federal housing resources available to individuals seeking housing.
2. Identify local, state, and federal housing resources available to relevant Town Boards. Town Committees, and other Town entities, and other relevant local organizations.
3. Advocate for land use, regulations, and zoning bylaws to increase the housing stock.
4. Increase public awareness of the need for affordable housing through public information and forums.
5. Assist with land or properties acquisition suitable for development of housing.
6. Make recommendations on proposals that do or could include a housing component,
7. Advise the Select Board, Planning Board, and other Town entities to aid in their decision-making process regarding housing. This will include decisions respecting implementation of Objectives, Strategies, and Potential Actions identified in the housing section of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan.
8. Provide input to local housing organizations.

9. Support adherence to federal and state Fair Housing Laws.

Criteria for Membership: The Housing Partnership will consist of thirteen voting members and six liaisons. Voting members will include individuals recommended by:

1. Planning Board
2. Council on Aging
3. Lexington Housing Assistance Board (LexHAB)

The following boards and committees will be asked to name liaisons to the Housing Partnership Board:

1. Select Board
2. Capital Expenditures Committee
3. Sustainable Lexington Committee
4. Lexington Human Rights Committee
5. Affordable Housing Trust
6. Lexington Housing Authority

Members are also expected to advance the cause of housing by activities outside of Housing Partnership Board meetings. Prior to serving as a member of this committee, appointees are required to:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the Summary of the Conflict-of-Interest Statute. Further, to continue to serve on the Committee the member must acknowledge annually receipt of the summary of the Conflict-of-Interest Statute. Said summary will be provided by and acknowledged by the Town Clerk.
2. Provide evidence to the Town Clerk that the appointee has completed the on-line training requirement required by the Conflict-of-Interest Statute. Further, to continue to serve on the committee, the member must acknowledge every two years completion of the on-line training requirement.

Ref.: Charge adopted by Board of Selectmen on December 1, 2003.

Board of Selectmen voted to designate as Special Municipal Employees on 1/18/06.

Revised charge, October 15, 2007, to 18 Selectmen appointments and 3 appointed by designated boards or committees.

Revised charge, March 15, 2010, to increase general housing advocates to 13, removing specific organizations and removing three liaisons.

Revised charge, September 26, 2011, to decrease membership from 21 to 17 voting members.

Revised charge, October 15, 2012, to decrease membership from 17 to 15 voting members.

Revised charge, April 24, 2017, to decrease membership from 15 to 9 voting members.

Revised charge, March 8, 2023, Select Board voted to: change "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board"; change the number of members from "9" to "13"; add "Quorum: Quorum shall be a majority of members serving"; update Description; amend Responsibilities; update Criteria for Membership; update list of boards and committees naming liaisons to the Housing Partnership Board

Revised charge, November 10, 2025, Select Board voted to maintain 13 voting members but shift composition by converting the designated voting seat for the Lexington Housing Authority (LHA) into a general advocate seat; formalize two new liaison positions for the LHA (converted from voting) and the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT), increasing the total number of liaisons from 4 to 6.

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Members: 13 voting members

Liaisons: 4-6, as noted below

Members Appointed By: Select Board

Length of Term: Three years for voting members

Appointments Made: September 30, or as required

Meeting Times: As posted

Quorum: Quorum shall be a majority of members serving

Description: The Charge of the Housing Partnership Board is to promote and support production and preservation of housing, including low and moderate income, older persons, and workforce housing. The Housing Partnership Board will bring together committees, groups, and housing advocates to create a unified and focused approach to achieve housing goals in Lexington.

Responsibilities: The Housing Partnership Board will work with other community organizations to support housing goals. The Housing Partnership Board will support these goals by taking the following actions:

1. Identify local, state, and federal housing resources available to individuals seeking housing.
2. Identify local, state, and federal housing resources available to relevant Town Boards. Town Committees, and other Town entities, and other relevant local organizations.
3. Advocate for land use, regulations, and zoning bylaws to increase the housing stock.
4. Increase public awareness of the need for affordable housing through public information and forums.
5. Assist with land or properties acquisition suitable for development of housing.
6. Make recommendations on proposals that do or could include a housing component,
7. Advise the Select Board, Planning Board, and other Town entities to aid in their decision-making process regarding housing. This will include decisions respecting implementation of Objectives, Strategies, and Potential Actions identified in the housing section of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan.
8. Provide input to local housing organizations.

9. Support adherence to federal and state Fair Housing Laws.

Criteria for Membership: The Housing Partnership will consist of thirteen voting members and ~~four~~^{six} liaisons. Voting members will include individuals recommended by:

1. Planning Board

2. Council on Aging

~~3. Lexington Housing Authority~~

3. Lexington Housing Assistance Board (LexHAB)

The following boards and committees will be asked to name liaisons to the Housing Partnership Board:

1. Select Board

2. Capital Expenditures Committee

3. Sustainable Lexington Committee

4. Lexington Human Rights Committee

5. Affordable Housing Trust

6. Lexington Housing Authority

Members are also expected to advance the cause of housing by activities outside of Housing Partnership Board meetings. Prior to serving as a member of this committee, appointees are required to:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the Summary of the Conflict-of-Interest Statute. Further, to continue to serve on the Committee the member must acknowledge annually receipt of the summary of the Conflict-of-Interest Statute. Said summary will be provided by and acknowledged by the Town Clerk.

2. Provide evidence to the Town Clerk that the appointee has completed the on-line training requirement required by the Conflict-of-Interest Statute. Further, to continue to serve on the committee, the member must acknowledge every two years completion of the on-line training requirement.

Ref.: Charge adopted by Board of Selectmen on December 1, 2003.

Board of Selectmen voted to designate as Special Municipal Employees on 1/18/06.

Revised charge, October 15, 2007, to 18 Selectmen appointments and 3 appointed by designated boards or committees.

Revised charge, March 15, 2010, to increase general housing advocates to 13, removing specific organizations and removing three liaisons.

Revised charge, September 26, 2011, to decrease membership from 21 to 17 voting members.

Revised charge, October 15, 2012, to decrease membership from 17 to 15 voting members.

Revised charge, April 24, 2017, to decrease membership from 15 to 9 voting members.

Revised charge, March 8, 2023, Select Board voted to: change "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board"; change the number of members from "9" to "13"; add "Quorum: Quorum shall be a majority of members serving"; update Description; amend Responsibilities; update Criteria for Membership; update list of boards and committees naming liaisons to the Housing Partnership Board

Revised charge, November 10, 2025, Select Board voted to maintain 13 voting members but shift composition by converting the designated voting seat for the Lexington Housing Authority (LHA) into a general advocate seat; formalize two new liaison positions for the LHA (converted from voting) and the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT), increasing the total number of liaisons from 4 to 6.

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

LEXINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

AGENDA ITEM TITLE:

Update: Vision for Lexington Report on Local Election Voter Participation Analysis

PRESENTER:

Jeri Zeder, VFL Subcommittee

ITEM NUMBER:

I.3

SUMMARY:

The Vision for Lexington Subcommittee will present its findings from their study on local election voter participation in which causes of low voter turnout in Lexington's municipal elections were examined. The Vision for Lexington will also present its recommendations to increase civic engagement and voter participation at the local level.

Key Recommendations for consideration from the Vision for Lexington Subcommittee include:

1. Establishing a Voter Turnout Task Force
2. Changing the timing of local elections
3. Promote Voting in Local Elections
4. Reducing logistical barriers to voting
5. Supporting the Town Clerk's office in streamlining election administration and developing new voter engagement tools.
6. Advocating for legislative action on home-rule petitions related to ranked-choice voting and local voting rights for lawful permanent residents.
7. Improving access to data to better study and understand voter participation patterns.
8. Studying How to Foster Informed Citizenry.

The Select Board is being asked to accept the Subcommittee's report, dated August 22, 2025 which is included in this meeting packet, to be put on file with the Town Clerk.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Move to (accept) the Vision for Lexington Subcommittee report dated August 22, 2025 regarding their study on Local Election Voter Participation and place the report on file with the Town Clerk.

FOLLOW-UP:

DATE AND APPROXIMATE TIME ON AGENDA:

11/10/2025

7:25pm

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
📎 Lex.Voter.Turnout.Presentation.	Presentation
📎 Report - VFLLocal.Election.Voter.Turnout.	Backup Material

OUR VOTE, OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing Low Voter Turnout in Lexington's Local Elections

Vision for Lexington Subcommittee on Local
Election Voter Participation

Report approved by the Vision for Lexington Committee on
August 22, 2025

Overview

- Why Local Voting Matters
- The Problem
- Key Points
- Findings & Recommendations
- Conclusion
- Call to Action
- Acknowledgements
- Questions?

Why Local Voting Matters

- Voting is a singular activity.
- It is the *only* activity that determines who will oversee and run our town government.
- Local voting is fundamental to local democracy.

The Problem

- Lexington has a 96% voter registration rate, but turnout is only 10-27%.
- A small minority has an outsized role in electing our town government.
- We should not be satisfied with this state-of-affairs. We should encourage all eligible voters to participate in our democracy.

Key Points

- Increasing local voter turnout will require multiple approaches.
- Voting is a “sticky” habit. Those who vote once are more likely to vote again.
- Social & cultural expectations significantly influence voter turnout.
- We can increase turnout by making local voting a basic community value & expectation.

Findings and Recommendations

Recommendation # 1

- People vote when there is a social & cultural expectation that will they do so.
- Voting even once makes future voting more likely.

Convene a Voter Turnout Task Force

Recommendation # 2

- Local turnout has been highest when the Annual Town Election aligns with Mass. presidential primaries held on a Tuesday in March.
- Local turnout increases substantially when local elections align with Election Day in November.
- Voters assume that elections occur on Tuesdays.

Adjust the Timing of Local Elections

Recommendation # 3

- Voter turnout tends to increase when voters are better informed.

Promote Voting in Local Elections Through
Enhanced Communication, Publicity & Events

Recommendation # 4

- Barriers to voting can reduce voter turnout.
- While there is no evidence in Lexington of intent to impede or suppress the vote, we should take steps to make voting easier and more accessible.

Reduce Real & Perceived Barriers to Voting

Recommendation # 5

- With additional assistance, the Town Clerk can be a voter-engagement resource.

Support the Town Clerk in Looking at Processes
& Making Improvements

Recommendation # 6

Town Meeting approved:

- Ranked-choice voting (2023).
- Voting rights in local elections for non-citizen lawful permanent residents (2025).

The Legislature has not yet acted on granting home-rule petitions for these voting reforms.

Advocate for Home-rule Petitions for Ranked-Choice Voting & for Local Voting Rights for Non-Citizen Lawful Permanent Residents

Recommendation # 7

- To make improvements, we need data.
- Better access to demographic information could improve the study of local voting and voter turnout.

Modernize Data Collection & Access

Recommendations # 8 and # 9

- Increased voter awareness of local elections could lead to higher turnout.
- Contested races can increase voter turnout.

Two Studies:

1. How Can We Foster a Citizenry that is Informed about Local Elections?
2. Why are Lexington's Elections Often Uncontested?

Conclusion

- Local voting is consequential.
- Only a small minority elects our town government each year. We can do better.
- Our report offers actionable ideas (Task Force, etc.) for promoting “local-election voter” as a core identity of a Lexington resident.

Call to Action

*Turnout in Lexington's local elections is too low.
We call upon the Select Board to take this issue
to heart and act to enhance the practice of
democracy in our town.*

Acknowledgements

- Vision For Lexington Subcommittee Members: Marian Cohen, Margaret Coppe, Daniel Joyner, Jr., Fernando Quezada, Eileen Zalisk & Jeri Zeder (chair).
- Town Clerk Mary de Alderete
- The Vision for Lexington Committee

Thank You!

Questions or feedback?

OUR VOTE, OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing Low Voter Turnout in Lexington's Local Elections

A Report to the Lexington Select Board by the Vision for Lexington

Subcommittee on Local Election Voter Participation

Subcommittee Members:

Marian Cohen

Margaret Coppe

Daniel Joyner, Jr.

Fernando Quezada

Eileen Zalisk

Jeri Zeder (subcommittee chair)

Final Report approved by the Vision for Lexington on August 22, 2025.

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
KEY FINDINGS.....	1
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	4
INTRODUCTION	5
WHAT IS THE PROBLEM, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?.....	5
SHOULD EVERYONE VOTE?.....	7
BACKGROUND	9
WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT VOTER TURNOUT IN GENERAL FROM LITERATURE REVIEW AND SURVEYS	9
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH LOW VOTER TURNOUT.....	11
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED VOTER TURNOUT	13
PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT	14
RECENT MASSACHUSETTS VOTING REFORMS AND VOTER TURNOUT.....	19
VOTING IN LEXINGTON’S LOCAL TOWN ELECTIONS	23
FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER TURNOUT IN LEXINGTON.....	28
TIMING.....	29
COMPETITION.....	29
INFORMATION	30
OTHER FACTORS THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO LOW VOTER TURNOUT IN LEXINGTON’S LOCAL ELECTIONS	33
WHY LOCAL VOTING MATTERS: THE STRUCTURE OF LEXINGTON TOWN GOVERNMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON LEXINGTON VOTERS.....	37
SELECT BOARD (ELECTED) AND TOWN MANAGER (APPOINTED).....	38
SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ELECTED)	39
PLANNING BOARD (ELECTED).....	40
TOWN MODERATOR (ELECTED).....	41
HOUSING AUTHORITY (ELECTED)	41
TOWN MEETING (ELECTED)	42
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	45
RECOMMENDATION 1: CONVENE A VOTER TURNOUT TASK FORCE	45
RECOMMENDATION 2: CHANGE THE TIMING OF LOCAL ELECTIONS.....	46
RECOMMENDATION 3: PROMOTE VOTING IN LOCAL ELECTIONS.....	47
RECOMMENDATION 4: REDUCE BARRIERS TO VOTING.....	48
RECOMMENDATION 5: SUPPORT THE TOWN CLERK IN LOOKING AT PROCESSES AND MAKING IMPROVEMENTS	48
RECOMMENDATION 6: ADVOCATE FOR HOME RULE PETITIONS FOR RANKED-CHOICE VOTING AND FOR LOCAL VOTING RIGHTS FOR NON-CITIZEN LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS.	49
RECOMMENDATION 7: MODERNIZE DATA ACCESS	49
RECOMMENDATION 8: STUDY HOW TO FOSTER AN INFORMED CITIZENRY.....	50
RECOMMENDATION 9: STUDY WHY LOCAL ELECTIONS ARE OFTEN UNCONTESTED	50
CONCLUSION	52
APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES FOR LITERATURE REVIEW.....	53
APPENDIX II: WHAT LEXINGTON CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT CIVICS IN SCHOOL	56

Tables

TABLE 1 2023 March Annual Town Election, by percent	24
TABLE 2 January 24, 2012, Special Town Election, by percent.....	25
TABLE 3 May 3, 2016, Special Debt Vote, by percent	26
TABLE 4 Voter turnout when the Annual Town Election in March is held on the same day as a presidential or state primary, by percent	27
TABLE 5 Residents' Reasons for Not Voting in March 2021 Annual Town Election	34

Executive Summary

This report of the Vision for Lexington Subcommittee on Local Election Voter Participation examines low voter turnout in Lexington's municipal election and makes recommendations on ways to increase turnout.

Key Findings

1. ***Voting in local elections is a singular form of local civic participation. It is the only activity that installs into office the individuals who populate Lexington's elected governing bodies and constitute our town government.*** These governing bodies make decisions about Lexington's nearly \$300 million municipal and school budget that includes public health and safety; transportation; housing; recreation; climate challenges; upkeep and renewal of town and school buildings, roads, and other public infrastructure; and the care of vulnerable residents and other public concerns and emergencies.
2. ***Despite Lexington's 96 percent voter registration rate, it is typical that some 80 to 90 percent of Lexington's voters do not vote in Lexington's Town elections. Higher voter turnout can ensure that our town government is more representative of the townspeople of Lexington.*** Higher voter turnout, insofar as it is a marker of community engagement, is valuable in itself. But equally important is that higher voter turnout enables local candidates and local elected officials to be more in tune with, and answerable to, a wider swath of the community. A community in which small numbers of voters have an outsized role in electing candidates into local office is a community that may not be hearing other voices and ideas and is potentially less responsive to people whose needs and concerns differ from those of the people who vote.
3. ***Low voter turnout in local elections is not unique to Lexington.*** It is a phenomenon seen across the United States.

4. ***There is no single magic bullet that will serve to transform our community from a low-turnout to a high-turnout town. There are, however, particular, concrete actions that can be taken that may increase turnout, even by small percentage points, and cumulatively may result in a meaningful increase in local voter turnout.*** These are discussed in the Recommendations section of this report. We developed these recommendations and reached conclusions based on surveys and data that are unique to Lexington, and also by reviewing academic studies that address the issue more broadly.
5. ***Our review of the literature revealed two major findings: (1) that those who feel connected to a social and cultural expectation that they should be voters tend to actually go to the polls and vote, and (2) that voting is a “sticky” habit: people who vote in one election tend to vote in subsequent elections. These findings suggest that Lexington could substantially increase its turnout rates in local elections if voting becomes a basic community value and expectation.*** Just as Lexington values our public school system; our low crime rate; our significant local history; our low rates of littering, graffiti and other property-disrespecting activities; our strong recreation programs and facilities; our public conservation lands; and our commitment to diversity and peaceful coexistence, so, too, could we value participation in democratic actions such as voting.

Recommended Actions¹

1. ***That the Select Board create and convene a Task Force to work on transforming voting in Lexington’s local elections into a central social and cultural value and expectation in our town.*** We envision a Task Force of appointed residents, including at least one or two high school students from Minuteman High School, Lexington High School, or both, to work year-round on the issue of increasing voter turnout in local elections and reducing barriers to voting. We see this as a multi-year effort that would require the Task Force to engage in regular assessment and experimentation. We propose that the Task Force have a clear end date, with the potential for extending its life or even

¹ Consult the “Recommendations” section of this report for in-depth discussion of these action items.

making it permanent if the Select Board deems necessary or appropriate. Six to ten years would give the Task Force time to get its bearings, to create and test programs, and be nimble in its work as things change, stagnate, or progress. The charge of the Task Force would include helping people vote.

2. ***Change the timing of local elections.*** A home-rule petition to permit the Annual Town Election to occur on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November would, according to research, measurably increase voter turnout. An alternative, but likely less impactful change from a voter-turnout perspective, would be to amend Lexington's bylaws to require that the Annual Town Election fall on a Tuesday instead of a Monday in March, to align with voters' expectations that Election Day is always a Tuesday.
3. ***Promote voting in local elections.*** Voter turnout can increase when voters are better informed. A robust program of communications, publicity, and events to inform voters of local-election voting and local civic engagement, including educating eligible voters to make a plan to vote, could improve turnout.
4. ***Reduce barriers to voting.*** Barriers to voting can lower voter turnout. Increasing the number of mail-in drop boxes, better assisting those who need help going to the polls, and raising awareness of voting by mail and of voting accommodations for those with disabilities would all reduce barriers to voting.
5. ***Support the Town Clerk in looking at processes and making improvements.*** Enabling the Town Clerk to streamline the logistics of administering elections, to consult with experts on the management of events, space, voter engagement, and social media outreach, and to develop a Voter Assistance Hotline could enhance the Town Clerk's ability to be a resource for voter engagement efforts.
6. ***Advocate in the Massachusetts Legislature for home-rule petitions for voting reforms passed by Town Meeting.*** Ranked-choice voting and local voting rights for non-citizen lawful permanent residents passed by Town Meeting in 2023 and 2025 are measures that could increase voter turnout. But they cannot be implemented without the granting of

home-rule petitions by the Massachusetts Legislature. Town leadership should advocate for these measures, per the will of Town Meeting.

7. ***Modernize data access to make it easier to study, and increase understanding of, local voter turnout.*** A unified database related to voting, census, and schools (within the confines of privacy laws) in Lexington, and uniform collection of voting and demographic data across Massachusetts, would help researchers better understand local voter turnout, and be used to craft effective reforms.
8. ***Study how to foster an informed citizenry.*** We recommend the convening of a Vision for Lexington subcommittee to explore how to better communicate with residents, specifically about local elections and voting.
9. ***Study why local elections are often uncontested.*** Contested elections tend to increase voter turnout, yet, in Lexington, elections are frequently uncontested. We recommend the convening of a Vision for Lexington subcommittee to explore why our local elections are often uncontested, the implications for inclusive representation, and relevant reforms.

Acknowledgement

The Subcommittee wishes to thank Lexington Town Clerk Mary de Alderete for her careful reading and comments on a draft of this report.

Introduction

What is the problem, and why does it matter?

Lexington has a thriving civic culture. When decisions by town officials and staff are opposed or supported by groups of residents, coalitions often quickly form and insistent activism follows. When groups of residents recognize that they have common interests and needs, they band together into affinity organizations that fill our town with new awareness and appreciation for perspectives that might otherwise be overlooked. When residents feel that the town government is insufficiently addressing issues that are important to them, they research, write, and file citizens articles that are brought to Town Meeting. The Lexington League of Women Voters, PTO/PTAs, the Lexington Lyceum, houses of worship, and other organizations and venues often provide forums for public affairs events that are open to all. Widespread volunteerism is a bedrock of Lexington, civically and culturally, as is generous charitable giving to community needs and organizations.²

All of this is a feature of and credit to our community. Yet, none of these activities does one very important thing: establish our town government. Groups and their activities do not elect local officials who are responsible for making decisions about the town's nearly \$300 million municipal and school budget; public health and safety, transportation, housing, recreation, and climate challenges; upkeep and renewal of town and school buildings, roads, and other public infrastructure; the care of vulnerable residents and other public concerns and emergencies. These groups and activities do not put into public office the people whose job is to devote themselves, 365 days a year, to listening to and helping constituents; to weighing, considering, and balancing our shared short- and long-term community concerns; to judiciously examining complicated policy questions and putting solutions into practice.

Only one activity does that: voting in our local town elections.

And yet, despite Lexington's voter registration rate of around 96 percent,³ typically just 10 to 20 percent of eligible voters turn out to vote in our Annual Town Election each spring.

² 2022 Town Wide Survey <https://www.lexington.gov/911/2022-Town-Wide-Survey-Report>

³ Per 5/21/2025 email from Lexington Town Clerk Mary de Alderete to Jeri Zeder: "As of today, Lexington has 23,160 registered voters out of a possible 24,080 qualified residents (age 18 and over), which brings us to the 96% rate of registration."

Even in contested candidate elections and in tax override and debt exclusion elections, voter turnout does not come close to reaching 30 percent. The evidence cited in this report is that Lexington's local election turnout rates are low.⁴ These low local voting rates mean that a majority of Lexington's citizenry is not meaningfully expressing its preferences for who should govern us and make the important decisions that affect the present and future lives of Lexington's townspeople. Given this, it would be to the benefit of the community if representation were more robust through higher local election turnout rates.⁵

The phenomenon of low voter turnout in local elections is not unique to Lexington. Across the Commonwealth and nationwide, voter turnout in municipal elections is similarly low.⁶ Published studies (discussed later) point to a series of factors for this phenomenon. It is worth noting that, while this report is focused on *local* election voter turnout, we noticed a dip in turnout for the *presidential* election in November of 2024. Lexington's turnout in the 2012, 2016, and 2020 elections were 83 percent, 84 percent, and 88 percent, respectively, but turnout in 2024 fell to 78 percent.⁷ Time will tell if this is a trend.

What we do in Lexington affects not only our town, but the wider world. Our well-regarded school system, for example, educates and shapes individuals who bring the knowledge, skills, and values they learned here with them wherever they go in life. Similarly, Lexington's town culture shapes whether or not we are a community of voters dedicated to a democratically representative government. If we can develop a culture that embraces an expectation of local voting by our townspeople, we will be producing citizens who will vote wherever they go and be good citizens for the world.

⁴ The Subcommittee defines "low voter turnout" in our town's local elections as the wide gap between Lexington's voter registration rate and Annual Town Election turnout rate.

⁵ Lawful permanent residents, because they are not U.S. citizens, are ineligible to vote in any elections. In 2025, Lexington Town Meeting adopted Article 26, a citizen petition seeking voting rights in local elections for lawful permanent residents. The vote was 84 in favor, 79 against, and 7 abstaining. This Town Meeting action did not, however, render Lexington's lawful permanent residents eligible to vote. Lexington cannot act on the adoption of Article 26 unless and until Massachusetts state government grants the town a home rule petition.

⁶ Even in the contested, historic 2021 Boston mayoral race, in which the ballot included three referendum questions, just 28.9 percent of voters cast a ballot. <https://www.boston.com/news/politics/2021/11/03/despite-historic-election-low-voter-turnout/>

⁷ <https://records.lexingtonma.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=171697&dbid=0&repo=TownOfLexington;https://lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1788/November-8-2016---Presidential-Elections-Official-Results-PDF;https://lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1784/November-3-2020---Presidential-Election-PDF;https://lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13149/2024-11-05-FINAL-TABULATION-Presidential-OFFICIAL-RESULTS---Copy>

This report addresses factors correlated with low voter turnout in Lexington’s local elections, explores in greater depth the importance of local elections, and makes recommendations for constructive actions and measures to potentially increase voter turnout that can be taken by the Town and by the community at large. The specific observations and recommendations in this report reflect the background research and discussions carried out by our Subcommittee from October 2021 to the present date.⁸

Should everyone vote?

Throughout our time of studying this issue, we grappled with our guiding premise: that voter turnout in Lexington’s municipal elections should be higher, that the gap between Lexington’s high voter registration rate and low voter turnout rate should close. We confronted issues such as: what if more people are motivated to go to the polls because they believe misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda being spread about town policies and candidates? What if we manage to raise the voter turnout rate in local elections, but those voters are not well informed about local issues and how our local government works, or they do not feel invested in Lexington’s future? Discussing questions like these helped to sharpen why we advocate for higher voter turnout in Lexington’s local elections.

The law establishes who can vote.⁹ Notably absent from these criteria are requirements that voters demonstrate motives, abilities, viewpoints, values, levels of knowledge, or similar characteristics. The ballots we cast are secret ballots. This means that voting by an eligible individual is a matter of personal conscience and choice. In a democracy, to address voters’ understandings of candidates and issues, we write articles, hold information sessions, foster discussion, campaign, and raise awareness. The goal is to encourage more people to vote, and to provide more information so that we have informed voters.

⁸ A word about what this report does not cover. Voting is a complex activity. When, for example, a ballot runs longer than one page and voters do not realize that they must turn it over to complete their voting, it may be said that voters did not “turn out” for those items on the reverse side of the ballot. This report is not addressing phenomena like ballot design, although we do discuss that certain ballot-design issues can be a barrier to those with low-vision. In our Subcommittee meetings, we discussed the impact of misinformation and disinformation on voter turnout, and on the issue of whether it is “good” for Lexington if low-information voters go to the polls. It is possible that agitating Lexington’s voters with misinformation and disinformation could increase voter turnout in our local elections, but we do not recommend that as a method of increasing voter turnout.

⁹ <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/voter-resources/registering-to-vote.htm>

Underlying voting are fundamental ideas about civic engagement, democracy, our social contract, and responsibilities to ourselves, our families, and our community¹⁰:

- Voting gives every person an equal voice.
- Voting empowers us to help shape the policies and decisions that affect our lives and futures.
- Voting lets us express our values and gives us a say in who represents us and who makes decisions on issues that matter to us.
- The right to vote, and voting itself, safeguards other rights and freedoms.
- Voting holds elected officials accountable for their actions and decisions.
- Voting encourages elected officials to be responsive to their constituents.

When so few of Lexington's eligible voters are turning out to vote in our local elections, it is a sign that most of Lexington's residents are not engaged in shaping their future, protecting rights, and holding elected officials accountable in the most direct way possible to voters.

Voting is not compulsory in Lexington or anywhere in the U.S. Therefore, to increase voter turnout in our local elections, we must turn to education, persuasion, and articulation of the core social and democratic values manifested in the act of voting. Perhaps by doing so, we will not only strengthen the civic life of Lexington; we will also help to guard against erosions of our voting rights, represented in controversial bills like the SAVE Act,¹¹ by mobilizing ourselves and our neighbors to care about voting.

¹⁰ Adapted from content submitted by the Lexington League of Women Voters.

¹¹ <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/9-things-to-know-about-the-proposed-save-act> ; <https://www.lwv.org/blog/safeguard-american-voter-eligibility-save-act-trick>

Background

What we learned about voter turnout in general from literature review and surveys

Voter turnout has been discussed in conversations among neighbors and friends, in both academic literature and the popular press and blogs, and has been the subject of various polls. Low voter turnout in general has been widely acknowledged, and it is agreed that voter turnout in local elections is particularly poor. Factors associated with low voter turnout have been identified, and factors that might increase voter turnout have been proposed.

As one author stated, “turnout to vote is the most common and important act of political participation in any democracy.” (Aldrich 1993: 246) And yet, even though voting is central to democracy and is a key marker of social cohesion and social capital, voter turnout is less well explained than other political actions. Rational choice theory posits that people should make decisions based on what is rational and in their best interests. That would argue that people should vote in order to help secure the futures that matter to them. However, instead of looking forward to actions they can take to ensure outcomes they desire, voters tend to look backward and assess whether their prior choices have been reinforced. Past performances of candidates, for example, matter more than do candidates’ promises. This is reasonable in the case of those seeking reelection but is made difficult with new candidates. In the latter case, there is less on which to base a decision, so voting is less likely. All the more reason, as we discuss below, to make sure to communicate, on personal levels (especially in local elections), with potential voters.

“The folk theory of democracy,” that elections give citizens the power to control their government (Bartles 2016:38), is the core of American thinking about elections. We assume that elections show preferences of a majority, or the ‘will’ of the people. In reality, given low voter turnout, elections serve as referenda on the performance of those already in office or an expression of the passion associated with an issue and express the voice of a minority.

Interestingly, while low voter turnout is repeatedly cited in the literature and statistics, a 2018 Pew Research Center survey found that 74% of respondents ranked election participation above paying taxes and following laws as a determinant of good citizenship. Therefore, while we

acknowledge the importance of voting, paradoxically, we do not vote in concert with our beliefs. (Root and Kennedy 2018)

Two possible explanations for political participation are: 1) people conduct a cost-benefit analysis and conclude their vote might decide an election, and 2) people enjoy voting. Under this view, the challenge is to convince people that their vote *does* matter, and that voting is an enjoyable privilege. (Shachar and Nalebuff 1999)

Why does voting matter, or more directly, why does low voter turnout matter? Those who study this issue posit that voting is a democratic act that leads to more democracy, more consensus, and more egalitarianism. Low turnout means unequal turnout, with those more connected and committed determining outcomes for those less involved. It results in unequal political influence, even in local elections.

One factor complicating voting in local elections is that there is rarely a cue available regarding a party moniker. For example, those who would vote ‘Democrat’ or ‘Republican’ do not have the guidance on which they might rely in a national or state election. Instead, voters are obliged to learn more about candidates or issues, and that requires some work. If an incumbent is running, a voter must learn about what that incumbent has, or has not, done while in office. If a candidate is new on the ballot, a voter must learn about that for which the candidate stands, is willing to do, and what qualifications are possessed for the office. If an issue is to be decided, a voter must learn the details of the issue and the pros and cons associated with it. There are, generally, key factors that affect voting in local elections: incumbency; campaign spending; support of local groups or known individuals; and internal dynamics of communities, including ‘stakeholders’ or those with particular agendas they wish to advance. When turnout is low, elections hinge on a highly motivated group (rather than the ‘average’ voter) and results are determined by a small group that is not necessarily representative of the whole population.

As noted by the Brennan Center for Justice (2023), local elections are critical in that they shape constituents’ daily lives. It is at this level the residents’ concerns can make the most difference by creating change not available at other levels of government. Local elections are also important entry points into the political process. It is here that new political leaders can develop and here that grassroots efforts to affect the larger society can grow.

Factors associated with low voter turnout¹²

When asked why they did not vote, people have cited reasons ranging from **political biases/preferences** (such as not liking candidates, not believing one's vote makes a difference) to **practical impediments** (such as barriers to voting, including lack of transportation, choice fatigue) to **personal factors** (such as feeling ill, being out of town). (U.S. Census, November 2020) This range of reasons illustrates why the task of increasing voter turnout is not easy, or straightforward. Rather, it suggests that a comprehensive effort, involving many strategies and tactics, will be needed to get more Americans involved in the voting process generally and in going to the polls.

Reaching intermittent voters (those who are registered to vote but do not regularly do so) is important. These tend to be the **voters who do not have strong social connections** and are **less likely to see voting as a civic duty**; are **dissatisfied with government** generally; **know less about issues/candidates**; are more likely to say **issues don't affect them**; and say they are **too busy** to become involved. They are **not convinced that their vote matters** or makes a difference and **do not feel guilty about not voting or feel a responsibility to vote** or even generally participating in the social/political world.

Electoral research has shown that political competence; civic, cultural, and political motivation; and social integration affect individual voting behavior. The **less connected** a (potential) voter feels to a community or society, the less likely that individual is to vote. Older citizens, who are more likely to vote than are younger citizens, illustrate the importance of connection. (The gap in turnout between older and younger people has been estimated to be as high as 50 percentage points.) Younger people are more likely to move from community to community, decreasing the likelihood that they are registered to vote; they tend to be renters, and renters vote less frequently than do homeowners; they often do not appreciate the importance of having a voice in local elections because they are less likely to see decisions about issues such as housing affordability or public safety to be relevant to them; and they tend to be more skeptical about the value of their votes in solving community problems.

A review of comments from (self-selected) Lexingtonians on The Lexington List, an email-based community forum, on why they did not vote on the June 6, 2022, debt exclusion for

¹² Findings in this section come from a review of the literature on voting behavior. See Appendix 1 for citations.

a new Police Station, found the following reasons: felt **ambivalent about the issue** or **did not feel well enough informed**; **forgot** or did not know there was an election; **moved** or will be moving soon; came down with COVID or had another **health issue**; had **family issues**; felt that an **individual vote did not matter**; **did not understand the wording of the ballot** (a perennial problem as the wording of ballot questions is legally mandated). These reasons suggest that residents felt there were **barriers to voting** including: illness or other reason for not being able to get out of the house; not enough time to get an absentee ballot; not automatically receiving a mail-in ballot; failing to remember there is an election or failing to plan ahead to vote; not understanding the wording of a ballot question; not liking the choices (yes/no) offered. Other reasons cited included a lack of understanding of the issue due to the **absence of a campaign** (citing pros and cons) of the debt exclusion; **misgivings** about the role of police in Lexington and in the country; concerns that a **new station was not really necessary**; and a belief that because Town Meeting and Town officials supported a new Police Station there is **no need for additional affirmation by residents**. These argue both for the need to provide voters with opportunities to ask questions and express concerns and the importance of voter education.

The findings are consistent with those reported in the Report on Town-Wide Survey 2022,¹³ in which respondents were asked their reasons for not voting in the March 2021 Annual Town election. Respondents said: they were **too busy**; **missed deadlines**; that **issues did not matter** or were not important enough to the respondent; they believed that a **single vote does not matter**; that **local elections do not make an impact**; they **distrust government**; they **did not like the choices**; they had **accessibility issues** (transportation, weather, illness, inconvenient polling hours). Again, the message is that more outreach and connection to voters is needed to inform them about issues and remind them to vote.

¹³ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7112/2022-Town-Wide-Survey-Report-2022-9-30-VfL-approved>

Factors associated with increased voter turnout¹⁴

Research has established that **voting history** matters in voter turnout. Specifically, those who vote in one election are more likely to vote in the next. Taking actions to vote (including registering to vote, learning how to cast a vote, learning about issues/candidates) requires an initial investment, but after that, political behavior becomes habitual. Voting becomes more or less automatic or expected, and it tends to increase an interest in politics generally, which can lead, in turn, to increased voting behavior.

Those who develop a sense of themselves as voters have a psychological impetus to vote and develop a **‘habit’ of voting**. **Civic participation** changes how people view themselves, and voting confirms a self-image as civic-minded and politically involved. In other words, there are **psychological benefits to voting** as voting creates a sense of political efficacy and increases a sense of civic duty.

Two field experiments conducted to evaluate the **‘contagiousness’ of voting** found that the tendency to vote is passed from one household member to another and through interactions with others who vote. Discussions with others will increase voter turnout by encouraging the exploration and focusing of ideas. Those interactions with others influence how we become informed about issues/candidates and whether or not we vote. This **norm of civic participation** declines, however, as voter turnout declines due to fewer encounters with people who vote, reduced social pressure to vote, and a diminished sense of civic responsibility.

The probability of voting is **linked to** the incidence of cooperative and **engaged behaviors in other areas** such as giving to charities, reading the newspaper, volunteering, belonging to a group, interacting with neighbors or other community members. **Social capital** is a good predictor of voting behavior as it increases the likelihood that people will have shared objectives and social commitments and will engage in socially interested behaviors. This reinforces the notion of habit formation associated with voting.

¹⁴Findings reported in this section were recorded in the literature on voter turnout and reiterated in interviews with experts in the field and expressed by subscribers to listservs in Lexington. Please consult the List of References for cited literature.

Party identification (or partisanship) was generally not found to have much influence on local nonpartisan elections. What does matter is the **social structure of the community** and the **commitment of citizens to the local community and its political system**; **familiarity** with the candidate and his or her orientation; and the **role of local organizations**, including campaigns and media. Acquaintance with the community and the candidate heavily influence turnout.

Voting is a conscious act requiring preparation and plans for voting. Vote planning involves people envisioning themselves voting and identifying barriers they might encounter. It is one technique that can help voter turnout to the polls. A field experiment conducted during the 2008 presidential campaign found that forming a voting plan can increase turnout by 4.1 percentage points, and by 9.1 percentage points among single-eligible-voter households. (Nickerson and Rogers 2010) The ‘self-prophecy effect’ illustrates a powerful connection between implementation intentions and actual behavior. Predicting one will follow through on a plan predicts one’s likelihood of doing so.

Proposed strategies to increase voter turnout¹⁵

It is widely acknowledged that there is no silver bullet for increasing voter turnout. To address the myriad reasons for not voting, many strategies have been suggested to overcome reluctance or resistance to voting and the consensus is that a **mix of strategies** will be necessary.

One suggestion focuses on increasing **social connectedness**. As was noted in factors associated with increased voter turnout, feeling connected to one’s community or society can be a powerful impetus for voting. In this connection, text **messages** (whether personal or general) have been proposed as a mobilization tool. This is particularly helpful when used with registered voters.

Mobilization efforts should stress at least one of three factors that influence voting: impact of voting (and the importance of the individual’s vote); convenience (demonstrated, for example, by ease of registration, the use of mail/absentee ballots); community (sense of civic responsibility; representativeness, and community engagement). Identifying *how* the outcome of an election pertains to the life of a voter will help mobilize potential voters.

¹⁵Information in this section reflects reporting in the literature, discussions with experts, and comments by Lexingtonians on listservs.

By the same token, **personal contact**, often through door-to-door canvassing, has been shown to be effective at the precinct level. While less effective in influencing voter preferences, it can affect voter turnout. The degree to which voters feel ‘contacted’ by a candidate/candidate representative, including the number of contacts and the means of contact used, and personal interactions with a candidate will affect turnout. It is helpful to have discussions with individuals about planning to vote – finding the time, learning relevant information about candidates/issues, making logistical arrangements for voting by mail or going to the polls, etc.

Preregistration has been shown to increase voter turnout. This is especially true when applied with young people who are still in school, and when utilized during the excitement of political campaigns. Encouraging registration under these circumstances motivates and mobilizes young voters. As we have already demonstrated, voting behavior can become habitual so establishing voting habits early can have lasting effects. (Voting in one election can increase the probability of voting in a subsequent election by more than 50%.)

In addition to preregistration, **education about democracy and one’s role in it**, one’s **rights and responsibilities** within it, and **information about issues and candidates** are essential to creating informed citizens who understand the importance of voting, individually and collectively, and what effects a vote can have on the structure and functioning of society. But civics education that increases interest in and knowledge of politics and political issues, cultivates a sense of citizenship, and expands social networks that support community involvement (including voting) is not enough. A practical component is needed.

Education should also address the many obstacles that might keep someone from voting. In addition to providing a philosophical civics education, education should offer applied civics training and impart **skills to navigate the registration process**. As noted by Holbein and Hillygus, “... many people fail to vote... because... they lack the skills and strategies that would help them follow through on their behavior and intentions.” (2020:12) A longitudinal study (Fast Track Intervention) found that children who learned emotional regulation and social-cognitive skills carried those skills into adulthood and were more likely to vote in adulthood.¹⁶ These ‘noncognitive’ skills or strategies made participants more likely to overcome barriers (such as

¹⁶ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2632714

life distractions) to a follow-through of actions. Several programs designed to instruct students on the logistics of voting found an increase in voting behavior later in life.¹⁷

There have been proposals to **extend voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds in local elections**.¹⁸ Research has found that reaching young people and educating them about the value and importance of voting improves their social commitment and sense of belonging to the wider society. Those who receive such education in high school develop a stronger culture of civic engagement and have higher voter turnout rates in their 30s. Involving young people at younger ages has been shown to predict future participation in local elections.

There is evidence that people do not generally vote upon initial eligibility, typically at age 18. The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (circle.tufts.edu) argues that 18-year-olds are ‘busy’ and adjusting to new social roles and responsibilities, so voting is not a priority. By contrast, younger students have fewer distractions and are therefore more able to deal with ‘first votes.’ Schools can reinforce the value of voting, as can families and social networks, each of which is still strong among those in high school. Further, high schoolers are interested in local issues, many of which directly affect them. In addition, getting **young people to serve as poll workers** allows them to see democracy and voting in action and makes them feel more connected to the voting process. (This could serve to help satisfy the community service requirement in high school.)

Especially in local elections, **making role descriptions available and outlining the types of decisions officials make**¹⁹ in their roles helps voters better understand that for which they are voting. Such information would enable citizens to see how officials impact their daily lives and the direction of their community. This can be accomplished through workshops, events, forums, and use of local and social media. When a local election involves a ballot question, informing the public of the language of the ballot question and the impact of a “yes” or “no” vote in advance of the election can also help inform voters.

In states where **initiatives and referenda** have been used, voter turnout is higher, especially when voting occurs in mid-terms and is not tied to federal elections. This was

¹⁷ <https://pure.johnshopkins.edu/en/publications/promoting-voter-turnout-an-unanticipated-impact-of-early-childhood>

¹⁸ Lexington’s Town Meeting declined to adopt voting by 16- and 17-year-olds in local elections in 2024. (Article 43 at ATM 024). The Town Meeting vote was 71 yes, 74 no, and 13 abstentions. Town Meeting again declined to adopt voting by 16- and 17-year-olds in 2025 (Article 27 at ATM 025). The Town Meeting vote was 76 yes, 91 no, 2 abstentions.

¹⁹ Similar to the “Red Book” produced by the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office.

especially true among independents and peripheral voters (rather than partisans), who evidence greater awareness of ballot measures under these circumstances.

Several **institutional mechanisms** have been proposed to increase voter turnout: *make voter-registration more “friendly,”* including allowing registration when parking permits or library cards are renewed and same-day voter registration that permits registering and voting at the same time; *ease qualifications for absentee ballots;* have *schools distribute registration forms* to high school students and *landlords provide forms* for tenants; have *businesses give time off or offer incentives* for voting; *schedule fewer elections* so that when elections do occur, they garner more interest; *keep ballots simple and short;* *hold elections on weekends* when people do not have conflicts with work schedules; *open polling places for longer hours;* use “*early voting;*” *couple elections* in which low turnout is expected with national elections; *incentivize participation through* mechanisms such as cash lotteries or have businesses promote election information; and *increase the use of mail/absentee ballots*²⁰. (**Mail/absentee ballots** are most effective with those who find going to polls difficult and their use is enhanced by mobilization efforts.) Many of these proposals, when implemented, have been shown to increase voter turnout.

The U.S. Census of 2020 reported on the **relationship between method of voting and sociodemographic characteristics of voters**. The method most used, overall, was mail-in voting (43%), followed by voting in person on election day (30.4%) and close behind that, in-person voting before election day (26%). This pattern persisted for all age groups, with those 65 years of age and older most likely to vote by mail. Others who were more likely to use mail-in voting included those with higher educational attainment; Asians and Hispanics; naturalized citizens; and those with higher family income. No differences were found by sex of voter. While the majority of voters still chose in-person voting, the use of mail-in voting was significant.

Historically, local elections held in off-cycle years lag behind state and national turnout, and this is getting worse. Moving local election day to coincide with state and federal elections has been found to have a significant effect on voter turnout.²¹ There is near consensus that **timing of elections** affects voter turnout, especially in state and local elections. According to the National Civic League²², timing is the number one predictor of voter turnout. Timing of elections

²⁰ In Lexington’s 2025 March Town Election, 18 percent of ballots were cast as mail-in and absentee ballots.

²¹ <https://www.governing.com/archive/gov-voter-turnout-municipal-elections.html>

²² <https://www.nationalcivicleague.org>

further influences voter composition with respect to partisanship and ideology. Older voters, for example, are more likely to be overrepresented in low turnout elections. The highest voter turnout in local elections occurs when they coincide with high-profile federal elections. The lowest turnout occurs in irregularly scheduled special elections.²³

Concerns about voting behavior and voter turnout have been expressed by Lexington residents. Comments compiled from the Town Meeting Listserv in April 2023 focused on voting, voter turnout, and participation in democracy. Listers expressed that **Town leadership** should excite and inspire citizens to vote and to participate on boards and committees. They believed that Town leaders (including those on elected boards and appointed committees) should **take the reins** as they do the work of ‘crafting government.’ This would include increasing and improving publicity about Town governance in ways that ‘normal’ residents (i.e., those not already engaged in governance) can understand.

²³ An additional suggestion has been to use **compulsory voting** as a counterweight to low turnout. Research has shown that compulsory voting can increase turnout by between 7% and 16%. (Lijphart 1997) This would require that people show up to vote (even if they leave a ballot blank), thereby assuring high voter turnout. (There are arguments against using this strategy that would have to be considered before adopting the practice.) The penalties for not voting are generally low, but it is seen as an egalitarian instrument that could cause people to pay more attention and be more likely to get in the habit of showing up to vote. (In Massachusetts, constitutional provisions dating back to 1918 authorized the state legislature to institute CV, but no action along these lines has yet been taken.)

Recent Massachusetts Voting Reforms and Voter Turnout

You can register to vote in Massachusetts²⁴ if you are a U.S. citizen, resident of Massachusetts, 18 years or older, and not currently incarcerated by reason of a felony conviction. You can preregister to vote if you meet the above criteria and you are 16 or 17 years old.

In recent history, a number of federal and state laws have led to changes in Massachusetts voter and election laws.²⁵

- The **National Voter Registration Act of 1993** (NVRA), also known as the Motor Voter Act, is a federal law signed into law on May 20, 1993, that came into effect on January 1, 1995. It allows eligible citizens to register to vote when they apply for, or seek to renew, a driver's license.²⁶
- In 2009, the **Veteran Voting Support Act** passed, letting overseas service members send in scans of ballots via fax or email. In 2012, Secretary of State Galvin posted downloadable, printable Voter Registration Forms, modernizing elections in Massachusetts.
- In 2014 and implemented in 2016, the **Election Reform Bill** was signed into law, bringing online voter registration, audits of voting machines, pre-registration of 16- and 17-year-olds, and early voting to Massachusetts. Massachusetts already had absentee balloting. Absentee voters must certify that they will be out of town on Election Day; are incapacitated; or have religious beliefs that prohibit voting on a particular day.
- In 2018, **Automatic Voter Registration** was enacted in Massachusetts and implemented in 2020. Voters are automatically registered to vote when interacting with certain government agencies, such as the Registry of Motor Vehicles, division of medical assistance, health insurance connector authority or other agencies verified by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

²⁴ <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/voter-resources/registering-to-vote.htm>

²⁵ The Votes Act: Common Cause Massachusetts

Massachusetts State Senate Approves Bill to Make Voting Reforms Permanent – NBC Boston

Electoral reform in the United States - Wikipedia

*Mary de Alderete, Lexington Town Clerk, personal communication 5/22/2024

²⁶ <https://www.justice.gov/crt/about-national-voter-registration-act>

- In 2020, for the first time in Massachusetts history, residents had the choice to **vote by mail, to vote during an extended early voting window, or to vote in person on Election Day**. These reforms, which received overwhelming bipartisan support, helped increase civic engagement and enabled residents to vote safely, securely, and easily. According to Secretary of the Commonwealth's office, 3,657,972 votes were cast in the November 3, 2020, election, topping the state's previous record by nearly 300,000 votes and representing a roughly 76% turnout. 42% of people voted by mail last year and another 23% cast their ballots during early voting.
- As of the date of this report, Massachusetts does not allow for Election Day Registration.²⁷
- In 2022, the **VOTES Act**²⁸ expanded access to the ballot in Massachusetts. The bill was the largest expansion of voting access in Massachusetts in years. The VOTES Act, effective January 1, 2023, made permanent changes, including allowing voters to vote by mail without an excuse, expanding early voting options, making sure that eligible voters who are incarcerated (not by felony conviction²⁹) are able to vote, and ensuring that the Commonwealth joins the Electronic Registration Information Center. The voter registration deadline prior to an election was reduced from twenty-one days to ten. In addition, the VOTES ACT requires the RMV to remove the "opt out" for voting from the driver licensing application. Applicants that wish to opt out may contact their town/municipality directly. Information on all eligible applicants will automatically be sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth for voter registration.
- Ranked Choice Voting, which allows voters to list their candidates from favorite to least favorite, has been slowly gaining ground in both the United States and Massachusetts, but has not been adopted yet by the state. On November 8, 2023, Special Town Meeting passed STM1-9, a citizen petition seeking authorization from the Massachusetts Legislature for a home rule petition that would establish ranked-choice voting for the election of Town offices.³⁰ The measure is still before the Legislature.

²⁷ In 2008, Election Day Registration passed in the State Senate, 33-5, before being stopped in the State House.

²⁸ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter92>

²⁹ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVIII/Chapter51/Section1>

³⁰ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10131/Wednesday-November-8-2023-PDF>

- In addition to these state reforms, Lexington Town Meeting recently voted on two proposals intended to extend the franchise in its local elections. One proposal would have granted the right to vote in local elections to 16- and 17-year-olds. Town Meeting rejected this measure in 2024³¹ and 2025³². The other proposal sought to give lawful permanent residents who are not U.S. citizens the right to vote in local elections. This measure passed, 84 in favor, 79 against, and 7 abstaining.³³ However, Lexington cannot act on this without a special act of the Massachusetts legislature.

These reforms seem to be **affecting Lexington in several ways:**

- Students aged 16 and 17 with driver's permits or licenses are automatically pre-registered to vote, but voter registration drives conducted by the Lexington League of Women Voters reveal that many of these students are not aware that they are pre-registered. This has implications for how future voter participation and awareness initiatives are conceived and implemented.
- Lexington has seen a significant increase in mail-in voting. Administering the mail-in ballot process has added to the workload of the Town Clerk.³⁴
- In Massachusetts, the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office is required to send a pre-addressed, postage pre-paid vote-by-mail application to every registered voter before each *statewide* election.³⁵ For *local* elections, there is no statutory obligation to send vote-by-mail applications to registered voters. The annual census materials that the Town of Lexington sends to households include information about the need to contact the Town Clerk's office to request a ballot. While providing this information in the census materials is a good thing, it may not be enough to dispel confusion for some voters, as the next bullet point suggests.

³¹ Article 43; vote was 71 yes, 74 no, 13 abstaining.

³² Article 27; vote was 76 yes, 91 no, 2 abstaining.

³³ Article 26, <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/2294/2025-Annual-Town-Meeting-Legal-Postings->

³⁴ No-excuse early voting by mail in Lexington peaked in the March 2024 Annual Town Election, which coincided with the presidential primary (6,453 voting by mail or 80 percent of total voting of 8,046), an increase over the March 2023 Annual Town Election (408 voting by mail or 15 percent of total voting of 2,813), which was the first use of Vote by Mail in a local election. In the 2025 Annual Town Election, 6,151 (27 percent) of eligible voters cast ballots, with 52 absentee and 1,070 voting by mail, for a total of 18 percent of the total vote.

³⁵ <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/voting-information/vote-by-mail.htm>

- In Massachusetts, when voters apply for a mail-in ballot, they must specify whether they are applying for “all elections this year” or “a specific election.”³⁶ Voters who choose to apply for a mail-in ballot for “all elections this year” will receive mail-in ballots for every election in which they are eligible to vote during the calendar year (unless it is a local election and the municipality has opted out of no-excuse early voting by mail in local elections³⁷). We heard from several highly committed, frequent Lexington voters that they were assuming they would receive a mail-in ballot for the March 2025 Annual Town Election because they had voted by mail in the November presidential election, and they were surprised when they did not receive one. They were not aware that their application for a mail-in ballot had expired in December 2024 and they needed to reapply starting January 2025.

³⁶ <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/download/vote-by-mail-applications/Vote-by-Mail-Paper-Application-2025.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/voting-information/vote-by-mail.htm>

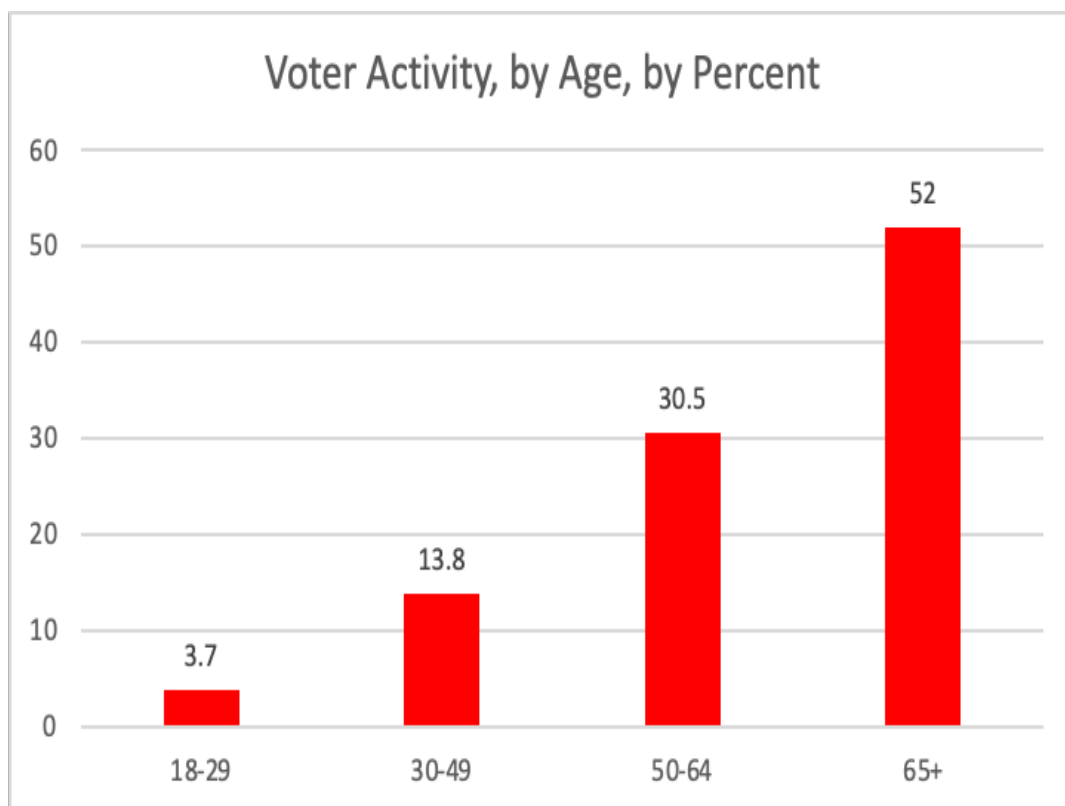
Voting in Lexington's Local Town Elections

We analyzed several Lexington town elections to see what turnout patterns might emerge. Based on the graphs below, it appears that:

- In a typical March Annual Town Election -“typical” meaning that only Town offices are on the ballot, and there are no state primaries or referendum questions before the voters - turnout is highest among Lexington's older voters. But these are also some of Lexington's lowest turnout elections.
- In special Town elections involving ballot questions about school funding, middle-aged voters - that is, those who are more likely to have school-aged children - turn out to vote in higher numbers than they do in “typical” Annual Town Elections. These elections ask voters whether they are willing to increase their taxes through debt exclusions or overrides, and tend to involve spirited, high-information campaigns.
- Overall, local election voter turnout has been higher when the March Annual Town Election falls on the same day as do federal/state primary elections.
- The percentage of voters who turn out in Lexington's local elections ranges from approximately 10 percent to 27 percent and is sometimes higher when local elections coincide with federal or state primaries.

TABLE 1 2023 March Annual Town Election, by percent³⁸

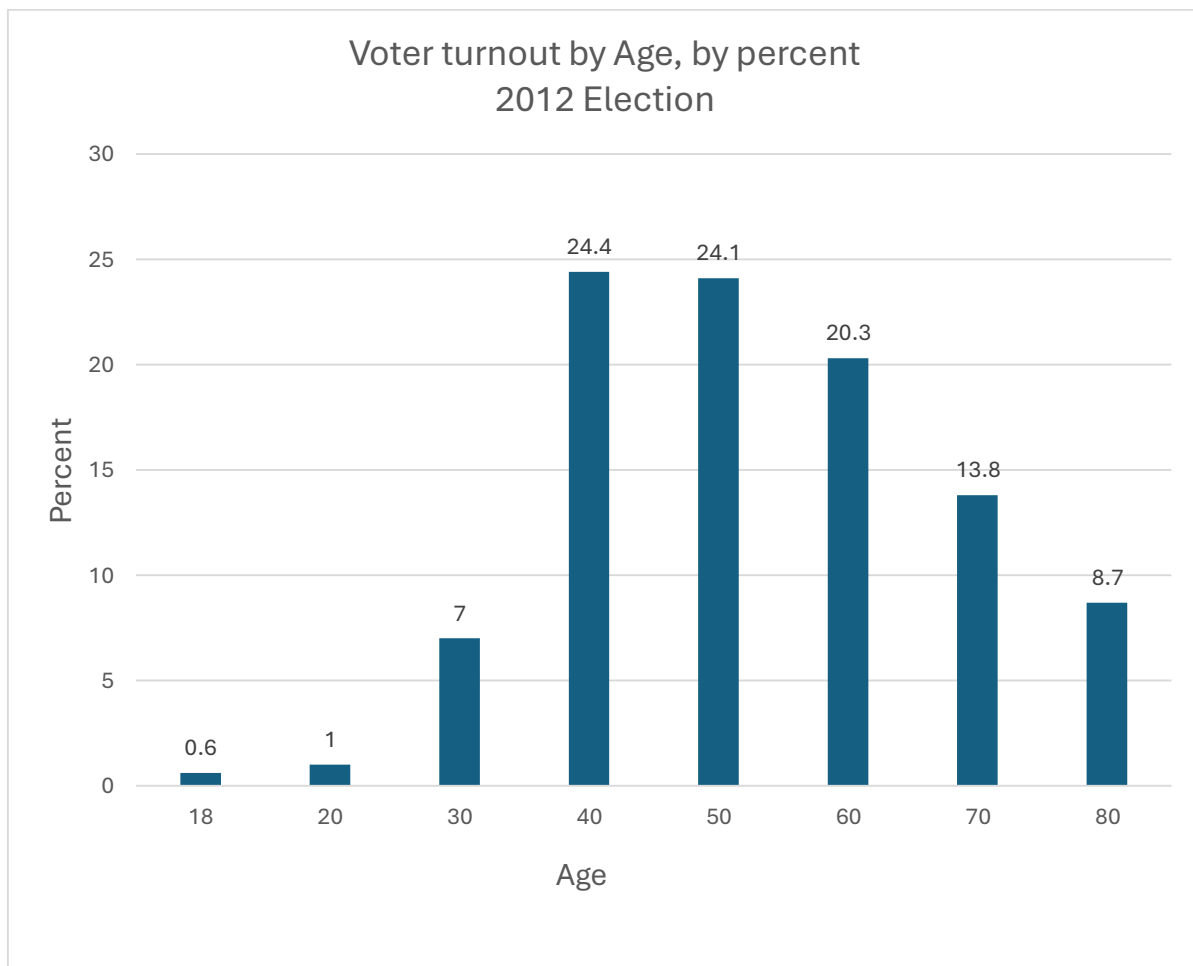
There were 22,736 registered voters in Lexington in 2023, and 2,019 cast a ballot in this election. Voter turnout was 9 percent. The majority of voters were 65 and older, and over 80 percent were 50 and older. This pattern of voter age and turnout rate is exemplary of patterns relating age and voter turnout in general.



³⁸ <https://lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8347/March-6-2023---Annual-Town-Election-PDF>

TABLE 2 January 24, 2012, Special Town Election, by percent

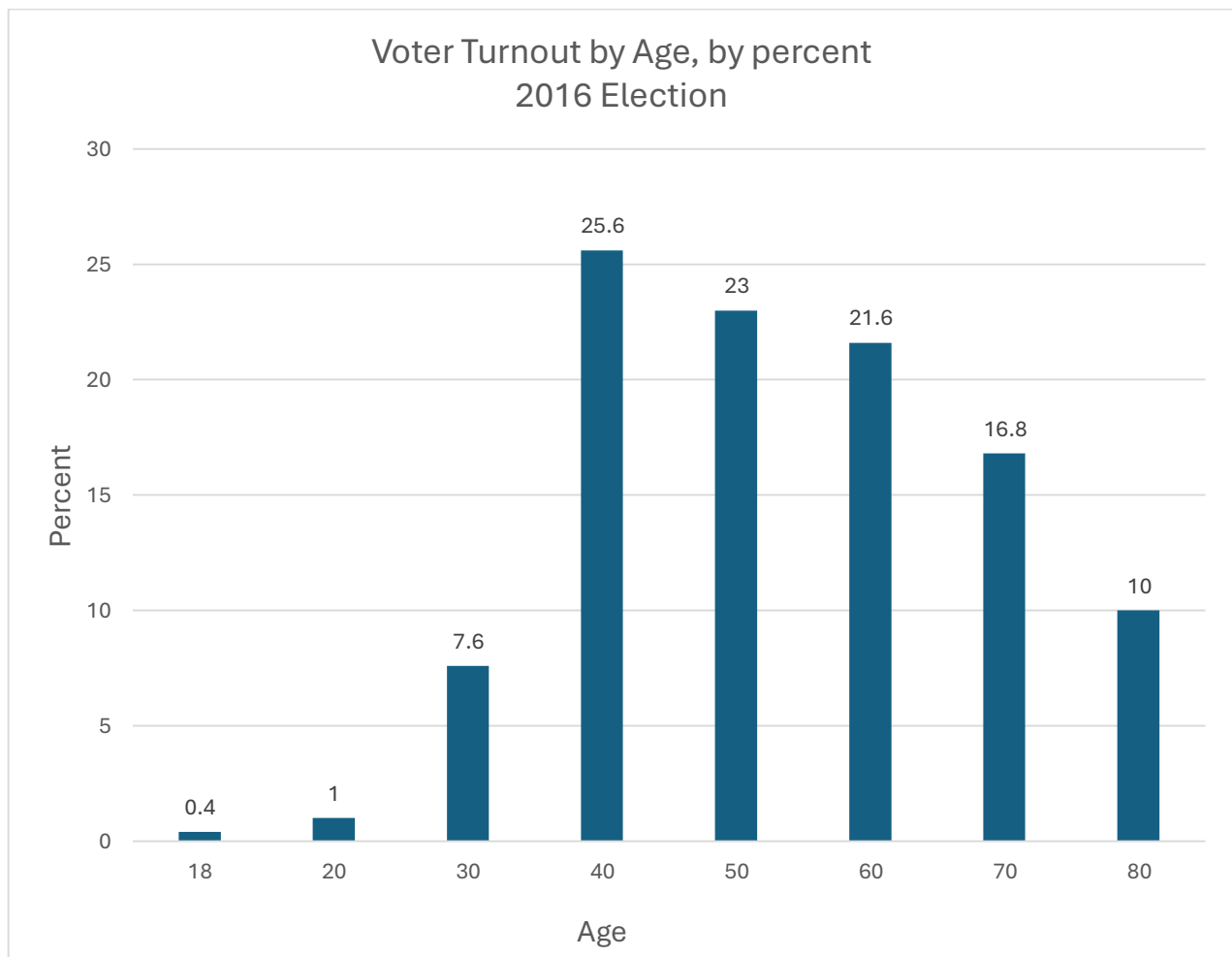
This special election posed a debt exclusion referendum question to voters for renovations to Bridge and Bowman Elementary Schools.³⁹ There were 21,435 registered voters. 5,726 voters turned out to vote, for a turnout rate of 27 percent. The pattern of voting in this case suggests that when an issue of concern to a specific group (in this case, parents of school-aged children) is on the ballot, voters in that group are more likely to vote. As compared with the table above, it can be seen that there were more voters in the 30-50 age range for this special election than would be seen in a general election.



³⁹ <https://records.lexingtonma.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=97118&dbid=0&repo=TownOfLexington>

TABLE 3 May 3, 2016, Special Debt Vote, by percent⁴⁰

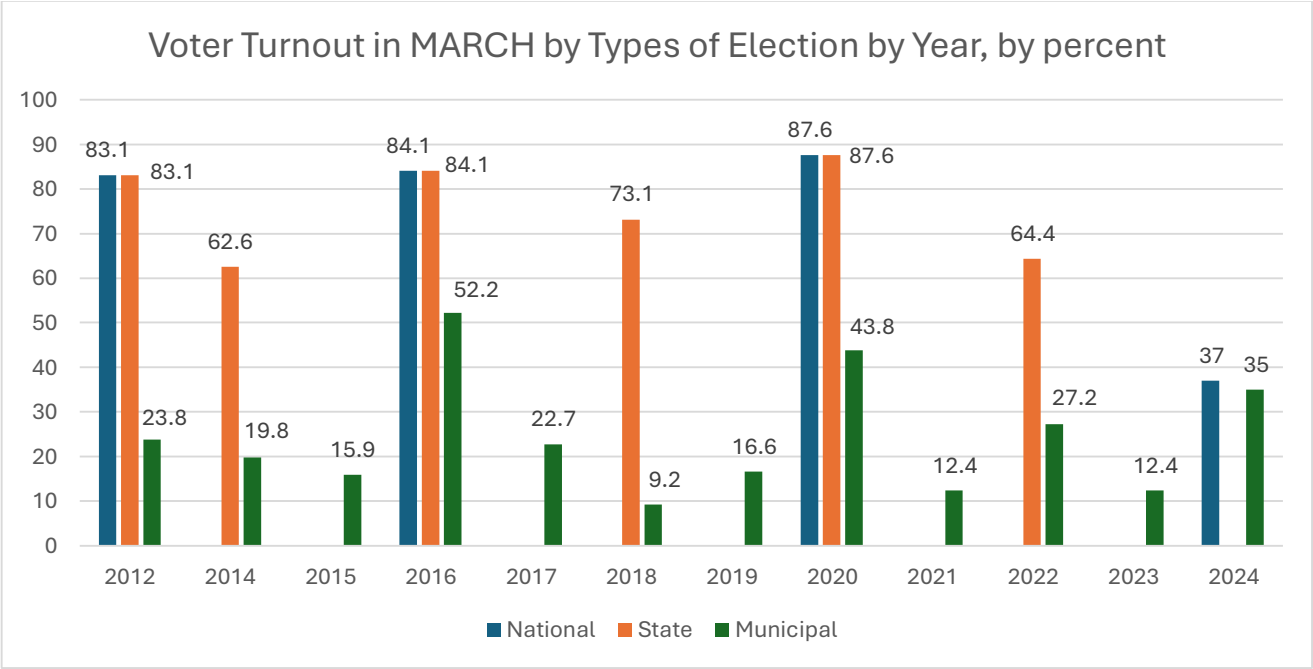
This special election posed a debt exclusion referendum question for the renovation of Clarke and Diamond Middle Schools. There were 21,385 registered voters. 5,473 turned out to vote, for a turnout rate of 26 percent. As can be seen in Table 2.0, when there is a ballot question of concern to a specific age group, voters in that age group are more likely to vote.



⁴⁰ <https://lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1783/May-3-2016-Special-Town-Election---Debt-Exclusion-PDF>

TABLE 4 Voter turnout when the Annual Town Election in March is held on the same day as a presidential or state primary, by percent

- In years when the local March election occurs on the same day as the state- or federal-level primary election (2012, 2016, 2020, 2024), turnout for the local election is higher than when only a local election is on the ballot - but it is never as high as is the turnout for the primary.
- Turnout for local (municipal) elections is highest in March elections that occur on the same day as presidential primaries.



Factors Affecting Voter Turnout in Lexington

As of May 21, 2025, Lexington had 23,160 registered voters out of a possible 24,080 qualified residents (age 18 and over), with a voter registration rate of 96 percent.⁴¹ Yet voter turnout in Lexington's local elections was just 27 percent in March 2025⁴² (with contested elections), 35 percent in March 2024⁴³ (with contested town races and a presidential primary), 9 percent in March 2023,⁴⁴ 27.10 percent in March 2022,⁴⁵ 12 percent in March 2021,⁴⁶ 44 percent in March 2020 (a local election that coincided with a presidential primary, which had a turnout of 54 percent),⁴⁷ and 17 percent in March 2019.⁴⁸ Lexington is far from the only Massachusetts municipality with low voter turnout rates.⁴⁹ In fact, turnout for local municipal elections are low across the country.⁵⁰ The question is, why?

Experts link voter turnout to three factors: timing, competition,⁵¹ and information.⁵²

⁴¹ Email from Lexington Town Clerk to Jeri Zeder dated May 21, 2025.

⁴² <https://lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13940/2025-03-03-ATE--OFFICIAL-RESULTS?bidId=>

⁴³ <https://lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11239/March-5-2024-Annual-Town-Election>

⁴⁴ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8347/March-6-2023---Annual-Town-Election-PDF>

⁴⁵ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1782/March-7-2022---Annual-Town-Election-PDF>. This March election included a ballot question on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers.

⁴⁶ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1799/March-1-2021---Annual-Town-Election-PDF> (included a contested election for Planning Board and several Town Meeting seats).

⁴⁷ Coincided with a Presidential Primary, which had a voter turnout of 54 percent.

<https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1803/March-3-2020---Presidential-Primary-PDF> and <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1802/March-3-2020---Annual-Town-Election-PDF>

There were no contested town-wide seats in 2020.

When a local election and a state primary occur on the same day in March, voters are offered two different ballots: one for the local election, and one for the state primary. The results of the March 2020 election tell us that 54 percent of eligible voters went to the polls, and all of them voted in the state primary. But, while they were at the polls, a significant number of them chose not to cast a ballot for the local election. This suggests that the rate of voter turnout is related to what it is that voters are turning out for.

⁴⁸ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1779/March-4-2019---Annual-Town-Election-PDF> (included contested races for Select Board, Planning Board, and various Town Meeting races).

⁴⁹ In 2021, Lincoln's municipal turnout rate was 9.46 percent, Arlington's was 19.69 percent, and Concord's was 13.55 percent. <https://lexobserver.org/2023/02/16/in-next-months-local-election-few-lexingtonians-are-likely-to-go-to-the-polls-why/>. Even Boston, with a contested election for an open mayoral seat, had a turnout rate of only 28.9 percent. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/11/07/opinion/elections-even-years-voter-turnout-massachusetts/>

⁵⁰ E.g., <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/22/opinion/why-does-no-one-vote-in-local-elections.html>

⁵¹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326133664_Turnout_in_Local_Elections_Is_Timing_Really_Everything

⁵² <https://lexobserver.org/2023/02/16/in-next-months-local-election-few-lexingtonians-are-likely-to-go-to-the-polls-why/>

Timing

Research shows that turnout is higher when local elections occur in even-numbered years on the same day as state and federal elections.⁵³ It is tempting, then, to say we can “fix” this by holding our municipal elections on Election Day in November. However, under Massachusetts state law,⁵⁴ annual town elections must take place between February and June, in conjunction with Town Meeting.⁵⁵ The Select Board is responsible for choosing the date of local elections within the confines of the law. The Select Board typically schedules Lexington’s local elections for the first Monday in March of each year, as required by the Town’s bylaws.⁵⁶ When Lexington’s local elections have fallen on the same day as the Presidential Primary, turnout overall has been considerably higher, but turnout for municipal elections is still considerably lower than is the presidential primary turnout.⁵⁷

Competition

Contested races tend to increase voter turnout.⁵⁸ In Lexington, most seats go uncontested each year. There are several factors that appear to be related to this:

- The number of seats that Lexington must fill annually is large. For Town Meeting, some 63 seats are on the ballot each year (approximately seven for each of nine

⁵³ <https://lexobserver.org/2023/02/16/in-next-months-local-election-few-lexingtonians-are-likely-to-go-to-the-polls-why/>

⁵⁴ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter39/Section9> ; <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter39/Section9A>

⁵⁵ An exception is when a local elected seat becomes vacant due to the death or resignation of an official. Then, a special election may be called at other times of year to fill the vacancy, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter41/Section10>

In certain circumstances, the Select Board also has the authority to fill the vacancy by appointment, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter41/Section11> Vacancies of Town Meeting Member seats are governed under Chapter 215, Acts of 1929.

⁵⁶ <https://ecode360.com/10535272#10535272>

⁵⁷ The 44 percent turnout rate for the March 2020 Annual Town Election is an example of this. So is the 52 percent turnout for the March 2016 Annual Election, <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1797/March-1-2016-Annual-Town-Election-PDF> , which was held on the same day as the Presidential Primary (which had a 58 percent turnout rate), <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1798/March-1-2016-Presidential-Primary-PDF> .

⁵⁸ <https://lexobserver.org/2023/02/16/in-next-months-local-election-few-lexingtonians-are-likely-to-go-to-the-polls-why/> ; <https://www.illinoispolicy.org/reports/competitive-elections-raise-voter-participation-uncontested-elections-hinder-democracy/>

precincts). In additions, there are races for Town Moderator and a subset of the Select Board, School Committee, Planning Board, and Housing Authority.⁵⁹

- All of these positions are unpaid and the demands of office can, at various times throughout the year, rival a full-time job.⁶⁰
- Running a contested campaign costs money, and it is hard to defeat an incumbent.⁶¹ In 2022, there was a contested race for School Committee. Three candidates were running for two, three-year seats; one was an incumbent. Together, they spent more than \$25,000.⁶² In 2019, there was a contested race for a single one-year seat on the Select Board.⁶³ Together, the two competing candidates (neither were incumbents) spent more than \$14,000.⁶⁴ These monies must be raised by candidates; races are not subsidized by the town.

In addition to potentially increasing voter turnout, competitive elections can offer another benefit: improving elected officials' ability to represent their constituents. In competitive races, candidates may court voters by knocking on doors, using social media, and hearing from residents at coffees and other campaign events. This puts candidates in the position of hearing from the people they are going to represent and learning about their concerns and needs.

Information

Local elections are low-information elections, and low information elections have lower voter turnout.⁶⁵ The most basic piece of information voters must know to be able to vote is the

⁵⁹ <https://lexobserver.org/2023/02/16/in-next-months-local-election-few-lexingtonians-are-likely-to-go-to-the-polls-why/>

⁶⁰ <https://lexobserver.org/2023/02/16/in-next-months-local-election-few-lexingtonians-are-likely-to-go-to-the-polls-why/>

⁶¹ Some researchers say that ranked choice voting could encourage competition because it increases the chances that a challenger can defeat an incumbent, <https://lexobserver.org/2023/02/16/in-next-months-local-election-few-lexingtonians-are-likely-to-go-to-the-polls-why/>, but further study is required for a definitive answer, <https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/what-we-know-about-ranked-choice-voting/candidates-and-campaigns/#claim-6-rcv-changes-who-runs>. Ranked choice voting which allows voters to list their candidates from favorite to least favorite has been slowly gaining ground in both the United States and Massachusetts. Lexington Town Meeting voted in 2023 to apply for a home rule petition to allow Lexington residents to cast Ranked Choice ballots.

⁶² <https://records.lexingtonma.gov/weblink/browse.aspx?dbid=0&cr=1>

⁶³ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1779/March-4-2019---Annual-Town-Election-PDF>

⁶⁴ <https://records.lexingtonma.gov/weblink/browse.aspx?dbid=0>

⁶⁵ <https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/lack-civic-information-and-readiness-leading-lower-latino-youth-turnout;>
<https://www.npr.org/2018/09/10/645223716/on-the-sidelines-of-democracy-exploring-why-so-many-americans-dont-vote>

date of the election. It is widely known that major federal and state general elections occur the first Tuesday following the first Monday of November. In Massachusetts, annual town elections happen in the springtime on dates determined by each municipality individually, with the dates varying each year.⁶⁶ Under Lexington's town bylaws, the annual town election is to occur on the first Monday in March.⁶⁷

The next piece of information voters need is: Who is on the ballot? Competitive races boost information about both the date of the election and about the candidates themselves, but competition in local elections tends to be the exception rather than the rule. "Additionally, Massachusetts local elections in towns, including Lexington, are nonpartisan: the signifiers D or R, which at a glance can tell voters something about a candidate's presumed views, aren't present on a local ballot."⁶⁸

Sometimes, the information voters need is not just who is on the ballot, but what issues are on the ballot. In non-candidate elections, specifically those involving referendum questions of various kinds, including overrides and debt exclusions, another source of voter information may come from the campaign committees formed by Lexington residents to promote or oppose the ballot questions. These campaigns typically try to influence the public through websites, emails, postal mailings, letters to the editor, articles, and events. They also conduct get-out-the-vote efforts that may impact voter turnout.

While campaigns for candidates or ballot questions can raise awareness of an upcoming election, the substantive information they spread is, by definition, biased in favor of their perspectives. That is where local journalism comes in. But local journalism has been on the decline,⁶⁹ leaving voters in the dark about election information, about what candidates stand for, about local issues, and about the consequences of voting yes or no on ballot questions. In Lexington, the *Lexington Minuteman*, a paid subscription publication, is no longer the robust

⁶⁶ Lexington's Annual Town Election is typically scheduled for a Monday in early March, with the Select Board scheduling them to coincide with the State Primary in years when there's a primary election going on.

⁶⁷ Town Bylaw Section 118-4. Annual meeting date. "The annual meeting of the Town for the election of Town officers and Town meeting members and the transaction of municipal business shall be called for the first Monday of March in each year, provided, however, that if it shall fail to be so called in consequence of any defect in the warrant or other irregularity, it shall be called for a date as soon thereafter as may be practicable."
<https://ecode360.com/10535272#10535272>

⁶⁸ <https://lexobserver.org/2023/02/16/in-next-months-local-election-few-lexingtonians-are-likely-to-go-to-the-polls-why/>. "In California's nonpartisan local elections, candidates identify themselves by occupation." In Massachusetts, local town elections are nonpartisan. <https://www.mma.org/local-government-101/>

⁶⁹ <https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2022/06/newspapers-close-decline-in-local-journalism/>

source that it once was for local election season. The free-to-readers, nonprofit, online-only *Lexington Observer*, founded in 2021,⁷⁰ relies on donations for its operations.⁷¹ In 2024, the *Observer* added candidate information to its online edition. *Lexington Times Magazine* is a free, hardcopy promotional publication that is mailed to each Lexington household several times a year. Those running for elected office often run campaign ads there, and the publication runs candidates' statements, but it does not journalistically cover elections.

Other sources of information about Lexington's local elections may come from events hosted by the Association of Black Citizens of Lexington, the Chinese American Association of Lexington, the Chinese Association of Lexington, Indian Americans of Lexington, LexPride, the Merriam Hill Association, the South Lexington Association, and other affinity groups; and from listservs such as The Lexington List and Lex Pol-Rel; and from Facebook groups such as Lexington Mavens, Lexington, MA, Residents, Lexington Parents, and others.

The League of Women Voters of Lexington sponsors a Candidates Night for both town-wide and precinct elections every year before the March municipal election. Other organizations hold similar events but usually only for town-wide candidates and selected precincts. The League posts candidate information on its website.

Information coming directly from the Town of Lexington can help voters be more engaged with local government. As required by law, the Town mails the Town Warrant to every household in Lexington. Residents can subscribe for free to informational Town emails⁷² to stay informed about election dates, early voting, opportunities to serve as poll workers, and applying for mail-in ballots.⁷³ Election information is sometimes posted on social media. Code Red is not used to transmit information about elections, nor are election notices placed in the tax and water bills. (It is worth noting that renters often do not receive tax and water bills, so election notices

⁷⁰ <https://lexobserver.org/our-mission/>

⁷¹ https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1yS2ydBaYr8r4NOdxLFud7sX5ud6B0Bq6zQJy8_8-Qd0/edit#slide=id.g27da3497263_2_6

⁷² <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/1689/Link-to-Lexington-Newsletter-Archive>; https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001OkYV23r4voB1ZWZ4Df35dSTbew_Zyl6j27JtJH2lJ8JJ0MkYW43g_IC1L4Hnq5ZvlnMI1ijxVKwJnK2SDdeFNs67o_QVVXBXhIXgaiidsQ27WfLSyuFpnC5I7jzXdy_fzaAgRJIILi0-FgMW37f2-g%3D%3D

⁷³ In an email dated June 20, 2025, and forwarded to the Subcommittee chair on June 23, 2025, Julia Flood, Web & Digital Engagement Specialist for the Town of Lexington, wrote, "The Link to Lexington has 5, 249 email subscribers and Town News & Alerts has 4,146 subscribers. Combined, I believe the number is somewhere around 5,445 unique subscribers total."

through this vehicle would not reach them in any case.) The Town offers a course for adults⁷⁴ called Civic Academy,⁷⁵ which covers how the town government works generally, but does not currently seem to delve into details about voting.⁷⁶

The issue of information and how to make it available to all is a perennial one in Lexington. The Town mails postcards and flyers, posts meetings, invites citizens to publicly posted meetings, and the meetings themselves get recorded and are publicly viewable. People can get free subscriptions to town-issued informational emails, and to the *Lexington Observer*. Yet hundreds, if not thousands, of residents are often not aware of what is going on in town, or of the opportunity to vote in local elections. In light of the importance of information to both increasing voter turnout in local elections, and of having an informed citizenry, we recommend that Vision for Lexington consider studying this topic of communication as it pertains specifically to voting behavior.

Other factors that may contribute to low voter turnout in Lexington's local elections

The Town-Wide Survey 2022 sought feedback from survey respondents as to why they did not vote in the March 2021 Annual Town Election. The responses are summarized in this table published in the survey report:⁷⁷

⁷⁴ According to data collected by Abraham Fofanah, ICMA Management Fellow in the Town Manager's office, between 2009 and 2025, 367 residents have participated in Civic Academy. The course was not offered in 2024. Average enrollment per cohort is 24.5.

⁷⁵ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/296/Civic-Academy>

⁷⁶ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/296/Civic-Academy>

⁷⁷ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7112/2022-Town-Wide-Survey-Report-2022-9-30-VfL-approved>

TABLE 5 Residents' Reasons for Not Voting in March 2021 Annual Town Election

<i>Reasons for not voting in March 2021 election</i>	% of responses
Not a citizen	4.6
Too busy	4.5
Missed deadlines (e.g., registration, absentee balloting, etc.)	3.7
Issues did not matter to the respondent/issues weren't important enough to the respondent	3.5
Belief that individual's vote would not have an influence	2.0
Belief the local elections really don't make an impact	0.8
Did not like choices offered	0.8
Accessibility issues (e.g., transportation, bad weather, illness)	0.7
Inconvenient polling place hours	0.5
Does not trust government/governmental entities	0.3

After the June 6, 2022, referendum election asking voters to approve a debt exclusion to fund the new Lexington police station, which yielded a turnout of 12.48 percent,⁷⁸ a member of the Subcommittee asked subscribers to The Lexington List⁷⁹ if they would explain, confidentially, why they didn't vote in the election. The twenty-one responses revealed that some people didn't vote because:⁸⁰

- They were ill or unable to get to the polls on election day, and they hadn't applied for a mail-in ballot.
- They didn't know or they forgot there was an election.
- They didn't understand the ballot question as written.
- They felt ambivalent or uninformed about the issue.⁸¹
- They felt their vote didn't matter.

Many of these cited reasons are consistent with reasons given for not voting in the Town-wide Survey of 2022.

The Subcommittee also sought feedback from the Commission on Disability on any barriers and challenges to voting that members of Lexington's disability community may face.⁸² Commissioners reported the following barriers:

⁷⁸ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4148/June-6-2022---Special-Town-Election-PDF>

⁷⁹ <https://groups.io/g/lexington/message/102936>

⁸⁰ [Memo.VPS.why.i.didnt.vote.JZ.docx - Google Docs](#)

⁸¹ Unlike most local referendum questions, there were no 'Yes' or 'No' campaigns putting out information and vying for votes on the police station question.

⁸² [Commission on Disability.docx - Google Docs](#)

- The need for better understanding of the low vision voting machine so residents could vote independently and retain ballot privacy.
- Poor contrast on mail-in ballots, making it hard for low-vision individuals to fill them out.⁸³
- Difficulty getting to the polls, especially among those who do not drive. This is exacerbated by the consolidation of polling places away from within-walking-distance school buildings toward more centralized locations.
- Lack of understanding by some poll workers who do not know the rules about allowing voters with disabilities to have an assistant with them to help them vote.
- Lack of adequate handicapped parking at the polls.
- Lack of adequate information on the status of rides to the polls.

According to Dana Bickelman, Director of Human Services for the Town of Lexington:

- Barriers to information about town government may affect voter turnout. For example, some people are unable to attend night meetings. Even when night meetings can be attended and participated in remotely, there are those who are unable to handle the technology.
- Language barriers exist for some residents who are eligible to vote.
- Transportation and parking may be barriers to accessing polling places.
- Only one mail-in ballot dropbox in town requires voters to come to the center of town to drop off their ballots.

The town's then-Chief Equity Officer Hemali Shah and Senior Services Director Michelle Kelleher told us that the town government does not collect data about voting access among seniors and diverse communities in Lexington. However, Ms. Shah and Ms. Kelleher shared their observations about what they think affects voter turnout:

- Homebound and isolated seniors may have trouble getting to the polls. Rides to the polls may be helpful to them, as may be assistance with voting-by-mail.

⁸³ Ballot design is determined by state law.
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVIII/Chapter54/Section44>

- Communications like Link to Lexington⁸⁴ and the communications channels of Lexington’s housing villages may be helpful in spreading the word about elections and voting.
- Free rides to the polls, which rely on volunteers, may be helpful.
- There are contrasts between presidential and local elections that tend to result in higher voter turnout for national elections versus town elections. Presidential elections get a lot of media attention, which helps people feel invested in them. In comparison, people don’t have very much information about local elections.
- People may feel more invested in voting in local elections when someone they know or when someone from their affinity group is running for office.⁸⁵
- People may feel more invested in voting in local elections when they believe the office in question affects them personally.
- People who are less familiar or less comfortable with American culture and government may find it helpful to have opportunities to learn about the process of voting.

To the extent that voting in local elections is correlated with civic engagement more generally, it was important to hear that some people who are “new” to serving on Lexington Town committees have sometimes felt that their input was being treated dismissively by other, longtime committee members. This has sometimes caused them to withdraw from civic engagement, and then to feel less invested in the governing of the town. What can be done to help people learn how to get involved and stay involved? What can be done to ensure that they are welcomed and taken seriously when they join Town committees?

⁸⁴ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/1689/Link-to-Lexington-Newsletter-Archive>

⁸⁵ Research from the Brennan Center at NYU reinforces this idea, [Local Lockout in Georgia](#) | [Brennan Center for Justice](#)

Why Local Voting Matters: The Structure of Lexington Town Government⁸⁶ and its Impact on Lexington Voters

The individuals that Lexington’s voters elect to town government are the stewards of how our local tax dollars are spent. They engage in short-term and long-term planning and decide the allocation of resources for public services, public education, and infrastructure for which the town (not the state or federal government) is responsible. Once elected, they can champion specific policy agendas, make appointments to important Town boards and committees,⁸⁷ exercise judgment over new, unexpected issues, and respond to sudden emergencies, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. These decisions affect the quality of our schools; the safety, habitability and adequacy of our public buildings; the responsiveness and robustness of our public library; the speed and effectiveness of emergency response by our police and fire departments; the soundness of our environmental practices, including waste management; the state of our public lands and recreation resources; services for vulnerable seniors and those with mental health challenges; and so much more.

Lexington’s elected officials make decisions that shape our day-to-day lives, including what we are permitted to do with our property, how we dispose of our trash, and how local businesses and other commercial entities function in our town. Lexington’s elected officials also make site visits to proposed projects, locations of proposed zoning changes, and areas of concern identified by residents.

Lexington’s elected officials are our community’s mediators. When our town is facing large projects and extraordinary expenditures, they ensure that public hearings take place and public input is solicited. When resident interests appear to collide, they convene town staff and community members to study the issue and propose solutions that minimize hardships and address different constituent perspectives. When a neighborhood wants a stop sign or a sidewalk installed, the place to turn is their elected officials, who can offer guidance to citizens on how to access the levers of town government for change.

⁸⁶ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/738/About-Lexington-Town-Government>

⁸⁷ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/267/Boards-Committees>

In this section of the report, we summarize the structure of Lexington's town government to help pinpoint exactly where voting has an impact.

Select Board (elected) and Town Manager (appointed)

Lexington has a Select Board-Town Manager form of government. The source of this form of government is the Selectman-Town Manager Act of 1968,⁸⁸ which established that the Select Board makes policy and oversees the Town's operations. The Select Board consists of five elected members who each serve three-year staggered terms. The Select Board appoints a full-time professional Town Manager to manage the day-to-day operations of the municipal government. Department and division heads report to the Town Manager. Among the responsibilities of the Town Manager and Town staff are:⁸⁹

- Implementing all decisions of the Select Board and Town Meeting;
- Submitting to the Select Board a proposed annual budget, including revenue, expenditure, and tax rate projections for the next fiscal year;
- Submitting to the Select Board a five-year capital budget and five-year capital improvement plan.

In addition, the Select Board and Town Manager are responsible for appointing (some) members to no fewer than twenty-five Town boards and committees,⁹⁰ with each of these committees and boards having various impacts on the lives of the people of Lexington. The titles of these boards and committees provide a sense of how their work touches the lives of Lexington's townspeople. Some⁹¹ of these boards and committees include:

- Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee
- Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Communications Advisory Committee
- Design Advisory Committee
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Fence Viewers
- Fund for Lexington Board
- Hanscom Area Towns Committee
- Hanscom Field Advisory Commission

⁸⁸ <https://ecode360.com/attachment/LE1818/LE1818-A201.pdf>

⁸⁹ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/249/Town-Manager>

⁹⁰ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/267/Boards-Committees>

⁹¹ This list is not exhaustive.

- Historic Districts Commission
- Historical Commission
- Housing Partnership Board
- Human Rights Committee
- Lexington Center Committee
- Lexington Council for the Arts
- Noise Advisory Committee
- Registrars of Voters
- Sustainable Lexington Committee
- Tourism Committee
- Town Celebrations Committee
- Town Report Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Tree Committee
- Trustees of Public Trusts
- Vision for Lexington
- Water and Sewer Abatement Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals

Many of these committees are advisory, but some, such as the Historic Districts Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals, are quasi-judicial, handing down decisions that have the force of law. The appointment choices that the Select Board and Town Manager make to these boards and committees do matter.

School Committee (elected)

School Committee is composed of five members who each serve three-year staggered terms. The role of School Committee is to hire, supervise, and evaluate the Superintendent of Schools; develop school policies and educational goals consistent with requirements of law and Massachusetts goals and standards; approve the schools' operating and capital budgets; advocate for school concerns with Town officials, boards, and the community; and lead Lexington schools in areas not covered by state or federal law. In addition, School Committee is the liaison between the Lexington School Department and the community.⁹² Members also have roles on various

⁹² Annual Report 2023, p. 159 and Town website

subcommittees within School Committee⁹³ and serve as liaisons to other boards and committees in Town⁹⁴.

According to the most recently published Annual Town Report,⁹⁵ there were 6,805 students enrolled in Lexington Public Schools in academic year 2023-2024. There was one pre-kindergarten school, six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school in Lexington. The operating budget for the schools was \$134,730,244. The schools' budget is developed by School Committee and presented to Town Meeting for approval. (It is important to note that Town Meeting has 'approval' authority, but not authority to determine the overall school budget.)

Planning Board (elected)

The Planning Board is composed of five elected members and one appointed, non-voting (Associate) member who is chosen by a majority of the Planning Board to serve for one year. Planning Board members serve for three-year staggered terms.

The Board is charged with municipal planning and subdivision control as adopted by Lexington in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 41, Section 81-A, under Article 52 of the March 1948 Annual Town Meeting. It is responsible for the review of special permit applications; administration of Subdivision Regulations and control laws and site plan review; planning and preparation of zoning initiatives and amendments and rezoning petitions; review and evaluation of unaccepted-street adequacy determinations; and preparation and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and other planning initiatives.

The Planning Board drives the development of Lexington's zoning bylaws, which require Town Meeting approval, and then administers the implementation of those bylaws. The Planning Board substantially influences where buildings, including homes, are built, how they are used, and how land gets developed and for what purposes.

The Planning Board is supported by the Planning Office (whose staff is appointed by the Town Manager) and receives study results and recommendations from the Planning Director.

⁹³ Subcommittees include Policy; Finance; Bargaining; DEI; PK-5 team; 6-12 team; special education; long range master planning; Superintendent's working groups.

⁹⁴ Appointed roles and liaison assignments include Vision for Lexington Committee; Cary Memorial Library Trustees; Cary Library Executive Trustees; Select Board; PTA/PTO Presidents' Council; Lexington Education Foundation; Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

⁹⁵ <https://records.lexingtonma.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=3066825&dbid=0&repo=TownOfLexington>

The Planning Board has Special Study Committees, with members appointed by the Chair of the Planning Board. Members serve on these committees until the special committee completes its task and submits a report. The length of service on such committees is generally not longer than one year. Board members also serve as liaisons to other boards and committees in Lexington.⁹⁶

Town Moderator (elected)

The Town Moderator is elected annually to a one-year term to preside over the business and conduct of Town Meeting, as included in the Warrants for Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meetings. The Moderator facilitates Town Meeting sessions and preserves order and decorum. Operating procedures and rules are dictated by statute, bylaws, tradition, and Roberts' Rules of Parliamentary Practice. The Moderator may be aided by an Assistant Moderator, whose name is submitted to Town Meeting for its approval. The Moderator sets the tone for a civil, deliberative, and productive Town Meeting.

The Moderator is responsible for appointing members to the Appropriation Committee, the Capital Expenditures Committee, and Cary Lecture Series.

Housing Authority (elected)

The Housing Authority⁹⁷ consists of three elected members, one Governor-appointed member, and one tenant member appointed by the Select Board, each serving five-year staggered terms. The responsibility of the Housing Authority is to provide safe, stable, and quality affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents and to deliver such services with integrity and mutual accountability. The Authority also creates living environments that serve as catalysts for the movement from dependency to self-sufficiency.

The Authority administers 340 units of state and federal affordable and low-income housing for elderly, families, and disabled individuals, 68 Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and four Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) project-based vouchers. Working with the Lexington Planning Department, LexHAB, and the Lexington Housing Partnership, the

⁹⁶ Annual Report 2023, p. 133 and from the Town website.

⁹⁷ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/624/Elected-Town-State-Officials>

Authority promotes development of more affordable housing in Lexington. The properties overseen by the Housing Authority are Countryside Village, Greeley Village, and Vynebrooke Village.

Town Meeting (elected)⁹⁸

Town Meeting is the legislative branch of Lexington's town government. In 1929, Lexington adopted a Representative Town Meeting form of government.⁹⁹ This means that voters who live in Lexington elect Town Meeting Members to represent them as their citizen/legislators (in contrast to Open Town Meetings, in which voters may attend Town Meeting, debate the articles before the Meeting, and vote on the articles directly). Town Meeting enacts municipal by-laws, passes the operating and capital budgets each fiscal year and appropriates funds for those budgets, and adopts certain "local options" available under state law. Decisions of Town Meeting affect how much we pay in taxes, what we are and are not allowed to do with our property, and what public safety and other Town-offered services are available to residents. It also passes resolutions that identify community values and aspirations.

Lexington Town Meeting meets each Spring and other times when necessary, and:¹⁰⁰

- Is constituted of elected members representing each of nine precincts, as well as at-large members who may or may not be elected. These include the Select Board, Town Moderator, the Town Clerk, the School Committee Chair, the Appropriation Committee chair and the Capital Expenditures chair, and state representatives and state senators.¹⁰¹
- Currently has 189 elected members, with 21 citizens from each precinct serving for three-year staggered terms.
- Is presided over by the Town Moderator, who is elected annually.

Each year, the business of Town Meeting is determined by the Town Warrant, which is made up of business items called articles and is mailed to every household in town. The Select Board "determines the content and order of articles in the Warrant."¹⁰² Citizens can also submit

⁹⁸ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/566/About-Town-Meeting>

⁹⁹ <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/bitstream/handle/2452/68948/1929acts0215.pdf> ; <https://zoom.joepato.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2021-LE1818-A201.pdf#RepresentativeTownMeeting>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/566/About-Town-Meeting>

¹⁰¹ <https://ecode360.com/attachment/LE1818/LE1818-A201.pdf>

¹⁰² <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/566/About-Town-Meeting>

warrant articles, following certain procedures.¹⁰³ Warrants are publicly available on the Town’s website.¹⁰⁴ Town Meetings may be attended by the public in person, and may be viewed on LexMedia and elsewhere. Unless specifically allowed to speak on a particular article, the public cannot participate directly in Lexington Town Meeting discussions. The public cannot participate in Town Meeting votes.

The [2024 Annual Town Meeting Warrant](#)¹⁰⁵ offers a good overview of the importance of the decisions of the Town’s elected officials to the lives of Lexington residents. The [FY2025 budget](#)¹⁰⁶ approved by Town Meeting amounted to \$290,052,759. Of that amount, \$143,914,762 was budgeted for Lexington Public Schools and the Minuteman High School, and \$72,296,815 for shared expenses between the “school side” and the “municipal side.” In FY 2024, the property tax levy was \$227,334,427, of which 76.7% was paid by residential property owners. The average property tax paid for a single-family dwelling in Lexington in FY2024 was \$18,501.75.¹⁰⁷

In addition to appropriating funds for the municipal and school operating budgets, a non-exhaustive list of other actions taken by Town Meeting includes: appropriating funds for the senior services program and for various capital projects and infrastructure improvements; prohibiting of single-use food containers and single-serve plastic water bottles; authorizing the Select Board to pursue affordable housing on Lowell Street; and appropriating design funds for the Lexington High School Construction Project. Town Meeting also appropriated funds for police, fire, and school maintenance, the public library, roads, and snow removal, and established rates for water, sewer, and cemetery charges.

Beyond their role in Town Meeting as an entity, Town Meeting Members, as individuals, serve as a conduit for residents to be engaged with their local government. They are often better known to their precinct neighbors, and therefore perceived as more easily accessible than are the elected members of the three major boards (Select Board, School Committee, Planning Board) when constituents have concerns they would like to raise.

¹⁰³ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/571/Creating-Citizen-Petitions>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/565/Town-Meeting>

¹⁰⁵ [2024 Annual Town Meeting Warrant](#)

¹⁰⁶ [FY2025 budget](#)

¹⁰⁷ https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13147/FY2025-Classification-Packet_1182024

Separately and together, the decisions made by the those elected to the offices described above have profound impacts on how Lexington residents live each day and plan for their futures. Higher voter turnout in local elections could ensure that more voices are heard and residents are better represented.

Recommendations

Recommendations 1 through 6 identify activities that our research and analysis suggest may increase voter turnout in Lexington's local elections. Some of these ideas will be more easily implemented than will others. **Recommendations 7 through 9** address issues that may not directly affect voter turnout, but that we nevertheless believe are important.

Recommendation 1: Convene a Voter Turnout Task Force

Our over-arching findings are: (1) that those who feel connected to a social and cultural *expectation* that they should be voters tend to actually go to the polls and vote, and (2) that voting is a sticky habit: people who vote in one election tend to vote in subsequent elections. This suggests that, over time, Lexington could considerably increase its voter turnout rates in local elections if voting becomes a basic community value and expectation, akin to other values and expectations that many believe define Lexington: our respected public school system; our low crime rate; our veneration of our local history; our low rates of littering, graffiti, and other property-disrespecting activity; our strong recreation programs and facilities; our public conservation lands; and our commitment to diversity and peaceful coexistence. Advancing a social and cultural value and expectation that living in Lexington means voting consistently in its local elections will require constant, explicit, year-round discussion of local-election voting. We therefore recommend:

That the Select Board convene a Task Force to work on transforming voting in Lexington's local elections into a central social and cultural value and expectation in our town. The Task Force could consist of residents (including at least one or two high school students from Minuteman High School, Lexington High School, or both) to work year-round on the issue of increasing voter turnout in local elections and addressing barriers to voting. This would be a multi-year effort that would require the Task Force to engage in on-going experimentation and assessment. We envision a Task Force with a clearly defined end date, but also with the potential for extending its life if results of its actions are proving to have desired outcome or the members feel more work is needed. This Task Force may even become permanent. Six to ten years would give the Task Force time to get its bearings, to create goals, strategies, and tactics and evaluate their

effectiveness, and to be nimble in its work as things change, stagnate, or progress.¹⁰⁸ **The sections of this report titled “Factors associated with increased voter turnout” and “Proposed strategies to increase voter turnout,” which summarize the research literature, could serve as starting points for ideas.** Most importantly, the Task Force would have the latitude to be innovative and creative, and would be responsible for assessing the impact of its work, by answering the questions: *Has voter turnout in Lexington’s local elections increased?*

Recommendation 2: Change the Timing of Local Elections

Studies have found that the *timing of elections* to coincide with the standard U.S. Election Day—the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November¹⁰⁹—can increase voter turnout. We therefore recommend:

Changing the timing of Lexington’s local elections. Lexington is required by law to hold its Annual Town Election in the spring; however:

- *We could ask for a home-rule petition to have the date of the Annual Town Election mimic the date of federal elections, so that it occurs on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November. The swearing-in of those elected to townwide offices and Town Meeting would occur a month or so before Town Meeting. Example: hold the Annual Town Election in November 2025 and install those elected in March 2026.*
- *We could change the day of the local election from Monday to Tuesday so that “voting day” is more in keeping with citizen expectations for state and federal elections. This could be done through a bylaw change, especially if Lexington continues to hold its Annual Town Election in March.*

¹⁰⁸ Examples of activities the Task Force might work on include:

- Ways of helping people to vote—to get to the polls, to use mail-in ballots, to overcome language and ability barriers, to make advance plans to vote; it might work on keeping a steady drumbeat of communications about voting in local elections; it might develop local civics education programs and news articles and outreach to various affinity groups in town.
- Raising awareness of voting among youth, perhaps through “I Voted” sticker contests in school; targeting youth through program collaborations with the schools, Cary Library, League of Women Voters, Boy & Girl Scouts, and other groups; and helping high school students be aware of their voter registration status.
- Keeping the community apprised of voting rules and polling locations and any voting issues that may arise.
- Working with Cary Library and/or the Community Center to create voting programs for Lexington newcomers, those whose first language is other than English, older adults, and others. These programs would cover topics like civic education in Lexington, what ballots look like and how to fill them out, and what do to if you need assistance and the polls.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/post/why-election-day-united-states-america-tuesday>

Recommendation 3: Promote Voting in Local Elections

Studies have found that voter turnout can increase *when voters are better informed*. We therefore recommend:

Promoting voting in local elections through communications, publicity, and events.

- *Create an official town voting-awareness day with enhanced communications that raise awareness of local voting, and **how to make a plan to vote**.*
- *Establish a budget and a program for an information campaign about voting by mail.*
- *Establish a robust program promoting local election voting and local civic engagement.*

Such a program may include:

- *Increasing Town-generated communications about elections and civic obligations. To achieve this may involve increased Town staff time for the purpose, but also engaging private associations, civic groups, religious communities, listservs, social media outlets, and so on to participate in the effort. It appears to the Subcommittee that Lexington residents rely heavily, and increasingly, on listservs and social media for information, making these informal outlets indispensable to informing the public.*
- *Making the Town's webpages on voting and elections more streamlined and user-friendly, using models from other municipalities, states (such as Colorado¹¹⁰), and organizations such as Vote.org and TurboVote.org.*
- *Using banners and signs on all Town buildings including the Town Office Building, Cary Hall, Cary Library, the Community Center, the DPW building, and every school building to alert the community about upcoming elections; posting sandwich boards at key intersections around town.*
- *Offering a Lexington Community Education course on American government and voting and its relationship to citizenship and the civic and collective good, with particular emphasis on local elections.*
- *Informing newcomers to Lexington about town government.*

¹¹⁰ <https://www.coloradosos.gov/voter/pages/pub/home.xhtml>

- *Printing a booklet for voters similar to the “red book” issued by the Massachusetts Secretary of Commonwealth’s office.¹¹¹*

Recommendation 4: Reduce Barriers to Voting

Studies show that *barriers to voting* can reduce voter turnout. We therefore recommend:
Reducing barriers to voting.

- *Increase the number of mail-in ballot drop boxes—perhaps one at the Community Center, another at Cary Library. Such additional drop boxes would require 24 / 7 monitoring and closure at 8:00 p.m. every Election Day.*
- *Assist those who have trouble going to the polls, particularly in the form of*
 - *information about how to vote by mail*
 - *information about how to access the existing services that give rides to the polls*
 - *raising awareness of voting accommodations for people with disabilities, such as the use of low vision voting machines and the option to bring a companion for assistance.*
- *Engage the Commission on Disability to assess whether ballots have poor contrast for those with low vision and make improvements. Where necessary, lobby the Secretary of Commonwealth to improve contrast on ballots.*
- *Enable those for whom English is not a first language to receive voting assistance.*
- *Make Lexpress free, if financially feasible, on local election days.*
- *Apply for grants, such as the League of Women Voters Lotte E. Scharfman Citizen Education Grant Program, for programs that promote civic participation through voting.*

Recommendation 5: Support the Town Clerk in Looking at Processes and Making Improvements

The Town Clerk can be a resource for enhanced voter engagement efforts, but we must keep in mind that new laws in Massachusetts intended to make voting easier for residents have changed the nature of some of the Town Clerk’s work. We invited the Town Clerk to comment on

¹¹¹ https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/publications/information-for-voters-24/cover_2024.htm

an earlier draft of this report. We present her feedback to the Select Board in the form of this recommendation:

Support the Town Clerk in looking at processes and making improvements.

- *Provide a dedicated transport vehicle and staff specifically for the transporting of ballots and equipment. A dedicated transport vehicle would further enhance the efficiency of elections operations, streamline processes, and ensure timely and secure delivery, complementing the current excellent efforts of Lexington's facilities team.*
- *Provide logistical support in the form of increased storage space and dedicated mail space.*
- *Create a Voter Assistance Hotline, especially during election season.*
- *Support the Town Clerk in consulting with experts on events management, space management, voter engagement, social media outreach and dissemination of information, voter-friendly web design, and other expertise the Town Clerk may flag.*
- *Provide funds for volunteer staffing needed for improvements.*

Recommendation 6: Advocate for Home Rule Petitions for Ranked-Choice Voting and for Local Voting Rights for Non-citizen Lawful Permanent Residents.

In 2023, Special Town Meeting passed STM1-9, a citizen petition seeking authorization from the Massachusetts Legislature for a home rule petition that would establish ranked-choice voting for the election of Town offices. In 2025, Town Meeting passed Article 27 granting voting rights in local elections to non-citizen lawful permanent residents. To be implemented, both measures require the Massachusetts Legislature to grant home-rule petitions. We recommend: *That Town leadership advocate in the Legislature for passage of both home-rule petitions so that Lexington can put them into practice, per the will of Town Meeting.*

Recommendation 7: Modernize Data Access

We found it challenging to access *data* about voters and voting in Lexington. Better access to certain demographic information could improve our understanding of what we need as a community regarding voting. In addition, our research found that academics who study local voting and local voter turnout tend not to focus on Massachusetts because it is hard to mine the data. We therefore recommend:

- *Modernizing how Lexington collects and maintains data related to voting, census, and schools (within the confines of privacy laws) in a unified database.*
- *Petitioning the state to modernize, centralize, and make uniform the collection of voting and demographic data across the cities and towns of the Commonwealth.*

Recommendation 8: Study How to Foster an Informed Citizenry

We recognize that the issue of information-sharing is a perennial one in Lexington. Despite what appear to be the Town government's best efforts, and despite outreach by candidates especially when local elections are contested, hundreds, if not thousands, of residents are often not aware of what is going on in town, and of the opportunity to vote in local elections. In light of the importance of information to both increasing voter turnout in local elections, and of having an informed citizenry, we recommend:

The convening of a Vision for Lexington Subcommittee to explore how to better communicate with the residents of Lexington, particularly about local elections and voting. We appreciate that a subcommittee of Vision for Lexington, Enhancing Communication in Lexington, has already investigated how to improve communication by looking at best practices and recommending several actions for implementation, but the issue of information-sharing regarding voting in particular is worthy of a separate subcommittee investigation. The subcommittee should include in its study the power of horizontal communications (informal networks among residents). Recommendations from such a subcommittee could enhance other Town efforts to foster a widely informed citizenry that participates in local elections.

Recommendation 9: Study Why Local Elections are Often Uncontested¹¹²

We found that contested races tend to increase voter turnout. Yet, in Lexington, most seats go uncontested each year, dampening enthusiasm for voting. Three factors may be related

¹¹²As a way of boosting the likelihood of competitive elections, we considered recommending that Lexington create a public fund to help partially finance local-office political campaigns. We decline to do so, however, based on advice from a State Ethics Commission attorney, who wrote in an email dated July 9, 2025, "such a fund could create conflict of interest law issues...for any municipal official/employee/board member who seeks to participate in crafting the public fund program or making decisions about it, while they are potentially interested in taking advantage of that program as a candidate. Further, the program may raise an issue under the conflict of interest law provision generally restricting having a financial interest in a municipal contract."

to this: the large number of elected seats that must be filled each year; the costs of running a contested campaign; and the fact that all of these positions are unpaid, while the demands of office can, at times, rival a full-time job. We recommend:

That the Select Board and the Vision for Lexington see the phenomenon of frequently uncontested elections in Lexington's local races as an issue worthy of study and convene a committee that explores why our local elections are often uncontested, the implications for inclusive representation, and relevant reforms.

Conclusion

The decisions made by local elected officials impact our daily lives, often more than do those made by state and federal officials. By voting for local elected officials who represent local values, each voter contributes to the formation of policies and programs that promote the well-being of the community. Lexington will benefit from embracing as a community value the expectation that its citizens turn out to vote in local elections.

Just as Lexington's identity includes community commitments to public school education and preservation of the local cultural heritage, Lexington should adopt an assumption that its identity includes a community commitment to voting in local elections and should similarly invest in that identity. The recommendations in this report offer actionable ideas for promoting the role of "local-election voter" as a core identity of a Lexington resident—an identity that gives Lexington citizens the power to speak up for themselves and to enable citizens to participate in a basic and vital tenet of democracy: voting.

APPENDIX 1: References for Literature Review

1. Aldrich, John. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 246-278.
2. Bartels, Larry M. 2016. "Elections in America." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667:36-49.
3. Root, Danielle and Liz Kennedy. 2018. "Increasing Voter Participation in America." *Center for American Progress* <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/increasing-voter-participation-america/>
4. Shachar, Ron and Barry Nalebuff. 1999. "Follow the Leader: Theory and Evidence on Political Participation." *American Economic Review* 89(3): 525-547.
5. Brennan Center for Justice. 2023. "Voting Laws Roundup: June 2023." www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-june-2023
6. Factors Associated with Low Voter Turnout:
 - a. Augenblick, Ned and Scott Nicholson. 2016. "Ballot Position, Choice Fatigue, and Voter Behavior." *The Review of Economic Studies* 83(2): 460-480.
 - b. Brennan, Jan. 2020. "Increasing Voter Turnout in Local Elections." *National Civic League* 109(1). www.nationalcivicleague.org/ncr-article/increasing-voter-turnout-in-local-elections/
 - c. Carlson, Jamie, Erik Engstrom, Jason Roberts. 2007. "Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress." *The American Political Science Review* 101(2): 289-301.
 - d. Cohen, Marian and Ruth Remington. 2022. "Final Report on Town-Wide Survey 2022." *Vision for Lexington Committee* <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7112/2022-Town-Wide-Survey-Report-2022-9-30-VfL-approved>
 - e. Holbein, John and D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2016. "Making Young Voters: The Impact of Preregistration on Youth Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(2): 364-382.
 - f. Tawfik, Amal, Pascal Sciarini, Eugene Horber. 2012. "Putting Voter Turnout in a Longitudinal and Contextual Perspective: An Analysis of Actual Participation Data." *International Political Science Review* 33(3): 352-371.
 - g. The Pew Research Center. 2006. "Regular Voters, Intermittent Voters, and Those Who Don't: Who Votes, Who Doesn't, and Why."
 - h. U.S. Census Bureau, November 2020. Table 10. Reasons for Not Voting, by Selected Characteristics.
7. Factors Associated with Increased Voter Turnout:
 - a. Conway, M. Margaret. 1969. "Political Participation in a Nonpartisan Local Election." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 33(3): 425-430.
 - b. Denny, Kevin and Orla Doyle. 2009. "Does Voting History Matter? Analysing Persistence in Turnout?" *American Journal of Political Science* 53(1): 17-35.
 - c. Gerber, Alan, Donald Green, Ron Shachar. 2003. "Voting May be Habit-Forming: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 540-550.

- d. Holbein, John and D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2016. "Making Young Voters: The Impact of Preregistration on Youth Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(2): 364-382.
 - e. Knack, Stephen and Martha E. Kropf. 1998. "For Shame! The Effect of Community Cooperative Context on the Probability of Voting." *Political Psychology* 19(3): 585-599.
 - f. Krantz, Laura. 2021. "Gen Z is coming of age with real purpose: college students set record for voting in 2020 election." *Boston Globe* October 28. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/10/28/metro/gen-z-college-students-voted-historic-rate/?p1=BGSearch Overlay Results>
 - g. Nickerson, David. 2009. "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments." *The American Political Science Review* 102(1): 49-57.
 - h. Pons, Vincent. 2018. "Will a Five-Minute Discussion Change Your Mind? A Countrywide Experiment on Voter Choice in France." *The American Economic Review* 108(6): 1322-1363.
 - i. Subscribers to listservs, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WwwR8MhrgAodW8av-Gv6MALBgKOqj0Pp/edit>
8. Proposed Strategies to Increase Voter Turnout:
- a. Arceneaux, Kevin and David W. Nickerson. 2009. "Who is Mobilized to Vote? A Re-Analysis of 11 Field Experiments." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(1): 1-16.
 - b. Berinsky, Adam J., Nancy Burns, Michael W. Traugott. 2001. "Who Votes by Mail? A Dynamic Model of the Individual-Level Consequences of Voting-by-Mail Systems." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 65(2): 178-197.
 - c. Brennan, Jan. 2020. "Increasing Voter Turnout in Local Elections." *National Civic League* 109(1). www.nationalcivicleague.org/ncr-article/increasing-voter-turnout-in-local-elections/
 - d. Conway, M. Margaret. 1969. "Political Participation in a Nonpartisan Local Election." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 33(3): 425-430.
 - e. Dale, Allison and Aaron Strauss. 2009. "Don't Forget to Vote: Text Message Reminders as a Mobilization Tool." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4): 787-804.
 - f. Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, Daniel A. Smith. 2009. "Political Engagement, Mobilization, and Direct Democracy." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 73(1): 98-118.
 - g. Generation Citizen. 2017. "Young Voices at the Ballot Box: Lowering the Voting Age for Local Elections in 2017 and Beyond." *National Civic Review* 106(2): 29-38.
 - h. Hajnal, Zoltan L. 2018. "Why Does No One Vote in Local Elections?" *The New York Times* October 22. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/22/opinion/why-does-no-one-vote-in-local-elections.html?searchResultPosition=1>
 - i. Katz, Daniel and Samuel J. Eldersveld. 1961. "The impact of Local Party Activity Upon the Electorate." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 25(1): 1-24.

- j. Kogan, Bladimir, Stephane Lavertu, Zachary Peskowitz. 2018. "Election Timing, Electorate Composition, and Policy Outcomes: Evidence from School Districts." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3): 637-651.
- k. Kramer, Gerald H. 1970-1971. "The Effects of Precinct-Level Canvassing on Voter Behavior." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 34(4): 560-572.
- l. Maciag, Mike. 2014. "Voter Turnout Plummeting in Local Elections." August 28. www.Governing.com
- m. Maciag, Mike. 2016. "Millennials Let Their Grandparents Decide Local Elections." December 13. www.Governing.com
- n. Oliver, J. Eric. 1996. "The Effects of Eligibility Restrictions and Party Activity on Absentee Voting and Overall Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(2): 498-513.
- o. Patterson, Samuel C. and Gregory A. Caldeira. 1985. "Mailing in the Vote: Correlates and Consequences of Absentee Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 29(4): 766-788.
- p. Rainwater, Brooks and Olivia Snarski. 2019. "Voting in Local Elections Matters. This is What Cities Can Do." *Bloomberg News* November 4. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-04/how-cities-can-invigorate-local-politics>
- q. Root, Danielle and Liz Kennedy. 2018. "Increasing Voter Participation in America." *Center for American Progress* <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/increasing-voter-participation-america/>
- r. Sondheimer, Rachel Milstein and Donald P. Green. 2010. "Using Experiments to Estimate the Effects of Education on Voter Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(1): 174-189.
- s. Holbein, John and D. Sunshine Hillygus. 2020. *Making Young Voters: Converting Civic Attitudes into Civic Action*. Cambridge University Press <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108770446>
- t. Comments on listservs about voting 4-19-2023, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/18RlCAbDfxcv7dVWLw9cb3mlgQnu24Kzl/edit>
- u. Notes from *Why Americans Don't Vote*, by King and Hale, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Y4vH_A3YET7q2fBczCdNOMOBRAJj0UXVps7FRgz-E/edit?tab=t.0
- v. Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). *Youth Poll*. <https://circle.tufts.edu>
- w. U.S. Census Bureau.2020. <https://www.census.gov>
- x. Lijphart, A. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma. Presidential Address, American Political Science Association, 1996." *American Political Science Review* 91(1): 1-14.

APPENDIX II: What Lexington Children Learn about Civics in School

The Lexington Public Schools civics curriculum is based in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for History and Social Science,¹¹³ a 217-page document detailing age-appropriate student learning goals for content and skills-development. Here, the Subcommittee presents a summary of the Frameworks, with a focus on the teaching of civics. This section quotes extensively from the Frameworks.

The Frameworks hold that, “The primary purpose of a history and social science education is to prepare students to have the knowledge and skills to become thoughtful and active participants in a democratic society and a complex world.”¹¹⁴ The Frameworks expect that students will:

- Know the fundamental ideas central to the vision of the 18th century founders, the vision that holds us together as one people of many diverse origins and cultures.
- Understand the intellectual and political tensions and compromises in the Founders’ ideas and how successive generations in the United States have worked to resolve them.
- Know how democratic ideas have been turned into institutions and practices, and the history of the origins, growth, and struggles of democratic societies on earth, past and present.
- Understand what economic, social, cultural, religious, and international conditions have helped to shape democratic practices.
- Understand the purposes, principles, and practices of the United States government as established by the Constitution, which includes their rights and responsibilities, and how to exercise them in local, state, and national government.
- Understand that, in the United States, the Constitution has continued to be vibrant and relevant through amendments and decisions of the federal courts.
- Understand how individuals, groups, organizations, and governments have addressed obstacles to democratic principles by working within the structure set forth in the Constitution.
- Are knowledgeable about local, state, and national politics and policies, and understand the current condition of the world and how it got that way.
- Are prepared to discuss complex and controversial issues and ideas with people of different views, learning to speak with clarity and respectfulness.

¹¹³ Sources for this section of the report are from the following:

- <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>
- <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/hss/civics-project-guidebook/index.html#/>
- High School course descriptions: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YyCHhXA44XZx64-wIbBLhDzziwt9KaIW9a7Bvknt_ig/edit
- Emails from the Lexington Public Schools’ K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinators and Department Heads.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 12.

- Develop and practice habits of civic engagement and participation in democratic government.¹¹⁵

Pre-K through Grade 5

The Frameworks state that the goals of the elementary school curriculum—pre-K through fifth grade—are to:

- promote respect for people of diverse backgrounds and human rights, and develop students’ understanding of characteristics of leadership and informed action;
- build students’ conceptual knowledge of history, geography, civics, and economics;
- encourage inquiry, questions, and development of reasoning and research skills;
- build content knowledge about the geography and history of students’ cities and towns, state, and nation; and
- build content knowledge about the narratives of United States history, including the interactions of Native Peoples, Europeans, and African Americans in the colonial, Revolutionary War, Civil War, Reconstruction, and 20th century Civil Rights periods.¹¹⁶

Grades 6-7

In sixth and seventh grade, the Frameworks aim to:

- extend students’ knowledge of the physical and political geography of the world
- expand their capacity for geographical reasoning
- strengthen their ability to develop research questions and conduct inquiries
- introduce the cultural achievements of ancient and classical civilizations worldwide
- establish foundational knowledge about types of societies and governments in preparation for Civics in grade 8 and World History and United States History in high school¹¹⁷

Grade 8

Under the Frameworks, the focus of eight grade is on United States and Massachusetts government and civic life.¹¹⁸ The curriculum covers:

- The philosophical foundations of the U.S. political system.
- The development of the U.S. government.
- The institutions of the U.S. government.
- The rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court decisions.
- The structure of the Massachusetts state and local government.

¹¹⁵ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 12.

¹¹⁶ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 26.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 83.

¹¹⁸ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 104.

- Freedom of the press and news/media literacy.¹¹⁹

Among the rights and responsibilities of citizens explicitly taught is the right and responsibility of voting. In addition, students are expected to be able to:

- Explain the different ways one becomes a citizen of the United States.
- Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens as compared with non-citizens (e.g., voting, serving as a juror, paying taxes, serving in the military, running for and holding elected office).
- Distinguish among civic, political, and private life.
- Define and provide examples of fundamental principles and values of American political and civic life (e.g., liberty, the common good, justice, equality, tolerance, law and order, due process, rights of individuals, diversity, civic unity, patriotism, constitutionalism, popular sovereignty, and representative democracy).
- Describe how a democracy provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process through elections, political parties, and interest groups.
- Evaluate information related to elections (e.g., policy positions and debates among candidates, campaign financing, campaign advertising, influence of news media and social media, and data relating to voter turnout in elections).
- Apply knowledge of the meaning of leadership and the qualities of good leaders to evaluate political leaders at the community, the state and national levels.
- Explain the importance of individuals working cooperatively with their elected leaders.
- Explain the importance of public service, and identify career and other opportunities in public service at the local, state, and national levels.
- Analyze issues involving liberty in conflict with equality or authority, individual rights in conflict with the common good, or majority rule in conflict with minority rights.
- Examine the varied understandings of the role of elected representatives and discuss those who have demonstrated political courage or those whose actions have failed to live up to the ideals of the Constitution.
- Examine the role of political protest in a democracy.
- Examine the influence of public and private interest groups in a democracy, including policy research organizations (e.g. Pew Research Center, Brookings Institute, Heritage Foundation) in shaping debate about public policy.¹²⁰

Notably, eighth grade students in Lexington engage in a mock Town Meeting as part of a unit on local government.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 104.

¹²⁰ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 107-108

¹²¹ Email from School Committee member Kathleen Lenihan to Jeri Zeder dated 05.28.2025 at 8:19 a.m.

High School, Grades 9-12

Per Lexington's high school graduation requirements,¹²² students are expected to take four years of social studies, or 16 credits out of 104 total credits. Ninth graders must take World History I; sophomores must take World History II; and juniors must take U.S. History.

Through the United States History I Content Standards established by the Frameworks, specifically related to civics, students should be able to:¹²³

- Explain the main argument of the Declaration of Independence, the rationale for seeking independence, and its key ideas on equality, liberty, natural rights, and the rule of law.
- Explain the reasons for the adoption of the Articles of Confederation in 1781 and evaluate the weaknesses of the Articles as a plan for government, the reasons for their failure and how events such as Shays' Rebellion of 1786-1787 led to the Constitutional Convention.
- Describe the Constitutional Convention, the roles of specific individuals (e.g. Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, George Washington, Roger Sherman, Edmund Randolph), and the conflicts and compromises (e.g., compromises over representation, slavery, the executive branch, and ratification).
- Explain the main argument of the Declaration of Independence, the rationale for seeking independence, and its key ideas on equality, liberty, natural rights, and the rule of law.
- Explain the reasons for the adoption of the Articles of Confederation in 1781 and evaluate the weaknesses of the Articles as a plan for government, the reasons for their failure and how events such as Shays' Rebellion of 1786-1787 led to the Constitutional Convention.
- Describe the Constitutional Convention, the roles of specific individuals (e.g. Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, George Washington, Roger Sherman, Edmund Randolph), and the conflicts and compromises (e.g., compromises over representation, slavery, the executive branch, and ratification).
- Analyze the consequences of the Civil War and Reconstruction (e.g., the physical and economic destruction of the South and the loss of life of both Southern and Northern troops; the increased role of the federal government; the impeachment of President Johnson; the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments; the expansion of the industrial capacity of the Northern U.S.; the role of the Freedmen's Bureau and organizations such as the American League of Colored Laborers, the National Negro Labor Council, the Colored Farmers' National Alliance and Cooperative Union; the accomplishments and failures of Radical Reconstruction; the presidential election of 1876; and the end of Reconstruction).
- Analyze the campaign for, and the opposition to, women's suffrage in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; describe the role of leaders and organizations in achieving the passage of the 19th Amendment (e.g., Carrie Chapman Catt, Alice Paul, Ida B. Wells-Barnett the National Woman Suffrage Association, National Women's Party, League of Women Voters).
- Analyze the strategies of African Americans to achieve basic civil rights in the early 20th century, and determine the extent to which they met their goals by researching leaders

¹²² <https://www.lexingtonma.org/lhs/students/graduation-requirements/>

¹²³ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 121-128

and organizations (e.g., Ida B. Wells-Barnett, W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Booker T. Washington, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).

Through the United States History I Content Standards established by the Frameworks, specifically related to civics, students should be able to:¹²⁴

- Explain and give examples of the roles that government may play in a market economy, including the provision of public goods and services, redistribution of income, protection of property rights, and resolution of market failures.
- Analyze how the government uses taxing and spending decisions (fiscal policy) and monetary policy to promote price stability, full employment, and economic growth.
- Using primary sources such as campaign literature, news articles/analyses, editorials, and radio/newsreel coverage, analyze the important policies, institutions, trends, and personalities of the Depression era (e.g., Presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Frances Perkins, Huey Long, Charles Coughlin, Charles Lindbergh). Students may research and complete a case study on any **one** of the following policies, institutions, or trends:
 - the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
 - the Securities and Exchange Commission
 - the Tennessee Valley Authority
 - the Social Security Act
 - the National Labor Relations Act
 - the Works Progress Administration
 - the Fair Labor Standards Act
 - the American Federation of Labor
 - the Congress of Industrial Organizations
 - the American Communist Party
 - the America First movement and anti-Semitism in the United States
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the New Deal programs enacted during the 1930s and the societal responses to those programs.
- Explain the long-term consequences of important domestic events during the war.
 - the War's stimulus to economic growth
 - the beginning of the second Great Migration of African Americans from the South to industrial cities of the North and to California
 - A. Philip Randolph and the efforts to eliminate employment discrimination on the basis of race
 - large numbers of women in the workforce of munitions industries and serving in non-combat jobs in the military, including as pilots, clerks, computer scientists, and nurses
 - the internment of West Coast Japanese Americans in the U.S. and Canada
 - how the two world wars led to greater demands for civil rights for women and African Americans.

¹²⁴ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf>, page 129-138

- Research and analyze **one** of the domestic policies of Presidents Truman and Eisenhower (e.g., Truman's Fair Deal, the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 or the Social Security Disability Insurance Act of 1956).
- Analyze the roots of domestic communism and anti-communism in the 1950s, the origins and consequences of, and the resistance to McCarthyism, researching and reporting on people and institutions such as Whittaker Chambers, Alger Hiss, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Senators Joseph McCarthy and Margaret Chase Smith, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the American Communist Party, the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and congressional investigations into the Lavender Scare).
- Analyze the causes and consequences of important domestic Cold War trends in the United States (e.g., economic growth and declining poverty, the G. I. Education bill, the decline in women's employment, climb in the birthrate, the growth of suburbs and home ownership, the increase in education levels, the impact of television and increased consumerism).
- Analyze the origins, evolution, and goals of the African American Civil Rights Movement, researching the work of people such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, John Lewis, Bayard Rustin, Robert F. Kennedy, and institutions such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the Congress of Racial Equality.
- Using primary sources such as news articles/analyses, editorials, and radio/television coverage, research and analyze resistance to integration in some white communities, protests to end segregation, and Supreme Court decisions on civil rights.
 - The 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*
 - the 1955-1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott, the 1957-1958 Little Rock School Crisis and Eisenhower's civil rights record
 - King's philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience, based on the ideas of Gandhi and the sit-ins and freedom rides of the early 1960s
 - the 1963 civil rights protest in Birmingham and the March on Washington
 - 1965 civil rights protest in Selma
 - the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Evaluate accomplishments of the Civil Rights movement (e.g., the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act) and how they served as a model for later feminist, disability, and gender rights movements of the 20th and 21st centuries; collect and analyze demographic data to investigate trends from the 1964 to 2010 in areas such as voter registration and participation, median family income, or educational attainment among African American, Hispanic American, Asian American and white populations.
- Using primary sources such as news articles/analyses, editorials, and television coverage, research Massachusetts leaders for civil rights and the controversies over the racial desegregation of public schools in the 1960s and 1970s, including:
 - the establishment of the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) busing plan involving Boston, Springfield, and suburban school districts
 - Court-ordered desegregation and mandated busing in the public schools of Boston and other Massachusetts cities

- Using primary and secondary sources, analyze the causes and course of **one** of the following social and political movements, including consideration of the role of protest, advocacy organizations, and active citizen participation.
 - Women’s rights, including the writings on feminism by Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem and others; the availability of the birth control pill; the activism of the National Organization for Women and opposition to the movement by conservative leaders such as Phyllis Schlafly; passage of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution (1972), and its failure to achieve sufficient ratification by states; Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1973 Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, the appointment of Sandra Day O’Connor as the first woman Justice of the Supreme Court in 1981, and increasing numbers of women in elected offices in national and state government
 - the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Civil Rights Movement, the impact of world wars on the demand for gay rights, the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969, the Gay Pride Movement, and activism and medical research to slow the spread of AIDS in the 1980s; the role of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* (2004) and the role of other state courts in providing equal protection for same sex marriage in advance of the United States Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)
 - the disability rights movement such as deinstitutionalization, independent living, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1990)
 - the environmental protection movement (e.g., the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*; the 1970 federal Clean Air Act; the 1972 Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act; the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act and subsequent amendments)
 - the movement to protect the health and rights of workers, and improve working conditions and wages (e.g., César Chávez and Dolores Huerta and the migrant farmworkers’ movement, workplace protections against various forms of discrimination and sexual harassment)
 - the movement to protect the rights, self-determination, and sovereignty of Native Peoples (e.g., the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, the American Indian Movement, the Wounded Knee Incident at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in 1973, the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, and the efforts of Native Peoples’ groups to preserve Native cultures, gain federal or state recognition and raise awareness of Native American history)
- Research and analyze issues related to race relations in the United States since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, including: the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and its impact on neighborhood integration; policies, court cases, and practices regarding affirmative action and their impact on diversity in the workforce and higher education disparities and trends in educational achievement and attainment, health outcomes, wealth and income, and rates of incarceration; the election of the nation’s first African American president, Barack Obama, in 2008 and 2012.
- Using primary sources such as campaign literature and debates, news articles/analyses, editorials, and television coverage, analyze the important policies and events that took

place during the presidencies of John F. Kennedy (e.g., the confrontation with Cuba over missile bases, the space exploration program, Kennedy's assassination), Lyndon Johnson (the Great Society programs, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, the Vietnam War and anti-war movements, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy), and Richard Nixon (the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, diplomacy with China, détente with the Soviet Union, the Watergate scandal, and Nixon's resignation).

- Analyze and evaluate the impact of economic liberalism on mid-20th century society, including the legacy of the New Deal on post World War II America, the expansion of American manufacturing and unionism, social welfare programs, and the regulation of major industries such as transportation, energy, communications and finance.
- Analyze the presidency of Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) and the rise of the conservative movement in American politics, (e.g., policies such as tax rate cuts, anti-communist foreign and defense policies, replacement of striking air traffic controllers with non-union personnel).
- Analyze how the failure of communist economic policies and U.S.-sponsored resistance to Soviet military and diplomatic initiatives contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the end of the Cold War.
- Analyze some of the major technological and social trends and issues of the late 20th and early 21st centuries (e.g., the computer and technological revolution beginning in the 1980s, scientific and medical discoveries such as DNA research, major immigration and demographic changes such as the rise in Asian and Hispanic immigration).
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the federal government's response to international terrorism in the 21st century, including the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C., the Homeland Security Act, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, and the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars.

In addition, relevant high school electives include AP U.S. Government & Politics, Introduction to Law, Introduction to Economics, and Class, Race, and Gender.

Grade 8 and Grade 11 Required Civics Projects

As required by Massachusetts law Chapter 296¹²⁵, all eighth graders and eleventh graders complete a civics project. The curriculum guide¹²⁶ provided by the state describes the goals¹²⁷ of this project, envisioning that students will:

- Develop civic dispositions and a sense of self-efficacy
- Develop and practice civic skills
- Build civic content knowledge
- Develop and practice literacy skills, including digital media literacy
- Conduct inquiries and determine next steps

¹²⁵ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2018/Chapter296>

¹²⁶ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/rlo/instruction/civics-project-guidebook/index.html#/>

¹²⁷ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/rlo/instruction/civics-project-guidebook/index.html#/lessons/Io2YzQhuch-KQI-T0ZQBGGxxnDJr66f2>

- Develop and practice social-emotional skills
- Become more academically engaged
- Develop cultural competence and social political awareness