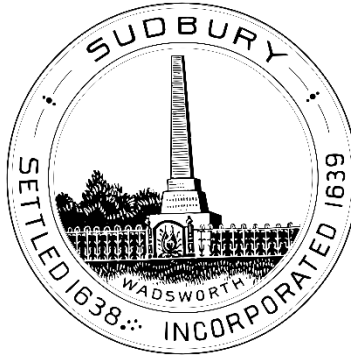


Town of Sudbury Massachusetts



SUDBURY BALLOT QUESTIONS NOVEMBER 3, 2020 STATE ELECTION

Polls Open 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Precincts 1, 1A, 2 & 5 - Fairbank Community Center, 40 Fairbank Road
Precincts 3 & 4 - Sudbury Town Hall, 322 Concord Road

SUDBURY.MA.US/ELECTION2020

INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

The November 3, 2020 State Ballot will include two Town of Sudbury Ballot questions as follows: Ballot Question No. 3 related to the Proposition 2 ½ Debt Exemption for acquisition of a former rail corridor from CSX Transportation, Inc., consisting of 11.26 acres from Station Rd. to the Framingham line, at an expected final bonded cost of \$820,500 ((\$1,220,500 reduced by \$400,000 in expected grant funds); and Ballot Question No. 4 to exempt from Proposition 2 ½ the debt for funding the final cost of design and construction of a Fairbank Community Center including partial renovation of the pool area which will accommodate the Senior Center, Parks and Recreation, and Sudbury Public Schools for an estimated \$28,832,000.

As the ballot will contain the questions only, the following material is provided for your information pursuant to Chapter 180 of the Acts of 1996. The numbering below reflects that which will appear on the State November 3 Ballot.

BALLOT QUESTION NO. 3

Shall the town of Sudbury be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond issued in order to acquire the parcel of land shown as Mile Post QBS 3.40 to QBS 4.80 on a Railroad Map dated July 22, 2020, prepared by CSX Transportation, Inc., and a Plan dated July 20, 2020, copies of which are on file with the Town Clerk, consisting of 11.26 acres of land, more or less and any and all incidental and related costs associated therewith?

SUMMARY: The 2020 Annual Town Meeting held on September 12, 2020 voted to approve Article 17 authorizing a borrowing of \$1,220,500 for the acquisition of a former rail corridor from CSX Transportation, Inc. The property is being acquired for open space, conservation, passive and active recreation purposes including rail trail/bicycle path, general municipal purposes, for water protection and water supply purposes, and for all other lawful purposes. This ballot question seeks to exclude from the Proposition 2 ½ levy limit the amount needed to be raised by taxation to pay the principal and interest on bonds issued to pay for this land purchase. If this debt exclusion question is approved, permanent bonding will be obtained based on actual expenditures, which amount may be reduced by grant funding.

The estimated impact on the tax rate for bonding \$820,500 (\$1,220,500 reduced by \$400,000 in expected grant funds) is: \$0.02 per \$1,000 assessed value at the highest point of the bonding period (based upon a 10-year bond at 1.75%). For example, the tax impact on the 2020 average home value of \$746,260 is estimated at \$15 in the first year of debt service, and would average approximately \$14/year during the bonding period.

A “yes” vote on this question will authorize the Town to exclude from the levy limit the debt service required to repay the loan for the land purchase, and allow the acquisition to move forward.

A “no” vote will mean that the September 12, 2020 appropriation for the purchase will be null and void, and the Town cannot purchase the property at this time.

ARGUMENT FOR PASSAGE: Ballot Question 3 is a vote to fund the purchase the Sudbury section of the CSX rail corridor, a critical component to completing the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail through Sudbury. It will provide direct access to retail businesses, athletic facilities, recreational areas, and schools. Purchasing this land will protect our drinking water supply, and will prevent another utility corridor from

coming through the heart of Sudbury. The rail trail will be a 21.5 mile linear park that all residents can enjoy, from Sudbury to Lowell.

Sudbury Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved the purchase the CSX corridor. The purchase was supported by the Sudbury Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Land Acquisition Review Committee, Finance Committee, and Select Board. The purchase price is in line with independent appraisals.

The state has offered to help Sudbury buy the land with \$400,000 in use it or lose it grants. This is over a third of the \$1,145,500 purchase price. Full cost of trail construction will be paid with State and Federal funds. Average tax impact will be \$13 - 15 yearly for 10 years.

We need to act now. Federal law requires us to complete the purchase this year. Otherwise, the parcel becomes available to others (such as a utility company), or it could be divided and sold in pieces making acquisition of the pathway difficult, and we would lose the grant money.

This is a unique opportunity to make Sudbury stronger and protect our vital resources at the same time. Vote yes on 3.

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION: Vote NO. This is an unjustified expense for Sudbury.

Purchase of the CSX Right of Way (RoW) is a State responsibility.

It is the State's declaration, MA General Law Chapter 161C Section 1, to purchase, create and preserve railroad RoWs for public use. If Sudbury votes to not purchase the CSX RoW, the property will be abandoned (released from federal regulation and control) and CSX will sell the property. Ma General Law 161C provides the State Right of First Refusal to purchase railroad RoWs. Massachusetts standard practice for public use of these RoWs is the construction of recreational trails.

The State has already purchased the entire railroad RoW from Sudbury's Station Road north through Concord, Acton, Carlisle, Westford and Chelmsford. The State leases the RoW to each Town for \$1/yr for use as their section of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Sudbury's actions to delay this abandonment and State purchase for 20 years are, and always have been, questionable.

Recently voiced concerns about Sudbury's wells along the RoW are unsubstantiated. Sudbury Water District has not expressed any concerns. Town wells are provided the same legal and environmental protections irrespective of who owns the RoW.

The State can and should treat all Towns equally in the funding and construction of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. The State can and should purchase the CSX RoW and lease it to Sudbury for \$1/yr. Vote NO.

BALLOT QUESTION NO. 4

Shall the town of Sudbury be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond issued in order to design, permit, construct, and renovate the property located at 40 Fairbank Road, also known as the Fairbank Community Center and Atkinson Pool, and any and all incidental and related costs associated therewith, including without limitation the professional, design, engineering, and project

management services, preparation of plans, specification and bidding documents, borrowing costs, purchase of equipment, technology, and furniture, as well as site preparation, demolition, landscaping, and relocation services and costs?

SUMMARY: The 2020 Annual Town Meeting held on September 12, 2020, voted to approve Article 18 requesting funding for the development and completion of a new building to be known as the Fairbank Community Center which will include space for the Senior Center, Park and Recreation, and the Sudbury Public School offices with renovation of the existing pool area and replacement of accessory areas. The proposed building will also provide adequate emergency shelter use.

This ballot question seeks to exclude from the Proposition 2 ½ levy limit the principal and interest to pay for this project. If this debt exclusion receives approval via this ballot, bonding will be obtained upon completion of the project based on actual expenditures.

The estimated impact on the tax rate for a \$28,832,000 project is: \$0.31 per \$1,000 assessed value at the highest point of the bonding period (based upon a 30-year bond at 3%). For example, the tax impact on the 2020 average home value of \$746,260 is estimated at \$231/year during the bonding period.

A “yes” vote on this question will authorize the Town to exclude from the levy limit the debt required to fund the project expenditures connected thereto and a “no” vote will mean the project cannot go forward.

ARGUMENT FOR PASSAGE: The new Fairbank Community Center building will replace an old, deteriorating building to meet the needs of our growing community. The new building provides:

- increased space to enhance and expand programs and services offered to our growing 4,200+ senior population.
- appropriate space for Park & Recreation to enhance and expand programs for residents, from toddler to adult, meeting the changing needs of Sudbury families and our 5700+ school aged children.
- up-to-date professional office space to retain and attract highly qualified school administration professionals for Sudbury Public Schools,
- updates to the Atkinson pool systems, new locker rooms, including a family locker room, and expanded observation areas, and
- expansion and enhancement of the Town’s only emergency shelter.

The project takes a very practical approach to serve the Sudbury community. With modern design and construction protocols, and state of the art utility management systems, the Town anticipates reducing its energy footprint and maintaining level operating costs. Three professional architecture firms have each independently determined that there are no cost effective ways to salvage the current facility. The cost to build will likely only go up over time so we should not delay any further. The combination of historically low interest rates and the potential for a favorable bidding environment for design and construction, creates an opportunity to build Sudbury’s new community center at a much lower cost.

It is in the best interests of Sudbury’s residents to approve this Fairbank Community Center project proposal now. Please vote YES on Question 4.

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION: The Covid-19 pandemic has created economic uncertainties for our schools, our community, and our residents. Committing to the Fairbank project, estimated to cost taxpayers \$44 million dollars over the next 30 years, is not prudent at this time.

We cannot assess the full life cost of this proposal because it is an incomplete design. The typical process requires an engineering design and review before committing to construction funds. We are not satisfying the Board of Selectmen's "Protection of Credit Rating Policy" that "The Town will analyze the full-life costs of multi-year decisions." Meanwhile, other capital projects, including fire station expansions and school roofs must be funded as well.

Updating the Senior Center may be a smart investment for Sudbury. However, tagging on approximately \$5 million for SPS administration space and over \$10 million for additional P&R space is imprudent.

Class A office space is available for lease in Sudbury, but we have not fully evaluated whether leasing or building new is the better option for the SPS Administration. Leasing could save taxpayers significant money.

Enrollment for Park and Recreation programming has diminished in recent years as alternatives develop in and around Sudbury at similar price points. Yet the proposal increases Parks and Recreation's footprint at Fairbank, for programs which may be served elsewhere.

This is not the right time for a \$28.8 million dollar project as we struggle to come to terms with the economic effects and consequences of Covid-19 on our community and our families. Please vote NO.

Visit <https://sudbury.ma.us/election2020> to learn more about the November 3, 2020 State/Presidential Election:

- Ballot Information
- Early Voting
- Election Day
- Register to Vote
- Vote by Mail

SUDBURY.MA.US/ELECTION2020



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Sudbury, MA 01776**

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**INFORMATION FOR VOTERS
State/Presidential Election
Tuesday, November 3, 2020**