

## **INFORMATION FOR BELMONT VOTERS REGARDING UPCOMING OVERRIDE VOTE**

Dear Belmont Voter,

On April 3, you will be asked to vote yes or no on a ballot question that would allow an increase in the property tax levy of \$3 million or approximately 5.4% above the 2.5% increase allowed by proposition 2 1/2. For a home assessed in FY2005 at \$719,000, the combined impact of the override and the allowable 2.5% increase would result in a total increase in FY2007 of 7.9% or approximately \$625 (instead of \$196, the allowable 2.5% increase).

A “yes” vote will permanently increase taxes by this total amount and commit \$3 million to the improvement of our roads each year.

There are 6 points that we would like to be sure you are aware of:

1. It is our intention that this \$3 million legal commitment to our roads will replace the existing \$1 million road program. This would allow us to free up that \$1 million to support other town and school priorities. The net increase in road spending will be \$2 million annually.
2. In our judgment, this \$2 million increase should allow us to maintain and reconstruct our larger roads over the next 10 to 15 years. However, it will not be sufficient to allow us to address the smaller residential side streets within this time frame. On the back of this letter is a list of the roads we expect will be addressed over the next 5 years.
3. The \$1 million rededicated to other purposes is not sufficient to address all priorities in the fiscal year 2007 budget, but will provide a responsible balanced budget for FY'07.
4. If we are to maintain our current level of service over the next decade, we will need to come to you every year or two with additional requests for override votes to support town and school services and infrastructure. These votes will, if approved, lead to a continuing increase in property tax levels.
5. These increases are necessary if we are to address long neglected infrastructure needs, structural inflation, and cuts in state and federal aid. Most long-time town residents already perceive a decline in services from the town (including schools), and their perceptions are accurate.
6. While we have worked hard and will continue to strive to control costs through consolidation, efficiencies, and simply asking a lot of our staff, we are convinced that annual increases above the allowable 2.5% are inevitable if we are to continue to provide the level of services that the town (including the schools) currently provides. Both cuts in expenses and increases in revenue will continue to be investigated and, when possible, implemented.

We, like you, are taxpayers, and we understand the financial strains that tax increases create for many Belmont citizens. We are all available to answer any question that you have. We welcome your comments and concerns and encourage your attendance and participation at our regular public meetings.

SINCERELY,

***THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
THE WARRANT COMMITTEE***

***(Consensus statement negotiated and adopted unanimously in public meetings but distributed at private expense by the Committee to Provide Accurate Information to Voters.)***

## **TECHNICAL DETAILS OF A STABILIZATION FUND OVERRIDE**

The proposal before the voters takes advantage of new legislation that allows municipalities to create special “stabilization funds” on their books that may only be used for a designated purpose. This allows municipalities to make binding commitments to voters as to how funds will be used.

Here is how the proposal will work if the voters approve it:

- First, next year’s tax levy will go up by an extra \$3 million above the annual increase allowed by Proposition 2.5. The average single family tax bill will go up an extra approximately \$425 above the annual 2.5%.
- That increase will remain in place in future years and will grow annually by the 2.5% allowed under Proposition 2.5.
- The \$3 million in additional funds will replace the existing \$1 million roads program.

However, the ballot question is phrased as authorizing a \$3 million “stabilization fund” for roads. The consequence of this language will be that if town puts less than the full \$3 million into the stabilization fund for roads, taxes will be reduced by the difference. Funds committed to this new program can not be applied to other purposes.

Voters who are interested in the technical details of how the new stabilization fund works can go on the web to [www.mass.gov/dls](http://www.mass.gov/dls) and view Informational Guideline Release 04-201 (follow the quick link to IGRs).

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## ***INFORMATION FOR APRIL 3 BALLOT QUESTION***

<b>STREETS TO BE RECONSTRUCTED IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS IF THE VOTERS APPROVE</b>			
<b>Name of Street to be Reconstructed</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Year</b>
Washington Street	Common Street	Grove Street	FY 07
Cross Street	Channing Road	Brighton Street	FY 07
Cushing Avenue	Pine Street	Payson Road	FY 07
Grove Street	Washington Street	Belmont Street	FY 08
Concord Avenue (West Bound)	Common Street	Louise Road	FY 08
School Street	Common Street	Belmont Street	FY 09
Beech Street	Trapelo Road	Waverley Street	FY 09
Marsh Street	Winter Street	800' W of Evergreen Way	FY 10
Mill Street	Concord Avenue	McLean Drive	FY 10
Park Avenue	Park Avenue Circle	Arlington Line	FY 10
Park Avenue Circle	Park Avenue	Park Avenue	FY 10
Mill Street	McLean Drive	Trapelo Road	FY 11
Concord Avenue	Somerset Street	Mill Street	FY 11
Concord Avenue	Pleasant Street	Somerset Street	FY 11

(Major maintenance of the street segments listed above, including engineering and police details, is expected to account for over 90% of the \$15,000,000 proposed to be spent over the next 5 years. The balance will be spent on minor maintenance and also to cover town expenses associated with state projects like Trapelo Road and Pleasant Street. For most of these streets, the reconstruction will include reconstruction of sidewalks.)