



FAQ: Impact on the Taxpayer

How much will the proposed override on June 7, 2011 cost me?

If you want to figure out the increase on your own property, find your property's assessed value on your current tax bill or [on the town website](#). Divide the assessed value by 1000, and multiply that number by 0.94. For example, if your house is currently assessed at \$400,000, multiply \$400 by 0.94 to learn that your taxes will go up by \$376. After the first year, your tax bill would only increase by the usual 2 ½ percent. For the median house assessed at \$479,345, taxes will go up by \$445 a year.

But my tax bill has gone up more than 2 ½ percent some years with no override.

The 2 ½ percent limit applies to the total tax revenue on all existing property in town. If your property's assessed value increased at an above-average rate, your tax bill would have gone up more than the town-wide average. For every taxpayer whose bill rose more than 2.5%, however, there is another taxpayer whose bill went up less than that, to keep overall revenues within the town-wide limits. If you think your assessment is too high, there is a process to appeal it. Contact the Assessor's Office at 781-316-3050.

How are seniors with limited resources protected from property increases?

Many residents are concerned about a property tax increase forcing a senior on a limited income from his or her home. There are several programs in place on the local and state level to help seniors who qualify lower the amount of tax they owe. Anyone concerned about helping a senior should call the [Council on Aging](#) (781-316-3400) for information about eligibility and how to apply.

There are exemptions for veterans (of any age), those who are blind, and various abatements for which residents who are over 65 or over 70 might qualify.

There is also a program that allows seniors who qualify to defer payment of taxes. Interest will accrue and the full amount of tax and interest ultimately must be paid to the community upon the death of the taxpayer or sale of the property.

The state has the "[senior circuit breaker](#)" which allows seniors who qualify to file for tax credit on their state income tax. It allows renters to consider a portion of their rent payment.

Finally, the Council on Aging provides information and assistance to seniors on a wide range of programs: consumer protection and legal advice, fuel assistance, food & meals delivery, financial advice, continuing education, substance abuse, home health care, support groups, volunteering, and transportation.

Will the failure or success of the override affect my property values?

Eventually property values will go down if prospective buyers see Arlington as a less desirable place to buy home and raise a family. Arlington's property values have been maintained in recent years because of the town's proximity to Boston, the school system, and the level of town services. Should services and our schools decline, property values would surely decline as well.

Will rebuilding the Thompson school increase my tax bill even more?

Yes, about \$30.00 a year on the average tax bill. As the middle school and elementary schools are paid off over the next 10 to 15 years, taxes will go down by much more than the \$30 a year that the Thompson financing will add. Debt exclusions are different than operating overrides in that your taxes are reduced when the debt is paid.

It's up to us. Vote Yes on June 7.