



Editorial: Growth, but at what cost?

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Lexington - On Monday, Town Meeting will take up at least one of two major redevelopment plans in South Lexington that have long-term effects on the economic solvency of the town.

If approved, the warrant articles for Lexington Technology Park and Cubist Pharmaceuticals could pave the way for millions in tax revenue and road improvements. And they should be approved, as long as concrete plans for handling traffic are put in place.

It's great timing. The town's coffers could use the money. The recent reports of the town's Fiscal Task Force say as much, painting a grim picture over the next two years as town revenues stagnate.

The impacts of development decisions are not felt right away, so some long-term planning has been put in play by the Planning Board to ensure these projects fit with Lexington's long-range goals.

And they do. Mostly. Both Patriot Partners, the developer for Lexington Technology Park, and Cubist representatives have pledged added contributions to Lexpress and the town's transportation mitigation funds.

Lexington Technology Park is the former home of Raytheon, now the headquarters for Shire HGT. It is located off Spring Street, near another large office development owned by Beal Companies. Patriot Partners proposes adding 380,000 square feet of research and development space, and 510,000 square feet of parking area to the complex.

At Cubist, the plan is to add 110,000 square feet of research space and 180,000 square feet for parking.

If any commercial growth is to occur in Lexington, it's going to happen in Cubist's and Lexington Technology Park's neighborhoods. Their payments to the town should provide some help in managing what traffic impacts may come down the road.

But that's also the stumbling block. The last thing the residents of South Lexington need is more traffic. The balance will come as Town Meeting asks itself: Do the impacts to the roads and town infrastructure outweigh the commercial tax income these projects will generate?

These projects are not a slam dunk. But with careful oversight of the Traffic Mitigation Fund, two long-term burdens may be eased: Traffic in South Lexington, and revenue for *all* of Lexington.