

To the Applicant:

Before you complete this application to the City of Ann Arbor's land preservation program, commonly known as the Greenbelt Program, it is important for you to read and understand this introduction. If you have any questions at all, please direct them to Ginny Trocchio at 734-794-210 ext. 42798.

The purpose of this part of the City of Ann Arbor's Greenbelt Program is to protect agricultural properties and natural areas from future residential, commercial and industrial development, with the voluntary co-operation of willing land owners. The goal is to protect working and undeveloped lands surrounding the City for practical, economic purposes; to protect the Huron River watershed, from which Ann Arbor receives most of its water, from over development; to lessen the burden on expensive urban infrastructure; and to provide a permanent scenic complement to the urban landscape.

For those landowners wishing to retain ownership of your property, preservation of the land is accomplished through an agreement between you and the City, a conservation easement that becomes a permanent part of the deed to your property. You will be compensated by the City, at a level determined by appraisal, from funds dedicated for that purpose, in return for extinguishing your right to develop your property in any way other than that specified in the easement. The application is for the preservation of land that is to remain private property. It is not intended for park land or other public lands, and is not intended for lands that will have general public access.

For those landowners wishing to sell your property in its entirety, and if it contains high quality natural features, the application may be considered for park land or other public lands, in partnership with the another local partner.

In all instances, this is a competitive application process. There are more applications to preserve land than there are monies available for easement purchases. For that reason, your application will be scored and prioritized by a point system that values various attributes of your land and of your application. For more information on the scoring criteria and strategic plan, please see our website, <http://www.a2gov.org/greenbelt/Pages/greenbelthome.aspx>, or contact the land preservation staff at the phone number above.

Because funds are limited, the City seeks to leverage its dedicated land preservation funds with matching grants from other sources, including federal, state, county and township funds, grants from private land trusts and other non-profit agencies, and from landowners themselves, who may donate some portion of the appraised value of their development rights. Currently, the City's goal is to receive at least 20% of the purchase price of each project from those sources. Each project is unique. The characteristics of your land and its prospective easement or outright purchase will determine the source, or combination of sources, for matching funds.

If your property is in agriculture production and meets certain City and Federal criteria, the City will apply for funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm & Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP), which may pay up to 50 percent of the appraised value of your development rights. IF YOUR APPLICATION SUCCESSFULLY ATTRACTS THE FULL AMOUNT OF FRPP FUNDS REQUESTED, in most cases, a landowner donation may not be required, though the City may still seek additional funding partners. IF A QUALIFIED APPLICATION DOES NOT ATTRACT FRPP FUNDS OR DOES NOT RECEIVE FULL FUNDING FROM FRPP (FRPP applications are very competitive), you may opt for your application to be resubmitted for

the Federal program at the next available date, or you may withdraw your application, or you may follow the path outlined below.

IF YOUR PROPERTY DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR APPLICATION TO FRPP FUNDS, or if your qualified property does not successfully attract FRPP funds, a successful project is likely to require funding from the other sources already mentioned. Please keep in mind that the City's current goal is to secure matching funds to make up at least 20% of the appraised value of your development rights. In cases where full matching funds are unavailable, you will likely need to donate at least some of that value. The land preservation staff will make every effort to research and secure funding opportunities, and to put forward a workable funding package for willing and motivated landowners.

You should understand however, that in all cases, and regardless of funding sources, your expression of a commitment to donate some portion of the value of your development rights may enhance the success of your application.

There are many aspects to a successful conservation easement that, in the end, benefits both the city's residents and the participating landowner. Funding is only one of them, but often the most complicated. The City hopes this introduction helps you understand the basic goals of the Greenbelt program, and that it explains the basic parameters of a successful funding effort. Meeting certain funding goals, however, does not by itself guarantee a successful application or preservation project. You are encouraged to thoroughly discuss your application, and the application process, with the Greenbelt staff.

Thanks very much for considering an application,
Ann Arbor Greenbelt Commission