

September 2008

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Your opinion is important to the Greenbelt Program to preserve farmland around the City of Ann Arbor. The Greenbelt Advisory Commission is in the early stages of considering a supplementary method to reach out to landowners. We would greatly appreciate your response to our brief survey.

All landowners in the Greenbelt Area surrounding Ann Arbor have been invited previously to consider selling their development rights to the Greenbelt to preserve farmland for the future. So far, six landowners have received funding from the Greenbelt Program. Together, we have preserved 755 acres. An additional \_\_\_ farms totaling \_\_\_ acres are expected to close this year. These farmers filled out applications to be a part of the Greenbelt Program. That process continues, tied to appraised values.

Appraisals and negotiations have been challenging in the current real estate market because there are so few recent sales in the area. The City's Greenbelt program is beginning to consider a bid process for landowners. To date, \$\_\_\_ has been spent to preserve properties with an additional \$\_\_\_ in remaining in the fund balance. The idea would be to have landowners make a bid to the Greenbelt Program (based on a price per acre) that they would be willing to sell their development rights to the City. Landowners still own and control their private property, have all farming rights and may build future farm related structures in a building area. Depending on the price, the landowner may have sizeable tax deductions under current law.

We are eager to have some input before formulating this potential bid process. We know it is a busy season for farmers, so we really only need a general indication of potential interest, not a bid price. Of course, we welcome your questions and advice, if you would like to elaborate. Even if you are certain that you are not interested in submitting a bid for your farmland development rights, we would appreciate a reply with your opinion.

Thanks for your time! A stamped envelope is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Laura Rubin  
Chair, Greenbelt Advisory Commission

## Survey

1. Would you consider selling your development rights to the Greenbelt?
2. Are you familiar with the current application process?
3. Would you consider a bid process, in which you would set the price you would be willing to accept? A “yes” response is not an obligation.
4. If you would not consider a bid process, would you explain why?

Other comments?