



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0404, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Approve a Participation Agreement with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, and Superior Township and Appropriate \$300,000.00 for Purchase of Fee Title to and Establishment of a Conservation Easement on the Stepien Trust Property (**8 Votes Required**)

This resolution approves a participation agreement and appropriates \$300,000.00 from Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage proceeds for the purchase of fee title to and establishment of a conservation easement on approximately 80 acres of land owned by the Stepien Trust, located in Superior Township. The resolution also appropriates \$300,000.00 from the Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage proceeds.

Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy has agreed to become the fee title holder of the property and to pay for the establishment of a publicly accessible nature preserve with a parking lot, trails, and signage. Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy will also endow and operate the public nature preserve going forward. Washtenaw County will hold a conservation easement on the property to ensure its long-term protection as open space.

Stepien Trust Property, Superior Township

The property is approximately 80 acres with access from Berry Road. This acquisition, along with the adjoining Weatherbee Woods property and Superior Township's Schroeter Park property, would create an uninterrupted 278 acres of protected land on the east side of Berry Road from Ford Road to Warren Road. The property includes an old-growth oak woods on the north side, where it adjoins the Weatherbee Woods Preserve. The east side adjoins an 82-acre parcel of protected farmland. Along with the successional farm fields on the south end, the property provides a range of habitat diversity, with a particularly rich variety of bird species.

Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission commissioned an appraisal which was completed in March 23, 2018. The fair market value was determined to be \$693,000.00 for the fee title to the property. The tables below detail the financial contributions from partners. The resolution approves an appropriation of funds for 43% of the total purchase price, not to exceed \$300,000.00 from Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage proceeds. Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy will own the property and cover all due diligence and closing costs. Washtenaw County will be the conservation easement holder.

Approval of the Participation Agreement and appropriation of funds for the purchase of fee title to and establishment of a conservation easement on the property was recommended by the Greenbelt Advisory Commission at their October 4, 2018 meeting. The Greenbelt Advisory Commission recommended the purchase due to the quality of natural areas on the property, the property's proximity to other protected land, and the opportunity to leverage City funds through partnership with Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, Superior Township, and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission.

Project Budget

Total Acquisition Costs	\$693,000.00
City of Ann Arbor	\$300,000.0043%
Washtenaw County	\$360,000.0052%
Superior Township	\$20,000.003%
Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy	\$13,000.002%
Total cost	\$693,000.00100%
Total City cost	\$300,000.0043%

Total Other Costs **\$100,500.00**

Parking Lot, Trails, Signage (Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy)	\$78,000.00
Due Diligence (Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy)	\$13,500.00
Closing Costs/Endowment (Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy)	\$9,000.00

Prepared by: Remy Long, Greenbelt Program Manager, The Conservation Fund

Reviewed by: Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator

Approved by: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

Whereas, The Stepien Trust has offered to sell approximately 80 acres of property located in Superior Township;

Whereas, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy has offered to hold title to the property and establish and operate a publicly accessible nature preserve;

Whereas, Washtenaw County has offered to hold a conservation easement on the property to ensure its long-term protection;

Whereas, Chapter 42 of the Ann Arbor City Code establishes the Greenbelt district and authorizes City Council to enter into agreements for joint acquisition of land and conservation easements in the district with nonprofit groups and governmental agencies;

Whereas, Chapter 42 of Ann Arbor City Code authorizes the purchase of a land and conservation easements with Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage proceeds, of which there are sufficient funds for this purchase;

Whereas, Washtenaw County, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, and Superior Township have offered matching funds for the purchase of the Stepien Trust property; and

Whereas, The Greenbelt Advisory Commission recommended purchase of fee title to and establishment of a conservation easement on the Stepien Trust property with the participation of Washtenaw County, Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and Superior Township at its October 4, 2018 meeting.

RESOLVED, That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute a participation agreement and the City Administrator is authorized to execute any supplemental documents

necessary to document the appropriation of funds for the purchase, after approval as to form by the City Attorney;

RESOLVED, That \$300,000.00 be appropriated for the purchase of the Stepien Trust property, establishment of a conservation easement, and related expenses from the Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage proceeds for the life of the project without regard to fiscal year; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator be authorized to take all appropriate actions to implement this resolution.