

GREENBELT HISTORY

The Greenbelt was founded in November 2003, when Ann Arbor residents passed the Open Space and Parkland Preservation Program. This program consists of a 30-year millage that raises over \$2 million annually. These funds are matched by federal grants, landowner donations and other locally funded programs. Ann Arbor's dedication to parks and preserving its surrounding greenspaces is one reason it consistently ranks as one of the most livable cities in the U.S. Preserving land around the city is vital for the health and well-being of our citizens and for the natural resources we all depend on: air, water, and land.

PARTNERSHIPS

The City of Ann Arbor has worked with The Conservation Fund, a nonprofit focused on environmental conservation and economic development, since 2004 to implement the Greenbelt Program.

Other partners include:

- Cherry Republic
- Landowners
- Legacy Land Conservancy
- Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy
- Ann Arbor, Lodi, Scio & Webster Townships
- USDA Agriculture Conservation Easement Program
- Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation

TESTIMONIALS

"The Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program offered a unique opportunity to combine our business and conservation goals with the environmental health goals of the community. We have absolutely no second thoughts." *Tom and Rosanne Bloomer*

"In Webster, our family, along with other neighbors, will have accumulated a critical mass of preserved acreage, which is the essential base for agriculture in the foreseeable future. We are grateful for those who had the vision of viable farms coexisting with and serving a truly rural/urban community, and to the Greenbelt Program which can make it happen." *Gilbert and Kathryn Whitney*

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

For more information about the Greenbelt, or if you are a landowner interested in joining the Greenbelt, please contact:

734.794.6210 ext. 42798 | greenbelt@a2gov.org
a2gov.org/greenbelt
[facebook.com/annarborgreenbelt](https://www.facebook.com/annarborgreenbelt)
[Twitter.com/A2Greenbelt](https://twitter.com/A2Greenbelt)

Remy Long, Program Manager

Greenbelt Advisory Commission 2019

Chair Jennifer Fike, Environment/Conservation Representative

Vice Chair, John Ramsburgh, Public At-Large Representative

Robert Gordon, Environment/Conservation Representative

Rosanne Bloomer, Farmer Representative

Alexander Perlman, Real Estate Development Representative

Sheila Schueller, Plant or Animal Biologist Representative

Stephanie Buttrey, Public At-Large Representative

Stefanie Stauffer, Public At-Large Representative

Julie Grand, Ann Arbor City Council Representative



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THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR GREENBELT PROGRAM

301 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734.794.6210 x42798

www.a2gov.org/greenbelt

GREENBELT FAQ

What is the Greenbelt? The Greenbelt Program is an innovative land protection program that Ann Arbor residents approved in November 2003. The Greenbelt has a simple mission: to protect rural lands and habitats around Ann Arbor, including farms and natural areas. The 30-year millage raises just over \$2 million annually. A portion of millage funds are also used to purchase new parkland within Ann Arbor city limits.

How big is the Greenbelt? The Greenbelt district encompasses portions of eight townships surrounding Ann Arbor. The Greenbelt district boundary is, on average, within four miles of the Ann Arbor City limits.

What was "given up" when Ann Arbor voters approved the millage? Nothing. The millage amended an existing millage that was used solely for park acquisition. A portion of the funds are still used for park acquisitions within city limits.

What is a Conservation Easement? This is a legal agreement between the City and a landowner to 1) protect the natural or agricultural nature of the land by limiting the type and amount of development that can occur and 2) that prohibits subdividing the property. The landowner continues to own the property and the City conducts annual monitoring visits to ensure the conservation easement terms are upheld. The easement transfers with ownership of the land, thereby protecting the land in perpetuity. Conservation easements can be either donated or sold by the landowner. If the easement is purchased, it is referred to as Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).

If the city acquires the development rights, can the City build on the land? No. The conservation easement removes the right to develop or subdivide the property. The development rights no longer exist so the property cannot be developed by anyone. The conservation easement protects the property in perpetuity.

Why are not all Greenbelt-protected properties open to the public? Most Greenbelt acquisitions place a conservation easement on a farm or natural area, and in these cases the property remains in private ownership. However, the Greenbelt also acquires many properties that are accessible to the public by partnering with the County and other partners to acquire natural areas that are converted into publicly-accessible nature preserves within the Greenbelt District. Once a year, the City hosts a bus tour of Greenbelt properties to give the public a chance to visit protected properties and to meet with farmers and landowners who participate in the Greenbelt. The tour typically includes a mix of public nature preserves and privately-owned properties with conservation easements.

As an Ann Arbor resident, how much am I paying every year? The millage is 0.50 mil for 30 years. This is equivalent to residents paying annually \$50 in property taxes per \$100,000 of taxable property value.

Are we in this alone? No. On average, 53 percent of the purchase price for both conservation easements and outright land purchases have come from other partners. Most projects have multiple partners, including the US Dept. of Agriculture; Ann Arbor, Scio, Webster, Lodi, and Pittsfield Townships; Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission; Legacy Land Conservancy; Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy; businesses; and landowners who have donated a portion of the purchase price.

Who's in charge of the millage money? Only City Council can authorize purchase of land or conservation easements from the millage funds. There are two advisory commissions, the Park Advisory Commission and the Greenbelt Advisory Commission, which make recommendations to City Council on acquisitions.

City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 5,491 acres of land protected
- 47 family farms preserved
- 10 new nature preserves established
- 128 acres of parkland added within city limits, providing linkages between existing parks and protecting some remaining critical urban areas
- \$26 million raised through external funding

