

## **..Title**

Resolution to Recommend Approval of a Grant Application to the EGLE Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Grant for Huron River Bluebelt Land Protection and Commit \$163,715 in Matching Funds.

## **..Memorandum**

This resolution recommends to City Council authorization of a grant application to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program for “Huron River ‘Bluebelt’ Land Protection” (i.e. purchasing conservation easements) within the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt’s “Bluebelt” and commitment \$163,715 in matching funds to the proposal.

### Grant Description

Michigan's NPS Program assists state, federal, and local partners to restore water bodies impaired by polluted runoff and other categories of NPS pollution as well as protecting high quality waters from NPS pollution impacts. Land protection projects via conservation easements are eligible because they prevent NPS pollution due to land use changes that may impact water quality. Applications to the NPS Program Implementation Grant are for funds up to 75 percent of the project total, equivalent to two-thirds of the total grant request.

In April 2026, Greenbelt staff submitted a Notice of Intent to apply to the NPS Program Implementation Grant. On May 8, EGLE invited the City to submit a full application and determined that the proposal would likely fit Tier 1 for funding. The deadline for application is June 30, 2026. It is anticipated that a request for acceptance of this grant, if awarded, will be presented to the Greenbelt Advisory Commission in August or September, and City Council in September of 2026.

Staff expect to be able to purchase two conservation easements with the grant. This resolution does commit City funds to this project. Appraisals will be completed for all properties and, if awarded grant funds, a complete budget along with a purchase agreement approval request will be submitted to the Greenbelt Advisory Commission and Council for approval.

### Bluebelt

The specific properties whose protection would be funded by this grant are still being negotiated. However, they will all a) meet eligibility for Bluebelt per the framework adopted by the Greenbelt Advisory Commission, b) have a sufficient score according to the scoring system adopted by the Greenbelt Advisory Commission, and c) be inspected by EGLE staff for their contribution to water quality. The NPS Program’s stated purpose aligns with the Bluebelt’s purpose and is one of the grants staff were specifically hoping to leverage with the Bluebelt.

### Proposed Budget

The grant dollars would pay for 75% of the purchase price of the conservation easements. The local match includes the remaining 25% of the estimated purchase price, plus all due diligence costs associated with easement acquisition (appraisals,

surveys, Phase I ESAs, baseline documentation reports, title search) and staff time.

The City's matching funds for this grant would be from Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage proceeds.

Grant Request	\$351,469
Local Match	<u>\$163,715 (31.78% of project total; 46.58% of grant request)</u>
Project Total	\$515,184

If the grant is awarded, staff may seek funding contributions from Washtenaw County and other relevant stakeholders identified during the acquisition process.

**..Staff**

Prepared by: Rosie Pahl Donaldson, Land Acquisition Supervisor

**..Body**

Whereas, Chapter 42 of Ann Arbor City Code establishes the Greenbelt District and enables the City to purchase conservation easements on property within the district;

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

Whereas, The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program has matching grant funds available for up to 75 percent of the project total, equivalent to two-thirds of the total grant request;

Whereas, the NPS Program and the City of Ann Arbor Bluebelt share the goal of protecting high quality waters from NPS pollution impacts;

Whereas, The Greenbelt Advisory Commission's goal is to leverage the City's millage funds to protect as much land as possible throughout the 30-year life of the millage;

RESOLVED, That the Greenbelt Advisory Commission City Council directs the City Administrator to apply to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program for a 2026 Implementation Grant for the "Huron River 'Bluebelt' Land Protection" project; and

RESOLVED, The Greenbelt Advisory Commission confirms that \$163,715 is available in the Open Space and Parkland Preservation fund and recommends it to be committed as local match if the grant is awarded.