



Legislation Text

File #: 17-0508, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Approve Pre-Proposal Application to the USDA FY 2018 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), in Partnership with Washtenaw County, Legacy Land Conservancy, and Others, to Secure Funding to Complete USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Purchases of Development Rights (PDR) Conservation Easements (up to \$1,000,000.00) The Attached Resolution authorizes the City of Ann Arbor to approve the submission of a Pre-Proposal to the USDA FY 2018 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), in partnership with Washtenaw County, Legacy Land Conservancy, and others, to secure funding for the purchase of USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) conservation easements in Washtenaw County.

This pre-proposal would not obligate the City of Ann Arbor to expend any funds or enter into any agreements. If the City is invited by the NRCS RCPP to submit a full proposal, an additional City Council resolution will be sought to submit a full proposal that would obligate the City of Ann Arbor to participate in the RCPP.

If the final Proposal is funded, the grant would provide the Greenbelt Program with funds to support the purchase of conservation easements. Individual projects will still seek City Council approval on a project by project basis.

If the City's proposal is successful, the City would contribute up to \$1,000,000.00 of bonding funds over the five-year program period to be matched at 50% by NRCS, leveraging up to \$1,000,000.00 towards the acquisition of conservation easements. The City of Ann Arbor would commit contributing funds in the amount of \$40,000.00 for staff time, and \$30,000.00 for due diligence activities (appraisal, survey, title work, environmental assessments, closing costs, etc.) over the five-year program period.

The purpose of the acquisition of the development rights utilizing this funding is for Open Space Preservation and Agricultural Land Preservation.

Passage of the attached resolution and grant application to the RCPP is recommended by staff.

Prepared by: Ruth Thornton, Greenbelt Program Manager, The Conservation Fund

Reviewed by: Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator

Approved by: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

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

Whereas, Limited funds are available through the County Natural Area Preservation Program, Legacy Land Conservancy, and Township land preservation funds;

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

Whereas, The Greenbelt Advisory Commission strongly recommends a minimum of 25% matching funds on Greenbelt purchases, provided by either grant funds, other local matching funds, or landowner donations;

Whereas, If the City's pre-proposal is successful, the City will be invited to submit a full proposal as leading partner, which, if successful, would obligate the City to provide up to \$1,000,000.00 of match from bonding funds, and appropriate \$70,000.00 in contributing funds (\$40,000.00 in staff time and \$30,000.00 in due diligence over five years) to the purchase of conservation easements; and

Whereas, The City, as lead partner, would be eligible to receive matching funds of up to \$1,000,000.00 from the USDA NRCS towards the purchase price of conservation easements over 5 years;

RESOLVED, That City Council approves submitting a Pre-Proposal to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program to the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service; and

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