

Coffin Street Conservation Project Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers!)

How did this opportunity arise? Wasn't this land supposed to be developed?

A group of private landowners purchased the land after the previous buyer's purchase agreement expired and their back-up offer was accepted by the seller. They then approached the Town regarding interest in preserving approximately 50 acres for conservation and public trails. The Town asked Greenbelt to be the conservation project lead.

What is the total purchase price, and how much is the Town paying?

The total purchase price for the 50 acres – 30 acres of conservation land and 20 acres that will be permanently preserved from development via a Conservation Restriction – is \$250,000. The Town would pay \$175,000 in existing CPA funds; Greenbelt would fundraise the remaining \$75,000.

How was this purchase price determined? Is the Town over-paying?

The purchase price was determined based upon a balance between available funds and public benefit. Greenbelt commissioned an independent appraiser to determine the property's market value based upon what could be built on the property. That appraisal determined that the market value of what the Town and Greenbelt are purchasing is over \$500,000. That means the actual purchase price is approximately 50% below market value. According to the appraisal, up to 5 homes could be built on 50 acres if it is not purchased for conservation.

Will my taxes go up because of this purchase?

No. The \$175,000 would come from Community Preservation Act funds, which can only be used for historic preservation, affordable housing, and open space & recreation.

Will there be public access on the preserved land?

Yes; there will be a public trail system on both the 30 acres owned by Greenbelt and on the 20-acre Conservation Restriction portion. These trails will be created, signed, and maintained over the long term by Greenbelt.

Will there be parking?

If Cortland Lane is accepted as a public way (Article 19), then a small, unpaved parking area will be created just off of Cortland Lane. If Article 19 does not pass, then there is the option of creating parking off of Coffin Street.

Who will own and manage the preserved land and make sure trails are maintained?

Greenbelt will own the 30 acres (the Town will hold a CR on these 30 acres), and Greenbelt and the Town will co-hold a Conservation Restriction on 20 acres. This Conservation Restriction will permanently prohibit development on the 20 acres, as well as create public trail access on the 20 acres. Current and all future owners of the 20 acres will only be able to use the land for low-intensity farming, grazing, pasture, and non-motorized recreation. Greenbelt will maintain trails on the entire 50 acres, including creating signs, maps, and a kiosk.

What does the Town get for \$175,000?

- 1) **Public trails** that would connect Riverbend Conservation Area trails to a public trail on Riverrun Farm. Preserving this land also creates the potential for future trail expansion.
- 2) Streams and wetlands – important for **clean water and preventing downstream flooding**.
- 3) Intact forests – important for **clean water and keeping the air cool**.
- 4) Important **wildlife habitat** provided by these diverse landscapes.
- 5) Increased resilience to the impacts of climate change – connecting conserved lands is important for **climate resiliency to protect both wildlife and people**.
- 6) **Greenbelt will manage and maintain the land and public trails** – at no cost to the Town – forever.

What will happen to the land if Article 14 does not pass?

The land will remain privately-owned and can be developed according to local wetland, zoning and subdivision regulations.

Do you have more questions?
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