

Landowner options. Community benefits.



Payment to landowners who choose conservation.



Ready-to-harvest beans grown right here in Bethlehem!

The selling of an agricultural or conservation easement to the Town:

- Is voluntary and guided by the farmer's or landowner's vision and needs.
- Is an option for interested landowners who own 5 acres or more of undeveloped land.
- Retains property in private ownership, keeping land in the hands of the people who are the best stewards of the land.
- Financially compensates farmer or landowner for the development value of their property.
- Can be tailored to the individual farmer's or landowner's current and future needs.
- Can bolster a farm or forestry business operation by providing cash assets for investments, estate planning, retiring debt, or anything else.
- Helps keep working farms as working farms, and working forests as working forests.
- Keeps farmland affordable for new and beginning farmers, and for farmers who want to expand their operations.

Pays farmers and open space landowners to help keep their land in farmland, forest, and open space forever.

www.townofbethlehem.org

What is an agricultural or conservation easement?

When a farmer or landowner chooses to sell their development rights to the Town through the Farms & Forests Fund, and after their application is approved by the Town, a legal document known as a conservation or agricultural easement is created so that the land cannot be further developed, except for continued farming and agricultural uses, or leaving the land as open space. This easement permanently restricts residential, commercial, or industrial development of a property in order to protect its conservation or agricultural values. All easements are unique and are designed to meet the individual needs and wishes of each landowner. The easement is attached to the landowner's deed and stays with the deed even if the land is sold or passed on through inheritance, thereby ensuring that the land will remain protected as farmland or open space forever.

What are development rights?

Development rights are a landowner's rights to develop, or subdivide, their property. Development rights can be separated from a landowner's property and sold to another entity. When the rights are sold, the land remains in private ownership. Money from the sale goes to the landowner to spend however they choose.

Charitable donations to the Farms and Forests Fund are tax deductible under section 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code.



How do I apply to the Farms & Forests Fund?

The Farms & Forests Fund is an option under the Town's larger **Farms and Forests Conservation Program**. Landowner applications for this program are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Interested landowners with 5 acres or more of farmland or open space can apply anytime by completing the Town's:

Conservation Project Landowner Application.

Available online:

www.townofbethlehem.org

Search: *Conservation Project Landowner Application*

Pick up at Town Hall: at the information display table on the first floor and at the second floor Planning Department office.

Questions? We're here to help!

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Thank you! Implementing this

voluntary farmland, forest, and open space conservation tool is a cooperative effort. Thank you to all farmers and landowners who collectively help to make this environmental conservation program a success for both landowners and the larger community.

Thank you also to the five voluntary members of the **Conservation Easement Review Board**, who provide support and expertise in program implementation.



Town of Bethlehem
Farms and Forests Conservation Program

Farms & Forests Fund

Local Voluntary Landowner Conservation

A purchase of agricultural or conservation easement program.

