



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6348  
October 3, 2023  
Consent Agenda**

**AGENDA BILL INFORMATION**

<b>TITLE:</b>	AB 6348: Arbor Day Proclamation No. 317	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Proclaim the third Saturday in October as Arbor Day on Mercer Island.	

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Public Works
<b>STAFF:</b>	Alaine Sommargren, Deputy Public Works Director Andrew Prince, Urban Forestry Project Manager
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. Proclamation No. 317
<b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b>	n/a

<b>AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE</b>	\$ n/a
<b>AMOUNT BUDGETED</b>	\$ n/a
<b>APPROPRIATION REQUIRED</b>	\$ n/a

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this agenda bill is to proclaim the third Saturday in October as Arbor Day on Mercer Island (see Exhibit 1).

**BACKGROUND**

The Tree City USA program serves to recognize a community’s commitment to caring for its urban forests – a designation which more than 3,500 communities nationwide have attained since the program’s creation in 1976. The City of Mercer Island first joined this program in 2017, and the Arbor Day proclamation is an annual requirement for renewing this designation.

**ISSUE/DISCUSSION**

In addition to showcasing the many ways the City of Mercer Island values and supports a robust urban forest management program, maintaining active Tree City USA status also makes the City eligible for certain urban forestry grant programs. To qualify for this program, four core standards of sound urban forestry management must be met:

1. Maintaining a tree board or department,
2. Adopting a tree care ordinance,

3. An annual budget of at least \$2 per capita dedicated to community forestry, and
4. An annual Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

The City of Mercer Island currently meets these criteria in the following ways:

- Urban forestry programs are well-established within the Parks and Right-of-Way divisions of the Public Works Department and include extensive tree planting and systematic tree assessments along the City's park, open space, and arterial boundaries. This work is supported by five staff ISA-certified arborists.
- The tree chapter of the Mercer Island Municipal Code (MICC 19.10) demonstrates the City's ongoing commitment to protecting and enhancing this vital natural resource.
- Calculations of expenditure on all aspects of tree care indicate that the City has continued to exceed the per capita requirement by over tenfold in 2023. These expenditures include all plant materials, installation, maintenance, and risk management, as well as ongoing training for staff arborists.

This proclamation, designating the third Saturday in October as Arbor Day in the City of Mercer Island, fulfills the final requirement needed to maintain Tree City USA qualification for the seventh year running. Further, the annual Arbor Day celebration creates a platform from which the City of Mercer Island can celebrate its triumphs, raise awareness of the challenges facing its urban tree canopy, and educate citizens on ways in which they can contribute to a healthy urban forest.

The 2023 Arbor Day celebration will be held on Saturday, October 21 from 10am to 1pm in Luther Burbank Park adjacent to the newly constructed south shoreline trail. This planting will enhance shoreline habitat, promote tree planting in the community, recognize our community volunteers, and encourage citizens of all ages to be good forest stewards in Mercer Island's parks and their own backyards. City staff will launch a social media Countdown to Arbor Day including Facebook and Instagram posts that highlight the City's efforts to improve the health of Mercer Island's urban forests and share ideas of how residents can contribute on their own properties.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Proclaim the third Saturday in October as Arbor Day in the City of Mercer Island.