



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

**AB 5947  
October 5, 2021  
Consent Agenda**

**AGENDA BILL INFORMATION**

|               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
| <b>TITLE:</b> | AB 5947: Arbor Day Proclamation No.282  | <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance<br><input type="checkbox"/> Resolution |
|               | <b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>  |   |
|               | Proclaim the third Saturday of October as Arbor Day in the City of Mercer Island. |   |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>DEPARTMENT:</b>            | Public Works   |
| <b>STAFF:</b>                 | Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations/Public Works Director<br>Hannah Van Pelt, Right of Way Arborist |
| <b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>       | n/a  |
| <b>EXHIBITS:</b>              | 1. Arbor Day Proclamation No. 282  |
| <b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b> | n/a  |

**SUMMARY**

At its core, 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 these ranks in 2017, and the Arbor Day proclamation is an annual requirement for renewing this designation.

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 six staff ISA-certified arborists.
- The tree chapter of the Mercer Island Municipal Code was updated in 2017, demonstrating 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 over tenfold in 2020. 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 fifth year running. Further, the annual Arbor Day celebration creates a platform from which the City of Mercer Island can celebrate its accomplishments, 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 2021 Arbor Day celebration will be held on October 16, 2021. As in 2020, COVID-19 restrictions necessitate that this event differ in size and scope from years past, though maintain the same spirit of encouraging native tree planting, recognizing our community volunteers, and engaging citizens of all ages to be good forest stewards in our 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. In addition to the Countdown, there will be a small volunteer event held on Arbor Day at Upper Luther Burbank Park, in partnership with the EarthCorps. The community is encouraged to participate, whether at a volunteer event or from home, in support of the City's efforts to foster a healthier, greener Mercer Island.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Mayor proclaims the third Saturday in October as Arbor Day in Mercer Island.