



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

**AB 5756
October 6, 2020
Consent Calendar**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 5756: Arbor Day Proclamation No.257	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Proclaim the third Saturday of October as Arbor Day in the City of Mercer Island.	

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
STAFF:	Hannah Van Pelt, Right of Way Arborist
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Arbor Day Proclamation
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

SUMMARY

The City of Mercer Island first obtained Tree City USA designation in 2017, and the Arbor Day proclamation is an annual requirement for maintaining this designation. Tree City USA certification recognizes the many ways the City of Mercer Island values and supports a robust urban forest management program. In addition, active Tree City USA status makes the City eligible for certain urban forestry grant programs.

Tree City USA designation recognizes a community’s commitment to caring for its urban forests, and since the program’s creation in 1976, more than 3,500 communities nationwide have gained this recognition. To qualify for the Tree City USA 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 seven 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 2019. 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. 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 2020 Arbor Day celebration will be held on October 17, 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this event will differ from year's 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 which 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 Pioneer Park, with the aid of EarthCorps. Volunteers will work in shifts to reduce exposure, with a break in between for City staff and official(s) to plant a ceremonial tree and say a few remarks. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

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