

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 24, 2025

PREPARED BY: Maria Gonzalez, Management Analyst
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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE CITY'S ONGOING COMMITMENT TO TREE CITY USA
RECOGNITION THROUGH THE ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the update on the City's Tree City USA status and continued participation in the Arbor Day Foundation's program.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The Arbor Day Foundation, a nonprofit organization established in 1972 by J. Sterling Morton—the founder of Arbor Day—works to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees. With a focus on environmental conservation, sustainability, and global reforestation, the Foundation has helped plant tens of millions of trees worldwide and provides valuable educational resources to promote tree care and environmental stewardship.

A key initiative of the Foundation is the Tree City USA® program, which recognizes communities committed to effective urban forest management. Other initiatives, such as Replanting America's National Forests, support large-scale reforestation efforts nationwide.

The City has successfully completed the 2024 Tree City USA application, which documents forestry and tree care activities throughout the year. This application is submitted annually for the preceding year to maintain Tree City USA recognition.

To qualify and maintain Tree City USA status, the City must meet the following standards:

- Maintain a designated tree board or department to oversee public tree management
- Enforce a Tree Care Ordinance (Ordinance No. 1003)
- Invest at least \$2 per capita annually in urban forestry
 - Required investment for City of Palm Desert (based on population): \$105,558 annually
 - Current investment: \$1.39 million via West Coast Arborists contract, Project No. MLS00026)
- Formally observe Arbor Day (April 9, 2025)

Following the fulfillment of these criteria, the City will submit an annual report detailing all tree-related activities. This information contributes to the Arbor Day Foundation's assessment of the collective environmental impact of participating communities.

Staff will continue to identify and implement additional pledge actions to support the program further should the City Council reaffirm its commitment to participation.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The annual cost for Arboricultural Services is included in the approved operations budget for the Public Works Department, which includes Parks, Medians, LLDs, Desert Willow, and the Housing Authority. Therefore, there is no additional financial impact to the general fund with this action.

<i>FY 2024-25</i>	Account No.	Budget	Current Investment
<i>Civic Center Park</i>	1104610-4332001	\$130,000	\$130,000
<i>Parks</i>	1104611-4332001	\$150,000	\$132,500
<i>Medians</i>	1104614-4337001	\$500,000	\$495,000
<i>LLDs</i>	200 Accounts	\$100,000	\$76,625
<i>Desert Willow</i>	4414195-4809200	\$425,000	\$425,000
<i>Housing Authority</i>	871 Accounts	\$130,000	\$130,000
	Contract Totals	\$1,435,000	\$1,389,125

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2025 Tree City USA Application for Certification
2. Ordinance No. 1003 Maintenance and Care of Trees