

# TREE CITY USA

The National Arbor Day Foundation recognizes towns and cities across America that meets the standards of the TREE CITY USA program and promotes urban forestry. The program began as a 1976 Bicentennial project, and has since been gaining popularity especially as a means of boosting a community's public image. Co-sponsors for TREE CITY USA include the National Association of State Foresters, the USDA Forest Service, and the Department of Natural Resources. Below are the TREE CITY USA standards. Communities need to re-apply every year for TREE CITY USA recognition and applications can be found at the National Arbor Day Foundation website: <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA.cfm>

The Village of Downers Grove has been a TREE CITY USA since 1984 for a total of 33 years. Only 10 other communities in Illinois have been TREE CITY USA recipients longer than Downers Grove. A list of all TREE CITY USA communities in Illinois and other states can be found at <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/directory.cfm>. Communities that have continued to improve and encourage higher levels of tree care may be awarded the Growth Award. Since the Growth Award recognition program began in 1990, Downers Grove has received the Growth Award 13 times (1992, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2012, 2015, and 2016).

### TREE CITY USA Standards

**STANDARD 1: A Tree Board or Department**  
A tree board is a group of concerned citizens, usually volunteer, charged by ordinance to develop and administer a comprehensive community tree management program for the care of trees on public property. Tree boards usually function with the aid of professional foresters. In communities with a population of more than 10,000, city forestry departments with salaried employees are often feasible. These departments may or may not be supported by advisory boards or administrative commissions.

**STANDARD 2: A Community Tree Ordinance**  
The community tree ordinance needs to designate the tree board or department and give them the responsibility for writing and implementing the annual community forestry work plan. The ordinance should determine public tree care policies for planting, maintenance, and removals. Ideally, the city tree ordinance will make provisions for establishing and updating a list of recommended street tree species to be planted with spacing and location requirements. A sample tree ordinance may be obtained by writing The National Arbor Day Foundation.

**STANDARD 3: A Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at least \$2 per capita**  
Many communities begin their program by taking an inventory of the trees growing on public property. The species, location, and condition of each tree are noted (i.e. healthy, needs pruning, should be removed, etc.) and the inventory data is summarized in a written report for presentation and approval by the city council. The report should be an objective analysis of the present state of the urban forest with recommendations for future management. The essential, ongoing activity for the care of trees along streets, in parks, and in other public places is the community forestry program. The annual work plan should address planting, watering and fertilizing, dead and hazardous tree removal, safety and fine pruning, and insect and disease control. To be named as a TREE CITY USA, a town or city must annually spend at least \$2 per capita for its annual community forestry program. Consider all funds spent for tree care — budget for street tree department or board, park department's tree expenditures, dead tree removal, etc.

**STANDARD 4: An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation**  
An Arbor Day observance can be simple and brief or an all-day or all-week observance. A proclamation issued by the mayor must accompany the observance and declare the observance of Arbor Day in your community. You can obtain a free "Celebrate Arbor Day!" packet by writing The National Arbor Day Foundation. Along with ideas for celebrating the holiday, the packet contains a sample proclamation.

