

**WELCOME TO  
TREE CITY  
USA!**



**TREE CITY USA**



***KENTUCKY  
DIVISION OF FORESTRY***

The Tree City USA (TCUSA) Program recognizes communities that demonstrate a strong commitment to the management of their urban forests. This program is sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation, in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters. The Kentucky Division of Forestry offers technical and educational assistance that enables communities to develop sustainable community forestry programs.

This booklet contains step-by-step instructions to walk the first time TCUSA applicant through the application process. Four standards are required for certification, and the requirements for each are outlined within this booklet. It is important for communities to carefully review the four required standards at the beginning of the calendar year to allow time for meeting the standards. If you need assistance or have any questions, contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry at (502) 564-4496.

### **What's Inside?**

Required Standards:

- A Tree Board or Forestry Department
- A Community Tree Ordinance
- A Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at least \$2 Per Capita
- An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation

***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."***

**Margaret Mead**

**STANDARD 1: A Tree Board or  
Forestry Department**

*The Tree Board or Forestry Department must be established by ordinance and given the responsibility for the management of the city's urban forest.*

**EXAMPLE(Standard 1)**

Date Tree Board was Established March 1, 1997

Tree Board Members:

Name	Address	Phone
Joe Smith*	123 Joshua Tree	(502) 123-4567
Bob Jones	456 Cactus Pike	(502) 456-7890
Liz Taylor	8890 Bryan Rd.	(502) 345-7584
Mary Poppy	346 London St.	(502) 395-9001

\*List Chairperson First

Meeting Dates and Meeting Description

March 31 - Organized Arbor Day Celebration.  
April 27 - Discussed Street Tree Ordinance.  
May 15 - Revised Street Tree Ordinance.  
June 12 - Organized Earth Day Celebration.  
August 18 - Discussed Upcoming Events.  
September 4 - Discussed Upcoming Events.  
October 20 - Planted 6 Memorial Trees.  
November 7 - Discussed Programming Ideas.  
December 9 - Completed 1993 Tree City USA  
Application.

**OR**

Our community tree management program is coordinated by the City Forestry Department. The Forestry Department is supervised by our City Forester, John Doe at (502) 863-2200.

**STANDARD 2: A Community Tree Ordinance**

*The community tree ordinance must have minimum standards for tree protection and maintenance.*

**EXAMPLE (Standard 2)**

Sample Tree Ordinance for  
Small to Mid-Size Communities

AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TREES ON PUBLIC PROPERTY WHICH SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY PROVIDING OXYGEN, STABILIZATION OF THE SOIL, PREVENTION OF EROSION, SHELTER FOR WILDLIFE, CONSERVATION OF ENERGY BY PROVIDING SHADE, FILTERING AIR, AND ADDING TO THE BEAUTY OF THE CITY OF HOMETOWN.

WHEREAS, trees provide a setting with a variety of color unsurpassed in shade and hue; and

WHEREAS, trees are an invaluable physiological counterpart to the man-made urban setting; and

WHEREAS, trees absorb a high percentage of carbon dioxide and return oxygen, a vital ingredient to life; and

WHEREAS, trees are a valuable asset that can affect an area economically; and

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Hometown has determined that the protection of trees on public property within Hometown is not only desirable but essential to the present and future safety, and welfare of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, the City of Hometown recognizes that trees on public property are valuable contributors to the City's environment;

NOW THEREFORE, be it ordained by the City Commission of the City of Hometown, Kentucky:

## **Section 1: Definitions**

Street Trees: "Street trees" are herein defined as trees, shrubs, bushes, and all other woody vegetation on land lying between property lines on either side of all streets, avenues, or ways within the City.

Park Trees: "Park trees" are herein defined as trees, shrubs, bushes, and all other woody vegetation in public parks having individual names, and all areas owned by the City or which the public has free access as a park.

## **Section 2: Creation and Establishment of a City Tree Board**

There is hereby created and established a City Tree Board for the City of Hometown, Kentucky, which shall consist of five members, citizens, and residents of the City, who shall be appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the Commission.

## **Section 3: Term of Office**

The term of the five persons appointed by the Mayor shall be three years except that the term of two of the members appointed initially shall be for one year, and the term of two members of the first Board shall be for two years. In the event that a vacancy shall occur during the term of any member, his successor shall be appointed for the unexpired portion of the term.

## **Section 4: Compensation**

Members of the Board shall serve without compensation.

## **Section 5: Duties and Responsibilities**

It shall be the responsibility of the Board to study, investigate, counsel, develop and/or update annually, and administer a written plan for

the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal, or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets, and in other public areas. Such will be presented annually to the City Commission and, upon acceptance and approval, shall constitute the official comprehensive tree plan for the City of Hometown, Kentucky. The Board, when requested by the City Commission, shall consider, investigate, make finding, and recommend upon any special matter of question coming within the scope of its work.

### **Section 6: Operation**

The Board shall choose its own officers, make its own rules and regulations, and keep a journal of its findings. A majority of the members shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.

### **Section 7: Street Tree Species to be Planted**

Tree Board will formulate an official Street Tree Species List for Hometown, Kentucky. The list of allowable species shall be broken down into categories of small, medium, and large trees. No species other than those included in this list may be planted as Street Trees without written permission of the City Tree Board.

### **Section 8: Spacing**

The spacing of street trees will be in accordance with the three size classes referred to in Section 7 of this ordinance, and no trees may be planted closer together than the following: small trees, 30 feet; medium trees, 40 feet; and large trees, 50 feet.

### **Section 9: Distance from Curb and Sidewalk**

The distance trees may be planted from curbs or curblines and sidewalks will be in accordance

with the three size classes listed in Section 7 of this ordinance, and no trees may be planted closer to any curb or sidewalk than the following: small trees, 2 feet; medium trees, 3 feet; and large trees, 4 feet.

### **Section 10: Distance from Street Corners and Hydrants**

No street tree shall be planted closer than 20 feet to any street corner, measured from the point of nearest intersection curbs and curblines. No street trees shall be planted closer than 10 feet to any hydrant.

### **Section 11: Public Tree Care**

The City shall have the right to plant, prune, maintain, and remove trees, plants, and shrubs within the lines of all streets, alleys, avenues, lanes, squares, and public grounds as may be necessary to ensure public safety or to preserve or enhance the symmetry and beauty of such public grounds. The City Tree Board may remove or cause or order to be removed any tree or part thereof which is an unsafe condition or which by reason of its nature is injurious due to fungus, insects, or other pests. This section does not prohibit the planting of street trees by adjacent property owners providing that the selection and location of said trees is in

### **Section 12: Tree Topping**

It shall be unlawful as a normal practice for any person, firm, or city department to top any street tree, park tree, or other tree on public property. Topping is defined as the severe cutting back of limbs to stubs larger than three inches in diameter within the tree's crown to such a degree so as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree. Trees severely damaged by storms or other causes or certain trees under utility wires and other obstructions where alternative pruning

practices are impractical may be exempt from this ordinance at the determination of the City Tree Board.

### **Section 13: Pruning, Corner Clearance**

Every owner of any tree overhanging any street or right-of-way within the City shall prune the branches so that such branches shall not obstruct the light from any street lamp or obstruct the view of any street intersection and so that there shall be a clear space of eight feet (8') above the surface of the street or sidewalk. Said owners shall remove all dead, diseased, or dangerous trees or broken or decayed limbs which may constitute a menace to the safety of the public when it interferes with the proper spread of light along the street from a street light or interferes with visibility of any traffic control device or sign.

### **Section 14: Dead or Diseased Tree Removal on Private Property**

The City shall have the right to cause the removal of any dead or diseased trees on private property within the City when such trees constitute a hazard to life and property or harbor insects or disease which constitute a potential threat to other trees within the City. The City Tree Board will determine hazardous trees which may constitute a menace to the safety of the public when it interferes with the visibility of any traffic control device, sign or street light.

### **Section 15: Interference with City Tree Board**

It shall be unlawful for any person to prevent, delay, or interfere with the City Tree Board or any of its agents or servants while engaging in and about the planting, cultivating, mulching, pruning, spraying, or removing of any street



trees, park trees, or trees on private grounds, as authorized in this ordinance.

### **Section 16: Arborist Licensing and Bond**

It shall be unlawful for any person or firm to engage in the business or occupation of pruning, treating, or removing street or park trees within the City without first applying for and procuring a license. The license fee shall be \$25 annually in advance provided, however, that no license shall be required of any public service company or City employee doing such work in the pursuit of their public service endeavors. Before any license shall be issued, each applicant shall first file evidence of possession of liability insurance in the minimum amounts of \$25,000 for bodily injury and \$10,000 property damage indemnifying the City or any person injured or damage resulting from the pursuit of such endeavors as herein described.

### **Section 17: Review by City Commission**

The City Commission shall have the right to review the conduct, acts, and decisions of the City Tree Board. Any person may appeal from any ruling or order of the City Tree Board to the City Commission who may hear the matter and make the final decision.

### **Section 18: Penalty**

Any person violating any provision of this ordinance shall be, upon conviction or a plea of guilt, subject to a fine not to exceed \$500.



**STANDARD 3: A Community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at Least \$2 per Capita**

*City must have a comprehensive tree management program supported by \$2 per capita per year.*

**EXAMPLE (Standard 3)**

Annual Workplan

- I. Tree Planting
  - a. County Park
  - b. Hometown School
  - c. Main Street
  
- II. Tree Maintenance
  - a. Routine pruning on city park trees
  - b. Remove hazardous trees on Main Street
  
- III. Arbor Day
  - a. Tree Giveaway at County Park
  - b. Educational Walk in County Park
  - c. Tree City USA Ceremony

Annual Budget

Tree Planting.....	\$10,000
Tree Maintenance..... (pruning and tree removals)	\$7,000
Supplies.....	\$4,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>

\*The population of Hometown, Kentucky is 10,000.

## Allowable Budget Expenditures

The following expenses for public tree care (street, park, cemetery) may be counted in meeting the \$2 per capita requirement:

### I. **Administrative costs:**

- a. city worker salaries
- b. survey or inventory expenses
- c. computer inventory software
- d. administrative time (paperwork)
- e. insurance costs

### II. **Planting Materials, Supplies, & Misc.:**

- a. tree purchases
- b. equipment purchases
- c. mulch
- d. fertilizer
- e. staking supplies

### III. **Tree Maintenance:**

- a. tree planting labor
- b. watering
- c. pruning
- d. mulching
- e. dead tree and stump removal
- f. leaf and brush pickup
- g. insect and disease control
- h. contract work
- i. tree trimming expenditures by utility companies

### IV. **Educational Development:**

- a. Arbor Day program
- b. prizes for Arbor Day contests
- c. tree care conferences and workshops
- d. public education materials - brochures, newsletters, etc.

**STANDARD 4: An Arbor Day Observance  
and Proclamation**

*Arbor Day must be celebrated with a signed proclamation.*

**EXAMPLE (Standard 4)**

Proclamation

WHEREAS, In 1872 J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and

WHEREAS, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious top soil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, release oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife, and

WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products, and

WHEREAS, trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and

WHEREAS, trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Doe, Mayor of Hometown, Kentucky, do hereby proclaim April 5, 1999, as

**ARBOR DAY**

In the City of Hometown, and I urge all citizens to support our city's urban forestry program, and FURTHER, I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the hearts and promote the well-being of present and future generations.

DATED                      this 5th day of April, 1999

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

