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## News Release

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*Seeing the forest for the trees*

## City named one of the '10 Best U.S. Cities for Urban Forests'

The City's urban forest and its management are one of the best in the U.S., according to a study released today by the nonprofit group [American Forests](#).

Through a combination of an in-depth survey, independent data and a vote by a blue-ribbon panel of leading urban forest experts, the nonprofit has named the 10 best U.S. cities for urban forests among the 50 most populous U.S. cities: Austin, Charlotte, Denver, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York, Portland, Sacramento, Seattle and Washington, D.C. The list made [USA Today](#).

"We're thrilled Sacramento is being recognized for having one of the very best urban forests in the nation. When the City was founded 164 years ago, Sacramento had few trees. Today's urban forest is the result of an early vision and the leadership and stewardship of many people who realized the value and beauty trees bring to a community," said Jerry Way, director of public works. The achievement will be formally recognized with a proclamation at the Feb. 26 council meeting.

Joe Benassini is the city's Urban Forester that oversees policy and planning for the city's trees. "The story *From the City of the Plains to the City of Trees* is one of the great tales about how Sacramento's founders immediately recognized the importance of tree lined streets and began planting an urban forest that is now internationally recognized. "With the help of our own city leaders, the Sacramento Tree Foundation and many others, that legacy continues today," said Benassini.

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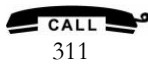
*Urban Forestry, 2*

“We believe the City’s investments in urban forest resources, including community partnerships, is very worthy of this national recognition by American Forests,” states Ray Tretheway, executive director of the [Sacramento Tree Foundation](#). “The citizens, businesses and many public agencies in Sacramento, particularly the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, value the guidance and commitment of our City’s leadership. Our elected officials and policy makers truly value trees as critical contributors to clean air, summer energy conservation, water quality and the health and well-being of Sacramento’s neighborhoods.”

The project, funded by the U.S. Forest Service, found that while many cities are working to improve their green infrastructure, top-ranked cities, like Sacramento, have made prolonged investments in the health of its urban forest. The City has also benefited from active nonprofit and community participation. Sacramento recognizes that trees don’t just provide aesthetic value; they also help increase property values, reduce energy costs and lower medical costs by improving human health.

The panel recognized Sacramento for its strong volunteer base managed by the Sacramento Tree Foundation with thousands of individuals volunteering thousands of hours of work each year. Another contributing factor for the City’s high ranking is its documented knowledge of its tree canopy, tree species diversity and age class range. In recent years, the City invested in hiring a consultant firm to capture this data. The database includes the characteristics and maintenance history of all of its 100,000 trees on streets and in parks and cemeteries.

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