

## Special Community Designation Requests Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent and transparent process for community members or organizations seeking official City of Maricopa recognition of a special community designation (e.g., Purple Heart City, Dementia Friendly Community, Autism Friendly Community, Tree City USA).

This policy ensures proposed designations:

- Align with the City's values and strategic priorities
  - Provide meaningful community benefit
  - Do not create unfunded City obligations
  - Demonstrate sustained community leadership
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### Scope

This policy applies to any request for the City of Maricopa to adopt, recognize, or promote a special designation, certification, or recognition program initiated by an external individual, nonprofit, civic group, or coalition.

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### Policy Statement

The City of Maricopa supports community-driven initiatives that enhance quality of life and civic pride.

Special designations must be community-initiated, community-led, and community-funded. The City may provide recognition when a designation:

1. Demonstrates clear community benefit
2. Meets recognized external standards
3. Aligns with City priorities and values
4. Does not create ongoing fiscal or operational obligations
5. Has sustainable local leadership

Final approval of any special designation rests with the City Council.

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## Definitions

### Special Community Designation

A recognition or certification granted by an external organization acknowledging a community's commitment to a defined cause, population, or standard.

### Sponsoring Organization

The community member, nonprofit, or coalition leading the designation effort.

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## Community Standards for Eligibility

To be considered for City recognition, a designation must demonstrate:

1. **Recognized Framework**  
Administered by a credible national, state, or widely recognized organization with established criteria.
  2. **Meaningful Community Impact**  
Provides tangible benefit such as awareness, services, engagement, or quality-of-life improvements.
  3. **Achievable and Sustainable Requirements**  
Standards are clearly defined, realistic for Maricopa, and maintainable by the sponsoring organization.
  4. **Community Support**  
Evidence of support from stakeholders such as affected populations, nonprofits, civic groups, businesses, or residents.
  5. **Alignment with City Values**  
Consistent with Maricopa's commitment to being a welcoming, safe, and thriving community.
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## Roles and Responsibilities

### Sponsoring Organization

The sponsoring organization shall:

- Lead all designation activities and community engagement

- Meet and maintain program requirements
- Fund all fees, materials, signage, and related costs
- Provide ongoing leadership and status updates as requested

The City is not responsible for securing or providing funding.

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## City Staff

City staff may:

- Provide procedural guidance
- Evaluate alignment with this policy
- Assess fiscal, operational, or branding impacts
- Coordinate Council consideration
- Promote the designation as deemed appropriate by staff

Staff are not responsible for implementing designation requirements.

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## City Council

City Council may:

- Formally recognize or adopt a designation
  - Authorize use of the City name or logo
  - Decline requests
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## Request Process

### Step 1 — Community Initiation

The sponsoring organization submits a designation request including:

- Program description and administering organization
- Required standards and commitments
- Community benefit statement

- Evidence of community support
  - Funding, implementation and sustainability plan
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### Step 2 — Staff Review

City staff evaluate alignment with policy standards, City impacts, and potential overlap with existing initiatives. Additional information may be requested.

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### Step 3 — Council Consideration

If standards are met, staff may present the request to City Council for formal recognition. Council approval is required for official City designation.

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### Funding

All costs associated with obtaining and maintaining a designation are the responsibility of the sponsoring organization, including fees, materials, signage, outreach, and renewals. Any City financial support must follow standard budget processes.

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### Branding and Representation

Use of the City of Maricopa name, logo, or identity in connection with a designation requires:

- Council approval of the designation
- Compliance with City branding standards
- Staff approval prior to public use

Unauthorized representation of City endorsement is prohibited.

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### City Recognition and Promotion

Upon Council approval, the City may acknowledge the designation to recognize community leadership and increase public awareness. Recognition may include:

#### City Website

Listing on the City website with designation name, description, sponsoring organization, and recognition date.

#### City Hall Recognition

Standardized signage or display at or within City Hall, as determined by the City.

#### City Communications

Acknowledgment through official channels such as press releases, social media, newsletters, or proclamations.

Recognition is contingent upon the designation remaining active and compliant with program standards. The City may remove references if a designation lapses or standards are no longer met.

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#### Ongoing Accountability

The sponsoring organization shall notify the City of designation status changes or lapse. The City may withdraw recognition if standards are no longer maintained.

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#### Non-Endorsement

City recognition of a designation does not constitute endorsement of all positions or activities of the administering organization or sponsoring group.