

HARTFORD'S URBAN FOREST IN CRISIS ... ALERT!

Last August, 11-year-old Christopher was struck and badly injured by a falling tree in Goodwin Park. In response, the City launched a city-wide survey to identify hazardous trees in parks and along streets. That effort stopped when fall leaf drop made assessment impossible. The City Forester had surveyed about 2/3 of Hartford's 200+ miles of streets as well as many acres of high use park areas. This work will resume when trees leaf out in spring.

Almost 250 trees were removed before the forestry account ran out of money. The Hartford Tree Advisory Commission expects that more money will be found to continue this work, and they hope that the City will again have a full-time forestry crew to tackle the work in the next fiscal year.

Residents who noticed these removals were alarmed. Some of the trees looked big and strong and their crowns were leafy. Based on careful assessment by the City Forester, they were not healthy. They were hazardous. A tree may look healthy because the living part of the trunk is a very thin layer just inside the bark, but the strength of the tree is in the woody core which is missing when the tree is hollow.

Our urban forest provides us with all kinds of good things, from clean air to summer shade to storm water retention to beauty and even increase property values. A city without trees is a dismal place. To take care of our forest, we need to keep planting new trees, taking care of mature trees, and removing trees that are dead or dying.

The Hartford City Forester and the Tree Advisory Commission are doing all they can to care for our forest. People who have questions about the city's trees should contact Heather Dionne at dionh001@hartford.gov or (860) 757-0683