



CITY OF HARTFORD

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Hon. Luke A. Bronin, Mayor



Tree Advisory Commission

Mike McGarry, Chairman
Greater Hartford Flood Commission

Dear Mike-

The City of Hartford Tree Advisory Commission has received information indicating that the Connecticut Airport Authority is requesting that the Flood Commission provide a Statement of No Objection to CAA's plan to clear 30 acres of riverside forest from flight paths serving Brainard Airport. We understand that Hartford's City Engineer has provided such a statement on behalf of the commission without the topic ever being discussed by commission members. We further understand that the topic will be taken up at a future meeting of the Flood Commission.

The Tree Advisory Commission will not stand in the way of crucial work to ensure the safety of pilots and passengers using the airport, but we believe that such work should be undertaken carefully. Our commission's purpose is to preserve, enhance, and expand Hartford's tree canopy to protect our urban environment and the people who live here. We believe that the safety related work may be undertaken with that purpose in mind and request the support of the Flood Commission in obtaining assurances that proper precautions are taken.

1. Hartford's Tree Ordinance requires that, when trees are removed for development purposes, that those trees be replaced with trees with a total trunk diameter equivalent to the total trunk diameter of those being removed. Although CAA has not inventoried the trees they intend to remove, our rough estimate is that they will likely remove the equivalent of about 800 12-inch trees, with a total diameter of 9600 inches. These could be replaced with 4800 2-inch trees. CAA's current plans include no replanting. Our Tree Ordinance permits entities that remove trees to "buy out" of the replanting requirement with payment of \$500 per 2-inch tree to the Hartford Tree Fund. Assuming our rough math is accurate, that payment would amount to \$2.4 million in this case. We request that the Flood Commission support our effort to obtain such a payment.
2. Should CAA decide to do some replanting on the riverside land, we suggest that they develop a plan that will be suitable for this location. Their current plan is to do some ground level flush cuts and some 10-15-foot-high snag cuts of existing trees, most of which are silver maples and cottonwoods. These trees will likely resprout from the stumps and snags. This treatment will result in misshapen and unhealthy trees and a repeat of the obstruction problem they now face in a relatively short period of time. We request that CAA investigate a more sensitive treatment of this riverside ecosystem and we seek the Flood Commission's cooperation in obtaining their compliance.

Hartford's tree canopy is very valuable, providing millions of dollars worth of environmental services each year. And yet this crucial asset is under severe stress. 25% of our trees are mature and provide most of those services. Every one of those trees that is lost leaves a big hole in our tree canopy. Recently experienced episodes of high heat and drought have had severe impacts on these older trees and we are losing them at a rapid rate. Even recent heavy rains have led to loss of trees whose weakened root systems have been unable to support them in saturated soil. For that reason, we believe every measure must be taken to preserve healthy, mature trees and to replace all those that are lost. The Tree Advisory Commission seeks partnership with the Flood Commission and all other components of our city government in ensuring that our valuable tree canopy will be maintained.

Thank you for your consideration. I will be happy to speak to the Flood Commission about this issue at your convenience and will also respond to any questions or concerns you may have.

Yours,

Jack N. Hale
Chair

Cc: Mayor Luke Bronin
City Council members
City Engineer
City Planner