

November 3, 2022

Memo

To: Mayor Bronin and City Council members

From: City of Hartford Tree Advisory
Commission



Re: Concerns regarding CAA proposal to cut trees from Brainard Airport flight paths

The Federal Aviation Administration has ordered Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) to clear trees from flight paths at Brainard Airport. CAA has indicated that this will involve cutting down or topping trees on 30 acres of land, most of which is in Hartford. There seem to be no ways to avoid complying with that order, but there are details to attend to. CAA has presented lengthy reports to Greater Hartford Flood Commission and the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, but they have not presented to the Hartford City Council. Nor has there been any presentation to the general public.

- The report presented to GHFC indicates areas where trees will be cut to stump height, areas where they will be cut to “snag” height (10-15 feet), and areas where trees will be pruned or topped by climbers, but it doesn’t explain how those areas and treatments were identified.
- CAA assumes that most trees will resprout and perhaps also assumes that the regrowth will eventually compensate for the loss of canopy. In fact, most of the trees in this area are Silver Maples and Cottonwoods which do tend to resprout. That said, the forest will be decimated at the time the work is done and it will be a long time before trees will grow back to provide valuable canopy.
- The Hartford Tree Ordinance requires replacement of trees removed during development projects on an inch for inch trunk diameter basis. Each 2 inches of diameter could be “cashed out” by contributing \$500 to the Hartford Tree Fund. An inexact estimate of that liability developed several years ago suggested that if all trees were removed, the replacement cost could be as much as \$2 million. CAA has not addressed this.
- CAA has made no presentations to the public since the early days of this conversation in 2017. Nor have they prepared anything for the City Council. The commission recommends that CAA be asked to present to the council’s PWPR&E Committee and the PED&H Committee where council members and the public would be able to ask questions.

The commission raised these points at a recent City Council hearing and stands ready to provide further details regarding these concerns. Please contact Commission Chair Jack Hale at 860-371-8026 or jack.hale@comcast.net.