

# **Town of Hamden Tree Removal Policy**

Approved unanimously by the Tree Commission on July 21, 2015

## **Policy for Removing Public Trees**

The Town of Hamden will use its tree assessment procedures to ensure consistency in the approach to determining tree removal. In all cases, the retention of healthy trees is a priority.

The Town of Hamden will remove public trees meeting the following criteria:

### **Hazard Trees**

Any tree on Town-owned property or in the public right-of-way determined to be a hazard, - one that risks public safety and property – may be removed by the Town of Hamden. If the Tree Warden has determined that the danger is imminent, the tree may be removed without notice. In all other cases, the tree must be posted by the Tree Warden in accordance with state law.

To be considered a hazard, a tree must meet all of the following criteria:

1. The tree is sufficiently large enough to cause damage should it fall;
2. The tree has a target, that would be damaged should it fall;
3. The tree has a condition that would make it likely to fall. Such conditions may include dead or damaged limbs, insect infestation, disease, significant root damage, or other physical damage or signs of decay or distress as noted by the Tree Warden.

The Town will inspect all requests for removal. Final determination as to whether a tree is a hazard tree shall be made by the Tree Warden.

As the removal of hazard trees is in the interests of safety, not aesthetics, the Town may leave stumps or trunks in place until appropriate equipment can be assigned to complete the removal. The Town will remove all limbs and brush at the time of the removal; different recycling requirements for limbs versus trunks may require separate visits to complete the removal of a hazard tree.

The Town will schedule all work within its priorities and assigned resources.

### **Non Hazard Trees**

#### **Infrastructure Improvement**

Public trees that fail to meet the definition of hazard tree may be removed as part of a *bona fide* infrastructure improvement or construction project at the discretion of the Tree Warden and in a manner consistent with the Connecticut General Statutes. The Town of Hamden will develop plans for the installation of new plantings, where feasible, prior to tree removal required for infrastructure improvement or construction projects.

### **Public Safety**

Hamden government agencies, including the Police Department, Fire Department, and Department of Public Works, may report to the Tree Warden any town tree that it is believed constitutes a threat to public safety, for example to motorists, pedestrians, or users of town recreational facilities. In the event that such a tree is identified, options including pruning, installing signage, or installing traffic signals will be evaluated. Removal of the tree will be performed only if no other cost effective alternative exists. Such removal shall be undertaken at the discretion of the Tree Warden and in a manner consistent with the Connecticut General Statutes.

### **Other Criteria**

Other criteria that will permit removal of public trees include the removal of weedy, noxious, invasive or poorly performing trees. In each of these cases, the tree must be posted by the Tree Warden in accordance with state law. With consideration of maintaining canopy cover, weedy, noxious, invasive or poorly performing trees removed through this process will be replaced with a tree from the town approved list.

Removal of public trees by the Town of Hamden will include the grinding of stumps within the priorities and assigned resources of the Public Works Department.

### **Public Trees will not be removed**

Requests to remove a town tree will not be granted for the following:

1. to facilitate views (including advertising signs)
2. off-street parking
3. installation of solar panels
4. to reduce the extent of leaf / flower / fruit drop
5. to reduce the impact from any bird or other animal waste or noise.