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**Policy: Managing and Protecting Park Trees**  
**Adopted by Board of Park Commissioners: July 2024**

The City of Bristol Department of Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services (BPRYCS) is responsible for the maintenance of trees located within the City's parks. In accordance with this policy and CT State Statue Sec 23-59 it is the City's objective to maintain and protect healthy trees for the benefit of City residents and to mitigate the risk trees pose to property and persons, while ensuring the sustainability of Bristol's urban forests. While not required by state law, BPRYCS, in line with the policies and procedures set forth by the Board of Public Works, has adopted the following policy to ensure a consistent approach to maintaining and protecting City Trees. Certified Tree Wardens on BPRYCS staff shall serve as Deputy Tree Wardens for the City of Bristol under the direction of the City's Tree Warden.

Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services has two primary responsibilities regarding park trees:

1. Maintain and protect healthy trees
2. Evaluate trees when complaints are received that may pose a risk to property or persons. The City does not have or maintain a survey of park trees indicating location, size, type or condition.
  - a. Upon receipt of a complaint, a Deputy Tree Warden shall inspect the tree(s) to confirm that it is a City owned tree and determine the condition/risk of failure of said tree.
    - i. Determination of City owned tree shall be based on location as determined by available mapping or a measurement from the pavement centerline to the edge of the right way (typically 50 ft.). The property owner shall reserve the right to obtain the services of a licensed survey to determine/confirm ownership of the tree. Tree location is based on the location 3 ft. above average surrounding grade.
    - ii. Tree evaluations performed by the City shall be based on a visual inspection from the ground to evaluate risk of failure. The property owner shall reserve the right to submit a report from a Licensed Arborist in the State of Connecticut. In addition, BPRYCS may also may procure the services of a Licensed Arborist to perform an additional evaluation. Tree evaluations shall be documented using the applicable department forms and be made available to both the concerned party and the City of Bristol's Tree Warden.
  - b. Tree removal must satisfy one of the following criteria:
    - i. The tree:
      1. Is a bona fide hazard and poses threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the public;
      2. Is diseases and has no prospect of recovery;
      3. Has been damaged by a storm event or damaged mechanically resulting in instability and posing a danger to people and/or property;

4. Is damaging adjacent infrastructure, and root or crown reduction will not eliminate the intrusion;
  5. Is obstructing motorists' view which creates an unsafe condition, and pruning will not eliminate the obstruction;
  6. Needs to be removed due to construction activity, new landscape installations, or landscape renovations and the tree cannot be incorporated into the project;
  7. Has declined substantially, will not recover, and detracts from the landscape;
  8. Has outgrown its location or is planted too close to a building.
- ii. Shade, leaves, fruit, sap, limited building and sign visibility, view visibility, etc., shall not constitute justification for tree removal.
- c. Trees that pose an immediate hazard shall be removed/cut by the City. All other trees scheduled for removal shall be posted for a period of 10 days in accordance with CT State Statue 23-59. Once posted the City shall conduct a hearing in accordance with State Statue if a concern is received from the public. In accordance with CT State Statue decision of the Tree Warden are final and appeal is through the CT State Superior Court.
  - d. Trees located on private property are the responsibility of the property owner not the City of Bristol.
  - e. Trees where a portion of the tree is located on private property and a park, are defined as shared ownership. Since the objective of the Department is to limit City risk, trees that are classified as shared ownership that pose a risk to the public are removed/cut or trimmed to remove the hazard at City expense. Care is taken during tree trimming as to not unbalance the tree, therefore trimming on the City portion of the tree may in the removal of the entire tree. For large trees that are primarily located on private property and do not pose a risk to the public but do pose a risk to private property the Department shall notify the private property owners that the City is not responsible for removing the hazard (cutting/trimming trees).
  - f. There are times due to work load, hazard (electrical), location, and/or the need of specialized equipment that requires work to be performed by a private vender (tree company) procured in accordance with City purchasing requirements.