

Memo: Roundabout Landscaping

Sandy Wood did the attached rendering of the roundabout center area landscaping. It is based on discussions we had at Wednesday's meeting with DOT officials on what would be acceptable to go in that area. The plantings that were discussed were Indian hawthorns, knock-out roses, liriopse, muhly grass, and zoysia grass as a lawn grass (pictures also attached). Rubber mulch is recommended as the mulch type (picture attached). Also included was discussion of some type of natural Christmas tree at the very center. NCDOT believes that what we have presented here in Sandy's rendition is a good concept. Town staff recommends this design and these plantings, including the Japanese cedar.

The Christmas tree we generally think of is usually a spruce or fir, but they don't survive well in coastal North Carolina. The trees mentioned by DOT staff were the Eastern Cedar and the Japanese Cedar, which grow to a height of 40 - 50 feet. After some research which included the Arizona Cypress, Leland Cypress, and Virginia Pine, staff reviewed the tree characteristics and recommends the Japanese Cedar. We think it's a better choice than the others because it has stronger branches (for decorating) and can be shaped to a pleasing sight. However, an alternative is to purchase a more traditional northern spruce or fir tree (natural) each year and plant it.

If we want a Christmas-tree-appearing tree, then it would be a tree of 8 or 9 feet in height. If we want a large tree in that space, then the cedars or the cypress which grow to a height of near 50 feet, won't appear as much like a Christmas tree as a smaller tree would. Attached are pictures of these trees. Keep in mind that decorating the smaller tree is relatively easy, but to decorate a tree anywhere from 25 to 50 feet in height would require us to have use of a bucket truck. DOT officials said that there is no sight obstruction to drivers from the height of a tree in the center of the roundabout.

In terms of cost, if we get DOT to do the landscaping as planned, the cost of any tree serving as a Christmas tree and planted during landscape installation is borne by them (although we might want to specify a minimum planting size and, if necessary, pay for it ourselves). We are of course responsible for maintenance. But if we purchase a Spruce or Fir tree annually, that cost would be borne by the Town.

DOT must have our proposed plantings list by November 8 so that they can proceed with the bid letting process. There will be irrigation and up-lighting also that DOT will install.