Broughton Street Landscape Analysis and Plan (2005) Overview

In 2003 the City of Savannah partnered with SDRA to develop what became the Broughton Street Landscape Analysis and Plan (2005). During this process we held two public meetings and invited residents, business owners, and other interested parties to create goals and needs for the Broughton Street corridor as it related to trees and landscaping. Some of the words and phrases the participants selected to describe these goals were: inviting, comfortable, appropriate to this urban environment, provide shade, reduce temperatures, filter air, filter stormwater and reduce runoff. These criteria were used to create three concepts for tree plantings along the corridor, one with only small canopy trees, one with small and large canopy trees, and one with only Sabal Palms.

These three plans were further vetted during a 90 day public comment period and review which resulted in the selection of the plan showing only small canopy trees as the best design to meet the stated goals and needs identified at the beginning of the process. From this process we created the current plan where we propose to replace the remaining Foster Holly trees with Bosque Elms, which was selected in the analysis as one of the trees which would meet the requirements set forth. The concept showing only Sabal Palms was not selected because it "did little to address the issues on the street including reducing street-level temperatures and ongoing maintenance issues" as well as the fact that they "would provide very little shade and would be constantly dropping branches and large seedpods that could be tracked into the businesses."

The goals and needs of this corridor are well met by the proposed Bosque Elm trees shown in the plan we have before us today. Further review of possible tree species will just lead us back to the Bosque Elm as a top contender. This cultivar has exhibited a high tolerance for heat /drought and shows high resistance to many of the common pests/diseases that tend to affect some of the other Elm cultivars, including Dutch Elm Disease. Ultimately these trees will provide the much needed shade for the public during the hot months, allow the warm sunlight to filter through during the cold ones, and provide huge benefits in terms of carbon sequestration, rainfall interception, and energy savings that far outweigh the necessary maintenance over the life of these trees.