

Questions and Answers about Emory Village

Q1. How can I know what Emory Village will look like if the Zoning Overlay is passed?

- A. No one can be positive about what it will look like exactly. Zoning is only a guide. It is not a site plan. Zoning **allows** things to happen but it doesn't **cause** them to happen.

Q2. What will the traffic situation be?

- A. It will certainly be different since there will be a roundabout.

The traffic study indicated that in peak hours the intersection will function about the same as it does now but speed will be reduced. Also, it's likely that with new housing planned for Emory Village, many people who work at *Emory* or on the Clifton Corridor who drove to work in the past will now be able to walk.

Q3. *Emory* says that the housing provided in the village by private development will be attractive to its employees. But *Emory* is building a large number of new residential units nearby across from the CDC and at Sage Hill.

- A. Emory Village will be developed by private developers. The location, being within walking distance to *Emory* and within shuttle distance to *CDC*, is attractive to professors and employees who are currently driving to work, but would now be able to walk.

Emory is developing the Sage Hill project which is geared toward graduate students who won't have cars. They will likely use public transit, bike or walk. *Emory* is also developing a mixed use center across from the *Centers for Disease Control (CDC)* and will only allow employees of *Emory*, *CDC*, *Children's Health Care of Atlanta*, and *Druid Hills High School* to live there. These residents will not be allowed to have a parking pass at *Emory*. Also, *Emory* is making a concerted effort to make driving an unattractive option. Parking permits, for example, have doubled in price and various incentives are offered to those who utilize alternative transportation options.

Q4. What about the six-story garages? Won't they tower over the village, including the four-story buildings?

- A. No. The floors in a parking deck are only two-thirds the height of a residential floor. Thus, 6 floors of parking are the same as 4 floors of residential. Remember: nothing in the village can be over 54 feet.

Q5. Why is it so expensive to build in Emory Village?

A. It's expensive because it's in so many bits and pieces. Emory Village consists of many small land parcels that are owned by several different individuals or companies. Thus, it is very difficult to assemble a single, large, easily buildable tract of land.

With small sites it is difficult to store materials and equipment such that construction can take place in one portion of the site with other portions being utilized as onsite storage. Instead, materials and equipment must be ordered in bits and pieces and/or be frequently moved. In short, construction on such small tracts is neither efficient nor cost-effective. Therefore, contractors charge more.

Q6. Are there any other complicating factors?

A. Yes, some owners would have to buy out others to create viable and buildable tracts. Adjoining property owners realize that their property is now more valuable because it can be part of an assemblage. So land prices rise.

Q7. Why does the Zoning Overlay allow some things but not others? Why does it permit some things but not others?

A. The Zoning Overlay is a carefully thought out package. It has to work with everything in tandem. It is intended to combine retail, office and residential uses in a small area. It has to be pedestrian friendly. It has to allow the use of cars but not encourage them too much. It has to allow owners and developers enough options to make a reasonable profit. It has to respect regulation protecting the stream bank and floodplain. It is complicated and it contains compromises that not everyone likes. But "cherry-picking" certain aspects from the whole package can cause the whole overlay to fail. If it does fail there will be no redevelopment.

Q8. What does the Zoning Overlay provide that we don't have now?

A. Predominantly residential housing, but also professional/office sites. If properties are developed under the overlay, better compliance with floodplains and stream bank regulations will be required. This will produce more open space. It also **eliminates** some uses **allowed** under the **current** zoning, such as drive-thru restaurants, fraternity houses, animal hospitals, personal care homes and many others.

Q9. How does the Overlay deal with environmental concerns? Emory Village doesn't seem to comply with a lot of rules that are in effect elsewhere.

A. Much of the village was built before environmental controls were in effect. Any new construction will be constrained by much more severe environmental requirements. For example, storm water will have to be handled much more stringently, helping our local streams to be cleaner. Also, it is **illegal** under the **current** zoning (due to parking requirements) for a property owner to pull up the

asphalt in the stream buffers or floodplains. The overlay provides an incentive for property owners to pull up asphalt in the stream buffer.

Q10. How can I feel sure that the buildings won't look like everywhere else—Atlantic Station for example?

- A. Because every new building will have to be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission, builders in Emory Village will have to jump through a lot more hoops than they would in a standard area. In addition, builders will have to adhere to stringent environmental regulations. Atlantic Station is nearly ten times the size of Emory Village. So it can accommodate big box retail and high rises. Emory Village doesn't have the space for this.

Q11. How much land can be covered with buildings?

- A. New buildings can go on 5 - 6 acres of the 11.4 total acreage of Emory Village. If 5 acres were built it would be 45% of the land. If 6 acres were built it would be 54% of the land. So it works out to about half. It could be less, depending on how the little parcels are joined.

Q12. What happens in the areas that don't have buildings?

- A. About 2 acres are floodplain. Nowadays you can't build on a floodplain (although this was allowed in the past and some Emory Village buildings now are on floodplain). The other 3 acres are public right-of-way: sidewalks, the plaza, and the "furniture zones" for trees and sitting areas.

Q13. I understand that the 1996 historic guidelines were widely accepted. Does the zoning overlay jeopardize the village?

- A. The local Historic District was created in 1996 and updated in 2000. The 2000 guidelines have an entire page devoted to Emory Village. In December of 2006, the DeKalb Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved the Design Standards for Emory Village, a 13-page document. These updated guidelines strengthen the standards and heighten the compatibility between the historic buildings and the in-fill buildings. A copy of the Design Guidelines can be found on the AIEV website.

Q14. Is Emory Village itself historic?

- A. No, it is not. On its own, Emory Village would not have qualified as a historic resource. At least half of the historic buildings burned in a fire in the late 1970s. It is included in the local Historic District because it is between two parts of the historic residential neighborhoods.

Q15. Why isn't Emory Village historic?

A. It has only 4 contributing historic structures out of 23 parcels of land. The other 19 parcels have not been designated as historic. Four out of 23 (17%) is not a high enough percentage for it to qualify as a historic resource.

Q16. What about the properties that are considered historic? Are they threatened?

A. Ever since the 2002 Emory Village Revitalization Plan these buildings have been protected. *Everybody's Pizza, One Hot Cookie* and *Supercuts* now occupy these historic buildings—essentially the buildings with the red tile roofs. These will remain as they are.

Q17. Are there any other historic buildings? If so, what will happen to them?

A. Yes. These are 1467 Oxford Road (the stone-faced Dutch Colonial of 1910) and 1399 Oxford Road (a red brick, two-story house). They, too, are protected. It should be noted that they can be adapted and/or modified to accommodate restaurants, bed & breakfast inns, and other permitted uses. The Historic Preservation Commission must approve any design.

Q18. What about buildings like the old *Jagers/Park Bench building, Emory Village Flowers and Gifts, All Fired Up* (the pottery place) and *Sta Travel*?

A. There are no immediate plans to change these buildings. The owner has recently updated the exterior façade. What will ultimately happen to them is uncertain. As part of the 2002 Revitalization Plan a historic planner cataloged all of the buildings in Emory Village to evaluate their historic character. The building in which these businesses are located was **not** deemed historic by the planner.

Q19. How can four-story buildings be compatible with the current scale?

A. Scale is comprised of more than just height. The design guidelines discuss different forms of compatibility, some of which are technical, like fenestration and façade articulation.

Q20. If there are too few buildings to qualify the village as historic, how is scale determined?

A. One way of determining scale is by looking outside the immediate boundaries of the village. The Glenn Memorial Church cornice is used as the measuring point. Because of the hilly topography, nothing in the village will be taller than the cornice, which is 950 feet above sea level.

Q21. Which buildings are in the floodplain?

A. *Dave's Cosmic Subs, Panera Bread, Majik Touch Cleaners*, 1385 Oxford Road (formerly occupied by *Kinko's*, now owned by *Emory*) and two-thirds of the CVS building.

Q22. What are the owners of these buildings likely to do?

- A. It's likely that *Panera* and *Dave's* will remain as they are. They can't get any bigger or they would exceed their footprint. It's likely that *Majik Touch Cleaners* will remain the same. We don't know what *Emory* will do with their property at 1385 Oxford Road.

Q23. What about CVS?

- A. This is complicated. It will probably remain as it is. CVS can build up to four stories, but—and this is an important “but”—it can do this on only one third of the building. It can build up only on the part of the building that isn't in the floodplain. In addition, if CVS expands upward it must adhere to environmental guidelines. This means it would have to pull up a substantial part of the parking lot because it is in the floodplain.

Q24. What's going to happen to the BP and Chevron gas stations?

- A. They can remain gas stations. But if they want to redevelop they would have to build something else. Gas stations aren't permitted with the overlay.

Q25. Why must we have some four-story buildings?

- A. The real estate “pro forma” (cost estimate) was done by Genoa Construction and Silverman Construction Management. Both are highly experienced, local firms. According to them, four-story buildings are necessary for economic viability*.

*See page 2 of the article “The Economics of Revitalization” available on the AIEV website for the cost-per-square-foot comparisons and other details. It is located on the right side of the AIEV homepage.

Q26. Please explain “economic viability.”

- A. Builders need to make a profit, and we want to motivate high-quality builders to invest here. The pro forma shows that, in order for a builder to make a 10% profit, a condominium built at only three stories would have to sell at \$460 per square foot. This is very expensive, especially in comparison to nearby buildings: *The Clifton*, a few blocks from Emory Village, sells at \$290 per square foot; *The Artisan* in Decatur sells at \$266 per square foot. In short, building at two or three stories is just too expensive for developers and builders to consider it a good investment.

Q27. Why are taller buildings needed in Emory Village when they don't exist in Virginia Highlands?

- A. Virginia Highlands is a regional shopping and entertainment destination that attracts people from all over the metropolitan area. It is also a neighborhood with many more multi-family properties and much higher residential densities than Druid Hills. Parking is very scarce and consequently

spills over into residential areas. Virginia Highlands has been much more economically successful than Emory Village, and it is not necessary to encourage redevelopment as is necessary in Emory Village. In Emory Village, the economic conditions must change to bring about redevelopment.