



APRIL 2011



EMORY VILLAGE LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE STUDY AND ACTION PLAN

Five-Year Update
2011-2016





Alliance
to
Improve Emory Village



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INTRODUCTION

Emory Village is the historic commercial center of the Emory University and Druid Hills neighborhoods located at the intersection of North Decatur Road, Oxford Road and Dowman Drive in DeKalb County, northeast of Atlanta. It emerged in the early 20th century to serve the newly relocated University and the surrounding homes of Druid Hills laid out earlier by Frederick Law Olmsted, America's founding landscape architect, and his sons. As the University and the city itself grew, however, the neighborhood commercial center used by students, faculty, and residents alike strained to adjust to the debilitating pressures from this growth and the fast-changing urban conditions of the city.

In recent years, the Village's retail vitality has waned as constantly increasing traffic transformed North Decatur Road, the main street of the Village, into a high-volume barrier separating the University from the Village. Its disjointed physical environment was hurt, too, as the destruction from a 1979 fire. Subsequent disorganized redevelopment fragmented the Village into small shopping islands separated by broad areas of asphalt and intermittent, crumbling sidewalks.

The deteriorating buildings as well as dangerous traffic conditions have been a major detriment to the Emory Village area for quite some time. Several attempts have been made in order to improve conditions in the area; however, none have led to significant improvements. With historic structures that were once part of a booming commercial center, the sudden growth of the area resulting from Emory University's growth has made it difficult for businesses in the area to thrive.

In early 2000, a new effort at replanning the Village was undertaken sponsored by the Urban Land Institute, Atlanta District Council, and the Georgia Tech Urban Design Studio. Leon Eplan, former Atlanta Commissioner of Planning and Community Development, coordinated the ULI's participation, and Georgia Tech's involvement was guided by Professor Randall Roark. This collaborative sponsored four participatory design charrettes involving Village stakeholders that produced broad concepts for Village revitalization integrating the ideas of urban designers, traffic planners, economic development consultants, historic preservationists and, most importantly, the local stakeholders: community residents, University representatives, businesspeople and land owners. These charrettes resulted in a clear vision for the Village along with the creation of the Alliance to Improve Emory Village (AIEV). The AIEV's mission as stated is to:

“Create a safe, economically viable, walk-able and compact mixed-use community that is compatible with and a resource to Emory University and the surrounding historic neighborhoods.”



In 2003 the DeKalb County was awarded a \$2.1 million grant by the Atlanta Regional Committee to implement the changes that would help them to become a mixed-use environment. With the implementation of the revitalization plan there is an opportunity to improve this area.

EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT

Below is a summary of key projects and accomplishments that have taken place in or around the study area since 2003.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

DeKalb County adopted a new Comprehensive Land Use Plan in June 2007. The Comprehensive Plan designated the Emory Village area as a Traditional Neighborhood, Conservation/Greenspace, Town Center, and Institutional area. Each piece of Emory Village's composition contributes to its sense of place. This mix of land provides an opportunity to further maximize the quality of life for the area stakeholders. The development from the implementation of the LCI would further integrate the area thus positively impacting accessibility.

Transit Oriented Development Study Guidelines

MARTA established Transit Oriented Development (TOD) guidelines not only for the current MARTA system but for the future transit network of Metro Atlanta. In 2008, MARTA, ARC, and the GRTA adopted a long term expansion plan known as "Concept 3", which includes the Atlanta Beltline, MARTA rail extensions, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, and bus rapid transit (within DeKalb County,) as well as throughout the region.

Zoning Code Update

DeKalb County is in the process of updating its Zoning Code Ordinance and implemented other development standards and policies. There are proposed zoning districts that will allow mixed use development, multiple story dwellings and reduced setbacks and other development features. DeKalb County will continue to significantly invest when feasible in creating a consolidated government center in the Emory area. This area benefits from strong regional access via both MARTA's east line and I-285 which, is becoming an increasingly critical factor to development. Strong residential neighborhoods in Avondale Estates, fueling new residential infill development north and west of the study area, create an attractive setting for development of new residential and commercial uses in the study area.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WITH 5 YEAR ACTION PLAN

This Plan has created a new “Emory Village Neighborhood Commercial” zoning district to guide development in the Village. Its purposes to establish the conditions needed to support Village revitalization and healthy future operation. The new zone will enumerate the permitted and proscribed uses in the Village, establish development regulations to define lot sizes, site coverage, building heights, massing and setbacks, energy and environmental conservation standards, incorporate design guidelines for architecture and open spaces, regulate the provision of off-street parking and encourage shared parking, and define landscaping and signage standards. The Emory Village Neighborhood Commercial District would guide redevelopment into an arrangement that protects the Village’s historic fabric, enhances the value of natural resources, creates safe and pleasant pedestrian circulation, supports a vibrant retail environment, and in general permits people to live, work and play in the Village.

The development of Emory Village Park, an 8,300 square foot project, will serve as a focal point for the Village. The designated land area will be approximately 40 feet of space resulting from the shifted space of roundabout construction on North Oxford. The estimated cost for the park is \$300,000. Funding came from Emory University, DeKalb County and fundraising activities. The project will include seating, landscaping and a water feature that will compliment Emory University as well as the neighborhood’s historic-designation guidelines.

Construction of the park will not begin until the roundabout is completed. There is an estimated \$40,000 in additional funds that need to be raised by August.

There have been several new businesses added to the area. They are as follows:

Store Openings

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Yogli Mogli Frozen Yogurt | August 2010 |
| Steady Pour Coffee Shop | October 2010 |
| Wonderful World Burgers & More | September 2009 |
| BA Dog Tacqueria | June 2011 |
| Barnes and Noble University Bookstore | August 2010 |



IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE WITH STRATEGIES

Emory Village's rich context, historic architecture and strong associations with Emory University provide it with the potential to become once again Atlanta's best example of a successful mixed-use community. To help reestablish its former role, the Emory Village Revitalization Plan outlines an integrated effort to restore the Village's vitality and expand its offerings to create a true mixed-use marketplace, thus restoring the role it historically performed for the surrounding neighborhoods and institutions. The following are the recommended projects with strategies.

STRATEGY - Reduce North Decatur Road to a single lane in each direction with a shared center turn lane between Clifton Road and Lullwater Road. Realign North Oxford Road to remove it from the intersection. Construct a roundabout (or a 4-way signalized intersection) to accommodate traffic in the intersection, and test the changes thoroughly before finalizing the arrangement. Install new facilities for transit users, bicyclists and safer amenities for pedestrians plan to link to future commuter rail station scheduled for construction nearby. Through all of these improvements, ensure that patrons have a choice of travel modes when considering a visit to the Village facilities at the intersection and in the Villa.

STATUS: IN-PROGRESS- TO BE COMPLETED IN AUGUST 2011

STRATEGY - Reorganize on-street parking to replace angled parking with parallel parking spaces, and construct new off-street parking garages to handle Village demand and the needs of visitors. Limit curb cuts providing access to the decks to reduce their interruption of the sidewalk environment.

STATUS: IN-PROGRESS- New zoning code will apply to all new development and control curb cuts.



STRATEGY - Create a new “Emory Village Neighborhood Commercial Zone” that will regulate redevelopment in the Village (alternatively, create an “Emory Village Overlay” zone to address the same issues.) Permit retail, and residential uses in the new zone, within prescribed limits. Establish urban design performance standards and Emory Village Design Guidelines. Encourage shared parking facilities. Prohibit overhead utility service to private property. Require environmental design features that control storm water runoff and encourage efficient, non-polluting new structures.

STATUS: COMPLETED

STRATEGY – Protect historic structures. The Plan recommends that current structures in the Village defined as “contributing structures” in the Druid Hills Historic District should be preserved, and their landscapes carefully improved to maintain the qualities of their historic setting. New construction in the Village should complement, not imitate, historic structures.

STATUS: IN-PROGRESS- Design guidelines adopted by Board of Commissioners

STRATEGY - Build new streetscapes on North Decatur Road and Oxford Road that support a lively street life and comfortable shopping environment. Accommodate socializing and dining on the sidewalks. Install shade trees, street furniture and attractive walking surfaces to recharge the sense of quality in the Village. Build new mixed-use structures in the Village to increase the diversity of people and activities, and improve the economic vitality of the Village. Open views to adjoining landscapes to highlight the delightful contrast between the Village’s urbane shopping street and the green vistas just beyond the rear of the buildings.

STATUS: IN-PROGRESS

STRATEGY- Emory Village’s extraordinary setting includes forested hillsides falling down toward a small creek. The plan recommends preserving the forested edges of the Village and restoring the stream bed and creek banks to increase the environmental health and enhance their contribution to the Village’s image as a compact urban oasis surrounded by greenery.

STATUS: IN-PROGRESS

APPENDICES

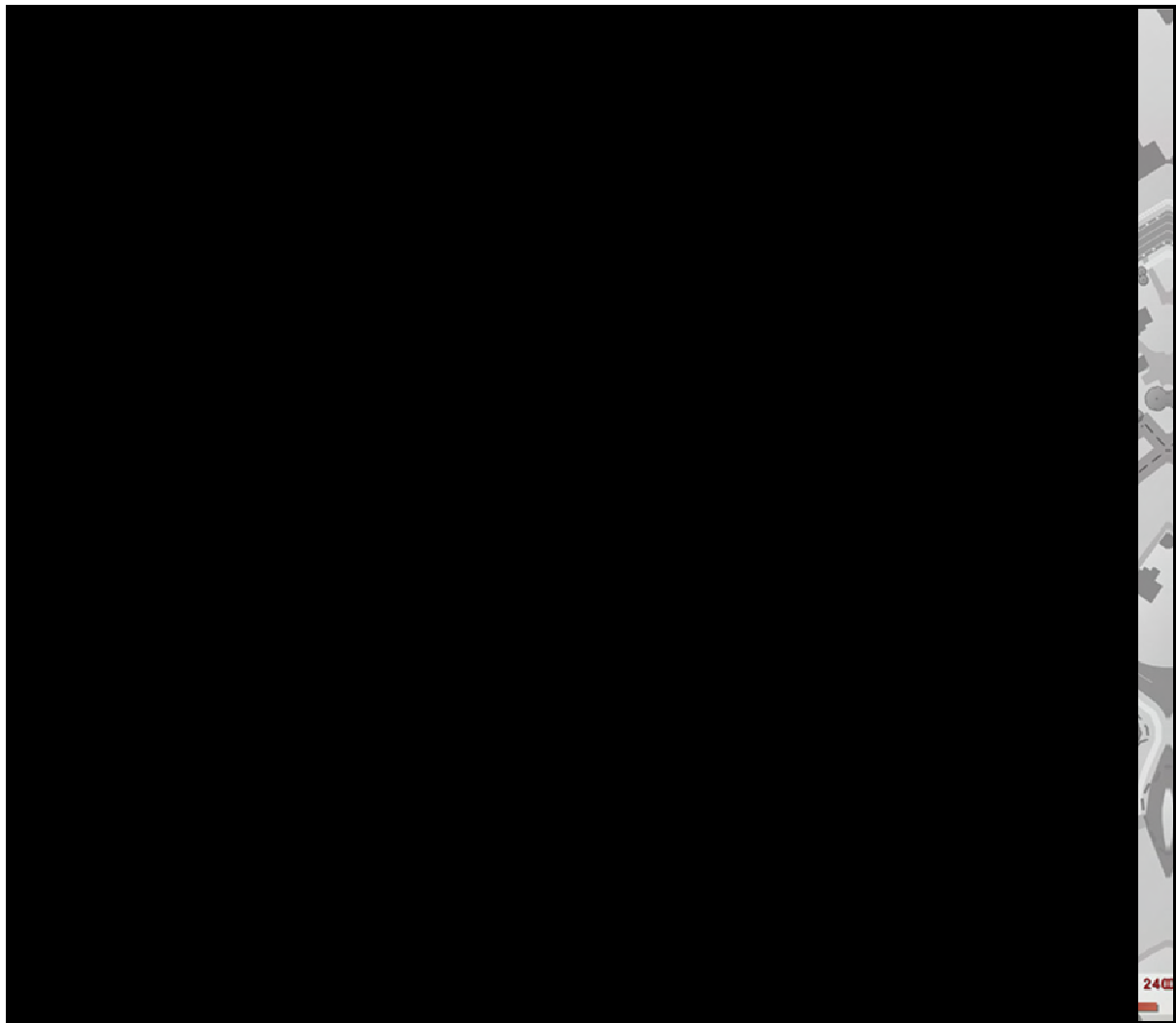
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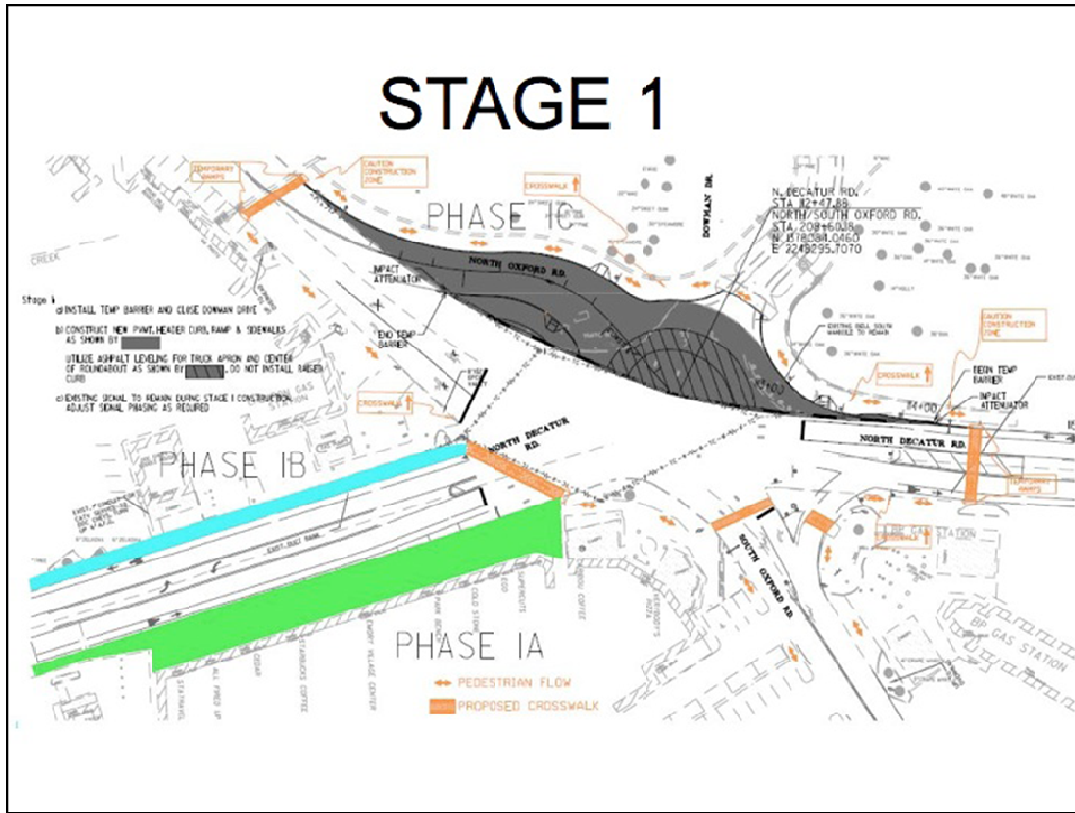


EMORY VILLAGE RENDERING



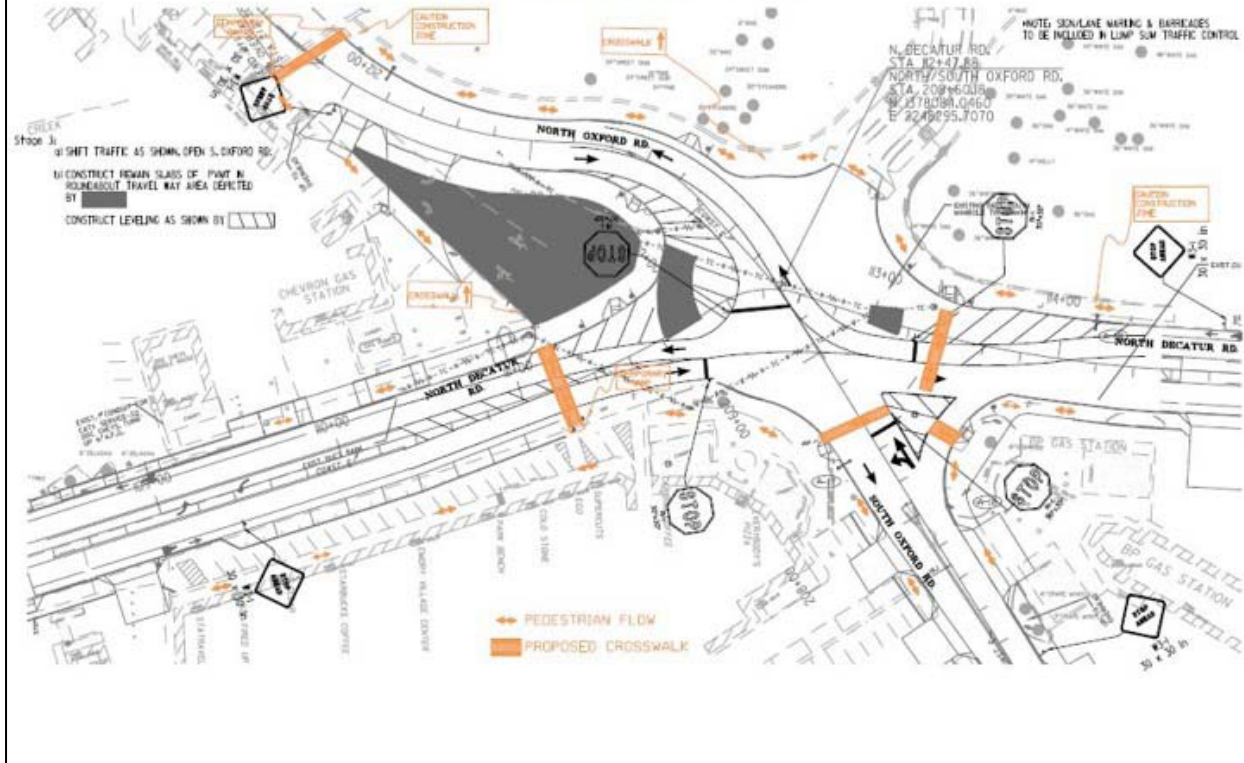
EMORY VILLAGE LCI DEVELOPMENT PHASES

STAGE 1



DEVELOPMENT PHASE 1

STAGE 3



DEVELOPMENT PHASE 3

