

## NATIONAL HEALTH MUSEUM:

Land will come at healthy price

By Kevin Duffy

The proposed National Health Museum has a couple of basic ground rules as it searches for a home in downtown Atlanta. It wants to be close to Centennial Olympic Park, and it needs a footprint of at least 50,000 square feet, a little more than an acre.

Several sites where there's now parking along Centennial Olympic Park Drive fit the bill.

They're all a short walk from the American Cancer Society headquarters and park-area tourist attractions — the Georgia Aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola, the Imagine It children's museum and CNN.

Museum President J. Mark Dunham said his organization is in the early stages of exploration, and he would not discuss specific locations for the planned \$250 million attraction.

He did say construction is estimated to cost \$200 million; the remaining \$50 million would cover other expenses, including buying land.

Dunham said the museum building could be a four-story "iconic design statement" and part of a mixed-use project, which downtown developers say is the way to go for relatively small, expensive parcels. He said the museum is investigating whether it would have to build parking.

The average value of land without buildings near the park is \$4.38 million an acre, according to an analysis of Fulton County's appraisals of 52 tracts.

But a sale price could soar much higher depending on location, what's on the land and how willing the parties are to strike a deal.

Melaver, a Savannah real estate company, paid \$6 million in December for one-third of an acre at Andrew Young International Boulevard and Centennial Olympic Park Drive. The price is equivalent to more than \$18 million an acre. By itself, the Melaver site is too small for the museum.

Carell Family LLC of Nashville recently paid \$19.9 million for 1.73 acres that contains surface and structured parking — almost the entire block at Marietta Street and Centennial Olympic Park Drive across from the park. That works out to \$11.5 million an acre.

Monroe Carell Jr., who died last month, built and sold Central Parking Corp. and was a noted philanthropist who funded the children's hospital at Vanderbilt University. Stuart McNeil of Carell Family LLC said the corporation has not been contacted by the museum group.

Barry Real Estate Cos., developer of the nine-block Allen Plaza mixed-use project near the park, did provide information to museum backers, a Barry spokesman said. Barry owns land across from the World of Coca-Cola and next to Imagine It, Atlanta's children's museum.

It also owns a one-third-acre tract behind the children's museum at Baker and Williams streets. The Allen Plaza conceptual plan shows a future museum there, but that site would have to be combined with other land to accommodate the health museum.

The Barry spokesman said the company is interested in the building only if it's part of a mixed-use development.

Another possible site is the 1.8-acre parking lot at Centennial Olympic Park Drive and Harris and Williams streets, next to the American Cancer Society headquarters.

Urban Growth Property, part of the InterPark parking company, which is a subsidiary of GE Capital Real Estate, owns the land.

"As far as I know, we are not in talks with the National Health Museum," GE Capital Real Estate spokesman John Oliver said.

When Atlanta was vying for the NASCAR Hall of Fame, which eventually went to Charlotte, a parking area owned by Ted Turner under the name Luckie Street Properties was considered the leading site. It fronts Centennial Olympic Park Boulevard between Luckie Street and International Boulevard.

Turner Enterprises spokesman Phillip Turner said he was not aware of any communications between his company and the health museum.

Last month, Gov. Sonny Perdue announced that Atlanta had been chosen for the proposed museum, beating out the nation's capital and other cities.

The museum's mission will be to teach visitors about healthier living and to serve as a stage for international health events. The bulk of the project will be privately funded. If fund-raising goes well, the attraction could open in 2013.

Dunham said the museum is not announcing a deadline for selecting a site. "We want to do this with due diligence."