

# Downtown Shopping

*What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?*

Public comments as of October 27, 2011, 1:59 AM

All Participants



*As with any public comment process, participation in Open City Hall is voluntary. The statements in this record are not necessarily representative of the whole population, nor do they reflect the opinions of any government agency or elected officials.*

# Downtown Shopping

*What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?*

## Introduction

As you answer this question, please tell us whether you currently shop, dine or obtain services in Montgomery's Downtown Heritage District. If so, how often? If not, why not?

Last year when City staff was conducting our new resident focus groups, the unique look and feel of Montgomery's Downtown Heritage District was one of the determining factors in new residents selecting Montgomery as their home. Based upon that research, we wanted to use our new Open City Hall pilot project to solicit your feedback. We think the question is particularly timely with this being the holiday season.

# Downtown Shopping

*What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?*

---

As of October 27, 2011, 1:59 AM, this forum had:

Attendees:	235
Participants:	37
Hours of Public Comment:	1.9

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

Name not shown in Cincinnati

July 22, 2009, 12:33 PM

It's already a nice downtown. Some stores are really useless for us though, because they are so expensive (or at least expensive looking). We come downtown for Starbucks and that's about it. We used to go to Imaginattic, but that's gone now.

Bring in more affordable, family-friendly dining. Antique stores. Comic book stores. Accessible (as in not too serious about itself) art gallery. Unique stores that aren't so "upper-class" looking. BTW, my city says Cincinnati, but we live in Montgomery.

---

Name not shown in Montgomery

March 28, 2009, 12:14 PM

Bring back Barlecorn's or a place like it... A family oriented place to eat and enjoy a cold drink. Instead we drive to Silver Spring House in Symmes, Paxton's in Loveland, and Slatts in BlueAsh where we see a lot of other Montgomery folks.

---

Name not shown in Montgomery

February 7, 2009, 10:36 AM

Our downtown is physically pretty, has some small creative businesses, and there's a lot of smart people living in the area--and yet the central district is not lively and has no culture. It could be more like a Hyde Park of the north and a draw from the bland sprawl of the northern suburbs.

It would be great to have a theater that showed art films and doubled as a community art center--a stage where plays and music could be performed when films aren't playing. The public areas could have gallery exhibition space. Maybe connected to a cafe/wine bar. I think such a place would stand out in the suburbs and attract people to the restaurants and other businesses.

Downtown also needs more inexpensive eateries and family oriented spaces. It would be nice to have a public space around which there was some outdoor eating.

---

Richard Wilson in Montgomery

February 3, 2009, 12:53 PM

I concur with prior comments regarding signage, especially for parking. On many occasions I have asked friends to meet my wife and I at Germano's restaurant and they almost always complain of not being able to find the public parking lots. At night, people unfamiliar with Montgomery are trying to find a particular business, obey traffic signals, avoid hitting pedestrians and locate parking. They need abundant, bold, conspicuous signage directing them to such lots. Quaint little signs do not necessarily help patrons locate quaint little businesses.

---

John Lovro in Montgomery

December 22, 2008, 2:20 PM

We shop occasionally in Heritage District. Thing which would draw us to the district more often would be:

- a) More affordable dining
  - b) More promotions activities
- 

Vince Giardina in Montgomery

December 20, 2008, 3:53 PM

Previous social events such as "Pub Crawl" have exposed Montgomery residents to the location and

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

interior of local host businesses. Perhaps expansion of these programs could increase exposure and generate additional revenue for these businesses.

Those of us who live in Montgomery are fortunate. In my opinion, I feel we should all contribute to maintaining and enhancing that lifestyle.

Our unique and compact business district could prosper if more people were aware of what is available. I also think it can improve community spirit and involvement.

Current communication with modern technology is overwhelming. I suggest developing a better system to break through these barriers, to inform residents of business and social programs that are available.

---

Name not shown in Montgomery

December 19, 2008, 8:08 AM

We recently moved to Montgomery and overall, are happy with the area. However, the downtown area really needs more moderately priced businesses and restaurants. We find ourselves eating out with our 6 year old in Blue Ash a lot, and shopping outside the downtown area (Village Junction). Some great ideas that have already been suggested: ice cream, book store, more eclectic affordable stores like Utes. I have not been into the Little Red Gift House yet. A directory of stores would be helpful, perhaps on the corner of Cooper and Montgomery. Downtown has a wonderful look and feel to it, and I'd love to dine and shop there more often. Outdoor events are also a great idea.

---

Patti May in Montgomery

December 18, 2008, 10:58 AM

We currently live and work in the Heritage District.

We find most of the shops and services we need within walking distance of our home.

I would like the Heritage District expanded to include the area up to and including the east side of Zig Zag Road, the south side of Mitchell Farm, the Montgomery School on the north the Indian Hill border to the east and Cross County to the south.

The Heritage District signage should be in place with better graphics, different colors, to be easier to read and identify the boundaries. Within the boundaries, there should be more appropriate zoning of the existing properties. This area was never intended to be a "sub-division" in the modern sense of the word.

The ambiance of the downtown, with its paver sidewalks, unique lighting, holiday decorations etc. invites people in. Once there, we need to provide a variety of shops, restaurants, businesses and a people friendly environment.

Repair the sidewalks, change some of the signage requirements so that merchants can identify their businesses (and stay in business). Identify the parking available to the general public. Put a crosswalk across Montgomery Road at the corner of Snider Alley.

Promote more events in the downtown area...like the tree lighting event we just had.

Move the Sensory Sundays to a downtown location. Encourage more of the arts...

like the exhibits of local artists at Starbucks...music on the square...utilize the Church for some of these events...have live jazz or a violin concert...lots of ideas...just bring more people in to enjoy an experience here and they will be back.

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

Encourage retail in the area. You'll need to support it with shopping (obvious) and also cooperation among and between the business owners and the City.

I support the local merchants with my business. I see how many are leaving and have left in the last few years and know that something needs to be done soon to keep our Downtown and the entire Heritage District a "destination".

---

Sally Monahan in Montgomery

December 18, 2008, 8:23 AM

I feel extremely fortunate to be living close to, and I regularly go to the heritage district. That is one of the reasons that I chose the Swaim neighborhood when I purchased my home.

I go to the Salon Bastille, Dr. Endres, Stone creek, Woodhouse, Starbucks, European cafe, CVS and the Little Red Gift House quite regularly. My husband and I were married in the Historic Church by candle light it was beautiful. I am sorry that Whole Foods is not going to move into our area. I regularly shopped there when I lived in Texas, and it is a wonderful upscale grocery store. That addition would have brought major traffic to our area.

Another idea would be taking the abandoned car lots and making a community arts center with regional theater offering plays/concerts. It would be fantastic to have regular events that included the many talented residents of our community.

---

Dan May in Cincinnati

December 17, 2008, 11:42 AM

In my opinion, it's essential that the city maintain the historic character of the downtown "district." That includes both residential and commercial properties.

I agree that there is a need for more choices in terms of restaurants and shops. The city should promote smart growth and any development, residential or commercial, should be in keeping with the historic character of downtown.

I like the idea of more events in the downtown area. A nice community area downtown would be a good way of attracting more people to the events already planned but also could inspire other gatherings.

I think the city needs to do more to promote the downtown area. The businesses in the "district" can be featured in the city newsletter or on the city website. Also, better signage, especially along Montgomery Rd., is needed promoting the fact that the downtown corridor is the "heritage district" of Montgomery - something that celebrates the fact that we're proud of our downtown.

---

Name not shown in Montgomery

December 12, 2008, 12:47 PM

More affordable restaurants/shops. Ice cream would be a great addition, as well as a Dunkin Donuts (you can make them trendy looking if you try!) We use the dentist there, but not many other "services."

---

Name not shown in Cincinnati

December 11, 2008, 2:02 PM

We feel fortunate to live very close to the downtown Heritage District. Our family walks to Starbucks,

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

The Imaginnatic, and Pomodori's quite often. My husband and I enjoy Germano's, Stonecreek, and the Montgomery Inn but these outings are considered "special occasions". We would love to see more family friendly/moderately priced restaurants and shops. It seems that many of the shops and restaurants are "high end" and not family friendly. It is unfortunate that we are losing the Imaginattic...it is such a gem. Also, the area behind the Montgomery Rd. shopping district (The Business Mens Club and Ray Williams Heating and Cooling) has become an eye sore. The buildings are not well maintained and therefore appear quite run down. This large area of land could be developed for many family oriented attractions such as a theater or recreation center. I hope the City will to take a close look at this area as it is has great potential for enhancing our downtown.

Name not shown in Cincinnati

December 11, 2008, 7:40 AM

Our doctor, and dentist, and the kids orthodontist are located in downtown Montgomery so we can walk or ride our bikes there. We also shop @ Montgomery Cyclery, dine at Z's Place, Neon Lights, Stone Creek, Montgomery Inn and European Cafe. We use the hair salons in downtown Montgomery, so we try to patronize local businesses.

However, we'd like to do more in the neighborhood.

\* We need more affordable, family type restaurants like a Panaera or LaRosa's or Dilly Deli (Mariemont), a bagel store, and a good bakery

\* The shopping needs to include more affordable stores. We can't afford the high end clothing stores

Jodi Keith in Montgomery

December 10, 2008, 8:31 AM

Our family is happy to live just a short walk from the Heritage District, so we enjoy frequent walks among the shops, restaurants, and public spaces. My "wish list" includes some of the items already mentioned: more moderately-priced restaurants; a high-quality ice cream shop (with regular evening hours); a grocery/food market; a book store; shops with evening hours; a variety of browsing-friendly shops/boutiques; better public gathering space.

Other ideas to help make the area more usable: a crosswalk across Montgomery Road at the east end of Parrott Alley; regular merchant events to promote Heritage District shopping; and as most have already pointed out: advertising. For example, the recent 3-evening promotion by the merchants tying in to the City's Holiday in the Village was a great idea! I don't know if many folks knew about it because I wasn't aware of much advertising by the merchants or the City.

The Heritage District is a gem! I appreciate the City's dedication to keeping it attractive and comfortable and commitment to make it even better.

Name not shown in Montgomery

December 9, 2008, 9:32 PM

I would like to see some minor changes to the sign ordinances. I appreciate that Montgomery has limited the signs but I'm sure the businesses would like a bit more visibility. As people are driving through Montgomery they really can't tell what businesses and services are available.

I would like to see additional restaurants that are more of the "fast food" type. Previously there were

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

La Rosa's and Frisch's. A Panara Bread or Skyline might be a good addition.

For the Downtown Heritage District to be really appealing it needs to develop a critical mass of similar merchants. It would seem to be an ideal location for art galleries and unique gift shops. However, since all of the businesses could not be on Montgomery Road, there needs to be sufficient publicity, sign and maps to direct customers to the various locations.

Jennifer Meyer in Montgomery

December 9, 2008, 4:00 PM

As a resident, we do as much of our shopping within Montgomery as we can to support our community. I think there are 2 things that would make it more appealing to shop/eat in the Heritage District:

1. Better/more frequent advertising: There are several retail stores and businesses tucked away in the Heritage District. Because they do not have large store fronts and tend to turn over frequently, it's difficult to know what the Heritage District has to offer residents and visitors. A feature article of the businesses in the Montgomery Newsletter and/or a separate mailing with coupons and special deals would help attract shoppers to the District.

2. Attract family-oriented retail stores and restaurants: Many of the businesses are high-end speciality stores that are not child-friendly or easily shoppable. If I'm out walking and window shopping, it's usually with my small children, so many of the stores are off limits to us. The same applies to the restaurants. We love Germano's and Montgomery Inn, but can not afford to eat there often. Additional small restaurants like the European Cafe and child-friendly places would be great.

We spend a great deal of time at the stores in the Kroger shopping complex. The ice cream and bread stores are great for kids, and we really enjoy shopping in the other small stores in the shopping complex. Stores like these would be great additions downtown.

Kendra Hildbold in Cincinnati

December 9, 2008, 11:11 AM

Several items would make the Heritage District more attractive to consumers.

- \* Group advertising from the businesses located in the district.
- \* More events, like Bastille Day, with and without the roads closed. The tents for those types of events should be located off the sidewalk, so the businesses are visible instead of masked. And, the events should incorporate all of the heritage district, not just the area in the middle.
- \* A map that is available online and in print so that people can know where all the stores and services are located.
- \* Events that get the community into the district, 5k runs, bikes, charity events.
- \* eventually a bridge to connect the vacant space at the SE corner of Montgomery Rd. to the rest of the district.
- \* A longer pause at the crosswalk near Cooper and Montgomery (it always turns before I'm even halfway across). And, possibly more crosswalks.

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

Residents need a directory of merchants and the services they offer to know what is available downtown -- both alphabetical as well as by category. Unless the business is located right on Montgomery Road, many of us may not even know about it. Perhaps the City could compile the initial directory and mail it to residents, but keep it updated online. Or post the directory online, and provide the website link in the Montgomery Bulletin.

Name not shown in Montgomery

December 8, 2008, 2:54 PM

As owner of the Obsess Boutique at 9393 Montgomery Rd, I would like to see some city funds used to promote the retail district of Old Montgomery through advertising.

John Perry in Montgomery

December 8, 2008, 1:11 PM

The Downtown Heritage District is great as it is. I have not taken the time to investigate all of the services available in the District. Advertising that informs me of all the stores and services might make it more appealing for me shop at a place that might meet a need I have.

Elizabeth Dolan in Cincinnati

December 8, 2008, 11:14 AM

I think there are a lot of great suggestions here. I enjoy the beauty of the heritage district, but I don't frequently stop and walk around. I agree that a few more restaurant options with outdoor seating, would be ideal. I also like the idea of e-mails going out if there's a special evening that shops are open etc., especially in the summer months. I think a specialty grocer and movie theater would be nice additions. It would help to make a whole afternoon/evening out of being downtown.

Gwyn Adams in Cincinnati

December 8, 2008, 10:18 AM

I would like to see a map developed showing the locations, names and types of businesses. With the low key signage and all the nooks and crannies, it's hard to know just what businesses are here. I can't count the numbers of times new customers have said, "I never knew you were here because you're kind of hidden." and we've been here since 1987.

Kathy Sostaric in Montgomery

December 7, 2008, 10:27 PM

I think downtown Montgomery is cute. It reminds me a lot of Danville, CA, but on a smaller scale. I need more of a reason to hop on my bike with my son and pedal down there. More restaurants serving B, L & D, and independently owned book store, a unique toy store, ice cream shop, Fleet Feet type sports store, pizza place, etc. These are the types of places I frequented in Danville. It was fun to grab a bite to eat, then get ice cream and maybe buy something small and inexpensive. With the plethora of professional service companies (insurance, architect, etc.) and expensive boutiques, my biking to Montgomery with my son consists of going to Aglemesis or Starbucks and then heading to one of the parks. If we can bring more family oriented businesses to the district, it would be a place to spend several hours at several different venues. It is unfortunate that The Imaginattic is leaving as this would be the perfect venue to incorporate into such a community. Grab lunch, a couple of hours of art and then ice cream. All in walking distance from a single parking spot or bike rack.

Sue Thomas in Cincinnati

December 7, 2008, 8:45 PM

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

My suggestions for further increasing the appeal of the heritage district include:

- making it easier to locate businesses in the district and knowing which businesses are included,
- collective advertising which encourages people to "check it out", and
- increasing the spaces where people can be outside for dining, listening to music, etc. (like the Southwest corner of Cooper and Montgomery).

I also like the idea of a small movie theater. I know I am just reinforcing some of the other suggestions, but I think they are good ones!

I think the attention consistently given to keeping the area visually appealing is a big plus, and should be continued.

---

Peg Lewin in Cincinnati

December 7, 2008, 7:36 PM

I currently frequent several businesses in the Montgomery Downtown Heritage District on a regular basis. I like this area very much, but it does truly not have a 'neighborhood' feel (yet) for me. Some of the merchants know me and always say 'hello' and wave, but it is not an area where I see and/or meet and/or can talk to people who live here in Montgomery. We need more 'focal or gathering points' for people to sit and talk and get to know one another. BTW - Parking is not a problem for me. I like the idea of extended store hours; special offers; and the city events that are held there.

---

Eric Roth in Cincinnati

December 4, 2008, 10:38 AM

Shops suited for foot traffic in the Heritage District are great. We would go to after hour's entertainment similar to the outside courtyard in Mariemont where they have drinks, entertainment, and a place to congregate. Having places that are reasonably priced which can be frequented regularly and not only on special occasions is important too.

---

Gerald (Gerry) Houchell in Cincinnati

December 4, 2008, 9:56 AM

The downtown Heritage District is fine. When a new business is established at the old Montgomery Ford location, it's entrance needs to be widened and further off the road so that customers coming from North or South do not block traffic. As much as I personally dislike traffic lights, we need to make sure that a light and turning lane provides easy entry for customers coming south on Montgomery Road.

---

MM GOARD in Montgomery

December 3, 2008, 11:09 PM

The idea of a once per month extended hours event, similar to Oakley's is a great idea...and add to that a weekly or bi-weekly blast email to residents (with invitation for them to share with others) announcing Heritage District "goings on", with contributions from businesses that have special events, happy hours, weekly entertainment, special sales, or new product arrivals. I know I appreciate having a visual reminder. The patio dining planned for Montgomery Inn will certainly help!

---

Doug Hughes in Montgomery

December 3, 2008, 4:54 PM

Better, more explicit signs (the "you are here" type - overlaid on the downtown map -that would show the attractions grouped by category - parking, shopping, eating, snacking, walking tour(s), parks, etc. Then the great (aforementioned) ideas should be included in the Montgomery Town

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

development - park, theater, "whole foods", deli, more sidewalk cafes and with the improved cross-the-street access to the development, it will almost double the Heritage/"heritage-like" district. It's also possible that the new Key Bank corner could be developed to draw foot traffic to the Kroger square area for the ice cream shop, the wine shop, subway, etc... (or maybe those establishments would want to move to the Montgomery Town. I think the future lies there.

---

Chris Mann in Cincinnati

December 2, 2008, 8:55 PM

I love the feel to the whole area, what a cool small town vibe. Here's my 2 cents: need more/better lunch places, a new cafe would be great. I am a big believer that restaurants bring traffic, so I would say we need to have a better mix of dining and retail with more "foot friendly" shops. Places for people to window shop for things they can afford to impulse buy...not a picture frame, or a \$5,000 watch, or some fabric. I think some of the best shops in Montgomery are OFF Montgomery rd...and most people don't know about them. Lets get them noticed! I love the idea of collective advertising (similar to o'brienville). Make the area enticing to new (and existing) shoppers who aren't familiar with all we have to offer.

The idea to demolish the Village Tavern building is interesting, although a bit extreme. More community events would be great too, like bastille day. How about a monthly 'open house?' The first friday of the month, all participating businesses stay open till 8 and offer small food bites etc.

I think there needs to be an organized group of business owners/residents who meet regularly to formulate promotional plans and opportunities for The District. Almost a Board of Directors. I'd volunteer!

---

Raymond Miller in Cincinnati

December 1, 2008, 1:50 PM

Some reconfiguration of the Heritage District would make a tremendous impact.

The plaza on the Southwest corner of Cooper and Montgomery is the only gathering area for events unless the streets are closed.

Demo the building on the Northwest corner and develop a more town square feel to the district.

In our MCLA class we even talked about developing part of the parking lot area near the Businessman's Club into a town square with foot traffic amenable restaurants, an ice cream shop, a nice neighborhood diner similar to the Echo in Hyde Park.

A little move theater would be great as well perhaps becoming affiliated with The Esquire.

---

Julie Strickland in Cincinnati

December 1, 2008, 8:32 AM

Affordable dining options would certainly lure us on a regular basis. Germano's and Stone Creek are reserved for special occasions; however, if there were a more casual/affordable dining option, we'd frequent the area more. We do enjoy the European Cafe for breakfast and Starbucks for coffee. I agree with others - retail advertising would be a good idea. The turnover in the downtown district has been frequent lately that many residents don't know what retail shops are there. Also, luring some

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

### All Participants

upscale gift shops would encourage more shopping. Stationery shops, gift shops, etc. would encourage more foot traffic - a nice day outing with a stop for lunch at an affordable restaurant.

---

Russell Speiller in Montgomery

November 29, 2008, 4:33 PM

My wife and I absolutely love the Downtown Heritage District, which was a MAJOR FACTOR in our decision to move to the city of Montgomery. We frequently dine at several of the restaurants in the district and occasionally visit the shops. The shops are mainly knick-knack boutiques and thus we would frequent the district more often if there were places such as a niche grocery store (e.g. Trader Joes, Wild Oats, Aldi), a small movie theater (similar to the one in Mariemont), independent bookseller, or other such places that offer goods and services we use on a more frequent basis. Additionally, more public festive events (like Bastille Day or Blue Ash Fri night concerts) would be attractive.

---

Bob Saul in Montgomery

November 26, 2008, 11:26 AM

A draw to downtown Montgomery for me would be a good breakfast and lunch restaurant that offers an open, bright facility. The former Perkins location would be a great location.

---

Carolyn Buffington in Cincinnati

November 25, 2008, 8:01 PM

Many people are unaware of the nearby public parking. This close, safe and free parking is such a big plus!

I think if the restaurants sent coupons - good for Friday and Saturday nights - to Montgomery residents it would generate local business.

---

Greg Leader in Cincinnati

November 25, 2008, 4:45 PM

I agree with Thom - more foot-traffic would be great. I'd love to see visitors walking the lovely streets of the heritage district.

I think priority one is to help people become aware of the businesses within the district. Yesterday, while passing through downtown, I was shocked by how many retail businesses I didn't know even existed - and I live in Montgomery! Why would consumers be attracted to the area without knowing what's there (aside from everybody knowing Montgomery Inn)?

It is my suggestion that the city and the business owners (brought together by Prosper Montgomery) begin an advertising campaign in local print media outlets promoting something to the effect of "Sophisticated Shopping - In the Heart of Montgomery" and list the retailers. It would promote an upscale image and inform consumers of exactly what retailers are located in downtown Montgomery.

---

thom monahan in Montgomery

November 24, 2008, 8:28 PM

The most appealing aspect would be more people moving about in the community. I would be more likely to roam the streets of Montgomery if there was a lot of activity and I believed I was missing out on something. Of course, a safe and easy means to cross Montgomery Road would also be

## Downtown Shopping

What would make it more appealing for you to shop, dine or obtain services in the Downtown Heritage District?

All Participants

beneficial.

---