

A Greener Montgomery?

What are some of the barriers to being a greener, healthier City? What would increase your use of a non-motorized form of transportation (i.e. walking, bicycling, etc.) in the City of Montgomery?

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

All Participants around Montgomery



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Introduction

Citizens often express an interest in seeing Montgomery be a more health and environmentally conscious city. Residents also say they enjoy the size of the city and its available amenities. Many residents desire Montgomery to be a greener place to live.

Research says that 25 percent of all trips made in America are less than one mile. But, 75 percent of all trips under a mile are made by car. The case for non-motorized transportation is clear. It is good exercise, efficient, clean, inexpensive, uses no fossil fuels and requires little space.

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

Attendees:	106
Participants around Montgomery:	10
Minutes of Public Comment:	30

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Name not shown inside Montgomery

October 4, 2011, 10:33 PM

I would love to see sidewalks along the east side of Montgomery Road, running the full length of the road through Montgomery. This would connect the Heritage District to the south with a number of city parks and facilities, businesses, restaurants, residences, and employers along the commercial strip further north: the pool, the Public Safety Center, Bethesda North Hospital, banks, a number of restaurants, the comedy club, the Goodwill store, Twin Lakes, and so on.

There is currently a sidewalk only on the west side of Montgomery Rd. As a result, pedestrians who live or work east of Montgomery Rd. must cross and re-cross the street several times (sometimes at poorly-marked crosswalks) to get from Point A to Point B and back again using sidewalks. This increases the risk of car-pedestrian collisions and is a deterrent to walking.

I agree with another commenter that adding more casual restaurants (A coffee place, local or chain, that sometimes hosts live music? A soup-and-sandwich place like Panera?) and some non-boutique/"middlebrow" retail (perhaps a new-and-used bookstore or music store, an art-supply store, a smaller/independent office-supply/stationary store, or an REI/EMS/Benchmark-type outdoors store?) would give residents more reason to walk to/through the Heritage District on a regular basis. (We are at a bit of a disadvantage, with community staples like the Library and the Post Office down the road in Blue Ash -- either of those would be a huge boon to the Heritage District!)

Finally, I know there was some discussion about the parcel of land east of Triangle Park formerly occupied by the car dealership. I would love to see this parcel turned into a gym/fitness center open (for a small fee) to City residents/employees, which would both be a good use of that space, and also help encourage exercise/activity/health among Montgomery residents. I'm not suggesting we attempt to rival the exceptional fitness center in Blue Ash, but a facility with cardio equipment, weights/weight machines, and a small indoor track or basketball court would be fabulous -- bonus if they offer yoga or aerobics-type classes at reasonable prices! The City currently has a partnership with TriHealth Pavilion; perhaps they could be encouraged to open up a "branch" in that location, maybe in addition to a healthy cafe-type restaurant?

Pierce Quinn outside Montgomery

May 15, 2011, 8:05 PM

I think that a huge obstacle getting in the way of this "going green" idea is the fact that the City of Montgomery doesn't really encourage other uses of transportation besides cars. I mean, if you look at the sidewalks that Montgomery has, they either don't travel for very long, or break up and start again further down the road. There isn't any one clear pathway to take all the way from the suburbs to the downtown area. I feel that a good way to encourage people to walk more often would be to make one big sidewalk that crosses from the downtown area to the suburbs.

Another thing that I feel is a problem about the current situation is that it doesn't seem like there are any maintenance people that take care of the sidewalks that are there. In the winter time, ice usually covers the ground, with no signs of salt being put down. In the spring or summer it always seems like there are weeds growing through the cracks in the concrete, or that there is litter on the sidewalk. These hazards could potentially cause people to slip and fall, injuring themselves. In order to solve

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this and encourage people walk and bike, I suggest that there should be some type of maintenance going on to ensure that the sidewalks are as safe and clean as can be.

A third issue that I feel needs to be addressed is the absence of places for people to park their bikes. If the City of Montgomery is trying to encourage people to stop driving everywhere and to start walking and biking in order to keep the environment "green", then there should be access to park bikes on either the side of the sidewalk or at the various places where people can stop at in downtown. If the City of Montgomery can take notice of these suggestions then I feel that this project of "going green" can be a success after all.

Mike Cappel inside Montgomery

March 22, 2011, 8:34 PM

Last year I walked or ran 1408 miles, most of it in Montgomery and Blue Ash. I also biked 941 miles, about half of it back and forth to Pipkins, Kroger or Kenwood. I plan to increase both distances during 2011.

Montgomery's 6 foot sidewalks and trails are great for walking in pairs or biking. Once off the 6 foot walkways one must move to the street or grass when passing a slower person or someone from the other direction. So more 6 foot sidewalks would facilitate walking and biking.

There is a shortage of bike racks at some key locations in Montgomery and Blue Ash: city hall, heritage district, some parks, etc. So more bike racks would make biking for errands safer and more convenient.

It is 2.5 miles from my house to Kenwood Towne Center: this is a 15 minute leiserly ride through the Donjoy and Heitmeyer neighborhoods. (This is often faster than driving.) On the other hand it is a 50 minute walk, so usually I bike or drive, since walking to Kenwood is a 100 minute walking commute.

I would bike to work, but I'm afraid of what a shower or tumble would do to my laptop. A bike lane on Remington Road through Montgomery and Indian Hill would make this risk more tolerable.

Lela Groene inside Montgomery

March 5, 2011, 3:14 AM

I heartily second Raymond Miller's idea of a local shuttle. I've thought of this for several years and hadn't voiced it publicly before. My idea was something "cute" like the trolley used for the Christmas tree lighting festivities, but I like Mr. Miller's idea of a green vehicle even better. A route that looped from the northern area (Harper's Point, Weller/Montgomery intersection, etc) to the Heritage District and over to Pipkin's/Library/Post Office would be great. Stops near the retirement communities could be helpful, and including stops at or near parks and the pool would be great in summer. The shuttle could also be useful for teens and adults to get to local jobs. There are several city activities (evening concerts, etc.) we'd like to travel to by bike, but they end after dark, making that an unsafe option. The shuttle would be the perfect green alternative.

I also agree with a previous post-er about more family-friendly amenities & attractions in the Heritage District. A less expensive restaurant that's not a bar would be nice. I was very sorry that the new

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theater by the Kenwood Towne Center did not end up here--it would've been a great replacement for the empty car dealership sites, and really given downtown a boost that would attract local foot & bike traffic.

Doug Hughes inside Montgomery

February 23, 2011, 1:52 PM

This is the second of two statements, unfortunately, the first statement was overwritten by this one...

Bill Cockayne outside Montgomery

February 23, 2011, 9:38 AM

I'm not on the so called "green" bandwagon. I don't plan to change my current methods of transportation to "non-motorized" form. The winter smog is a problem----I remember it was a problem clear back in 1960 when there were far fewer motorized vehicles in the valley. Funny thing, I'm still alive !!

Michiko Kissinger inside Montgomery

February 20, 2011, 10:24 AM

I think being busy is one of the barriers to being greener and healthier. Another is the distance of travel. This is the suburbs, as my son points out. When my children were younger, we did more things locally and the kids rode their bikes around the neighborhood, to the pool, to a friend's house or just to ride around. As they got older they traveled farther for their activities, so bicycling and walking were no longer options. We also do things, buy things, and dine in the greater Cincinnati areas which are beyond walking/bicycling distances...unless we were Tour de France cyclers. We purchased a hybrid car that gets over 45 mpg to help with the impact on the environment.

Now that the kids are older, I would like to use the bicycle to get around. But, I still have activities, and shop at stores, many of which take place outside of Montgomery, which aren't bike distance away. There is still the obstacle of time: do I have two hours to bike to Kroger and be ready to get a workout verses 45 minutes in a car and still have energy for other things? Is it raining or snowing? Can I pedal through those hills on Pfeiffer and Montgomery Roads?

We could have an event where we invite residents to come ride their bikes or walk to downtown Montgomery or to the shopping center on Montgomery Road on a beautiful early summer day. We can have healthy foods to share in addition to some other activity. If it was an enjoyable event, maybe we'll be more inclined to repeat it on our own.....

Raymond Miller inside Montgomery

February 19, 2011, 4:18 PM

One obstacle to biking in and around Montgomery is the scarcity of bike racks. A uniquely designed bike rack could be adopted and business sponsors could fund their fabrication and installation around Montgomery's Heritage District as well as the great parks.

I would also recommend kind of an outside the box idea. If one were to approach Montgomery as a tight knit campus, one element that might be a huge success in bringing people downtown and encouraging them to walk around and visit our local businesses would be a city shuttle bus that would cover a couple of main routes, like along Montgomery Road, Pfeiffer Road, Cooper Road. The bus(es) could be hybrids or possibly pure electrics. Residents might absorb a minor surcharge to get

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an annual pass and use the bus and non residents could swipe an ATM or credit card on the vehicle.

Make getting around Montgomery like getting around a beautiful and scenic campus. For events like Harvest Moon, Bastille Day, All Fired Up it could really ease people's access but not having to find parking.

Cherie Estill inside Montgomery

February 19, 2011, 2:14 PM

The City of Montgomery needs to take a stance on shoveling of sidewalks. Businesses and churches do not even shovel their sidewalks. I walk and run through the city all winter long. There are a lot of others who are also committed to a healthy lifestyle. Shoveled sidewalks are required in many cities. Why not here? My sister from Gaithersburg Maryland came with me for a run in January and she couldn't believe that none of sidewalks were shoveled. The City of Montgomery needs to commit to helping people achieve their fitness goals by mandating sidewalk shoveling.

Russell Speiller inside Montgomery

February 19, 2011, 8:54 AM

This particular question is close to my heart as my wife and I moved to Montgomery and specifically our neighborhood because of the walkability, particularly through the Heritage district and along Cooper Rd. We greatly enjoy taking a stroll with our daughter to the local parks, Kroger, library, restaurants, Pipkins, Starbucks, CVS, and Montgomery Farmers' Market. It's our time to bond, enjoy the fresh air, stay healthy, and be "green."

If there is a barrier, besides the winter weather that can not be changed, it is the need for more businesses in walking distance that cater to the needs of our family. For example, a bakery or small movie theater (or other entertainment attraction) would get us walking over to the heritage district to meet up with friends. No disrespect whatsoever to the fine apparel or furniture stores in the district, but these businesses don't draw us out for a walk on a regular basis.

Having sidewalks and other paths connecting our neighborhood families to businesses that provide daily needs (food, entertainment, community gathering spots, services, etc...) go a long way to creating a green and healthier city.

Come July 4th, my family along with the other neighborhood families all walk from our homes to the parade route on Montgomery Road, chat with one another, and enjoy the parade. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every weekend were a July 4th experience?

Russ
