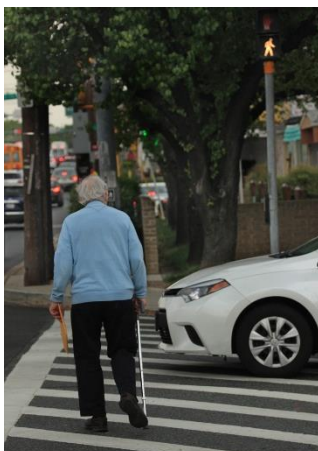# Finding Montgomery Hills

May 2018

Lack of Place

Montgomery Hills has an identity crisis. To be honest, it has a lot of other more important problems; but its lack of place has created a 50-year spiral of decline.

Wait – *Montgomery where*?

Montgomery Hills is the neighborhood corridor that runs along Georgia Ave in Silver Spring, north of 16th Street to the Beltway. It is surrounded by some of the County's neighborhood jewels: Woodside Forest, Woodside Park, North Woodside, Woodside, Linden, and Forest Glen.

It is also home to beloved Silver Spring institutions, such as Snider's Super Foods, the Woodside Deli, and Jalal's Barbershop.

Montgomery Hills is known as a place to drive through, not a destination.

Traffic Crawls

More vehicles move through this stretch of Georgia Ave than any other non-interstate road in the County. "Move" is relative. Mostly traffic crawls. Traffic planners assigned failing, or near failing, grades for every intersection for existing conditions and for future traffic growth.

Unsafe at any Speed

Rear-end, sideswipe, left-turn, angle, pedestrian, and truck-related crashes occur at rate significantly higher than statewide average for those crash types on similar roads. The road is unsafe for everyone.

Inaccessible Transit Access

This area was intended to be a neighborhood hub with shops, less than ¼ mile from the Forest Glen Metro. Yet it is unsafe to walk or bike. This is not smart growth.

What is the Plan Forward?

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) will announce a redesign of Georgia Ave, but **they need to allocate the funding**.

The Planning Department is also revising the Montgomery Hills & Forest Glen Sector Plan, and **recommendations are due by the end of 2019**. Residents can participate and **share your vision** with planning staff.

A Wall of Cars

Georgia Avenue through Montgomery Hills is a 7-lane highway with minimal pedestrian safety measures.

Hostile Landscape

The corridor is unsafe. The volume of vehicles; lack of greenery; and hodgepodge signs and overhead poles make the area ugly and unwelcoming.

Community Framework

Better balance local and regional needs. Montgomery Hills should be a community resource rather than simply a transportation corridor.

Enhance community identity. Encourage redevelopment to create a center for community life where people can gather and meet.

Improve walkability, bikeability and safety. Create pedestrian-scaled streets with sidewalks, a tree-lined median, and dedicated bike lanes.

Improve retail and dining environment. Attract and retain businesses that serve the community's needs.

Improve aesthetics. Plant trees and landscaping, bury utilities, install pedestrian-friendly lighting, and provide coherent and complementary signage.

Improve traffic flow. Implement traffic measures that facilitate traffic flow and reduce cut-through traffic on residential streets.

For too long Georgia Ave between 16th St and Forest Glen has been the subject of great plans, but no action. I am committed to moving from plan to action, so we can transform Montgomery Hills into a vibrant community destination.

George Leventhal, Councilmember At Large

GET INVOLVED

@FriendsofForestGlen

www.friendsofforestglen.org

June 4 Sector Plan Meeting

June 12 Neighborhood Charrette

Email: Friendsofforestglen@gmail.com

The Opportunity: Create a Neighborhood Resource

What we need is a bike- and pedestrian-friendlier approach that's safer and enhances – not degrades -- this neighborhood.

—Tom Hucker, Councilmember Montgomery County District 5

Montgomery Hills was developed in the mid-1920s when developers realized the importance of including neighborhood shopping centers within subdivision plans. Developers planned the location of the neighborhood stores in relation to the housing and selected the merchants to allow maximum convenience, services, and goods to homeowners. As a result, access to everyday goods was within the community.

Over the past century, we lost the vision of a neighborhood-focused center and ceded it to a vehicle-dominated landscape, unwelcoming to residents and accessible only by car.

Let's transform Montgomery Hills back to a community resource. What do you want to see in the future?

How would you like to see Montgomery Hills transformed? What does a community-focused center look like to you?

Would you walk or bike to Montgomery Hills if it was safe and accessible?

Can you envision meeting neighbors and friends for coffee, a meal, or a stroll along a tree-lined boulevard? Or read a book in a park?

Come join the discussion to #FixMontgomeryHills!