

**From:** [Todd Hoffman](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#); [Server, Jeffrey](#)  
**Subject:** Town of Chevy Chase Comments on Sketch Plan No. 320260020 – Montgomery Pearl  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2026 10:59:59 AM  
**Attachments:** [TOCC Comments on Sketch Plan No. 320260020 – Montgomery Pearl.pdf](#)

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Please see the attached comments from the Town of Chevy Chase. Thank you.

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Barney Rush, *Mayor*  
Rich Brancato, *Vice Mayor*  
Carlo Colella, *Treasurer*  
Tambra Leonard, *Secretary*  
Quynh Tran, *Community Liaison*

April 28, 2026

Chair Artie Harris  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
2425 Reddie Drive, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wheaton, MD 20902

**Re: Sketch Plan No. 320260020 – Montgomery Pearl**

Dear Chair Harris and Members of the Planning Board:

On behalf of the Town of Chevy Chase, I write to submit the Town's comments on the Montgomery Pearl Sketch Plan (No. 320260020), which is scheduled for hearing on April 30, 2026. The site, comprising the southwest and southeast quadrants of the intersection of Pearl Street and Montgomery Avenue, immediately abuts our Town along its northern boundary. Our residents will live with the consequences of this redevelopment for decades, and we appreciate the opportunity to share the Town's perspective at this early stage.

### **Comments on the Sketch Plan**

In general, the Town is supportive of the Sketch Plan concept, and in particular the use of step backs to reduce the massing of the building toward its rear (south) elevation. We believe this approach reflects a thoughtful response to the transition between the higher-density Bethesda Downtown Plan area and our established residential neighborhood.

We offer the following specific requests with respect to the Sketch Plan:

***Privacy.*** Town residents have expressed concerns about privacy, particularly about views from the project apartments into the rear yards of homes along the Town's northern boundary. The step-back design may mitigate this concern, as it appears that future residents inside their apartments will have a limited downward view into Town backyards. We request that the Applicant confirm this analysis as part of the Site Plan submission. This feature of the design is very important to us, and we ask that it be preserved as the project advances through subsequent reviews.

***Building Height at the Rear.*** We request that the height of the rear (south) elevation of the building, currently shown at 35 feet, be explicitly limited to that height as a condition of Sketch Plan approval.

**Noise Mitigation at the Southern Terraces.** We request that a noise-suppressing and opaque screen be installed along the outside edge of the large terrace on the southern façade of the Central Building, which includes the pool, and also along the southern façade of the East Building terrace, if that area is also designed to be open to residents. Town residents already report that conversations from the existing tennis courts on the site carry clearly into surrounding homes; the more intensive use contemplated for a rooftop pool and terraces warrants meaningful acoustic mitigation from the outset of the design.

**Outdoor Lighting.** We request that all outdoor lighting on the terraces, pool deck, and residential balconies be designed to direct light downward onto those surfaces, and not outward toward Town homes.

**Operational Noise from the Southern Terraces.** Once the facility is in operation, we will look for clear operating regulations and management practices that hold noise from the southern terraces of the Central and East Buildings, including the pool, to acceptable levels throughout the day. We ask that this condition be memorialized as a Binding Element.

#### **Issues to Be Addressed in Subsequent Reviews**

While the following matters are not properly the subject of Sketch Plan review, we wish to note them now, so they receive appropriate attention as the project moves forward through site plan and building permit stages:

**Construction Management.** We will ask that the County require the Applicant to enter into a construction management agreement requiring strict adherence to the County's noise ordinance, prohibiting early-morning and late-evening work, and addressing dust, debris, and traffic management. The agreement should also establish a clear protocol by which residents may raise grievances and receive timely responses throughout the duration of construction.

**Pedestrian Access During Construction.** The site lies along a pedestrian route from the Capital Crescent Trail up Pearl Street to Montgomery Avenue. This route will be heavily used, especially by students walking to and from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. We will ask that the construction plan keep this path open and safe to the greatest extent practicable throughout the construction period.

The Town appreciates the Planning Board's consideration of these comments. I expect to provide oral testimony at the April 30 hearing and am available to answer any questions in advance.

Sincerely,



Barney Rush  
Mayor

cc: Jeffrey Server, Plan Reviewer, Montgomery County Planning Department

**From:** [Kent Morgan](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Comments RE: Sketch Plan Number 320260020  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2026 9:27:44 AM

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Dear Board Members,

As a near-by neighbor to the proposed Sketch Plan 320260020, I am writing to express my strong objection to the approval of this project as proposed.

My concerns are borne not only from the negative impacts this project will have on my family and me, but also from my professional background as an urban planner. In addition to a Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning, I have a 40-plus year career as an urban planner, including having directed the preparation of both multiple compressive regional plans and downtown master plans.

While my objections to this project are numerous and sweeping, I will limit my comments to the already eroded performance of the Montgomery Avenue as a transportation corridor and to the further disturbingly negative impacts this project will have on this pathway.

Let me begin with the predicate allowing this project to even be considered — the Bethesda Downtown Plan. The Plan contains two glaringly mistaken assumptions allowing this project to even be considered. Both appear on Figure 2.08 on page 38 of the Plan.

The first is the functional classification of Montgomery Avenue. (By the way, the Plan fails to give any definitions to the meaning of these functional classifications. This is but one of countless fundamental flaws in this Plan.) Montgomery Avenue is the eastward oriented portion of the two-way pair for State Highway 410. Even so, the Plan shows East-West Highway as a “Major Highway”, while classifying Montgomery Avenue as “business”. This totally misrepresents the role of Montgomery Avenue as a traffic corridor, and its commensurate role in carrying vehicular traffic.

This presumed role has been, and continues to be, undermined by the County and the Downtown Master Plan.

For example, capacity along Montgomery Avenue has been eliminated as a result of the construction of an unused and indefensible bike lane coming off the Wisconsin/Montgomery Avenues intersection — a bike lane proposed to extend the entire length of Montgomery Avenue! This diminished service level has already created a severe traffic constraint cascading along the entire corridor. This newly created chokepoint frustrates drivers who must maneuver past parked cars associated with the adjacent hotel, as well as the ubiquitous delivery trucks blocking the left lane. The resultant driver frustration causes exceedingly dangerous traffic conditions once vehicles pass through the Montgomery Avenue and Pearl Street intersection.

I know of at least six instances in the past five years in which cars have driven off of Montgomery Avenue and onto the adjacent right-of-way, resulting in property damage to buildings and ground signs. These accidents are the direct result of the diminution of roadway carrying capacity and the vexation driver experience from the County’s continuing actions to denigrate this travel corridor. Thankfully no pedestrians have been injured — but such a tragedy is certainly in the offing. And, no, adding a bike lane along the entire length of Montgomery Avenue will not “solve” this matter; it will only compound the problem. (Why do we need a bike lane on Montgomery Avenue with the Capital Crescent Trail just yards away?)

A second major flaw in the transportation plan for this corridor are the condition related to the proposed “Pearl District Connector” (B-1) for this corridor. The Plan states, “Implementation of the Pearl Street Connector should only be considered if 4350 East-West Highway is redeveloped.” The need for such an intervening connection is not simply related to 4350 East-West Highway, but is equally relevant proposed Sketch Plan 320260020.

As proposed, the residential component of Sketch Plan 320260020 will add between 3800 and 4500 additional vehicular trips per day to Montgomery Avenue and Pearl Street (based on ITE standards). Given the presumed access points for the project, a large number of these trips will flood onto Montgomery County going east in order to travel west. This will greatly exacerbate the existing congestion experienced at intersection of East-West Highway and Montgomery Avenue.

Today, residents of our building at 4242 East-West Highway already face challenges trying to travel west on East-West Highway. To accessing the left turning lane at this intersection, we have to cross two through lanes of traffic, while at the same time hoping there is adequate capacity in the left turn lane. If there are three or more vehicles in the turn lane, it is nearly impossible to gain entry into the lane. The additional traffic from Sketch Plan 320260020 will render this movement impossible during large portions of the day — at least not without other traffic design changes.

I could go about the numerous adverse transportation consequences this project — as well the many shortcomings in the Bethesda Downtown Plan's "Transportation Plan" and Montgomery County's current traffic management policies — will have on the quality of life we experience as County residents. As an example, the host of pedestrian safety concerns in this area will only grow with the approval of this project. The County and its Planning confederates seem totally indifferent to these matters, focusing instead approving developer friendly projects unmindful of the impacts on area residents/tax payers.

Moreover, the County's complicity in the Purple Line project as already caused a nearly 40 percent reduction in the assessed value of our unit. Sketch Plan 320260020 will unquestionably cause a further deterioration in both our quality of life and economic wellbeing.

For once, please consider the interests of other Downtown Bethesda residents and property owners before giving hasty approval to yet another ill-conceived buildout.

Kent Morgan



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Sketch Plan application number (320260020)  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 21, 2026 1:30:17 PM

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Dear Planning Board Chair Harris,

I am a resident of the Town of Chevy Chase, and more generally of Bethesda. I am writing with a comment regarding this plan application for the Montgomery Pearl.

There has been significant discussion in recent years of the need for a community fitness and aquatic center for Bethesda, as it currently lacks such a facility. This seems like an ideal project to consider for incorporating such a public amenity. Has this been considered? Could it? I would strongly encourage and support this.

Sincerely,

Erik Heyer

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [Judith McGuire](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** MONTGOMERY PEARL SKETCH PLAN NO. 320260020  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 21, 2026 10:57:54 AM

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I find it odd that the overall design fails to mention Coquelin Run, a watercourse along the Purple Line/CCT that catches runoff from Pearl St, Montgomery Ave, and the properties abutting it. Also, the plan is silent about the quiet Town of Chevy Chase neighborhood, all private homes, directly across from the development. They deserve more consideration. These huge buildings will loom over the homes and destroy their privacy, especially since the Purple Line construction clearcut all the trees on the transit ROW. At the very least, I would expect the planning board to require that trees be planted on the South side of the development to protect Coquelin Run and the privacy of private homeowners in the Town.

In addition, I am concerned that there seem to be no public amenities associated with this obstacle to reaching the CCT.

Needs improvement.

Judith McGuire  
