

Candidate Name	Place in order of priority the following issues:					Briefly explain your reasons for your first priority choice in the previous question.	If not listed above, what do you consider to be the most pressing or critical issue facing Asheville at this time?	If elected, would you support increased funding for the Economic and Workforce Development initiatives?	What is your vision for the development of Asheville in the next 15 years?	Do you support the I-26 connector as currently designed?	What do you want to happen with the Haywood Street property, better known as the "pit of despair"?	Do you believe in the use of incentives to help local businesses expand and to attract new businesses to our City?
	creating more parks, bicycle lanes, and greenways	affordable housing	improved transportation	bringing in high paying jobs	public safety							
Pratik Bhakta	NO RESPONSES GIVEN					NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN
Cecil Bothwell	2	4	1	5	3	Frequent, reliable transportation is the key factor in affordable living available to the municipal government. I have been unimpressed by the City's efforts to spur construction of affordable units during my two terms. Low cost housing has moved to the margins as downtown has boomed. Working with the County to extend transit beyond City limits is the best path to affordable commuting, reducing our carbon footprint, and solving the parking shortage.	Climate change. It needs to be considered in every decision we make as citizens and as a City.	I have begun to advocate for a new use for Tax Increment Incentive Grants (which we currently use to encourage construction of new businesses or expansion of old ones). I believe we should help local businesses take advantage of the lately approved NC solar credits by extending the Tax Incentive rebate program to rooftop solar on existing businesses. This will move us (faster) toward our goal of 100 percent renewables by 2050. And it can put a lot of people to work in the solar industry.	We will be dealing with the introduction of driverless cars and buses, and therefore have to begin planning for adaptive re-use of parking-first surface lots and curbside. This vehicle revolution is poised to change everything about transportation, transit and trucking. CEOs of Ford and GM predict wide introduction of autonomous vehicles in 2021. Google engineers believe we have hit "peak pavement" and will begin to eliminate lanes. Driverless cabs now predicted to cost 1/10 of owning a private car, and private car ownership anticipated to plummet 80-90 percent by 2030. Cities will change. Meanwhile, we need to design for more walkable, mixed use neighborhoods, and density on transit corridors.	No	The people have clearly indicated preference for a park for more than a decade.	I support the Tax Increment Incentive Grant program in appropriate circumstances, with the current requirements of minimum wage set at local Living Wage, and median for company at or better than Area Median Wage.
Andrew Fletcher	4	2	3	1	5	While affordable housing is a chief concern for the many persons who rent here, upward mobility is severely restricted by the lack of middle-income paying jobs. Partnering with the county, state, the Chamber and higher education institutions to create the conditions that can create those opportunities for workers and business development is crucial to our long term success as a community.	Both our diversity and our cultural capital are eroding under the burden of rising cost of living and stagnant wages. Business and government routinely undervalue culture and diversity. If we do not address this soon, we will be in danger of losing the culture that tourists find so compelling and continuing to drive the exodus of our minority communities.	Yes, as long as those initiatives are extended to all members of the community. The Minority Business Program is a part of that. I would also initiate a review of previous efforts, and examine successes and failures so as to make better use of those funds in the future.	Increasing our economic resiliency by fostering business growth outside of the tourist sector, completion of the greenway plans to better connect the city to itself, preparing the city for the coming self-driving car revolution, continuing to restore our river district, reducing sprawl by encouraging managed density along transit corridors, maintaining our environment and green spaces, restoring government services and public infrastructure to underserved neighborhoods, and reconnecting Asheville via rail for passengers and freight to the region and the nation. These are all things that will require leadership with vision that goes beyond the four year election cycle.	No Answer	As Chair and Spokesperson of the Haywood Street Advisory Team, I led the effort to answer this question. My leadership led to a 16-1 vote in favor of our report becoming the basis for the design phase which is about to begin. In considering the future of the property, I determined a few guidelines that I believed would culminate in a successful outcome and allow us a way out of the unnecessarily politicized process. I recognized that some green space is desired, and must be a part of the outcome. But foremost, I focused on the potential of the site to be an active and well-loved public space. Leaving open the possibility of small scale private development seemed a crucial tool to be made available to a design team as a way to do that. I believe that any building on the site must respect the mixed residential and commercial nature of the neighborhood and not be out of place with the Basilica, the Grove Arcade and the existing buildings on Haywood St. I look forward to the results of the design phase, and do not wish to interfere with that process. I trust that a talented designer, using the Haywood Street Team's work, will come up with a design that far exceeds the capability of any politician or candidate.	Yes, if there is positive return on investment for the city and clear benefits to the workforce rather than just a government handout to business and property owners. I highly value cultural capital, environmental responsibility, and respect for neighborhoods. Any incentives for businesses must also value those things. I consider incentives one tool to achieve those goals.
Jeremy Goldstein	5	3	4	2	1	Of course we have a mounting housing crisis and a lack of high paying jobs. I understand that, am deeply concerned, and am confident City Council has tools to address both effectively as our community continues to grow. However, when prioritizing public funds I begin with the essentials of public safety: fire, police, roads, water, sewer, storm water and garbage. It is particularly imperative that we support men and women who put themselves in harms way on a daily basis to protect and serve the people and property in our community.	Commercialization of our residential neighborhoods threatens the character of our community. Like other tourist towns across the globe, we are in a battle to keep our neighborhoods accessible to those of us who live and work here. People create a community, not houses full of transients. The proliferation of illegal short-term rentals is pitting neighbor against neighbor, driving the price of housing higher, increasing property taxes on everyone and making it less affordable to live in the City.	Yes, for the right initiatives. We need to expand business opportunities and bring better paying jobs to the area.	For the past six years I have served on Asheville's Planning and Zoning Commission, including four years as its Chair. I have worked hard to build trust with neighborhoods and communities through careful stewardship of the City's development ordinances and plans. I support a defined process for development, formulated with extensive public outreach and engagement that encourages balanced growth and is not subject to the political extremes of the day. Increased density in our downtown, combined with incentives for affordable housing and infrastructure improvements, will provide space for people to live and work, increase our tax base, make living in Asheville more affordable and accessible, and protect our existing neighborhoods.	Yes	I served on the Council-appointed Advisory Team for the Haywood and Page properties. We need a dense, mixed use urban development that incorporates a public space—a place for people to live, work, shop, eat, relax, and congregate. Currently, the area is a dead zone. It needs to be activated from early morning through late evening, generate property tax revenue, and safely connect people from Pritchard Park on one end of Haywood Street to the River Arts District gateway at the other end of Haywood Street.	Yes, depending on the terms of the deal.
Vijay Kapoor	No Answer	No Answer	No Answer	No Answer	No Answer	In my view, the issues that you've listed are all critical to Asheville's future and quality of life and we need to find ways of addressing them in a comprehensive way. I do not see them as separate issues that can be ranked.	In talking to residents, they are very concerned about balancing development/growth with preserving what makes this area special. Our infrastructure has not kept up with development; traffic is a mess in many parts of the City; and we're losing our tree canopy at a rapid pace. At the same time, many people understandably want to move here and the high cost of housing is a significant problem. We need policies to ensure that development is rational and responsible.	Having grown up in Asheville during a time when it was struggling economically, I want to ensure that our local economy is diversified and resilient so that we can improve wages, weather the next recession, and meet the needs of the future. That means ensuring that our existing businesses have a workforce pool with the skills that can meet their needs. It also means encouraging other companies and entrepreneurs to locate to the area. As a small business owner myself, I understand the value of economic and workforce development initiatives and would support increased funding for them provided that there is a targeted and well thought out plan to use them. I'm particularly interested in encouraging more green jobs and those that address climate change.	My vision for the development of Asheville is one where every resident goes to sleep each night feeling safe, fed, healthy and valued. It is one where the needs of residents and neighborhoods are taken into account, where we have rational and responsible development policies and where our local economy is diversified and resilient. This vision requires residents and businesses to understand that they are often on the same side and to find ways of working together. In my view, we need to have a regional focus when we think about both development and our local economy.	No Answer	I've been spending the last couple of months talking to people on all sides of this issue to better understand their views. I do not yet have a position on the property, but plan to announce one soon.	I believe that these type of incentives are helpful provided that they are targeted and that expectations and obligations are clear. If the businesses do not meet their obligations under the incentive, then they should have to pay the incentive back.
Jan Kubiniec	NO RESPONSES GIVEN					NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN	NO RESPONSES GIVEN
Rich Lee	5	2	3	1	4	As much as we need to tackle the affordability crisis by growing the supply of affordable housing, it's more important to get Asheville workers better access to middle- and high-income, career-track jobs, so more can afford housing at the prices we have. We are not going to close the affordability gap only by controlling rents, but by boosting incomes at the other end, as well. That's a typically underutilized, reactive city function: city governments wait for a business (or outside EDC) to approach them with a proposal, usually one calculated to benefit the relocating business more than the government or local workforce. Ideally, I think, we would see the city proactively working to grow high-potential, career-track businesses that are native to the area, with an eye to growth we could achieve with less (in incentive terms) and sustain over the long term.	The category I would add is government transparency and accountability. The city has made strides on this front in recent years, but there's still obviously a long way to go. Each of the categories listed above will matter little if not acted on in an open, inclusive fashion that brings in as many community voices as possible. I'm in favor of a wide-ranging, open process, even including direct participatory democracy, and trusting our citizens to handle information and decisions responsibly, even when the results seem -- inevitably -- messy. Increasingly, that's what an engaged, opinionated city is demanding.	Yes. I'll be blunt that I'm not in favor of courting out-of-area businesses with tax incentives and infrastructure perks. The city needs to be conscious of the taxpayer trust and keep an eye on long-term sustainable growth. Local initiatives to grow businesses that are already here seem like the way to go, and I applaud them.	I'm invested in Asheville being a place where my kids, now 6 and 7, can do meaningful, career-spanning work in whatever field they choose. Asheville's justified reputation is that you have to move away to start a career or expect to toil in the low end of the service industry. We need to change that. On the physical infrastructure front, we need to keep the look and feel of a small, accessible mountain city, and that means tackling traffic, transit, and other deficiencies that make getting around the city increasingly feel like a drag. We need to protect a place in the community for working artists and bohemians and local independent businesses so they don't decamp with our culture and quirkiness. If we can hold onto that, I don't think we'll worry so much if there are 90,000 or 190,000 people here. But lose any of them, and we'll soon feel like we've lost the city.	Yes	I want it to be a well-designed public space, a city park. Due to the height difference between Page St in the back of the property and Haywood St in the front, I think there should be a building, maybe restrooms and concessions or a small gift shop, in front of that retaining wall, but I would ask that any building have an open roof accessible from the back. I think the city should undertake to realign the four-way intersection at the corner of the property, squaring off Page St. to produce a better, safer space and intersections. This seems to be the direction indicated by the planning process so far.	Yes to the first part of the question, no to the second. I think cities end up the losers of a system of bidding against other governments for out-of-area businesses. Major employers with the resources to shop municipalities are going to take the deal that offers the most in exchange for the least. Additionally, they'll expect to bring many of their professionalized positions (e.g., engineers) from out-of-area, with little benefit to the local workforce. The costs of incentives, in a city with rapidly rising taxes, are poorly accounted by local governments. It seems like strategically growing companies that already have an investment in the area is a better use of resources, and I support that wholeheartedly.
Kim Roney	4	2	1	5	3	Improved transportation, especially via bus transit, increases access to jobs, housing, groceries, childcare, and education. Moving towards a fare-free system will put much-needed transportation dollars back into the budgets of necessity riders, especially workers and elders. It is possible that fare-free will save the city operational costs by eliminating the pending investment in new fare boxes. Additionally, the anticipated increase in ridership will have a positive impact on traffic and parking. Asheville is among the cities in our State and across the US that is recognizing our limited road capacity, ready for solutions which impact affordability for its residents while benefiting from increased quality of life and coming in line with our goals for environmental sustainability. Fare-free transit is one of the tools we can use to make our goals a reality.	The wage gap is a national issue that Asheville is no stranger to, and it's why affordability is the most critical issue facing our city today. Stagnant wages based in a tourist economy are economically crippling the people at the heart and soul of Asheville. Natives who grew their families up in their homes are selling to move out to the county. Students graduating from high school, or even college, say there's no place for them. This community of Asheville, along with the artists, musicians, teachers, service-industry workers, and lower-level municipal employees are forced to the outskirts, but still commute into Asheville to keep their jobs and to enjoy the vibrant life of the city they love. We need to find courageous ways to impact affordability. Increasing property taxes, and therefore rent, in the name of affordable housing that we cannot afford is unacceptable. We must find a solution to attract units in the 30% AMI throughout development. Until then, the people showing up to make Asheville work will continue to ask for whom are all these apartments being built?	Yes, especially for minority and women-owned businesses. Additional consideration should go towards employers who pay a living wage or higher.	The language in the current draft for the Comprehensive Plan claims that Asheville will have affordable housing and that the people investing in Asheville will "deserve to enjoy the fruits of their collective labors." Our City Council sets the tax rates and prioritizes the budget, so it will be very important to ensure these goals are met for all the people of Asheville. Over decades until even today, the decision-makers and stakeholders of Asheville have ignored or even perpetuated issues around affordable housing, wage gaps, and racial disparities. This has had a tremendous impact on our neighborhoods, in our schools, and on our ability to have a truly thriving economy. The people of Asheville have the will and desire to envision a resilient city, but we need courageous leaders who are as brave as the people they serve.	No	I support the decision of the Haywood/Page Street Task Force members, which came together over a very polarized issue, with over 30% attendance at their meetings. Given that they were not tasked with design, the solutions they came to showed willingness to compromise, and that should be taken seriously. Having a park with active edges will not only help to offset the cost of the park, but will also ensure regular use and increased attachment to the space by local people. As we move towards reviewing and finalizing a design, I hope Asheville will be intentional in our investment in edible parks. I would also be interested in researching whether or not the street between the Basilica and the park might be made an open street for pedestrians and multi-use space, closed to vehicular traffic, which would improve safety and maximize available uses.	Yes, with a specific focus on measures that allow our current local, independently-owned businesses to succeed, and efforts to support Asheville residents in opening and maintaining businesses. Especially those owned by minorities, women, and/or those paying living wages or higher.

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Sheneika E Smith	5	2	3	1	4	I believe establishing pathways to success that improve the financial situation of everyday people in our community would have a powerful and lasting impact on the overall economic health of the City of Asheville. A rising tide should float all boats. In my work at Green Opportunities, I have witnessed the life changing effects of training and workforce development. However, I would suggest a slight edit to the wording of this priority by changing the phrase "bringing in" to instead read: "creating" high paying jobs. We are blessed to have a tremendous amount of hometown talent and creativity right here in our own backyard. This region has become a cluster for diverse industries like brewing, value-added foods, natural products, fiber, sustainable energy, and outdoor gear. Instead of falling for the tired model of competing with other municipalities on who can give away the most to lure multinational corporations to town, we should focus a good part of our resources on growing and scaling these local economies. We have the talent necessary to create high paying jobs right here in Asheville!!	One word... Equity. Asheville has increasingly become an economically segregated community where a seemingly select few prosper while others struggle under the burden of stagnant wages and an ever rising cost of living. As a member of City Council I will manifest the political will to focus on policy solutions that combat poverty. As a community we must take a comprehensive approach that targets economic inequalities and their root causes, and advances social mobility. Putting equity at the center of economic development will allow larger segments of Asheville to realize their wealth potential and contribute more fully to the economy. To that end, I would work directly with the newly hired Equity Manager at the City of Asheville to look closely at our contracting process and push to ensure adequate representation of minority owned firms in the bidding process. I would focus on the supply chain of services required by local government and encourage the launch of start-up businesses in those areas where local firms could fill a need.	Yes, I believe it is essential to invest in the future of our community by ensuring that we have a highly trained workforce and good paying jobs. I envision utilizing these particular funds to directly empower individuals and provide support to grassroots organizations that seek to develop our local economy. Bottom-up, not top-down, growth. That means closely examining the non-profit organizations that City the works with via its Strategic Partnership Fund, and hard-targeting entities that are building economic empowerment. I support development that builds a more fair economy. As such, I would like to see the City support more innovative public / private partnerships similar to the revolving community loan fund now in place at Mountain Bizworks. This combination of matching local funds and federal grants are earmarked for local entrepreneurs to help them grow and scale their businesses. Additionally, I support workforce development missions that educate, empower and build community buying power that translates into direct ownership and generational wealth!	The Asheville we see now is not the Asheville it was years ago. In the 80s this City, especially downtown, was mostly deserted with boarded up buildings and a host of pigeons. As a native Ashevillean, I have some level appreciation for our City's recent development. However, I would stress that the metrics that govern our success should be widened to take into account historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities. My vision in an Asheville that works for everyone: a democratized economy that honors our shared cultural heritage. Tourism will likely remain an important part of our strategy, so I will push to generate cultural tourism and local enterprises that puts money back into neighborhoods. However, we can't put all of our eggs in one basket, and as such I would work to diversify our local economy.	Yes	"Who doesn't love a park? I fully support a green space across from the St. Lawrence Basilica. So much money and time has already been spent on this project. I would much rather fight for the renovation of Walton Street Pool, guaranteeing this community landmark becomes a national historic site. This once segregated pool should not only be preserved, but prioritized also. However, if the community truly wants to have a park on this city owned parcel of land, we have to ask ourselves how are we going to pay for it in perpetuity. To that end, I envision support from the Tourist Product Development Fund, a fundraising endowment led by Friends of St. Lawrence Green and volunteer labor. If we're serious about a park, we can mobilize the proper community support to anchor it."	I believe in supporting local business. Local lasts longer! It's not confined to one or two generations of owners, after which businesses sell to outside owners or close. They have proven the best benefit to the community landscape and are less likely to extract harmful advantages from our city because the owners are residents who love Asheville.
Adrian Vassallo	5	3	2	1	4	No doubt, each of these is a priority. When we bring in higher paying jobs, we take a multi-prong approach to alleviating several of these issues. Smart growth policies that promote density towards our City core and multi-use projects help attract new businesses, support our existing small businesses, and promote more housing above commercial uses. By encouraging workers to live closer to their jobs and shorten their commute times, we can create more livable and walkable communities. This will also help alleviate the strain on our transportation network and ease traffic congestion, while working to protect our future budgets by not increasing cost and maintenance of roads and utilities throughout our City. With the \$25M in affordable housing funds from the bond referendum, we have the opportunity to partner with developers to have a dynamic approach to job creation and incentivize projects that will create affordable housing with job centers in close proximity.	We have to get "smarter" about where and how growth is occurring in our community to ensure the "livability" of our community. Growth helps our tax base and is the way we can hopefully get out of our current fiscal situation. By encouraging growth towards our city core, we can alleviate some of the pressures on services. The City must work with developers from day one, to not only ensure we have the infrastructure in place to support the investment, but also begin planning for that growth and put solutions in place that would make it a "win-win" for all involved. Many of the large scale developments that are currently being built will help alleviate our affordable housing crisis, but will negatively impact quality of life in those areas from a transportation perspective. By focusing on the "quality of life" factors around growth, we can do a better job of making sure that Asheville is a great place for all of us to live.	Absolutely. I've been a supporter of the EDC and the 5X5 campaign for years from the private sector. As a CPA, I believe that investing in the team that is working to grow jobs here in our community is money well spent. They've been successful bringing new businesses to our community and supporting existing businesses with expansion and growth. We also need to see greater partnerships between the City and the County. It's time to work together to make a greater community for all of us. Every day, over 40,000 county residents commute into the City for their jobs. By working together, we can come up with solutions that will benefit all residents.	We have so much opportunity to make Asheville a great place for all of us and for those that continue to move here. By focusing on density back towards our City core, we can create more walkable, livable communities that will continue to attract new businesses, residents and support existing small businesses. Walkable communities make it easier for citizens to get around, regardless of income, which also boosts equity and inclusion. Our Innovation Districts should be areas of focus with an emphasis on truly innovative projects, not just sidewalks and streets. Working with our EDC team, we can attract businesses to these areas and partner with them and developers to build a new vision for what a livable, walkable community looks like.	No	As Chair of Downtown Commission, I was the one that moved to start the "visioning" process in our community. I firmly believe that as a community we can work together to come up with a mixed use design that makes all parties proud of what we can do there. We should be working to re-route the streets in front of the US Cellular Center as they are currently an issue with all events at the facility. Rafael Guastavino is an international icon for his building technique and we need to honor him with a wonderful public space in front of the Basilica. Finally, we must retain a portion of that parcel for commercial use, because that is where we can generate the most tax revenues in our community. If we are able to bring all of this together, we will have a space that will be dynamic and reflect how our community can work together to achieve greatness.	Yes. Our local businesses need assistance just as much as the new businesses that are locating here. We should be facilitating the growth of jobs from the small to the large because the end result will be the increase in tax revenues for our community. While small businesses might not have the largest impact from a tax base perspective, they do have the most immediate effect on job growth. We should be supporting them with additional services, loan funds and policy changes.
Dee Williams	4	2	3	1	5	Our City is proliferated with low paying service sector jobs which impact the quality of life for our citizens. The ability to care for one's self and a family is contingent upon income. The inability to make decent living wages impacts the ability to afford housing, as well. Over 30% of our citizens are "cost burdened", by housing since they pay more than 33% of their gross income for housing. Good paying jobs are often located outside the geographic area of the city bus system. Having access to adequate transportation is an economic development and equity issue. The lack of transportation is a barrier to good paying jobs which often exist outside the City center. Overall, data shows that crime has increased 1% in a five year period, so public safety is at the end of the list.	Next to living wage jobs is the lack of a diverse economy, along with companies which pay a living wage. There exists a lack of investment in the development of an adequate small business supply chain from which our anchor employers can "buy locally". The lack of a reliable source of adequate funding for modern local infrastructure is also a barrier to creating/attracting high paying jobs.	Yes, we need to train our workforce for high tech jobs like advanced manufacturing, and supply chain management. It is easier to recruit these types of good paying jobs if we have a well-educated work force which is ready, willing, and available to go to work.	It will be a City that has living wage jobs, a system of modern infrastructure, including adequate transportation well-designed and maintained streets, including an adequately funded public transit system with a diverse economy. It will offer affordable housing options inside the City limits and also be a City which demonstrates equity and opportunity in all aspects of community life.	Yes	It should become a park or green space for folks downtown to enjoy. The proliferation of hotels downtown, coupled with the attendant traffic which they generate, have acted to change the character of the City Center. This space would provide an oasis in the middle of a lot of hard scape and development. Parks and green spaces contribute to the economic vitality of downtown spaces, too.	Yes, There could be a loan pool to help local businesses "scale up" to become suppliers of local anchor businesses and governments. Financial incentives could be offered if these businesses agreed to provide a specific number of living wage jobs, as well as contributions to certain infrastructure improvements which are necessary for these businesses to locate to our City.
Gwen Wisler	3	1	4	2	5	Actually I struggle between jobs and affordable housing. However what I hear in the community is that affordable housing is the top priority. To determine what is affordable is based on income, therefore without good paying jobs, it is difficult to get to affordable housing.	A very significant issue right now is equity. Is the City treating all residents fairly? Are we doing enough for our underserved populations? This is why I strongly support the creation of a Human Relations Commission.	Yes. As I said above, making Asheville accessible in terms of affordability will require good paying jobs. I will work to encourage partnerships with the County and other organizations to bring and retain good paying jobs. I will also encourage industries that have been incentivized to hire Asheville residents.	I envision a diversified Asheville -- good combination of industries and residential development. A good mix of residential development in terms of design, size, values. Diversity in terms of industry with less dependence on the tourism industry.	Yes	I support the Haywood Street vision task force work.	Yes. I've been supportive of our use of property tax incentives. Again, I want to encourage businesses that are located within the city limits to hire and retain Asheville residents.