YOUR NAME: Shane McCarthy

QUESTION: Please tell us why you are running for City Council.

I’m running for city council because I want the people who grew up here to be able to live here. Our housing crisis, low wages, and lack of an adequate public transportation system are driving out the workers who keep this city running, and the people who have lived here their entire lives.

QUESTION: What do you feel is downtown’s most pressing challenge, and how would you address it?

The most pressing issue is the multi-pronged problem of affordability, meaning the lack of affordable housing, low wages, and the lack of a viable public transportation option for many residents. On city council, I will address affordability by boosting access to homeownership through the down payment assistance program and community land trust, using city resources to build deeply affordable rental housing, increasing bus frequency, extending bus service hours, and attracting jobs to Asheville that aren’t in the tourism and service industries.

QUESTION: What smart growth strategies and funding mechanisms would you advocate for to support thoughtful growth in downtown that increases the city's tax base while also maintaining its character?

Use the break provided by the hotel moratorium to develop sensible regulation and goals for the tourism industry. Shift new development away from tourism and service, and into office space and affordable housing. New development should be transit-oriented and contain affordable and workforce housing.

ISSUE: Parking/Transportation

QUESTION: What improvements to our parking, transit system and alternative transportation options would you advocate for to ease pressure on the parking system?

I’ve committed to fully fund our transit master plan, increase bus frequency, and extend bus service hours. These improvements will make the bus a more attractive option for workers and visitors. I would also increase parking garage rates for out-of-town visitors and decrease them for locals, which would take pressure off workers who commute downtown by car.

ISSUE: Supporting local business

QUESTION: What strategies would you employ to ensure the sustainability of small locally owned businesses in downtown?
The city should implement a policy to buy from local suppliers whenever possible. Local vendors have a wide range of products and have competitive prices that can fulfill many of the city’s needs. The City can do more to promote local businesses through “Go Local” weeks and similar initiatives to boost our small local businesses.

**ISSUE:** Infrastructure  
**QUESTION:** Identify your top three downtown infrastructure needs. How would you prioritize funding for these projects and how do you feel infrastructure impacts business success?

1) A shortage of public bathrooms means that many people downtown don’t have proper access to sanitation. This results in unsafe conditions for residents and workers, and results in strain on the bathrooms of downtown businesses. 2) Some locations downtown are missing sidewalks, crosswalks, and crosswalk signals, especially on the south side. We have to fill in the gaps in our pedestrian network. 3) Our water system has frequent outages, and our emergency notification system has sent out conflicting, inaccurate messages about boil water advisories. Our businesses and residents depend on clean, reliable water - we have to address our water system sooner rather than later.

**ISSUE:** Safety  
**QUESTION:** How would you work with the police department to ensure adequate resources to maintain public safety? What strategies would you employ to ensure community trust in policing?

Invest in a housing first approach to homelessness so that our neighbors don’t have to sleep in doorways or on park benches, which will free up police to address other issues. Partner with the county to increase access to drug treatment plans. The needle disposal units in the Civic Center parking garage bathrooms were shown to reduce needle litter by 90%, more of them should be installed in strategic locations downtown. Increase public trust in police by expanding the written consent to search policy to pedestrians. Work to decrease APD’s non-emergency response time, which some stores report can be over an hour.

**ISSUE:** Homelessness  
**QUESTION:** What steps would you take to support the Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee and Asheville’s homeless resource providers? What other strategies or initiatives would you consider to address homelessness in our community?

One homeless child in Asheville is too many. On city Council, I will support innovative initiatives like Beloved’s street medic program, and will expand our housing first approach to homelessness. We will leverage city resources to build deeply affordable housing for people on low incomes and at risk of homelessness, so they can be housed instead of sleeping on the street. It’s not just the right thing to do, it’s the fiscally
responsible thing to do – it costs up to three times less to put people in housing than it does to leave them on the street, due to frequent costs from first responders and medical care.

**ISSUE:** Affordable/Workforce Housing

**QUESTION:** What is your position on housing diversity in downtown? What other strategies would you like to see our city develop to address the affordability issue?

Downtown has seen an increase of high-dollar condos and apartments. Downtown Asheville needs a diverse range of residents, it can’t become a playground for tourists and the rich. Downtown is closely connected to our transit system and providers of resources for low income residents, so it’s essential that we invest in affordable housing downtown too.