

1. What is your vision for growth and development in Asheville?

As someone trained in urban design, I find it difficult to answer succinctly but believe that the City's Comprehensive 2025 Plan articulates a simple and clear vision that I wholeheartedly support:

*Smart Growth is a City of Asheville development pattern that makes efficient use of our limited land, fully utilizes our urban services and infrastructure, promotes a wide variety of (housing) and effectively serves a significant portion of the future population growth of Buncombe County and Western North Carolina, protects the architectural and environmental character of the City through compatible, high quality, and environmentally sensitive development practices, and recognizes the City's role as a regional hub of commerce and employment. Inherent to this definition is the need to implement Smart Growth through comprehensive, consistent and effective policies, regulations, capital projects and incentives.*

The land-use and transportation principles on page 31 and 33 of the 2025 Plan provide detailed objectives to the above mission which I also support. A P&Z Commissioner is seated to implement these policies where they have been concretely proscribed into ordinances by City Council and as required, the P&Z Commissioner shall be capable of interpreting the broader vision statements which are articulated in the 2025 Plan.

Examples of my practice of the above is in my work on mixed-use urban infill with Public Interest Projects, my volunteer work in creating the Downtown Comparison Project for the Asheville Downtown Association, my volunteer work at the Asheville Design Center (particularly the designs and real estate calculations for the infill designs on Patton Ave.), and the work that I do nationally, creating analytic models for communities to reinforce their Smart Growth decisions with solid financial data. This work has been presented at two national Smart Growth Conferences and has been published in numerous trade journals, as varied as the Center for Clean Air Policy to the Wall Street Journal. The principles of the 2025 Plan are very much part of my practice as an urban designer and what constitutes my vision for any community, including Asheville.

2. Do you believe Asheville has taken an approach that is too "pro-growth" or "anti-growth" over the past 5-6 years? Please share your reasons.

This is difficult to answer as our community (like pretty much every community across the country) has experienced a tremendous change during the last boom and since the recession. To some degree, Council does not create or control matters of the larger forces inherent to the "market", yet the Council has within its power the ability to participate in saturation of the market. A project like the Thoms Estate is a good example of 'piling on' in a high-end market development in a saturated submarket category, while the 60 N. Market Street project met the same market price point in a different development category, yet was better reflective of the community's Smart Growth policy intentions outlined in the 2025 Plan. Both added units to our

supply (pretty close to the same number of units in each project), yet they impact our community cost in different ways (one more than the other) and though both were 'high-end' projects, one was much more risky than the other. From a "city" standpoint, it will cost our community 175% more to service each residential unit in Thoms vs. its comp in 60 N. Market though the income to our community will be about equal. But this is all in hind-sight though it highlights the most important aspect of community growth, that is a question relative to *location and design* of the development.

Cities must grow, or they die. They are living, changing places, much like a human body. Its not a matter of pro or anti, but a matter of good growth. One could liken poor development patterns to a cancer in a human body, it damages the cells next to it. If you locate a waste plant next to people's houses, chances are pretty good that you've just impacted that neighborhood in a negative way. To put it bluntly, not all growth is created equal. This is where the design and location come together, and again, principles to guide these distinctions are articulated in the 2025 Plan.

Also, the P&Z Commission should strive to understand larger market forces, and stay ahead of them, rather than result into a situation of being a 'reacting' body resulting in pressure decisions. With the actions of the market that put us in "hot" situations like several years ago, or the "cold" market we are currently in, the key is to maintain your standards throughout. We must not throw our standards out the window during the feeding frenzy, nor should we ignore them out of desperation in a dead marketplace. Conversely, we need to understand when policies are an impediment to good growth or are obsolete and remove them. We need to make Smart Growth the easy option. The City is incorporated, and much like any corporation, we must position ourselves to compete against other corporations and distinguish ourselves by our "Brand", and from a planning perspective Asheville's 'brand' is a Smart Growth,community.

### 3. How strictly should interpretation and application of the Unified Development Ordinance be applied?

This depends on the regulation written within the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). After all, the UDO is a set of Ordinances as written by Council, and as a certified planner, I see our Ordinances as a set of laws. Secondly, this is also a matter of how the regulation is drafted, in that some part are concrete and others allow for more grey. If it says "so and so *should* do x, y, or z; then that is a flexible guideline, but the onus is on the applicant to have tried the recommendation and provide a reason why that standards wasn't met. If the ordinance says so and so *shall* do such and such, then that is a strict rule and must be followed. As a sworn representative of Council, I'd be obligated to follow that rule. If it was obvious to the P&Z Commission that a rule was onerous or obsolete, then we'd need to recommend policy change to Council for legislative action/correction. In short, I consider the UDO to be both flexible guidelines AND strict rules, it just depends on the actual part of the policy you're looking at. Also, all laws and policy are living, breathing documents that have

to be adjusted from time to time, and its the obligation of the Planning and Zoning Commission to understand the policies in the context of community goals and recommend adjustment of those policies that are in conflict with the Annual Goals of the Council.

4. Name one Planning & Zoning Commission decision in the last 18 months you've agreed with and one you've disagreed with or would have struggled with. Please explain your rationale for each.

I agree with the Kenilworth Apartment decision, as it met all of the standards as they were in place at the time, even though I may not personally agree with the form of the development that was brought forward. Ordinances cannot foresee all possible developments and sometimes something comes forward that exploits gaps in policy, but the policy should be addressed and shored up with clear and objective standards. One cannot fault the applicant for following our adopted policies and procedures.

As for disagreement, I would have struggled with the Ellington project and the introduction of a curb cut on Biltmore, though there are a lot of caveats. But that was also beyond the 2 year window. As for recent issues, I do disagree with the vote on the Ingles lighting and signage, as I feel that the interpretation/recommendation went outside of the Commission's ability within the UDO procedures and strayed into the territory of creating precedent, a matter that was raised by City Staff. If P&Z truly believe that parcels should have more lighting than our adopted standards and more signage than anyone else is allowed, they should recommend policy changes and leave that matter to Council. P&Z Commissioner should not stray into matters of creating new public policy, especially when that has been highlighted by City Staff. And when it is outside the guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan. That encourages an unpredictable development process.

5. What are some of the positive or negative effects of Asheville's zoning regulations?

That's a complex question to answer. There are positives and negatives to any regulation, and there is no perfect law (though some are better than others). Our zoning regulation is a living breathing document created several decades ago, and its up to our community to mature the document and work for a creation of a better community. The guideline document for that is our comprehensive plan and the UDO is a tool to get toward our comprehensive goals.

It could be argued that having zoning regulation could make projects more expensive, and in some cases that is true, but our forefathers sacrificed that penultimate principle to gain more predictable development patterns that could be argued increase our total community value and

quality. But really, this is an endless debate. What matters is that we DO have zoning regulation, and we accepted that as a community. This was before my time, and personally, I feel that the benefits of having this system outweighs the cost. I see our 2025 Plan & UDO as our corporation's business plan of how we agreed to grow our community.

A more nuanced investigation of our zoning regulations, would be to add to this question "could our zoning regulations be improved?", and my answer would be "yes". Because of the many modifications of the UDO since its adoption, there is redundant language that could be cleaned up without eliminating predictability or affecting policy. Moves like the Planning Staff's proposal of the "Use Table" last year is an excellent example of utilizing simple tables and graphic design to show more information in less space. Making one table eliminated saying the same information in many more pages. I think that one table was able to replace 25 pages of information. A continued frustration in the development industry as well as the average citizens could be resolved just by using simple graphic design communication tools to say the same thing in less space, thus resolving community frustration with the document as a whole. I believe the regulations are generally sound, but the bigger issue is in the communication of those regulations - it needs to be converted into something that communicates in a more user friendly format. Making our regulations more transparent and accessible, wipes out a lot of aggravation.