The Asheville Downtown Association periodically surveys its members and the community to get feedback on issues and challenges facing downtown. We’ll utilize this feedback to formulate the questions included in this survey.

The top issues noted in the survey for maintaining the vibrancy of downtown are: supporting local businesses, safety, more parking/transportation options, maintenance of infrastructure, addressing homelessness and affordable/workforce housing.

**Downtown Issues Questionnaire for Asheville City Council Candidates**

**YOUR NAME**  Jeremy Goldstein

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

To protect our quality of life as Asheville continues to grow.

I believe a small, downtown business owner with a common sense, moderate voice is needed to broaden the perspective on City Council. For the past 23 years through my commercial real estate brokerage practice, I have forged common ground among business owners, developers, investors, and municipalities. My professional experience and skill set would be useful on Council—especially as we wrestle with growth. For the past six years I have also served on Asheville’s Planning and Zoning Commission, including four years as its Chair. I have worked hard to build trust with my fellow Commissioners, neighborhoods and communities through careful stewardship of the City’s development ordinances and plans. I offer an intimate understanding of the power of our land use laws to protect neighborhoods, promote affordability and encourage thoughtful growth.

Finding common ground is a cornerstone of my personal and professional life. While my answers to these questions might seem unusually direct, arriving at common sense solutions depends upon listening to and understanding the views of others. That is what I do. That is what I have done as Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission and what I am eager to do as a member of City Council.

**QUESTION**: What do you feel are downtown’s most pressing challenges?

Homelessness
Safety
Parking
QUESTION: What is the role of downtown in the greater Asheville community?

Economic engine
Cultural heart
Community gathering place

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

With the exception of the provisions added to increase public engagement, I would repeal the recent 52-page amendment to the UDO that essentially politicizes the approval process. The amendment as passed will contribute to sprawl, increased traffic, increased property taxes, and less affordable housing options. The amendment was adopted with little public engagement and serves to stifle dense development exactly where we need it most—in our downtown.

We need to build in and up in our downtown. 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.

As new residents bring unique perspectives and experiences to share with our community, our city will grow and change. I welcome this diversity and believe it strengthens the character of Asheville.

ISSUE: Supporting local business
QUESTION: What strategies would you employ to ensure the sustainability of small locally owned businesses in downtown?

I own a small, locally-owned business that just entered its 17th year in downtown Asheville. For the last 15 years I have been located at 28 N. Ann Street, directly across from Homeward Bound. Area neighbors also include the Salvation Army, Hyatt Place Hotel, Jan Davis Tire, and the WNC Rescue Mission. We have had a front row seat to Asheville’s recent growth and the challenges associated with it.

We need to end homelessness, keep our streets clean, maintain public safety, and encourage dense development that will provide a diversity of housing options and places for people to work.

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?

First, build more public parking decks. We have a significant parking deficit not only for our visitors but for downtown residents and workers. Perhaps we locate parking decks on the fringes and provide shuttles and/or bicycle rentals to downtown? Next, leverage our tax dollars by incentivizing private developers to incorporate public parking into new projects in exchange for increased density. This will not only alleviate the parking problem but increase our tax base and provide more space for people to live and work.

Increased density downtown will also grow our urban population, driving down the cost of housing and improving safety. Higher demand for public transportation along with additional tax dollars generated by new mixed use development will allow us to expand our transit system, fund pedestrian and bicycle improvements and take more vehicles off the road without increasing property taxes for individual households throughout the City.

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 address the concerns regarding policing brought forth during the recent budget conversation?

I believe in hiring well-qualified, caring and hard working people. Then, I believe in letting those people do their jobs. If Chief Tammy Hooper recommends additional funds in order to adequately protect the welfare and safety of our citizens, then I will do what is necessary to provide adequate resources.

It is imperative that all of our citizens—in all of our neighborhoods—feel safe. Since this is not the case, I would ask the public for suggested solutions through extensive outreach. Using that input, I would ask the police department to recommend specific action steps to address this sense of fear and inequity. Defunding our police department is not the answer. If we are going to resolve equity and trust issues, we need to work together—not against one another. Increased community engagement is a must. Our men and women who put themselves in harms way on a daily basis to protect and serve the people and property in Asheville seek everyone’s support and gratitude for undertaking a dangerous and difficult job.

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?

Utilities (Water, Sewer, Stormwater)
Sidewalks
Roads
These are the very foundation of building our tax base, increasing density, and maintaining our quality of life.

**ISSUE:** Homelessness  
**QUESTION:** What steps would you take to support the Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee’s 5-year plan released earlier this year? What other strategies or initiatives would you consider to address homelessness in our community?

I support all of the priorities, strategies and action items in the HIAC 5-year plan.

**ISSUE:** Affordable/Workforce Housing  
**QUESTION:** What is your position on housing diversity in downtown? How would you direct staff to utilize funds from the recently passed Affordable Housing Bond? What other strategies would you like to see our city develop to address the affordability issue?

There is a significant lack of housing diversity in downtown. There is a significant lack of housing in downtown, period. We need to ease regulations and use zoning as a tool to encourage—not discourage—investment in our downtown.

There is no one, single magic pill to solve our affordable housing problem. This is a nationwide problem. The reality is that we need to attack this issue on multiple fronts. Increasing the overall supply of housing options will have the single greatest impact on affordability. There are simply more people than there are places to live, which drives the cost higher. Downtown presents the most viable opportunity to tackle the problem without overburdening our infrastructure.

In order to increase supply of affordable housing, the City needs to leverage our funds by offering incentives to those willing to invest in our community to add an affordable housing component. Best options include contributing to infrastructure improvements and additional public parking. In addition to increasing the number of affordable units in a project, those kinds of investments will benefit the City in other ways.

As we continue to grow our tax base by encouraging density, we will have additional funds to direct to our Affordable Housing Trust Fund and other programs that seek to create permanent affordable housing solutions in our downtown.

What is your 5-year vision for Downtown?

I would like to see many more locals living and working in our downtown. If I have to choose between a changing skyline or increased traffic, sprawl and lack of affordable housing, then I choose the changing skyline all day long.

Any further comments you’d like to include concerning Downtown Asheville?
I hope that my four sons will live in Asheville when they are older. I want good jobs, a bustling economy, natural beauty, and an independent spirit to be here for them when they do. I'm committed to working toward this vision, for my children and for yours.