From:	Harper
To:	Public Comments
Subject:	Halt Reopening Plans
Date:	Monday, July 20, 2020 3:27:36 PM

I am writing today to demand:

1. Buncombe County Commissioners amend their budget and defund the County Sheriff's Office and Detention Center by at least 50% immediately.

Going forward, the County MUST invest in the economic wellbeing of Black, Brown, and Indigenous residents, commit resources to eliminate the racial opportunity gap, and provide deeply affordable housing, land provisions, mental health services, rent subsidies and eviction diversion, free public transportation, and restorative justice services for all.

2. All city and county schools must choose Plan C, and refuse to return to in person learning until the end of the pandemic.

3. Buncombe County Commissioners and the Tourism Development Authority Board must halt reopening plans. Only essential businesses should be open, with a requirement that businesses provide all workers with protective gear and that the mask policy is upheld. It is absolutely shameful that Buncombe County has not only reopened to outside visitors from states like Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida but begun paying to advertise Asheville to travel and leisure visitors again. ***IT'S A PANDEMIC, Y'ALL.*** Are the deaths of locals really worth it?

While our cases rise exponentially, so do the cases in surrounding states that you insist on advertising in. This is putting locals at risk every single day, especially Black, Latinx, and Indigenous populations. Choosing tourists and profits over the health of your citizens is disgusting. The County Health Board acknowledges that racism is a public health crisis and when communities of color are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, moving forward with reopening plans while COVID-19 cases continue to rise exponentially can only exacerbate this.

And while you're at it: the County must open hotels for the unhoused community to prioritize their health and wellbeing. The Sheriff's Department must halt enforcing evictions during the extent of the pandemic (which Durham's County already did). Don't forget redirecting funds (maybe from the TDA?) to support communities hardest hit and most at risk during the pandemic.

Thank you for—hopefully—listening.