

From: 'Diane Wilkey' via councilgroup <AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov>
Sent: 2/13/2022 1:22:30 PM
To: AshevilleNCCouncil@ashevillenc.gov
Cc:
Subject: Do Racial Equity! Support a Track at Memorial Stadium!

: Asheville City Council,

Dear City Council and City Manager Campbell,

I want to ask you to help our city make good on our promises to our East End/Valley Street neighbors and to make good on our commitment to racial equity by setting aside American Rescue Plan funds to build a track at Memorial Stadium.

For decades, our neighbors have faced racism in countless ways in our city including the devastation of urban renewal. More than 10 years ago, these neighbors asked for a track to be built at Memorial Stadium. It was dreamed of as a place where neighbors could support their health together. We know walking, jogging, and running help to improve heart health, lower the risk of chronic diseases, support healthy blood sugars, lower blood pressure, and reduce stress as well as provide many additional health benefits. We also know that health disparities due to systemic racism in all areas of life negatively impact the lives of many Black Ashevilleans.

As we talk of reparations and racial equity, one thing the city could do to build trust and work towards racial equity is to keep its promises to the Black community regarding the track at Memorial Stadium. This is the smallest of small efforts, but it would be a step on the long path of making reparations. We owe so much to our Black neighbors and siblings. Who is more important to this city, our friends and neighbors we live with every day who support our city physically and financially, or some potential soccer fans who are in and out? Please keep your priorities straight and love your neighbors (constituents) who trusted you to hear their voices.

I join my voice with the chorus of East End/Valley Street neighbors and call for the city to improve Memorial Stadium in ways that support neighborhood use and to set aside ARPA funds for the following purpose:

- *Build a 6 lane track around the entire field for neighbors to use for regular exercise
- *Reduce the field by 6 yards (this still being FIFA compliant)
- *Remove bleachers from the far side and only have bleachers on the side closest to McCormick Field
- *Create a parking plan for Memorial Stadium

Thank you for hearing the concerns of the East End/Valley Street neighbors and me and for following through on your promises to our African American community. I ask that you commit to racial equity in all of your decisions. And finally, thank you for your service to our community.

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