

From: David LaMotte <info@sg.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: 2/10/2022 1:49:47 PM
To: dcampbell@ashevillenc.gov
Cc:
Subject: Concern about broken promises and neighborhood equity

City Manager Deborah Campbell,

Dear City Council and City Manager Campbell,

I am writing to ask that you, on behalf of the residents of Asheville, prioritize equity, and the well-being of our neighbors, over tourism. To do this, I ask you to help our city make good on our promises to 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 six-lane running and walking track at Memorial Stadium.

For decades, neighbors who have faced racism 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 as a place where neighbors could support their health together. We know walking, jogging, and running help to improve heart health, lower the risks of chronic diseases, support healthy blood sugars, lower blood pressure and reduce stress among many more health benefits. We also know that health disparities due to systemic racism in all areas of life negatively impact the lives of so many black Ashevilleians.

As we talk of reparations and racial equity, one thing the City could do to build trust and do racial equity is to keep its promises to the Black community regarding the track at Memorial Stadium.

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, with a top capacity of 1200, as neighborhood leaders have graciously agreed to
- *Create a parking plan for Memorial Stadium that will accommodate a sufficient number of vehicles for that large of an audience.

Thank you for hearing the concerns of the East End/Valley Street neighbors 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.

David LaMotte
davidlamotte@me.com
800 Laurel Ave
Black Mountain, North Carolina 28711