

'road diet' and have never once decried it. It makes our city more livable, and I'm hoping the city does a better job of connecting multimodal streets to encourage more bike commuting. McCormick Field, on the surface, was a giveaway to a billionaire team owner, but if this means the field will now be open to year-round use for concerts and other events outside of baseball season, this could be a huge and much-needed addition to Asheville's cultural and entertainment venues."

— **Matt Peiken**,
host, *The Overlook with Matt Peiken*

"I drive Merrimon every day. Initially, with the lane changes that were made, I felt there was just too much traffic for one lane, but I have changed my tune! I think it has made a big difference in the safety of drivers, cyclists, even walkers, in the North Asheville area. Hats off on that one."

— **Monica Walsh Blankenship**,
veteran

What's the biggest infrastructure need for your neighborhood that you've noticed this year? (Please include the name of the area where you live.)

"I live on South French Broad Avenue and I walk a lot, so from my perspective, the biggest infrastructure needs are sidewalks, trees, benches and trash cans. Many of our sidewalks are crumbling, and/or have poor drainage. Lots of the trees lining the streets have died or are dying, so there's less shade each year. Benches would be nice to rest on, and trash cans would cut down on litter."

— **Stu Helm**,
food blogger and food tour guide,
Stu Helm Food Fan

"Our office is located in the Pisgah View Apartments community in West Asheville, a property of the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville. One of the largest infrastructure needs we see where we work includes better transit opportunities for community members to access jobs, grocery stores and health care. Without a car, team members require additional hours of transit time on a city bus to reach the office, pick up lunch and visit program sites."

— **Ashley Allen**,
co-executive director,
Read to Succeed Asheville/Buncombe

"Believe it or not, only one major apartment building was built in North Asheville over the past 10 years. That's because our zoning laws are outdated. On Merrimon, for example, where we have two bus lines, you can only build a fast-food joint because of the two-story height limit, 6,000-square-foot floor plan limit and parking requirements. How are we going to provide people with somewhere to live, especially in areas near amenities and transit, if we can't build?"

— **David Moritz**

"I live in West Asheville next to Pisgah View Apartments. It's saddening to see the homeless population surrounded by the low-income housing development. They were camping in the woods, and the [Asheville] Police Department tore down the surrounding bushes. A lot of them suffer from addiction, so I'd like to see facilities in Asheville that can help people get off the streets if they decide to do so themselves."

— **Nina Gi**,
singer-songwriter

How have changes in the real estate market impacted you this year?

"The challenge of unaffordable housing continues with rising interest rates and housing prices. My friends and neighbors are struggling to afford to live here with rising rents, and homeownership is less and less accessible. The lack of housing also creates an environment where many of our neighbors can't afford housing at all. I am saddened to see our city criminalizing folks for not being able to afford our extremely expensive city."

— **Grace Barron-Martinez**,
activist and realtor

"This year, I was forced to move out of my rental home because it was put on the market for sale. As I start the new year, I also will be looking for a new place to live. With rental prices astronomically high, and a dog, the search has been tiresome and quite difficult."

— **Karis Roberts**,
executive director,
Asheville Brewers Alliance

"The increase in construction costs and interest rates have greatly impacted housing development, especially affordable housing. Our community has a great need for housing units for multiple income groups. Slowing housing production means higher rents for everyone, which impacts lower-income families the most. Also, with increased costs, developers and builders look to both the city and the county for more funding to make it feasible to build affordable housing."

— **Sasha Vrtunski**,
Affordable housing officer,
City of Asheville

"I've been a homeowner in Buncombe County for almost 30 years. I see the reward of additional wealth from a strong real estate market, and in my professional life, I see the challenges that come with that. I welcome the appreciation in my property value due to current market conditions. However, I also realize that my adult children may find it difficult to purchase that first home due to the same conditions."

— **Keith Miller**,
tax assessor, *Buncombe County*

"Remote work has changed the landscape of real estate. People can choose where they want to live without sacrificing the money that they make. Remote workers are willing to spend more on a house based on their financial situation. The resulting increase in local cost of housing is a strain on people that live off of local market wages."

— **Lucious Wilson**,
board member,
Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority X



BILLY DOUBRASKI



NINA GI



STU HELM



JOSH KELLY



ESTHER MANHEIMER



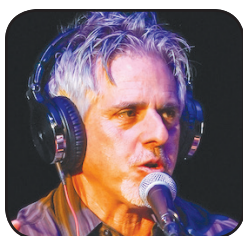
KEITH MILLER



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LISSA PEDERSEN



MATT PEIKEN



KARIS ROBERTS



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