



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Block Party campaign?

MountainTrue is running a policy campaign to change the rules in the City of Asheville to make it easier to build more homes - in particular, middle housing types like duplexes and quadplexes. We believe that creating more housing choices within the city ultimately benefits both existing residents and the natural environment across our region. We're calling it Block Party because our neighborhood block parties will get even better when we have more friends to party with! Join us! What Asheville needs is more homes in the right places. By building in and up within the city limits with "middle housing," we can protect the natural landscapes that define this region, while also creating better-connected, more walkable neighborhoods for all to enjoy.

Why is MountainTrue working on housing? Aren't you an environmental group?

For decades, restrictive housing policies and resistance to urban growth have pushed new development outward, paving over forests and farmland and increasing traffic and pollution. This sprawling development trend has forced residents to drive farther for daily needs and has increased the cost of housing. Small multi-family homes make sense within city limits, where residents have greater access to jobs, health care, amenities and public services like transit.

What is "middle housing"?

"Middle housing" refers to housing types that fall between single-family homes and large-scale apartment complexes — homes like duplexes, triplexes, cottage courts or townhomes. Middle housing is often referred to as "missing" because these structures have largely been missing from the residential housing market over the last 70 years. In addition to being more affordable, these types of homes are more energy efficient than single-family detached homes.

From 1976 to 2006, land development in WNC increased 568% — from 34,348 acres to 229,422 acres — yet population increased only 42% in that same time. The result? An increase in average acres per person, or each person's "development footprint." (Renaissance Computing Institute, University of North Carolina Charlotte, 2010)

Why can't we build middle housing now?

66% of all residentially zoned land in Asheville only allows single family homes by right. If someone wanted to build a duplex or triplex they would have to go through a long and complicated permitting process first.

But won't more housing encourage more people to move here from out of town?

Our region has built its identity around creativity, community and care for the natural world, attracting both tourists and transplants for many years. For a vibrant city like Asheville, growth is inevitable — but sprawl doesn't have to be. We want to ensure that newcomers and natives alike have housing choices near the city center where they can access jobs, schools, and amenities on foot, by bike, or by riding the bus. Having these options not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions, but it also means land is used more efficiently, reducing development pressures on our region's farms and forests.

What kinds of policy changes do we need?

Changes to consider in municipal zoning policies include:

- allowing more homes or accessory dwelling units on residential lots.
- allowing apartments and mixed-use developments on transportation corridors.
- allowing subdivision of lots through the removal or reduction of minimum lot sizes.
- allowing manufactured homes and very small (or “tiny”) homes in more places.

Asheville and its surrounding area need more than 34,000 housing units within the next 5 years to address affordability and sustainability across our region.
(Housing Needs Assessment, Bowen National Research, 2025)

How can I get involved in the campaign?

Go to www.blockpartyavl.org and sign the Block Party Pledge to get on our mailing list. You can also reach out to Shea Kinser, Asheville Housing Organizer, at shea@mountaintrue.org or 828-617-0853.



MountainTrue is a regional nonprofit championing resilient forests, clean waters and healthy communities in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains. In recent years, MountainTrue has expanded its Healthy Communities program to address two urgent challenges: a worsening housing shortage and a deepening climate crisis. By building in and up in our cities and towns we can prevent sprawl and improve affordability.