

PA-PAC Questionnaire for Candidates for City Council Appointment **2018**

When answering this questionnaire, please repeat the questions in your response document with each question numbered and organized as it appears here. Type your responses in italics, bold, or a different font to distinguish your responses from the questions. Please do not use colors. Please try to confine your responses to the word limits set for each question. They should be generous. Do not feel obliged to exhaust the limit for each question.

Please return the completed form with your resume or personal history describing your education, work history, community service, and prior political experience as soon as possible, but by December 22, 2017, at the latest.

You may e-mail your responses to Tom Miller at tom-miller1@nc.rr.com or you may send a printed copy of your responses to Durham PA-PAC c/o Tom Miller 1110 Virginia Avenue, Durham, NC 27705-3262

Please note that following the December 22 deadline, the Durham People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of Durham.

Candidate's name: Alejandra (Javiera) Caballero _____

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Government and the Public Good

1. Of all the issues confronting city government, which single issue is most important to you and why? What would you do about it if elected? *Please limit your answer to 300 words.*

There are many issues that are important to me, but I am also keenly aware that affordable housing is the issue we must tackle first. This issue affects everyone from our residents who are on section 8 vouchers to those who are trying to buy their first home. Within the broader umbrella of affordable housing I believe there are key priorities as well.

- *One of my first priorities would be to get a better understanding of Durham's eviction rate and work towards lowering it. Durham has one of the highest eviction rates in the state and the highest of the 10 most populous cities. I would carefully need to examine and work with other Council members to see what funds (if any) currently help with emergency rent assistance, learn about models that have been successful in other cities especially in North Carolina, and implement tactics to improve our current metrics. Continuing to work with agencies and deepening our relationship with those who have proven successful in providing rent assistance will be an important component of achieving the goal of significantly reducing our current eviction rate.*
- *Our 2 pennies for housing has been vital to helping combat our affordable housing crisis but we will have to be creative in how we work with private market landlords to truly make an impact.*
 - *Our city government is trying to increase the amount of affordable housing units through city owned properties, and improve their current inventory, but many Durham residents do not qualify for these types of programs, especially in our immigrant community. Simultaneously there are not enough affordable housing units in the private market. We will have to incentivize private market landlords to keep their units affordable.*
 - *I would like to investigate the possibility of lowering property tax burdens on private landlords who dedicate percentages of units to be affordable housing units. I understand we are limited in relation to what the state of NC allows as far as varying tax burdens, but implementing or expanding a grant program may be a good and practical work-around to the limitations we face.*
 - *I am also interested in setting up grants through the city for landlords who need to repair units, but cannot afford the repairs. Often these landlords sell and when new owners take over and upgrade the properties they increase rent, which often pushes renters out.*

2. What can the city do to lift the wages of the lowest paid workers in Durham and reduce growing income inequality in our community? Where in our community do you see opportunities for city government to address the racial wealth gap? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

I believe this is really important work and should be done in tandem with the work around affording housing. I know that we have limited options due to our inability to raise the minimum wage in our city, and while there has been some traction in Durham with the Living Wage project and other efforts, there is still a tremendous amount of work to do. Durham's median household income has increased, but this wealth growth has not been equitable. We will need to aggressively begin building a base of jobs that cannot be easily automated or outsourced and has the potential for workers to earn even higher wages than \$15 an hour. Leaning on our workforce development department to work with both DPS and Durham Tech in researching, identifying, and implementing/strengthening programs of study especially within Career Tech. Education will be vital if we want decent paying jobs in Durham that help lessen our growing income inequality. We cannot rely on retail or restaurant work to provide the necessary financial security for our residents. Recently the Lumina Foundation funded 15 cities it deemed "talent hubs." The intention of the grant is for businesses, local government and community colleges to work together to help align job training and post-secondary educational attainment to the needs of their local communities in order to improve education outcomes and increase employment opportunities. I think this approach is something Durham should investigate. I am also open to incentivizing certain businesses or industries to move here if it helps produce high-quality jobs with good wages. If we want to

help reduce the racial wealth gap we need to create as many opportunities as possible for our communities of color and improve their employment prospects.

3. How should the city measure the benefits and costs of incentives to promote development especially as those benefits and costs affect low-income residents of Durham? How would you use these measurements when deciding to vote for or against a proposed incentive? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

The city's approach must always take into consideration the residents' perspectives on incentives being offered. The City Council needs to do its due diligence to hear from everyone, especially residents whose voices are often ignored or not sought out. For example, was language access/justice implemented into the original design of how the city sought input, and were residents really allowed to be active decision-makers? After this initial process of information gathering and deep stakeholder engagement, I think the next step would be to assess if the incentives support development that will substantially benefit the community and create new employment opportunities. Developers seeking incentives would need show how their development would create jobs, specifically in our communities of color and would not exacerbate current issues of gentrification.

4. What actions should the city take to expand job creation and job quality? In your answer, please comment on the city's potential involvement in entrepreneurship, worker-owned cooperatives, and union organizing. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

I spoke to some of this in question 2, along with those thoughts expanding our grants and small business loans to incorporate worker-owned cooperatives will be important if we want this business model to flourish in Durham. I do not know what structures are already in place to help with the development of worker cooperatives, but I think business education on how to effectively launch them is something the city should implement and promote. I was part of a worker-cooperative in Durham a few years ago, and there were few resources then. City workshops focused on the legal and business structures of worker cooperatives would be an excellent way to move this work forward.

I am a supporter of union organizing as we have seen the power of Unions in the US diminish we have seen our wages stagnate. I was proud of the Duke faculty who worked diligently to unionize non-tenured faculty and believe that strong unions are part of the solution to improved job quality.

Housing, City Planning, and Neighborhoods

5. What does "gentrification" mean to you? What, if anything, should be done about it? How, if at all, is the issue of gentrification implicated in the Planning Department's current review of zoning in East Durham, the proposed creation of an Alston Avenue Design District, and the redevelopment of the former Fayette Place property? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

Gentrification to me essentially means the pushing out of people from communities they have historically lived in, or it can be a more recently re-populated working-class neighborhood changing to accommodate more affluent usually white new-comers. Over a period of time and often within a very short timeline the neighborhood or sections of the city change drastically and little remains either of the original residents or businesses. Another component of gentrification is the suburbanization of our city centers. Affluent new comers who often grew up in suburbs, bring those sensibilities with them, and use the police to monitor and enforce this aesthetic. Neighborhoods that are often loud or where people

“loiter” are not the types of places many are used to, and so new residents use their power and privilege to enforce a standard onto a community they are not from, and change the dynamic of that community.

As the city reviews zoning in East Durham, the proposed creation of an Alston Avenue Design District, and the redevelopment of the former Fayette Place property it must proceed with caution. I think the Southside revitalization project is an example of having very good intentions and strong community partnerships, but the outcome being detrimental to the neighborhood it was intended to help. As Durham rapidly gentrifies all three of these areas will be under pressure to get developed, but they also are crucial in Durham’s efforts to create enough affordable housing. The communities who will be impacted not only need to be engaged, but must be actors through the whole process.

6. What should the city seek to accomplish through its power to stimulate and regulate growth? What principles and considerations will guide your decisions in zoning cases and other development issues? Illustrate your answer with a recent controversial zoning case. Did the city decide the case correctly? *Please limit your answer to 500 words.*

The two main considerations I would use to guide my decisions on zoning cases are input from the community most impacted, and environmental implications. Growth is important to economic development, but in my opinion, it must always be within a context of sustainability. As our environment continues to deteriorate and our population continues to grow we will have to make decisions that help density and combats sprawl, is conducive to public transit, takes into account our natural resources, and the health of our community. A recent example of a controversial zoning case was the planned Publix/North River development, I think the Council made the correct decision. Development in this area of the city may need to happen, but the necessary infrastructure of improved roads would be an important first step, which would help alleviate many of the concerns neighbors had with increased traffic. The developer did share some improvements, but not enough to outweigh concerns.

7. Under what circumstances would you vote to approve a rezoning that does not include commitments to meet the city’s affordable housing goal? If you answered yes, how would you ensure that the city meet its goal? Please illustrate your answer with a recent case. *Please limit your answer to 500 words.*

I cannot think of a circumstance where I would approve rezoning that does not meet the city’s affordable housing goal.

City Finances, Capital Improvements, Transportation, and City Services

8. If the city needs more revenue for a basic public service, do you, in general, favor a new or increased user fee or a property tax increase? Residential trash pickup is an example of a basic service. *Please limit your answer to 250 words.*

In general, I support paying for our services through property taxes, and unless it made sense to charge a fee that was not regressive or burdened lower-income households too heavily would stick to this model.

9. Do you support or oppose Durham's plans for rail-based transit? If federal funding for the project is denied, what must Durham do about transportation, urban planning, housing, taxes, and infrastructure? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

I support our plan for rail-based transit. I think it will be challenging if federal funding is denied, but with the likelihood of federal funding coming through for the Durham-Orange light-rail we are moving in the right direction. I am also excited about the commuter rail between Durham and Wake Counties. I know there is concern about the cost of trying to complete both projects close together and there has been discussion of pushing out the completion of the Wake and Durham commuter trail by a decade. Quite frankly we do not have 20 years to complete these rail-based transit projects, and I see these as priorities. We must work towards smarter growth initiatives now and creating a robust light-rail and commuter train system will be an easier way to control sprawl and contain growth to key areas.

10. Does the city's investment in bus transportation reach the population that needs it most? What else can be done to improve bus transportation access and affordability? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

No, we will need to expand services and move towards a fare free system although more routes and more areas served may need to take precedence over a free fare system in the short-term. As stated in question 9, I am an adamant supporter of a more robust mass transit system. We will need to improve our bus system and encourage its usage, if we want to avoid crippling traffic and poorer air quality as a result of more cars on the road. Often our current solution to increased traffic is to widen roads, and we need to shift our strategies to incorporate more environmentally friendly solutions.

11. Would you support a property tax relief program, for example, a circuit breaker, to reduce the tax burden on homeowners with limited resources and help them stay in their homes? If your answer is yes, please describe the program or programs you would support. If your answer is no, please explain. *Please limit your answer to 300 words.*

Yes, I would support a property tax relief program to ensure residents with limited resources have a better chance of staying in their homes. What our city government is already doing in the Southside neighborhood is an example of the type of program I would support and work to extend to a larger number of neighborhoods. It is also important to include relief for landlords who are helping to house lower-income families and individuals as one solution to lower the high eviction rate in Durham.

One concern I have with these grant programs is their accessibility to our immigrant population. I would like to know more about how immigration status affects how and if these Durham residents qualify for the grant programs the city already has in place or it plans to implement. Is there a potential work-around for our undocumented residents?

12. What is the city's most pressing capital improvement priority? *Please limit your answer to 300 words.*

I think funding the commuter rail between Durham and Wake County and fully funding our bus system needs to be a priority. We have to make shifts in how we use our resources and need to move towards a transit system that is not dependent on non-renewable energy sources. We must be bold in our strategy and this capital improvement project would have a deep and lasting impact on the quality of life for a large section of our community not just in Durham, but in the larger Triangle area. Our model of constant growth at all costs has to change and we must re-orient ourselves toward a model of smart, sustainable growth. A mass transit system that lessens the amount of carbon dioxide in the air, limits the addition of more impervious surfaces that impacts our ability to manage flooding and maintain water quality, and connects families, the disabled, and the elderly to their city is unquestionably a more sensible path.

13. What would you push for in the city's upcoming budget? *Please limit your answer to 300 words.*

- *Ensuring we are meeting our affordable housing goals, with an emphasis on lowering our eviction rates and working towards ensuring there is funding for residents who do not typically qualify for traditional city programs.*
- *Improving access to city government for our immigrant communities especially for Spanish speakers since they are growing percentage of our population. Translation of the website, (not a google translate button) interpretation at city council meetings and improved communication of city government news are all priorities.*
- *Continue funding commitment to mass transit solutions and moving towards solutions that will not take 20 years to complete commuter train and light-rail projects*
- *Increasing funding for small businesses and worker-cooperatives*
- *Setting up a legal fund to help detained immigrants, the legal fund would have qualifying factors, to ensure only immigrants charged with minor offences or picked up during check points could qualify*

Policing and Public Safety

14. Is there a trust problem between the people of Durham and the police department? Are you satisfied with the department's responses to issues of use of force, racial profiling, deployment of personnel, searches, and communication with the public? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

Yes, I think there is a trust problem between city residents and the police department. I know our PD has made great strides to improve this, and it seems that Police Chief Davis is very aware of the expectations to improve the relationship between Durham PD and the community. This work is ongoing though and will need to be monitored. Honest dialogue between Durham city government, residents and our police department has to be continually cultivated. I would like to know and understand more about the policing work done by the High Enforcement Abatement Team. What changes if any has Police Chief Davis made to the team? I would also like to review the metrics around frequency of stops, and the race/ethnicity of who is being stopped to see what statistically has changed. There also needs to be clear and correct messaging from the police department on how they work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, saying that they do not work with them is not enough. I appreciate that Durham PD has eliminated their traffic check points within city limits, but they work with the Durham Sherriff's department and the State Trooper's office and both of those entities do work with ICE (regardless of what our Sherriff has said). Durham residents need to understand the nuance of these relationships better so that our most vulnerable residents can be better protected. Finally, I am very curious about the HR policies implemented by the DPD. What recruitment and retention strategies are used? What does their leadership pipeline look like? How do they identify police officers with leadership potential? The hiring process that was used to hire Police Chief Davis seemed robust to me, and I would like to see something of that nature implemented for all leadership in the DPD. I think input from residents should be included through focus group and other mechanisms to ensure that our police officers have the skills we value as a community.

15. To what degree, if any, should the city cooperate with U.S. Department of Immigration & Customs Enforcement? Should the city become a sanctuary city? If your answer is yes, for whom should the city provide sanctuary and by what means should sanctuary be provided? If your answer is no, please explain your reasons. In either case, please be specific. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

Our city government and law enforcement should not cooperate with U.S. Department of Immigration & Customs Enforcement. Our city government has done a fantastic job showing its support of our immigrant and refugee community and while I would love for Durham to become a sanctuary city, I also know that declaring ourselves one could potentially cause the state to penalize us. It would also largely be a symbolic gesture, we cannot keep ICE out. Recent immigration raids in Sanctuary cities like Los Angeles are evidence of this. There are many more practical solutions the city can implement that would create a culture of non-cooperation, and help Durham's immigrant residents.

- *Our police department needs to commit to ensuring all low priority offenders are routed through our justice system without using the Durham jail, especially from our immigrant community. The DPD does not control the jail, and the Sheriff's department does cooperate with ICE.*
- *I would like the city to set up a legal fund for any detained Durham residents, residents who have emigrated from Mexico get some financial support from the Mexican consular, but I know residents who have emigrated from many Central American countries do not receive financial assistance. Legal fees are costly, and immigration cases with attorney representation often have much better outcomes for those detained.*
- *U Visa program—Ensuring that our PD complete the certification process in a timely fashion for victims of violent crimes, especially for people in domestic violence situations, is also something that would help many in our community.*

16. Should the city allocate more, less, or about the same money to policing? Please explain your answer. If your answer is less, would you allocate more money to other services to improve public safety? Again, please explain. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

This issue needs to be approached carefully and not with blanket black and white positions. I would like to ensure our police officers are paid fairly and potentially better than comparable police departments to incentivize highly qualified officers to be recruited here, or to retain them after they finish their training in Durham. I know police officers received raises in the last budget cycle, and their pay is now more in line with other communities in NC, but we will have to see if this increase helps retain competent police officers.

I also believe professional development around bias training, de-escalation training and other community policing strategies needs to be a priority, and well-funded. If funding needs to be increased for that to be achieved, then yes, I would allocate more but otherwise I would make other budgetary needs a bigger priority and allocate less funds to policing. Public safety is important, but we must balance this with other budgetary needs.

Civil Rights

17. Name one issue in Durham that directly impacts, or is directly impacted by, race inequity and how can the city incorporate a race equity framework in addressing this issue? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

Unfortunately, there are several issues in Durham that are directly impacted by race inequity from housing to the achievement gap in our schools. I feel that I have touched on a couple of race equity

solutions in policing and housing in my answers to previous questions, but my belief is that race inequity is an issue that needs to be addressed at every level of policy and community engagement. We must fundamentally change how we govern and institute policy shifts if we ever want to have a truly equitable city. Engaging our community in this work will not be easy, but I know our City Council is already working on improving racial equity and it is a priority for them.

18. If the city could adopt an ordinance concerning the civil rights of members of the LGBTQ community, what provisions should that ordinance contain? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

I think any ordinance would need to contain non-discrimination protections for both sexual orientation and gender identity and would need to cover everything from employment to housing. I know that such an ordinance is hampered by the state, but I look forward to the day we can embrace a comprehensive legal framework of non-discrimination for our LGBTQ community.

I also believe there would need to be clear language acknowledging that our trans neighbors especially trans women of color face the most discrimination and the highest rates of violence, and that if we are to claim Durham as one of the most progressive cities in the South we must live our values and ensure the protection of all of our residents.

Personal and Political

19. What would you bring to the city council that is not already represented by the members who are currently serving? You may wish to consider your background, education, experience, and set of skills when responding to this question. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

If I were fortunate enough to be appointed to City Council, I think I would bring a unique perspective and skillset not already represented on council. I am an immigrant and a Latina, but I was raised in the South before there was a large Latinx population. I emigrated to the US so my parents could leave a country in the throes of a dictatorship. Not being political was never really an option, and my deep commitment to progressive values is something that was instilled in me from a very young age. In college, I found my own political voice and began my political activism while studying Political Science at Appalachian State. I was a Montessori teacher after graduating from college and am still involved in education professionally as a program coordinator for an education consulting firm based in Chicago called Alma Advisory Group. We work to help school districts grow and develop leadership pipeline programs and to train leaders within their system. We also work on issues of equity and bias in recruitment and retention policies in HR departments for public school districts. I am also currently the PTA president at Club Blvd. this is my 2nd year in that role. My experience both professionally and in the volunteer organizing work I do has taught me a lot about organizing efficient organizations and building the leadership capacity of teams. As an elected official of my school community I have learned how to help ensure budget priorities are met, how to work across a broad spectrum of stakeholders, and to be accountable to them.

20. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence other than a minor traffic offense? If your answer to this question is yes, please describe the charge or charges, the circumstances, and the outcome. *Please limit your answer to 250 words.*

No

21. For whom did you vote in the 2012 and 2016 presidential and gubernatorial elections? For whom did you vote in the 2014 U. S. Senate election? *Please limit your answer to 75 words*

In 2016, I voted for Hillary Clinton & Roy Cooper.

In 2012, I voted for Barack Obama and Walter Dalton.

In the 2014 Senate race I voted for Kay Hagan.

Please don't forget to provide us with a resume or personal history.

Alejandra (Javiera) Caballero

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Work Experience:

Program Coordinator, Alma Advisory Group, LLC

2016-present

Coordination of project timelines, deliverables and scheduling across multiple projects and programs. Provide content support to senior and lead project advisors including development of competency rubrics, survey creation and project research. Coordination with Business manager around invoicing and project cash flows . Coordination and grading of third party application reviews for applicants in leadership pipeline programs

Project Coordinator, Cross & Joftus, LLC

2014-2016

Coordination of project timelines, deliverables and scheduling across multiple projects and providing content support to senior consultants including development of competency rubrics, survey creation and project research

Owner/Baker, Bread Uprising LLC - Durham, NC

2011-2014

Co-owner of a small cooperative bakery. Along with baking responsibilities, helped manage daily running of bakery including ordering, inventory and scheduling. The business model was mission driven and as such involved constant evaluation, dialogue, and collective decision making amongst co-bakers and bakery members

Teacher, Myers Park Through-the-Week Preschool - Charlotte, NC

2009-2010

Part-time preschool teacher in 2-year-old classroom. Responsible for teaching and implementing curriculum with a co-teacher.

Teacher, Council Oak Montessori - Chicago, IL

2005-2007

Lead teacher for 6-9 year old class. Responsibilities were similar to those at Mountain Pathways Montessori School.

Teacher, Near North Montessori - Chicago, IL

2004-2005

Spanish instructor for 6-9 year old and 12-14 year old classes and after-school teacher

Mountain Pathways Montessori School - Boone, NC

2000-2004

Progressed from part-time Spanish teacher to lead teacher for 6-9 year old class, after receiving Montessori training. In charge of the curriculum for 6-9 year old class. Responsibilities also included tracking student progress, facilitating parent communication and supervising classroom assistant.

Education

NC Center for Montessori Teacher Education - Apex, NC

2001-2002

6-9 teacher training program

Appalachian State University - Boone, NC

1997-2000

Bachelor of Science, Political Science

Concentration in International and Comparative Politics

Double Minor in Women's Studies and Sustainable Development