

Pierce Freelon's People's Alliance Questionnaire Answers

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's no single issue that I would elevate as "most important". To quote spoken-word poet and LGBTQ rights political activist Staceyann Chin, I believe, "all oppression is connected." The intersection of racism, poverty, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and sexism creates a society in which those with resources and privilege benefit at the expense of others.

Right now in Durham, over 70% of children under the age of 8 are Black or Latinx. A significant amount of these children are growing up poor, with nearly 40% of black and brown children living in households at or below poverty level, compared to 8% of white children. By the time these children are teenagers, they will be much more likely to be charged for marijuana possession than their white peers, even though both use marijuana at similar rates. This impacts opportunities for jobs, education, and even housing. It is these same families who will feel the squeeze from Durham becoming a more expensive place to live. Average rents now exceed \$1,000/month and some neighborhoods have experienced housing price increases of nearly 400% in recent years. Meanwhile, there are more than 800 evictions a month (highest in NC) in Durham, displacing families and reshaping the demographics of our city.

I approach these intersecting challenges with joyful optimism in the knowledge that Durham is resilient, innovative, and resourceful. To quote June Jordan, "We are the ones we've been waiting for." Our community is full of creatives and possibilities. As Mayor, I will work tirelessly to harness our collective strength, and to ensure that all Durhamites have access to good jobs with good wages, an affordable place to live, and a community where our youth can thrive. An equitable redistribution of resources and political power will help Durham plant seeds for a sustainable future.

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.

As Hip Hop artist Method Man brilliantly articulates in Wu-Tang Clan's song C.R.E.A.M., "*cash rules everything around me.*" Socio-economic status plays a significant role in one's ability to access education, health, housing, and other opportunities.

The City of Durham has taken a good step by raising the pay rate of city workers to a living wage of \$15 by July of 2018. I understand that the city is limited in its capacity to provide living wages for all because NC House Bill 142 (HB142) puts a moratorium on local ordinances regulating private employment practices and public accommodations until 2020. The oppressive HB142 also attempts to hamstring city ordinances by regulating private employment practices, such as wages, and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender. Durham can push back against HB142 by looking for city-based creative solutions that enable us to provide good jobs and that will encourage living wages in the private sector.

As Mayor, I'll propose a city-based jobs guarantee program. I am working with one of the country's leading economists on a Jobs For All program for Durham. Through Jobs for All, Durham can invest in its people and encourage other employers to do the same. This jobs guarantee program will provide good jobs with good benefits and wages for anyone who wants to work and cannot find work.

The racial wealth gap is rooted in historical disparities in access to land, loans, and other wealth-building mechanisms. In Durham, while some homeowners will benefit from rising property values, others are vulnerable to displacement and disappearance. Rising costs and gentrification threaten to widen the existing wealth gap in our city, and raise barriers to future Black homeownership. As such, policies related to promoting affordable homeownership are critical to address our racial wealth gap. Furthermore, we need property tax relief for low-income families to preserve existing homeownership.

In addition, the city can explore other wealth building vehicles, such as a Baby Bonds program, which provides trust funds for each child through public funding. A Baby Bonds program could work to address the nearly 12-to-1 median household wealth gap between White and Black Americans.

Income inequality and the racial wealth gap serve as strong indicators that the rapid changes our city is experiencing are not benefiting all Durhamites. I am committed to making sure that everyone has access to resources and opportunity as we develop and grow.

3. Describe your interest in and commitment to public amenities such as playing fields, open space, street trees, traffic calming, and walking and biking facilities. Are you willing to raise property taxes to provide for and maintain these amenities? Are public amenities allocated to neighborhoods of different wealth and income levels equitably? Please explain and cite examples. Please limit your answer to 500

It is worth noting that there are disparities inherent in this questionnaire. I have been afforded 500 words to address public amenities, yet I was limited to 400 words to address both income inequality and the racial wealth gap (two very different issues, which easily could have merited 400 words each).

Public amenities make Durham beautiful. I grew up at the Eno. Now I ride my bike through the American Tobacco Trail and take my kids to public parks. The City has taken some positive steps, working with the Durham Open Space and Trail Commission, to eliminate fees for youth and teens to access facilities and to increase signage to Durham parks. The City Council increased taxes .20 cents (per \$100 assessed value) in its most recent budget in support of these benefits. I support maintaining and building on these efforts. In the wake of historic disinvestment, low-income neighborhoods need amenities to nurture a welcoming atmosphere. It is necessary to consider what amenities are desirable to the communities I seek to serve. A community may not want a walking trail; they may prefer a skate park or basketball court, or better yet, a paying job maintaining those spaces or creating programs that use those fields. We must not only provide the resources and amenities that make our communities look beautiful, we must also offer them beautiful opportunities to earn a living wage (our aforementioned jobs guarantee will help with that). We must also ask the communities who will be utilizing said amenities what their vision for those resources entail, and make the right investments according to their vision to guarantee that our public amenities are being used.

4. 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.

City leaders have a responsibility to measure the benefits of economic development initiatives against their costs. Both the progressive think tank PolicyLink and the conservative think tank John Locke Foundation have been critical of tax incentives, stating in one report, “There are much better uses of tax revenue and much more efficient ways to spur economic growth.” (Locke)

Starting in 2017, the Government Accounting Standards Board required a report of costs of corporate subsidy “tax abatements” be made available to the public. We must go further than this to ensure that transparent decisions are made with meaningful public input, that incentives and subsidies are disbursed only after performance standards are met, and that we enact clawbacks to hold partners accountable to what they say they’re going to do in a timely manner.

According to Good Jobs First Subsidy tracker, Durham provided nearly \$25 million in tax incentives between 2012 and 2015. We need to make sure that we can measure the benefits of this investment and make informed decisions accordingly, so that we get the most bang for our buck! What we are looking for, essentially, is a win-win scenario. Mutually beneficial partnerships bind incentives to community benefits agreements. This guarantees Durhamites get tangible deliverables for their investments.

Since 2013, the Economic Development Department in Austin, Texas, has used performance-based incentives and required businesses to demonstrate public benefit when they apply for public subsidies. “The department uses a transparent scoring system based on 11 criteria—ranging from jobs created to contracting opportunities—to weigh the costs and benefits of providing a business with public funding. Companies receiving public subsidies are also required to integrate diversity and inclusion targets in their business plans. The city posts the details of all its economic development agreements online for the public to review.” We could expand on this by adding a racial and gender equity assessment criteria.

We’ll get to this more in a later question, but while we’re on the subject of tax incentives for businesses, why not extend some of this tax relief to low-and-medium income homeowners whose property taxes have skyrocketed because of new development? If we extended a fraction of the support we’re providing big businesses to struggling homeowners, we could help ensure that more locals can afford to stick around to enjoy the benefits of Durham’s growth and spend their money in our local economy.

5. 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.

As mentioned in question #2, I am working with some of the world’s most brilliant economists on a robust Jobs For All program. If a person is unemployed it is because the market failed them, not because they failed society. As such, our team is working to identify a target population with which to launch a pilot program, and make Durham the testing ground for what could become a state, or national, jobs guarantee program.

Furthermore, I am encouraged by community-powered initiatives to explore worker-owned cooperatives, such as Cooperative Durham. The city should look at how the resources made available through its Office of Workforce and Economic Development can support the incubation and development of co-ops, particularly ones that could be linked to our city’s anchor institutions—city government, hospitals, and institutions of higher education (NCCU, Duke, and Durham Tech). These institutions spend millions of dollars annually and these purchases could be used to support local worker-owned cooperatives.

I support union organizing, but understand the state law limitations which prevent collective bargaining by public employees. I will urge the repeal of NC 95-98. I am encouraged by the organizing power of Duke's contingent faculty in reaching a historic union contract with Duke to defend workers' rights.

Durham is a vibrant entrepreneurial hub. I have worked extensively with American Underground - a robust incubator of entrepreneurship - to create learning opportunities and internships for local youth through Blackspace and Beat Making Lab. Durham is full of innovators looking for opportunities to develop their ideas. I will continue to support existing and burgeoning entrepreneurs as Mayor by working to decentralize entrepreneurial spaces and set up hubs like Blackspace in locations adjacent to affordable housing complexes.

We need to do a better job recruiting a variety of types of employers, including manufacturers, into our job market. Job quality is enhanced by job diversity. Though the tech sector has grown in recent years, many mid-wage and goods-producing jobs have declined, while low-wage jobs in the service industry have increased. We need to think beyond tech and towards creating infrastructure to provide living wage jobs that supplement the growth we've experienced.

We need to invest our resources in supporting the arts. Arts-entrepreneurs helped create the "Durdy" Durham culture that is so attractive and cool. We can pay it forward by investing in creative public spaces, local festivals, arts education and artists to build on this foundation.

Housing, City Planning, and Neighborhoods

6. 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.

I am sitting on the steps of the Hayti Heritage Center on the corner of Lakewood and Fayetteville. To my right, in the distance, the skeleton of a 28-story skyscraper towers over the city. A loud pop draws my attention. Gunshots? No. Fireworks ricochet from the Durham Bulls stadium, off the County jail. The roar of the crowd finds me on the steps of the Hayti. Durham is celebrating a victory.

To my left, a community is under siege from decades of disinvestment. No banks, bakeries, nor breweries here. Instead, I see bail bondsmen, corner stores, and fried chicken; anchored by The Hayti, with her strong red bricks, erupting defiantly out of the fading legacy of Black Wall Street.

Decades ago, Highway 147 opened the veins of the Black community here. I can still see the scars.

Down Lakewood Avenue, a large mural adorns the side of Food World at Heritage Square. It is in a slow process of decay. Painted in 1999 by Emily Weinstein, the Black Wall Street Community Mural depicts a vibrant intergenerational black community. Images of children, churchgoers, business people, musicians, and educators grace the wall in homage to Hayti's legacy of resilience. After years of neglect, the mural is crumbling. Large swatches of hardened paint protrude from the wall like blisters. The adjacent neighborhood, St. Teresa, suffered a similar fate of deterioration. In a process spanning over a decade, families were evicted and the homes of working-class folks were boarded-up, condemned, and bulldozed. Today those homes, and families, have largely been replaced by new homes with new tax-brackets.

This is gentrification.

This is the story of Durham, and the story of the United States. Gentrification is as American as apple pie. It is the seizure of land from indigenous people, bequeathed to the sons of the Founding Fathers. It is the erasure of history and community as those with privilege, power, and gunpowder manifest destiny.

The redevelopment of Fayette Place is of paramount significance to the preservation of the Hayti community. I am glad City Council, alongside Durham Housing Authority, took action to purchase the land because it had been lying derelict for over a decade. I have spoken with Pastor Laney from Monument of Faith, as well as with members of Durham CAN about this unique property. If properly zoned and developed to be intentionally inclusive, it could transform the community positively.

7. 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.

City Council plays a very important role in stimulating and regulating growth. Each individual zoning case is nuanced, and will require members of the council to listen and take multiple (often conflicting) perspectives into consideration and make the most mutually beneficial decision possible. The principles I will bring to this process include keeping an open mind, doing thorough research, consulting experts in the planning department, and embracing an open dialogue during public hearings.

The city should grow in ways that are equitable, sustainable, and that reflect and preserve our character. Council members are representatives of the people, so we should vote with our values and constituents in mind. A recent controversial zoning case is the Golden Belt Historic Designation, where Golden Belt was zoned a historic district in a 3-4 split against the wishes of the Durham Rescue Mission.

This was a tough issue with valid arguments on both sides. The Golden Belt community, aligned with the Durham Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission, wanted to protect the historical integrity of their neighborhood while the Rescue Mission wanted to be excluded in order to avoid the bureaucracy and higher cost associated with developing a historic area. With the knowledge I have on this case, I believe the city decided correctly, and that the two goals are not mutually exclusive. Perhaps, though, as members of the Golden Belt community noted, the controversy is really rooted in the socioeconomic status of the neighborhood. If it was a upper-income neighborhood, the question of whether homeownership should be preserved or promoted would not even exist. As Planning Commission member DeDreana Freeman said in a recent News & Observer article< “If this was in a higher-end neighborhood, there wouldn’t be a debate. There are ways in which the city could help the Rescue Mission achieve its goals of building a community center and affordable housing inside the historic district without breaking the bank, and while preserving local heritage.” As mayor, I intend to bridge these kinds of divides.

8. Does the city adequately fund its affordable housing plan? If no, what funding are you willing to fight for in the next budget for affordable homes for lower income Durham renters, homebuyers and homeowners? Where will the money come from? Please limit your answer to 400 words.

I do not believe the city adequately funds its affordable housing plan. Currently the city dedicates only \$9 million for affordable housing through the city’s Dedicated Housing Fund. I applaud the recent increase, going from 1 cent to 2 cents for every dollar of property tax. This is projected to create, preserve, or repair 1,150 affordable housing units every year. But, it does not go far enough. This 2 cent increase costs the average Durhamite \$37 per average household per year to help sustain affordable housing in Durham. If we were to double that, to 4 cents, or a nickel, we could provide housing for thousands of local residents for a fraction of the price of a Durham Bulls season ticket (or less than half the cost of a ticket to Moogfest) per average household.

By comparison, the city is currently using the entirely discretionary General Revenue Fund to spend \$60 million annually on the budget for our Durham Police Department, in addition to the

\$71 million price tag for the new headquarters. In terms of funding for these initiatives, we should look at equitable allocation of existing taxpayer dollars. An analysis of the intersecting layers of oppression reveals that homelessness and unemployment are a threat to public safety. There's a housing crisis when 800 people a month are being evicted, which makes it difficult to find a home, desperation and a lack of resources make our streets less safe. We can alleviate some of these problems by providing for the most vulnerable. We could provide city money to fund legal help for people facing eviction, like Philadelphia and New York City have recently done.

But the city can't do it alone. We must work with private industry to provide affordable housing solutions. We must leverage public-private partnerships, networks, and resources, and partner with 501(c)(3)s, such as Habitat for Humanity, to make this a joint effort.

Durham should be committed to using all necessary tools, while also ensuring opportunities for the future. One type of tool is a tiny house initiative that will not just provide affordable homes but also create pathways for homeownership and job training. Examples of existing models include the work of Durham Habitat for Humanity, and initiatives recently launched in Greensboro and Detroit.

9. 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.

Durham has ignored its affordability for far too long at the expense of go-go growth for downtown. If we don't stay committed and focused on our affordable housing goals, how will we ever get there? Currently, even the minimum affordable housing goals are still woefully short of the need. We should be looking to exceed these goals, not just meet them. Durham is open for business, but our values are not for sale.

One recent example of development trending in the right direction is one rezoning proposal by Bob Chapman, who voluntarily agreed to provide affordable housing. This is the first time in the city's history a developer requested the affordable housing density bonus since it was introduced in 2003. This should be the norm, not the exception. In addition, we can look to provide a number of ways in which a rezoning request can be coupled with incentives for providing affordable housing, such as the density bonuses currently being considered for the Compact Neighborhood Zones, expedited permitting, or payments-in-lieu of providing housing units. If we are steadfast in our commitment and flexible in the ways citizens and developers

can further our housing goals as a city, together we can meet this daunting challenge before us. Having safe, decent, affordable housing for all people in our city is too important to waiver, and it has been ignored for too long amidst the rapid growth in our city.

City Finances, Capital Improvements, Transportation, and City Services

10. 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.

I will not let your trash sit on the curb. If basic services are not being met by our City government then, given the two options, I would advocate for the implementation of a progressive property tax increase.

11. 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 500 words.

I support Durham's Light Rail Project. I have some serious reservations about the following: 1) rising costs, 2) the state reducing its commitment from 25% to 10%, 3) the fact that we weren't able to get buy-in from Raleigh, and 4) I would have liked to have seen? more stops in East Durham, servicing low-income communities, it seems like the proverbial train already left the station.

If the federal money does not come through, we will likely have to hold and wait for a more friendly administration, or we may have to pull the plug on the project. I will rely on the Triangle Transit Authority to re-assess the situation and come up with a recommendation that is within a cost-effective threshold. It's simply too expensive for us to bear the cost alone.

In the interim, I would advocate that we continue to invest dollars in expanding our public transportation services—free buses, accessible sidewalks, revamping infrastructure, upgrading the bus station, enhancing rapid transit, and building more bike lanes. This is particularly important now, as the Bull City Connector's future is increasingly uncertain. Folks who rely on public transportation need relief now, and can't wait until the rail is finished in a decade.

The Durham Light Rail Project needs to create living-wage jobs and be accessible to low-income and working people in Durham. In 2014, Durham CAN worked to obtain commitments from Durham city elected officials to support a goal of 15% of housing within half a mile of each light rail station to be affordable to families earning less than 60% of area median income. At that

time, CAN leaders also called city and county elected leaders to factor affordable housing in their Station Area Infrastructure Study (SASI), which is aimed at determining infrastructure needs, cost, and financing mechanisms at all transit stations. CAN also wants to make sure jobs provided by light rail will pay at least a living wage and that internships will be used as a gateway to permanent jobs for both Durham youth and adults. I stand beside CAN in meeting these demands.

12. Has the city's investment in bus transportation reached the population which needs it most? What else can be done to improve bus transportation access and affordability? Please limit your answer to 400 words.

Before going into this question, I want to give a shout-out to Spirithouse, whose city-wide book reading of *Urban Alchemy* brought the issue of the Bull City Connector (BBC) to the attention of the Human Relations Commission and into my consciousness as a pressing issue. We are blessed, in Durham, with an abundance of community organizers and healers who are doing the work to hold Durham accountable.

The Human Relations Commission report on the BCC offers a glimpse into some of the city's bus transportation challenges. Durham's only free bus service, which was originally intended to connect and bring folks into downtown, has been re-routed to exclude some of its most popular stops in order to convenience Duke University, which covers only 25% of the cost associated with maintaining the free bus line. With the millions of dollars the city is currently funneling into the light rail line, Durham could completely revamp, upgrade, and make its entire busing system free. Durham needs to build towards a free bus system and the Bull City Connector needs to return into the hands of the people. BCC should expand its reach into East Durham, so the people who need a free commute the most can have access to Downtown Durham. GoTriangle system is not meeting the needs of all Durhamites, although it has improved over the years. To quote Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah, Durham's buses need to move, "forward ever, backward never"—meaning we cannot allow free programs like the BCC to short-change the citizens that rely on it the most. Instead, we should redouble our efforts to make all buses in Durham free, not just the BCC.

13. 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 400 words.

Yes, I would support a circuit breaker using a multiple threshold formula, which takes several

factors into account, including age, ability, and income, when determining the extent of the tax break. Circuit breakers that help renters and homeowners exist elsewhere and we should learn from models that work.

In line with my response to question #2, circuit breakers are another way the city can play a role in slowing the growing racial wealth gap. Rising property taxes undermine wealth building opportunities for local residents who, all of a sudden, see their property taxes jump and who do not have the bandwidth to keep up. Circuit breakers alleviate some of the pressure on them to move out of their homes, or sell out and relocate. This is only one tool in our kit to stabilize the rapid growth and alleviate pressure off low or fixed income residents. If structured correctly in relation to our city's eviction crisis, circuit breakers could also provide relief for the low-income renter as well. Specifically, landlords would not feel the pressure to increase rents to keep up with rising property taxes.

The city had no problems giving breaks to developers, which contribute to the rising costs of homes, so let's use the same incentives that we gave to developers to create reciprocity for citizens who have historically been pushed out by development.

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.

About a month ago, I was at a free lunch program at The Mac (McDougald Terrace), Durham's biggest housing project. On the way home I saw a young man, probably a teenager, walking fast, with one hand holding up his grey basketball shorts, and the other hand tightly wrapped around a pistol. It was shocking to me that this brother walked down the street publicly wielding a gun at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. My mind raced with questions: Where was he coming from? Where was he going? What was he going to do when he got there? What would possess him to carry a gun as casually as he would hold a cup of iced tea?

Should I call the police?

The fact that this question even crossed my mind is evidence that there is a trust problem. Of course I should call the police... right?

Then I thought about Tamir Rice—the 12-year-old boy who was killed within two seconds of

police arriving on the scene. He was holding a toy gun. Then I thought about Rekia Boyd. Then I thought about La’Vante Biggs. Then I thought about Frank Clark.

The trust problem between The People and police is bigger, and older, than Durham. As laid out clearly in Michelle Alexander’s book *The New Jim Crow*, our nation’s police system, as well as The War on Drugs, prison-industrial complex, systems of mass incarceration, and the criminal justice system, disproportionately target working class, black and brown bodies.

In Durham, trust eroded to new lows under Chief Lopez, as Durham police adorned riot gear and shot tear gas at protesters mourning Jesus “Chuy” Huerta, in the wake of multiple police shootings, and as the department has dragged its feet on implementation of the recommendations of the FADE Coalition. I am glad Chief CJ Davis has taken steps to implement training on implicit bias and de-escalation, as well as appoint liaisons to the LGBTQ and Latinx communities. However, building trust is not what’s required—we actually need to build entirely different systems to address some of the gross inequities in our deeply dysfunctional criminal justice system. I will go into some immediate steps we can take in question #16.

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.

Durham should be a sanctuary city: for refugees fearing for their lives, for immigrants with papers and without, for Muslims or other religious or ethnic minorities on the President’s ban-lists, and for the LGBTQ community under siege by our state legislators. We need to stand in defiance of bigotry, in the name of our principles, and challenge the state and federal governments if they try to bully us into compliance. This is the spirit of the Greensboro Four, of Pauli Murray and of Baba Chuck Davis, as well as of Jesus Christ, Confucius, and Oshun. “Peace, Love, Respect: For Everybody” means we provide sanctuary to those who need it. Period.

Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to defund cities that provide sanctuary. The state of North Carolina also restricts cities from refusing to cooperate with ICE, and has threatened to deny immigrants bail and withhold tax revenues from cities who do not comply with their agenda. The ACLU calls these bullying threats unconstitutional, and we will fight them tooth and nail. Durham needs to join the cities of San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Detroit, Chicago, and Denver as leaders in the progressive movement, on the right side of history. United, we can stand up against injustice and shift the culture of our state through bold, principled action.

The city did pass a resolution in October 2003 aimed at protecting undocumented immigrants. Resolution 9046 prohibits police from targeting people based solely on their immigration

status. We acknowledge the DPD's announcement about stopping most traffic checkpoints, and will support other measures to make the city more safe for those seeking sanctuary.

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.

In her poem *A Pledge to Our Youth*, Dr. Maya Angelou charged us with a mandate to create "safe and non-threatening streets" for our youth. As a young Black man with locs, I have been profiled by police on more than one occasion in Durham, and I'm sure many Durham (and American) citizens can relate. Which begs the question: how, Auntie Maya, are we supposed to make our streets safe, when the current system of policing seems to exacerbate situations, using violence to eliminate violence?

The answer rests in part on devoting resources to help create a world we can't yet even see. Where "public safety" means good jobs, a safe place to live, communities where our youth are not simply the sum of their worst mistakes. In others words where, "public safety" is not just "police."

The city allocates 60% of its public safety dollars towards policing, the largest allocation of this category and funded largely from our discretionary General Revenue Fund. Let's use that discretion to expand opportunities for the community, instead of relying on methods that disproportionately levy burdens on poor and working class folks of color.

We can do this by:

Helping end money bail. The city alone cannot solve this problem. However, the city, and I as Mayor can lead. Just as it was done with the Misdemeanor Diversion Program, by bringing together necessary stakeholders, such as local judges, the Sheriff's Office, DPD, community groups with expertise—such as Southerners on New Ground—and directly impacted community members.

Expanding the Misdemeanor Diversion Program: The MDP works for the few hundred youth who can access it. We can open the doors even wider by: 1) eliminating the age limit of 21, and 2) working with local law enforcement to ensure officers refer as many people as possible to it.

Moving to Non-Violent Policing: We must ensure that police do not exacerbate the harm and trauma which many communities in Durham already experience. This can be done by requiring

reading (or listening to the book-on-tape) of *The New Jim Crow* for all current and new officers, ongoing investments in racial equity training for all officers, de-escalation training, and training in trauma-informed care.

Investing in Clean Slate Clinics: Durham's own Umar Muhammad was leading the way in community-based clean slate clinics to help clear up old records so people could get jobs. Wake County invests its own public dollars to pay for such clinics. Senator McKissick passed a bill this session to reduce the waiting time for expungement eligibility. We should follow their lead. Such an investment is critical for the economic growth of our city.

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.

We can observe national and historical trends of inequity currently playing out right here in Durham. Let's take the issue of marijuana as an example. Even though it is legal elsewhere, black and brown youth in Durham are being criminalized for it at far greater rates than whites, even though blacks and whites use marijuana at the same rate. In 2015, which is the most recent data available, the Durham Police Department (DPD) made 144 arrests in which the possession of marijuana or paraphernalia was the *only* charge. The racial disparities are staggering: 84% of the people arrested were African American, whereas only 15% were white. Furthermore, 83% were male and 17% were female. These interactions with the criminal justice system trigger a cascade of collateral consequences for the future of those arrested, such as increased barriers to jobs, housing, and education. This concern is further heightened in light of announcements by the Trump Administration to double-down resources on the already failing War on Drugs, which squarely puts black and brown people at further risk of incarceration.

Ultimately, North Carolina should move to decriminalize marijuana as other states have done. While that is out of the purview of Durham's authority, the city can do more to prevent the racially disparate enforcement of marijuana laws (and other non-violent crimes) in our city. And, in so doing, it helps us police smarter, not just harder, by dedicating more resources to solving other crimes or to engaging the community in other ways. While the city has taken some initial steps to encourage marijuana charges as citations rather than arrests, it is not yet clear whether this policy change is being enforced. Ultimately, the city should move closer toward adopting a policy similar to what is currently in place at Duke University, which treats marijuana use as a public health issue, rather than criminal matter.

A racial equity framework includes looking at the research on racial disparities and ending practices that perpetuate systemic racism. The racial disparities in this one part of our city perpetuates racial disparities elsewhere, as criminal records hinder people's ability to get jobs, housing, and education. Ultimately this undermines city economic development investments in these same neighborhoods. Building a racially equitable Durham is a priority throughout my campaign, particularly with how we criminalize marijuana use.

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.

North Carolina is among the most repressive states in the country when it comes to protecting LGBTQ communities. Durham is somewhat complicit in this, as we did not have adequate protections in place, and were not discussing it at the city level until HB2 forced our hand. The status quo was not where it needed to be on this issue, creating more risk for the LGBTQ community. We have to be out in front of issues that can severely affect folks' lives.

I will push to see Durham enact an LGBTQ-inclusive non-discrimination ordinance, similar to that seen in Savannah, Georgia, which will protect city employees and applicants from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and disability status in city employment, application, licensing, and permitting. We should pass this ordinance in defiance of HB142's attempt to tie our hands until 2020, and sue the state.

Do you remember Amendment One—our state's attempt to ban same-sex marriage? I remember thinking we would crush the oppressive bill. Durham was saturated in yard signs and bumper stickers proclaiming "Another Family Against Amendment One." Almost everyone I knew was against it. It turns out, I was an overly optimistic progressive millennial who forgot where he came from. The bill passed by a landslide, and was law until the Supreme Court deemed it unconstitutional two years later.

That was a hard lesson in the politics of bigotry and intolerance, but I learned some valuable things from it. I learned that Durham is different; that I'm proud to live in a city that opposed the bill vehemently. I learned that artists are still at the vanguard of our social justice movements. One of the sites for local organizing against Amendment One was The Pinhook, which, in the aftermath of the bill, gave us the gift of Party Illegal, a "monthly dance party that aims to create a safe space for experimentation. Party Illegal embraces collaboration and

organic growth, pushes back against white supremacy and gender binaries, and aims to educate about consent culture in party spaces.”

To quote Dr. MLK, “‘Wait’ has almost always meant ‘Never’.” We can’t wait for our state legislators to get this right. Durham can be a model for other cities. I’m following the lead of The Pinhook on this one. If they make our lives illegal, we’ll throw party, and invite them to court.

19. 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. My only convictions are my opinions, reflected here.

20. 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 100 words.

2012: Barack Obama / Walter Dalton

2014: Kay Hagan

2016: Bernie Sanders (Primary), Hillary Clinton (General) / Roy Cooper

**Pierce Freelon – additional responses for vacant City Council seat
12/31/2017**

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

Recently, I attended a wreath-laying at a segregated African American cemetery at the corner of Camden and Colonial, where over one thousand formerly enslaved Africans, and Black Wall Street luminaries (including WG Pearson and Augustus Shepard) are buried. The condition of the graveyard was surprising. The ground was uneven, with some gravestones half-buried, and there were no distinguishable paths between the leaves. At the center of the two-acre lot, a large tree laid on its side, conjuring a most disturbing metaphor in my mind. The great Pan-African Marcus Garvey once said, "A people without knowledge of their history is like a tree without roots." Looking at the tree's bulging trunk and twisted roots sprawled vertically felt like a betrayal of the heritage of Black Wall Street, and of our ancestors who were enslaved in Durham, home to one of North Carolina's biggest plantations in Stagville.

Previous budgets have included "cemetery upgrades" under the "General Services" category of capital improvements. I consider this one to be pressing.

The land is owned by an unnamed burial society, and the cemetery was closed by the City in 1944. We have an opportunity to play a leading role in healing some of the fissures that have historically divided our community. This capital improvement, to repair, upgrade and maintain this historic graveyard, should be part of a broader process of reconciliation, that also includes replacing Durham's Confederate monument, and thinking about a reparations package to address the legacy of the destruction of Durham's historic Hayti neighborhood.

Once those proverbial seeds are planted, I believe we will have a solid foundation from which to tackle the living legacies of institutional racism, including the poverty, gentrification and violence that has disproportionately affected people of color, particularly people of African descent, in the City of Durham.

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

This week, I attended a City Council meeting where several organizations who serve our homeless population were *begging* for tens of thousands of dollars, because their funds were re-appropriated, and it was unclear if the City would continue to support them. One woman who made a powerful and emotional appeal was the grandmother of a young man who has attended WokeShops at Blackspace (a community center I founded based in downtown Durham). They were evicted the previous week, and are now living out of a hotel. I spent last week coordinating with his middle school teacher, about how we were going to drive the young man to school and back, so his grades wouldn't suffer due to their abrupt displacement. It bothers me, that families are being displaced at alarming rates, and the civic organizations doing important work for Durham's most vulnerable populations have to beg for scraps at the table. Meanwhile, we reach deep into our pockets to provide tax incentives to businesses, for downtown revitalization, and for increased militarized police presence in our communities, that have been proven to be discriminatory.

I am a strong believer that our budget should be a reflection of our values. We should be spending more to prevent and eliminate poverty than we spend to police and contain it. We should provide tax breaks to working class folks in gentrifying neighborhoods, not just big businesses based downtown. I will push for more of our funds to support job training, affordable housing, end homelessness and to provide services to folks who are faced with evictions. I will also push for participatory budgeting.

Poverty is a policy choice, and we have an opportunity to choose something different for the City of Durham.

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.

As a creative, millennial city, Durham needs creative, millennial leadership. Let's put an artist in office! I believe the City of Durham would benefit from having a young Black man on Council. During my campaign for Mayor, I was often told to "wait my turn" and gain more experience. Meanwhile, young Black men in the City of Durham are *experiencing* the highest levels of poverty, joblessness, and violence. We are disproportionately impacted by gentrification, police shootings, incarceration, school to prison pipeline, and institutions of racial/economic injustice. There are various initiatives designed to *help* young Black men, yet we're constantly told to wait to be invited to a seat at the table. Our expertise is sought, but we're not asked to be leaders (and when we have the courage to mount an ambitious campaign, we're actually *discouraged from running*). As a young Black man who is both professor and Hip Hop artist; who carries both the locs, and the legacies of his ancestors; who is both married with two kids, and committed to the principles intersectionality, racial equity, and Afrofuturism — I will bring fresh energy and necessary perspectives to City Council.

My Mayoral campaign galvanized an incredible amount of enthusiasm and contributed to the expansion of our electorate in this year's elections. Though I did not make it through the primary, we ignited thousands of millennials, community organizers, creatives, and local residents without the backing of Durham's powerful publications or PACs. Even though we didn't get their endorsement, INDY Week called me this year's "*most exciting candidate*". In this political moment in the US, we need candidates and public servants who are able to excite and connect with a wide audience; who can utilize social media to clearly articulate and widely disperse progressive ideas; and who is capable of partnering, and finding common ground with people of different backgrounds, for the benefit of all Durhamites.

No other Council member has my breadth of experience working with youth. This is particularly important because of the departure of former Mayor Pro Tem Cora Cole-McFadden, who was very youth-centered. No other Council member is as connected to millennials or Durham's arts community. Lastly, I was endorsed by Equality NC, and though this is a distinction I share with Vernetta Alston and Steve Schewel, I think it's important that we build on our collective strengths to form a quorum of progressive values on Council.

Pierce Freelon | Candidate for Mayor of Durham, Professor, Artist-Organizer

Pierce Freelon is a musician, professor and social entrepreneur with a passion for creativity and community. Born and raised in Durham, Freelon has taught in the departments of African American studies, music and political science at UNC Chapel Hill and North Carolina Central University. Pierce is the founder of Blackspace, a digital maker space where young people learn about 3D Printing, coding and electronic music production free of charge. He also co-founded Beat Making Lab, an Emmy-Award winning PBS web-series and social entrepreneurship community program. He is the youngest person to be appointed by the Governor to serve on the NC Arts Council board of directors. He has also served on the boards of the Nasher Museum of Art, KidZnotes, the Durham Library Foundation and others. Freelon has traveled the world engaging communities in political education and organizing, teaching music and history, and building institutions for creative expression and social justice. Pierce lives in Durham with his wife Katye and their two children.

EDUCATION

2008 - M.A. in Pan-African Studies (Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY)

Masters Thesis: Sankofa: Pan-African Migrations in Hip-Hop Music and Culture

2006 - B.A. in African and Afro American Studies *awarded with distinction and highest honors (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC)

Honors Thesis: Blackademics: the Development of a Hip-Hop Curriculum Based on the History of the African American Experience and Struggle for Freedom and Equality

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Community Programs

2014 - Founder of Blackspace (Pan-African digital makerspace based in Durham)

2013 - Co-founder of Next Level (Cultural diplomacy program at UNC/US State Department, for which Freelon raised over \$1,000,000)

2012 - Co-founder of Beat Making Lab (PBS web-series won an Emmy-award in 2015)

2010 - Co-founder of Poetic Justice (Hip Hop/spoken word after-school program with Durham Crime Prevention Council)

2008 - Program coordinator for Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz

Adjunct professor/visiting lecturer

2009 - 2016 - UNC Chapel Hill; Department of African American and Diaspora Studies/ Department of Music (Chapel Hill, NC)

Course load: AAAD 401; AAAD 356; AFAM 259; AFAM 356; AFAM 375; MUSC 239; MUSC 159

2008 - 2011 - North Carolina Central University, Department of Political Science (Durham, NC); Piedmont Community College, Department of Music (Roxboro, NC)

Course load: POLS 4881; HUM 120; MUS 112

2007 - 2008: - Syracuse University; Department of African American Studies (Syracuse, NC)

Course load: AAS 207; AAS 409

Artist

2015 - present - Co-founder of 5P1N0k10: a political Hip Hop x Puppet show

2007 - 2015 - Co-founder of hip hop and jazz band *The Beast*

SELECTED RESIDENCIES, LECTURES, WORKSHOPS

2017

Blackspace WokeShops (free digital media workshops for Durham youth): Conscious Coding/3D Printing, Digital Storytelling, Street Griot, Blackspace Poetry (Durham, NC)

Brave New Voices (San Francisco, CA)

Just Space (Duke University social justice conference - Durham, NC)

John Hope Franklin Young Scholars Program (community workshop - Durham, NC)

My Brother's Keeper (Black history month lecture, Chapel Hill, NC)

Rhythm and Race (Raleigh, NC)

2016

Hayti to Haiti: Beat Making Lab (Durham, NC / Matenwa, Haiti)

Tedx Durham: Centers and Edges (Durham, NC)

Blackspace Block Party (Durham, NC)

Black Wall Street Beats (Moogfest, Durham, NC)

Darth Vader Youth Hackathon (web-app development program by Blackspace, Durham, NC)

Virtual Reality Lecture (Black Wall Street Homecoming, Durham, NC)

2015

Nguvu Ya Weusi: Black Power from Carolina to Congo (Goma, Congo and Chapel Hill, NC)

Cristo Negro | Diablo Blanco (Portobelo, Panama and Chapel Hill, NC)

Audio Immersion (Allied Media Conference - Detroit, MI)

Black Revolutions (University of Puget Sound, WA)

2014

Black August: Black Liberation Youth Cypher (Chapel Hill, NC)

TEDx: Mid Atlantic (Washington, DC)

Beat Making Lab projects in: Nairobi, Kenya; Cabarete, Dominican Republic

2013

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation International Conference on Family Planning (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

Beat Making Lab projects in: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Chapel Hill, USA; Dakar, Senegal; Goma, DR-Congo; Portobelo, Panama; Suva, Fiji

2012

Global Voices: Citizen Media Summit 2012 (Nairobi, Kenya)

Mashable's Social Good Summit (New York, NY)

TEDx: Sticky Ideas (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

United Nations Foundation: Rio+Social (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

Juvenile Justice and Crime Prevention Council (Durham, NC)

PUBLICATIONS

Blackademics Interviews: Freelon ran a popular blog called Blackademics where he published one-on-one exclusive interviews: Dr. Maya Angelou, bell hooks, Angela Davis, Reverend Jesse Jackson, Paul Mooney, Tommie Smith, John Singleton, Rakim, Amiri and Amina Baraka, Herbie Hancock, Gil Scott Heron, Danny Glover, 9th Wonder and others (www.blackademics.org/interview-archive).

Book/Journal/Magazine/Newspaper Contributions: Freelon has written over 50 columns in The News and Observer's Durham News: April 2010 - present.

“Born and Raised” in 27 Views of Durham: The Bull City in Prose and Poetry; 2012.
“Gwendolyn Brooks,” “Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Ice,” and “Martin Luther King, Jr. Strength to Love” in 1,000 Key Moments: Books.

GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS

2012 - present - Various grants from Grable Foundation, WUNC, North Carolina Arts Council, Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, etc.

2013 - \$1,000,000 US Department of State grant for “Next Level” program at UNC (Chapel Hill, NC)

2013 - Freedom Foundation: Levey Award for Excellence in Education (Philadelphia, PA)

2012 - Center for Global Initiatives faculty research grant (Chapel Hill, NC)

2008 - DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities/National Endowment for the Arts: American Masterpieces Grant Award (Washington, DC)

2007 - OMA Diversity Programming Grant, Syracuse University (Syracuse, NY)

2007 - Chancellor’s 2007 Research Grant, Syracuse University/University of Ghana, Legon (Accra, Ghana)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS/AWARDS/HONORS

2016 - Movement of Youth “Spirit of Excellence in the Arts” Award

2015 - Emmy Award for Beat Making Lab

2015 - Leadership Triangle Goodmon Award

2015 - Hip Hop Education Center “Extra Credit” Award

2014 - Triangle Arts Award, The Independent Weekly

2012 - 2015 / Board member, Sacrificial Poets (Durham, NC)

2012 - 2015 / Board member, Nasher Museum of Art (Durham, NC)

2011 - 2016 / Board member, KidzNotes (Durham, NC)

2011 - 2015 / Board member, Durham Library Foundation (Durham, NC)

2010 - 2013 / Board member, North Carolina Arts Council (Raleigh, NC)

2010 - 2012 Best of the Triangle: Best Hip Hop Band, The Independent Weekly

2007 - Sankofa Bird Award for Community Leadership (Syracuse, NY)