

## **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: Humberto (Hubie) Mercado

Address: 1026 Jerome Rd. Durham, NC 27713

E-mail Address: hubiemerc@hotmail.com

Phone: (919) 949-2335/ (919) 584-5920

### **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 which have and/or are confronting city government, for me personally the issue of an increase in crime though out the city is probably the most important issue; at the moment. There seems to be a shift in movement as it pertains to crime, maybe due to the growth and development in certain parts of the city, maybe an increase in property value; which corresponds to an increase in rental properties and the inability to afford affordable housing, or maybe the lack of skill-sets jobs for residents who may not have obtained the educational requirements and/or may lack the experience to perform particular job descriptions. On any given night, I hear gunshots throughout the night; whereas a few years ago, this was not the case. There has been an uptick in crime in the Fayetteville Rd/MLK area, since I have been a residence in the community; I currently reside in. Home break-ins, as well as cars being broken into; to steal valuables has also been on an upswing. The question is why crime been on an uptick and what has been the plan to reduce overall crime, and not just by data and stats, I assume some constituents may

be in denial, but the city has seen an increase in crime. There is no denying this fact. What would I do, if elected? Very good question, which has no definite answer; I would inquire information from the champions of the communities as to why they think crime is on an up-tick. Then I would make every effort to find out from Law Enforcement personnel, the same. There has to be a common denominator and a solution. Solutions, is not about lip service; actions will need to take place to reduce crime in Durham.

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.* The city of Durham needs to compete with other cities in NC to reduce income inequality, look at city budget and figure how to lift wages for the lowest paid workers. Since I am not an accountant by professional, nor have a business background; the overall budget may not seem like the possible solution, but it is a start. The possibility into looking at the businesses within the RTP and Duke and NCCU and gather information from their respected business departments to figure out how to collectively work together in lifting wages of the lowest paid city of Durham workers. Durham is divided into “The haves and the have nots”, when it comes to dealing with racial wealth gap. A few days ago, I was driving along the North Alston Avenue area and noticed how dilapidated and run down this area of Durham looks like. How and why has not the city invested in growth and development in this part of Durham? This is just one area where there is no racial growth in wealth and not too far from this part of town, near downtown; there is a pocket of new homes being built for those who can afford it and in the same notion, pushing out residents to other “poor areas” within Durham. So to answer the second part of the questions, there are many areas within the city that can benefit racial wealth gap. The question is, how will this get done, who will it benefit and why has certain stake holders from the community been left out.

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.* First and foremost, I would need to gather information regarding the benefits and costs of incentives to promote development. Again, I am not an accountant; nor I have the experience when it comes to dealing with “Tax Based” incentives which will eventually benefit one party and not the benefactor. Information and communication is a vital component in any decision which I am tasked to accomplish. Affordable housing is shrinking in Durham; many families cannot afford to live the “American Dream” in 2017. Private and Public sectors will need to be part of any promotional development that will benefit low-income residents of Durham. Residents are tired of lip-service when it comes to affordable housing or any type of incentive that may benefit them in pursuing a piece of that dream. People want directives and solutions on how to be part of the process and not get lost in the mix of reading the fine print and not understanding even the basics of incentives to promote development.

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.* The city and county should take on the expansion of job creation and job quality as a collective. I am going to assume that this has been occurring for a number of years. As a former city of Durham employee, who worked in Economic & Workforce Development; one of my primary responsibilities was to conduct small job fairs that would benefit local community residents who had specific job skill-sets that local and RTP companies would require. Technology continues to change on a daily basis and many RTP companies, as well as local business, universities, and city/county government require tech skill sets that many of city of Durham residents lack. For a city that has been nationally ranked as to have the one of highest concentration

percentage of B.S, M.S and PHD's, there seems to be a high percentage of residents who lack specific skill-sets for employment. The city would need to get involved in promoting collaborative efforts with DTCC, Duke, NCCU and the High Schools to gather information and promote entrepreneurship, job creation, job development and hiring from within the city/county residents. Specific job skill training programs would need to be re-visited to ensure that residents of Durham who may not go to a University or may not have graduated from High School have specific training's that will allow them the skill sets to be part of job quality and job creation. The city would need to do research on how other cities across this nation, who maybe compatible to Durham created job equality, job creation and collaborative efforts. I am sure that the city has been doing these efforts, with positive results; however, there is always room for improvement in areas of deficits that will eventually benefit all stakeholders and residents of Durham.

### **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.* What does "gentrification" mean to me? It means growth and development for those who can afford it and pushing away those who can't. It means adding to the local tax base, which in turn contribute to job creation and job development. It means attraction from outsiders to invest and buy, while leaving the locals out in the cold. I have seen this double-edge sword move in certain parts of Durham, like a slow moving tsunami; affecting generations of families, businesses and changing the demographics and geography within Durham. Not everyone will benefit from gentrification, and not all communities will see investors come knocking at their doors to be part of this phenomenon, that Durham has been part of the past 20 years. All I know is that crime is being pushed throughout the city and affordable housing in becoming less and less. Again, if residents do not know the benefits of gentrification, then they will assume the worse. I am not current with the current review of zoning matters in East Durham, as it pertains to the re-alignment and proposed creation of Alston Avenue project. These are matters which I need more time to research and with the limited amount of time to turn in this document, I am not abreast of the current situation. All I know is that it will affect residents and businesses along the corridor.

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 city should continue to research and collaborate with private sector and RTP, as well with local universities to continue a stimulation and regulation of growth and development within Durham. Again, I would have to conduct research based upon information with respect to any decisions in zoning cases and other development issues. Time will not permit me to respond with an adequate answer for this purpose. I will do my best in answering this question. I would need to know how will any zoning factors will affect the respected community at large, whether if it's for commercial and/or residential; someone is going to benefit and someone will have to sacrifice. It comes down to business and whose pockets will it benefit. I recall reading several articles regarding a potential Publix supermarket and the zoning aspects would affect traffic flow and create all sorts of problems with local residents. I believe this re-zoning was voted down, due to pressure from the local residents; I could be wrong. The East Durham initiative has always been a "Hot-Topic" regarding re-zoning for mix commercial/residential use. But, how can you redevelop a community that doesn't have the means to support itself (high unemployment, crime, lack of effective jobs, etc.) Again, it correlates to gentrification and pushing out those whom can't afford the changing times of re-development. One, pet

peeve which I have is that residents of Durham want zoning and re-development, but “Not in my community/neighborhood” concept. Zoning and development cases/causes could benefit everyone, once again; if effective communication and the basic understanding of how it will benefit all stakeholders were presented to everyone.

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 am going to assume, that under this circumstance, it would be a commercial use rezoning that will eventually create jobs for local residence. Once again, I am not abreast in current rezoning projects and/or future projects that doesn’t include the city’s affordable housing goal. I will assume that it is the ultimate goal to include affordable housing in any rezoning project, or have some language that if there is a rezoning commercial project; that it will benefit all stakeholders and not just some. Again, I recall the Publix supermarket controversy project which was voted down, due to the potential uptick in traffic for the local residents and how this proposed development would benefit geographically, certain Durham residents; while leaving others out in the cold. Many factors come into play, when deciding to vote for or against a rezoning project. Having all information on the table is important to me and accountability to those who propose the development for either commercial and/or residential must be communicated in an effective manner, so that there is an understanding and information is not “lost in translation”.

#### **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.* As a former home owner who (lost my first home-foreclosure), I would prefer a new fee in the determination of a property tax increase. This could be a challenge, because not all property tax values will determine what you will get for your property if you ever decide to sell. The current market does benefit the seller and the buyer who has the funding streams to afford. Basic public transportation and residential trash pick-up is a growing demand in Durham and once again, the tax payer will eventually have to decide what to give up, in order to meet the demand in the increase of public services. It comes down to the concept of “supply and demand”.

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 the plan for a mono-rail system that will alleviate the rising traffic within the highway corridor of Durham. I am aware that federal funding is a major factor in the decision to move forward with this project and Triangle Transit Authority has a major stake with this project as well. If federal funding is denied, then Durham and TTA will have to look into collaborative efforts with Orange and Wake counties, as well with local universities, Duke Hospital and RTP. Because, this is something that will affect the surrounding communities for years to come and if Durham and/or the Triangle wants to compete with other regions throughout the nation, as it pertains to job development, educational attainment, housing, and the attraction to have others to relocate here; then there has to be a major collaborative effort. The possibilities of application for grant funding is an avenue to research, I assume that State Government does not have the funding sources for such a massive rail based project. The private sector will have to get involved and contribute toward this cause, rather than having local residents pay for the bill. Durham has to realize, that in order to compete with

the Charlotte's and Raleigh's of the state, major decisions will need to take place to improve the infrastructure of the city, as well as transportation, affordable housing, urban planning and how to provide services without breaking the tax bank. Issues and concerns which can't be answered in 400 words.

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.* I believe that this is an area that needs massive improvement. I do not think bus transportation reaches the population that needs it most. I believe that having more buses and expanding services would benefit those whom need the service. Again, I would like to see a study analysis; comparing other cities across the country that may have similar issues to Durham and seeking out information as to how they deal with their bus transportation services to those who need it most.

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.* I would have to have information, regarding a property relief program and how it would benefit homeowners with limited resources. I lost my first home, because there was guidance as it pertains to resources available at the time and the process to keep my home was overwhelming and confusing, that even the mortgage company at that particular time; could not even provide guidance. I would say yes, but; again, I would need to know what is available and how this would benefit homeowners to keep their homes, while contributing to the tax base of Durham. There are many programs out here, but if residents do not know how the process, then it can be very frustrating and overwhelming at the same time.

12. What is the city's most pressing capital improvement priority? *Please limit your answer to 300 words.* I am going to assume that the pressing capital improvement priority is the re-development of the downtown area, it is something that is visible and the skyline of Durham is changing, as each day progresses. But, overall; the ultimate goal is for Durham to continue to compete with other cities, regarding the future of Durham. This city is full of diverse communities and cultures, the residents should be priority in capital improvement; without its' residents, Durham is just another small city, wanting to dream big. Safety, transportation, infrastructure, growth and development is all part of capital improvement. The question is, which geographical section of Durham will benefit from this growth, because as stated earlier; there are sectors in Durham, which have not benefited from growth and development, while other sectors have seen a richly growth in commercial and/or residential development.

13. What would you push for in the city's upcoming budget? *Please limit your answer to 300 words.* I would push for affordable housing for all Durham residents, especially city employees. There has to be an investment for the backbone that keeps the wheels grinding, and those are city workers. While the private sector continues to flourish, there has to be an incentive to keep city of Durham workers from leaving. So, I would push for more affordable housing incentives and the ability for banks to work with city of Durham employees to afford specific housing. There are other issues, which I would like to push for, but this one is an important issue; which needs to be addressed.

## **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, and deployment of personnel, searches, and communication with the public? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.* There has always been a trust problem with the people of Durham and the police department, this is nothing new and all stakeholders involved are aware of trust issues. I would mention that there could be improvements, with respect to issues of use of force, racial profiling and deployment of personnel, searches and communication efforts with the overall public. As we are all aware of what has been happening on a national level as it pertains to LEO's and communities throughout this nation; the diverse communities of Durham and the police department could improve on their trust issues. Community policing is a key and vital component in developing trust on both sides and effective communications is always important. Durham has a diverse cultural population and actions speak louder than words.

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.* The city should make every effort to cooperate with the U.S. Department of Immigration & Customs Enforcement with specific cases which involve crimes (felonies, drugs, pedophiles, murders, gangs, child abuse, etc.). I read several articles, which the Federal Government will not provide funding for specific infrastructures if a city does not comply with ICE, but I could be wrong. Immigration is a sensitive topic and I have my personal opinions as to who should be dealt with, as it pertains to ICE. For some reason, I assumed Durham was still a sanctuary city and LEO's decided not to enforce and cooperate with ICE, if deemed necessary.

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.* The city should review and collect information regarding policing efforts. Crime is on an uptick, gun violence has seen an increase and property crime have increased as well. My question to current council personnel is what programs have been and/are being implemented to improve public safety? As a victim of property crime, I am concerned that with community growth, you have crime opportunities being pushed out further to new sectors in Durham, so there should be an increase in policing. Durham is growing in all facets, whether it involves positive economic & development and negative gentrification. This creates new opportunities for individuals who want to pursue property crime/s; I believe there has to be more visible police presence in all areas of Durham. Public safety is a priority in capital investment and growth. We are all residents of Durham, no matter the social class or status of your bank account. Safety is vital for all residents of Durham.

## **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.* Over the summer, we all witnessed on national television the events in Charlottesville, Virginia and how this trickled to downtown Durham with the protests of various groups regarding the removal of the Confederate statue in front of the old courthouse. Even though, the outcome did not resemble what happened in Virginia, tensions were high among the protesters. Race inequity/inequality

has deep roots in Durham, as well in North Carolina. Myself, originally from NYC and having been in NC for over 25 years; I have seen discrimination, racism, xenophobia first hand. The city can incorporate a race equity framework by having town-hall meetings and discussions on addressing such issues, which have taken a national platform and have opened up old wounds. There are racial issues affecting Durham, people need to talk and address these issues and come up with respectable solutions, which will benefit all residents in Durham. Once again, talk is cheap and actions speak louder than words. We do not want to see another Charlottesville, here in Durham. Having people share their experiences will allow the city to develop a framework that will enable policy to have effectiveness and voices to be heard in a respectful manner and embrace racial equity/equality.

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.* The city would need to study, analyze and research what other cities have in place; concerning the civil rights of members of the LGBTQ. Provisions should be set in place that will benefit all stakeholders and not deter and/or violate civil rights of any member of the Durham community. The civil rights act of 1964 outlaws' discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

### **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.* I am confident that my years of solid experience and diverse capabilities in state government, city government and within the private sector make me an ideal candidate to successfully fulfill this vacancy. I have much to offer, including numerous years of experience in Grants Management, Project Management, Program Development, Community Engagement, Case Management and Community Collaborations within Durham County and other counties throughout the State of North Carolina. I have held professional positions which have enabled me to facilitate and coordinate activities to help key stakeholders and diverse communities in Durham and other communities throughout North Carolina as well. I consider myself as an individual who likes to think outside the box who enjoys working with individuals who bring all sorts of talents and experience. I also consider myself a student of life, always learning and always contributing to those around me. Furthermore, I have strong bilingual communication skill sets which have enabled me to reach key stakeholders and community leaders to address issues and sharing of information to better improve efforts and outreach initiatives.

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 convictions of a criminal offence.

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 the 2012 presidential election, I voted for the democratic presidential candidate. In 2016, I voted for the presidential candidate whom be best fit for office. In the 2012 and 2016 gubernatorial elections, I voted for the democratic candidate. For the 2014 U.S. senate election, I voted for the democratic contender.

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

**Humberto (Hubie) Mercado**  
1026 Jerome Rd. Durham, NC 27713  
[Hubiemerc@hotmail.com](mailto:Hubiemerc@hotmail.com)  
[Hube212@gmail.com](mailto:Hube212@gmail.com)  
(919) 949-2335 Cell Phone

## **OBJECTIVE**

Multilingual professional seeking a position within a progressive community service agency (private and/or government) which will utilize my talents, knowledge, skillsets and professional experience to attain their vision and mission.

## **QUALIFICATION HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Highly Skilled:** Planning/development, grants management, community needs assessment, advocacy, data analysis/research and consultation, motivation.
- **Strong:** Leadership, management, oral/written communication, interpersonal, intuitive, creative, and analytical skills. Thrive in both independent and collaborative work environments. Skilled at developing/cultivating key relationships and establishing effective collaborations.
- **Quick Study:** Assimilating new ideas, concepts, methods and technologies. Dedicated, innovative and self-motivated team player/builder with a superior work ethic.

## **EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Science, North Carolina Central University, Durham NC  
*Magna cum Laude, 2002*

## **MILITARY EXPERIENCE**

United States Marine Corps: *Camp Lejeune, NC*  
Honorable Discharge.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### ***Court Management Specialist, 2014-2017***

#### ***North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts, Raleigh NC***

Provided administrative, technical assistance and consultation for questions, concerns and issues involving interpretation and translation services. Served as one of the primary point of contact for court interpreters and remote interpreting services. Maintained project and program files, documents and databases to ensure appropriate follow-ups of activities, training, invoicing and testing results. Coordinated training to streamline case management for court cases requiring foreign language interpretation and translation. Collaborated with court officials and staff to address operational challenges. Identify possible grants funding streams for projects. Managed grant projects and database system regarding interpreter invoicing and events/cases per day.

### ***Governor Highway Safety Specialist/Community Development Specialist, 2011-2014***

#### ***North Carolina Department of Transportation, Raleigh, NC***

Coordinated grant application process to include preparation, submission and monitoring of federal grant status to Law Enforcement Agencies, Universities and Non-Profits agencies that enhance, research and focus on Highway Safety issues, such as "Click it or Ticket", "Booze it or Lose it" and "Speed" campaigns within North Carolina. Community collaboration, event planning and enhancing programs with Law Enforcement agencies, Universities and Non-Profits' that deal with the Latino Community and High School students in NC regarding issues pertaining to Highway Safety. Actively managed grants and audits departmental data on a regular basis, including grant expenditure reporting to verify compliance within grant terms. Generated data analysis and administered monthly, quarterly and yearly project monitoring schedule reports. Made regular field reviews of work in progress and determine if contract's guidelines have been completed in accordance with contract(s) and department policies.

***Program Manager, 2010-2011***

***Securing Resources for Consumers Inc., Durham, NC***

Program Manager for SRFC, Inc Spanish services division. Coordinating and supervising services for Latino consumers in accessing MH/DD/SA services and other community based programs to assist and help those in need of additional community services.

***Hispanic/Latino Services Program Manager, 2008-2009***

***Carolina Adolescent Center Inc., Durham, NC***

Served as Program Manager of Day Treatment Spanish services division, within Carolina Adolescent Center. Developed and implemented planning of program, coordinated day to day operations of division, trained internal personnel, supervised Bi-lingual Qualified Professionals, Associate Professionals and Day Treatment Para-Professionals. Monitored daily activities of Day Treatment personnel and services provided to population served.

***Language Access Services Program Manager, 2007-2008***

***Innovative Programming Associates Inc., Durham, NC***

Bi-lingual Program Manager of Community Support Language Access Services division. Coordinated and managed services for the Latino community in accessing MH/DD/SA services. Provided support and training of internal staff and supervised team members. Monitored activities, tasks and provided guidance to Community Support personnel and consumers. Participated in numerous community collaboration efforts and events.

***Job Link Coordinator/Job Link Satellite Support, 2004-2007***

***City of Durham - Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Durham, NC***

Served as the Job-Link Coordinator/ Job-Link Satellite support personnel for the department, provided employment information and job-skill training opportunities to residents of Durham. Assisted individuals with resume building, job coaching and labor market information. Represented department as a member of several sub committees and task teams.

***Latino Community Outreach Coordinator, 2002-2004***

***City of Durham - Parks and Recreation: Durham, NC***

Served as the Outreach Coordinator for department, providing information to the Latino community of Durham; regarding programs, services and activities. Assisted with planning of events and coordination of tasks. Translated documents and provided interpretation services when needed. Represented department as a member of several sub committees and task teams.

***Community Support Specialist, 2002-2008***

***Comprehensive Community Care Inc., Durham NC***

Served as Community Support Personnel in roles of Associate Professional and Qualified Professional for agency providing support services, case management and role model to male youth. Participated in weekly meetings, planning sessions and skill-building activities. Aided consumers with life skills, community building and one-on-one peer development.

***Youth Services Coordinator, 2000-2002***

***Durham Youth Coordinating Board, Durham, NC***

Served as liaison between community agencies that provided services to youth and their families. Coordinated and monitored programs and activities involving public and private youth service agencies. Also, reviewed and coordinated Grants for several Non-Profit Organizations.

***References available upon request***