

**PA PAC Questionnaire for
Durham Board of County Commissioners – 2020**

Please return the completed form along with your resume or biographical statement describing education, work history, community service, and prior political experience as soon as possible, but by January 5 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 PA PAC c/o Tom Miller 1110 Virginia Avenue, Durham, NC 27705-3262

Please note that following the January 5 deadline, the People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.

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. Do not use colors or shading.

Please try to confine your responses to no more than 300 words unless another word limit is indicated. Do not feel obliged to exhaust the limit for each question.

If you use words or ideas from another person, please attribute your source.

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

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Government and the Public Good

1. *Of all the issues confronting Durham County, which single issue is most important to you and why? What would you do about it if you are elected?*

Our residents feel that their voices are not being heard. Most don't feel meaningfully empowered to collectively shape Durham, from requesting and receiving a bus stop shelter to planning for the future of their neighborhoods and communities to make life better for all. We face many enormous challenges - from providing good jobs and good housing under an austerity federal economic system, to finally ending out-of-control automobile-oriented sprawl and achieving climate resiliency, to adequately funding our schools under a volatile state and federal climate. We owe it to ourselves, our communities, and future generations to overcome these challenges and more. The only way we can accomplish the enormous tasks ahead is by enacting structural change that meaningfully and intentionally empowers the residents of Durham to be visionaries and decision-makers. This is the unifying theme underlying our roadmap to a better county.

Too often, people are told that their struggles are their fault and that their individual experiences within an entirely broken economic framework are personal failings. We have come to accept inadequate changes around the margins of issues like crumbling housing conditions, sprawl that defines all of our new growth, financing that penalizes low-wealth people, limited mobility options that strand the poor, young, elderly, and physically disabled, under-resourced school districts and burgeoning charter schools that further sort people by race and class, and jobs that overwork and under-pay.

While the scope of power for the Durham County Commission is limited I pledge to intervene to enact systemic change that truly empowers people to shape the world around them in a way that transcends mere politicians and elections. We have many strategies for implementing this change, including:

- Establishing a system of neighborhood and area planning so that residents co-lead planning projects with the City-County Planning Department, developing a vision for their communities and establishing the blueprint for land use and capital investments to achieve it.
- Creating ongoing long-range community-driven planning processes and ensuring truly fair participation and decision-making.
- Rewriting Durham's growth DNA - the Unified Development Ordinance - so that developers' projects provide sustainable, affordable, equitable, fiscally-responsible, and pedestrian-oriented communities and a fair share of public benefits.
- Saving our dying media ecosystem by establishing Democratic Journalism Vouchers to allow residents to use tax dollars to support independent investigative local journalism, empowering them with better information for informed objective decision-making.

2. *How can county government use its authority and its resources to direct jobs to those who most need them and to lift the wages of the lowest-paid workers in Durham?*

The political economy of the last fifty years has had devastating impacts, even during times of economic growth and low unemployment. Worker productivity has drastically increased but wages and benefits have not. If you come from a poor community, your chances of accessing good jobs is low. Since the 1980s, the racial disparity of income and wealth, on average, has not improved: The gap has in fact widened.

Among other strategies, we must:

- Adopt a minimum wage in Durham that guarantees that all workers make enough to support themselves.
- Facilitate the transition toward democratic workplaces where workers sit on decision-making boards, own the means of production, and have more control of their labor and work environment. This should be folded into our economic development strategy using a multifaceted approach that takes advantage of existing institutions, such as Durham Tech and our high schools.
- Think about the Triangle as one metropolitan area, with coordinated planning and economic development strategies, including regional bus rapid transit.
- Examine economic development incentives to ensure they are used to bring good, green, ethical, living-wage jobs to Durham.

- Educate and encourage residents and visitors through a comprehensive user-friendly portal to support living wage certified, worker-owned, locally-owned, and/or unionized businesses that provide their workers adequate benefits and time off.
- Track and monitor success toward achieving climate and equity goals through an online dashboard and make those data available and easily accessible to all residents.
- Make jobs more geographically accessible by reimagining the built environment to weave jobs throughout our community fabric and enhancing access through multiple modes of transportation.
- Explore options for directly employing Durham residents through public enterprises that offer good jobs and pay workers a living wage with good benefits. Create public enterprises that particularly serve the social and economic needs of all our residents, such as identifying food deserts in Durham and establishing public grocery stores that provide good jobs and accessible high quality foods.
- Focus on a vibrant rural economy, supporting our farmers and ensuring landholders can derive economic value from land as active farmland or in its natural state.

3. *If elected, how will you guard against the power, access, and influence of wealthy special interests? How can county government hold such interests accountable for their actions?*

This issue is extremely important to me and a major motivation for my candidacy. Power, money, and profit-motivated access to decision-makers can have strong direct influences, but most often it influences decision-makers in subtler ways that can slowly and over time erode democratic principles. Elected officials must be objective and directly accountable to their constituents. That starts, but does not end, with campaign finance. One of the core powers of local elected officials is through the extraordinary power to regulate real estate through the police power: zoning. Because of this unique authority, it is critical that real estate special interests do not hold greater power and influence over other residents and stakeholder groups.

Therefore, I am proud to announce my pledge to reject any and all donations from developers and real estate special interests that do business in Durham. In a city as progressive as Durham, this should be the standard for all local elected officials.

The challenge of holding government and special interests accountable is great, but we must take action. In the Triangle and around the country, free, fair, high quality, and independent journalism is in a challenging state. When I was growing up in Durham, many households subscribed to and received the Herald Sun and/or the News and Observer for \$15-20 per month. These papers had many local journalists conducting investigations and writing stories with relatively objective in-depth reporting. Today, the local media ecosystem has become decimated. Journalists have been laid off; and those that are working are working long hours for inadequate pay. There are major stories being missed, and often journalists do not have the time to understand and adequately report key context for stories. Meanwhile, many people are getting their news from social media or from biased sources.

Now is the time to establish Democratic Journalism Vouchers to allow residents to use tax dollars to support independent investigative local journalism, empowering them with better information for informed objective decision-making. Each resident will be offered a \$20 annual voucher that they can direct toward a non-profit local media source of their choice. An independent commission will be established to write the rules and oversee the voucher's implementation.

Educating Our Children

4. *What issues do you see with school construction and student school assignment? What role should race equity play with regard to school construction and student assignment?*

The schools are at overcapacity in several parts of Durham, and in others, schools are below capacity. We have been putting off building new schools for lack of funds. Moreover, by virtue of the development patterns we are allowing, we risk a situation in which more of our future schools will lack diversity and inclusion.

The issue of demographic homogeneity, uneven student distribution, and lack of funds to build, are all connected to one another. The key thread is that our neighborhoods have been built to be relatively homogenous and exclusionary. Over decades, we have enabled disconnected, unwalkable, uniform-housing-type (mostly single-family), car-centric developments at low density. We have allowed building that externalizes many of its costs, draining our tax dollars and making school diversity difficult to achieve.

In the short term, we need to get started on the two new elementary schools and in the intermediate and long term, we need to stay ahead of growth so that we don't find ourselves with severe overcrowding again. I understand that there is concern about raising funds, but if it is necessary to keep kids out of trailers, we should be proactive about financing to keep up with population growth. We also must stop allowing new development to externalize costs, and explore how to tax residents progressively so that we can raise revenues to appropriately resource our schools, without overburdening those of low- moderate- and fixed-incomes.

This issue needs a long-term comprehensive approach and requires us to answer some hard questions about our neighborhoods and land use policies. Our schools are segregated, not just because of our history of redlining, but also because of decades worth of planning mistakes.

5. *What role should charter schools play in public education in Durham County? What are the issues associated with charter schools and what should be done to address them?*

I am a public school advocate and a product of the Durham Public Schools system K-12. As a DPS graduate, I encourage all parents to send their children to DPS schools. I believe that all schools should be public and that every child should be provided every opportunity to succeed through public schools. I believe charter schools are a threat to public schools and fear they are a Trojan Horse to privatize our public schools.

At the individual level, I understand why some parents feel pressure to choose charter schools. I know people who have attended them. As long as we are forced to live under a framework that expands charter schools we need to hold them to account and ensure they provide high quality education and are inclusive and equitable. Many charter schools lack busing, cafeterias, and other infrastructure necessary for true equity and that is provided by public schools. I believe in continuing to fight for public schools while maintaining a level of pragmatism that prioritizes high quality and just educational opportunities for all our children.

Housing, Planning, and Neighborhoods

6. *What planning policies and priorities do you wish to see emerge from the on-going review and revision of Durham's Comprehensive Plan and Uniform Development Ordinance?*

As an urban planner, I have worked on a dozen comprehensive plans across the South and multiple comprehensive UDO rewrite projects from Pennsylvania, to the Carolinas, to Alabama. Comprehensive plans are valuable for both their potential for a robust public process as well as the resulting plan document that lays out a community vision for the future and the blueprint for achieving it. With Ellen Reckhow not running again, Durham is losing its one and only professional planner in elected politics. It is critical that we have a forward-thinking elected trained planner who can help us achieve the possibilities.

The new Durham Comprehensive Plan should provide a roadmap to radically altering our built and natural environment and making Durham an inclusive, walkable, carbon-neutral community by 2045. The Planning Department has indicated that they want the plan to focus on land use, and although I believe it should be a truly comprehensive plan, there is a lot that can be achieved through better land use policy in Durham. While the content of the plan should be driven by public input, not by politicians, I will speak to the direction I believe the community should go. Here are my desired goals and what I want to see in the plan:

- Create a fact-based community profile, with key land use and planning trends that are maintained online with annual or bi-annual updates
- Eliminate Durham's dependency on the automobile for a significant portion of households by 2045
- End the construction of new automobile-oriented single-family-only developments
- Establish a growth management system through a Tiered Growth Map and annexation policies that guide growth, protect, open space, and prohibit leapfrog annexations
- Establish a growth management division in the planning department using existing resources to track and monitor growth and set policy
- Establish priority areas for neighborhood, corridor, and area planning projects
- Establish guidance for connected countywide green infrastructure
- Establish clear policy and action direction for UDO updates/rewrite and development approvals
- Ensure ALL new infill development and greenfield development is built using walkable and pedestrian-oriented growth and design principles
- Ensure all new private-sector buildings meet a minimum level of green building requirements to ensure Durham can meet its carbon neutral goals by 2045.
- Protect Durham's existing stock of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)
- Provide links between our land use policy, economic development strategy, transportation infrastructure, transit, and affordable housing to ensure we are intentional about meeting our equity and sustainability goals
- Ensure all new neighborhoods built on Durham's periphery are complete, include jobs, services, affordable housing, transit, civic space, multimodal infrastructure, natural space, and a variety of housing options
- Incorporate as a requirement of approval, that elected officials must visit all sites large rezoning requests by transit before they are permitted to vote

7. *What, if anything, should be done to promote meaningful engagement of ordinary residents and neighborhoods in planning and zoning issues in city-county planning?*

Our planning systems in Durham are not working for residents and we are seeing the results of that every day with exclusionary and unsustainable development, the continued automobile-oriented built pattern, and the overwhelming feeling of helplessness and powerlessness by residents who feel there is no way that they can shape their community. Under the current system here in Durham, residents have little say in the future of their community. They are only able to respond and react to primarily private-sector proposals for change. There is virtually no proactive long-range neighborhood planning. As County Commissioner, I will change that.

We need change that provides avenues for residents to be able to collectively shape their neighborhoods through land use and capital needs. That requires restructuring our planning systems so that residents and stakeholders are coming together under an inclusive planning framework to determine the future of the community. As County Commissioner, I will work to establish a neighborhood planning division that conducts ongoing work with neighborhood leaders, residents, businesses, development stakeholders, affordable housing advocates, and other stakeholders to find solutions that benefit everyone while achieving the overarching goals of the community as determined by the comprehensive plan through tailored neighborhood strategies and approaches. We need to establish what is called “the right to the city” where collective grassroots imagination and decision-making drives community change rather than a system that uses an antiquated top-down framework that is best suited for maximizing private profit-generation.

The public engagement process is key to neighborhood planning and a truly unique opportunity for public discussions and conversations where members of a community collectively ask, “where are we?” “where are we going?” and “how do we get there?” Successful planning must be community-driven, with significant empowerment of the public to determine their shared future. It must be led by a steering committee consisting of a truly fair and representational cross-section of the community, and provide long-term thinking and direction-setting. Importantly, the plan must be comprehensive, and tie together multiple complex and intertwined issues and strategies like land use, government programs and services, and capital investments.

Finally, we must acknowledge and address the enormous number of negative actions that have been taken in Durham historically and presently – both public and private. We must end our regulations and ongoing actions that negatively impact low income communities. We must have a real conversation about what we did wrong. That means discussion redlining, urban renewal, state-sponsored gentrification in the Southside neighborhood, and ongoing gentrification-inducing policies. We must find real comprehensive strategies for reducing the negative impacts of capital investments. We must do it with communities, not just for them.

8. *What should Durham County government do to promote housing affordability?*

Durham has been taking an incremental approach to affordable housing that - despite key accomplishments - has had our governments chasing our tails. We need a cohesive and comprehensive strategy and that starts with investing in a real comprehensive affordable housing plan for the city and the county. The plan should include a vision and goals, as well as strategies, priorities, and timing. The plan would involve a public process with community-generated solutions. Affordable housing is a

regional issue and we need to do more through the planning process to work with Triangle Council of Governments and Wake and Orange Counties for better affordable housing strategies. Here are the elements I would fight for in a comprehensive housing plan.

- I would fight for an aggressive approach to social housing, that funds the construction of permanent government-owned social housing as well as land banking through community partners like the Durham Community Land Trust.
- I would encourage the City of Durham to use funds from the affordable housing bond for repairs to the existing stock of affordable housing, including units Durham Housing Authority communities.
- I would establish a loan fund for homeowners to borrow money at low interest rates to construct accessory dwelling units.
- Now is the time to adopt a mandatory inclusionary zoning ordinance. There is no legislation that prohibits inclusionary zoning in North Carolina and we cannot wait for enabling legislation at the state level. Further, we have a large majority in the N.C. State Supreme Court. However, to legally support our new ordinance, we will conduct a rigorous nexus study.
- We need to focus not just on housing affordability - as though housing is isolated from the rest of the world. We need to focus on neighborhood affordability, and ensure new housing is built to be walkable to the places that residents go on a daily basis, like jobs, services, and transit.

County Finances, Transportation, Incentives, and Services

9. *What is the most important thing that is not currently being funded by county? Would you be willing to raise taxes to fund this item?*

Austerity at the state and federal levels have pushed the burden of financing schools, housing, transportation, and so many other societal needs to local governments, with inadequate tax and revenue options and all of these issues competing for funding. I believe that education should be a top priority for the County Commission and that we should seek to close the gap and fund schools at or above the national average. I would like to see more schools with universal free meals, counselors, and nurses. I also believe that there are other key initiatives that are required to support children, families, and schools indirectly. I would support raising taxes to fund this item, and would seek to find ways to make our taxes more progressive, to avoid overburdening low-wealth, low-income residents in our community.

10. *What is your position on providing public incentives to private firms to promote economic development in Durham? How can county government use development incentives to promote more widely shared prosperity, including better jobs and higher wages for Durham residents?*

Public incentives to private firms can be used well, and they can be used poorly. Too often, public incentives only benefit companies and highly-paid workers. I would not eliminate public funds for economic development, but I would like to see closer scrutiny of how the funds are allocated to ensure that they will provide a net benefit to our residents, and that those benefits are equitably distributed. Furthermore, I would like to have the voices of the people who are the perceived beneficiaries of our economic incentive programs to have their voices elevated and empowered to be integrally involved in making these decisions.

I agree Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce's analysis that the Black community has both been denied equitable inclusion in economic development investments made by the city and county, and that the Black community is uniquely situated to understand the challenges and opportunities to achieve a more equitable future. This argument can be extended to other populations in Durham that have been left behind in our city's prosperity.

11. *What non-traditional programs (such as public banking, community investment trusts, community development venture capital) could Durham County implement to reduce economic inequality in our community?*

With increasing political and economic uncertainty at the federal and state levels, we need to use every potential tool in the toolbox in a responsible and fiscally sustainable way.

We need to explore new modes of housing production and look at social housing as critical infrastructure. But we also need to foster a dense ecosystem of housing opportunities. We need to nurture and expand our supply of cooperative housing and cooperative business establishments to grow wealth, democratize housing and work environments, and provide our residents with the choices that they want and desperately need.

We also need to look at the needs and services that are not being provided in the community and open public enterprises. For example, I want residents to be able to conveniently reach a grocery store, no matter where they live. Where there are food deserts, we will find creative solutions to provide high quality food choices beyond just private grocery chains that offer low wage and unstable employment. That could mean anything from a public food truck that provides fresh foods and produce on a regular basis, to creating a farmer's market, to opening a public grocery store that pays living wages with benefits.

Land banking is somewhat complicated in North Carolina, but I want to work find ways to land bank in partnership with the Durham Community Land Trust.

12. *What should be the principal components of a new public transit plan for Durham County?*

High quality affordable transit is fundamental to the future of Durham. We need frequent, reliable, connected, and expansive service. We need to be willing to fund that service, recognizing that it helps low income residents, the environment, and also provides universal benefits to riders and drivers alike.

It is time to finally construct - and I will fight for - a high quality and comprehensive local and regional bus rapid transit (BRT) system that connects to jobs, housing, and services. That will require political will to both eliminate automobile travel lanes in some places and constructing a new lane in other places. Those tough choices are critical because without a dedicated lane, BRT is no more than a bus stuck in traffic. I will provide the leadership and backbone to ensure the BRT is built.

Finally, transit will never become what we want it to become if driving continues to be the most convenient mode of travel. So we must transition our land use and transportation infrastructure toward a multimodal system. With political courage we can do it. For far too long, policymakers have siloed the issues of housing, land use, and transportation, not realizing that they are inextricably interlinked and

interrelated. It is time to view them all together as a way to make Durham inclusive, vibrant, and livable at the individual, neighborhood, community, and metropolitan levels. We cannot and will not ever achieve a high quality transit system if we do not achieve a more compact walkable pattern, with integrated social housing, jobs, civic spaces, services, and nature.

13. *What, if anything, should the county do to distribute the property tax burden with greater equity and fairness?*

Property tax is a regressive tax which often threatens to unfairly burden low- and middle-income homeowners. Yet the low and increasingly reduced revenue from the state and federal governments requires creative local solutions. We must expend resources on exploring creative answers to this question through workarounds that achieve a more progressive taxation system. There are property tax relief programs, which must be used but require additional administration and introduce complexity. I also believe that there are untapped revenue sources that should be further explored.

Justice and Law Enforcement

14. *How do you define community safety? What are the most effective ways for the county to build and preserve community safety throughout all the communities in Durham County?*

I believe that a safe community is one in which people are free from harm and fear. I support the current Sheriff's and DA's emphasis on preventing crime, empowering communities to keep each other safe, strategies for reducing the number of guns in our communities, non-cooperation with ICE, working with the DA to lower our jail population via diversion programs, and elimination or lowering of bail, improving safety for those who are in our jails, and innovations such as restorative practices and restorative justice.

It is also critical that we take a holistic view of preserving community safety by working to empower communities with local collective decision-making and enhancing access to opportunity and quality of life for all.

15. *Are you satisfied with Sheriff's Office, including its administrative, law enforcement, security, and detention functions? Should county government increase or decrease resources allocated to the Sheriff's Office? Please explain your answer.*

One issue that is key is oversight of the jail, because the BOCC holds the purse strings and must hold the sheriff's office accountable for conditions in the jail. The Inside-Outside Alliance brought a lot of important attention to conditions in the jail over the past decade.

Sheriff Birkhead is an asset to Durham and his work here has just begun. I believe he is making strides in his efforts to reestablish community trust, and in his ongoing work to change the legacy culture of the Sheriff's Office.

His announced decisions to end ICE detainees, and to withhold mugshots of those who have not been convicted of crimes are fair and just. His emphasis on preserving the safety and dignity of detainees in

Durham's jails is much-needed. The Community Advisory Board is an important initiative and I look forward to seeing the initiative mature and produce better outcomes for our community.

It is important to me to support the Sheriff's resource priorities because I believe he knows what his department needs. I hold the belief that over time, his initiatives, along with the District Attorney's, will reduce crime and the number of detainees in our jails, and that our criminal justice system will be more just and less expensive.

16. *What, if anything, should Durham County do to promote restorative justice?*

I am a strong believer in the practice of restorative justice, and it is exciting that Durham is a leader in North Carolina and around the country in achieving justice by this method in the court system. I am particularly excited about the work being done by the Durham I-Team on the Durham Expunction and Restoration Program (<https://www.deardurham.org/>) as well as their achievements on the Durham Driver Restoration Initiative. The team found that suspended licenses was a barrier to employment for 46,000 Durham residents. Approximately 80 percent of those with suspended licenses were black and brown people, most of whom had their licenses suspended for over a year.

I believe that other opportunities for Durham County to promote restorative justice actually begins by interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline in the schools. I am an enthusiastic supporter of the adoption of restorative practice in the schools, including the shift to Restorative Practice Centers as a replacement for In-School Suspension.

I believe that Durham County can promote restorative justice by supporting the work of the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham and the Campbell Law School's Restorative Justice Clinic, the Durham's District Attorney's office and others. We should be looking at the entire continuum of the lives of our people to find other ways to make our residents' lives, and our community stronger, via restorative practices. I believe that by investing in these initiatives, and providing the necessary funding, we will achieve a more equitable, just system, that will cost us less socially and financially in the long-term.

Health Care and Social Services

17. *How can Durham County improve mental health services in our community?*

Mental health – and the lack of access to care – is a major issue. As an elected official, I will use my platform to speak out on and fight for universal healthcare at higher levels of government, but that is not enough and we must also seek local solutions, like New York's Thrive NYC initiative for mental healthcare. I intend to both leverage existing non-profit and government providers in and around Durham and bring together leaders and experts to support fresh innovations.

The Durham area hosts some of the best mental health training programs in the country. I will work to strengthen partnerships with programs at Duke and UNC, which offer cost-effective ways to provide high-quality and evidence-based care.

Serious mental illness (SMI) such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder have prevalence rates below five percent but result in frequent ER visits due to lack of insurance and underinsurance. Increasing funding

to local SMI programs could produce significant improvements to outcomes and actually improve cost-effectiveness in ways that would be attractive to the county and local partners.

I also want to enhance programs focused on employment and independent living, which are relatively low-cost and improve outcomes for mental health patients, and decrease ER visits and hospital stays. Program staff for these programs are less specialized than psychiatrists and psychologists, which can reduce costs while maintaining on-call licensed professionals who are integrated into clinical treatment teams.

A key part of improving mental health outcomes is Supported Employment Services, which include working in collaboration with schools and employers to return individuals back to their lives. They also provide direct employment for individuals with mental illness and improve outcomes for those early in recovery. Peer support programs can help one-on-one to improve functioning and reintegration in the community (e.g., attending treatment groups, navigating public transportation, finding social support in the community). Drop-in programs like Club Nova, and creating safe spaces for individuals so that they can access services or spend time in the community are also important. Having staff on-hand is key so that they can make recommendations for resources if they notice symptoms worsening.

Additionally, stable housing, high quality-of-life, green space, affordable transportation, and good jobs result in both prevention and significantly improved outcomes for people living with mental health challenges and are fundamental health strategies.

Civil Rights

18. *Name one issue in Durham that directly impacts, or is directly impacted by, race inequity, and explain how the city can incorporate a race equity framework in addressing this issue?*

Democracy and engagement are critical in Durham to achieve a more equitable and inclusive society, transparent and accountable government, and feeling of meaning and collective empowerment. But residents - all residents, but especially those in black and brown communities - do not feel like they have a say in our community's future. And many people have an overwhelming sense that there are a few powerful and wealthy players that are controlling the levers.

Why should residents think otherwise if they've been burned so many times over decades? Look no further than urban renewal programs that destroyed the once vibrant Hayti district. Look no further than the Southside redevelopment work, although little reported, a terrible case of nothing less than state-sponsored gentrification and wholesale displacement of black and low-income residents. Look no further than present powers pointing toward "filtering" – let's call it "trickle-down condo theory" – as victory for affordable housing advocates. Look no further than the overwhelming power and influence of big developers at various levels of Durham government.

We need to incorporate a race equity framework in decision-making, democratic systems, and the collective ability residents have in shaping their community's future. We need to acknowledge mistakes of the past, work to dismantle unfair and unjust systems still in place, and we need to work hard to bring all working and middle class people of all races and backgrounds together to achieve a brighter future.

19. *What is the principal issue facing the Latinx and immigrant communities and how should the county address it?*

Latinx and immigrant communities are not homogenous groups, and these groups face many different complex issues. I was recently told by an Afghan immigrant that I spoke with that he grew up in Afghanistan believing America was the land of opportunity, but upon arriving in the Triangle, “discovered that America was instead the land of misery.” He talked about the discrimination he faced as foreigner with an accent, the struggle to pay the bills and raise a family, and the long distances between the places he and his family need to get to with costly and limited travel options. They were strong words, but revealing of and supported by, real trends and data.

Poor, and even middle-class, Americans face overwhelming challenges today. Black and brown people live with an added layer of burdens. And yet, immigrant communities are penalized even further because of the struggles of another language, the unearned stigmas they carry, the threats and fear under which they may live, and the red tape they face in all aspects of daily life.

A major, and hugely concerning issue facing many immigrant communities right now is the threat posed by this country’s racist federal immigration policy and enforced by ICE. Many in the immigrant and Latinx community live in fear for themselves, their families, and their neighbors. We must do everything we can and more to protect these vulnerable residents.

America is an unfair and unequal place, with discrimination against poor people, black and brown people, and immigrant communities, built deep into our legal, financial, and land use systems. We need to be intentional about fighting for change and resisting hate at the state and federal level, while also revisiting our own laws and regulations to eliminate built-in discrimination and improve quality of life for Durham’s Latinx and immigrant communities.

20. *Do you support legislation designed to protect gay, lesbian, and transgender people from discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodation, and access to government benefits and services? Please limit your answer to 100 words.*

Yes, absolutely.

Political

21. *For whom did you vote for in the 2012 and 2016 presidential and gubernatorial elections? For whom did you vote in the 2016 U. S. Senate election? Please limit your answer to 100 words.*

In 2012, I voted for Barack Obama and Walter Dalton. In 2016, I voted for Hillary Clinton, Roy Cooper, and Deborah Ross.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please do not forget to provide us with your resume or biographical statement.