

**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?

The biggest issue is securing employment. So many of the issues in Durham stem from many citizens living in poverty. If a person cannot work for a livable wage or gain access to employment then their chances of decent living conditions, healthy food, mobility and in some instances advancement in education, are significantly reduced. The go word for politicians for multiple elections cycles has been affordable housing. We can reduce the need for affordable housing by making sure that our citizens have access to wages that move them in to better living conditions.

Each year in Durham our County Commissioners and state officials carry out a series of press conferences, announcing all the new companies either moving or expanding in Durham. Those companies have gone through numerous negotiations to get to the point of selecting Durham as their new home. Durham is a talented Tier 3 county. They have evaluated its citizens, schools, crime rate, housing, institutions of higher education and it's workforce. However conversations about recruiting that workforce often lack significant details as to the methodology that will be utilized to get said workforce

hired. Our community uses taxes incentives from Durham's tax base and Job Development Matching Grants. Those funds often come with strings attached. One example is the use of a formula that accounts for the new tax revenues generated by the new jobs. State payments only occur following performance verification by the Departments of Commerce and Revenue that the company has met its incremental job creation and investment targets. JDIG projects result in positive net tax revenue to the state treasury, even after taking into consideration the grant's reimbursement payments to a given company.

If we are going to make the companies adhere to a job creation timetable then why not also negotiate a job recruitment rate for our county. They do so in other counties. I know like most candidate that there are thousands of jobs that go unfilled every day.

When Corning moved to Durham they received tax incentives and promised over 300 jobs. After 2 years, Durham citizens only make up 17% of Cornings employees. The same can be said for many of our counties newest employees. Manufacturing firms are great for all of Durham. They have jobs open in almost all levels of education and often train their employees in formal setting before they begin work.

If I walk into any affordable housing area in Durham and make the case to come to an incubator environment at Durham tech that promises they will go from making minimum wage to on average \$50k or \$60k a year, they would sign up. We have to get our people trained to fill these jobs. While I am not the only candidate who has ever lived in public housing, I am one of the few if not the only one who has lived in Durham's public housing. I am proof that being there does not mean you we all was be there. After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I moved into Lincoln Apartments (formerly adjacent to McDougal Terrace and now condemned) to start graduate school at North Carolina Central University. I on more than one occasion walked to campus Lincoln. I also walked from Lincoln to Durham Technical Community College which is only blocks away from those affordable housing developments for a job interview. The same steps I took are the ones other citizens are willing to take to get access to a good job.

I want to bring our institutes of higher education to the table earlier. I want to work with our partners at the Durham Chamber, Greater Black Chamber and the Institute to strategically target these populations. Even if only one family member gains employment we have now moved that family up the socio-economic ladder and possible removed their reliance to affordable housing. When individuals are able to work only one job they might have time to spend with their families. Better food is provided. Cars are purchased. Children's grades improve as well as their extracurricular activities. If they are not on streets corners, citizens don't have to worry as much about crime rates. When crime rates are reduced property values go up. When property values go up, then tax revenues go up. All these things are interconnected and collectively improve the other. All this because we helped someone get a job.

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?
Please see answer to question 1.

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?

I think another issue is working on lobbying disclosure. All too often politicians are lobbied by individuals who have varying titles in a company or a varying titles as contracted employees. Their failure to disclose their actual work as well as how much they are getting paid is problematic. Designations for lobbyist at both the state and federal level are too loosely defined. Having them formally register at the Secretary of States Office also aids the public by putting them in a better position to see exactly what monies are being spent. This helps them hold politicians accountable.

I would also be interested in seeing what would happen if county or municipal politicians had similar "revolving door" policies implemented on a local level. Perhaps no job offers to any companies that relocated or expanded in the county for at least 18 to 24 months. Promising career opportunities will always come to any good politician if they work hard, promote the needs of the citizens and implement good public policy. Removing these temptations can aid politicians in focusing on the work of the people.

Educating Our Children

4. What issues do you see with school construction and student school assignment?

I would love to see capital outlays improved for Durham Public Schools. There are 100's of millions of dollars of suggested renovations or repairs needed by Durham's public schools. Funding for capital outlays has not improved in over a decade. That fund has not kept up with the cost of inflation. Example: The number of buckets of paint need to paint a classroom remains the same. However the cost of those buckets of paint in 2010 is significantly lower than those same buckets of paint in 2020. So now instead of painting an entire classroom, we have been reduced to spot painting those spaces that show the most wear. This same example can be paralleled across all construction cost. As a candidate, I have sat in on school board meetings and reviewed years of minutes and agendas. We can no longer continue to patch leaky roofs. At some point, it becomes an issue of public safety. There are schools without labs. There are schools with mobile classrooms that have been sitting on campuses for 20 years. At the most recent joint meeting between the County Board and the School Board a decision was finally made to move forward with the building of two new schools and even a possible additional elementary school. I am hopeful if elected I can aid in the development of those two new schools and work with the School Board to get parents of Durham students excited about making Durham Public Schools their first choice.

What role should race equity play with regard to school construction and student assignment?

Currently the public schools in Durham have an overall average of only 19% enrollment for Caucasian/White students. Durham County is almost 50% white. This number is especially staggering when you take into account that number of students in charter schools, private schools and at-home-schools for the most part are majority white. The answer to this question is not simply one of busing. Those were remedies for the civil rights era and the 1990's era. The question then becomes why are parents not choosing Durham Public Schools? It begs the question are Durham Public Schools becoming purposefully segregated outside of Durham Public Schools. There are 1000's of reports nationwide that prove, with empirical data, that students learn/work best in diverse classrooms.

I do think this discussion has to come from a leadership. A real announcement. Not one found on social media, but an open uncomfortable conversation. A conversation that is so carefully choreographed that the county nor the school board seems to be helping one group or pointing the finger at one group while the other feels ignored. I also think we follow the data.

I feel confident that the county is taking appropriate steps in the right direction. The county has invested in the leadership that lead equity based work. The recent hires of Dr. Kelvin Bullock as the Executive Director for Equity Affairs in Durham Public Schools as well as the hiring of a Boys of Color Coordinator speaks to Durham's commitment to start to have those difficult conversations at an administrative level that will hopefully trickle down into the classroom.

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 think the biggest issues that Durham is having with charters schools is the expansion of new charter schools and the lack of regulatory oversight of those charter schools. Years ago I was indifferent to charter schools. Charter schools were touted as an opportunity to use public funding to build more “innovative” and “creative” schools. Every school district in the south wanted to be the next Ron Carter Academy. Charter school were also touted as a safe haven. As a proponent of social equity I saw the systemic higher rate of suspension and expulsion for young men and women of color, as a problematic in our public school systems. Especially when their white counterparts who were guilty of the same violation received far less punishment, if any. This lead both black and white parents to start accepting these alternative to traditional public schools.

Sadly around the state and county, new reports of unqualified teachers, false reporting on class sizes and loss of funding in traditional public school funding has triggered the public to question these schools and their place in our community. They have also becoming machines for for-profit institutions to abuse the system in some places across the state. Additionally, if you look at enrollment numbers for our charter schools in the county they are segregated and the data leads one to the conclusion that their existence might be leading to some of the segregation in public schools, as they continue to draw largely depending upon the charter school on one race of children.

The most recent approval was Oak Grove (not to be confused with the current Oak Grove elementary). This is a school that neither county, Durham nor Wake County wanted. However the school will be able to pull students from Durham, Granville and Wake County. According to a December 2019 article in the News and Observer reports found, “ Durham school officials cited multiple concerns, including how they fear it will lead to white flight from traditional public schools. In the letter, Durham pointed to how after Wake Forest Charter Academy opened, the demographic balance of nearby Wake Forest Elementary School changed dramatically. Wake Forest Charter Academy is also a National Heritage Academies school that Oak Grove says it wants to replicate academically.”

Dramatic segregation is not what this Board of County Commissioners candidate wants for her county.

In our very own Durham, one school had to remove their high school enrollment as recently as 2017 for improperly awarded diplomas. I do not want any student facing that level of embarrassment, when they simply did what they were told to do by instructors.

I think we should look at how neighboring counties have moved on a local level to have more regulatory oversight in charter schools and I agree with halting the expansion of new charter schools in Durham County. There are 14 charter schools in Durham. Until recently, rising charter school enrollment had caused a drop in the school district’s enrollment. So parents are choosing public schools. As a county we just have to tell that story better. I have walked the halls with a few principals and they don’t have the marketing budget or the staff to tell the community about all the great things that their schools are accomplishing, but I would love so to see such a county-wide strategy utilized by our board.

While I recognize there are children on waiting list for charter schools public school enrollment improved in Durham County on last year. Hence, the Schools Boards new proposal for the possible construction of “Elementary School C”..

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?

I would love to see Durham's Comprehensive Plan take Migration patterns into account. The historical integrity of many of Durham's neighborhoods are changing. The individuals who have lived in communities the longest do not always have the loudest voices at the table. Newcomers to some of Durham's most historic neighborhoods are voicing their opinions at the table during Engage Durham session and at Durham's Planning Academy. Simply asking a citizens where they live and taking their account in to affect when making plans for an area is problematic. I would love to see planners go into those neighborhoods. I don't just want to see another planned meeting at a library that only had an announcement via social media, government message boards and emails.

Research shows that a migration dividend accrues when the household income of in-migrants from a specific community of origin is greater than the household income of the typical Durham resident. That was the case for newcomers arriving from 18 communities in 2014-15 and from 32 communities in 2015-16.

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?

I recently attended Durham Planning Academy last fall. I found that it informative and problematic. The well intentioned individuals at the planning office do great work, but I have two suggestions. 1) Diversify your office and 2) Be intentional about diversifying the marketing for meetings for your office.

- 1) *There were around 8 or 9 speakers that day for Academy. Of those people 5 or 6 were new hires. There were also 2 paid interns. They were all white. When asked about the diversity of the almost 60 person office, I was told that diversity was all but nonexistent in the office and that “requisite education” not experience was a factor in hiring. I promptly took out my laptop and in less than 10 minutes count 97 students of color within a 30 mile radius that would be matriculating with either an MPA, MPP, MURP or a subsequent PhD’s in Spring 2020. Between North Carolina Central University, Duke University, UNC – Chapel Hill, NC State and Meredith those numbers were easy to find. The planning offices issue isn’t education it’s focused recruitment.*
- 2) *The planning academy audience was diverse in race and ethnicity but I think most attendees would fall into the middle to upper class socio economic statutes. They took many notes about the upcoming comprehensive plan and asked our suggestions on neighborhoods, sidewalks, parking, buildings, historic districts and bike lanes. The most interesting part of the conversation came when a substantial group of white citizens complained about a the parking at a new shopping center development. (Which I will not name here.) After many of the people of color in the room realized which shopping center they were referring too, we were appalled. They used words like dirty, ugly and unattractive. Many of us thought, you must have not been all over Durham if this is what you think is ugly. The planners admitted they heard the complaints about parking and about the architecture. Again I was surprised. During the break, I asked if this is their normal crowd that they solicit advice from. The manager told me yes. I would really love to see these types of meetings marketed more broadly. While it is costly, I think that mailers and well placed meeting locations to all Durham Citizens could get more people to the table. I found out about the event on the County Website. That’s not how all of Durham receives their information. Meetings like these are also absent in our water bill newsletters. I want to see the city-county planning office be more intentional.*

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

Each day I drive through Durham and I notice new apartments and townhomes being built. Some promoting studio apartments with 660 square feet at \$1350 a month. Other townhomes downtown are being built with \$1+ million price tags. This shows a clear disregard for the public servants who work downtown. Young professional individuals making low six figure salaries cannot afford to live in downtown Durham or even in parts of midtown. There are no first responders, teachers or city/county staff that can afford these rates. It is almost as if we have said, yes I want to come to my home during an emergency medical issue, and yes I want you to teach my children and yes I want you to stop criminals and yes I want you to process my deed, but I do not want you to live close to me.

I am hopeful that planners can relax work towards relaxing lot size requirements and that we can begin to work with developers to set aside a minimum of 10% of their units for those seeking affordable to moderate priced housing. I would also want to work with housing developers to add pricing incentives for public school teachers, law enforcement and first responders. I know that the planners are looking at many concepts for getting more homes in the county. As it stands only 3% of county can have duplexes. I would be open to looking at spaces where land can accommodate duplexes. I also want to look at ways in which the county can relax regulations on accessory dwelling units.

Lastly as I mentioned above, I want to make sure that the planning office works on making more diverse higher.

To accommodate the approximately 160,000 people expected to move to Durham by 2045, the county needs to add about two thousand units per year to its housing stock. Additionally, Information gathered on individuals moving into Durham shows us that they on average they make \$10,000 more than the average Durham County Citizens. I do not want those who have always lived in Durham to feel left behind. I am hopeful that if made a County Commissioner I can work to develop housing for both our current neighbors and our new neighbors.

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?

I have reviewed the budget and Durham County funds so many great programs were funded. I have looked at the comprehensive plan as well as the past three budgets. I was happy to see that our schools received more funding and that emergency management got some much needed additional funding.

The most important thing not being funded right now is school repair and renovations. As I have and will state in this questionnaire, capital outlay funding has gone unchanged for a decade. I would be willing to raise taxes to keep our kids safe as they learn. This taxation will most likely appear in the next cycle of the County's General Bond.

I think there are some expanded services that should be addressed. There are parts of Northern Durham and Research Triangle Park that do not have fire stations and sheriffs substations. Particularly in places seeing growth. I would love to look at the County's comprehensive plan and how they are going to do a better job of tracking migration patterns.

I would be willing to fund these areas and raising taxes to protect All of Durham's citizens. Often the perception is that the City of Durham gets the most help as opposed to our other townships. Our neighbors in Bahama, RTP, Hillsborough and Rougemont.

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?

In addition to answer 1,

I would like to see our county work on a more inclusive supplier diversity plan. Our state is currently in the process of reevaluating the states Historically underutilized business plan. While it might be a herculean task at this point to move the county to reach a 40% participation rate that mirrors it's African American population or a 10% rate that mirrors the population of other races, the county has to do better. There are companies in Durham that provide a wide range of services and products yet, never receive contracts. Working in the supply chain space for a few years, now I recognize how hard it can be to engage businesses. While I appreciate the great work being done by the Chamber, I think there is room at the table for other stakeholders like the Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce and the Institute. Improvements in access to contracts for our county's valuable entrepreneurs will lead to more local job creation. We have to work to establish quantifiable goals or targets for utilization of historically underutilized businesses. We then have to hold the various departments within city government accountable and celebrate them for demonstrating progress. We also have to let the public know about these efforts.

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?

I would be open to seeing how community development venture capital could aid our county in reducing economic inequality in our community. These firms could potentially make investments in companies, organizations, and funds that will generate a measurable, beneficial social or environmental impact alongside a financial return.

*The Kenan Institute recently published a report entitled: **BULIT TO LAST: A ROADMAP FOR INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IN DURHAM**. It suggested, given the difficulty most minority and other traditionally under-represented entrepreneurs and business owners face in trying to access capital to launch, maintain, and grow their businesses from a city level that government officials “.....must take a leadership role in forging strategic partnerships with majority- and minority-owned banks, credit unions, community development financial institutions, and philanthropic organizations to create what might be marketed as The Bull City Equitable Development Fund. The Fund, as currently envisioned, will serve, first and foremost, as the primary investment vehicle—as a much needed source of patient capital to support the growth and expansion of “home grown” historically underutilized businesses, especially those certified as Tier 1 and Tier 2 vendors in the City’s newly proposed supply chain management system.”*

The same can be said for the county. I would like to see this a dual endeavor of the city and county as opposed to a separate one.

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

- *Inclusive membership on all oversight boards and major stakeholder meetings. There number of people on boards and commissions in Durham involving transportation who actually use public transportation is minimal. How can we seek to fix a system, that no one at the table utilizes.*
- *Intentional review of access to services. Example: Charlotte just moved many of the public social services near their airport yet no bus lines or rail lines go out to the location.*
- *Transit should provide access to our schools and homes. Many of Durham do not have bus stops nor do the neighborhoods adjacent to hem.*
- *Alternative modes or multi-modal. (When I received the questionnaire the region had not yet moved forward with their all electric buses.) Moving forwards I would like to see what methods we can use that have less environmental impact.*
- *A real reassurance to the taxpayer that the \$158 million lost to the first transit system has been accounted for and that these types of serious missteps in planning and negotiation DO NOT happen again. The public still wants and explanation for the loss of funding and we as a county can no longer blame it on any one institute of higher education.*

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

I do not know if the county should move forward with any changes in distribution to the property tax burden. I understand that the wealth tend to own the most expensive residential property, but I feel many middle class owners too will feel overly burden possible higher fees, especially if we put a tax in place that moves they cost of up. I be open to listening to any policies that my counterparts or the county managers would like present, however I would approach them cautiously, especially since many homeowners in Durham are still recovering from the housing and mortgage bubble of the most recent recession. The last thing I want to do is discourage individuals from purchasing homes. I recognize that many existing property taxes tend to be regressive. I am not a proponent of taking proportionally more of the income of poorer households.

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?

Based on the city county satisfaction survey results for waking both at night and in the day remained the same in 2016 and 2018. 83% felt safe in the daytime while 53% felt safe at night. While some might feel the non-movement of the numbers is satisfactory, I find it alarming that the numbers have not moved and for almost 4 years approximately the same number of citizens have not felt any safer walking in their own neighborhoods at night. If there were a funding request for the additional personnel in the Sheriff's Office, I would be open to a tax increase in a few years with a vote on a general bond. We currently have the experience in Durham for GOOD community policing.

Safety also comes into play with adequate lighting in neighborhoods and safe public recreation spaces.

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.

I do support Sheriff Birkhead's Office in all its functions. He is a duly elected official as are the members of the Board. He ran on change and innovation. He cannot move forward with those changes if his initiatives are not properly funded. He made a request for additional personnel and equipment that has not been funded. I would vote to increase that offices resource allocation.

The Sheriff has taken on new tasks without increased assistance and this puts undue pressure on our county's overall public safety. Even if the horrific incidences of gun violence in the County had not taken place this past year, the move to provide funding for additional law enforcement personnel would still be needed. Durham's population is increasing at a rate of 13 people a day. That is adjusted for deaths and for those who move out of Durham. If for no other reason, the additional officers are needed for crowd control. Couple that with aging law enforcement personnel unable to go into the field, pending retirements and City Council of Durham's denial to DPD for additional officers and we are looking at a shortage. This alone dispels the rumor of over policing. Citizens I have communicated that they would feel better with this Sheriff hiring and training new officers, as this Sheriff breeds a sense of fairness and community policing that they can trust. I have spoken with in the substance abuse arena and those in gang reduction organizations. While the County Commissioners supported the addition of 27 new school resource officers, it was done so because Durham Police Department no longer had the duty of providing the school resource officers.

Those aforementioned new families also bring pets. The Sheriff's office also took on the Duty of Animal Control enforcement. Animal Control has seen no additional funding in years yet the population of people with pets as well as stray animals continues to increase. We now have officers collecting animals as a collateral duty. Most of which have not been trained for animal collection.

The Sheriff has submitted empirical data supporting his need for additional officers, the shortages during specific shifts and the parallels between rising crime. At each turn he has submitted the requested paperwork to the Board. When the office was required to takeover enforcement for the ABC Board, the request was made for additional officers. The request was denied, yet the county paid to have those duties assumed by State ALE officers. If money was going to be spent, why was it not spent in the county.

They have not funded any new equipment needs. As a grant administrator for the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program. I purchased 100s of pieces of equipment for the states' 350 Law Enforcement agencies. The life cycles of the dash cams are only about 5 years and some of the ones being utilized by the Sheriff's office are edging closer to 7 or 10 years. We need this equipment to meet the minimum standards of a patrol. As a County Commissioner, I do not feel like I would say yes to all of anyone departments request. That includes the Sheriff's office, but one has to be prepared to look at these reasonable request and make decisions for the greater good.

It is also important to not that all those request for personnel were not just officers. Advances in technology have brought cyber crimes to the forefront. Officers trained in specifically forensics and cybersecurity are needed to protect our counties most vulnerable from being hard targets.

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

While an outreach officer at the North Carolina Department of Justice, I attended a few restorative justice conferences. I understand the tenets. I know that these programs seek to identify and take steps to repair the harm done to victims/community by offenders. I recognize that it must involve all the stakeholders. This is where I think nation-wide it has not taken on the level of public interest that its results purport to have accomplished. I know that it is used nationally and that it is used in over 40 countries.

I like the idea of restorative justices in schools. Children can still be saved from a life of violent crimes and soft target victimization. It's speaks to the Frederick Douglass quote: "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men". Adults are different. I'm not just speaking about offender but also the victim. Restorative justice seeks all parties to have a preliminary conversation, a community conference, a repair agreement, a closing conference circle and a wrap. The point of the closing conference is to see if justice was achieved and if all obligations were fulfilled.

It think this definition of "achieved justice" changes from a crime to crime and injury to injury. A victim of a gas station hold up will respond differently from a gun wound victim.

While I applaud the efforts of Judge Elaine O'Neal, the young man who made a mistake and courage of the family to allow him to make an amends, on one of the counties most publicized restorative justice cases in 2018, I do not know how the county can push this narrative at this time after the season of gun violence that Durham faced in 2019. That said, I am aware of the meetings being held by the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham. I am open to attending and learning more about the process. I want to know what steps are taken to get the victim to the table by causing the least amount of additional trauma.

Health Care and Social Services

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

First of all, Durham County needs to let the public know that Mental Health Services Exist. This is not a criticism of the work being done by the employees of our county's Department of Public Health. That said, upon going to DCOPH's website there is no link on any of the main menus to any mental health services. I recognize that mental health crosses over with numerous other physical ailments or social issues. Example: There are who sections and brochures on diabetes in mental health or LGBTQ and mental health. I also recognize that DCOPH utilize many outpatient services and partners for their mental health services. That's fine, but where they are is cumbersome to locate on the website and might lead to the already vulnerable patient seeking help in believing those services do not exist.

The main resource for Mental Health Information is the Partnership for Healthy Durham. As of July 2018, the committee decided to focus on mental health rather than substance use disorder and mental health. The Mental Health committee seeks to increase public awareness of mental illness and access to mental health services.

I think the biggest hurdle is improving access to mental health services. In 2019, the Kennedy Satcher Center for Mental Health Equity gave North Carolina and "F" on how equitable the states laws treat mental and physical health issues. The two from a legal and regulatory standpoint still lack parity. 1 in 5 adults has a mental issue in NC and 1 in 7 adults in NC with mental illness go uninsured. While those with insurance can go to traditional hospitals and private doctors, those without have a tougher time finding help. I would like to explore the idea of emergency mental health assistance much like that of our current emergency management system (EMS). While it is still a new idea for many parts of the country, Durham is as it has always been innovative. Durham County is the home of the city of medicine and we have the professionals who could aid the planning for implementing even a pilot program.

There are a broad spectrum of mental health issues so there will be no one size fits all solution. However, think there are strategies that the county can utilize to improve those services and overall access to those service. The goals outlined in the Durham County Community Health Improvement Plan are in alignment with my goals for the county. I mostly want to see improvements around the communities knowledge of trauma informed care and I want to see targeted improvements in access to culturally responsive mental health services.

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?

I think the county as well as the city needs to take a look at their proposals. In public policy the first and only questions are:

- 1. What is the budget for this policy, program or proposal?*
- 2. What are the intended outcomes?*

In an effort to, introduce a race equity framework we have to ask in addition to the above questions, the following question.

“What does this proposal have an ability to impact?” These answers to these questions need not be traditional. Planners often taking into account housing, health, transportation, utilities, environment, etc. If the individuals at the table do not have answer to this question they need to do 3 things.

- 1) Get someone(s) at the table who can answer this question,*
- 2) Look at the data, and*

Data lets us know what neighborhoods will be affected and what the racial makeup of those areas looks like. Then we can move forward in asking what racial inequities already exist in these communities and how might our new policy might exacerbate these situations.

- 3) engage the community.*

How will the community be engaged. What opportunities exist to expand on community engagement. Engaging the community will aid in educating planners on the factors that produce or perpetuate the racial inequity related to the proposal.

I would have to say the county's current housing crisis and rising gentrification. Many might question why should governments get involved with gentrification since private property purchases are just that, private? I would reply that if government had declined to build racially separate public housing in cities where segregation hadn't previously taken root, and instead had scattered integrated developments throughout the community, those communities might have developed in a less racially toxic fashion, with desperate ghettos and more diverse suburbs.

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

I think that each of the immigrant communities faces very different issues. The issues facing Durham's Guatemalan immigrants are not the same as those of the county's Korean or Nigerian immigrants. I think the collective issues is that of victimization.

Immigrant populations are historically seen as soft targets for criminals. The thought process is that these individuals, whether citizens or undocumented, are less likely to report crimes to police or seek medical assistance. I applaud the efforts being done by Sheriff Birkhead, Chief Davis and District Attorney Dewberry to make sure Durham's immigrant population feel comfortable coming to them for help absent persecution, prosecution and deportation.

I would also love to work with our health care institutes for the same. Often times immigrants victims of sexual assault and assault and battery are fearful of seeking medical attention.

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.*

Absolutely. Discrimination of any kind is civil rights issue. All individuals should be giving access to same level of civil and human rights as their neighbor outside of their sexual orientation.

Political

21. For whom did you vote for in the 2012 and 2016 presidential and gubernatorial elections?

I voted for then President Barack Obama in the 2012 election and for Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in the 2016. I voted for then Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton in the 2012 gubernatorial election. I voted for then Attorney General Roy Cooper in the 2016 gubernatorial election.

For whom did you vote in the 2016 U. S. Senate election? *Debra Ross*

Please limit your answer to 100 words.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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