

DRAFT: PA PAC Questionnaire for Durham City Council Ward Seats and Durham Mayor – 2021

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 Friday August 20 at 5pm, at the latest.

Please email your responses to the PAC Board at papacboard@googlegroups.com by August 20 at 5pm.

Please note that following the Friday August 20 at 5pm 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 were elected?**

The most important issue to me is addressing the cycles of violence that are plaguing our neighborhoods, disproportionately impacting Black and Latinx residents and poor and working-class residents. As City Councilmember, I would answer the urgent call from Black-led racial justice movements to reallocate resources away from unjust policing and incarceration to create lasting investment in true public safety. We need unprecedented cooperation within and across municipal leadership bodies to really prioritize an end to the gun violence that is tearing apart our communities, and forcing our children to live in fear.

As a City Councilmember, I will support allocation of our city's resources towards the aspects of our City budget that have been proven to play significant long-term roles in preventing gun violence: affordable housing, public transportation, jobs, youth programs, arts, and parks and recreation (along with cooperating with the School Board and County on expanding access to public education, healthcare, libraries, and social services).

Gun violence is not a new heartbreak for Durham. I grew up in the Durham that was featured in the 2007 documentary, *Welcome to Durham*, about gang violence in our city. Like most of my Black, working class peers, I have lost loved ones to gun violence. Being surrounded by gun violence has demoralized us and caused deep trauma. Every summer, we see an uptick in gun violence, closely followed by an uptick in calls to expand policing and fill the jails, in spite of the fact that policing is often part of the violence problem especially in instances of escalatory interactions, police brutality, and accelerated use of lethal force. Additionally, there is no conclusive research that shows police officers decrease homicides, violence, or “crime.”

We need long-term solutions, we need interventions to be simultaneous with community infrastructure investment, and we need directly-impacted community members to have a say in those solutions or the interventions won't be successful or sustainable.

Education

1. Do you think it's appropriate to use the city's zoning/annexation/utility extension powers to hold charter schools accountable? If so, how would you do that?

Yes, I do think it's appropriate. Charter schools are not included in our City's new Comprehensive Plan. Charter schools, often funded by the private sector and controlled by out-of-state Boards, are not held to the same standards as public schools. Durham Public Schools has to provide robust services in order to care for our children including free and reduced lunch, bus service, access to school nurses, and IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) for our Exceptional Children. If charter schools that aren't subject to operating with comparable oversight and accountability are requesting access to the city's utilities, zoning, and land use, we need to ensure that they aren't depleting resources at the expense of Durham Public Schools. Adequately funded public schools that offer high-quality education for all Durham's learners would make it so that charter schools aren't necessary. We have to prioritize that investment.

2. How will you ensure that school facilities are incorporated into the long-range comprehensive planning process so that schools will serve as focal points for communities and neighborhoods?

As we consider how Durham is growing, it is vital that there is collaboration and joint planning between the city, the county and DPS, to ensure that new schools are collocated near libraries, greenways and parks per the City's new Comprehensive Plan. We need to have standards for developers to ensure they are operating with strong values alignment. Areas where development is happening should complement the surrounding area, and work to establish collocation of facilities that complement the schools.

We also have an opportunity to maximize land use. Contingent upon cost and feasibility, where there are options to use inactive facilities for reuse or expansion. Buildings situated in areas that have been under-resourced should be prioritized, so that those communities can benefit from the improved architectural character to restore pride and belonging.

Schools are often the connective tissue between families, neighbors, workers, and children, who often develop life-long relationships with classmates. Communities where schools are central provide an invaluable resource to help build a strong social ecosystem. As we think towards a future where the pandemic is long in the past, creating more opportunities for connectedness feels like a top priority for the long-term.

3. How should the City Council use public dollars to ensure that youth in Durham have equitable access, including transportation, to affordable extracurricular and job training opportunities?

One of the foundational tenets of my platform is City-wide Access & Mobility. Within that strategy is expanding fare-free public transit and expanding bus routes to make it less challenging for residents to get across town. Fare-free public transit has already significantly increased ridership and will continue to do so.

It's hard to imagine asking our youth, particularly those experiencing extreme poverty or hardship at home, to pay for transportation to get to an opportunity towards gainful employment, whether it's a job fair, training, or their place of employment. As a City Councilmember, I would prioritize sending young people down pathways to prosperity. Obstacles along those paths often lead to kids making hard choices towards survival. Our Shared Economic Prosperity and Engaged Communities strategies should address that reality. We can't have a real conversation about addressing gun violence, and other criminalized behavior like theft or robbery, unless we're talking about the root causes which often look like children not having options to expand their horizons and perspective because they can't explore beyond the 300 foot radius of their block.

What ideas do you have for Parks and Recreation to improve specialized programming options for different populations? (For example, disabled or religiously adherent members of our communities.)

Durham's Department of Parks and Recreation works hard to offer a wide array of wonderful opportunities for learning, play, exercise, and connection across age, race, gender, ability, and language. Parks and Recreation could play a crucial role in growing safety and wellness across Durham's diverse geographies. As we consider how Parks and Recreation could improve specialized programming options for different populations, I want to emphasize the necessity in not making decisions about any group of people without inviting and welcoming their involvement in the process. Cycle One of Participatory Budgeting was an excellent example of bringing in community at every step of the process, to consult, advise and implement ideas.

I'd like to see focus groups where participants receive stipends for their time as well as childcare and language interpretation if needed, to help brainstorm what culturally-relevant, diverse programming could look like. Participants would be duly credited for their work, and asked to take on leadership where they have capacity so that the essence of the programming remains authentic, and true to the people it is meant to serve. Introducing concepts such as setting shared agreements, asking, not assuming, using people's preferred pronouns, and honoring and acknowledging the land we're on, are a few ways we can establish more equitable norms within Parks & Recreation programming. Conversations could take place

in settings that feel familiar to the residents who are gathering. I'll be advocating for collaboration across race, class, gender, religion and ability for groups to operate within a participatory framework to build out specialized programming that is non-extractive, and honors traditions, customs, and cultural practices of our LGBTQ+, differently-abled, and Black, indigenous, migrant, and people of color communities.

The 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan reported that Durham residents offered useful feedback in focus groups and community meetings including the need for more effective outreach to all residents about DPR's programming, more sharing between parks and schools, more DPR-community partnerships, and more effort from DPR to help build community within neighborhoods. "In their focus group, the teen participants strongly agreed that "transportation" was a critical barrier for them in accessing many of DPR's sites and offerings. Latino participants stressed the need for more soccer fields to meet community demand. They also encouraged having Spanish-speaking staff at each of the recreation centers."¹ I would be curious about how the City has made progress on these and other requests already made by Durham residents.

Racial Equity

1. How does race equity play into your view of governance? Will you ensure that race equity is a part of your leadership/governance? If so, how?

Racial equity is central to my view of governance. City governments have specific zoning and annexation powers that historically have perpetuated geographical segregation, redlining, and socio-economic disparities across cities. Municipalities and electeds have misused this power at many points in history, including in Durham. Clear evidence of geographical segregation still haunts our city when many majority Black neighborhoods pre-1980s were up-zoned to heavy commercial and industrial use, causing major degradation of communities as a result, and lowering property values.¹

As a Council Member, I will have the express responsibility of ensuring that our City is consistently working towards correcting past harms, reworking policies that reflect implicit bias, and taking a new approach moving beyond the idea of "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion" training, which often proves ineffective at addressing structural racism and inequity. I want us to be intentional in seeking out groups that are using workplace training as a means of grounding City workers and departments in anti-racist understanding, addressing the depths of systemic oppression, reckoning with the responsibility of white allyship, and proposing practical policies and practices for cultural, structural, and interpersonal change.

Longer term solutions would be aimed at addressing the impacts of structural inequity, such as providing home equity and energy efficiency grants, funding the replanting of tree canopies in lower income neighborhoods, and making stronger interventions in creating safe, pleasant, and sustainable public housing.

1. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01944363.2017.1320949> Racial and Class Bias in Zoning: Rezonings Involving Heavy Commercial and Industrial Land Use in Durham (NC) 1945-2014.

¹

Durham Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2013, p. 5-6 <https://www.dprplaymore.org/DocumentCenter/View/75/Durham-Parks-and-Recreation-Master-Plan-2013-PDF>

2. What is your position on the county/city of Durham establishing a dedicated Race Equity Fund? Please explain.

Every line item held in our City and County of Durham annual budgets as well as the Capital Improvement Plans have a bearing on racial equity in our City and County, as well as equitable outcomes along gender, sexuality, immigration status, ability, and class. I would like to see a racial justice and equity lens applied to our choices in every aspect of governance, and I feel concerned about the ways that a Race Equity Fund could be used to sideline or underfund the work, rather than engaging in deep structural transformation. That said, I could support Durham establishing a dedicated Race Equity Fund that helps advance this overall strategy of structural transformation and reparations. With the development of our Equity and Inclusion Division, we have the infrastructure to hold this fund, and implement the recommendations inside of the RETF 2020 Report. If we are able to fund cutting-edge City and County-wide research that not only results in quantitative, but rich qualitative data and story-telling that identifies the impact of long-term racial disparities in Black communities through a Racial Equity Fund, I would be willing to explore the idea.

3. How, if at all, should Durham utilize the 2020 Durham Racial Equity Taskforce Report?

I think the 2020 Racial Equity Taskforce Report is an absolutely inspiring achievement; a highly accessible and comprehensive document breaking down the racial disparities and inequities that are not unique to Durham, but affect our city in ways mirrored across the country.

The authors of the report ask that there be a collection of baseline data to track the current conditions and call for evaluation of those conditions, and an accessible presentation of that data. I'd like to see the build out of the recommendation for a *racial equity tool* to assess municipal policies, so that potential adverse impacts are assessed in the first place, and affected communities have the ability to chime in from the beginning. I'd like the city to commit resources towards implementing a city and county-wide project that effectively collects measurable data documenting the manifestation of racial disparities in Durham, and use the funds allocated towards their recommendation for a *Racial Equity Fund* to fund initiatives directly correlated to each of the key areas of their report, including *Criminal Justice, Health and Environmental Justice, Housing and Education*.

I'd like to specifically move forward with their recommendation that "*the City and County, along with community partners, work to implement policies that result in the decriminalization of substance use/abuse, mental illness; and poverty in Durham.*" (p. 15) with more specific recommendations such as offering "*restorative justice processes*" vs. punitive ones when harm is committed, and fully funding programs like the *Community-led Safety & Wellness Taskforce*, and the recommendations that come forth from that body.

Housing and Transportation

1. How will you ensure that new housing development serves the Durham community equitably, including households with income less than \$15/hour?

As City Councilmember, I will advocate to permit and encourage the construction of more affordable rental housing and affordable homes for purchase in areas where opportunity is high, and advocate for the improvement of existing dwellings and neighborhoods, to benefit lower and middle income households across a broader spectrum than is being currently served.

But the core problem here is that many workers are doing vital labor that our community needs and raising households on incomes less than \$15/ hour. I will support state initiatives to raise wages for lower income households, like raising the minimum wage and offering tax credits. North Carolina is long overdue for setting a higher minimum wage than the federal standard, and it is wrong that North Carolina's preemption laws currently prohibit municipalities from setting our own higher standard. Durham's own City and County public worker living wage standards raised the bar for local businesses and for the Southern region, and we have a long way to go before the lowest-wage workers have their needs met. I believe in listening to organized labor formations to understand what workers are facing, and addressing income inequity accordingly.

- 2. Would you support adding a city policy to the Comprehensive Plan which favors the inclusion of at least 20% small dwelling units in new residential developments? If such a policy were adopted, under what circumstances would you let it guide your vote on zoning/annexation/utility extension cases? Under what circumstances would you make an exception to such a policy?**

(Note: 'Small' in this context would mean smaller than 1,200 sf in single-family units, whether attached or detached, and smaller than 1,000 sf in two bedroom apartments in multifamily buildings.)

In 2019, our City Council approved an amendment to its Unified Development Ordinance, giving property owners permission to add multiplex and ADU's (Accessory Dwelling Units) in single family residential areas. This increase of supply to respond to the high demand would allow for higher density and developers would reap benefits in the form of bonuses, as a trade off for providing low income units. Though, without critically sound oversight, this could potentially mean bigger high-end developments for the sake of a few affordable housing units, potential environmental justice concerns, and a question of whether the means justifies the end.

If done right, the original intention would be a significantly positive outcome; to undo the racist and classist harms of Single Family, low-density zoning which historically has meant less options for people across a spectrum of income and family types (or more simply put, disproportionately affecting Black, Brown and low-income communities who can't access these home types).

While I am in support of including at least 20% small dwelling units, the challenge is that Durham does not have inclusionary zoning, which would require developers to allocate a percentage of units as low-income. Density bonuses to developers would theoretically counteract this, but if the small dwelling units are not priced in a way to accommodate low to medium income residents, then it won't do much good. If the 20% small dwelling unit policy was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, it would always be a consideration during zoning cases. I'd likely make very few exceptions, because developers need to be held accountable to standards that prioritize the needs of our residents.

1. How will you make the development process transparent to neighborhoods and ensure they have a seat at the table with planning staff and developers? Would you support Durham neighborhoods in creating small area plans?

Our City Council has the responsibility to set standards so that developers are aligned in values and understand what it means to truly make equitable investments in our city. While on City Council, I will work to put more protections in place for Historically Black districts and neighborhoods. I believe we need a well thought-out Developer Accountability & Oversight Committee, led by community stakeholders who have been cut out of the conversation, but are nearly always impacted as a result of aggressive development.

I like the framework of creating community-briefings that are open to the public, and where the public is invited in early enough to be able to meaningfully inform the process. Often, the trouble with these briefings is that any true participatory process is undermined by developers and planners showing up with projects already fully in motion, without the contribution or input from the communities that will be affected. I'd like to see more intentional and focused opportunities for resident participation in determining the ways new development enters our city.

These briefings should be accessible to people who often have to work during business hours, and offered during evenings. If in-person, child care should be made available. In virtual settings, meetings should be language accessible, and accessible to people who have low-vision, sight and hearing impairments. In addition community briefings should also be recorded, and have dial-in options for those without access to internet or computers.

I would like to see Durham engage in generative planning that considers the impact of urban design and development on future generations.

2. How will you expand bus service, so riders can connect across Durham? What transportation infrastructure is most pressing to fund and expand?

The most pressing infrastructure need is the expansion of fare-free public transportation. The \$25 million dollar American Rescue Plan Act funding has yet to be allocated. I'd like to see a portion of this funding go towards this expansion. Additionally, Durham's Transportation Department Director has made a commitment to provide fare-free bus *"service for essential trips in our community -- for as long as it is safe and appropriate to do so."*³

We should also begin to think about how we can create more opportunities for multi-mode transportation and ensure there is an equitable distribution of resources across the city, particularly sidewalks. I feel confident that based on the \$2.9 million allocated for sidewalks in our City's FY21-22 budget, that this is being prioritized by our Transportation Department.

3. <https://godurhamtransit.org/news/starting-monday-godurham-will-go-fare-free-institute-rear-boarding> Starting Monday, GoDurham will go fare free, institute rear boarding.

3. Black communities in Durham are being threatened by displacement due to private investment. What resources and support can the City and County deploy to help longtime residents resist the negative impact of these developments and facilitate self-determined visions for the future of each community?

I will work towards expanding the City's current Longtime Home-Owner Grant Program to include more targeted areas, and reduce the family size average median income to account for homeowners who may not have the income to support paying the rising property taxes. Such a situation may be an instance where a long-time homeowner with health problems passes away, leaving other family members to inherit deferred maintenance costs and the inability to pay the annual property tax bill, and they end up losing their home.

Reparations include undoing past harms and creating opportunities for Black people to build communal resources over multiple generations. Often home-ownership is a cornerstone step in that direction, and it has historically been an obstacle due to geographic segregation, redlining, and wealth inaccessibility.

I'd also like to see the city provide matching funds for programs like the Preservation Equity Project, which provides grants in the amount of \$1000-\$6500 towards maintenance and repair for homeowners in historic districts in the city, like Walltown, Braggtown and Merrick Moore.

4. Energy affordability is an underappreciated aspect of housing affordability. What steps can the City take to ensure high electricity bills do not force residents out of their homes?

The current Low-Income Energy Assistance program, which is Federal, only offers a one-time vendor payment to help homeowners pay their heating bills. The winter season lasts for several months, so a one-time payment feels insignificant, particularly for families struggling month to month, paycheck- to-paycheck. High utility costs, combined with the fact that evictions tend to increase in the winter months inevitably means higher rates of houselessness during below freezing temperatures. This is unethical, and inhumane.

I'd like to create a supplemental program that would not require extensive documentation other than the household bill, proof of hardship and paystubs or letter verifying proof of unemployment. Requiring a social security number or Citizenship status will lock out our Durham residents who are undocumented. The city does not require immigration status to apply to be on boards and commissions, nor to participate in democratic processes such as participatory budgeting project voting. Citizenship status is not required to receive a vaccine for COVID-19. The widespread inability to make utility payments is a crisis. Migrant communities, who are often on the lowest rung of wage compensation make up over half of the workforce for jobs such as nannies, farm workers, or drywall masons. Often, immigrant communities work jobs that don't require certifications.⁴

The Low-Income Energy Assistance program could work in tandem with the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), as often, residents who can't make utility payments can't afford rent either. Governments are responsible for taking care of our people. As a City Council Member, I'll work to create a supplemental program, initiated by the City, with lower eligibility thresholds and required documentation, as well as increase vendor payments to up to (3) in a fiscal year.

4. <https://money.cnn.com/2017/03/16/news/economy/immigrant-workers-jobs/index.html> Immigrant Workers are Most Likely to Have These Jobs

5. How would you act to ensure that development in Durham is done in an equitable way that benefits long-time residents as well as new arrivals?

My assessment is that the voices of long-time residents have not been valued in these conversations. Aggressive and unrelenting development in Durham has shut out and pushed out families that have been in Durham for years, decades and generations. Neighborhood Association leaders, organizers and housing activists have been pushing for more transparency, and for the City to take responsibility for the speed at which gentrification has erupted through Durham.

I want to implement a Developer Accountability & Oversight Committee, where residents and community stakeholders can strategize and create a comprehensive set of standards and values that every developer who wants to invest in Durham's growth must be held to. The Oversight Committee should consist of residents whose families have been here for generations, or a significant number of years. They would come with an understanding of the culture and nuance of the Durham community. They would have a stake in the conversation other than financial gain, and with a vision that matches Durham's Strategic goals.

Without accountability, developers are often only considering how to increase profit, and end up extracting from communities, desecrating or tearing down sentimental locations, and leaving people root shocked (emotional trauma a person experiences when their environment is devastated, or they are forcibly removed) with nowhere to go.

I want to press for solutions that include protections for historically Black districts, creating more community land trusts for neighborhoods, and pushing developers to not only notify residents of when they are making decisions about their communities, but are asking to be in collaboration.

Environment and Climate

- 1. What do you see as the most critical environmental and climate justice issues facing Durham, and what do you believe the city should do about them? Specifically, what opportunities do you see at the intersection of climate action, environmental justice, and Durham's economic development strategy?**

In Durham, we've seen urban heat islands in lower income, predominately Black and Brown neighborhoods, where severe heat plus high concentrations of concrete and impervious surfaces with no green infrastructure or tree canopies are literally baking the streets, and the residents are getting no relief in the record high summer heat (Indyweek August 04, 2021). When the lives of poor and working class communities are not prioritized, neither are the ways our folks are able to navigate space.

Often residents in East Durham neighborhoods and Braggtown use public transportation, and so issues like urban heat islands, paired with no covered bus shelters, walking long distances home, and little to no energy efficient retrofitting in older homes, or unlivable conditions in DHA properties becomes a health issue. Our communities which are often already plagued by high rates of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and respiratory illnesses become more susceptible to heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Communities experiencing extreme poverty are ultimately penalized through increased costs, but can't afford to foot the bill for energy efficient options like purchasing Energy Star appliances, replacing HVAC systems, or solar conversions.

Again, this gets back to the deprioritization of people's lives and quality of living by blaming lower income communities for problems that could be wholly mitigated by overhauling our deteriorating grid infrastructure. Our U.S. grid is responsible for greenhouse emissions, power outages, and other threats of environmental de-stabilization. We need structural solutions.

While the City has committed \$700,000 out of a total of \$950K in repairs to homes owned by elders and differently-abled households as part of our Affordable Housing Investment Plan, I will be advocating for city-funded renovations to qualifying long-time home owners that not only bring a higher external perceived value, but cover the cost of structural improvements like roofing, HVAC, insulation repairs and energy efficient retrofitting with solar panels and Energy Star appliances to offset the acute ramifications of climate change on Black and Brown communities.

2. American city government officials have the unique power of regulating real estate through zoning. Will you accept donations to your campaign from major real estate interests? Please explain your position.

I will not be accepting contributions from major real estate companies. In doing so, I would be positioning myself to be subject to the interests of those companies, which are often in deep opposition to the needs of our residents who have experienced the devastating effects of gentrification over the last 15 years. My campaign, so far, has been funded by grassroots efforts and community support with small dollar amount donations. I want to use every opportunity during my race to run a people-centered, people-powered campaign.

City Finances, Incentive, and Services

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

A City-initiated, robust property tax assistance fund for long-term property owners feels necessary given the current housing market. The City has purview over zoning restrictions though very limited control

regarding private development in Durham, resulting in few protections for long-time residents who are being pushed and priced out of neighborhoods due to rising property taxes. The Community Development Department is working towards the development of a City-wide Long-time Homeowner Grant program, as the current program works within the threshold of targeted areas (including NE Central, SW Central and Southside.) I am in full support of this, as the options being considered in terms of homeowner eligibility (between 30-60% AMI) would serve the highest need group and the lowest income households.

The rollout and expansion of this program could be significant in providing Durham residents who have been here for decades and generations, the opportunity to keep their homes. With the production of more affordable rentals and market rate, for-sale units, high density rezoning in Single Family residential areas in accordance with Expanded Housing Choices, and neighborhood stabilization through funding deferred maintenance and repairs, eventually the market should even out, and high rents will be driven back down. I would be willing to raise taxes to fund this program in order to give long-time residents the chance to stay afloat with the changing tides of gentrification.

What is your position on providing public incentives to private firms to promote economic development in Durham?

This idea is challenging; though if there are opportunities to do so in a way where there are trade-offs where private firms are making meaningful, investments in our city that maximize our returns, prioritize our people, create opportunities for residents to benefit without having to compromise our values around Shared Economic Prosperity, there is room for consideration.

Whether those incentive packages are coming in the form of investment grants or tax exemptions, accountability and non-extractive reciprocity is vital. I'd like to see our City set a precedent on shifting more control to communities to be active participants in these decisions, so that we can move towards deeper democratic processes and more opportunities for co-governance, particularly when what is at stake is the quality of life and livelihood of our people.

Justice and Law Enforcement

- 1. The newly elected Council will have to decide whether to transfer fifteen frozen positions by the current Council from the Durham Police Department to the newly created Community Safety Department. What is your position regarding the new Department, and would you support the transfer? If the Department's pilot programs are successful, what other resources would you be willing to commit to it, and where would they come from?**

In 2019, Durham Beyond Policing, a coalition that I've been actively involved with for the past 4 years, put forth a Community-led Safety & Wellness Task Force Proposal, where we called for City and County funding to support deeper, community-led structural solutions to the issue of public safety. We won the approval of the Taskforce in a 4-3 vote, and simultaneously won \$15/hr for part time city workers, increased funding toward the Eviction Diversion program, and blocked 72 additional police officers from being added to the force over 3 years.

The new Department of Community Safety, and the Community Safety & Wellness Taskforce was the direct result of our on-the-ground organizing. As soon as I'm sworn-in, I will be fully in support of reallocating the 15 positions to the Department of Community Safety and Wellness, and it will be at the top of my to-do list. I trust and expect our community to hold me accountable on this.

Ultimately, I'd like to advocate for more investment in communities impacted by gun violence, and would push for the creation of a City-funded initiative and training program to hire Durham residents from impacted communities to be Care Responders. This program would serve as violence and harm intervention, working within impacted communities to develop community-wide interpersonal conflict training, de-escalation and responsive alternatives. I would like to continue to draw from the excesses in the police budget, with the goal being to incrementally and significantly reduce police presence in Durham; replacing it with alternatives that address the root issues of violence, interpersonal harm, and criminalized behaviors such as substance use, and mental illness in non-reactionary ways.

2. Are you satisfied with the Durham Police Department, including its administrative, law enforcement, and security functions? Should City government increase or decrease resources allocated to the Police Department? Please explain your answer.

I am generally not satisfied with the Durham Police Department. Policing is an institution based in the establishment of slave patrols in the 1600-1700's, and in modern times, policing continues to perpetuate racial capitalism, unjust class structures, and the protection of property over human life.

We should be moving towards vastly reducing the footprint of the Durham Police Department which historically accounts for approximately 60% of our Public Safety budget annually. In the FY21-22 Adopted budget, the Police Department accounts for \$70,283,033, which is 55.72% of the Public Safety budget, and 29% of the General Fund. Each law enforcement officer's position costs the city about \$103,815² in public dollars. Nationally, we find trends that suggest police departments often consume a disproportionate share of city resources, and leave very little for investments in existing social services and programs that address root causes of suffering and violence like poverty, mental illness, houselessness, and underfunded education.

Currently, Community Safety only accounts for 3.25% of the Public Safety budget, and 1.67% of the General Fund, which was hard-fought, through persistent and unwavering organizing on the part of our people. Without continued, significant and equivalent investments in community-based alternatives, we

won't actually see the true indication of whether or not those alternatives work. As a Council Member, I'm prepared to ensure that we continue to fund community safety that is strengthened year-to-year, so that we can have measurable data on real impact and what's working.

2. 673 FTEs paid for in general fund, 4 FTEs paid for in 4 FTEs, 677 FTEs total in police department. \$70,283,033 total budget divided by 677 total FTEs means on average, each law enforcement officer's position costs about \$103, 815 in our public dollars.

Political

1. **For whom did you vote for in the 2016 and 2020 presidential and gubernatorial elections? For whom did you vote in the 2020 U. S. Senate election? Please limit your answer to the names of your selections.**

2016 presidential- Hillary Clinton
2016 gubernatorial- Roy Cooper
2020 presidential- Joe Biden
2020 gubernatorial- Roy Cooper
2020 US Senate- Cal Cunningham

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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

Biographical Statement

AJ Williams is a Black and indigenous person whose family has been in Durham for three generations. Both sides of his family have resided in North Carolina for as many generations as they can remember, based in Moore, Richmond and New Hanover counties. His grandparents moved back to Durham, after marrying in New York, to Crest Street Community, on Pratt St. during the fight against the East-West Expressway (later the Durham Freeway 147). Within Durham County, he has lived primarily in subsidized housing. He and his family have lived in Rochelle Manor, Walltown, Elm Street, Berwyn Ave. in Braggton, River Forest, Greenwood, before recently moving to Ward 3. AJ has also lived in Charlotte, NC and Atlanta, GA. He attended Durham Public Schools (EK Powe Elementary, Carrington Middle, Northern High) and went to Atlanta to study sound engineering at the Art Institute of Atlanta.

Most of his career experience has been in community organizing and nonprofit management. AJ works for **Southern Vision Alliance**, a nonprofit grassroots intermediary that supports leadership pipelines, local community organizing, and fiscally sponsored projects. He was previously an Organizer at the **Freedom Center for Social Justice** in Charlotte.

AJ's local organizing experience includes policing abolition work with **Durham Beyond Policing**, **Southerners on New Ground's (SONG)** Black Mama's Bail Out campaign, **We Are the Ones Fund**, an intervention to end gun violence in Durham, aimed to fund community-authored solutions and the Durham chapter of **Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100)**.

AJ holds his Certified Nonprofit Accounting Professional designation with **Fiscal Management Associates**. In addition, he participated in the **University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business' Philanthropy U**, earning a Certificate in Social Sector Leadership & Global Entrepreneurship.

He is currently serving his second cycle as an appointed member of **Durham's Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee** and serves as a member on the movement board of **The Cypress Fund**, a Black, femme-led, philanthropic entity, funding projects through a lens of reparations.

AJ's vision for Durham is informed by remembering Durham's past. He grounds himself in the multiplicity of legacies our city offers us. Honoring the ancestral lands of the Eno, and of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi people. Honoring the progress of Black folks in building Black Wall Street. Honoring our rich organizing history confronting urban renewal, slumlords, and poverty. Honoring Durham's vibrant West African dance and drum community that AJ grew up in. Honoring ancestors who made their home in Durham, like Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, Ms. Ann Atwater, and Baba Chuck Davis. Honoring legacy, and building the future we all deserve.