

**DUE FRIDAY, AUGUST 20 at 5:00 PM with biographical statement**  
**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 e-mail your responses to the PAC Board at [papacboard@googlegroups.com](mailto: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?

***In 2017, I ran on a platform of Social, Economic and Environmental justice. By focusing on these areas with an equity lens, we can SEE a more equitable Durham where everyone can safely live, work, worship and play. Almost four years later, and we still have more work to do. Inc***

***As an elected official, I can say that the issues confronting the City and County are interrelated. From gun violence to housing to racism as a public health crisis, we have to tackle all of the issues in tandem with an understanding of how moving resources or support will impact another area. Equity must be at the foundation of what we do, because what we see in the other issues is a result of inequities.***

## Education

2. 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?

***Before speaking about the city's zoning/annexation/utility extension powers and charter schools, I want to acknowledge my concern about the accountability of all schools to students' education. The outcomes for students in the Black, Latinx, People of Color (BIPOC), Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and/or Asexual (LGBTQIA) communities or students with disabilities all face challenges of equity given the education system. The needs of students in the classroom are underfunded, and the structure of our education system has to move into the 21st century. We have to address education loss due to COVID in a non-harmful way so that the students who were already behind don't get further behind. The school-to-prison pipeline is still enveloping our children as early as 3rd grade. We have not repaired the harm of centuries of institutional racism in the system.***

***However, we have strong education advocates on our local school board doing the work to address the harms. I will continue to support their work if I am fortunate to return to council. We as a community have to take measures to ensure all students in Durham have the opportunity to learn and be successful. Depending upon what issue we are trying to hold charter schools accountable for, it could be appropriate to use the city's zoning/annexation/utility extension powers to do so. However, we have to be prepared for the implications of a lawsuit if we do.***

3. 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?

***We can ensure school facilities are incorporated into the long-range comprehensive planning process by engaging parents, student caregivers, school administrators, teachers, and school staff in the Engage Durham Work. Our planning department is already doing this work as they gather community feedback and develop community goals and objectives for the comprehensive plan. However, the level of community engagement should be reflective of Durham's demographic makeup. We can also improve upon our efforts to engage those in our community with different viewpoints. We***

**cannot plan for private property owners, and Durham Public Schools operates as a private property owner. They must voluntarily engage in the City/ County Comprehensive Planning Process like other property owners, residents and businesses. DPS facilities are considered public property that is owned by the government. This doesn't automatically give us the right to access the property. We have to use the property per our laws. However, I am a proponent of community use of our school facilities. By doing so, we are centering students and our community as the focal point.**

4. 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?

There are many ways that we can use public dollars so that our youth have equitable access, including transportation, to affordable extracurricular and job training opportunities. I've listed a few below.

- a. **Durham can continue to offer fair-free buses so that youth can get to parks, explore sports, arts, music and other recreational activities that build their quality of life here in Durham.**
  - b. **Build out the Youth Works Programs with diverse business partners and community organizations across the city and county to build their workforce skills for the future. In being equitable, we also have to be mindful of how some communities are over and underrepresented in certain fields and take this into account when developing opportunities.**
  - c. **We can evaluate current programming through parks and recreation with an eye to expand opportunities for youth.**
5. 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.)

**The city has learned valuable lessons and gained insights from the COVID Pandemic about what virtual options could be offered through Parks & Recreation. We have implemented many new Virtual Zoom Programs. From Kid Fitness, to Yoga, to Basketball Skills, city staff has done a great job pivoting to provide virtual activities. There is also a YouTube page where people can watch recordings 24/7. Given there is more virtual programming, there are fewer opportunities for people to participate in the Special Programs that DPR conducts. They have Buddy Sports programs where children with and without disabilities can learn to play together. They also have programs for students who are visually impaired. As with most**

***things, there is always more we can do to be inclusive of all populations. We could expand our capacity to support children with severe disabilities in our programs as not every family can send a caretaker to watch their child in the program. We can also expand options to include programs for adults with special needs like cooking, chair exercising, wheelchair basketball, and trips. In thinking about programs, we can't forget providing opportunities for stay at home parents to participate in DPR activities. We support this by providing childcare.***

***While we are thinking about options for inclusivity for programming, we also need to think about how we can have additional park equipment for children with special needs.***

#### **Racial Equity**

6. 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?
  - a. ***Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) is a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. Our city Equity and Inclusion Manager is currently developing a plan around incorporating equity. Once we have our racial equity plan in place, we need to hold a City leadership conference that incorporates the Employee Engagement Survey, which will gather feedback from staff on recommendations to incorporate equity and efficiency into our municipal governance. We have laid some of the ground work by developing the position. Now, we need a team focused on the internal aspects while the Equitable Engagement team works to incorporate the external feedback and engagement to ensure that racial equity is a central focus. With the recent Black Artistry program we had an opportunity to tie youth engagement in arts to workforce development for the Black and Brown community.***
  - b. ***I have been Organizing Against Racism since 2013 and recruiting and creating spaces for REI training, which was helpful in making sure many of those serving on the City's Racial Equity Task Force created common language on how racism works systemically. I continue to work with and organize from the outside in with residents in Durham as we are committed to creating a local reparative plan that addresses the income inequality specifically for descendents of enslaved people.***

- c. Continue to support the RE TF recommendations and implementation.**
7. What is your position on the county/city of Durham establishing a dedicated Race Equity Fund? Please explain.
- a. We are long overdue. We could have baby bonds in place for the BIPOC community and develop funding for housing opportunities and wealth building. The key aspect is to make sure those closest to the pain in the racial equity conversation receive what would make them whole. The current budget creates a new Community Safety Department in Durham, an alternative to police response to crisis intervention. It will also work to provide legal funds for lawyers to support undocumented residents, and allocate tax revenues towards green and equitable infrastructure, new sidewalks, and bus shelters, especially in historically Black neighborhoods. As stated, we are long overdue on an equity fund to address the inequities in our community.**
8. How, if at all, should Durham utilize the 2020 Durham Racial Equity Taskforce Report?

**There were so many recommendations to build off of and much of the recommendations that could be utilized first are around shared prosperity and housing. We already incorporated the "Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (CROWN)," into the non-discrimination ordinance at my urging on council. I am currently working on the Tenants Bill of Rights with community and staff to bring forward to the council acknowledging that the intersectionality of low wealth BIPOC people who are renters are tied to the laws of the state of North Carolina. Laws that have been enacted to prevent racial equity.**

#### Housing and Transportation

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

**Equitable Development means the public needs and values are incorporated, we have to find tools to incorporate livable wages that make living in Durham sustainable. Currently, even at \$15 per hour, a single parent with one or more children would lose services like SNAP, Medicaid (North Carolina continues to lose out, we NEED TO EXPAND MEDICAID), Housing Choice Vouchers and housing would still be unaffordable. We have to increase incomes and find alternative ways to build housing, whether changing building materials or land use.**

10. 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.)

***Possibly, if the housing was for people experiencing homelessness not benefiting the same people that continue to benefit in the current real estate system.***

11. 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?

***I have been proposing small area plans since I was on the planning commission - staff has started developing a place based zoning plan that I feel will undo the work of communities like Walltown and Bragtown that have already started the work on their community needs and their small area plans.***

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

13. 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?

***We can set up a longtime resident equity fund out of our general fund, and developers can contribute voluntarily to the fund just as we see with zoning cases currently going to Durham Public Schools Foundation for students and the Affordable Housing Funds. Then we can build on the citywide long term resident tax grant to keep long time residents of Durham in their homes.***

14. 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?

***We can start with a Tenants Bill of Rights and include an ordinance to***

***incrementally increase existing housing standards for rentals and support homeowners in replacing their thermostats with programmable ones. We can set up funding through pennies for housing for solar upfitting and install stormwater and flood mitigation tools that decrease the cost of flooding in the public right of way as the storms continue to escalate and worsen with climate change. If we could find ways to tie affordable housing to deed restriction that included energy efficiencies like double pane windows, doors and well ventilated or dry crawl spaces, I would fully support putting long term cost saving measures in that would decrease the cost of housing overall. With a local Solar company we can find ways to incorporate job training and lower energy bills.***

15. 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?

***There needs to be more transparency in cases coming forward to staff that are administratively approved and don't come to council. Also we need to make sure that cities, towns and villages have the right to plan development that supports continuous improvement.***

***We need to prepare for the silver tsunami Dr. Johnson spoke about in ensuring our residents can continue to age in place. Our development plans need to also take into account those with disabilities.***

#### **Environment and Climate**

16. 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?
- a. ***Climate Action looks like building a solar field and finding ways to move us as a city off the grid, hyperfocused on the jobs of the future that use less energy and smaller footprints bring companies focused on energy efficiencies.***
  - b. ***Addressing the intersection of that climate action and environmental justice, we have to use the ONE Water Model to focus regionally and state wide on how we protect, treat and use water across city boundaries. My work with the Jordan ONE Water Alliance models what future economic development looks like in water, but it's ties in local farms, local distributors and the like to reduce waste and find***

***efficiencies in developing the jobs and training people locally.***

- c. ***Overwhelmingly, the communities that face flooding are low wealth and even more often, of color. One example of this work happening here in Durham is with Ellerbee Creek Watershed Association and the conservation fund has also led the way with parks with purpose again trying to address environmental justice. For example hiring community residents to lead in the conversation for their neighborhood, paying the workers to organize within their community to address environmental injustice. The work has begun and will continue to evolve and improve upon the lessons learned during the process of addressing the inequities and in which streams are protected***

17. 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.

***Noting that my supporters come from many walks of life and there are some very principled real estate professionals that have been on the front line of changing the way zoning works against the people I serve, I would not court real estate funding. There are real estate firms and developers that operate with a social justice lens like Urban Land Institute and as we continue to enlighten developers on the ways that affordable housing can fit into their projects I don't seek to offend either. We should be supportive of their efforts.***

#### **City Finances, Incentive, and Services**

18. 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?

***Open space planning staff focus how we use open space and seek out grant funding to support our work to keep Durham Beautiful with the Infrastructure and Equity bond coming next year, it would be great to have staff focused on the open space needs of the city***

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

**We participate because the system exist the way it does.**



## Justice and Law Enforcement

20. 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?

***I will continue to have conversations with as many stakeholders as possible, including the police chief and community members, to decide the best course of action. Being inclusive and open about solutions means hearing from a variety of voices. The issue of policing is layered in history, racism and white supremacy. Our criminal justice system as a whole works as intended, which is to harm those that the system does not value. This is continually evidenced by racial profiling and discrimination leading to the death of too many black and brown people nationwide. In Durham, we continue to experience an uptick in gun violence. Addressing public safety requires a multifaceted approach that addresses intervention and prevention. I agree that we must continue to invest in alternative forms of policing, but we must do so with policing that keeps everyone safe and includes accountability. We can do both at the same time. The city's community health and safety taskforce will make recommendations on how to move forward, and I look forward to supporting solutions that go beyond policing.***

21. 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.

***Of course not, the system of policing is biased and needs work nationwide however the criminal legal system as a whole needs in depth modifications. My response above speaks to my thoughts on allocating resources.***

## Political

22. 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.*

***In the 2016 presidential race, I voted for Hilary Clinton. I voted for Roy Cooper in the 2016 gubernatorial race. For the 2020 presidential race, I voted for Joe Biden. I voted for Roy Cooper in the 2020 gubernatorial race. US Senate - Do we really need to discuss how Cunningham jacked that up. I am a proud Democrat that has served on the State Executive Committee and as a Delegate to the National Convention.***

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