

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 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.

Candidate's name: ___ Sylvester Williams _____

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Question from Rochelle.

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? **Discrimination. Low-income people, especially blacks that were redlined, are being forced out of Durham because of increasing tax rates and ever-increasing housing prices even though they paved the way for the success of Durham. Black men are not included in set asides for the City Durham. Christians or believers in Christ Jesus the Only Begotten Son of the Living God have been discriminated against in building churches and voicing their concerns over polices in the city. Blacks make up the majority of homicides in Durham but the City Council voted to not increase the number of police officers as requested by the former Chief of Police. I would expose the racism across the board and implement changes to current policies to change the decades long discrimination.**

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? Charter schools are already accountable to the state of North Carolina.

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? Schools are under the purview of the county. However, I will gladly meet with principals and school board officials to address any inadequacies.
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? Talk to local non-profits who are more in touch with the citizens of Durham. Funds should be allocated to them instead of governmental agencies who tend to be politically driven.
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.) Parks and Recreation should reach out to the lower income parts of Durham to assess what their needs are. Also, money should be put into recreational facilities for the young.

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? I have worked with the Durham Committee On the Affair Of Black People and The Durham Business and Professional Chain, both black groups. I noticed the disparity in addressing the needs of blacks who have the highest unemployment, lowest income and little access to affordable housing. Durham must atone for the decades long redlining that penalized blacks and destroyed black businesses that were a part of the Black Wall Street. The Opportunity Zones are census tracts, consisting primarily of economically distressed communities, where new private investments may be eligible for preferential tax treatment under certain conditions. Investments are scheduled to expire this year. Durham participated in supplying over a billion dollars to downtown but have given few incentives to the more struggling parts of Durham. Blacks should be incentivized to take advantage of the Opportunity Zones.
7. What is your position on the county/city of Durham establishing a dedicated Race Equity Fund? Please explain. There is only race, the human race. Jim Crow and racist policies led to the discrimination of people based on the color of skin. The policy should be to uplift the poor, no matter the color of skin. When you uplift the poor you help all the citizens of Durham.
8. How, if at all, should Durham utilize the 2020 Durham Racial Equity Taskforce Report? Durham should lower taxes in predominantly black low-income areas based on census tracts. Durham should encourage or demand that corporations relocating to Durham do

as DuPont does. DuPont makes charitable contributions to nonprofit organizations involved with STEM education, hunger and nutrition, energy and the environment, public safety, and quality of life.

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? **Get Amazon and other major corporations to aid in supporting the low income in the city. Also, incentivize more housing for married husbands and wives with children who are the backbone of the city.**
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? **Not if it means increased taxes for the owners based on the tax valuations on the larger dwelling units.**

(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.)
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? **Yes.**
12. How will you expand bus service, so riders can connect across Durham? What transportation infrastructure is most pressing to fund and expand? **Take money from the failure in the light rail and use it to increase bus services.**
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? **Have private investors contribute more to the tax base and set zoning requirements that benefit the low income.**
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? **High electric bills are not the issue. Being able to pay the bills is the issue. Have set asides by the city to include black men.**
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? **Zoning.**

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? **Pollution from RTP and other industrial plants entering our water system.**

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. **If they agree with my policies.**

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? **Jobs, housing and recreation are not adequately funded.**
19. What is your position on providing public incentives to private firms to promote economic development in Durham? **Private firms should be required to promote economic development.**

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? **The city should have approved the formerly Chief of Police request for more police officers. Now we have escalating homicides in the city and it is not being addressed.**
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. **The Chief of Police is more in touch with issues such as crime and homicides. We should be willing to take the advice of the police when it is their responsibility to track crime on a daily basis.**

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. Candidates that were pro-life, for religious freedoms and were in support of the 1964 Civil Rights Acts as originally written.**

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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