

## **PA-PAC Questionnaire for Mayor and City Council Candidates – 2017**

*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. Please do not use colors. Please try to confine your responses within the word limits set for each question. They should be generous. Do not feel obliged to exhaust the limit for each question.*

**Please return the completed form along with your resume describing education, work history, community service, and prior political experience as soon as possible, but by July 30, 2017, at the latest.**

**You may e-mail your responses to Tom Miller at [tom-miller1@nc.rr.com](mailto:tom-miller1@nc.rr.com) or you may send a printed copy of your responses to Durham PA-PAC c/o Tom Miller 1110 Virginia Avenue, Durham, NC 27705-3262**

**Please note that following the July 30 deadline, the Durham People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.**

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

Candidate's name: \_\_Kershemia Ramirez\_\_

Office for which you have filed for election (circle one): Mayor

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### **Government and the Public Good**

1. Of all the issues confronting city government, which single issue is most important to you and why? What would you do about it if elected? *Please limit your answer to 300 words.*

*The issue that is most important to me is crime in Durham, NC. In order to effectively police high crime neighborhoods there must be a greater level of respect for the residents. I believe Stereotyping people as criminals in low income communities strain police-community relationships. I would devise a plan of action to regain the trust of the people served in all communities. I also would review and revise the ex-offender programs to find a living wage that could prevent them from returning to prison. Implement programs to find stable housing which will also prevent them from going back to prison. Create therapy action plans to rehabilitate prisoners to prevent future incarnations. Durham Police Department needs to consider having a center at the jail where people can check in and detox, without being arrested.*

2. What can the city do to lift the wages of the lowest paid workers in Durham and reduce growing income inequality in our community? Where in our community do you see opportunities for city government to address the racial wealth gap? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.* Durham, can offer jobs with growth and advancement within all companies. Also provide training or the ability to attend local community college to advance their education and living wage. I would like to see an opportunity for

employees to be business owners or franchisee of companies. I think the communities that would benefit from these types of programs would be Oxford Manor, Bluefield, East Durham, Hoover Rd, Cornwallis, Damar Court and McDougal Terrace.

3. Describe your interest in and commitment to public amenities such as playing fields, open space, street trees, and traffic calming, and walking and biking facilities. Are you willing to raise property taxes to provide for and maintain these amenities? Are public amenities allocated to neighborhoods of different wealth and income levels equitably? Please explain and cite examples. *Please limit your answer to 500 words. My interest in the commitment to public amenities, playing fields, open space, street trees traffic calming and walking and biking facilities are providing and gathering outside nature preserve what the city has by up keeping and maintaining trees so they're not uncut or hanging in the street. Well lit and security on walking and biking facilities, open space and playing fields. My interest in traffic calming will be to maintain traffic lights to secure safety in the community. I would promote healthy eating by encouraging people of the community to grow a community garden that will consist of natural fruits and vegetables to promote healthy living. Yes, according to [Durhamnc.gov](http://Durhamnc.gov) there are different amenities per park per area. I believe this is determined by the area of the city.*

4. How should the city measure the benefits and costs of incentives to promote development especially as those benefits and costs affect low-income residents of Durham? How would you use these measurements when deciding to vote for or against a proposed incentive? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*I would vote for incentives that would solely be based on building the low income communities by providing services that consist of homeownership, etiquette training, education, job training entrepreneurship, financial training, counseling, meditation and health accountability.*

5. What actions should the city take to expand job creation and job quality? In your answer, please comment on the city's potential involvement in entrepreneurship, worker-owned cooperatives, and union organizing. *Please limit your answer to 400 words. The action Durham should take will be to seek out individuals who desire to have a better life despite where they come from. Bonuses, incentives to attend community college upon graduation the individual can receive a start up business grant or loan. There has always been opportunities for entrepreneurs in Durham, NC from the tobacco industry, textiles, Black Wall Street to Research Triangle Park and the most recent American Underground, a tech hub that has partnered with Google. Durham has several co-working and office space ability for entrepreneurs.*

## **Housing, City Planning, and Neighborhoods**

6. What does "gentrification" mean to you? What, if anything, should be done about it? How, if at all, is the issue of gentrification implicated in the Planning Department's current review of zoning in East Durham, the proposed creation of an Alston Avenue Design District, and the redevelopment of the former Fayette Place property? *Please limit your answer to 400 words. What gentrification means to me is it makes the city appear desirable however you're alienating those individuals that have lived in that community for years. Gentrification pushes those residents out with nowhere to go. The elderly should not have their taxes increased on a property they have been living in for years. Now, the city has several property relief plans for qualified homeowners but the residents are unaware with these programs. There needs to be an informational platform for people experiencing gentrification. So the communities can have knowledge of resources. Durham City-County Planning Department has started the zoning and land use study. Some residents want East Durham to stay the way it is. The residents fear that they will be pushed out of the community they have lived in for years and years. Each one of these projects is well needed in each community. We cannot allow what has happen in the other areas of the Durham community to affect any upcoming projects that will promote economic growth.*

7. What should the city seek to accomplish through its power to stimulate and regulate growth? What principles and considerations will guide your decisions in zoning cases and other development

issues? Illustrate your answer with a recent controversial zoning case. Did the city decide the case correctly? *Please limit your answer to 500 words.*

*I believe Durham, NC should look at creating blended communities with a mixed income. Allowing, all people to have access to transportation, education either a four year college or community college and an adequate living wage. The Publix's zoning case would mean the rezoning of residential property to mix us. The neighbors complained the Publix would have the area in a complete traffic jam. I would not oppose to a Publix coming to Durham, NC. I think that there are plenty of communities that could use an economics boost. I believe this case should be revised for another zoning area in Durham, NC.*

8. Does the city adequately fund its affordable housing plan? If no, what funding are you willing to fight for in the next budget for affordable homes for lower income Durham renters, homebuyers and homeowners? Where will the money come from? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

9. Under what circumstances would you vote to approve a rezoning that does not include commitments to meet the city's affordable housing goal? If you answered yes, how would you ensure that the city meet its goal? *Please illustrate your answer with a recent case. Please limit your answer to 500 words. I would consider rezoning if the community was for the rezoning plans and if it meant economic growth reliable transportation and earning a living wage within the community. The example of a recent case was the zoning for the city's first Publix.*

### **City Finances, Capital Improvements, Transportation, and City Services**

10. If the city needs more revenue for a basic public service, do you, in general, favor a new or increased user fee or a property tax increase? Residential trash pickup is an example of a basic service. *Please limit your answer to 250 words. I am not in favor of an increased user fee or property tax increase. I would review and or audit current programs and determine if there are any obsolete programs. This will allow the City of Durham to free up funds and possibly allocate them to other projects.*

11. Do you support or oppose Durham's plans for rail-based transit? If federal funding for the project is denied, what must Durham do about transportation, urban planning, housing, taxes, and infrastructure? *Please limit your answer to 500 words. Federal funding has been approved. Yes, I support Durham's plan for rail-based transit. People need to have adequate and reliable transportation to and from home-work. Also, in order for people to make a decent living wage they need transportation to get them there and back.*

12. Has the city's investment in bus transportation reached the population which needs it most? What else can be done to improve bus transportation access and affordability? *Please limit your answer to 400 words. Durham Transit has had a half cent increase in 2011 and all the proposed plans taking effect in 2018. There are several issues that need to be addressed such as pre existing bus stops and trash cans. Durham needs to add more bus stops as well as survey the areas buses are not going too. There needs to be more buses until the rail system is complete. The cost for a one way ticket is \$1.00. Durham also discount tickets for senior citizen and disable people.*

13. Would you support a property tax relief program, for example, a circuit breaker, to reduce the tax burden on homeowners with limited resources and help them stay in their homes? If your answer is yes, please describe the program or programs you would support. If your answer is no, please explain. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*Yes, I would support a property tax relief program for homeowners with limited resources to help them stay in their home. The city has some three major homestead tax relief programs effective June 1, 2017. My concern is if the individuals that really need the assist had knowledge of these programs.*

### **Policing and Public Safety**

14. Is there a trust problem between the people of Durham and the police department? Are you satisfied with the department's responses to issues of use of force, racial profiling, and deployment of personnel, searches, and communication with the public? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

Yes, there is a trust problem between the people of Durham and police department. This is a sensitive subject for everyone. I believe there needs to be accountability for everyone from the citizens to the police department. The police are here to protect and serve not abuse their authority because they have a badge. I do believe is not the case for every situation in the police department. I think that if the local citizens and the police work together by treating each other with respect.

15. To what degree, if any, should the city cooperate with U.S. Department of Immigration & Customs Enforcement? Should the city become a sanctuary city? If your answer is yes, for whom should the city provide sanctuary and by what means should sanctuary be provided? If your answer is no, please explain your reasons. In either case, please be specific. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*To know degree should the city cooperate with the U.S. Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement? Yes, Durham should be a sanctuary city. I believe we should reduce the fear of families being deported. I would not want to see a family separated. I think the immigrants should be treated like everyone else in the city.*

16. Should the city allocate more, less, or about the same money to policing? Please explain your answer. If your answer is less, would you allocate more money to other services to improve public safety? Again, please explain. *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*I think when the city did the review and they decided to give a wage increase to the police officers the city should have based the increase by the number of calls along with a city comparable to Durham NC.*

### **Civil Rights**

17. Name one issue in Durham that directly impacts, or is directly impacted by, race inequity and how can the city incorporate a race equity framework in addressing this issue? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*The city can improve race inequity by allowing individuals opportunities and resources so their able to afford low interest mortgage loans and homeownership workshop as well as upkeep of the property.*

18. If the city could adopt an ordinance concerning the civil rights of members of the LGBTQ community, what provisions should that ordinance contain? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

*Yes, I would adopt an ordinance for non discrimination for civil rights of members of LBGTQ community.*

### **Personal and Political**

19. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence other than a minor traffic offense? If your answer to this question is yes, please describe the charge or charges, the circumstances, and the outcome.

*Please limit your answer to 250 words. Yes, misdemeanor for unemployment repayment. I was 19 years old. I did not report my commission. So, I had to repay the money back.*

20. For whom did you vote in the 2012 and 2016 presidential and gubernatorial elections? For whom did you vote in the 2014 U. S. Senate election? *Please limit your answer to 100 words.*

I voted for President Obama 2008 and 2012. The 2014 U.S. Senate election was Kay Hagen