

DeDreana Freeman 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 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: **DeDreana Freeman**

Office for which you have filed for election (circle one): Mayor / **City Council Ward 1**

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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.*

Of all the issues confronting city government, the single issue that is most important to me is the lack of racism equity in our city government which is played out in the affordable housing conversation. The displacement of renters

through gentrification is one of the single most important issues for me, because I have watched my neighbors disappear from the community. If elected, I would work with community leaders to offer creative preventative solutions that focus on the sustainability of housing. For example, supporting cooperative ownership with land banking. I would work with my fellow council members to engage developers around equitable development and affordable housing that incorporates sustainability in energy efficiency throughout the urban and suburban tiers across the city. I would also seek to coordinate planning efforts with workforce and economic development programs so that we can train and recruit strategically, continuing growth but with equity in mind. It's also important not only to include home ownership in the affordable housing conversation, but also to find ways to encourage existing and future property owners to maintain affordability for renters. There are various other equitable projects arising in the community that embody the principles of how equitable outcomes can be achieved in our city. The next city council will have the greatest opportunities to address gentrification and the negative outcomes for historically marginalized people in Durham.

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.

Outside of turning more cities and counties across the state blue, the best way for us to reduce the growing income inequality in Durham is to build coalitions with organizations and businesses that believe paying workers a wage they can actually live off benefits everyone in our city. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best: "We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

Our city also has many opportunities to address the racial wealth gap. One example is in creating tools to support reversing the effect could include the living wage project, or other community driven processes and engagement that build in community benefit agreements and accountability measures that tie back to our city priorities like affordable housing. It would be a great benefit to ensure we have developers that understand the value of our residents as the human capital in Durham we are willing to invest in. Supporting job training,

increasing access to certifications in fields with barriers to entry and small business incubation for the people that live in our city.

3. Describe your interest in and commitment to public amenities such as playing fields, open space, street trees, 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.*

As a matter of city government, the council is in place to oversee the city manager's budget for the greater good of the city. One of the main purposes of our city taxes is to maintain our city's infrastructure and the quality of life we want as a community, though I would not like to raise taxes I understand that difficult decisions on how our city grows are necessary. It is important to seek out options and solutions to provide and maintain public amenities that would not create added regressive tax burdens for residential property owners. My priority would be to support these amenities while not supporting any regressive taxation.

Providing for infrastructure and amenities knowing there are inherent inequities in where creeks are well maintained, how tree canopies flow through a community, how tree branches are trimmed vs lopped off, even where cell towers are placed engaging community voices is important. It is also important to navigate the conversation with transparency and City Council Members must plan for and take responsibility for these decisions and ensure the voice of the community is at the table. The amenities can be addressed over time with incremental measures. Participatory Budgeting has been an underutilized tool in engaging residents in the budgeting process based on neighborhoods.

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.*

The city measure of benefits and costs of incentives to promote development especially as those benefits and costs affect low-income residents of Durham is modeled by The Piedmont Triad Region has taken the lead in North Carolina in developing an Equitable Growth Profile of ensuring diverse residents can

participate in the regional economy and contribute to stronger job growth and broadly shared prosperity. This profile focuses on a new approach to building equity and inclusion with coordinated transportation, housing, and economic development investments critical to more equitable development patterns. All of these components are critical to a Durham that works for everyone.

I believe that we should adopt a similar equitable growth profile in Durham: development in our city should benefit the city as a whole to promote growth that is inclusive and fair. It is imperative that the city develop the tool box and implement equitable development strategies that provide opportunities not only to create a tax base but also support initiatives like affordable housing to address the shortage we are facing. Incentive should have city priorities tied directly to them with accountability measures laid out beforehand.

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 actions the city should take to expand job creation and job quality in the Workforce and Economic Development Department, which has the greatest ability to work externally with the business community and internally with other municipal departments to coordinate job creation opportunities that go beyond the creative class of tech start ups to encourage more diverse entrepreneurship, worker owned cooperatives, and other alternative job creation market producers. For example, the Cooperative Durham Initiative has the potential to create an alternative job market hub with equity building capabilities via the creation of new businesses that create great access to jobs for people often marginalized in our workforce.

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.*

Gentrification is wealth-building capitalization, often by people not of color, in communities, often of color, where long-term disinvestment provides artificially low cost land or structures which are purchased and "revitalized" to be sold or rented at much higher prices. This displaces the longterm or native persons who have lived in those communities with devastating impact on their lives.

We are now seeing the side effect of Gentrification in Durham -- an eviction crisis spurred on with nearby development driving up area property taxes leading to a combination of homeowners' inability to pay their taxes or renters facing rents that double or triple within a few years. Essentially, it leads to folk being pushed out and reducing the number of affordable units either for rent or for sale. All driven by gentrification.

We face an uphill battle in ensuring that the affordable housing shortage is erased. The solutions may be different in different parts of the city. The purchase of the property on Fayetteville St, referred to as Fayette Place, provides a clear opportunity to demonstrate the ability to create mixed income/mixed use communities that incorporate heavy income based housing, with density and commercial space. We need to be creative with the ways in which we build on infill lots and in communities that lack affordable housing- working with community partners, organizations and developers to connect our city across lines of othering. In East Durham, the commercial zoning patchwork of sites has to be sorted out to create greater connectivity from Hoover Road to Alston Ave.

There is an opportunity to build in growth with equity in the design districts that are arising out of the affordable housing crisis. These efforts, for the various commercial areas, could be coordinated across City & County Departments of Workforce and Economic Development, Planning, Community Development, Neighborhood Improvement, etc. It is important to align programs, training, and development that is equitable and serves the needs of our city.

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.

The city should seek to accomplish through its power to stimulate and regulate growth a healthy, safe, sustainable city focused on the equitable growth model. Building on the successes of past leaders, and learning from the mistakes I want to focus on a holistic approach to support coordinated pipelines of workforce and economic development that uses small area planning and intentional programming to create a Durham that works for everyone. As mentioned in the previous answer, I would like to see our city use the equitable growth model to spur development. My decisions will be guided by:

1. *Being sure the community has a voice;*
2. *Keep the historical thread of Durham alive;*
3. *Support SMART projects that really do contribute to equitable development: living wage jobs for residents, provide services/goods the community needs;*

As a planning commissioner for the last three and half years, I have solidly aired on the side of the community voice with one exception--the Cleveland Holloway Historic District Designation. As a local historic district resident, and person that loves quality architectural history and preservation, I had to vote to approve the local historic district. It was a matter of valuing the rich history of Durham's architects and the story that is woven into the neighborhoods that are preserved to tell the story of Durham for generations to come. As the community that tells the story of how before other ethnic groups were included in the census definition as white in the early 1900's and how they developed communities.

Also, the recent Publix zoning case caused major dissension and, based on the location and the lack of true "mixed use," I could not find a way to support the disruptive development in a residential community. It promised more jobs, but it's not more if you force another supermarket location to close. The neighbors closest to the site organized and were not in favor--this sealed my vote against it. There was a clear understanding that this was not the right place and the project could not guarantee to "deliver" on it's promise.

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.*

No, the city has not adequately funded its affordable housing plan. The plan has to encompass more than a housing plan. In order to make affordable housing a reality that is sustainable, the city would need to make an intentional investment of one hundred million over the next ten years with social impact bonds that address housing, job training, business incubation, and public health & safety now before we lose the opportunity to have an equitable impact. We have to recognize the role of systemic and institutionalized racism that disproportionately impacts African Americans in our city that allows for marginalized communities to be left behind. We need to create pipelines of resources that address families facing homelessness due to displacement and the eviction crisis because then

everyone would have better housing options creating equitable housing for all resident not unsustainable programs and services;

Some ideas that may be fruitful include:

- 1) continue our strong city support for the economic development initiative and actually provide housing subsidies for displaced long term residents that face gentrification and build mixes-income/mix-use/mix-communities that thrive like Golden Belt;*
- 2) support Durham Housing Authority (DHA) in redeveloping in a 5:1 ratio around the current housing residents that require housing assistance beyond a voucher that cannot be used.*
- 3) Prevent the displacement of DHA's downtown communities with equitable redevelopment and sustainability planning as mixed-use/ mixed income targeted communities for existing residents as a priority so there is zero forced displacement for those residents.*
- 4) ensure the success of DHA's housing voucher program so that the 6,000 people in need of low-income housing who are supported by those vouchers are able to find and sustain healthy, safe, affordable housing that is energy efficient;*
- 5) use publicly owned land downtown and within a ½ mile of planned transit stations to leverage affordable housing;*
- 6) develop an effective strategy for funding and supporting landlords willing to participate in the affordable housing plan renovations and repairs to maintain sustain healthy, safe, affordable housing that is energy efficient;*
- 7) working with developers that have equitable development practices that include hiring residents of Durham, paying a living wage, and/or having community benefits agreements in place with local nonprofits that support our city housing plan to contribute to our affordable housing;*
- 8) fix the municipally funded gentrification that low-income homeowners face in areas like Southside by providing 3 year grants to pay their increased portion of property taxes,*
- 9) help fund non-profit and cooperative construction and provide gap financing for current affordable projects underway local organizations and non-profits;*
- 10) develop neighborhood level plans for lot infill that include alternative site plans like tiny houses developments, flag lots, multi-unit for non-conforming lot sizes, and a process for incorporating accessory dwelling units into communities that lack affordable housing.*

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.*

When I think about the best interests of the city of Durham, there are very few situations where I could imagine approving a rezoning that does not include commitments to the city's affordable housing goal. Situations which might lead me to make such a decision are those in which resident and community input in areas that have community benefit agreements to prevent displacement, there may be an extenuating circumstance that could cause me to vote to approve such rezoning. Specifically in cases where the developer rezoning is optional to complete the project. However, I am not inclined to vote to approve projects that are not in line with our city housing goals.

It would be more efficient to create zoning area plans based on existing neighborhood needs, where community input is taking into account before any cases are submitted. There are some areas in this city that have carried the burden of poor housing stock and there should be more tools beyond housing goals to address the eviction crisis Durham is facing.

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 a strong believer in fiscal responsibility. In cases where social injustices apply, equitably resources should be used from existing revenues to resolve the issue however those equitably selected resources should be used from existing revenues to resolve the issue. In this situation a long range solution may be needed to address affordable housing in a more sustainable way, like a social impact bond that would allot one hundred million dollars over 10 years to expand around city priorities and manage budget shortfalls. This is a delicate situation where our city bond rating is concerned but, if it is a priority, we may have some hard decisions to make. For example, delaying maintenance and repair projects in order to tend to basic services. However, there are rotational ways to make sure the same project is not sacrificed every year. Our budget

manager and team do a really good job of laying out the options in the Capital Improvement Plan process so that our city finance and capital improvement equation aligns well. As a member of the Community Capital Improvement Plan Committee for the City of Durham, I have played a small role in the larger picture of prioritizing projects. I would lean away from regressive flat user fees that apply to all without accounting for historically low income residents who end up paying more. At the very least, a more equitable tier based on specific criteria around a protected class. The protected class would be developed with community input that protects vulnerable populations (historically marginalized populations like low financial wealth people of color, seniors with fixed income living in poverty, those with special needs or disabilities, or children with special needs or disabilities and etc.).

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.

Please note that as of July 28, 2017, the Federal Transit Administration approved the Durham and Orange light-rail project.

With our explosive population growth and the need to prevent Durham from contending with traffic like in Atlanta, I support light rail-based transit as the future of transportation. We have to prepare and plan for better modes of transportation that enable greater stewardship of our environment, including a decrease in carbon emission with fewer single passenger vehicles on the road. This would include building in existing and planned workforce and economic development programs to train future workers that support development with small area planning. Most importantly, this would also include intentional programming to create a Durham public transportation system that works for everyone.

With a commitment from City council to increase transit service levels, Durham could build out its transportation system, creating a more equitable approach to support coordinated pipelines of bus rapid transit service that offers fare free options phased in over time to the tune of almost four-five million dollars that it would take to operate fare free for all. The current fares are already a great deal

compared with nearly all cities. However, we could start by lowering the age for seniors, offering go passes to youth and family members providing care for people with disabilities without a fee, and working with college students at Duke, Durham Technical Community College and North Carolina Central University through reduced price GoPass payments. Then over a 10 year period increasing access building out the GoTriangle and Go Pass staff to include reporting and transportation planning to meet our city and environmental goals around service frequency and expanding service options to parts of the City with little, to no service, and including commuters whose businesses support GoTriangle initiatives and services until all passengers are fare free.

If federal funding was denied, we would have an opportunity to expand our regional transit development plan to include additional station stops in Research Triangle Park and/or into East Durham that would expand the ridership base around station stops. We would also have an opportunity to build in more recommendations from the Station Area Strategic Infrastructure (SASI) Study which include:

- *Pedestrian access and circulation;*
- *Bicycle access and circulation;*
- *Vehicular access and circulation;*
- *Streetscape amenities and*
- *Sewer and water capacity.*

It is important that we find ways to reduce our carbon footprint.

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.*

I would work to create a fare-free bus transportation system with services that were within 30-45 minute increments around the clock (similar to Chapel Hill) For the sake of our environment, we need to find ways to encourage much more use of public transportation. An increase in bus utilization could reduce the number of single passenger car riders who commute daily to work.

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.*

Property tax relief is one way to reduce displacement of long term property owners who are negatively impacted by revitalization in Durham. A grant would be the best option to alleviate the burden imposed by city targeted investments in areas like Southside or the Census Tract 10.01.

“The most serious limitation is that it does not address in an ongoing way the problem of low-income homeowners in many parts of the city paying excessive taxes because of higher property values. We are concerned that after four years of adding property liens, the homeowners will still face the high tax bills that destabilize the security of their housing” (James Svara). The proposed cap and 3 year limit are a step in the right direction but for some could present greater hardship.

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, deployment of personnel, searches, and communication with the public? *Please limit your answer to 400 words.*

Of course there is a trust issue between the people of Durham and the police department. Our policing system in Durham is as in other communities across the country is based on the New Jim Crow justice system. If our police officers and ranked officials within the police department are unaware of the system of racism they operate in, they have the ability to cause harm--unwillingly or not.

Durham has to address systemic racism head on with a lens of racial equity for the harm caused by the justice system. Our current Police Chief, C.J. Davis, has been actively engaging and charging forward on a number of FADE Coalition demands but not enough to address some of the issues around community policing. But, we have to make sure that our police force is well equipped with anti-racist tools and de-escalation training and incentives that reflect what the Durham community needs from our police force. Incentives should be aligned with completion of community recommended training, engaging with the community as coaches, and volunteers during service hours in the Police Athletic League or other identified programs that improve community relationships and build transparency.

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.*

City officials and police must refuse to serve as agents of the U.S. Department of Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE); however, we cannot become a sanctuary city unless we are ready to bankrupt our city. There are few remedies to the family-destroying mechanism that ICE has become. It's important to coordinate protections and family supports to keep the residents of Durham as safe as possible. This helps to ensure that immigrant communities can rely on Durham to provide police and safety services without fear. Durham officials and police need to understand the horrible conditions that are created for residents when they have no options for documentation and fear for their and their families' lives due to the threat of deportation.

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.*

Our City is in a unique position to learn from years marked by the tragic loss of life caused by police shootings and missteps of previous leadership. Our new Police Chief understands the voice of Durham. It is important to have a well trained police force that reflects community policing strategies and engages residents with a racial equity lens. In particular, we must create more 'Harm Free Zones.'" While these forms of policing may cost more in the short term, long term costs should decrease or at least remain the same with inflationary adjustments.

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.*

There is great inequity in our systems and institutions that have to be addressed using the racial equity framework. Understanding the dynamics of racism, self oppression and white supremacy, we have to be vigilant in calling out racism and proactive in addressing the implicit biases that live in us all.

As of the 2010 census, there were 228,330 people living in the city. The racial composition of the city was: 42.45% White, 40.96% Black or African American,

5.07% Asian American, 0.51% Native American, 0.07% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 8.28% some other race, and 2.66% two or more races; 14.22% were Hispanic/Latino of any race. About 13.1% of families and 18.6% of the population were below the poverty line.

Unemployment: North Carolina: 5.5%; Black: 9.4%; Latino: 4.4%; White: 4.4%

Racial inequity is an issue that rarely rises to the top of the civil rights agenda. It is important to call out the inequity and how race is usually a large factor in the statistical measures that show disparities. Recently, the issue of shredded tire mulch in East Durham Park raised the question of how the city addresses environmental health hazards, especially in North East Central Durham- my community. Environmental injustice is an area that is often overlooked as the cause of many slow deaths due to health issues rather than abrupt deaths caused by violence, which we spend more than half the city budget to address. Even with Durham's uniquely rare and rich history of collaboration and progressive leadership, the same disparities you would find in many other communities across this state and country exist here. These disparities center around economic wealth, health, safety, and etc. A parent pointing out the carcinogenic shredded tire mulch is an egregious example of the disparities that many people of color have faced in our city. We have had a haphazard approach to lead abatement when funding is available, and an even less effective approach to addressing mold, pest, and indoor air quality issues. As this parent raised the issue, my internal racial equity alarm was magnified by the appearance that these materials were used differently depending upon the city park. In this one park, the tire mulch had been sprayed with fire retardants which have been linked to serious health risks-- further endangering children who use the East Durham Park on a regular basis. I am sure that the decision to use this material was not intentionally based on the neighborhood being high poverty and predominantly a people of color community. However, there is a process that institutions use to select mulch and other supplies or equipment and how much of who is served comes into play implicitly. What was the cost of this material? What is the cost of the removal of this material? What is the response of Durham Parks and Recreation?

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.*

The rights of people within the LGBTQ community are under attack. I have been an advocate since our state legislated discrimination in 2011 with amendment one. We must stand up for the right of all residents of our city, county, state, and nation against these attacks. We must be proactive and diligent in protecting the right of every resident in this city across all lines otherism.

In Durham, I am disappointed that we are not being more proactive in this area that we can have impact on as a council. Noting that there are self identified members of the LGBTQ community that are city staff does not amount to equality. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation gave Durham a 69 out of 100, a 'D,' for our 2016 Municipal Equality Index Scorecard.

We need to develop a plan to address the inequities the LGBTQ community face as a often marginalized community guided by the community leadership Southern Coalition for Social Justice, LGBTQ Center, SONG (Southerners on New Ground), SWOOP (Strong Women Organizing Outrageous Projects), Equality NC, NC Pride, and other organizations that have been advocates for equity for the LGBTQ community.

Durham could implement an ordinance to immediately address the low score the provision in the ordinance would seek to expand city staff awareness of the Human Rights Campaign focus on institutional and system implicit bias around LGBTQ rights and discrimination. A provision would build in an accountability measure for the City Manager on the areas we need improvement. We should support the existing LGBTQ community leadership to provide channels of funding; implement a safe zone within City Hall to improve our City Municipal Equality Index.

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.*

NO

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.*

**Obama/ Purdue
Clinton/ Cooper**