

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: __ Cora Cole-McFadden _____

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

It is difficult to express one issue most important to me for gentrification and how it destabilizes low income areas and poverty and how our children are impacted by it I find troubling.. Continuing efforts to move toward racial equity can generate significant economic returns. When people face barriers to achieving their full potential, the loss of talent, creativity, energy, and productivity is a burden not only for those disadvantaged, but for communities, businesses, the City and County of Durham and the economy as a whole. The racial divide has left a legacy of inequities in education, employment, income, wealth, housing, health and other areas that impact achievement and quality of life. We should be deliberate about our efforts to impact the racial divide by increasing focus on programs such as the Mayor’s Poverty Reduction Initiative(10.01 Transformation in Ten) neighborhood by neighborhood and partnering with nonprofit organizations in implementing other

community based programs which are actually working. Gentrification is addressed in a later question.

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.

The residents in 10.01 have taken advantage of financial literacy offerings through Reinvestment Partners, Durham Regional Financial Center and other partners with the same mission. More residents are aware of and, take advantage of the Earned Income Credit benefit when filing taxes. Several years ago, we adopted Ban the Box. The City has hired over 100 ex-offenders and continue our work with the Re-Entry program.

The City of Durham has already taken steps to reduce income inequality in the City of Durham workforce by enacting a living wage ordinance several years ago and most recently, raising the living wage yearly with many employees earning a \$15.00 minimum wage. The Living Wage Campaign launched by PA highlights the cooperation of the private sector and the growing support for reducing poverty in Durham. Opportunities through workforce development programs, and the work of the Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance, especially with local and minority and women-owned business, and youth internships are already in place to address income inequity in the City. In addition, we encourage companies seeking to do business with the City to consider diversity in their hiring practices. Several engineering firms are reaching out to students attending HBCUs.

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?

I supported the half-cent in the tax rate for park maintenance. The tree forum during this past fiscal year provided a real education to the public on the environmental benefits of trees and the care of them. As the tree canopy study continues to unfold, disparities in lower wealth neighborhoods will be evident and should be corrected as should other inequitable public amenities. The most recent eye opener was National Night Out. So many low wealth areas are without parks, playing fields and access to other public amenities. Several parents noted that without these amenities, their children "get into trouble."

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? How would you use these measurements when deciding to vote for or against a proposed incentive? Please limit your answer to 400 words.

I will assess the following: 1. Will employment opportunities for Durham residents be created as a result of the incentive? 2. Will employment opportunities be accessible to and available for low wealth Durham residents (availability of public transportation to the site)? 3. How and when will the financial benefits to the city begin to flow? (Cost-benefit analysis) 4. What is the companies hiring track record? Is there a plan for local business and M/WBE participation if rehab or new

construction is involved? If these questions can't be answered, favorably, a no vote would be counted for me.

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 City's Department of Economic and Workforce Development, the Chamber of Commerce, local financial institutions and other entities should work together to support job creation through the growth of small businesses.

Many out-of-work residents turn to entrepreneurship as a result of their unemployment and are prime candidates for local assistance to help in their quest to become self-employed entrepreneurs. A program through DDI and the OEWD could help facilitate this business experience.

Worker-owned cooperatives are instrumental in job creation. This model has proven to be an effective tool for creating and maintaining sustainable, dignified jobs; generating wealth; improving the quality of life of workers; and promoting community and local economic development in low income communities. They address workers' needs and help to build wealth in communities most directly affected by inequality .and unions play a vital role in representing worker-owner interests in coops. Perhaps we can begin to incentivize cooperatives especially in known food deserts.

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? Limit your answer to 400 words.

Gentrification is sometimes referred to as revitalization and reinvestment causing a relatively sharp increase in rents and home values in low-and moderate income neighborhoods resulting in displacement of residents. We can neither control rent or cost of homes in Durham. In the near future, we will implement a Property Tax Relief Deferred Loan Program to assist eligible homeowners whose property tax increases occurred due to the impact of the City of Durham neighborhood revitalization or home improvements in the Southside, Northeast Central Durham, and Southwest Central Durham target areas. Other steps we can take include; 1. Protection of senior homeowners who cannot afford the upkeep on their homes. The City should increase funding for existing senior repair programs and prioritize gentrifying neighborhoods; if allowable; 2. Prohibit large-scale luxury development in at risk neighborhoods (Fayette Place) 3. Some community development advocates propose that the federal government create a new type of housing voucher,(stabilization voucher) to be awarded to long-time residents of low-income communities to help them stay when gentrification poses a risk. It could retain low-income residents to help stabilize communities by avoiding displacement.

The Alston Avenue Design District guidelines could help to assure development and rehabilitation projects that will contribute to a stable, attractive, economically viable, pedestrian-scaled environment and standards set by the community.

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 as our comprehensive plan dictates to guide growth and development in an organized, efficient, and sustainable manner. I tend to be guided by smart growth principles and the needs of the community, especially expressions from residents impacted by proposed changes. A recent zoning matter in which I think we decided correctly was the North River Village denial. It was neither in compliance with the UDO nor the Comprehensive Plan.

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.*

Our affordable housing needs continue to grow. During the most recent budget process, we added an additional penny to the tax rate for housing. In addition, resources in the Community Development Department have been realigned to assure more focus on affordable housing strategies.

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.*

According to our Attorney, we cannot deny a rezoning that doesn't include commitments to meet our affordable housing goal. The general practice is to seek the developer's cooperation by offering a contribution for affordable housing if not included in the development. It appears that we will need to provide a subsidy for affordable units.

10. 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?

I support Durham's plans for rail-based transit. I believe we will receive federal funding. The City of Durham administration is ready and capable of sharing alternatives if needed.

City Finances, Capital Improvements, Transportation, and City Services

11. . 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.*

It depends on the service. I understand what is considered regressive vs progressive fees. Taxes are more beneficial to me and those citizens in higher income levels normally because we itemize deductions.

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 believe the City's investment in bus transportation has reached most of the population which needs it. However, expanded bus service availability and more routes could increase ridership even more. In addition, sites for better bus stops and more bus passes are needed.

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. An initial presentation was made at our work session recently to look at a program which hopefully we will be able to implement soon. I support either a grant or loan deferral program.

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.*

Our Police Chief has been with us a little over a year. As I move about the community, my impression is that most citizens are welcoming the strides being made in gaining trust. I am satisfied that the Police Chief and the department are working together to improve outcomes in the areas mentioned.

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.*

Our law enforcement staff are not ICE agents. I believe Durham is a welcoming, compassionate and embracing City. I honor those labels.

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 the allocation for policing met the department's most pressing needs. I would not support less money for the department.

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.*

Housing and residential segregation: Housing inequities are a root cause of disparities in at least two ways. First, there are significant racial-ethnic differences in rates of homeownership and the value and appreciation of those homes creating large gaps in wealth accumulation and economic security. Second,

segregation has constrained minorities to lower quality residential neighborhoods and amenities, impacting health, wealth, and educational and employment opportunities. The City should look at housing goals, housing code enforcement and other related policies through a racial equity lens. In addition, we should enhance our partnerships with agencies assisting with financial literacy and preparation for home ownership. The neighborhood environment impacts the lives of our children.

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.*

Our legal staff takes the lead in crafting ordinances.

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. I have not.

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 Democrats.