

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: DeAnna Hall

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Government and the Public Good

- 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 most important to me is Durham’s economy. While Durham has surpassed the national economy in terms of income and job growth, the unfortunate truth is that the city is lacking in economic growth and stability among the entire community. If elected I would work to ensure that economic development includes more integration with job creation and training programs in Durham’s lower income areas, improve underdeveloped areas, and ensure all residents have the ability to participate in economic growth while balancing Durham’s tax base.

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 city can lift wages of the lowest paid workers in Durham and reduce growing income inequality in our community by investing in education and training for the workforce. Partnerships with Durham Technical Community College, four-year universities, private proprietary vocational training providers, local startups, companies in Research Triangle Park and Durham Public Schools will create a pipeline of invested businesses and employees throughout the community. Since home equity makes up the bulk of personal wealth, the opportunities in our community for city government to address the racial wealth gap include ensuring programs for homeownership are equitable.

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.*

My interest in and commitment to public amenities such as playing fields, open space, street trees, traffic calming and walking and biking facilities is significant. As a member of the Durham Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Commission for the past 2 years, ensuring bicycle and pedestrian facilities are equitably distributed by advising Durham's City Council and Board of County Commissioners on bicycle and pedestrian issues is important. Whether supporting the 15-501 Road Diet, submitting comments to amend the Unified Development Ordinance for bicycle parking in the downtown districts, reviewing residential and commercial site plans for adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities, partnering with Parks and Recreation and local schools to promote safe routes to schools and host educational bike rodeos, supporting the Mayor's Safer People, Safer Streets Challenge, or partnering with local advocacy groups such as BikeDurham on National Bike Month events, my commitment to public amenities is evident. While tax funding has been the most common method to provide for and maintain these amenities, I support the use of more creative funding models such as Federal Transportation Alternatives funds, use of TIGER grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation for the Durham Belt Line project, will enrich the lives of Durham's residents. Public amenities are allocated to neighborhoods of different wealth and income levels, but the question of fairness is best answered by the issues identified in the Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan. For example, there are initiatives to evaluate programs that have not met minimums and reallocate resources, perform an analysis of usage trends, and develop programs that build relationships with Durham's youth (ages 12-24).

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 should measure the benefits and costs of incentives to promote development by performing a comprehensive economic impact analysis. Tracking local economy growth through job creation, wage and compensation growth and tax base expansions, all the while balancing providing services to the community rather than maximizing profits. Additionally, identifying direct costs such as capital expenses and long-term operating expenses, impacts on existing infrastructure (utilities, roads, public transportation, recreational services) and services (police, fire, schools, social services). I would use these measurements, on a case by case basis by evaluating the financial and non-

financial costs and benefits, considering the timing of costs and benefits, and how they impact the current and future health of Durham's economy.

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.*

Actions the city should take to expand job creation and job quality include actively recruiting, establishing, and maintaining a highly qualified, diverse, engaged and healthy workforce; partnering with business, industry, schools, colleges and universities to invest in training and skill development; supporting entrepreneurial opportunities and small business development through incentives; and investing in youth by providing internships which lead to future development.

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 means redevelopment, refurbishment, renovation, restoration, and improvement. Embracing gentrification as a springboard to the future while simultaneously balancing the less than desirable effects is what should be done about it. The issue of gentrification is implicated in the Planning Department's current review of zoning in East Durham as evident by the renovation, restoration and improvement of housing. For the proposed creation of an Alston Avenue Design District, the change to a Design District designation changes the Compact Design (CD) zoning district and would convert commercial, industrial, medium-high density residential and office to Design District. While this plan can be beneficial to the broader tax base, there can be some unintended negative consequences for low income households and renters. Preserving the existing affordability for the 55.8% of occupied housing within a ½ mile of the Alston Avenue Station should remain a high priority.

The issue of gentrification is implicated in the Planning Department's redevelopment of the former Fayette Place property in that the reason the property was initially constructed was because gentrification/redevelopment efforts, although filled with good intentions, displaced Durham residents. Now that the city has given the development arm of the Durham Housing Authority funds to repurchase the property, requirements to include affordable housing in whatever gets built and seek community input should have a more lasting impact on the community and help reduce the decline of the property in the future.

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 a balanced approach through coordination with Durham's education, transportation, and land use goals, retain a healthy economy by improving underdeveloped areas to ensure all residents participate in economic growth, creating jobs and job training programs in lower income areas, supporting transit use and walkable communities, and providing land use plans and development review processes that maintain a quality community and afford economic growth. Principles and consideration that will guide my decision in zoning cases and other development issues

are impacts on neighborhoods and environmental protection, how zoning cases affect the nurturing of minority-owned, women-owned, and other Durham-based businesses, how zoning cases affect poverty reduction strategies, and how they will be incorporated in Strategic Plan goals. A recent controversial zoning case that has illustrated these principles is the rezoning request that would have brought a mixed-use shopping center to Guess Road. While bringing in new development is a great thing, the City Council made the right decision by not approving the zoning change in that location to allot for new development.

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.*

The city has worked to adequately fund affordable housing plans; however, with housing costs rising faster than income over the past decade have resulted in a shrinkage of housing options for very low, low, and moderate income households. I'm willing to fight for creative funding sources such as incentives, expanding the use of the 4% Tax Credit for affordable housing allocate through the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, inclusionary zoning strategies, developing on public land, creating a partnership with the North Carolina Housing Coalition to empower citizens to improve housing policy making, and fostering partnerships with private sector (lenders, developers and builders) in government funded or operated housing programs.

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.*

To decide whether to vote to approve a rezoning that does not include commitments to meet the city's affordable housing goal, careful examination of the facts would need to be completed before what is best for the particular situation could be determined.

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.*

If the city needs more revenue for a basic public service, I do not in general favor a new or increased user fee or a property tax increase. Durham already has the highest tax rates in the state of NC and increasing taxes reduces its affordability to long-time and new residents.

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.*

I support Durham's plans for a rail-based transit. The plan has four dedicated tax district revenue streams to fund the local share of the projects and services in the plan. Should federal funding for the project be denied, Durham must seek alternate funding sources outside of traditional tax district revenue streams to fund the federal share of these projects.

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.*

The city's investment in bus transportation has not completely reached the population which needs it most. Bus service expansions, along with new and revised services are already included in the Durham-Orange County Transit Plan. Additionally, efforts to combine affordable housing and affordable transit are already in the works with the Alston Avenue Design District to account for the light-rail project.

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.*

I would support a property tax relief program, to reduce the tax burden on homeowners with limited resources and help them stay in their homes. There are three existing major homestead programs for Durham County:

- ***Elderly/Disable Homestead Exemption: This program is for North Carolina residents who are either 65 years of age or older, or totally and permanently disabled, regardless of age, with an income to not exceed \$29,500.***
- ***Circuit Breaker – Elderly/Disable Deferment Program: This program limits the amount of annual property taxes the owner pays on their permanent residence. The tax bill is limited to a fixed percentage of income and any taxes owed above that limit will be deferred until a disqualifying event. The same age/disability requirements as Homestead Exemption apply, but the owner must have owned the property and lived in it as their permanent residence since 2009 or earlier.***
- ***Disabled Veteran Exclusion: This program excludes up to the first \$45,000 of the appraised value of the permanent residence of a disable veteran and is available to a surviving spouse who has not remarried.***

One of the ways to close the wealth gap in Durham and other communities is through homeownership. I support these programs as long as they continue helping Durham residents create and maintain a wealth base.

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.*

I believe there is a trust problem between certain members of the Durham community and the police department; there is room for improvement in the communication and interaction between the police department and citizens, which can be resolved by outreach efforts between both parties. Durham's strategic plan already includes efforts to ensure clear, open communication, matching police resources with neighborhood needs, expanding outreach efforts, and launching two-way communication forums between residents and department leadership.

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.*

The city should cooperate with the U.S. Department of Immigration & Customs Enforcement laws. Durham should not become a sanctuary city; however all citizens should feel safe in their homes and communities. Given the state of the immigration system at the federal level, and whereas North Carolina General Statutes 160A-205.2 and 153A-145.5 prohibit the adoption of sanctuary ordinances for counties and cities, respectively, Durham should not become a sanctuary 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.*
The city should assess the money currently being allocated to policing and determine its effectiveness in ensuring goals related to the Durham Police Department's six performance measures are consistently achieved now and will be achieved as the city's growth continues.

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.*

One issue in Durham that directly impacts, or is directly impacted by race inequality is the targeting of African American males in traffic stops. Police Chief C.J. Davis is evaluating how the police department is deploying resources to ensure it's targeting crime, not communities, and training officers on making prudent decisions regarding enforcing minor traffic offenses. The city is already working toward incorporating a race equity framework in addressing this issue as part of the police department's Strategic Plan. For example, one of the objectives under the Well Managed City Goal is to increase the public's trust in the Durham Police Department by developing and/or attending training classes on racial equity and understanding racial and cultural differences, developing and/or attending training classes on effective outreach and community engagement techniques to help build and maintain community partnerships.

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.*

Given the backlash from Charlotte and HB2, the city of Durham does not have a need to adopt an ordinance concerning the civil rights of members of the LGBTQ 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.*

I have never been convicted of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic offense.

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.*
In the midst of such a contentious political season, I feel it's best to keep personal voting records private.