

**PA PAC Questionnaire for Durham City Council Ward Seats and
Durham Mayor – 2025**

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 Monday July 28 at 5pm, at the latest.

Please also include a high resolution headshot for the PA mailer in case you are endorsed.

Please email your responses to the PAC Board at pac@peoplesalliancepac.org by

July 28 at 5pm

Please use subject line ‘PA ENDORSEMENT 2025’

Please note that following the Monday July 28 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.

***Please use subject line ‘PA ENDORSEMENT 2025’ when
emailing your completed questionnaire to
pac@peoplesalliancepac.org***

Candidate’s name: Andrea Cazales

Address: 1304 Cozart St. Unit 254 Durham, NC

E-mail Address: acfordurham@outlook.com

Phone: (843)-540-8976

Website: <https://www.cazalesforcitycouncil.com/>

1. What is your vision for the Durham community, and what are the specific policies you would prioritize during your term to move us towards that vision?

I am prioritizing the health of our communities by addressing the social and environmental conditions that shape our lives, what we call the social determinants of health. As the City of Medicine, Durham must lead with health justice that is rooted in racial and social justice. Health is not separate from housing, safety, or infrastructure, it lives in them. If our neighborhoods aren't healthy, nothing else can be. As a doctorally trained nurse, I know the conditions around us are what shape our outcomes.

My top priorities include:

- Community safety, including a vision-zero approach to gun violence and pedestrian deaths.
- Equitable development that invests in neighborhoods without displacing them. Affordable housing and stronger renter protections, especially in the face of displacement from rezonings. Real investments in historically neglected communities from Braggtown to South Durham, including sidewalks, flood protection, green space, and youth programs.
- Stronger and bold protections for communities made vulnerable, including immigrant, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized communities.

2. Why are you the right person to elect at this moment to guide our city over the coming years?

We are in a pivotal moment. Durham can either move forward with care and vision or continue leaving people behind. I bring lived experience as a working-class, first-generation daughter of immigrants, and professional expertise as a nurse with a doctorate in health justice. These identities do not make me entitled to lead, but they give me the insight and commitment to do so with compassion and skill.

As a nurse, I know how to advocate, make hard decisions with limited resources, and always center people. I believe our Council should live up not the City of Medicine, but the City of Healing by investing in the health, safety, and livelihood of every community, not just those with power or proximity.

3. In your view, how do interactions among council members influence the larger health of Durham's policy and political environment? As a council member, how would you seek to contribute to the council's culture? If you are running for mayor, how would your leadership influence the council's culture?

City Council should model the kind of collaboration and care that residents deserve. Right now, that is not always the case. Public outbursts and visible conflict have harmed both internal trust and the public's faith in city leadership. Missing key meetings, where crucial votes are taken, is also unacceptable and shows a lack of respect for the gravity of this role.

I have already been showing up, attending meetings, listening to residents, and preparing to serve. As a nurse, I know how to stay composed in high-stress environments and work across differences for the sake of a common goal. That is the energy I will bring to Council: grounded, respectful, and focused on the work our communities expect us to do because their health and livelihood is on the line.

4. Building and approving an annual budget for our community is one of the most important acts of governance that city council members undertake each year. If you currently serve on the City Council, what informed your approach to the budget process and your ultimate decision to vote for it? If you are not currently on council, how would you have voted on the budget and what would have informed your approach and decision?

If it does not make our communities healthier, safer, or more connected, then it is not good policy. My bottom line is health, not just physical health, but the overall well-being of our neighborhoods now and in the future.

I would have voted against any budget that prioritized surveillance tools like ShotSpotter over care infrastructure. I would have supported funding that expands the HEART program, invests in eviction prevention, supports youth mental health, and meets the real needs people are asking for. My votes will always be guided by the principle of health justice as the foundation of social justice.

5. From smoky skies to extreme heat to heavy rainfall events, Durham is already experiencing the effects of climate change – and the most vulnerable people in our communities (including children, the elderly, low-income residents, unhoused residents, and BIPOC folks) are being impacted the most. What policies will you prioritize to reduce climate pollution and help Durham adapt to worsening impacts?

Climate justice is public health. From the record-breaking heat to recent floods from Tropical Storm Chantal, we are already seeing the harm in Durham and it is hitting Black, Brown, and low-income communities hardest.

I will prioritize policies that invest in climate-resilient infrastructure where disinvestment has worsened environmental risk. That includes expanding tree canopy, green stormwater infrastructure, energy-efficient affordable housing, and clean public transit. We also need stronger air quality monitoring and data collection in vulnerable areas.

Community members and environmental scientists have already raised solutions. I will work to ensure we listen, act, and direct funding where it is most needed.

6. Would you be willing to vote for a city contribution to partially fund an expansion of the HEART program into Durham Public Schools? More broadly, how is Durham doing in its approach to community safety, and what if anything would you change?

Yes, I would fully support expanding the HEART program into Durham Public Schools. The program is backed by evidence, supported by the community, and reflects what real safety looks like, care-based, trauma-informed, and non-policing.

I will continue to invest in programs that address the root causes of violence: poverty, displacement, disconnection, and a lack of opportunity. I opposed ShotSpotter because it did not improve public safety and was rejected by the very communities it would target. That \$200,000 could have gone toward youth mental health, job programs, or violence interruption. Real safety means care, not surveillance, and I will always fight for policies that reflect that.

7. How does equity –including racial equity and equitable services for immigrants and refugees – play into your view of governance? What metrics or indicators would you look to to know whether Durham is achieving more equitable outcomes for underserved populations over time? What do you see as the main policy levers that City Council can use to impact those indicators?

Equity is not just part of my platform, it is how I govern. I lead with the understanding that racial and social inequities are the root causes of health and opportunity gaps. As a daughter of immigrants and nurse researcher, I know we cannot make decisions for communities without centering the voices of those directly impacted.

Metrics must go beyond numbers and include real community feedback. I would collaborate with city staff and experts of how to track housing stability, eviction rates, access to green space, transit access by zip code, accessibility in city services, and whether community boards reflect Durham's diversity. But the most important indicator is whether residents feel seen, heard, and supported.

I also support creating a citywide tool to evaluate the health impacts of major policies, so equity is not just a value but a measurable part of how Durham governs. We must center health equity in the areas where Council has the most power: housing stability, community safety, pedestrian infrastructure, and development patterns. These issues shape daily life. By aligning our decisions with equity-focused metrics and making sure our systems are responsive to the needs all Durham resident, including immigrants, refugees, and historically marginalized residents, we can build a Durham where everyone has a real chance to thrive.

8. 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?

Durham is not investing enough in its youth. They are 100% of our future, yet they face mental health challenges, violence, and economic barriers created by systemic neglect. Programs that center youth, mentorship, summer jobs, afterschool activities, mental health support, are underfunded.

I would also prioritize sustained funding for HEART, youth violence prevention, and neighborhood infrastructure that makes our communities safe and connected. I am open to discussing raising revenue, if necessary, but I believe we should first hold wealthy institutions and developers accountable for contributing their fair share before asking working families to carry the burden.

9. Are you satisfied with the Durham Police Department, including its administrative, law enforcement, and security functions? Should the City government increase or decrease resources allocated to the Police Department? Please explain your answer.

No, I am not satisfied. While there are officers who care about their work, the current model continues to over-invest in policing while underinvesting in prevention and care. Public safety is broader than law enforcement, it includes housing, mental health care, stable jobs, clean environments, and trusted responders.

We need to shift our approach to safety by reducing over-policing and investing in what actually keeps people safe. That includes fully funding and expanding HEART, ensuring traffic enforcement transitions away from armed response, and investing in root-cause solutions to violence.

10. Please detail your plan for affordable housing in Durham, including a discussion of current programs here in Durham and other programs across the state that have been effective in maintaining and creating affordability.

Housing is health. Durham's housing crisis is one of the biggest threats to community well-being. We must expand and protect affordability through multiple strategies:

- Strengthen programs like Section 8 and eviction prevention initiatives.
- Increase investments in the Affordable Housing Bond.
- Use city-owned land to build permanently affordable housing.
- Expand community land trusts and repair programs to keep residents in their homes.

I admire the public health approach to housing used by leaders like Mayor Brandon Scott in Baltimore, integrating housing, health, and community care. Durham can take similar steps, ensuring development does not displace families but strengthens neighborhoods. I will continue researching statewide models to bring the best solutions home while centering community voices in every housing decision.

11. Describe your decision making process in voting to approve or not approve zoning requests. In particular, what do you look for in a development plan that leads you to vote for it or against it? In your answer, please take into consideration state restrictions on the power of cities to regulate development.

I start with one question: who will be impacted the most, and how will this shape their health, safety, and economic opportunity? I consider input from community members, environmental scientists, and planners, and weigh it against evidence of potential harm or displacement.

My background in public health research taught me to use community-based approaches that bring residents into the decision-making process at every stage. I will support zoning requests that preserve neighborhood identity, create true affordability, and reflect social and environmental justice.

State restrictions limit some city powers, but I will use every tool available to negotiate community benefits, push for affordability requirements, and hold developers accountable to Durham's residents.

12. Please provide your analysis of Durham's municipal bonds over the past few years.

Durham's municipal bonds have funded vital projects, affordable housing, transit, parks, and public infrastructure. While I have not extensively analyzed every outcome, I believe bonds must be closely monitored and evaluated to ensure they benefit those they were intended to serve.

I support the most recent bonds that focused on affordable housing, safe streets, and public spaces. These investments align with my vision for a healthier, more connected Durham, one where all residents have access to safe places to live, gather, and thrive.

13. Many vulnerable populations in our city are under attack from both the federal government and the state legislature. This includes LGBTQI people and immigrants, among others. What role can the city play in countering these attacks?

Durham must stand as a shield when higher levels of government fail to protect our communities. This includes LGBTQ+ residents, immigrants, and other marginalized groups.

I will push for ordinances and resolutions that affirm these communities, but I know symbolism is not enough. We need safe access zones, trainings for city workers, and stronger partnerships with advocacy groups. We must also ensure city leadership shows up, not just on social media but in council chambers and community spaces.

I will hold myself accountable by being vocal and proactive. It is not enough to say we support vulnerable communities, we must act.

14. Please describe your understanding of the role of state and federal preemption on local government. Are there any parts of your platform that might run up against preemptions? If so, please explain how you would overcome such obstacles.

I understand that preemption often limits what cities can do, especially around housing, wages, and tenant protections. But I refuse to lead from fear of preemption. Local governments can and should push the limits of what is possible, work in coalition with other cities, and advocate for change at the state level.

I am not an expert in every legal restriction, but I will learn quickly, collaborate with colleagues and policy experts, and fight to ensure Durham uses every tool available to serve its people.

15. What guides your decision making process when presented with contradictory views? For example, when advice from city staff contradicts advice from advisory committees (such as the Planning Commission and others), and residents present multiple and conflicting opinions, how do you reach your decisions on how to vote?

I ground my decisions in a simple principle: will this make our communities healthier, safer, and more connected? I listen to city staff, advisory boards, and residents, but I prioritize the voices of those most impacted.

My process is informed by my nursing background: I combine evidence, expert guidance, and lived experience to make decisions with both rigor and compassion. I also remain accountable to residents by explaining my decisions and ensuring transparency.

16. How can the city engage with Durham Public Schools and work toward implementing an “Aftercare for All” program that could benefit all DPS families?

Aftercare is care. It reduces stress for working families, supports youth development, and helps keep kids safe and thriving. Access to aftercare should not depend on income or neighborhood.

The city can partner with DPS, the county, and community organizations to expand aftercare programs, using city facilities and braided funding to ensure no child is left without support. This is both a public health and economic mobility issue, supporting families helps create a stronger, more equitable Durham.

17. What steps would you take to create and improve ways for children to be able to walk or bike to schools?

Neighborhood infrastructure must keep kids safe. Motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of death for children, and we can prevent these tragedies with safer streets.

I will prioritize building sidewalks, crosswalks, and protected bike lanes near schools, especially in areas with high traffic and low investment. I will also work closely with advocacy groups like Bike Durham and other key experts in this space, to ensure every plan reflects the needs of our families.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please do not forget to provide us with your resume or biographical statement, as well as a high resolution headshot.