

PA PAC Questionnaire



Community-Based Leadership. Proven Results. Equity in Action.

For nearly eight years on the Durham City Council, DeDreana Freeman has been a **bold and consistent advocate for justice**. With a **track record of advancing social, economic, and environmental equity**, she brings the **leadership experience and lived perspective** needed to guide Durham into a more inclusive future.

A **nonprofit leader, policy strategist, and seasoned consultant**, DeDreana is the **Principal of Developing Equitable Economic Partnerships, LLC**, and former Director of Partnership Development at CornerSquare Community Capital, where she supported CDFIs and MDIs across 17 states, increasing investments from \$2.4 million to \$24 million in one year. She has also held executive roles at the Durham Children's Initiative and is an alumna of both **Rutgers University** and **North Carolina Central University**, where she earned a **Master of Public Administration**.

DeDreana's lived experience **surviving childhood trauma, domestic violence, and systemic inequity** fuels her **passion for challenging the status quo**. A **mother of three, a wife, and a community based leader**, she channels her advocacy into real policy change, centering the voices of those too often left out of the conversation.

She **currently serves** on the **Durham City Council representing Ward 1** and has held leadership roles on numerous **city, regional, and national boards, including:**

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- **Central Pines Regional Council (Former Chair)**
- **National League of Cities Racial Equity & Leadership Council and Federal Advocacy Committees (Former Vice Chair)**
- **North Carolina Democratic Party State Executive Committee**
- **Higher Heights Civic Leadership Fellow (2020)**
- **Co-Founder, Episcopalians United Against Racism**
- **Leadership North Carolina and Institute for Political Leadership Fellow**
- **North Carolina League of Municipalities – Past President, Women in Municipal Government**

Her community service spans housing, education, health, and racial justice—from the **Durham Early Childhood Action Steering Committee to the Affordable Housing and Transit Coalition and Organizing Against Racism (OAR) Durham.**

DeDreana has also served as:

- **Vice Chair and 3rd Vice Chair, Durham County Democratic Party**
- **Chair, Precinct 17 (6 years)**
- **2020 DNC Delegate**
- **Chair, Durham County ACCESS Transportation Board**
- **Planning Commissioner, City/County of Durham**

As a candidate for **Durham City Council, Ward 1**, DeDreana Freeman will continue to prioritize **People, Partnerships, and Possibilities** as she remains committed to advocating with love for a Durham where **every resident has the opportunity to thrive.**

**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: DeDreana Freeman

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Email: Info@DeDreanaFreeman.com

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Website: <https://www.dedreanafreeman.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?

Together, we’ll build a city where *everyone* can thrive.

A B.U.L.L. with C.I.T.Y. values focused on Impact You Can S.E.E.

“Social, Economic, and Environmental” Justice- Creating a Welcoming, Inclusive, Thriving Durham.

People • Partnership • Possibilities

A B.U.L.L to continue:

Building Equity and Health into Every Neighborhood

Uplifting Workers, Seniors, and Longtime Residents

Leading with Youth, Families, and Community Voice

Limiting Corporate Influence. Put People Before Profit

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with C.I.T.Y. values:

Centering community-led solutions

We believe real change begins by listening to and empowering the people most impacted—uplifting neighborhood voices, preserving cultural anchors, and building equity into every policy.

Invest in the people of Durham

From affordable housing to supporting small businesses, workforce development, and caregiving infrastructure, we invest in our residents—not just corporations.

Transforming systems and infrastructure with equity

We address climate resilience, mobility, and public safety with care and justice, ensuring every neighborhood is safe, healthy, and connected.

Yielding power in partnership

We build lasting solutions by collaborating with workers, seniors, youth, and longtime residents. We fight to limit corporate influence and put people before profit.

My focus this term would be implementing policy priorities such as expanding Health and Empathetic Assistance Response Teams (HEART), out-of-school support for students, long-time homeowner grants, Housing First with small area plans for 15-minute cities and Bull City business and MWBE resources city-wide. I would also like to SEE the implementation of the Racial Equity and Community Safety and Wellness Taskforce recommendations through.

One new focus would be around a land trust commission to study the land banking opportunities that exist and could build a base of donated land and create more affordable housing developments.

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

In these critically challenging times, the person elected has to be a well-rounded, critical thinker, unafraid to make crucial decisions on behalf of the residents of Durham with great consideration for the impact

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on those most vulnerable, whether by age, gender, language, race, or any other discriminatory demography.

I am that person who has demonstrated time and again that I am an equitable equity champion for the people, and my lived experiences guide my decision-making, and my work speaks to my commitment to the marginalized communities and overlooked people, partnerships, and possibilities of Durham.

I'm the right person to continue working with our communities to sustain what makes Durham home to our people, our neighborhoods, our small businesses, and the land we all share, so no one has to live in fear of being pushed out or left behind.

I'm proudly running in Ward 1 to continue representing the people of Durham, a city I've grown to love and where my family calls home, because our work is far from done. As a local leader, woman of color, mother, wife, sister, daughter, and small business owner, my vision includes a people-first Durham fighting for fairness, easing the load on seniors, uplifting working families, supporting homegrown businesses and entrepreneurs, all while keeping community voices first.

I listen when our community faces violence, city employees need higher wages, flooding occurs, ICE kidnaps our people, and urban renewal/gentrification displaces people and businesses. I listen to take my lead from the community, I seek solutions and I get to work.

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?

The City Council represents a wide range of voices, perspectives, and priorities across Durham, and all of them matter. Every viewpoint reflects a part of our community, and we should take the time to listen, learn, and explore them as potential solutions to our shared challenges. As a council member, I've worked to build coalitions both on and off the dais, partnering with fellow council members and trusted community leaders to deliver real

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results for the people of Durham.

Our Council culture should be rooted in values that prioritize those who've been most marginalized and historically left out—because when we center those voices, we build a stronger city for everyone. I've proudly worked with colleagues to pass policies like fare-free transit, expand affordable housing, support residents experiencing homelessness, and secure well-deserved raises for our city workers.

That means fostering a Council culture that models transparency, accountability, respect, and trust—both among members and with the public we serve. The resilience and health of our Council directly impact our ability to govern effectively, navigate challenges, and make thoughtful, community-centered decisions.

Moving forward, I'm committed to serving the people of Durham to partner with my colleagues to strengthen the resiliency of our institution, deepen public trust, and continue building on the values that define Durham—a BULL CITY that believes in fairness, equity, and possibility. We can foster a culture that centers community, champions transparency, and keeps our people rather than politics at the heart of everything we do when we use equity in our collective decision making.

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?

This past budget cycle, I approved the city manager's proposed budget. We made real progress: expanding community safety programs like HEART, increasing pay for city workers (though we still have work to do), and finally providing support to our part-time employees. It also funded long-overdue capital projects. While not perfect, it reflected the priorities I've consistently championed—investing in people, safety, and essential services.

Looking ahead, I'll continue pushing for more funding for programs like resident assistance, youth and out-of-school time programs, effective gun violence prevention programs, park improvements, and climate resilience.

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That may mean exploring new revenue sources, but I believe we can do so in ways that protect residents on fixed or low incomes.

Throughout every budget process, I focus on transparency, equity, and fiscal responsibility. I've pushed for data-informed decisions—like using demographics and neighborhood needs to guide participatory budgeting—and for surveys that reflect our community's diversity. My votes are rooted in equity, community voice, and the wellbeing of those most impacted by our decisions. I won't hesitate to vote no if a budget doesn't meet that standard—but I always show up to do the work of making it better.

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?

Durham is already experiencing the effects of climate change. Our most vulnerable residents, especially children, elders, low-income, unhoused, and BIPOC communities, are bearing the brunt. I will continue working to reduce pollution and help our city adapt. I've championed policies that both cut emissions and build resilience across Durham and beyond.

First, we must stop allowing development in sensitive areas like wetlands, floodplains, and creek beds unless climate-resilient infrastructure is built well above current standards. I've consistently pushed for stronger flood mitigation here in Durham, especially in historically underfunded neighborhoods, where the impacts hit hardest.

Second, we need to drastically green our planning and building processes. That means integrating green infrastructure into new development, expanding solar incentives, updating building codes for energy efficiency, repairing urban heat island areas, and growing our tree canopy to reduce urban heat. I support city investments that help residents and small businesses install solar, compost, and upgrade homes to save energy.

Third, we must expand our public green spaces, urban agriculture, and composting efforts, alongside electrifying our city fleet and staying committed to our zero-emissions goals to reduce our carbon footprint.

At the same time, we must fund this work in ways that are smart and equitable. The \$12 million our city committed to address the environmental injustice of lead in our parks is a critical investment. The investment in water treatment equipment to address PFAS must be balanced with our urgent needs around flooding, air quality, and protecting outdoor and lower-wage workers from extreme heat.

Environmental justice must guide all of our climate work. That means tracking asthma, lead exposure, and climate vulnerability. Durham can surpass our climate goals by investing in clean energy, walkability, and public transit—while centering the voices and well-being of those most at risk.

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 support a City contribution to partially fund an expansion of the HEART program (Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Teams) into Durham Public Schools. HEART is exactly the kind of community-centered safety initiative Durham needs. I do not support triple-taxing city residents, but I believe the City has a role to play—especially for schools within city limits. With coordination between the City, County, and DPS, we can expand HEART into all Durham schools without placing the full burden on any one funding source.

Durham's FY25-26 budget expanded HEART services and other alternatives to policing. I strongly support continuing that expansion, including placing social workers or counselors in schools during and after school hours. This would get mental health professionals on-site to support students in crisis, reducing our dependence on police responses.

More broadly, I believe Durham's approach to community safety must be multifaceted. Patrols alone cannot create true public safety. Increasing

safety “will require an approach that addresses intervention and prevention.” That means sustained investment in community-based programs like violence interrupters, youth mentorship, job training, and substance use treatment.

I also support co-responder teams of clinicians paired with officers and have been actively engaged in advancing recommendations from the City-County Community Health and Safety Task Force.

Finally, I will continue to bring community voices into public safety planning—convening families, faith leaders, educators, and youth to shape our strategies.

Durham has made meaningful progress in reimagining community safety. I will vote to sustain and grow those steps like HEART and Cure Violence—while critically evaluating how we allocate public safety resources to ensure they truly serve and protect everyone in our community.

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 isn’t just a value, it’s a practice. For me, that means making sure every budget decision, land use vote, and city service works to level the playing field. It also means following the data and being honest about where we’re falling short.

Durham’s own Racial Equity Task Force laid it out: Black residents face higher poverty, lower homeownership, and more health challenges. Immigrants and refugees often face language barriers and limited access to services. If we’re serious about equity, we must tackle these gaps directly and track progress over time.

We should be publicly reporting data like: poverty and eviction rates by race, homeownership and unemployment numbers, graduation rates, life

expectancy by ZIP code, and how city contracts and investments are distributed. That's how we measure whether we're closing disparities or not.

City Council's biggest tools for equity are:

- **Budgets:** Prioritize infrastructure, parks, and services in underserved neighborhoods.
- **Housing policies:** Protect tenants, prevent displacement, and support community ownership tools.
- **Land use decisions:** Require affordability in new developments, preserve naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), and support land trusts near transit.
- **Economic development:** Expand grant and loan programs for local, minority, women, and immigrant-owned businesses, like we did during COVID.

In every policy conversation, I ask: Who benefits? Who's being left out? Then I use the data and resident input to adjust. Equity has to be built in from the beginning—not added at the end. That's how we move from promises to lasting change.

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?

One of the most underfunded priorities in Durham is youth and out-of-school programming, including summer camp expansion and deeper partnerships. Kids and families deserve more options that support learning, safety, and joy beyond the school day.

Another area is employee compensation. Our workers provide vital services, yet we haven't fully restored promised pay steps. I voted to raise taxes to begin addressing this, and if re-elected, I will fight to keep that commitment and ensure city employees are paid fairly.

We also need greater investment in climate resiliency and deeply affordable housing. A future bond could help fund flood mitigation, property buybacks,

and affordable housing for households earning 60% AMI or less—going beyond token subsidies to real solutions.

I have supported responsible revenue measures when they serve equity and sustainability. In 2024, voters approved \$200 million in bonds for sidewalks, streets, and parks—projects I backed. I also supported the \$95 million affordable housing bond, though I pushed for a larger bond aligned with the \$540 million need outlined by DHA to preserve 6,000 affordable units. The shortfall means we now rely heavily on nonprofit and private partnerships, which increases pressure from speculative development.

I would never rule out fair revenue options. If raising taxes means we can fund afterschool care, build affordable homes, or pay workers a living wage, I will consider it—but I always seek out progressive, community-centered alternatives first. That includes bonds, fees that scale with ability to pay, and strategies to grow our revenue base without burdening low- and fixed-income residents.

We need a funding approach that reflects our values—one that’s fair, forward-looking, and focused on the well-being of all who call Durham home.

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.

I believe public safety is a shared responsibility—one that includes strong community partnerships, trusted first responders, and care-based services that meet people where they are.

Keeping Durham safe means supporting our Fire, Police, and EMS teams while also expanding programs like HEART (Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Teams), the Office of Survivor Care, and our Civilian Traffic Unit. These efforts allow us to respond more effectively to mental health needs, traffic issues, and survivor support—while freeing up police officers to focus on serious investigations, such as domestic violence, financial crimes targeting seniors, and protecting our children from sex abuse.

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I've supported increasing the Department of Community Safety's budget to grow our response capacity and deepen our prevention strategies. I also believe in maintaining strong accountability within the Durham Police Department through oversight, transparency, and ongoing collaboration between the department, community, and council.

I've worked with staff and the Police Chief to reinvest in prevention: Police Athletic League (PAL) sports, HEART partnerships, peer violence interruption, and expanding mental health support. Because safety in the Bull City starts with care, connection, and community-based solutions.

My focus is on what works: strategies that reduce harm, prevent crises, and bring our neighborhoods together around shared well-being.

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.

Durham's housing crisis requires bold, coordinated action. We must fully fund and implement our local programs—starting with the strong recommendations from the Forever Home Durham committee, which I've championed. That means investing city and county dollars (like the Penny for Housing tax) into deeply affordable rental housing and homeownership, especially for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-wage workers.

We should also empower developers (especially those based in Durham and surrounding counties that are MWBE) by offering streamline approval processes, density bonuses or waiving fees when they include at least 15% affordable units. While North Carolina law blocks us from mandating affordability, we *can* incentivize it.

To prevent displacement, I support enacting Tenant and community ownership opportunities, giving low-income tenants the first chance to buy their homes, paired with city-backed financing and legal aid. I've also worked with the County to preserve housing in Ward 1, including supporting renovations on Main Street using HUD funding, and I will push for more low-interest loans for landlords who keep rents stable.

Durham should build on statewide tools, like NC Housing Finance Agency's tax credits, and replicate proven models from other cities. Wake County and Asheville created housing trust funds using developer fees; I've proposed exploring similar tools within state limits.

In short, we must build and preserve affordable housing using *every tool* available: bonds, public land, local partnerships, state programs. We need housing for people earning \$10/hour and not just \$120K/year.

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.

With four years on Durham's Planning Commission and almost eight years on City Council, I've developed a principled but pragmatic approach to zoning decisions. I always begin with the question: Who benefits? I weigh every proposal based on how it serves Durham residents and local businesses, especially those historically left out of planning processes.

For smaller projects (under 5 acres), I focus on neighborhood fit, environmental impacts, and whether it increases flooding or traffic. For mid-size proposals (5–50 acres), I assess the trade-offs, like does the project addresses citywide needs like affordable housing, infrastructure, and connectivity. For larger developments (50+ acres), I scrutinize the fit and impacts on neighborhoods and surrounding areas with a focus on climate resilience, transportation access, and long-term impacts on equity.

Although state law limits what cities can require like banning rent control or mandatory affordable housing, I lean-in in on zoning cases to maximize the benefit to Durham. I will continue to be clear in negotiating voluntary community benefits such as units set aside as affordable, parkland, or funding for public schools and infrastructure. I believe developers seeking to profit from Durham's growth should also invest in the well-being of our people.

I look to Durham's Comprehensive Plan, neighborhood input, and staff recommendations—especially in historically marginalized areas. I value

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environmental sustainability, tree preservation, and making sure development helps fund the infrastructure it depends on.

Ultimately, I vote yes only if the proposal aligns with our city's values: affordability, sustainability, and racial and economic equity. My record reflects that. I've supported developments with meaningful community benefits and voted no on plans that lacked them or risked displacement.

Durham deserves development that strengthens our community without displacing residents.

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

Over the past several years, Durham has taken increasingly strategic steps to meet its most critical infrastructure needs, especially in affordable housing, multi-modal mobility, parks, and sustainability by responsibly leveraging municipal bonds.

Our bond programs are guided by voter support, long-term planning, and a commitment to equity. In November 2024, voters approved \$200 million in General Obligation (GO) bonds for streets, sidewalks, and parks. In response, the City Council's FY2025-26 budget set aside the funds and modestly raised property taxes to responsibly service the debt.

Thanks to city staff and Durham's continued fiscal discipline, we maintain AAA credit ratings from all three major agencies (Fitch, Moody's, and S&P), making us one of the few NC cities with this distinction. That means we can borrow for key projects at the lowest interest rates available.

I supported the city's "Equity and Infrastructure" bond framework, which ensures investments flow to long-neglected areas like the \$200 million in the FY25 budget for infrastructure upgrades in historically underserved or unserved areas in Durham. These bond measures also include funds to renovate flood-prone parks and complete sidewalk and street improvements.

I will continue to evaluate bond proposals based on their equitable impact, transparency, and fiscal sustainability. Every bond must have clear goals and should not over-leverage our financial future. Used well, bonds are one

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of our strongest tools to build a healthier, more connected Durham for everyone.

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?

I stand firm in support of an inclusive and welcoming Durham for everyone. When state or federal policies target LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, or other marginalized groups, the City of Durham must respond with courage, care, and action.

When statewide protections were repealed, Durham took bold steps enacting a comprehensive nondiscrimination ordinance that includes the CROWN Act, which I brought forward with the City Attorney's Office. As a Council Member, I've consistently worked to strengthen protections and expand access for all.

Policy and Ordinance: Durham will continue to implement local protections, including efforts to expand coverage for gender identity and gender expression. I also support policies ensuring city agencies do not inquire about immigration status or cooperate with ICE unless legally required.

Direct Support and Infrastructure: I support fully funding the Immigrant Defense Program, which helps provide legal representation for undocumented residents and asylum seekers. I also support strengthening the City-County Office on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, which plays a vital role in welcoming and resettling families, coordinating services, and protecting vulnerable residents. The City must also continue funding interpreters, immigrant legal clinics, health outreach, and partnerships with groups like the LGBTQ+ Center of Durham, La Semilla, El Futuro and El Centro Hispano, and collaborations with DPS to uplift LGBTQ+, immigrant, and BIPOC students

I will continue to publicly reject hate, defend our diverse communities, and ensure marginalized voices are heard and centered in our policymaking.

While we cannot override every state law, we can use every tool we have: policy, funding, services, and leadership to push back against attacks on

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our neighbors. By prioritizing equity in each budget, enforcing inclusive policies, and standing up with and for our most vulnerable residents.

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.

State preemption occurs when state or federal law overrides local authority—limiting what cities like Durham can do. The U.S. Conference of Mayors defines it as laws that “prevent or override local governments from enacting or enforcing certain laws or regulations.”

In North Carolina, preemption has blocked Durham from enacting inclusive and affordable housing policies, operating a stronger rental inspection program, controlling planning decisions (like the 751 project), and regulating fiber optic permitting that’s disrupted residents’ yards. We’ve also been restricted from setting living wages or rent control—even when those policies reflect our community values.

Still, I don’t believe in letting fear of preemption dictate our vision. As I’ve said before, we must show who we are—and let preemption show who it protects. That’s why I’ve championed workarounds: we can’t mandate private living wages, but we raised city worker pay. We can’t mandate inclusionary zoning, but I’ve negotiated voluntary developer contributions for affordable housing (like CASA) and schools (like DPS). And when HB142 restricted LGBTQ protections, I helped pass Durham’s nondiscrimination ordinance immediately after repeal.

I also push back politically. In 2017, I wrote that Durham must provide “meaningful pushback” to harmful state laws—while avoiding legal traps that could backfire.

If a future Council effort—like banning pesticides in parks or raising training standards—faces preemption risk, I’d propose parallel state-level advocacy, seek legal clarity from the Attorney General, and craft the strongest legal version possible.

I won't abandon parts of my platform due to preemption. I'll adapt, build coalitions, and fight smart—using legal tools like building codes or health standards to advance equity and justice for Our BULL CITY.

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 lean on my lived experience as a Black woman in the U.S, along with the data and research, but I am guided by the wisdom of our collective community, my elders, and my ancestors, to keep justice and the greater good at the center of every decision. I then focus on Durham's people, especially neighborhood-level leaders who know their communities best. I gather information from all sides, then turn to staff or subject experts to verify or challenge my understanding.

The people of Durham come first. I don't aim to please everyone; I aim to protect long-time residents while honoring the constitutional oath I swore in 2017 and again in 2021.

When faced with conflicting advice, whether from staff, advisory boards, or residents, I use clarifying questions, inclusive dialogue, and shared values to find common ground. I rely on the data, equity goals, and my commitment to careful listening.

A clear example is Participatory Budgeting. Staff and advisory groups disagreed on how to distribute funds. I pushed us to follow actual equity data, which revealed that giving each ward the same amount reinforced disparities. Because of that, we reallocated funds to focus on underserved areas.

My process includes gathering and reading staff reports, board recommendations, and resident input; weighing each against legal limits and shared goals like equity, safety, and sustainability; then consulting with fellow Council members. If staff contradict community insight, I ask why and seek changes that reflect community needs.

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Ultimately, I prioritize those most affected, especially historically marginalized voices. I weigh all views but stay rooted in justice. And when needed, I vote *no* to push for better outcomes, like I did on the first housing bond proposal.

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?

Access to reliable after-school care is essential for working families and young people. I believe Durham can work with DPS and youth-serving partners to make “Aftercare for All” a reality, ensuring every child has a safe, supportive space after school.

The City already has community centers like W.D. Hill, Holton, Walltown, Edison Johnson, and Weaver Street that could deliver additional tutoring, play programs, and recreation tailored to each neighborhood’s needs. Building on a 24/7 gym model like the one used successfully in Baltimore, we could extend hours and create safe, engaging spaces for youth and young adults, especially during high-risk times.

Through partnerships with DPS, the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army, and others, we can create a shared access pass that allows any DPS student to participate, connecting school bus drop-offs to all of the sites.

I would:

- **Expand Parks & Rec afterschool programs, especially in underserved neighborhoods.**
- **Coordinate city funding to subsidize programs for low-income families.**
- **Align transportation and safety plans to ensure kids can get to programs reliably.**
- **Create a joint City-DPS working group to identify gaps, streamline hiring (e.g. for guidance counselors), and co-locate new programs.**

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- **Improve communication with parents using DPS's tools so families know what's available early enough to sign up.**

By combining city resources (facilities, staffing, funding) with school and nonprofit partnerships, we can provide aftercare that strengthens community safety, academic support, and family stability. I'm committed to helping lead that effort.

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

Durham isn't fully walkable yet, so prioritizing infrastructure funding especially in historically underserved neighborhoods and school walk zones has been key. The 2023 sidewalk bond is a great start to improving sidewalks and creating safer, less car-centric routes. I will ensure all infrastructure projects include safe routes to school, focusing on walking, biking, and rolling.

Safe, accessible paths to school are critical. I support dedicating funding to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure near schools, prioritizing neighborhoods that have long been underserved. For example, Durham's Equity & Infrastructure bond provides resources for new sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks where they're missing. I have been pushing for requirements that new developments near schools include sidewalks and bike access.

Concrete steps Durham needs to include:

- **Completing sidewalk networks: Filling gaps on key school routes identified in Small Area Plans like Merrick-Moore and Braggtown, using city funds to build missing sidewalks.**
- **Safe crossings: Installing pedestrian crosswalks with flashing beacons or signals at busy roads near schools, proven to improve safety.**

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- **Expanding bikeways:** Growing the bike boulevard network so kids can ride safely on low-traffic streets and bike lanes connecting neighborhoods, schools, and parks. I support applying recommendations from the Station Area Strategic Infrastructure study citywide.
- **Education and enforcement:** Partnering with schools for bike and pedestrian safety education, and ensuring speed limits in school zones are enforced with crossing guards and monitoring.

By focusing on equity and safety, we can make walking and biking to school a real, safe choice for all Durham families. My work in transit and pedestrian planning demonstrates my commitment to these goals.

THANK YOU FOR REVIEWING DEDREANA FREEMAN'S ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE