

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

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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?

- My vision is simple - more. More economic development, more housing, more for our parks and recreation, and more safety and security. To get there, we need to be relentless problem solvers. If a project comes before us that is a no, we need to keep working until it's a yes. We must be tireless in shaping solutions that honor both our long-time residents and propel Durham's future.

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

- Durham is grappling with a housing crisis, an affordability crisis, and a significant issue with violent crime. We cannot continue to vote the same way and expect change. As a former teacher, longtime volunteer, and working mom, I understand the lived challenges facing our families and I bring the energy and focus to deliver results.

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 sets the tone for how our city navigates disagreement, builds consensus, and earns trust. Healthy civic culture starts at the top. If we can't find a way to work together, we will continue on a path that displaces the long-time residents who built this city. To that end, being able to work with my colleagues on council is one of the most important tasks at hand. Through facilitating group discussions and mediating conflicts as an educator and as a mom, I developed strong listening skills that will enable me to address diverse perspectives and create inclusive solutions that benefit the entire community.

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?

- I would have approved the budget as it reflects Durham's core values of public safety and caring for our underserved populations. The allocation of funds toward capital improvements is a crucial step towards enhancing climate resiliency in our community. To ensure my decisions are well-informed, I would have actively attended community and neighborhood meetings to hear firsthand from residents about their most urgent needs. I would also have engaged with my colleagues and staff to gather diverse insights and

learn from past choices, evaluating what has worked well. This approach would allow us to make economical and effective decisions that truly benefit our community.

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?
 - We must build a city that's climate-resilient and people-centered. That means saying yes to sustainable density, integrated green infrastructure, and public transit over car dependency.. This approach will not only foster a healthier environment but also encourage active transportation options like walking and biking, enhancing the overall quality of life for our residents. Embracing such forward-thinking policies will position us as a leader in sustainability while addressing the pressing challenges of urban development.
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?
 - While I am fully supportive of prioritizing the social and emotional health and growth of our children, I am interested in seeing data that shows a) that this model is working currently, and b) that this model is something we can expect to help Durham Public Schools. In general, I am wary of crisis response as a primary strategy when we could be investing in crisis prevention. We need a full ecosystem of care - not just one program.
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?
 - I think in our current political climate, this will be particularly challenging as immigrants and refugees might be even less likely to access resources. I would look at metrics such as access to affordable housing, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Additionally, tracking disparities in public safety and community engagement would provide insights into how well we are serving all populations. By prioritizing equity in our governance, we can create a more vibrant and resilient Durham for everyone.
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?

- More youth violence diversion programs. I would be hesitant to raise taxes as economic hardship can actually undermine the work being done by such a program. I am very interested in property tax relief programs that could offset such a burden. I will also be proactive in researching alternative forms of funding for youth enrichment programs, such as grants and collaborations with local universities.
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.
- We cannot talk about public safety without talking about police staffing, but it must be done in tandem with accountability, transparency, and non-police alternatives.
 - I support competitive compensation to fill current vacancies but not expanding the footprint or function of policing beyond what builds trust and keeps people safe. Public safety must also include housing, mental health, and youth opportunity.
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.
- We need to build across the income spectrum while focusing on the most vulnerable. Once we build, our responsibility is to ensure this new housing supply stays affordable. I am committed to making that a reality and support a housing strategy that includes thoughtful expansions to zoning, public-private partnerships that incentivize development, and making sure this affordable housing has accessibility and connectivity to basic needs.
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.
- We have too many unhoused people here in Durham to not be building housing. If one project doesn't work, we need to work with folks until we can say "yes." Leaving connected, walkable real estate undeveloped for years and years in pursuit of the perfect project will result in more suburban sprawl and by-right development, which doesn't help Durham reach its goals of connectivity, sustainable development, and ensuring everyone has a home.
 - Given the state's limitations on what cities can regulate, I also prioritize working with developers to shape outcomes: negotiating where we can, holding the line where we must, and doing the hard work of getting to "yes" on the right projects. Perfection can't be the enemy of progress. We need homes, and we need to be

smart about how we build them.

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

- I support the municipal bonds for the Durham Connect initiative, as it represents a significant step toward building a safer and more connected Durham. It is essential that we find ways to construct sidewalks more efficiently and effectively, enabling us to enhance our infrastructure and serve our community better. I agree with the substantial investment in parks and recreation, and I am committed to ensuring city funds are distributed across our community in an equitable manner.

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 needs all our residents to feel safe and valued, as our diversity is truly our strength. It is essential that we foster a welcoming environment for our immigrant and LGBTQI communities, ensuring they have a place where they can thrive and contribute. By prioritizing safety and inclusivity, we can build a cohesive community that celebrates our differences and unites us in shared purpose.

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.

- North Carolina's preemption laws limit the authority of cities like Durham—but they don't limit our imagination. Still, my platform is built around what we can say "yes" to, not all the "no"s we get from everywhere else. I am a relentless problem-solver and I am prepared to help us navigate the political terrain of this moment at the state and federal level but still saying "yes" to the things our city needs.

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?

- When confronted with contradictory views, my decision-making process begins with actively listening to the perspectives of all stakeholders involved. I then fact-check any inconsistencies to ensure a solid understanding of the issues at hand. Next, I consider various possible outcomes and research both the successes and obstacles we might encounter. This thorough analysis allows me to make a decision that I believe will have the most positive impact. After the decision is made, I remain committed to accountability by periodically reevaluating the choice to confirm that we are on the right path and ready to adjust if necessary.

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?

- Durham Parks and Recreation is a powerful force in our community, and I would like to see ways that we can increase afterschool opportunities for youth of all ages to ensure everyone is able to stay safe while their parents are working and continue to learn - whether that’s through sports, art, afterschool tutoring, or apprenticeship and job-training.

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

- I live in a deeply unwalkable neighborhood, and this is very important to me. I believe in investing in transportation infrastructure that doesn’t center cars will help us meet our Vision Zero goal and protect our environment from continued pollution through car emissions. Moving forward, we should say “yes” to building with density with proximity to our schools to promote connectivity and accessibility.

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.