

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?

Changing the image and spirit of Durham is what moved me to run for Durham City Council. Many residents of Durham do not feel safe in the city that is their home and residents outside of the Bull City portray Durham as a violent, unsafe place. Additionally, the spirit of the city is plagued with pockets of generational poverty and a victimhood mentality of hopelessness that is paralyzing families from reaching their destinies. To tackle the image, I would champion the full restoration of the Durham Police Department to hire the BEST officers by refuting the current "30 by 30" policy to have 30% of police recruitment classes to be women by the year 2030. Durham must practice meritocracy in its hiring practices and, therefore, hire the most qualified people to protect its citizens – male or female. To address the spirit of Durham, I would champion the integrity of work by promoting independence from government programs like the current Guaranteed Income program that the City funds. I would like to implement a partial tuition reimbursement program so encourage our justice involved or lower-income residents to partake. There are vocational programs at Durham Tech that our residents can enroll in that are 6 – 18 months leading to diploma or certification in well paying needed professions that can raise families out of poverty.

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

Common sense: People are seeking common sense solution to societal problems ailing the city of Durham. People are tired of their elected officials making promises only to forget them once elected. Outside of my career as a teacher, I have written articles in the Durham Herald and posts on Facebook and Substack in the past about the same issues that are still plaguing us – crime, poor educational outcomes, and wasteful spending. The climate is ripe now in Durham for its citizens to stop seeking the status quo elected leader who has done nothing and now to embrace the common sense candidate who wants what they want and how preached about it before.

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?

Over the past decades, the level of discourse at the national and even state levels has often been bitter and vindictive. Unfortunately, it has trickled down to the local levels of government and is disheartening to me. Our City of Durham council as leader personify this same poor level or decorum is conducting themselves in public settings. These outburst and immature behavior is an eyesore and does not demonstrate confidence to the citizens of Durham. When elected I would take my meekness into both private and Monday meeting sessions so that I demonstrate what I and the people expect. There is a place for a heated discussion when things can get ugly; however, that should not be public.

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?

Having read most of the 394 pages of the 2024-2025 Durham City Council budget, I would have voted "NO". Too much of the budget is rooted in division rather than seeing Durham as one and promoting a strong work ethic coupled a spirit that the City calls vulnerable and seeing them as more as victors instead of victims. By robbing citizens of their pride and dependent upon government insults the integrity of the people that the council claim to champion. Additionally, the Defund the Police mantra that the City of Durham rallies behind along with its "30 by 30" mandate in the Durham Police Department has not brought the peace and solace to the many communities across Durham while the HEART program is promoted and celebrated. The City's approach across to growth and the usage of bonds means nothing when they go beyond the dictates of the issue at the expense of the Durham taxpayer. Growth of the city has come at the expense of water systems becoming discolored like tomato soup in SE Durham while residents their experience damage to their homes from blasting. The squeaky wheel gets the oil and the desires of the City Council instead of the resident often reign supreme.

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?

Development along major watersheds in Durham need to be reserved as greenspace. This will help preserve our water for drinking as well provide area for recreation and play. Debris in and around our precious waterways needs to be cleared either by paid staff or volunteers to prevent more flooding during rainstorms and torrential downpours during hurricane season. Additionally, protective covering must be placed on sidewalk drainage canals to prevent trash and other debris from entering and washing into our streams. To prevent another Princeville tragedy in Durham, a major flood risk assessment needs to be done so that residents in these areas can be informed, so that they can acquire flood insurance if it's not part of their current policy or be bought out by the city or have homes moved to higher grounds.

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?

As a current teacher with Durham Public Schools, I would not be willing to fund an expansion of the HEART program into Durham Public Schools. With the epidemic shortage of social workers in DPS schools, the funding could be used to pay or supplement qualified social workers instead.

With the current staffing shortage, the Durham Police Department is not fully capable to patrol our city like it can potentially prevent crimes before they happen and removing drug dealers and suspected terrorists off our streets. Removing the "30 by 30" mandate is a start so that the best qualified people can be hired. The "30 by 30" is preventing some qualified men from being considered. The City Council needs to do a part in supporting the good work and sacrifice of our men and women in blue with commercials and outright support of these warriors. I will do that. The Durham Police Department must use the latest best practices continued training for our officers and make it a part of required training and increase in pay and promotion.

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 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?

All citizens of Durham must be treated with respect. However, people come from different circumstances but have equal and fair access to work themselves to their potentials. As a black male here in Durham and a teacher, I treat all my students the same assuring that they have the same opportunities to excel in school and in life. I will execute the same when elected to City Council. One of the problems with society today is their need to quantify outcomes based on race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality where all people need is their opportunity. When subgroups exist, division perpetuates. As a City Council, providing consistent unbiased information and making it available to everyone would be key. For example, J.D. Clement Early Collee High School, where I teach, has been around since 2005. However, many people, even those that graduated from NCCU, do not know that a school exists on the campus of NCCU. With the widespread of smartphones in our world, the City Council could have a downloaded app with all types of information from different groups, businesses, and agencies within the city that everyone can access.

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?

The role of government should be very specific: safety, provide water and sewer services, quality public education & limited assistance to the downtrodden. Therefore, there are not additional services that I would want the City to fund. Should ever a need was to arise, I would not want to raise taxes but rather cut services that are no longer needed or underperforming.

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 totally support the agency of the Durham Police Department but because of Defund the Police and the almost 100 unfilled positions, the DPD is not living up to its fullest potential. Am I satisfied with the Durham Police Department – NO – but do I support it – YES. As the city of Durham grows, more additional staffing will be needed to handle mass security needs should a traumatic event occurs. To fund this additional resources would be needed for manpower and equipment. Hopefully, unused budget to the DPD over the years has been saved to fund additional security, task forces and surveillance. As Durham grows along with other cities in the RTP and Triad, Durham's citizens deserve to be protected from internal and external threats.

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.

Affordable housing is relative. Not trying to be obtuse, but what is affordable to one is not to someone else. Housing, like anything else, is a function of one's income. In our urban area where cost of living and rents are higher, the incomes that people make must match that. However, with our underperforming education system, students entering the adult world with low skills are often employed in lower paying jobs making more of their income going to housing and not enough toward other expenses and saving. The Durham Housing Authority assists income challenged residents with housing and job training. Some receive Section 8 assistance vouchers. The Forever

Home program, funded by a bond referendum to provide apartments and apartment homes for individuals was only a band-aid. Despite programs such as this, there is still a lack of housing options in Durham. By the law of supply and demand and the influx of people to Durham, housing costs are still high. More duplexes and moderate sized homes and apartments must be built to keep costs and rent low. Current vacant commercial dwellings in Durham can be rezoned to residential so that they can be retrofitted to dwellings for people to live. With many of them close to grocery stores, libraries, and restaurants, walkable communities on the bus line can be an additional benefit to Durhamites.

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.

To be honest, I am not abreast to the state restrictions as they pertain to development. However, I do have common sense and compassion. I know that residents near the area have to be contacted and their input would be helpful to determining the zoning request. I would want to also know the domain and purpose of the request – commercial or residential – to determine if the need is valid in that vicinity. Preserving natural resources, especially water, is key to the longevity of the city and thus, how water and air quality would be affected would be important to consider. Additionally, I believe fulfilling requests of citizens for adequate infrastructure needs is valid as citizens would be potential patrons to development. Future planned communities need to encompass potential rezoning in the future as the city continues to grow.

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

Municipal bonds in Durham have not done enough to make any great difference. Too much goes to focus groups and consultants and not enough to fixing the problem. Property taxes go up for our citizens and, therefore, they are hit twice. An audit by our current state auditor would find waste in many of our bond referendum in my assessment.

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?

Attacks on any people in our city must never be allowed. In God's sight, all of His people are important, and he loves them all. Me, too. An attack on one is an attack on us all. The city can make a resolution that none of its citizens(racial, gender, sexuality, religious) will be mistreated and that enterprises within the city and county Durham will be severely reprimanded. Businesses may be heavily fined when they violate this very important resolution that I needs to be put into law. Hit enterprises in their pockets and back it up with a strong district attorney to violators. Very soon their will be little to no hate crimes in the city of Durham.

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.

The Supremacy clause of the Constitution state that the Constitution, treaties and federal is the law of the land. Federal law trumps state law and state law trumps local law. No parts of my current platform would run up against exemptions .

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?

God is Good. When planning it is always tantamount to have discernment and wisdom. Wisdom comes from the Lord. At times to people, decisions by man might not be popular, but when it is inspired from God, everything will work out. Removing emotion from the thought process as well as ego is important. Decisions affect the lives of people and often decisions in the short run might be painful to some. Conflicts do occur because people are above all human. When this occurs, I would need to do a needs analysis , touch bases with parties and come to a consensus through compromise. When concessions cannot be made, I will always go with my gut after prayer and counting the cost.

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?

Involved citizens, teachers, and businessmen would need to be at the table along with Durham Public Schools leaders to determine how this would need to look and what are the measurable outcomes of the program. The program cannot be a babysitting service. The program cannot be filled with programs. The program would have to be an extension of the home so reinforcing what is going on in the classroom needs to be paramount. The program cannot be free, although individuals that are below the poverty level should be able to qualify. When there is financial buy in parents will expect more and students will perform better in the program. Vetted volunteers or paid staff must be on the same page to provide a safe space for their tribe to get daily assistance with homework, acceleration, and supervised play time. With a pilot program to start at our most vulnerable K-8 schools to start will show where enhances can be made before making it in all K-8 schools.

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

As Durham grows, communities should be developed with this in mind. Future communities should me walkable by design with not only stores and amenities in close range but also schools. The Meadowmount Village community is good design but think of that layout with a school adjacent to the Harris Teeter there. I personally do not see how many children in older communities to be able to walk unless sidewalks were installed along a major perimeter of the school of the community. Biking would not be allowed on the sidewalks. Now, some neighborhoods, like Parkwood, would have an easier process since the school is within the neighborhood with low traffic.