

**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](mailto: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](mailto:pac@peoplesalliancepac.org)**

Candidate’s name: \_\_\_\_\_ Durant Long \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ 3803 Chimney Ridge PL, Apt 205 Durham, NC 27713

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ durantlong@gmail.com

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ 919-519-9044

Website: \_\_\_\_\_ [durantfordurham.com](http://durantfordurham.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?

*A rising tide lifts all ships. As America suffers under the legacy of “trickle down economics”, I want to lead the way by implementing the opposite. A city where each and every individual is safe, fed, and provided with accessible opportunities is one that prospers, grows equitably, and shows the nation that we don’t have to be satisfied with scraps.*

*Firstly, I want to form partnerships with community groups and leaders so that we can take a more accurate stock of the needs not met in under-represented communities. Secondly, we must work together with organizations like DPS, the YMCA, and Parktown Food Hub to provide nutrition and extracurricular activities to the youth of Durham. My third area of focus is housing. In addition to making developers provide more accessible housing, we need to redefine who is able to qualify. The restrictive definition of low income, (60 percent of median income, currently \$27,000), is not accurate for our economy and geographic area. Too many Durhamites are denied resources that they need because of an inaccurate classification. Finally, we must fix the staffing issues for our departments and organizations that serve our most vulnerable, and consider a plan to institute environmental reparations to communities that disproportionately suffer from the effects of climate change.*

*Furthermore, I will be advocating for the return of Durham’s Hotel Occupancy Tax to the city’s general fund. It is not just that the state government can divert millions from our city budget to a public-private tourism partnership with impunity - even when the person who introduced the bill was a former city councillor. I will defend the volition and agency of the people and municipality at every level.*

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

*Our city needs someone who is not afraid to disrupt the status quo in order to pursue the goals of life, liberty, property, and happiness for all. With the advent of massive cuts to grants and federal funding, we need bold solutions and a realistic, proactive approach that will work directly with communities so that all are able to prosper during the storm ahead. I am beholden neither to any donor nor interest other than that of the people of Durham. I want to not just improve our system, but work to remake it. Every day, Durhamites fight a battle of attrition by*

*struggling within the confines of our federal, state and municipal government. This is a battle that favors the privileged, the few. We have no choice but to implement radical ideas that will provide more substantial, permanent change, and shift the field in favor of the many. To quote Dr. King, "The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists of hate, or will we be extremists of love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice, or extremists for the cause of justice?" I am an intelligent person, a compassionate person. I cannot in conscience sit idly by while hands from in and out of state reach down to reallocate, divert, reappropriate, or any other filthy euphemism for pillage, the resources that should go to feeding, housing and clothing Durhamites. I can't wring my hands and destroy the environment for the sake of "compromise", then go on to lament the destruction wrought by said development come the first summer rain. I am not satisfied with symbolic decrees or resolutions meant only to quell public outcry. I will fight for meaningful systemic change for Durham.*

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?

*Many decry the often fiery events on the council, but our country has suffered as a whole because individual representatives put pomp and presentability over making their voices heard. Time and time again, compromise by "progressive" individuals has slowly eroded policy that benefits the everyman. I am not afraid to stand up for my convictions. I will not give anything less than my all when it comes to fighting for those I represent. Durhamites need to see that policy isn't solely something that occurs once every two or four years, but a year round 24/7 process that they themselves control. I want to broaden outreach and form relationships with individual neighborhoods so that we may both empower our communities and increase social involvement.*

*I will also seek to make the council a truer representation of Durham by eliminating the at-large seats and redistricting our current three wards into six. Durham is a 300,00 person strong city, the fact that the myriad of neighborhoods, cultures, experiences and community dynamics are relegated to just three wards is absurd. This is an excellent first step towards a government by the people, for the people.*

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 voted for the budget, as the long term infrastructure program support, essential service program support, and the funding of social justice initiatives like Hayti Reborn and DEAR are aligned with my mission of social and economic justice. The most vital part of the budget was the continuance of a free bus service. Just as important as presenting opportunities, is having a way for those who need them to physically access them.*

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 be both proactive and retroactive when it comes to preparing for and enduring these increasingly worse climate events. It is imperative that we modify the UDO to call for a higher percentage of trees, reduce/eliminate the clearcutting exemptions, and leave a much larger tree protection zone between parcels. We have to stand our ground against developers. No contribution to a fund can make up for the damage suffered by our environment and vulnerable populations. Additionally, it is required that we address communities and neighborhoods that have been historically oppressed by our city and developers. We must make right our previous wrongs and begin repairing our urban heat islands, which affect thousands of Durham citizens, their makeup being disproportionately people of color and people in poverty.*

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?

*The HEART program has been an important addition to crisis response in Durham. It has responded to over 30,000 calls in a few short years- calls that would otherwise have been handled solely by police officers. I would be willing to fund a pilot program of HEART in Durham Public Schools if the school site was within the beat of the most frequent HEART calls.*

*When I speak with fellow Durhamites about community safety, I overwhelmingly hear concerns about how crime is being handled. Car break-ins and theft are becoming more frequent. There have been several downtown businesses robbed recently. And we are still waking to the news of a deadly shooting at least weekly. There must be a balance between making sure residents feel safe in their community, which often translates to a visible public safety presence, and treating the cause of crime. Increased police presence is a reaction to incidents, but does nothing to address the root causes. My platform of equity for all directly addresses the systemic causes of crime. Crime is most effectively curbed when it is viewed as a public health crisis rather than a policing issue. Baltimore has made significant strides following this model.*

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 at the heart of my platform: a rising tide lifts all ships. We are one community, and the challenges faced by one demographic are felt by all in one way or another. Government frequently responds to the squeaky wheels, and especially today, having the time and energy to be a squeaky wheel is a luxury those most in need do not always have. It is the moral obligation of leaders to speak for those whose voices are not amplified by campaign contributions.*

*In assessing the challenges in underserved communities, metrics helpful in forming a picture of needs are: school attendance, drop-out, and graduation rates; Durham Housing Authority stats such as wait time for housing and unpaid rents; location of accessible food stores; location of parks/open spaces, and their ease of access; utilization of community outreach programs; and the trend of police service calls in localized areas.*

*Policy levers available to the City Council to affect change in these areas are DHA funding, free bus fare, HEART, zoning guidelines, and discretionary supplemental funding.*

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 city needs to fund a project that allows the bus station and the train station, which are perfectly sited across the street from one another, to be easily accessible by a civilian overpass. I think we could find the money in the budget to complete this without having to further burden Durhamites.*

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.

*The Durham Police Department is faced daily with the challenge of responding to public safety threats, more extreme disturbances, and maintaining a presence in the community. While the presence of more police cars, more officers downtown or on the American Tobacco trail, or in neighborhoods does not ensure no laws are broken, their presence does give a peace of mind to residents. When Durham experiences strings of break ins, shootings, and car theft, there exists no evidence from DPD or anywhere else that leads me to believe that an increase in funding would make a difference. I support filling the vacancies within the department to help lessen the workload of our current force. I would not decrease funding for DPD, but public safety comes from funding basic necessities, and that is where my priorities lie.*

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.

*I am a strong believer in the mission of Durham Housing Authority, as well as rent assistance programs across our state that create affordability, but as long as municipalities are prohibited from capping rent ordinances, there is very little we can do to maintain affordability without being gouged by landlords. I support the creation of tenants' unions as a way to fight back against these housing cartels, as well as a firm NO to developers unwilling to provide adequate accommodation to low income 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.

*Zoning requests must foremostly serve the immediate neighborhood and environment that will be impacted by the proposed development. I look for accessibility, I look for environmental and traffic impact analyses, I look at the capacity of nearby schools, and most importantly I ask if the proposed development fits in the current character of the neighborhood. While our state legislature has hamstrung the ability of municipalities to operate in the best interest of their local communities, they have left city leaders a few tools by which we may shape an environment that best suits the needs of our citizens. We must*

*revise the Unified Development Ordinance to eliminate the suite of loopholes allowing for tree removal, explore implementing aggressive stream and wetland development review fees to show our commitment to preserving these vital ecosystems, and simply grow a backbone when it comes to saying no to developers who want nothing more than to use Durham as another piece of their portfolio. Durham must end needless car-based sprawl to conserve resources, make the city and its services more accessible for more residents, and to preserve our beautiful green spaces.*

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

*Durham has used municipal bonds as a way to subsidize corporate obligation. These projects, whether they be affordable housing, sidewalks, parks, or other sites which naturally come with the influx of new people, have been pawned off onto the taxpayer instead of the developer who is responsible for creating said influx. It is not fair that the average Durhamite pays the price of development because our representatives can't quit pitching underhand.*

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?

*By taking a strong public position that avows our unwavering commitment to recognizing the humanity in all people, regardless of color, creed, sexual orientation or national origin, and disavows the heinous, hateful and derogatory action taken by our state and federal legislature, we cultivate a culture non compliance with any unconstitutional, illegal actions. Moreover, depending on the outcome of the veto overrides pertaining to HB 318 and SB 153, our city must not cooperate with the demands of our thuggish executive branch. We must be transparent to the Durham community about the presence and location of these agents and their operations so they may make safe and informed decisions at all times.*

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.

*Our state legislature has greatly limited the abilities of municipalities to properly regulate and enforce development and equitable taxation. It is especially disappointing that our*

*State representatives have had a hand in funneling local tax dollars away from Durhamites and into another tourism promotion fund. Downtown Durham, Inc already exists, and forming Durham Next is an unnecessary redundancy that will soon be taking \$3,000,000 annually from programs that directly impact our city. We do not need to fund an entity whose mission is to drive more money (hotel stays) to itself. That \$3,000,000 could do a lot to help our residents. If elected I will be lobbying the appropriate General Assembly representatives to undo this overreach.*

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?

*Ultimately, when presented with these sorts of deadlocks, we have to look at where the given decision would move us on the path of our larger mission. In the case of controversial council decisions such as the recent Pickett Road development, where the council went 4-3 for, contra an 8-2 against by the planning commission, many in favor stated that Pickett would provide a cohesive fusion of dense, urban housing with greenery and parks, all while being within the Urban Growth Boundary, thus being a positive development. While those qualities might technically be true, the overall effect had on Durham will be one of sprawl, environmental destruction and overcrowding. We will always have the opportunity to develop, but what is developed, especially on this scale, can not be undone.*

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?

*After school care is a desperate need for many Durham families. The current DPS before and after school care slots fill almost immediately, leaving parents scrambling to find safe and affordable care for their children. The city is in a position to bring together DPS, Durham Parks and Recreation, and possibly some community organizations that already have afterschool programs such as the YMCA or the Boys and Girls Club. The process could begin by working with DPS to identify schools with the greatest number of unmet aftercare needs and pilot an expansion of the program at those sites. The greatest challenge will be staffing. DPS has historically struggled to expand their before and afterschool care programs due to a lack of staff, but with supplemental city resources that hurdle is less daunting. Additionally, a sliding scale could be used for determining a family's responsibility with no one turned away.*

*This afterschool program could involve DPR providing recreational activities on site for students which would give them a more enriching program. The city and DPS already partner*



*with many community organizations that could provide supplemental activities- learning to bike; swimming; cooking; art.*

*Enlisting the help of community afterschool programs to ease the immediate burden of the unmet needs could eventually evolve into a partnership that provides quality care for all who need it both at DPS sites and in the community.*

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

*Municipal infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike lanes in DPS designated walk zones are the best way to encourage children to walk or bike to schools. These assets are most effectively used when there is high density development within that zone, maximizing the number of children who can opt out of the bus and safely walk or bike to school.*

*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.*