



Durham for All Questionnaire for Mayor and City Council Candidates - 2019

Name: Javiera Caballero

Position sought: Durham City Council at-large

Along with our coalition partners, Durham for All has been working on a People First Policy that would leverage the city's incentive programs to support equitable development (see attached). What do you think of the policy? As a council member, what kind of projects would you choose to incentivize, and why?

I was excited to learn about the People First Policy this spring and participate in the forum organized by Durham For All and others. I think a tool like this gives all residents a mechanism to fully engage and understand government decision-making that can often feel exclusionary. Incentives, which use our public dollars, need to benefit everyone. The People First Policy helps ensure that private development projects pay living wages and supports local businesses. We often ask these types of questions but this scorecard will help us and the public at large get important and necessary information.

I think projects that scored well would be the projects that I support.

Do you support the \$95 million affordable housing bond that will be on the ballot this November? Why or why not? As rents and housing values rise, how can we ensure that everyone has access to a safe and affordable home?

Yes, I support the housing bond. The city has done a great job maximizing the money in the dedicated housing fund. We can continue to do what we've been doing for the last several years but it will not produce the amount of housing needed to make any kind of real dent in Durham's affordable housing crisis. If we want to chart a radically different future for our city that is different than what we've seen across the United States in mid to large-sized urban areas we have to be bold. The housing bond is a bold policy response. It not only helps DHA redevelop all of their units it also adds more units, it has provisions that helps preserve affordable rental units and creates homeownership opportunities.

The proposed redevelopment of the Durham Housing Authority properties will have an enormous impact on Durham’s public housing communities. How will you ensure that public housing residents, who will be directly impacted by this bond, have a seat at the decision-making table throughout the entire redevelopment process?

The current plan on the redevelopment of DHA properties involved resident input through out the whole process. Their voices and ideas will continue to be centered as we move forward and ensuring there are consistent ways for them to provide feedback so that shifts can happen will be important.

The Rental Assistance Demonstration (or RAD) program contains protections to prevent displacement and protect the rights of residents, but these rights have not always been implemented or enforced. What actions will you take to ensure the rights of public housing residents, especially the right to return? By “right to return,” we mean the right of all residents who may be rehoused or displaced during redevelopment to move back into the redeveloped communities.

I think there are several things we can do ensure residents’ “right to return”. One important difference with many of the redevelopments slated to happen is that DHA properties will be redeveloped in stages so while residents will be moved out of their specific units they will be relocated on the same property site. This will not occur at all DHA properties but I think it will logistically help keep residents not just in DHA properties but in their specific housing community. Another requirement of the RAD program is that there must be one to one unit replacement. In other redevelopment programs such as the HOPE VI program one to one unit replacement was not required and so as Housing Authority properties were demolished and replaced with mixed-use units there was a net loss overall for units dedicated to people most in need.

And finally the re-development of DHA properties while still leveraging federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) will only be possible if the housing bond passes. We will be using local resources and city staff. City Council and ultimately the residents of Durham, most importantly DHA residents, will have direct access and input to the plan and implementation that DHA uses.

This spring, the city’s community development department recommended ending the longtime homeowners’ grant for longtime, low-income homeowners who have experienced an increase in property taxes. What are your thoughts about this? How can the city support low-income homeowners in the face of rising property values?

City Council ultimately did not agree with this recommendation and the grant program is still in place with a commitment from the Community Development Department to broaden its outreach efforts. One of the goals in the housing bond is to also expand the use of existing State property tax relief programs. The city

and the county both participating in the Longtime Homeowner Grant Program would also increase its success.

The best solution would be if we could create different tax levels for different income levels in our property tax collection. This is not something we can do due to state law but that change would have the biggest impact.

This May, Durham residents voted on how the city spends \$2.4 million through a participatory budgeting (PB) process. Did you vote in PB? If so, which projects did you vote for, and why? If not, why not?

I very excitedly voted for PB this past May. The projects I voted on were:
LGBTQ Youth Center
Goose Creek Tributary Restoration
Street Trees
Art Displays on East Chapel Hill Street Buildings
Bus Shelters on Dearborn
Protected Crosswalk from Lakeview Park to Lakeview Secondary School

I tried to pick a variety of projects and focused mostly on projects that we often hear the city is not doing enough in those areas. I also wanted to support the city's youth and felt the LGBTQ center helped achieve that.

Would you support running PB again? If not, why not? If so, what would you do differently, what would you keep the same, and how much money would you allocate towards the next round of participatory budgeting?

Yes, and I like the way we set up our PB process in Durham, which always provides an "off year". This ensures we have built into the process the necessary time to reflect and make changes so that each PB cycle gets better and more effective. It also ensures that city staff do not get burned out. PB places a lot of pressure and expectations on our staff so not running a PB cycle that involves voting on projects each year helps alleviate that burden. Right now I am committed to keeping the amount at \$2.4 million for projects. As we assess our first PB cycle in the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020 it will be important to determine if we allocated sufficient resources for staff time or if we will need to increase that amount.

PB is one example of how elected officials can democratize the powers of their office. If you are elected, what is another example of how you would share your power and give more people in the community the ability to make decisions that directly impact them?

The city will be undertaking two large processes that will lean heavily on resident engagement and create many opportunities for resident empowerment. The planning department is in the beginning stages of updating its comprehensive plan and they have very thoughtfully and intentionally created a process to bring in as many people as possible. Neighborhood Improvement Services has created an Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint, which they will be using as they engage with residents. These types of shifts in how we govern are possible because the current council takes the ideals of shared decision-making and equity seriously and that our beliefs must be followed up with action. Along with those examples of work already being done you can find more about what we hope to accomplish at <https://www.javieracaballeroparadurham.com/platform>

This spring, Durham Beyond Policing led a community coalition in opposing police chief Davis' proposed increase of 72 new police officers over three years (subsequently reduced to 18). In June, council voted to remove funding for increased policing from the 2019-'20 city budget, and instead to raise pay for part-time city workers to \$15.64 an hour. What are your thoughts on this decision?

I voted against the addition of 18 new officers I was very clear that my priority was to bring all of our city employees, not just full-time employees, in alignment with our living wage ordinance. We could not do both with out raising taxes and I was committed to raising taxes as little as possible this year. Below are a few policy ideas around community safety from the "Bull City Together" platform. We must shift our way of thinking that the only way to achieve community safety is through more police.

Partner with Durham County to create a crisis first-responders program separate from the police department or Sheriff's office.

Expand existing pre-arrest diversion program to include misdemeanor offenders regardless of age for nearly all first- and second-time offenders.

Ensure that all Durham police officers are trained in crisis intervention techniques.

Durham Beyond Policing has also urged the city to fund a community-based wellness and safety task force "empowered to research and propose viable, cost-effective, long-term solutions to violence and harm" that do not rely on increased policing. Would you support creating and funding such a task force? Why or why not?

I would support creating such a task force and look forward to working with Durham Beyond Policing members to make it a reality. Right now I do not think we are adequately prepared to create what their original proposal asked for which, included compensation for task force members. We would have to look at all of our board and commissions and think through the compensation of all residents who serve the city, which is a big undertaking.

This Spring, Duke's decision to oppose the Durham-Orange Light Rail effectively killed the project. What's your plan for affordable transit in our city and region given that the light rail proposal is no longer in play?

The failure of the light rail between Durham and Chapel Hill was a major setback for a robust regional transit system. Go Triangle is working on a new plan. BRT-Bus Rapid Transit may be the best option between Durham and Chapel Hill but there are still a lot of unknowns. Since the light rail failed and bussing seems to be the next best option this is a great opportunity to improve Durham's bussing footprint in the city. The commuter rail between Durham and Raleigh is also an extremely important piece for our transit plan.

Currently, North Carolina state law forbids local governments from establishing higher minimum wages than the state minimum and forbids local government from signing collective bargaining agreements with public-sector unions. If Durham could set a higher minimum wage, would you do so, and what would it be? Do you believe that public sector workers should be allowed to collectively bargain? Why or why not?

Yes, if allowed I would raise our minimum wage and set it to our living wage ordinance which only encompasses our city employees. That wage is currently \$15.46.
I also believe that public sector workers should be allowed to collectively bargain. State employees should be able to organize like all other workers.

Do you support LGBTQ+ equality, including marriage equality and LGBTQ+ non-discrimination laws? Do you support a woman's right to choose? If so, what would you do in office to support LGBTQ+ and women's rights?

Yes to all of the above. If HB 142 expires without having been replaced it will be important that we have a non-discrimination ordinance ready to go and that we work with other municipalities to have a coordinated effort across the state.

As a member of city council I voted in favor of our city council resolution calling for the repeal of the Hyde Amendment and was excited to support the creation of Mayor's Council for Women and to get to vote for the first inaugural cohort.