



Questionnaire for Mayor and City Council Candidates 2021

Candidate Name: Sabrina “Bree” Davis, MPA

Date: August 18th 2021

Position Sought: Mayor

What is your ideal vision for Durham? How will your leadership in elected office get us there?

Durham: Renowned the World Around! Health. Wealth. Progress. Success. As our community continues to emerge from perilous times, I believe that Durham can do better than it has ever done in its vast 168 year history. Durham deserves Better. Better Businesses & Jobs. A Safer Community. Better Health & Wellness. A better future for us all. I’m a Social Entrepreneur and Researcher, with well over a decade of experience in implementing Poverty Reduction solutions using innovations in Technology & Entrepreneurship. Experienced in Global Public Health & Policy, Law Enforcement (as a former Communications Officer), Social/Clinical Research and Community Organizing. Like many Durham residents, I have been tragically affected by gun violence. I have been housing & food insecure. Had barriers to reliable transportation. I have experienced un/underemployment and fallen through the gaping cracks of a fractured Durham Social Services system. What makes me the best candidate for Durham's next Mayor? Simply, I am a woman who knows how to overcome adversity with faith to create a better future for myself *and* others. I know how to triumph over obstacles and tragedy. With unrelenting determination, I will work to secure a better and stronger Durham with; Better Jobs & resources to Businesses, Better Health & Wellness for our families, and a Safer Durham for us All.

What do you think is the biggest challenge Durham is currently facing and how would you address it?

COVID-19 (+13 variants) is currently our biggest challenge -- as the pandemic has interlocked poverty, safety and wellness into an epic force for all of the residents of Durham to overcome. I possess a bold new vision and plan to revive our local economy, while addressing our public health crisis, economic and racial inequities and climate change. I would use the power of the Mayoral office to ensure that Durham’s residents felt safe and had access to government levers to right these inequities.

There has been a nation-wide push to extend the federal eviction moratorium that was due to end last month. More than 11 million people across the US were at risk of being evicted from their homes if the moratorium had not been extended until October 2021. Many residents in Durham will still be in jeopardy of being evicted in October 2021 if the moratorium is not extended again. What protections will you push for to ensure that residents are able to stay in their homes, despite state preemption laws? What would you do to support those who are in need of financial assistance?

I support tenant protections, “just cause” eviction laws and rent regulations to protect tenants from unfair evictions. Durham’s Eviction Diversion and Neighborhood Improvement Services programs would also be utilized to work in reducing landlord/tenant issues around safety and habitability.

Durham has been identified as the city with the second-biggest rent increase across the country, with a 46.8 percent jump year-over-year. (data based on two-bedroom apartments across the U.S. - Triangle Business Journal) What are your plans to ensure affordable housing for ALL residents moving forward? In addition to more affordable housing what are the measures you think need to happen to ensure affordability in Durham regarding renters?

I have a plan to end homelessness that is Housing First focused and inclusive of youth and highly impacted populations (i.e., LGBTQ, people of color, etc.) I also support inclusionary zoning policies to require that some percentage of newly developed housing is set aside for low-and-moderate-income families.

The historically Black communities of Braggtown, Merrick Moore, and Walltown are being threatened by displacement due to private investment and development. What resources and support can the City deploy to help longtime residents resist the negative impact of these developments? (Question submitted by Walltown Community Association)

As an MPA, my background in Urban Planning and Development supports more comprehensive planning and development. I look forward to offering solutions to the Black communities of Braggtown, Merrick Moore and Walltown for equitable sustainability. Incentives to innovate their communities with projects and programs that will be far reaching in these historic communities. As Mayor I would ensure that access to impactful community development programs -- e.g The Institute for Economic Development (Kevin Price, Executive Director) has been for 35 years a great resource as a CDFI (Community Development and Financial Institutions Fund) to initiate community development projects that engage and have lasting results. For example: Tiny housing/duplexes in the backyards of certain residents would assist in providing more affordable housing options and incentives to Durham residents to consider land-sharing/stewarding options.

The majority of City Council's power lies in zoning. What are your ideas around equitable zoning? How will you implement them?

I support inclusionary zoning policies (as a means to equitable zoning) to require that some percentage of newly developed housing is set aside for low-and moderate-income families. Additionally, I support changes to our corporate tax code to close loopholes, generate more revenue for Durham's coffers, and incentivize businesses to be good corporate citizens -- giving a heads up to Apple, Amazon, and Google.

Durham For All and Durham Beyond Policing collaborated on our 10 to Transform campaign earlier this year. Our demand to the City Council was to transfer 60 vacant officer positions in the Durham Police Department (DPD) to a new Department of Community Safety and Wellness (DCSW) and hire unarmed professionals to respond to traffic and mental health crisis calls. The City Council reallocated 5 positions from DPD to the DCSW and froze 15 more in DPD, with an affirmative vote needed in January to reallocate them to DCSW. Do you commit to fulfilling our 10 to Transform demand and vote to reallocate those 15 frozen positions to the DCSW in January 2022? Would you vote to reallocate 20 more vacancies each year for the next two years? Why or why not?

I absolutely stand behind the 10 to Transform demand and would strongly advocate for those 15 frozen positions to be directed to DCSW. I would also vote to allocate 20 more vacancies each year for the next 2 years because I believe that Durham can demonstrate a better way forward by enacting essential changes that transform the justice system, and advance racial justice and equity in the criminal legal system. I overwhelmingly support and will engage as Mayor policymaking to divert current DPD budget resources to first responders, mental health advocates, social workers and better housing initiatives.

During our 10 to Transform campaign, there were deep conversations with our community and elected officials about what safety looks like for our community. The uptick in gun violence was a consistent thread in many of these conversations, with many different views around how we address the gun violence in our city. What are your strategies to address the gun violence in Durham? How would you ensure that Durham has safe communities?

I support federal legislation for gun control and will work to enact it on a local level -- as Mayor to put into practice universal background checks, bans on assault weapons and support DPD (Law Enforcements) efforts to reduce unnecessary arrests and direct local efforts to stop arrests for lower-level charges -- all of which address the increases in gun violence and repetitive weapons arrests in Durham.

In March 2020, bus fares were suspended on public buses in Durham, Raleigh, and Cary. This freeze on fares has now been extended until June 2022. What's your plan for continued affordable transit in our city?

I will commit to support redirecting significant resources to fund mass transit. In addition to focused efforts on equitable transportation initiatives for vulnerable Durham residents -- such as local trolleys. I also offer up some Durham innovation nostalgia: remember when Organic Transit (car bikes) was a thing in Durham?

Due to increasing cases of Covid-19 and the spread of the different variants, there is a possibility of another shutdown. Many people faced financial hardships during the last shutdown. How would you support workers if there is another shutdown? What measures do you think the City should take in responding to the ongoing emergence of Covid-19 variants?

As another imminent COVID -19 shutdown may occur (as many as 13 possible variants have been reported). I am very much concerned that we will be vulnerable to repeating the same mistakes during this first shutdown that held our economy and communities in a locked in and shocked position. I have been an advocate of raising the minimum wage for workers to one that is liveable (some Economists say \$18 would lift a lot of people out of poverty). I will commit to requiring the payment of prevailing wages to workers. I support legislation that would set a paid sick days standard, allowing workers in Durham's businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days a year. In addition, I would work in tandem with the NC Department of Health & Human Services/Public Health Depts and encourage an all hands on deck approach to Durham's community agencies and their resources to deploy them accordingly.

Participatory Budgeting 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?

I am confident that the Engage Durham Comprehensive Plan works well to provide a community specific course of action to create a more cohesive long term live, work, play and grow planning initiative for the goals of the residents of Durham. I have actively participated in the Engage Durham process sharing input through online surveys and interactive maps that have helped to shape the future of Durham.

Not all people who give birth or become pregnant are women. Do you support birthing people's right to choose? Why or why not?

Absolutely - it is at my core belief that each individual has a right to live according to their personal journey. Simply put Equality for All.

Our local elected bodies need to share a collective vision and work together for education for all Durham students. Do you believe Durham needs more charter schools? Why or Why not?

No -- Durham has enough educational outlets for families. We will need to hone in on the access to resources for innovation and sustainability for our students -- certainly not more charter schools.

Holding elected office requires one to make hard choices. If elected, who (please be specific) will you turn to for insight and support in counseling you in tough times?

The Most High Creator (GOD) & my prayer partners, my mentors some of whom are Durham community leaders and advocates for humanity, and close family for moral support and care.