

**Name:** Jillian Johnson

**Age:** 34

**Occupation:** Operations Director, Southern Vision Alliance

**How long lived in Durham:** 16 years

**Political experience:** Moral Monday, Black Lives Matter, Occupy, labor, LGBTQ, and youth movements.

**If elected, what are your top 3 priorities in office?**

My top three priorities are to provide and maintain affordable housing for low-income residents, increase the accountability of law enforcement officers to the community, and increase the economic and racial equity in our city. The rising cost of housing in Durham is threatening our quality of life, particularly that of our lower-income residents. I believe the city should invest the necessary resources into making sure that we have adequate housing stock that low-income people and working families can afford. Statistics have shown that we also have serious issues with racial profiling and biased policing in Durham, and I believe the city should continue to play a role in demanding accountability from law enforcement. Finally, I believe that we should be considering the impact of racial and social equity in all decisions that face our city. From the location of new developments to funding for new amenities and city services, we need to ensure that we are spreading the benefits of Durham's continuing growth and development equally to all residents.

**The police department has said many of the shootings in Durham are related to gang violence.**

**What are your plans to stop gang violence and make Durham a safer place?**

Lack of economic and social opportunities are the primary cause of gang involvement. People who already have the opportunities they need to provide for themselves and their families rarely commit crimes, regardless of how many police officers are on the street or how strictly sentences are enforced. Therefore, the only way to prevent crime long-term is to invest in economic and community development. Good, safe jobs that pay living wages, educational and recreational programs for youth, and affordable housing and stable neighborhoods all create strong communities with low rates of crime. I would direct city resources toward each of these priorities as a council member. I also believe that mediation, nonviolent conflict resolution, and restorative justice are effective tools that can be used to build up the capacity of our communities to avoid creating and perpetuating the conditions that cause crime, particularly the sorts of dangerous cycles of retaliation and re-retaliation common in gang violence situations.

**Downtown is booming, but the cost of living there is unrealistic for many. What are your plans to make sure affordable housing is available downtown in areas that are safe?**

Ensuring that Durham continues to be a city where everyone can afford to live is one of the most critical issues facing our community. I believe that the city should bring together city resources and nonprofit housing providers to construct both for-sale and rental housing that is affordable for low-income people, demand that housing developers who request city funding or significant zoning changes proactively address our affordable housing crisis by providing affordable units as part of their developments, provide safe and affordable alternative housing for every person living in public housing that is slated to be torn down, involve members of the communities most affected by these decisions and policies in every step of the process, and ensure that issues of racial equity are addressed in any affordable housing plan. There are several plots of city-owned land downtown, including the one under consideration adjacent to the bus station that would be perfect for an affordable housing development.

**Durham is now seen by many as a food and entertainment destination. What projects would you propose to help continue the city's growth and evolution?**

The development that is occurring downtown is truly impressive, and I am hopeful that the city will be able to direct some of the resources that are revitalizing downtown into public projects that will benefit city residents more broadly. I would support capital projects to develop light rail stations, build additional sidewalks, and provide more community centers, outdoor parks facilities, trails, greenways, and open spaces. I also believe we should continue to celebrate Durham's diverse heritage and support and promote events like the Durham Blues Festival, the Bimbe Festival, the Latino Festival, the Art of Cool festival, and international food events that will bring diverse groups of people into the city.