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## **General Questions**

### **1) Would you like your candidacy to be endorsed by the Sierra Club?**

Yes, absolutely! A healthy city and a healthy community are dependent on a thriving natural environment. As a council member, I have supported increased access to transit and multimodal transportation, equitable tree-planting, and a resolution for the city to energy from 100% renewable sources by 2050. We continue to have important conversations about requiring more street trees in urban areas, environmentally-friendly development practices, and urban land use policies that can help us achieve our environmental goals in the context of a rapidly-growing city.

### **2) With what environmental issues or organizations have you been involved? Did you achieve any success?**

My first job after leaving graduate school was with a student environmental organization that mobilized students to work on climate issues. I am a GreenToGo member and supported their successful Kickstarter campaign to launch a green takeout service in Durham. I also support the city's Keep Durham Beautiful effort.

### **3) What do you anticipate will be the most important environmental issues you will face if elected? What actions do you plan to take to address these issues?**

I think the most important environmental issue within the city's purview is sustainable transportation. If Durham continues to grow in patternfaces that make it hard to travel without personal cars, we'll continue to struggle with traffic, pollution, and an expanding carbon footprint. To improve our community's health and do our part to fight climate change, we need to shift away from personal cars to green public transit and people-powered transportation. We just

added 2 electric buses to our fleet and I look forward to adding more. We also continue to invest in sidewalks throughout the city.

I believe the city should continue to heavily subsidize public transit and invest in improvements to our transit system. With the end of the light rail project earlier this year, our only option in the near term is to improve our bus system. We can use the proceeds from the ½-cent transit sales tax to expand our bus system and better meet local needs. We also still need to build a regional transit system, and GoTriangle, city & county staff are already working hard to make that happen.

Commuter rail is still a possibility for the region as well, though planning is in the early stages. Commuter rail to RTP & Raleigh could be as significant as light rail for the future of transportation in the region.

### **Questions on Specific Issues**

**4) Many Durham citizens are interested in making the city more walkable and in multiplying the number of safe options for cyclists. Would you do anything to advance this goal? Are there other things that might be done to create non-automobile mobility options for Durham's citizens, rich and poor?**

This is critical for our city's future. We continue to invest more each year in sidewalks to make walking safer and easier in the city, and we require developers to install sidewalks in new development projects. We haven't been as aggressive as we should be with installing bike lanes, especially protected bike lanes. A very productive conversation between Bike Durham and the transportation department was delayed earlier this year due to the unexpected departure of our transportation director. I'm hopeful that those conversations can restart soon and in time for the department to include any new bike infrastructure ideas in their budget requests.

The city's land use policies also greatly influence walkability. By focusing on good design for pedestrian connectivity, walkability, and bikeability in our neighborhoods, we can help make it more likely that residents will feel safe walking or biking and leaving their cars at home.

**5) Do you think Durham's neighborhoods have enough parks, park amenities, street trees and green spaces? If not, what are your priorities for additional facilities and how would you pay for them?**

No, we don't have enough parks, street trees, or green spaces. In particular, the resources we do have are not distributed equitably. Many wealthier neighborhoods have plenty of trees, for instance, while other areas are lacking. My priorities for additional facilities are the Hoover Rd.

athletic fields on the land in East Durham that the city has recently built, the five trails that are slated for funding in the next few years of our capital improvement plan, and deferred maintenance at our existing parks, especially in underinvested neighborhoods. I'm also very excited about the Aquatics Master Plan.

Most of these needs can be funded through our existing capital improvement budget, but I believe it would also be reasonable to allocate additional ½ penny for parks into the budget in the near future. The ½ penny we have now has done a lot to maintain and upgrade our existing parks facilities, and the Parks & Rec department has requested an additional ½ penny to meet additional needs.

**6) Growth and development around Durham continue to have consequences including the negative effects on water quality in Jordan Lake and elsewhere and the loss of tree cover. What can Durham do to limit the environmental damage of its outward growth?**

We can't have infinite growth on a finite planet, but we also can't stop people from moving to Durham. Since we have a fabulous city, more and more of them are going to want to come here, and we have to do what we can to make room for them without having a severe negative impact on existing residents. We also face strict regulations from the State of NC with regard to the standards for development that we can adopt, and sometimes even suffer direct intervention, as we saw with 751 South, when we try to protect our environmental assets.

First, I think we should do what we can to make inward and upward growth more desirable so that we can provide infill housing instead of sprawl wherever we can. Second, we can require tree planting and undisturbed buffers with development to mitigate environmental damage. Third, we can explore new technology to reduce impervious surfaces (ie permeable pavement) or clean our waterways (ie algal scrubbers). Finally, we can fight for changes at the state level that will allow us to have more local control over the kind of development we can have.

**7) Mass grading is widely employed in new development projects. What should the city do to limit this practice and its effects on the environment?**

Though options are limited, we can and do require buffers when sites are mass graded, and encourage developers to use the existing vegetation for their buffers instead of grading over them and planting new trees to meet opacity standards.

**8) Much of Durham's recent growth has been concentrated in the inner city area, which has displaced lower-income residents (and even moderate-income ones) from those neighborhoods and increased the need for quality affordable housing throughout**

**Durham. Obviously the affordable housing bond, if it passes, will be of immense help in this area. Do you support the bond? What else can the city do improve its affordable housing stock?**

Yes, I enthusiastically support the \$95M housing bond, and will be encouraging all Durham residents to vote for the bond this fall. This bond proposal is a bold and necessary step toward providing affordable homes for thousands of Durhamites in the context of rapidly increasing rents and home prices. We lack the regulatory tools that many other cities have used (i.e. inclusionary zoning, rent stabilization, progressive property taxation, etc.) to generate funds for affordable homes, so the bond is our best option to have an impact on our housing crisis. It will help fund a number of initiatives to ensure that everyone has access to a safe and affordable home: creation of new multi-family rental housing, preservation of existing multi-family rental housing, eviction & homelessness diversion programs, repairs and weatherization programs, and home ownership programs. We will also continue to invest the public money from the dedicated housing fund into these initiatives.

Unfortunately, Durham is not alone in facing a housing crisis. Most large US cities, and many cities in other countries as well, are struggling with the same challenges. Ultimately, the only way to ensure that every person's human right to housing is respected is for the federal government to dramatically change housing policy and fund a national housing strategy. We also need the state of NC to allow municipalities to use regulatory tools to raise additional funds for affordable housing. I'll continue to advocate for these critical policy changes with our state and federal representatives.

**9) Durham has made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gases, has funded a sustainability office, and has adopted the goals of the Paris Agreement. Given the city's limited resources, what initiatives would have the greatest impact on Durham's efforts to achieve its climate and sustainability goals?**

Our resolution calls for 100% renewable energy sources in all city operations by 2050 and 80% by 2030. These goals require immediate action, and our sustainability office is already working to provide us with the best research-based recommendations for how we should move forward. We've recently purchased two electric busses and a number of hybrid police vehicles. New city construction projects, like the new police headquarters and public works operation center, are being designed with smart energy use in mind. We're converting all our streetlights to more efficient LED lighting. We're modifying land use standards to encourage density and reduce driveway sizes.

The city can do a lot on our own, but I believe our most effective initiatives will be in partnership with community. We'll have the greatest impact by encouraging all Durham residents to do our part to meet our sustainability goals together. We've had great success with water conservation using this public outreach model, and I think we could do the same for sustainability. Recent

studies suggest that tree planting is an effective measure against climate change. More trees also make cities cleaner and have ancillary benefits for physical and mental health. The city is making a substantial tree-planting effort, particularly in disinvested neighborhoods, but this is an effort that all Durhamites can be encouraged to be part of by planting trees on their own property.

Solarization is also critical to meeting our future energy needs. The city should consider adding solar panels on city buildings are part of our sustainability plan and produce our own clean, renewable energy to power our government buildings. Due to the monopoly by Duke Energy, NC residents face some restrictions on solar energy production, but we can help residents connect to resources to allow them to solarize their homes and businesses.

Finally, Duke Energy needs to be a key partner in our clean energy transition. Because we're essentially required to purchase energy from Duke, and so much of their energy comes from coal, we will never really move beyond fossil fuels without Duke Energy doing so. We need to continue to apply pressure to Duke Energy to transition to a clean energy portfolio, and to lobby our state representatives to apply that pressure as well.

**10) RDU's "lease" of land to a quarry will have impacts on Umstead State Park. The city of Durham appoints some members of the airport board. Would you make environmental questions part of your considerations in your choice of board members?**

Yes, I believe environmental considerations should be part of the process of choosing board members who might have to make decisions about environmental issues.

**11) The demise of the LRT project has removed one option for decreasing congestion and improving mobility for residents of Durham. What would you do now?**

We will be receiving a report from our transit planning team next year with ideas about where to go from here, and I'm looking forward to their input. Since GoTriangle already owns most of the corridor where light rail was planned, it probably makes sense to use that corridor for bus rapid transit. We should also continue to improve our bus system and move forward with planning for the commuter rail line to Raleigh that is also in our long-term transit plan.