



**Chapel Hill - Carrboro NAACP
2019 Council/Alderman Candidate Questionnaire**

Please type out your responses in full below; take as much space as you need to answer the question in full. We thank you in advance for your participation.

Full Name:	Jessica Anderson
Age/Race/Gender (with preferred pronouns):	40/Caucasian/Female/She/Her/Hers
Occupation/Title/Retired:	Senior Policy Analyst, SERVE Center at UNC Greensboro
Position sought:	Chapel Hill Town Council

Headshot Photograph
(published with your
questionnaire responses):



Background

1. Please provide an overview of your local civic leadership/organizational affiliations. What specific insights into our local community have you garnered from this service work?

I have served four years on the Chapel Hill Town Council, the past two years as Mayor Pro Tem. I helped launch the Food for the Summer program and have volunteered for the Blue Ribbon Mentor Advocate Program, Meals on Wheels, and Chapel Hill-Carrboro Mothers Club and served as the Council liaison to multiple boards and commissions, including the Community Design Commission, Parks, Greenways & Recreation Commission, Library Board of Trustees, and the Council subcommittee involved in the potential redevelopment of Amity Station. These experiences have helped me develop a nuanced understanding of our community, including the many ways that

we shine and could serve as a model for other progressive communities in the South. For example, in order to properly serve on the Amity Station subcommittee, it was essential that I learn more about what the neighboring residents—specifically those in our historic Northside community—want to see in that location. Equipped with that insight, I was able to clearly and consistently advocate for those neighbors and support their wishes (I am the only council member who has followed recommendations and petitions from the Northside Neighborhood 100% of the time). My volunteer work and civic engagement has also given me great insight into the ways in which we still have work to do on our racial equity and class analysis. We also still need to do a better job of engaging the members of our historically disenfranchised populations so that our Town's boards and commissions more accurately reflect the communities they serve, and ensure that all voices that need to be heard are at the table.

2. What has motivated you to run for the office you seek?

I want to see some very important initiatives that started in my first term through to completion, including planning and implementation of the North/South Bus Rapid Transit, large scale affordable housing projects at 2200 Homestead Road and Sunrise Road, the completion of our Future Land Use Map, Land Use Management Ordinance Rewrite and Chapel Hill's first strategic plan, and continuing improvements to the Blue Hill Form Based Code. Each member of Council brings their own experience and expertise to the table, and I think my training in public policy and social policy is an important skill set as we continue to work on these transformational projects.

3. Have you attended the Racial Equity Institute (REI) training or any other racial equity trainings in the past three years? (Note: This training is not the same as diversity or cultural competence training.)

YES

○ If you have, what was the most impactful aspect of the experience?

I loved the historical analysis and timeline of how and why we got here, but the most impactful part of the two days was coming away with a better understanding of the systemic, “groundwater” approach to this work. It really helped me to see how race plays a part in outcomes for people of color in every aspect of society, from education and healthcare to finance and employment opportunities.

○ If you have not, if elected, do you commit to register and attend this type of training?

N/A

○ Describe instances or situations in which you have applied racial equity frameworks in your work.

Mobile home park redevelopment has been a place where I have applied a racial equity framework to engagement and decision-making. Specifically, I've asked what the impact will be on the residents, what residents know and want, and what structural impediments currently exist that prevent residents from being successful. Certainly, developers can easily make a strong case for developing land to its “highest and best use,” but looking at the situation with a racial equity lens reveals that the best use of that land is not necessarily the one that nets the Town the most in tax revenue. More generally, I try to apply a racial equity framework to all of my decisions, ranging

from transportation and housing to technology and startups. How will people of color be impacted? Do communities of color need to be engaged more or in a different way? Are we being honest brokers of information and really trying to figure out what people want and need? Are we trusting people of color to lead and decide what is best in their communities and their lives?

Housing Affordability and Local Taxation

4. What strategies do you support for increasing the supply of affordable housing in Chapel Hill/Carrboro?
 - **Public investment, including bonds and taxes**
 - **Public/private partnerships**
 - **Inclusionary zoning and requiring all developers to contribute to our affordable housing stock, preferably in units instead of payment in lieu (and establishing a standard or formulaic payment-in-lieu rather than allowing each developer to “negotiate” with Council)**
 - **Working with UNC to develop a shared student housing strategy so affordable or lower-cost housing is not eaten up by students who are not from low-wealth families**
 - **Working with providers like DHIC to leverage state and federal funding for affordable housing**
 - **Using town-owned property, like 2200 Homestead Road, to build affordable housing and work with partners to leverage resources and talents of different agencies.**
 - **Continuing to work with partners like Glen Lennox/Grubb Properties to expand our Master Leasing Program**
 - **Continuing to financially support our providers like Habitat for Humanity, EmPOWERment, Inc. and The Community Home Trust in building and acquiring units.**
 - **Continuing to support the Northside Neighborhood Initiative in protecting currently affordable units from being redeveloped into student housing.**
5. Do you have specific ideas on how to make affordable housing, both rental and owned (and especially housing accessible to transit) available to people who work and provide essential services in our town?

Affordable housing requires a multi-pronged approach. In addition to providing additional units, we must increase the availability of different types of units in locations that provide easy access to resources and transit (other key drivers of affordability). We must continue to work with our community partners to create new units while leveraging state and federal programs that offset costs at the municipal level. We must partner with the University on student housing so year-round residents are not boxed out of the housing market. We must continue to fund programs that subsidize rent for those at very low incomes and in danger of homelessness, such as the master leasing program at Glen Lennox. We must work with developers to not only include affordable units in every new project and ensure occupants of existing units -- such as those in our mobile home parks -- are re-housed in similar affordable units nearby rather than permanently displaced when development occurs.

6. How can we better engage residents of public housing in municipal governance?

We have made strides in engaging residents of public housing through our [Community Connections](#) program that we started in 2016. This initiative, at its core, is focused on shifting the idea of “community engagement” from a model where just informing residents or allowing

them an opportunity to speak at a public meeting is considered an acceptable attempt at “engagement”, to a model where we are jointly planning and executing initiatives based on the issues deemed important to these folks.

Beyond our current efforts, the best way to increase engagement from residents of public housing is to go to them as a Council in strategic ways, such as holding meetings in public housing communities and attending events that are created in collaboration with them in culturally competent ways.

7. What initiatives or changes in existing policy would you support to make it possible for seniors to “age in place”? How can the town support more affordable assisted-living options?

Making accessory dwelling units (ADUs) easier and cheaper to build would be an excellent way to allow seniors to age in place. I say this as someone who cares for a parent with dementia and could not afford to build an ADU, partly due to neighborhood restrictions, and partly due to our town process and requirements. My father would have loved to live next to us in a unit that was ADA accessible and I would have loved keeping him close to our family.

In addition to ADUs, we can look for good opportunities to partner with developers and our non-profits to create affordable assisted living communities and affordable units within new assisted living facilities. We can also continue to support the Northside Neighborhood Initiative, which has already been very successful in preserving existing affordable homes for the elders of our community so that they can continue to age in the home and neighborhood that they love.

8. In what ways would you like to see our town's tax base diversified? How should we move towards that?

The hope that building luxury apartments all over town would lead to “trickle down” affordable housing has not worked, as many of us predicted. We need to focus on building commercial and office space on the few parcels of developable land that we have left. This will help us diversify our tax base, bringing it closer to the ideal residential-commercial balance. Taking the tax burden off of residents in this way is critical to increasing affordability in our town, and increasing commercial offers additional benefits including increased employment opportunities and improved economic vitality.

9. How should the town address future possible displacement of residents of mobile home parks?

We should continue with our mobile home resident displacement strategy that we began several years ago, with heavy stakeholder engagement and collaboration with the County. We should continue our collaboration with Family Success Alliance as the leaders of our resident engagement efforts to continue to learn more about the preferences of our community members. We should continue to plan for new affordable housing projects to provide units to those in mobile home parks and we should require any potential developer to either redevelop with units for current residents or provide funding for their *full relocation* to units of similar size and monthly cost.

10. What is your position on the Rosemary Street Vision and its impact on the Northside neighborhood?

Rosemary Imagines is an excellent guide that represents the interests of the Northside community. This guide should be used as an evaluation tool for any future development within

the study boundaries and should be enforced by the Council in any negotiation with developers. The guide does allow for density bonuses if projects comply with the uses and characteristics outlined in the guide, so future density is not impeded by this guide.

11. How can the town address the pressures of rising regional population growth, increased student population, and rising land prices in ways that do not disproportionately negatively impact communities of color and low-income neighborhoods?

The town will have to continue to invest in communities that are not best served by what the market provides. This means investing not only in housing, but providing or negotiating for affordable innovation and office space, community recreation and green space, as well as necessities like spaces for daycare and small stores that are not only amenities for the community, but provide employment opportunities as well. This means that our historic communities of color cannot serve as the only places for affordable housing; every person and neighborhood in Chapel Hill should be prepared and welcoming of affordable and mixed income housing next to them.

Transportation, Infrastructure and Environmental Justice

12. What can the town do to make public transportation function better for low-income workers, hourly workers, senior citizens and the disabled?

Chapel Hill transit has seen steady ridership growth over the last five years, and we have won multiple grants that have allowed us to grow and improve our fleet. With the demise of DOLRT, the timeline for state and Federal funding for the Town's own Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line has moved up dramatically. We have just submitted our application for Federal funding and, if approved, could begin this much-needed project very soon. Adding BRT to our major transit corridors, especially along MLK Blvd., will streamline transportation along those thoroughfares and will free up the busses currently along that route to expand to other BRT feeder routes and run on new hours. Expanding our transit hours will certainly improve its accessibility for hourly workers, especially those on the third shift, and expanding our route network will make it easier for seniors and disabled residents to access buses.

I grew up taking buses and trains as my only way to get around my hometown and have used public transit all over the country, and overseas when I lived in Japan. I have tried to utilize our bus system for personal and business uses, but the routes, frequency and hours make it very challenging, particularly when factoring in my two small children. My daughter takes the school bus to and from elementary school every day, so we are committed to utilizing alternate transit where we can, but we would love to be able to use our fare free public transit system more than we currently do. My past experiences using transit, as well as trying to use public transit in Chapel Hill has informed my views on our need for the BRT as well as expanded routes and hours for those who need or want to use the bus, but find it challenging or impossible to do so.

13. Define "environmental justice" as it relates to our community. Do you see any model environmental justice work being undertaken locally?

In our community, environmental justice (or injustice as the case may be) includes ensuring that communities of color do not live much closer to landfills and other dump sites than white neighbors, addressing food insecurity and "food deserts" caused by lack of transit options and

other barriers, prolonged exposure to air pollution and other environmental toxins due to proximity to UNC's coal plant, and public and other affordable housing that is situated in a flood plain and consistently needs to be evacuated for flooding after heavy rains. Our Justice In Action Committee must continue to address these issues of environmental justice, and I have been working with the chair, as well as our Council Committee on Boards and Commissions to further empower them to focus and direct their work in ways that will have an important impact.

- Describe how you believe a racial equity framework should be applied to new sustainable infrastructure or greenway projects?

Living in a safe, clean environment is a basic human right. And as we see with the Green New Deal, working to address climate change and economic inequality simultaneously, with a unified set of goals, allows us to change the underlying infrastructure of both systems. As we work to build more sustainable infrastructure in our town, we can use this as an opportunity to invest in disadvantaged neighborhoods, focusing on increasing free transit, building affordable safe, clean, healthy housing, supporting businesses that can create more living wage jobs, and prioritizing clean energy and green construction in anything we develop.

Policing

14. How would you work to ensure improved relationships between citizens and law enforcement? What suggestions do you have to increase diversity (by race, class and gender) in our police department?

The best way to increase diversity in our police department is to give our department the resources necessary to hire the very best officers available, and intentionally recruit officers from underrepresented groups, by being able to offer more than our neighboring jurisdictions. Understandably, this past year's seemingly steady stream of racially-charged protests has contributed to our Town's reputation as being a place that places a lot of demands on its officers, as we need to counteract that narrative by showing potential recruits the values of inclusion that our Town holds, and how those stand in stark contrast to the views of those who come here to protest and fearmonger. As for improved relationships between law enforcement and our residents -- I believe that culture starts at the top. With a new Town Manager, a new UNC police chief, and our own extremely respectful and capable Chief Blue, I think we have the opportunity to initiate the culture shifts necessary to improve relations in our community.

Do you support citizen review of police departments? Why or why not? What is your position on citizen review of the UNC police department?

I support citizen review of police departments, with appropriate scope and authority. There are legal and personnel issues that the general public cannot weigh in on or be privy to, but I do believe the public should have a voice in informing our public safety leadership's policy decisions. Our Community Policing Advisory Committee often serves this purpose in giving voice to the public and raising issues of concern to the Police Department, as they did during the Silent Sam protests. I discussed this issue with our former Orange County Public Defender and our Police Chief when I first came into office, and was able to gain a greater understanding of the legal limits on implementing a full citizen review board, while also respecting the need for transparency and accountability for and by the public.

15. [If a candidate for Chapel Hill Town Council] What is your present understanding of the co-jurisdictional authority of the Chapel Hill Police and the UNC Police?

NC general statute gives university police the same level of authority as our own municipal police, within the boundaries of campus. Understandably, throughout last year's events surrounding Silent Sam, protestors and counter-protestors were both on and off campus as the statue was practically on the border of the two jurisdictions. This meant that Town and University police needed to collaborate and work together to try to keep our residents safe. Chapel Hill has worked hard to establish a culture within our police department that reflects our town's values and we expect our officers to demonstrate these values while they wear our uniform. However, the Town does not have authority over the culture or values of UNC's police force. I do believe that, through the existing partnership between the two departments, the Chapel Hill police can have influence through our mutual aid agreement and the conditions under which they will support the University police force during protests and other public safety emergencies.

- What is your assessment of the current relationship between the two entities?

My assessment is that there was a serious breakdown in communication between UNC Police and Town Police, especially on the night of August 20, 2018, when Silent Sam was pulled down, and protestors were arrested, pepper sprayed and run down with bicycles. The departure of UNC's former Chief McCracken and his replacement with someone from outside the system (not another UNC officer being promoted) opens up an opportunity to rebuild some connections between the two groups, and possibly impress upon them our values with regard to handling protestors in the future.

- What responsibility should the Town of Chapel Hill ultimately bear for the conduct of UNC-Chapel Hill campus police on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus?

As with many things, since we do not have legal authority to enact the changes we may like to see, our responsibility is to lead by example in our community, where we do have authority over our police officers' conduct and make it very clear to our residents what we stand for and who we are. This includes action such as placing an officer on administrative leave (and later, resignation) after it was discovered he had a Three Percenters tattoo (a paramilitary group dedicated to protecting Constitutional rights, often in the form of protecting white supremacists).

Do you feel it is important that the public know the specifics of the co-jurisdictional relationship between the two departments? If so, how do you propose to engage the community on the matter?

I think it is important that the public understands that there are two separate police forces (many do not), that their municipal tax dollars go to supporting only the Town police officers and that our officers work toward achieving our mission and demonstrating our values. This may be very different from the mission and values of other police forces that Town police may collaborate with for big events (including UNC but also other cities who send officers to help cover a large crowd).

16. [If a candidate for Carrboro Board of Alderman] What is your assessment of the town's response to the racial profiling by the Carrboro Police Department as outlined in the recent Dr. Frank Baumgartner study on race and policing?

N/A

Business and Labor

17. What more can our town do within its jurisdictional authority to promote living wages?
While we do not have the jurisdictional authority to mandate living wages, we do have the power to celebrate those businesses who are paying a living wage, and more strongly question those who do not. We currently lead by example as a Living Wage certified employer. We can strongly signal our support for other living wage companies by recruiting more of them to our area, promoting them through our communication channels and partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and other business networks to put more pressure on those who are not.

18. What do you believe are the main reasons or barriers as to why people of color are not attracted to Chapel Hill/Carrboro to start (or relocate) a business?

The main barrier to entry for people of color in Chapel Hill is not that different from the same barrier that exists in countless other communities in this country: namely that it is much harder for new businesses to overcome the myriad startup costs and then begin competing with existing businesses, when the incumbent businesses are already turning a profit. Barriers to entry benefit existing businesses and prevent new competition. And because of historic, widespread, and institutional racism, those incumbent businesses are much more likely to be white-owned, meaning that a person of color who wants to compete in this market faces a very steep uphill climb. Communities that recognize this disparity can invest intentionally in startups led by entrepreneurs of color. See more below.

What are the existing governmental policies or programs that harm or promote business development for entrepreneurs and/or people of color?

Town Council has the authority to offer incentives to businesses to encourage them to relocate to our town if we believe these companies would contribute a community benefit. I have supported offering tax incentives to companies that I believed would bring living wage + employment, help diversify our tax base, or bring year-round vitality to our downtown. Similarly, offering tax grants or other incentives to entrepreneurs or small-business owners of color would bring much needed diversity to our town's business landscape and open up opportunities for our own local businessmen and women to establish companies in their own communities. Some barriers that Council can help mitigate include fees for business licenses, expedited approval for development or inspections, property tax grants, and tailored communication support.

Demography and Engagement

19. In what ways can local governance better promote student engagement?

Students are a large percentage of our population during the school year and contribute in myriad ways to our town's economic and cultural vitality and yet they are often spoken of as a blight on our community. Folks are quick to blame students for gobbling up all the affordable housing or contributing to traffic without recognizing that our students are residents too and

deserve to be represented in local government and have their voices heard. Engaging with students doesn't require re-inventing the wheel - they are already very organized and engaged on campus, our job is just to connect with the student groups that already exist: fraternities and sororities, club sports teams, cultural and religious affiliations, and interest groups, and invite them to Town events and meetings, especially on topics that directly affect them, like housing and transit.

- What are you doing to engage the student community in your campaign? **I have not only engaged students to participate in my campaign, but I have also worked on specific initiatives based on work with students. After hearing from many young women on campus that the campus sexual assault policies were still of great concern and confusion, I worked with campus, county and town representatives to come together and find gaps in communication and services around sexual assault. I continue to work with student groups, speaking at and attending events and making sure that we are taking the interests of students into account as we make town policy that impacts them.**
- What should be the the role of local elected officials in engaging with student-lead, anti-racist organizing on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus?

As a local elected official, I sit behind the dais every week and make the best decisions possible for our town, but I also live here, and shop in the same grocery stores and send my kids to the same schools. When our student-led anti-racism groups were involved in bringing down Silent Sam, and as our Town's public safety staff worked protest after protest, I found myself best involved alongside my fellow residents. When a large group of community members was gathered at Weaver Street Market, I attended as a resident, but ended up addressing the group as a Councilmember. We represent our town both inside and outside of Town Hall and by standing shoulder to shoulder with the anti-racist activists in our community, I demonstrate that I personally and professionally support their work and the values they promote.

20. Assess the town's response to shifting demographics in our community. In what ways can the town improve access to services and communication generally with non-native-English-speaking populations?

Our town is continuously improving our ability to provide access to services and communication to non-native-English speaking residents. When a large number of Spanish-speaking residents planned to attend a Town Council meeting in response to the proposed redevelopment of their neighborhood on Weaver Dairy Road, the Town hired two translators and offered live translation via headsets for non-English speaking residents. I believe this dramatically increased the participation of this community and sent a clear message to the developer that our Town valued the input of these residents. We have also partnered with the Latino Migration Project at UNC and sponsored a report in August 2018 to help us better understand and connect with our immigrant communities (see [Building Integrated Communities](#)).

- How can our town to a better job of welcoming immigrants to our community without creating tensions with other underserved communities?

I can understand that historically underserved communities may feel slighted if the Town expends a lot of effort (and resources) to welcome and serve new immigrants to our area, when others have been here for generations and do not feel they have been as warmly welcomed or served, and I can understand how this perceived disparity could certainly contribute to increased tensions between these two groups. I think the best way to mitigate this possibility is to invest in our local long-time residents of color up front, from the very beginning. This could take the form of small business grants, more and better after school and summer camp opportunities, neighborhood preservation efforts, and the like. Additionally, inviting our historically underserved communities to join in any

events or other outreach efforts could communicate that the Town is interested in making these resources available to all our residents, not just those who have arrived most recently.

How would you characterize our town's readiness to ensure a full and accurate count in the upcoming census? How can our municipal government increase citizen participation?

The town of Chapel Hill has been planning for the Census for many months now and will continue to do so. We are participating in the Orange County 2020 Complete Count Committee, an effort to design and deploy ways to get an accurate count of every resident and collect demographic information. Despite these efforts, I think we can all agree that a mistrust of government, particularly in communities and neighborhoods of color, will be a continuing challenge which is only exacerbated by the state and federal-level policies on immigration and ICE raids. We will have to continue to work on trust-building through initiatives like "Building Integrated Communities" and "Community Connections" and continue to work with all our partners, including UNC, The Jackson Center, El Centro Hispano, EmPOWERment, Inc., CEF and others. It is critical that we ensure accurate representation in the 2020 Census and we will not get another chance until 2030!

Matters of State-Level Jurisdiction

- 21. How should municipalities like ours express our values or policy positions in matters which are generally the domain of the state legislature (e.g., living wage policy, immigration policy, reproductive rights, etc.)?**

We need to express our state-level values and policy positions thoughtfully and carefully, as sometimes those who are the most vulnerable or disenfranchised pay the price. What we have found to be the safest and most effective way to fight for progress is to create or join coalitions of municipalities across the state, so we are not opening our residents up to targeted retribution. When I was first elected I wanted to push back loudly and often against regressive state policies or laws, but I quickly came to the understanding that sometimes we have to put the safety of our residents before our calls for change, particularly in cases where the chance of success in changing policy is minimal.