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COMPLETE

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Page 1

Q1

NAME:

Paula Blackmon

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Q2

District 9

COUNCIL DISTRICT

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Q3

YOU AND THE ARTS Give us a sense about your relationship with the arts (Some ideas to consider) • What art form or cultural organization do you particularly enjoy? • Are your family members involved in the arts? • Share favorite cultural experience in the last two years? • What virtual arts programs have you and your family enjoyed during the pandemic?

Being married to an architect, our family enjoys all types of art, from buildings to sculptures. My artistic preference is dance and all of its forms, as I was a dancer for six years as a young adult. As past season ticket holders to the Broadway Series, my oldest son and I would attend performances not only to spend with one another but also I believe it is important for our youth to experience the arts. We have attended many events in Dallas including Command Performance, Dallas Summer Musicals, Broadway Series, plays, local museums and around the country.

In spite of the pandemic, I am extremely proud of the resiliency our arts organizations and institutions displayed as we transitioned to virtual programming in 2020 for Arts month and have returned to many socially distanced events this April. Many of the same people who helped establish Arts Week when I worked in the mayor's office are still just as, if not more, devoted today to see the arts thrive in Dallas as they were then. Attending "The House on Mango Street" pre-shutdown at the Latino Cultural Center was the very last in-person arts program I attended. I have continued to support from afar and stay in touch with friends who are deeply involved in the arts since. I want to continue serving this City and bringing more corporate partners to support the arts alongside community organizations like Big Thought and Junior Players.

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#### Q4

**ADVOCACY**The support of our elected City leaders is important to ensuring arts and culture remain a priority at City Hall and part of the civic dialogue. **QUESTION:** How have you advocated for the arts community and/or how will you do that going forward?

We know arts play a significant role in people's lives and the challenges presented by the pandemic have reminded us of this time and time again. From an economic standpoint, this was made even more evident by the study that revealed a \$95M total revenue loss for arts organizations in 2020 due to shuttered stages, museum visits, and more. I continued to advocate for the arts community by helping restore the City's obligation to support the arts, especially the Bath House Cultural Center on White Rock Lake. I used my experience having worked for Mayor Mike Rawlings to build consensus among my Council colleagues, work with City staff, and advance the recently adopted Cultural Plan. I will continue to make sure arts and nonprofits that support the arts are able to partner with our schools, libraries, recreation centers, large and small venues, and community-based black boxes, theatres, and cultural centers, so that all of Dallas' neighborhoods can experience performances and a higher quality of life.

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#### Q5

**SUPPORT & RECOVERY**Prior to COVID, the Dallas creative economy was on track to have an economic impact surpassing \$1B a year, a vital business sector. The pandemic derailed that momentum. Arts facilities were the first to close and will be among the last to reopen at full capacity. The city's nonprofit arts and cultural community has lost more than \$95M and over 1,000 jobs, and cultural tourism has virtually stopped. City support has been critical to keeping these institutions alive. Even in a tough budget year, this need remains. **QUESTION:** Will you work to see that City support continues and how will you ensure arts and culture play a key role in the Dallas economic recovery?

Yes, I will absolutely continue to listen, work hard, and get results for Dallas' arts community and creative economy. Dallas' Cultural Plan is still acutely relevant to the role arts and culture should play in our overall economic recovery. As we return to full capacity in the months ahead, we must elect and re-elect leaders who will support the arts consistently and not revert to cutting services and opportunities as we navigate potential budget constraints.

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#### Q6

**EQUITY AND NEIGHBORHOODS**The top pillar of the Dallas Cultural Plan is Equity, with a goal of ensuring arts and culture are accessible in communities that have been historically underserved. And we know when arts are purposefully embedded in the community, they can fight urban blight and create vibrant neighborhoods. **QUESTION:** How will you keep the focus on equitable access to the arts; and specifically where and how would you like to see art used to address challenges in your City Council District. (Some ideas to consider)• Murals• Underpass transformation• More opportunities for ALAANA artists in underserved communities• Popup cultural centers• Neighborhood performances• Economic incentives for developers to create affordable galleries, workshop spaces and artists' housing

I will keep the focus on equitable access to the arts by remaining in close contact with arts staff and advocates, working towards the goals of the Cultural Plan, sustaining and growing investments in the arts, and identifying underserved areas within District 9 that could benefit from additional arts programming. Whether it takes a high-level marketing plan in concert with VisitDallas or integrating smaller art venues like the Bath House into ongoing master planning at White Rock Lake, I am open to all innovative ideas that will bring more equitable access to the arts. I would like to find more areas to display public art, such as our Casa View, Hillside Village, and Casa Linda shopping centers and parks like Harry Stone, Cotillion and White Rock Lake.

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**Q7**

**PARTICIPATION**The Dallas arts and cultural community is diverse and growing and contains a range of genres, ethnicities, locations and more. Every group, especially those serving your district, is honored when elected officials attend a program, visit our organizations, or even stop by a monthly DACAC meeting to say hello. **QUESTION:** Will you commit to attending local programs (performances, exhibitions, classes) or meeting with a Dallas arts organization on a regular basis? What would that look like?

Yes, I would love to attend more local programs and will continue to meet with Dallas arts organizations on a regular basis. Please continue contacting the District 9 Council Office, and I will attend as my schedule allows. If I cannot attend personally and the program or meeting would also benefit from promotion in District 9's weekly newsletters or Facebook page, I am more than happy to include them in our external communications. I look forward to seeing our arts community live, in person, and in action soon!

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