



Candidate Pre-Interview Questionnaire

The Committee for a Better Atlanta (CBA) is a coalition of business organizations concerned about Atlanta. In 2009, CBA is interviewing candidates for mayor, City Council president and City Council with the intent of publishing a voter's guide of candidate evaluations. The evaluations will be based on the answers to the questions in this document, plus in-person interviews to be held this summer.

Your answers to these questions are very important to the CBA interview and evaluation process. *Candidates who do not complete this questionnaire will not be scheduled for an interview with CBA.*

Please complete this questionnaire and deliver it to the Committee for a Better Atlanta so it arrives **no later than 5 p.m., July 31, 2009**. Questionnaires can be filled out electronically and emailed to cwatkins@macoc.com or mailed to:

Committee for a Better Atlanta
235 International Blvd., NW
Atlanta, GA 30303
Attn: Che Watkins

If you have any questions about completing the questionnaire – or about the CBA process – please contact Che Watkins at (404) 586-8468.

Candidate information

Name: Adam Brackman

Position Sought: Atlanta City Council – At Large Post 1

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City, State, ZIP: Atlanta, GA 30315

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Secondary contact information (If you prefer that CBA direct scheduling inquiries to someone other than the candidate check here __.)

Name:

Relationship to candidate:
(e.g. Administrative assistant, campaign manager, etc.)

Address:

City, State, ZIP:

Telephone Cell phone:

E-mail address:

Please answer the questions in the space provided on this questionnaire.

1. In your opinion, what are the three greatest issues (problems or opportunities) facing Atlanta?
 - Public Safety - The Atlanta Police Department needs to not only increase the number of sworn officers, but also address the retention rate of officers. Simply hiring more officers isn't enough. The city needs more officers who know the communities they serve, the people they protect and the problem areas they patrol. As suggested in the February 2009, Police Foundation Report "Police Force Strength: A Major City Comparison", crime prevention experts cite police visibility as the most critical component in preventing crime. Police departments across the country use police visibility as a primary crime prevention patrol measure. More officers means more foot patrols, better community policing, and an ability to saturate areas of high crime with prominent police presence to deter criminal activity. In addition, increased force strength enables better crowd control, quicker response times, and more time dedicated to investigations.
 - Financial Management - Throughout city government, there are a number of examples where the city has wasted taxpayer money, passed unnecessary fee increases and continued inefficient use of city funds. In over 35 audits done by both the City Auditor's office and private firms in the recent past, there are multiple examples where wasteful spending was allowed to occur, over and over. It should be a top priority for the Mayor and City Council to undertake responsible decision making efforts in all of its budgeting and spending decisions.
 - Productive, efficient and responsive city services. The time for an infusion of efficiency into the way the city actually works is long overdue. Through out our city government, there is a lack of effective project management, responsibility for ensuring that services are delivered efficiently and effectively, and unethical behavior on the part of city employees. Departments and employees of the city should set and adhere to a strict code of ethics, work responsibly and ethically, and where evidence of abuse is discovered, appropriate action needs to be taken.
2. Describe briefly your qualifications for holding this office.

The skills I have developed in my professional life will translate well to my effectiveness as a city council member. I manage multiple consecutive large projects, working with executives and client teams from around the globe, and lead my own internal team in delivery of services, business effectiveness and transformation to a number of clients.

I was a recipient of the 2009 "Outstanding Citizens' CourtWatcher" for my active participation in the Fulton County DA's Citizens' CourtWatch program and am a charter member of the Atlanta Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association, having graduated from the Atlanta Citizen's Police Academy in 2008.

Additionally, I have served on several neighborhood boards, including vice president of South Atlantans for Neighborhood Development (SAND), the East Village Park Homeowners Association, the Benteen Park Neighborhood Association, NPU-W, Beltline SE Planning Committee, and the city sponsored Moreland Avenue Livable Centers Initiative. These opportunities have allowed me to develop the skills and insight that I believe Atlantans are looking for in the next round of leaders of our city.

3. What events or experiences caused you to decide to run for this office?

After spending many years, active in my neighborhood association, NPU, serving as a citizen representative on various city committees (including the Moreland Avenue Livable Centers Initiative, Beltline SE Planning Committee, Connect Atlanta Plan, etc...) and volunteering with the Fulton County DA Citizen's CourtWatch program, I felt that I had gone as far as I could as a private citizen in trying to effect the positive change that our city is so desperately in need of.

One specific example:

Atlanta Council District Community Town Hall Forum – City Council leadership, held a Community Town Hall meeting with the residents of my District earlier this year. At this meeting, a high ranking official with the Atlanta Police Department and a high ranking official from the Atlanta Fire Rescue both spoke about the challenges their respective departments faced with mandatory furloughs due to budget issues. The Director of the 911 Center then spoke of the shortage of 911 Operators and the inability to find qualified candidates who could fill the openings that were available. When I approached the 911 Director and asked him why the furloughed APD and AFR officers were not offered the positions, he informed me that since both the officers and the 911 operators were paid by the General Fund, it would be violation of the law to have them fill both roles. I suggested this “law” could be changed and the various City Council members at the meeting all agreed that it was a great idea that should be investigated further. I left the meeting, encouraged by the idea that the Council would undertake a serious review of my suggestion but equally disheartened that what seemed like such a simple and obvious idea was overlooked by the Mayor and Council.

4. Please identify up to five organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy.

- a. Ann Cramer, Director, IBM Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs*
- b. Victory Fund (www.victoryfund.org)
- c. Shireen Hormozdi, Community Prosecutor, Fulton County District Attorney's Office*
- d. Dianne Olansky, Advisory Board Member, Atlanta BeltLine Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee*
- e. Brenda J. Muhammad, executive director of the Atlanta Victim Assistance, Inc. and Atlanta Public Schools District 1 Board of Education*

* Connections are noted only for purposes of identifying the people. It is not meant to suggest the organizations endorse me.

5. The city government faces a \$50 million budget shortfall this fiscal year. How would you close the budget gap?

There are a number of responsible spending and budgeting decisions that can and should be made. I could list many more than what I have below. However, my intent is to use the space provided to highlight a sample of where I see opportunity in the immediate timeframe.

- Review the process for collecting “uncollectible” Department of Watershed accounts. In September, 2006, the City Auditor’s Office reported that there were 115 uncollectible Department of Watershed accounts, each with a balance of \$10,000 or more, totaling about \$3.26 million.
- Amend the rules to disallow City Council from carry-over of unspent funds in individual Council accounts and overspending of annual appropriations. Recent reports show that 2 Council Members gave back over \$500,000 (\$250,000 each), from their unspent budgets.
- Increase management oversight of the City’s Credit Card Account by changing to an account more appropriate for the city’s needs that blocks high-risk merchant categories and prohibits cash advances. Ensure timely payment of the account, that will prevent confusion over who is responsible for managing the account, how to make payments, and late and sporadic payments. In the past, this has led to the city paying about \$16,000 for finance charges, late fees, and over-limit fees. Source: Performance Audit – Management and Use of the City’s Credit Card Account.

6. Since 2004, the city’s official goal has been to have 2,000 police officers. The Police Department is now at 1,615 officers. Do you support the goal? If so, how would you pay for the additional officers given the city’s budget problems?

I am in agreement with the recommendations put forward by the Atlanta Police Foundation in their February 2009 report, Police Force Strength: A Major City Comparison.

- Identify fiscal means to increase APD’s budget to accommodate staffing of 2,000 officers by 2010, and a minimum of 2,500 officers by 2014.

I believe that through the spending and budgeting recommendations I sampled in question 5 above, it would be possible to support this. However, my analysis of the staffing of the APD shows that there are approx. 800 actual officers who patrol the 6 zones in Atlanta. The remainder of the 1,600 officers are comprised of (my numbers are approx.): Airport (200), Medical/Military (20), Chief’s Office (35), Support Services (90), CID (350), Taxi Bureau (1), Other FOD (100).

In a report published by a major Corporation in January 2009, the following social benefits were cited if the City of Atlanta were to increase the number of sworn officers:

Potential Benefits of Police Expansion in Atlanta					
Crime Type	Cost Per Crime	# of Crimes in 2008	Total Cost	% Reduction in Crime from a 10% Increase in Officers	Societal Benefit
Murder	\$8,000,000	127	\$1,016,000,000	10%	\$101,600,000
Rape	\$200,000	140	\$28,000,000	0%	\$0
Robbery	\$100,000	3558	\$355,800,000	10%	\$35,580,000
Assault	\$75,000	4249	\$318,675,000	5%	\$15,933,750
MV Theft	\$7,000	7028	\$49,196,000	10%	\$4,919,600
Burglary	\$12,000	8769	\$105,228,000	5%	\$5,261,400
Larceny	\$1,000	20306	\$20,306,000	0%	\$0
Aggregate Cost of Crime in Atlanta (2008)		\$1,893,205,000		\$163,294,750	

7. Mayor Franklin has used tax-allocation districts and tax abatements to support redevelopment projects. What would you have the city government do to support desirable redevelopment projects in the years ahead?

I look at the situation this way. What if the city government managed their economic redevelopment plans in a way that helps them prepare for the future, for a more interconnected city and state? What if the city acted in a way that allowed every area that their programs reach to come out of this recession stronger and better prepared? What if the city worked with private industry to foster innovative solutions that would be of interest to government, private industry and the citizens of Atlanta? The city is facing a difficult recession that is also unique in its origins and likely to require totally new remedies. However, there has been unprecedented government focus on the challenges and coordination that should give us hope. I believe there is an opportunity for our government to make bold moves that will have a lasting effect on the important industries in Atlanta. I have a vision that there is a brighter future and that Atlanta can spend a substantial portion of any stimulus funds investing in that future. The city needs to approach redevelopment in a 3-fold manner:

- Deliver value: Focus on strategic initiatives; do more with less (improve revenue collection and keep spending and revenues in balance) and re-align relationships by enabling collaboration and revisiting existing business relationships.
 - Exploit opportunities: Build future capabilities by examining our own governance and organizational structure, cultivate talent and rethink key infrastructure services. Transform the city's economy by initiating bold moves in key industries, transforming and stimulating and positioning Atlanta nationally and globally, where appropriate.
 - Act with speed: Manage change in a way that clearly communicates simple goals; seek and leverage experience. Lead by getting the information to act and set the agenda. Manage risk and encourage transparency by instituting performance management and ensuring compliance.
- Government leaders have the opportunity to lead by example and embrace strategic strategies to leap forward in improving services and safeguarding the communities that make up our city. To prosper, our government must create an environment of thriving businesses, efficient infrastructures and satisfied constituencies.

8. Traffic congestion is a major problem in Atlanta. If you could implement only one initiative, enhancement or management change to reduce congestion in Atlanta in the next four years, what would it be? Note: This should be something within the city government's ability to implement.

I participated in the City sponsored Connect Atlanta Plan (<http://www.connectatlantaplan.com/>). I feel strongly that the suggestions that came out of these workshops and have been documented by the CAP Team highlight concrete actions the city can take, starting immediately, to help begin easing the problem of traffic congestion.

Some of the highlights of what I see as being quick, easy to implement ideas include:

- Add a street network to Buckhead's activity nodes in the densest areas (Peachtree/Piedmont intersection, Lindbergh MARTA station, Piedmont Hospital, etc...)
- Explore a connection of Emery St. to I-75 Northbound (Collier Hills area).
- Repurpose a plot of land owned by the GA DoT in the northwest quadrant of the I-75 interchange with Mount Paran Rd. Neighborhood groups would like to convert the land to a park-and-ride transit facility.
- Simplify Interstate 85 access along the Cheshire Bridge corridor.

9. In your opinion, what are the three greatest infrastructure problems facing Atlanta over the next four years? Please rank them in terms of importance and urgency.

1. Water System.

Importance: High

Urgency: High

Even though City officials have committed funds and completed some of the work to split the combined systems into separate sewer and stormwater lines and to replace old, leaky pipes, the city has struggled to pay for this maintenance. Atlanta is now saddled with hundreds of million of dollars in bond debt for the cost of repairing the sewer system. Atlanta residents will pay for the cost of these necessary but expensive upgrades. While water rates are increasing in the coming years, Atlanta is in need of an increase in federal support. Even with all the work done to date, the EPA's most recent assessment of the Etowah, Middle Chattahoochee-Lake Harding, Upper Chattahoochee, Upper Flint and Upper Ocmulgee watersheds found 302 individual impairments to water quality, including fecal coliform bacteria, other pathogens and solid trash.*

* "Surf Your Watershed." Office of Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Available at: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>

2. Public Safety.

Importance: High

Urgency: High

I believe my answers in question 1 and 6 speak to this problem.

3. Transportation (including Bridge/Highway Construction).

Importance High

Urgency: Medium

I believe my answers in question 8 speak to this problem.