

COMMITTEE FOR A BETTER  
**ATLANTA**  
 A Citywide Business Coalition

## 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](mailto: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 CARLA SMITH

Position Sought COUNCILMEMBER DIST 1

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City, State, ZIP ATL GA 30316

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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 provide on this questionnaire.*

1. In your opinion, what are the three greatest issues (problems or opportunities) facing Atlanta?
  - a. **Public Safety** is at the top of the list. Although the statistics over the last four years show crime is down we have seen a spike over the last 18 months and the people of my district have been directly affected. It is important for the residents the city of Atlanta to feel safe enough to walk, take public transportation and use other alternative methods to get around. Yes we need to hire more police; however we need to take a good look at the retention rates and the career ladder for police. The City also needs to add more firemen, paramedics and additional equipment and apparatus for more effective service delivery.
  - b. **Partnership and Communication with the State of Georgia:** Atlanta has been called the economic engine of the State for many years; in order to move that engine forward we must improve our communication with the State. In 2011 we will have a new Governor and Legislators and I see this as an opportunity for Atlanta to create meaningful partnerships under the Dome. We need a Mayor and Council that will work across party lines to achieve the goals important to this city.
  - c. **Infrastructure:** the City has done a great job staying on target with the necessary projects required to comply with the two federal consent decrees and a state consent order to improve our water systems. The Clean Water Atlanta program expands on that with additional capital construction programs; however we are not there yet. Atlanta must look at other infrastructure needs; our bridges, sidewalks and streets are in dire need of repair.
  
2. *Describe briefly your qualifications for holding this office. (Please answer in the space below, but you may also attach a resume or other description to provide us with additional detail.)*
  - a. I have held this office for the last 8 years. Under my leadership District 1 has maintained steady growth in business and development. The district has increased its greenspace and the neighborhoods have stepped up to partner with the city to support our parks and greenspace initiatives, i.e. Beltline and Park Pride.
  - b. Through my leadership our neighborhoods are taking the necessary steps to support Police. Each neighborhood has found their effective methods to report crime. We have used some or all of the following methods to fight crime: Neighborhood Watch, Neighborhood Citizen Patrols and Paid Security Patrols. We are also using technology as an effective method to communicate with neighbors both at home and at work so that citizens can take an active role in fighting and reporting crime.
  - c. District 1 has become more bike and pedestrian friendly and we will continue to make improvements in this area.

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

- a. I am a long time community activist. This is the grassroots experience that I brought to the table initially. Having served in many different leadership roles on the neighborhood level this provided knowledge of the issues in the community. I found myself taking larger roles in the areas of Public Safety and Land Use and Zoning. Still today I am the Public Safety Committee Chair in my neighborhood.
- b. Having 8 years experience as a Council Aide prior to becoming a Councilmember provided added experience regarding the committees of the legislative branch of Atlanta City Government. In this position I became even more aware of the issues in Southeast Atlanta.

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

- 1) Neighborhood Associations such as: SAND (South Atlanta Neighborhood Development) Grant Park, Peoplestown, Chosewood Park, etc.
- 2) District 1 businesses such as: Six Feet Under, Ria's Bluebird, Daddy Dz, Dakota Blue, The Standard, Adams Realtors
- 3) Greenstreet Properties
- 4) Red Brick Homes and Development, LLC.
- 5) Turner Field/Atlanta Braves

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

This fiscal year we closed the gap by raising taxes. It was a very difficult thing to do, but it was the fiscally responsible thing to do. However, raising taxes doesn't fix everything.

6. *Since 2004, the city's official goal has been to have 2000 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 support the hiring of additional police officers. We the elected officials and the Mayor have to assume the responsibility of looking at methods of funding. It looks like we will receive the COPS Hiring Recovery Program Grant which will get us off to a good start. But as I mentioned earlier we also need to look at the retention rate. We also need to look at methods to create funds, like additional red light cameras, etc.

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?*

The City should seek more partnerships. All good partnerships profit from each partners individual strengths. Government shouldn't compete with the private sector; it should excel at what governments does best; provision of affordable and effective core services.

Tax Abatements are a good tool especially in underserved areas (of which Dist 1 has a few); however we must be careful not to incentivize projects in high profile areas. The City needs to review the New Century Economic Development Plan which offered several methods to support desirable redevelopment.

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.*

**There is not one thing there are three.**

1. **Traffic Light Management:** Most of the computer systems that run the red lights in Atlanta were installed in the seventies and have not been upgraded.
2. **Engage all jurisdictions** (Capitol Police, GSU Police, APD and State Patrol) of Public Safety on major public events in the city of Atlanta. Especially if more than one are occurring at the same time. Schedule special training sessions that will teach them how to effectively work together. Then throw the kitchen sink at special events; especially focusing on 1 hour before and 1 hour after events are beginning and ending.
3. **Call on experts.** Georgia Tech has a Transportation Planning/Logistics/Transportation Management Discipline. Get Students to do a Graduate class and get free advice on difficult nodes and problem areas. (After all, Ryan Gravel was a Graduate student and he gave us the Beltline)

9. In your opinion, what the three greatest infrastructure problems facing Atlanta over the next four years? Please rank them in terms of importance and urgency?
- 1) **Water/Waste Water** – With the latest ruling of Judge Magnuson (Tri-State Water Litigation Order) the city and other Metro Atlanta water providers must work along-side with the State to ensure the appropriate outcome. Georgia has 3 years to come up with a plan for a water source (new reservoirs) to serve Atlanta and the metro area. Atlanta must at the same time stay on course with its Clean Water programs and meet the Consent Decree deadlines.
  - 2) **Transportation:** the last question asks what one initiative I would put in place over the next four years. Well, traffic congestion is not a City problem it is a regional problem and we must look at the congestion from a regional perspective. Atlanta and the metro area must urge the State to settle on a funding method for transportation. Support for MARTA and other transportation initiatives will provide regional connectivity. As the Councilmember of an In-town district, I recognize firsthand the importance of our transportation infrastructure. The Beltline project for instance will increase mobility for nine district 1 neighborhoods.
  - 3) **Bridges, streets, sidewalks:** Atlanta needs another QOL Bond Referendum. But in doing so we must also educate the citizens of Atlanta (utilizing civic organizations) about the long-term benefits of taking care of the infrastructure.