



## 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 Clair Muller

Position Sought City Council President

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Telephone (404) 355-5600 Cell phone (404) 664-5316

E-mail address clair@clairmuller.com

Campaign Web site address www.clairmuller.com

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

Name Elizabeth Henry

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

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*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?

The middle of a significant recession is an interesting time to reduce crucial problems and opportunities to three. The biggest short-term problem we have is the economic situation we find ourselves in, caused some by the economy at large and some of our own doing through unpreparedness and mismanagement. We must fix our financial backyard through the re-allocation of resources and creating significant efficiencies. The second biggest problem that we need to address is transportation infrastructure. Traffic congestion, lack of an integrated commuter transit system and insufficient support from the State of Georgia on these issues are problems that must be overcome for Georgia's capital city. In my 14 years of serving on Atlanta Regional Commission, I have seen an improvement of relationship with city and region. Now we must continue that trend to make better relationships with our state. The opportunity that needs to be seized is the leadership of the fast-growing Piedmont Atlantic mega region. With our location and resources, not the least of which is our airport, it is not the time to abandon programs that insure our continued economic development.

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.)*

The key traits needed in the next City Council President are the ability to lead the city council to deal with the City's critical issues, the knowledge base to understand the critical priorities and the skill to work cooperatively with the new administration. I have the experience to deal with the crucial issues the City faces. I have served on Council for five terms and have served on all committees of the Council during that time. I have provided leadership by chairing major committees for 17 of the 20 years—Executive, Committee on Council, City Utilities and Transportation. I feel I have the respect and cooperation of all my colleagues to ensure that the Council works together as a team. I am known as a workhorse and a person who gets things done, including such significant areas as the 10 year drive to clean up our water/sewer infrastructure. I am now chair of the Transportation committee. I was a Marta supporter before I ran for Council in the 1980's. I was serving at the time on Andy Young's Marta Study Committee of 50. Improving our transportation infrastructure is a must for the city, the region and the state. My 14 years of membership on the ARC Board dealing with these issues will help foster continued cooperation regionally as well.

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

The experiences I have had during my service on City Council have built a resolve to insure that we move through this transition of administrations and emerge from this financial crisis. I decided to run for City Council President because I have the "history in my head", the breadth of knowledge and the leadership skills to lead the new Council to work with the new mayor to advance our city in meaningful ways. If there was an event, it was that the Council President seat was being vacated and I saw a need for it to be filled with a seasoned individual, with the right skills, who has the city's best interest at heart.

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

1) Lonnie King

2) Jim Balloun

3) Doug Hooker

4) Mary Long

5) Claire Arnold

(For most organizations, "Endorsement Season" has yet to happen.)

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

The original projected shortfall for the 2010 fiscal year is expected to be covered by a 3 mil tax increase. My view is that approach does little to solve the longer term financial issues we have—management control of spending, more efficient service delivery, effective financial operations and prudent use of resources. While some of that money went to reverse the furloughs of Police and Fire personnel, a large part of the \$56 M went to non-departmental accounts—such as \$27 M for increasing restricted reserves, money to repay internal inter-departmental obligations, pension payments and retiree benefits. Timing was an issue and the need to insure public safety immediate, but we need have long-term economic sustainability as well. Taxes should be used prudently and should not be so high as be a burden or an impediment to our economic development.

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 think the goal of 2,000 sworn police officers was an appropriate target at the time it was set. As we increased the number of officers, crime statistics did in fact come down. As a result of the recession and budget-induced cutbacks, crime is in the headlines again. It is important that Atlanta constantly evaluates not only what size police force is needed, but also how it is deployed, to keep our city safe both at night and in daytime when population swells. We have already moved to get some short term help with the stimulus grant (“COPS” program) allowing and newly funded increase of 50 officers this coming fiscal year. Other increases will have to be funded primarily by increases in the Public Safety budgets. I also believe we can look at how we use and pay for police services that are not directed at preventing crime.

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?

Based upon the experience of Atlanta's TAD's to date, it appears that their use can indeed stimulate growth and provide resources for truly blighted areas. We have some significant growth of assessment value in some of these areas and the promise of more –especially as we continue to support transformational projects such as the Beltline which is a transportation and economic development project. At this point we are at the 10% of assessed value limit for TAD initiation and so the TAD tool is not a short term source of development funds. Focusing on our current programs to maximize their potential probably should be our core strategy.

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.

Atlanta's congestion and the region's congestion are intertwined. We are now at a position where the ability to gain cooperation and support within the region for the City of Atlanta's needs is a crucial component of solving that problem. I think that Concept 3, developed in conjunction with the ARC, is the overarching initiative that we must tackle as a city. The concept is a blueprint for a multimodal solution to both commuting and connecting the residential, employment, shopping and recreational nodes of the region with Atlanta at the nexus. Marta is the spine for the regional transit and Beltline and Streetcar are also anticipated as needed operations. We have already seen the trend of inward migration occur in Atlanta. Transit oriented development done well can also mitigate additional congestion. Working together as a city and a region, which is already occurring, we need improve our relationship with the state to focus resources on this critical task.

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) The most immediate need is expanding our transportation access by building transit to  
and from the region including commuter rail that effectively interconnects with the  
highway and road systems.

2) We need to insure that we complete the clean water and sewer overhaul with the added  
consideration of our future water supply.

3) To insure that we remain the transportation center of the SE region, we need to be an  
integral part of the development of the proposed national high speed rail corridor program  
and put in place the infrastructure needed to accomplish that program.