

## 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: Joyce M. Sheperd

Position Sought: Atlanta City Council Seat- District 12

Address: 1460 Metropolitan Parkway

City, State, ZIP: Atlanta, GA 30310

Telephone: 404-758-1194 Cell phone: 678-949-8881

E-mail address: joycesheperd@comcast.net

Campaign Web site address: [www.joycesheperd.com](http://www.joycesheperd.com)

**Secondary contact information: (If you prefer that CBA direct scheduling inquiries to someone other than the candidate, check here. PLEASE SELECT)**

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Relationship to candidate: Julma Tucker

(e.g. Administrative assistant, campaign manager, etc.)

Address: 1460 Metropolitan Parkway

City, State, ZIP: Atlanta, GA 30310

Telephone: 404-797-0509 Cell phone: same

E-mail address: miles2john@yahoo.com

*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?

At this time, the three greatest issues that face our City are public safety, economic development, and growth. As all of these issues are interlaced, it is crucial that we provide a safe quality of life for the citizens and visitors of the City of Atlanta.

We must enhance police service across the City so that the increased presence of our officers in conjunction with community education and cooperation will act as deterrence to lawlessness in all communities comprehensively. Growth and economic development go hand in hand with public safety in providing a better quality of life for Atlantans. An all-inclusive look at development of Atlanta from the perspectives of business, housing, education, transportation, and infrastructure is key. Atlanta has great opportunities in all of these areas. As elected officials it is important that we assist to create and enhance opportunities to provide education, training, and jobs for Atlantans, for these opportunities are direct deterrents of crime. Companies and people are continuously moving into our city because of the attractions that the city possesses. The beltline, a growing police force, college campus expansions, tax allocation districts, housing developments, the restoration of historic neighborhoods and the redevelopment of Fort McPherson, Pryor Road and the Lakewood Amphitheater, are but a few of the examples, in District 12 and the entire City, of how we have begun to embrace and face the three challenges of public safety, economic development, and growth in Atlanta.

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.)*

I have been given the honor of serving as the Atlanta City Council Representative for District 12 for the past 5 years. In addition, I have had the opportunity to serve in the following capacities:

- Present Member of the National League of Cities
- Present Member of the Board of Women In Municipal Government
- Present Member of the National Black Council of Elected Officials
- Present Treasurer of the Georgia Municipal Black Caucus

- Present Member of the Georgia Municipal Association
- Graduate of the Regional Leadership Institute Class of 2007
- Previous Chair of Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) X for 7 years
- Board member of the Community Alliance of Metropolitan pkwy CDC for 10 years
- Previous Board Member of Keep Atlanta Beautiful
- Previous member of Atlanta Planning Advisory Board

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

In earlier years, I first pursued the opportunity to become an agent of change as a community leader. I then became involved with the City as well as other institutions and agencies where I learned how to work with these entities to further effect change and better my immediate area. When the Council seat became vacant in 2004, community residents asked me to run for public office. I was inspired to run for office by the many things that I saw could be better in Atlanta, but specifically, those items in District 12 that needed improvement. There was blight, public safety issues, and community improvements that needed to be made in my neighborhood. These were all great concerns to me. I saw the opportunity to demonstrate a belief in community and a better Atlanta by exercising my desire and ability to make a difference as an elected official. It has been a continuous commitment that has expanded to all of the City of Atlanta. I look forward to continuing in this capacity hand in hand with my fellow Atlantans through our struggles and accomplishments.

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

- 1) Congressman John Lewis
- 2) Rosel Fann, Community Leader
- 3) Diane Bryant, Chair of NPU X
- 4) Jerome Russell, President of H.J. Russell & Company
- 5) State Senator Nan Orrock

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

The closing of the budget shortfall is a balancing act that has to be a multifaceted approach in this current economy. As City Council Members, we have had to make very difficult decisions to meet the many service needs of the citizens with very limited financial resources. In the previous years, we had already cut departments and created furloughs to keep the budget balanced. We increased surcharges in areas that were needed based on industry standards and are contemplating a sale of the City jail. We have worked with the City's Chief Financial Officer and the Mayor to find viable options and make tax increases a last resort. However, as we assessed every department and the City revenue streams, the proposal of a tax increase to maintain dwindling City services and to deter a further growth of the unemployment of City workers, many of whom live in District 12, became our last feasible choice.

After many meetings with economist, finance experts and citizens, the current City Council and the Mayor enacted legislation to increase the tax rate by 3 mills. The millage increase brought the city employees off of furloughs and provided a greater opportunity for better city service.

As a result the last 2 years of deficits in the City have been a valuable learning experience. As a City Council, my colleagues and I are committed to a 5 year plan of financial stability for the city. We will work within this year to continue to create a plan of action for this process. This evaluation will cover every department and amenities with the city.

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?

Yes, I support the goal of 2000, police officers. We have just received a COP grant for 50 additional officers through funds from the Obama administration. My commitment is to continue pursue any additional funding available nationally and locally. Also to continue to scrutinize our finances internally to determine where money is available for more officers. I will also continue to pursue avenues with State Legislators to introduce a referendum to assess the community's desire for a tax increase to fund an increase of police officers in the City through a Local Options Sales Tax.

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 would have City government to continue to work with the Atlanta Development Authority to complete the authorization of bond issuances for all outstanding TADs in Atlanta, and promote the Business Improvement Loan Fund program and the federal tax credits available through the Atlanta Renewal Community program. We should encourage the use of New Market Tax Credits and work with business districts to create more Commercial Improvement Districts. It is also important to promote the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to assist in turning over high foreclosure neighborhoods.

These are all vital for the growth of Atlanta. We need to see economic investment in the southern crescent of the city. To that point, it is imperative that the Fort McPherson redevelopment plan move forward. I will continue to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure its success. The proposal to convert the Army base into a biotechnology center would enhance Atlanta's existing strengths as well as attract new jobs and industry participants to Atlanta's south side. In addition, we need to initiate and/or complete corridor studies and Livable Centers Initiatives that can lay the foundation for economic investment and development.

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.

Earlier this year, the Council passed the Connect Atlanta Plan which comprehensively addresses the city's transportation problems – of which, traffic congestion is just one. This plan looks at the long-term transportation issues facing the city. It is imperative that we begin implementing the plan and I would work to see this happen. Traffic congestion is a symptom of the larger problem facing the City, so we must adjust and reshape our approach to such things as land use, zoning, street grids, traffic patterns and pedestrian friendly development. One example is implementing neighborhood commercial zoning districts for business nodes along the corridors that run through our neighborhoods. Such zoning creates pedestrian friendly areas where residents can walk from their homes to local businesses. It also encourages live-work developments, cutting down further on the need for getting in one's car. In 2008, I was able to pass legislation that rezoned the commercial nodes at Dill Avenue and Metropolitan Parkway and Sylvan Road to neighborhood commercial. The Connect

Atlanta Plan has identified further goals and necessary steps that will address Atlanta's traffic and transportation issues.

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 critical infrastructure that the City has is its bureaucracy. If our departments are not running in a lean, efficient and effective manner, than the rest really does not matter. We cannot continue to fall behind in the providing vital city services to our residents. The City's Audit Department, as well as the Bain Report have clearly identified ways in which the City can and must improve it's own performance. Every tax dollar that comes into the City must be used in the most efficient and biggest bang for our buck manner.
  - 2) The provision of water for the City of Atlanta and State, including the completion of the water-sewer consent decree project.
  - 3) Review and re-evaluate the Atlanta Police Department from top to bottom. Addressing retention and recruitment of officers, and the way in which the command structure functions.