

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

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Position Sought: Mayor of Atlanta

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1. In your opinion what are the three greatest issues (problems or opportunities) facing Atlanta?

Our prosperity depends on our human capital. Attracting and keeping smart, talented, innovative, and forward-looking people in our city who in turn attract and keep businesses here is the key to jobs, economic development, and prosperity. Making this city an attractive place for people who, because of their talent, have the ability to move elsewhere is dependent on City Hall doing its job right. Without public safety, clean streets, well-maintained neighborhoods, and books balanced well enough to give us a sense of security, we lose our human capital, and having lost our human capital we'd lose jobs. Making our city work again is the foundation upon which Atlanta's future economic development rests.

1. Public Safety

Our city must be safe. It must be safe for our residents and our visitors. We need strong leadership in our Police and Fire Departments, and we need a hands-on Mayor who will be a strong advocate for funding for our public safety personnel: their compensation, equipment, and operational procedures. Our challenge is greater than the number of police officers and firefighters, although full strength for both is critical for Atlanta's future vitality, growth and prosperity.

2. Transportation

As a member of the Metro Chamber's Transportation Council in the 1990's, I have a long-standing interest in our city and region's transportation challenges and opportunities. It is critical that we work closely with the State of Georgia to fund transportation improvements so that our city and region can continue to thrive. The City of Atlanta has recently adopted its first-ever transportation plan, which outlines future transportation improvements for our city as the city is redeveloped. It is essential that this redevelopment occur with the implementation of the plan's recommendations once final scrutiny has been concluded.

3. Water

With the recent decision in the tri-state water wars, it is critical that we work at a regional and national level to determine water availability for our region. It is also essential that Atlanta explore all options for obtaining water as we do so. The citizens of Atlanta have invested heavily in water and wastewater systems. This must continue with oversight to ensure that all additional expenditures are cost effective and deliver the results that will continue the community's confidence in the investments we are making.

While I have listed three critical issues here, Public Safety, Transportation, and Water, all of these ultimately hinge on financial transparency and sound budgeting, and I have addressed that issue at some length in a position paper posted on my website, which I also urge you to read. Please visit www.MaryNorwoodForMayor.com and click on "Issues."

2. Describe briefly your qualifications for holding this office.

As a thirty-five year resident of the city, and a lifelong resident of the State, I have spent the past twenty years involved in issues affecting our city and region--first as a community advocate and then as an at-large city councilwoman. This experience has enabled me to acquire an in-depth understanding of all communities within our city and build the relationships that will enable us to tackle the challenges we face and produce the results we need that will make the City work for us again.

As a businesswoman of thirty-five years, the first seventeen were spent in the broadcasting industry, where as the Chief Operating Officer for Rounsaville Radio Stations, we were able to turn-around a chain of radio stations located throughout the southeast and market them successfully to national media companies. Subsequently, we formed a media brokerage company, where as the principal broker for Rounsaville Realty, I was honored to be the President of the National Association of Media Brokers.

For the past 18 years, I have successfully owned and operated Norwood Communications, an internet-based broadcast voice company. Doing business as onecallweb.com, we were one of the first companies in computer telephony in the 1990's and serve clients today throughout the United States and Canada.

In addition to being an accomplished businesswoman, I have a deep history of volunteer experience in running both established nonprofits as well as start-up organizations. My career has spanned involvement in the arts, the environment, the disability community, the criminal justice system, and preservation and development.

As a city council member, I have been actively involved in the issues that affect our city and our citizens including public safety, zoning, community development, transportation, and the environment. For further information, please see the position papers located on my website: www.MaryNorwoodForMayor.com.

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

Our city is at a crossroads and we need strong leadership from someone whose only goal is to make our city work for us again. As citizens are flocking into our city, it is essential that our city be developed in a way that will utilize good design, sustainable communities and enhance our quality of life.

Understanding all of our city's communities and have the trust of all of our city's communities is essential for the next Mayor to bring the consensus we will need to move our city forward.

As a community advocate for over 10 years, I realized that in order to effectuate the changes that we need in city government, it was necessary for me to run for office. With much encouragement from throughout the entire city, in 2001, I was honored to be elected citywide by over 42,000 voters. I have worked tirelessly on issues of importance to our city and our broader community, and again in 2005 was re-elected with the most votes of any member of council.

My decision to run for Mayor has been as a result of a citywide outpouring of support for a leader who understands in detail what needs to be done at city hall to make our city work for us again; making our city safe, fixing our finances, effectively and efficiently delivering city services, and enhancing the quality of life for all Atlantans.

Our city needs to work better so that all Atlantans receive good city services and have the faith and trust in our city government. As an individual who has spent 35 years in broadcasting and communications, as Mayor, I intend to keep our citizenry informed; our government's operations transparent and accountable, and work closely with the business community to have our city "ready for business" and "ready for company."

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

My candidacy is supported by thousands of citizens throughout every part of our City. With over 3,000 financial contributions to the campaign, over 2,000 yard signs in every part of our city, and thousands of supporters and volunteers, the Norwood campaign is one where every person is valued, every contribution is valued, and every citizen knows that all issues, large and small, are important to our city working for them again.

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

We have suffered from years of ENRON-like accounting in the City of Atlanta, none of which was known to the press, the public, or the Council until the house of cards collapsed in early 2008 and could be hidden no longer. The STRICTEST of accounting systems and the strongest of budgetary discipline will be the hallmark of the Norwood Administration.

The city has closed only the most immediate and pressing gap with the adoption of the FY 2010 budget. Going forward, our finances remain perilously fragile, so it is essential that the city set up the processes to

collect all of the revenue that is owed along with redeveloping the city to bring a larger tax base and enable us to grow the city and have all of our citizens share in our prosperity. I have addressed these issues at some length in a position paper posted on my website, which I also urge you to read. Please visit www.MaryNorwoodForMayor.com and click on "Issues."

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?

Nothing is more important than keeping our citizens safe. Reaching our goal for 2,000 officers is more complex than just acknowledging that it needs to be done. We have operational issues, retention issues, leadership issues, and deployment issues that must be dealt with. There will be new leadership at the Police Department and it is critical that the next leader be a strong, hands-on chief who will inspire the men and women of the department.

The next Mayor must be willing to be a vocal spokesperson for the city's financial condition and challenges and communicate effectively with our citizens about a plan going forward for fiscal solvency. Transparency and accountability are essential components to having the trust of our citizens that the city is working for them again.

I have issued a 12-Point Plan to restore public safety to our City. It is posted on my website, and I urge you to it. Please visit www.MaryNorwoodForMayor.com and click on "Issues."

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?

It is important to understand the background to the challenge the new Norwood Administration will face regarding development in its first years in office. The confluence of three trends presents a difficult row to hoe but – in the end – a canvass large enough to do great things. Here are the three streams that together present both our difficulties and our opportunities:

(a) We have a global economic downturn unprecedented in most of our memories, with particular impact on the housing market, all of which would be bad, but for Atlanta the Great Recession overlays existing problems with foreclosures and blight in large swaths of our residential capital stock, particularly on the Southside, areas which have not seen investment commensurate with the returns to be made there, all compounded by high incidences of mortgage fraud.

(b) The population of our city doubles every day with commuters who work in Atlanta, yet the State has resolutely blocked any continuing and appropriate way to support the infrastructure that the city provides to the entire region, forcing Atlanta in effect to subsidize the economies and development of the rest of the Metro area.

(c) Past city administrations have neglected the institutional underpinnings of development in a host of ways, including the mismanagement of traffic "hot spots," failure to enforce codes and clean the streets, and the inability of permitting and licensing offices to provide acceptable services.

The global recession is not under our control, but we can get people into homes when we devote the time, energy, and attention to detail that it takes, and that will be a major focus of the Norwood Administration. Atlanta cannot compel the state to support the subsidies we give to the metro area, but it will be a key focus of the Norwood Administration to work toward a compromise on a regional basis that one way or another

equalizes funding on a regional basis. And under a Norwood Administration, the bureaucrats will do what their job descriptions spell out, and that will facilitate development.

With that as background, we have to recognize that our new administration will need to look for ways to support development across a wide spectrum. No one strategy will suffice in these circumstances. We must proceed simultaneously down as many avenues as we find open. Here are some:

We should make use of a program made available under the recent 2009 economic stimulus legislation, President Obama's Recovery Act, which provides for the Treasury to subsidize of 45% of the interest on bonds issued by the city in a recovery zone. The City, under this legislation, designates recovery zones as we think best. The objective of this program is to employ people in meaningful community development initiatives, but is a good tool for redevelopment of areas in our city that sorely lack healthy economic growth. In addition, economic stimulus bonds are bonds that private business can issue and use to expand its business employing people and the city is not responsible if the bonds are in default. We have until the end of 2010 to make use of these opportunities, and it will be a high priority of the Norwood Administration to do so in a timely, targeted and efficient way.

We must also hire a commissioner of planning and development who is grounded in good and sustainable design and let him/her do his job. We must make the city work by fixing the building permitting process and streamlining city hall processes. We must get the city safe and clean in all parts of the city share in the prosperity.

Green practices and processes are key to our future. A Norwood Administration will

1. Re-harvest abandoned commercial corridors with new Live-Work-Play environments.
2. Make sure that laws are enforced equitably and systematically so that our inspectors' time can be spent getting projects "out the door" rather than the "cat and mouse" chasing the violators of the law.
3. Free up the bureaucracy if there are logjams in the system and working with the professional associations to craft the laws so that they work. (As an example, I have worked with the Georgia Restaurant Association to re-write the grease trap ordinance; it is languishing in committee. This is simply unacceptable)
4. Utilize the "fixing broken windows" theory with code enforcement that actually gets the job done.

8. Traffic congestion is 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?

We need to make use of affordable technologies that will enable us to move the traffic we have better on the roads we have. The obvious example is to synchronize our traffic signals. Beyond that, however, we need real-time monitoring of traffic flows so that we can dispatch small-scale public transit (vans, "jitneys") to make connectivity with the Beltline, MARTA, and the Peachtree Streetcar something that actually works for ordinary Atlantans in the context of their daily lives, meaning that the cost (both monetary and time) of using public transit does not exceed the cost of driving. With investment in real-time management and monitoring of traffic, we can make substantial improvements in our traffic flow within four years and within budget.

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
2. Transportation
3. Redevelopment of areas blighted or otherwise lacking the underpinnings of urban life, such as commercial and retail development, parks and playgrounds, schools and sidewalks and other amenities.