

## 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.

### **information:**

Name: Shelitha Robertson

Position Sought: Atlanta City Council Post 3 At Large

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

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

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

City, State, ZIP: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Telephone: [Click here to enter text.](#) Cell phone: [Click here to enter text.](#)

E-mail address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

*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?

Opportunity Number 1-Atlanta should focus on developing a manufacturing base which would include a variety of products. There are a number of incentives that should be offered to prospective manufacturers such as creating additional Tax Allocation Districts, improvement of roads if necessary, and recruitment of skilled workers, develop industry-specific training programs for potential workers through a partnership with Atlanta Technical College. There are many acres of former industrial facilities within the corporate boundaries of Atlanta which could be developed for this program. An excellent transportation infrastructure is presently in place to accommodate the shipping of finished products.

Opportunity Number 2-Atlanta must undertake efforts to become a destination city for cultural, scientific, and cultural events. Local public private colleges and universities must coordinate efforts and develop such programs to attract a wide audience, including families. These programs should be designed to attract students, faculty, and writers from the United States and foreign countries. The current cultural and historical offerings are adequate, however, these offerings should be promoted at a national and international level.

Opportunity Number 3-Atlanta should continue present efforts to place the city in the top ten livable cities in America. Atlanta once had this distinction. Neighborhoods should become stable and livable. Economic development should conform to the needs of the surrounding community. All communities thrive when residents feel comfortable to walk to stores, shops, and other settings..

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.)*

During the past 22 years, I have had the opportunity to serve the City of Atlanta in various capacities as a police officer for ten years, public defender for five years, and assistant city attorney for seven

years. My experiences as a police officer provided unique opportunities to participate in one of the most important aspects in the management of any city-public safety. My experience also provided opportunities for me to work as a team member and as an active member of a group which planned various types of activities to reduce crime and apprehend those who have broken the law.

My experiences as a public defender helped me better understand how and why some citizens make decisions which put them in conflict with Atlanta ordinances which govern certain types of behaviors..

As an assistant city attorney, I had the opportunity to participate in an array of legal proceedings which included federal and state litigation, employment issues, civil service hearings, providing legal advice to department heads, and drafting city ordinances and resolutions. The combination of these experiences has prepared me to assumed the many responsibilities which an elected City of Atlanta Councilmember must assume during the next four years in office.

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

I decided to run for office because our great City needs help in the form of elected officials who will work with other members of Atlanta City Council, the Mayor, the business community, and community organizations to develop realistic and pragmatic solutions to solve problems. Atlanta does not need to spend any additional money on consultants to tell us what the problems are. We know that part of solving any problem is related to honest and ethical leadership. The fiscal

condition of Atlanta is unacceptable. If elected, I am committed to work with other elected officials and the business community to put in place the type of fiscal and financial accounting systems to make sure that citizens know why and where their money is being spent. Taxpayers should never again be "blindsided " with huge budget shortfalls.

I believe that elected officials must work as an integrated team to solve problems and move Atlanta ahead. I have demonstrated my interest and capability of handling this responsibility.

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

- 1) Reverend Dr. William E. Flippin, Minister
- 2) Jackie Patterson, Esq.
- 3) Frank Gomez, Esq.
- 4) Donna Foland, Businessperson
- 5) Dan Young, Retired Educator & Political Consultant

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

First, I would request an external audit which would identify the following: number and value of accounts receivable, property owned by Atlanta that could be income producing (or sold), review all purchasing procedures to determine if the city is getting what is paid for, Second, a review of all capital needs to determine a priority funding schedule for each. This review would be used to temporarily delay some capital projects. Finally, discussions should begin with DeKalb County to discuss cost-sharing of certain responsibilities in the part of Atlanta which is in DeKalb County.

The recently-passed property tax increase was passed and designed to cover the 50 million dollar shortfall for this fiscal year( 2009-2010).

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 support the goal of hiring additional police officers, however, I believe that an independent analysis should be made as to how and where sworn officers are used. A recent study (July 2009) shows that in cities with populations between 500,000 and 700,000 plus, Atlanta ranks eight in the number of sworn police officers per 10,000 residents. This comparison includes cities such as Baltimore, Newark, Detroit, St. Louis, and Philadelphia.

One problem which must be corrected in Atlanta is the integration of modern technology into law enforcement functions. Modern technology not only increases the efficiency of police officers, but helps in the control of crime.

Another area of concern is the use of police time to testify in Traffic Court. The cases could be heard on a particular day and time each week which would remove the problem of an officer spending days in traffic court. Deployment of sworn officers is critical to good management. For example, does it make sense to have two Atlanta police officer sitting on Campbellton Road with a radar gun to catch potential speeders. The officers know that speeders do no speed on that stretch of road because a stop light is at Fairburn Road, so why speed? I am sure that many other examples are available which identifies poor management decisions in deployment of sworn officers

I support the goal of increasing the number of sworn officers, however, the decision has to reflect a logical deployment of current and new officers. I believe that Atlanta residents would consider a "security" surcharge to finance additional police officers. However, residents will not approve any type of surcharge if crime continues to rise in Atlanta. Atlanta residents want crime reduced so that they can feel safe in the community. Credible studies show that a relatively small percentage of people commit the majority of crimes. These "clusters" of persons who commit crimes must be identified. For example, the smash-and-grab persons know where and how to sell the stolen merchandise. Breaking the "fences" will greatly curtail this type of crime because they will not have an outlet to sell the merchandise.

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 support continuation and an increase in tax -allocation districts and abatements to support development. I believe that it is also necessary to review current projects which have been developed through these processes to determine if they are meeting the original set of objectives..

Future redevelopment projects must include an analysis of Atlanta's current population and future changes in the population mix. It will also be desirable to develop some smaller projects which would cater to local community needs. More attention should be paid to older communities which have lost population. Some of these communities would become attractive for in-migration of residents and new residents moving to Atlanta for the first time.

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 believe that Atlanta should consider "Congestion Pricing" as one of the tools to relieve traffic congestion. New York City came very close to getting a congestion pricing plan in 2008. San Francisco has received a federal grant to study the possibility of a pricing plan in downtown . A number of European cities have successful Congestion Pricing programs such London whose results are very encouraging: 30 % average drop in congestion, 37 % average increase in traffic speed, 12 % drop in particulate matter and nitrogen oxides and a 20 % decrease in fossil fuel consumption and CO2 emissions. Singapore and Stockholm have had similar successes with Congestion pricing programs.

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 and Sewer System Improvements and Regular Upgrades
- 2) Traffic Congestion
- 3) Sidewalks, Streets, and Roads