

Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Christopher Brown
Atlanta City Council
District 4



2017 Candidate Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Please type response to questions in the field provided. **You may also attach a resume or other description to provide us with additional detail**

1. Describe briefly your qualifications for this office. In addition, please identify up to 5 organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy and why you believe their support is important.

I am a firm believer that great change is only possible when people are given the power to organize, mobilize, and actualize their own collective goals. This is how communities are built and remain strong over time. For the last eleven years I has served the community in various capacities such as NPU Ambassador for the City of Atlanta Department of Public Works and as an effective union leader where I established relationships with neighborhood leaders and officials from federal, state and local government. I have extensive knowledge of City of Atlanta policy, procedures, and operations along with fresh ideas and a working knowledge of the District's current needs.

My experience as a labor organizer for the employees of the City of Atlanta has prepared me for the real work of connecting with community members. I believe in getting them the tools and information needed to achieve real policy results. My involvement with the youth at the individual and organizational levels as a hands-on mentor and youth leader has given me valuable insight to the changing needs that will affect the future based on how we address them today. My direct connection to this community as a person born and raised in the District motivates me to protect and promote the rich cultural history we all stand on. We have a beautifully diverse community and deserves a dedicated and experienced leader who will commit to bringing positive change and being a model for others to follow. I know this work well because I have spent my adult life doing it.

- 1) Dr. Samuel Hill – Frederick Douglass High School is one of Atlanta’s most historic and prestigious Schools. The first National School of Excellence in the state of Georgia. Dr. Hill severed as principal for over 30 years and is accredited for developing some of Atlanta’s most successful students. He instilled a culture and school climate that no matter what you had or where you came from you were given the opportunity to be great. I attribute him for being the key to my life. Out of all the students over all the years, he keeps up with me and the campaign via social media. His support is

important because he is the reason I learned to never quit, give up and to always give your best. To never forget where you come from and to always reach and give back.

- 2) **The Coalition of Black Trade Unionist-** This organization support is important because they recognize the importance of engaging and bridging the gap of the younger generation of workers. The initialized an under 40 committee to developing initiatives and summits to better understand the disconnect of young workers across America.
- 3) **My Family-** Family is the nucleus and foundation of support first known when born. As far as I remember, the family has had the same orientation as a community. My uncle was a small businesses owner that ran a small grocery store and soul food restaurant growing up as a child. He taught me the true meaning of community. I would watch families that would be struggling to get to pay day. Because they were regulars and lived in the community, he would extend credit to those in need for survival.

2. What is your vision for the City of Atlanta and how would you implement it? Please be specific.

My vision for the City is a one that is inclusive of everyone no matter their age, sex, gender identity, sexual preference, class or economic status. I believe that the change needed in some of our most challenged communities is possible when people organize, mobilize, and actualize their collective goals. This is how communities are built and remain strong.

I believe in getting communities the tools and information needed to achieve real policy results by fully engaging our NPU system and having quarterly collaborative meetings with the NPU located within my district. Every street in the district will belong to a community organization.

Using creative and innovative strategies. We will become a model for other districts while collaborating on best practices of other districts to further demonstrate that we can be inclusive of all.

We will use a collaborative partnership with Atlanta Public Schools to help promote the arts, education, social and economic opportunities to promote the rich cultural history of our great district. The pride, accessibility and new-found opportunities of the district will improve the quality of life that people will see, know, and trust.

Bridging a void of affordable healthy living & lifestyle and small business initiatives, we will use vacant lots and blighted land to give an entrepreneurial opportunity for small and start-up businesses to showcase their goods and services. To allow consumers to benefit and afford direct purchasing power, while allowing consumers the opportunities to directly purchase from vendors without middle man mark up and shipping costs.

Opportunities and investments by the community will lead to safer neighborhoods and community oriented policing. Atlanta Police will have an outfit of helping provide support services and resources to communities to change the negative perception on how we view police officers.

Job creation, workforce housing, transportation, and the incentives around green infrastructure and sustainability will help us down the path to addressing affordable housing.

Dedicated to the best interest of our City, District 4 will become the promised land, a district of upward mobility.

3. Please identify the three greatest issues or problems facing the City of Atlanta and specifically how you would work to solve them.

Education/Job Training – educational attainment, job skills, and Literacy in technology are some key factors to upward economic mobility.

Affordable Housing – as Atlanta grown drives the Atlanta housing market to grow with it. We will focus on the creation of more accessible workforce housing, inclusionary zoning, and collaborate with Fulton County on recommended Tax options to lessen the impact of rising taxes in low-income areas that incur a surge in taxes due to mass redevelopment. To educate owners of possible homestead exemptions they may qualify for.

Inclusiveness - assuring cultural and historic preservation of neighborhoods while improving the aesthetics of our communities in a collaborative effort will promote diversity and develop a respect for existing and new residents. Because every street will be a part of a community organization, there will be initiatives promoting the engagement and collaboration across the district.

4. As a City Council member, how would you manage to collaborate with your colleagues on difficult citywide issues versus representing your own constituents?

As Council member, I will continue to use checks and balance and best practices to fully vet issues that impact the city as a whole. Any issue that impacts a constituent base or district has impacts on other districts. I will be sure that we are inclusive and engaging of public input for the rationalization on difficult issues.

5. How do you view the City of Atlanta's financial position? Should the City of Atlanta have additional tools in place to ensure financial management going forward?

I believe that Atlanta financial capacity is at its best than in previous year and administrations. That came with a lot of sacrifices and the help of great city workers. From the Executive Offices to blue collar labor and skilled workforce. During the time of the recession, there was only one local municipality that was a surplus, Johns Creek. When asked how and what they attributed for that success, they disclosed the investment into their workforce.

The city's culture is into account of its mismanagement, wasteful spending, and lack of better opportunity positioning. There have been great gains over the years as the market has recovered but still lack some key investments, initiatives, and policy parameters.

The city should have additional tools and but more so policy and inclusiveness that will build better financial capacity, increase reserves, increase bond rating, and have a best in class internal workforce and workforce's system.

6. Please describe your philosophy regarding property tax assessments and municipal taxation.

It is my understanding that during the time of the recession Fulton County Tax Assessors Office was assessing at 78% of the market and failed to do assessments for a number of years. Georgia Department of Revenue requires that assessments are between 90-100% of market value. Fulton County is reviewing and adjusting how property taxes are assessed and I will assure that there are collaboration and input on what that looks like. Factoring in that process, I will also look at the mileage rate,

revenue projections and call for an assessment of how we are currently doing business between the General Fund and our enterprise funds departments to shape policy that encourages new residential developments aimed to increase the number of affordable units, allowing existing and senior residents to age in place as long as they own their home.

7. What is your opinion of Atlanta's MOST, and what approach do you support to fund long-term water and sewer operations?

I support MOST as it kept water rates from increasing in a city that has some of the highest rates while funding much-needed improvements. It's options like this and policies that support green infrastructure and technology that will continue to be a Best in Class City. The city has been in compliance in replacing its sewer lines from a federal order. With the investment and continued support of projects like Bellwood Quarry, we will have improved and reliable drinking water reserves.

8. Would you change the current procurement process to protect against "pay to play"? If so, what changes would you support?

I would. Adjusting the procurement process to include living wage rating points that would allow businesses who want to do business with the city additional points on their score card for paying all their employees at least \$15 per hour and additional scoring opportunities if they opt into our labor program administered by Atlanta Workforce Development Agency.

Our newly strong labor relations department will assure that there is no duplication of services the current capacity of departments in the city. That is in the best interest of the city to put out a request for proposal for vendors to competitively bid for best overall services delivery and not just the lowest bid.

9. If elected, describe your role in ensuring ethical and transparent management of City resources by City employees?

The creation of legislation that creates a strong Labor Relation unit that is open and welcoming to employees. One that protects employees from retaliation for reporting wrong doing and foul play. The creation of an oversight committee to help promote the philosophy of a transparent government and restoring trust within its stakeholders.

The creation of quarterly meet and confer sessions with our labor unions and employees. Creating an MOU with the Atlanta City Council and employee groups for best practices, training, improving working conditions, and initiatives that develop, retain and attract the best and brightest to serve our great city.

10. What economic development strategies would you prioritize to ensure the City of Atlanta captures its fair share of future job growth?

Continuing to support the attraction and creation of new business development in Atlanta from both large corporations to small business start-ups. Strategic ways to support job creation, programs of holistic harm reduction, affordable housing and home occupancy, support services, transportation, infrastructure and education support policies.

11. What strategies would you implement to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing?

We have to be creative in strategies we use to address major issues such as affordable housing.

Public/Private Partnership – Incentives that promote investment into communities, community groups, and non-profits that administer housing programs designed for affordable housing.

Intervention/Reentry – administer and promote a program for citizens returning home from incarceration that will provide labor, skilled trade, and community service to developers, contractors, and investment aimed at affordable housing. This program addresses education and job disparities to assist with intervention and diversion, job creation, community revitalization, housing and addresses a number of issues from a holistic perspective with housing and stability at its forefront.

Housing initiatives aimed at government employees. Most agencies offer some form of a housing assistance program for its employees. Incentives for affordable housing units within

the city limits and other areas for government workers in a collaborative partnership will reduce transportation cost, traffic congestion and commute. Initiatives evaluate government property surplus and inventory to help leverage affordable housing demand by converting properties into affordable housing and mixed use development.

12. What workforce development strategies should the next administration prioritize? How will these strategies address and improve economic mobility among low-to-mid skill workers?

Supporting policies, initiatives and funding allocations requests for Atlanta Workforce Development and Collaborative Partnership. Support committee creation that aligns partnership for solutions in filling workforce gaps, trends and alternatives to assure growth. Quarterly or bi-annual updates to confer on alignment, needs, and assessments. Creation and/or support for a Job Ready initiative is a priority as it supports internal operations and service delivery to residents

JOB READINESS/Career Path workforce program: Summer Intern or Apprentice/Journeyman program that an employment candidate can matriculate from Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta City Government, to a partner such as Atlanta Technical College, Atlanta University Center, Georgia State, and Georgia Tech for the purpose of economic mobility.

Livable Wages – Allows for adjustment of low wage jobs for a candidate for employment to compete for higher wages giving skills higher than the prerequisite of unskilled positions.

Education – Help candidates for employment to identify career paths while aligning a platform to do so.

Skilled Training/Certification – Validates that candidate for employment has basic skills and understanding

**Career Path Assessment
Summer Intern Program
Work Base Learning/Civic Study
Career Path Re-Assessment
JOB READY Entry Certification Testing & Placement
JOB READY Mentor Guidance Program**

13. What are the three most important transportation/infrastructure projects that should occur in the City of Atlanta? Please rank them by importance and urgency and explain your reasoning.

Belt Line- There has been major investments and projects surrounding the beltline. The major redevelopment for public/private investment for communities, major transportation development, conversions for sustainable living and green space benefits everyone. The creation of jobs, education investment, and sustainable practices make this one of the most important projects to date.

TSPLOST –One of the most critical projects is our street infrastructure. This project was also is significant for the purchase of right away for the beltline, address traffic congestion and lighting for the beltline trails. The expansion of MARTA is not only important to Atlanta but the region as we address much-needed transportation improvements and alternatives.

RENEW –With all that is going on with the beltline and coming out of the recession, we have to assure that our bridges that had been underserved of repair and overhaul got the attention it needs for our heavily populated city. The sidewalks and curbs needed the same as we are able to address evolving transportation alternatives and technology.

14. What strategies would you pursue to improve the safety – both real and perceived – of all residents, visitors, and workers in Atlanta? What partnerships are needed to realize these strategies?

Citywide Community Policing and Ambassadors: most crimes committed are crimes of opportunity. Lack of opportunities and access are key contributors to crime and poverty.

Opportunities and investments by the community will lead to safer neighborhoods and community oriented policing. Atlanta Police will have an outfit of helping provide support services and resources to communities to change the climate of these opportunity crimes by giving those potential offenders access to more opportunities. Job readiness, support services, and bridging the education disparity will improve safety, both real and perceived.

Ambassadors are your eyes and ears on the ground that will assure visibility in a brighter light than uniformed police. They would be a great fit in assisting residents and visitors in high

populated commercial areas. Strategic planning, partnering, and collaboration can make this happen.

15. Georgia ranks 49th among states for per-capita arts funding. What actions would you take to ensure our arts and culture organizations have the funding they need to thrive and enrich our city?

We must do our part locally by supporting programs, institutions, and communities to embrace the arts. Start initiatives to promote and fund the “arts” in the many STEM programs (STEAM) around the city. Allocating use of public space for Art and cultural events and festival. We will increase the budget for The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Design and create support groups to help develop creative ideas to move different initiatives.