



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Kwame Abernathy
Atlanta City Council
District 9

2017 Candidate Pre-Interview Questionnaire

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 have a lifetime of vocational and avocational experience working in the legal field, film and television industry, and non-profit sector. My experiences have helped me to hone an excellent skill set which has focused on responsiveness, project management, and negotiation prowess. My life experiences as the son of a civil rights leader, brother of a former state senator, and long term executive assistant to transit authority board member, have also helped to qualify me for this office.

I have received the support of many, but these are just a few:

Ambassador Andrew Young, former mayor Bill Campbell, former council members Jim Maddox and Thomas Cuffie.

Faith leaders in district 9, Rev Jasper Williams and Rev Charles Alphabet.

Friends, family and neighbors within district 9.

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

Vision for Atlanta over the next ten (10) years.

Complete and open transparency in government. Public access to all departmental spending and expenditures.

Become a nationwide leader regional transportation. Better coordination of rail plans and service in the city of Atlanta and the greater region, e.g. MARTA, Streetcar, BeltLine.

Become a nationwide leader in affordable housing options.

Greater economic development of those parts of the city of Atlanta that have been left out of the huge boom driving the city and region. Equitable share of development attention and dollars for the underserved communities throughout the city.

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

Affordable housing - focus on increasing the affordable housing supply which is too low at present. Opportunity bonds for housing; inclusionary zoning; incentives for builders both small and large. Address the dearth. Supply must be more in line with demand

Transportation/Infrastructure - fund, build and address long term plans and concerns. Focus on regional transportation options. Better coordination of rail plans and service in the city of Atlanta and the greater region, e.g. MARTA, Streetcar, BeltLine. Improve all bus services within the city's influence. Improve sidewalks, streetscapes, and bike paths, including lighting and overall accessibility.

Workforce development/education - focus on workforce job skills and education of youth/future workforce. Public private partnerships to ensure proper training of workforce, and outside funding for programs to ensure success. Better access for the public to city's workforce development department. Increased job creation through corporate incentives for hardline percentages and numbers of citizens to be hired through the city's workforce development department for companies doing business with the city.

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

All of the city's districts are inextricably linked, together we make up the city. The health of overall city is really only as good as the least of us within the city. Together we must focus on equitable distribution of tax funds throughout all district of the city. Without this we create a situation of "haves and have nots;" which exacerbates a public safety situation. I am a problem solver and coalition builder. Unite through common interests - the working public, children and seniors.

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?

The city is in an excellent financial position. The city's reserves are at an all time high. Focus on taking every step to ensure that we draw the best talent to work for the city, and continue to operate in a fiscally responsible manner so that we do not lose our credit rating. All steps to maintain the credit rating, because that is critical for the health of Atlanta, and our ability to draw new businesses. Jobs matter.

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

I am in favor of property tax limits for increases over a 3, 5, 10, and 15 year period and tax concessions for seniors.

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

Reduce flooding and pollution caused by stormwater;

Reduce the number of spills from pump stations;

Review consent decree programs

MOST is necessary to have a state of the art watershed department, improve drinking water reserves, drive down water costs, and fund projects already in the works.

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

Random quarterly outside audits. Continue to separate the decision makers from the bid process. Blind bid processes.

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

City employees are life blood of system.

Random outside audits of purchase orders of materials purchased - after the fact to ensure that the city still has the materials.

A department that focuses on researching the city's whistleblower hotline.

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

Focus on high growth job sectors

Provide affordable housing and workforce housing (e.g. teachers, firemen, policemen)

Increase transportation options and funding

Workforce development education

Tax incentives

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

As a city, focus on building to increase available supply of affordable housing to meet demand.

Focus on residential development in areas where land acquisition costs are lower, decreasing overall cost of property development.

Affordable housing through lowering building costs and costs per square foot.

Financial incentives like opportunity bonds for lower income housing (e.g. Invest Atlanta, Beltline)

HUD partnerships focused on affordable housing

Inclusionary zoning for residential developments - e.g. 20% of housing in a development will be reserved for a certain income bracket for 25 years. Support and increase programs like these with long term renewal and extension of years.

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?

As we increase the level of education, we increase the potential income levels of the people. Support and increase all programs associated with GED completion, job skills training, and secondary education programs through Atlanta Metropolitan College.

Encourage and support public private partnerships with Atlanta Public Schools and a job training/skills curriculum. So when people do graduate or receive their GED, they have a skill set to draw from.

Increase the minimum wage!

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.

Better coordination of rail plans and service in Atlanta and region, e.g. MARTA, Streetcar and Beltline.

Comprehensive re-look at bus services - build up and restoration of bus services that have had frequency levels decreased tremendously or routes eliminated.

Improve quality of roads, sidewalks, streetscapes and bike paths - including lighting and overall accessibility. Increase transit footprint to get people out of their cars - short term and long term. People are pedestrians for the first and last mile of their commute everyday.

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?

Increase police officer body cameras, closed circuit cameras and plate reading cameras all over the city; on every corner.

Better police officer and fireman training. Increase pay and increase the overall numbers through hiring and retention programs.

Support campaigns for increased interaction between the police/fire departments with community and public citizens.

Focus on education options and job skills training of youth and those incarcerated because they re-enter society after incarceration.

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?

Make funding of the arts a city, state and federal priority. Creatively find money in budget to fund. Health of arts community is reflective of the vibrancy of the city, which attracts new businesses looking to relocate.

Public private partnerships to increase awareness of importance of arts education and to fill the void created by dearth of arts.

Re-look and revamp the city's present mural/public art program.

Support all efforts to encourage citizens to write their congressperson, and state assemblyman to increase funding for arts programs.