

Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Cathy Woolard
Mayoral Candidate

Candidate Contact Request

Established in 1996, the Committee for a Better Atlanta (CBA) is a coalition of business organizations created to address issues affecting Atlanta's future. CBA will interview candidates for Mayor, City Council President and City Council members. We will then score and publish a voter's guide of candidates. The candidate scores will be based on your participation and answers to the questions in this document, candidate forums, and in-person interviews to be held September 13th – 15th. In preparation, we have attached our platform.

Your answers to these questions are very important to the CBA evaluation process. *Candidates who do not complete this questionnaire will not be scheduled for an interview with CBA.* In both 2009 and 2013, every challenged candidate participated in our process. Of those that participated, 94% who won their election received either an "excellent" or "well-qualified" score.

Please complete this questionnaire and return it no later than 5 p.m., August 11, 2017. Candidates must respond using the editable CBA Questionnaire PDF. Questionnaires should be filled out electronically and emailed to aamedu@macoc.com.

If you have any questions about completing the questionnaire – or about the CBA process – please contact Ahmeed Amedu at (404) 586-8530. For more information about CBA, please visit our website at <http://committeeforabetteratlanta.org>.

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 have been a government affairs professional for 35 years working at the local, state, regional and federal levels. I know how to move important policy issues through all levels of government, for example:

- As District 6 City Council-member, Chair of Atlanta's Transportation Committee and City Council President, I brought the Atlanta BeltLine from a Master's thesis vision to implementation, by rallying community support, passing multiple ordinances, placing the project in the region's long-range transportation plan, bringing in over \$20 million in

funding for the initial phases of the project and recommending the Tax Allocation District as the funding mechanism. The Atlanta BeltLine offers a 22 mile, off-street transit loop connecting to MARTA and over 40 neighborhoods, and is likely Atlanta's best selling point for millennial workforce recruitment and has created nearly \$3 billion in private investment to date.

- I introduced and brought to passage the only comprehensive non-discrimination bill in Georgia (at the local or state level) that provides private sector protections in housing, employment and public accommodations. Atlanta's non-discrimination bill has served as a tangible sign of our commitment to equal opportunity for all and has allowed us to escape some of the economic wreckage that other states have experienced in recent years by demonstrating that we are a welcoming city for business, tourism and conference investment. Also, I have served as a lead lobbyist and strategist working with the business community at the state Capitol over the past 4 years to defeat all harmful religious exemption bills proposed to date.
- I served as Executive Vice President for Global Advocacy and External Affairs at CARE, managed a global team of more than 800 employees and was responsible for a resource development budget of nearly \$500 million annually. I led a public policy team working on women's economic empowerment, foreign aid budgets and climate change mitigation in Washington, DC, as well as a global network of affiliates and NGO's working at the international and multi-national regional level.

I am proud of the outpouring of grassroots support that my campaign for Mayor has received (the majority of my first-time donors in the past three months gave less than \$100.)

- My supporters include prominent women civic leaders (including Elaine Alexander, Pinney Allen, Krista Brewer, Lucinda Bunnen, Edie Cofrin, Hattie Dorsey, Julia Emmons, Iris Feinberg, Renee Glover, Emily Saliers, and Beth Schapiro).
- I have received the official endorsement of all the major LGBT rights organizations (Human Rights Campaign, Victory Fund, LPAC, Georgia Equality).
- I have the support of environmental/transit/sustainability leaders (including Ryan Gravel, Tony Pickett, Angel Poventud, Virgil Murray, Brandon Sutton, Katherine Wilkinson, Brian Gist and many who influence others but cannot be listed here because they lead nonprofit organizations in related fields).

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

Atlanta is truly at a crossroads. We can be a world-class city that plans for sustainable growth, continues to attract quality jobs, and fulfills our promise to provide opportunity and quality of life

for all. But achieving this goal will require collaboration, innovative policy, solid financial management and strong, ethical leadership.

As Mayor of Atlanta, I will bring people together to get things done. I will leverage the strength of all of our neighborhood, faith, and community groups, as well as public-private partners, private sector investors, corporate leaders and small business owners, philanthropic funders, and federal, state and local agencies to do what is best for our City. I will welcome feedback and criticism, and engage all relevant stakeholders, as we find the best solutions for our problems and opportunities.

Details for how I will implement my vision for Atlanta are included in the survey answers below. For example, I will embark immediately on an expansion of our public transit system and mobility infrastructure, including sidewalks and bike lanes that provide connections to strategic areas. While creating alternatives to driving, I also will focus on coordinated traffic light technology coupled with Don't Block the Box markings in key intersections to reduce traffic congestion. I'll develop a comprehensive plan and specific, target goals for growing housing choices for people - from those experiencing homelessness, to young adults just entering the workforce and those who want to live in walkable environments, to seniors aging in place - coordinated with this enhanced transportation infrastructure. And I'll support our public school system, find stable and increased funding sources for parks maintenance and expansion, and invest in our arts and cultural infrastructure and programming, while maintaining a healthy budget, establishing ethical and transparent procurement processes and preserving our strong bond rating status.

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

The three greatest issues facing Atlanta include investing in affordable housing to keep pace with growth projections; traffic congestion and transit; and public education. The issues are intimately linked. Here are three solution-oriented strategies I will begin to implement quickly as Mayor:

1. Sustainable housing infrastructure expansion

By using a combination of innovative public policy, use of publicly-owned land, and creating a dedicated revenue stream, we can ensure that affordable housing is located in fast-growing areas and offers transit connections to jobs, quality education, community parks, and grocery stores.

2. Transit inclusive policies

I will effectively advocate for regional transit expansion and the improvement and maintenance of our public transit infrastructure. We will quickly move to build five, already-approved new transit lines simultaneously, so that Atlantans have more options to live near public transit and can use it to get where they need to go, rather than sit in

traffic, improving everyone's quality of life. Also to reduce traffic congestion, I will immediately implement coordinated traffic light technology coupled with Don't Block the Box markings in key intersections.

3. High-quality public education

If our schools don't work, the city does not work. All of the issues that are most important to our city – from equity, to economic development, to public safety – depend on an effective public education system.

The Mayor of Atlanta has an important role to play in public education. The Mayor should serve as a partner along with the Atlanta Public School Superintendent and School Board, convene relevant stakeholders to provide needed wrap around services for underserved students, and bring new focus and public commitment to the need to improve our school system and the communities around them.

Together, these strategies can help us to grow in a sustainable way, keep Atlanta's competitive advantage as an affordable city, prevent the involuntary displacement of existing residents, and promote equitable access to opportunity. If we fail to fulfill our responsibility to address the connected issues of housing, transportation, and education, Atlanta will be haunted by these failures for generations to come. We have to act now.

4. As Mayor, what would be your goals for your first 100 days in office and what would be your approach to achieving them?

1. Recruit the most qualified and innovative world class talent to lead city departments and serve in key leadership roles, to work together with me to implement a unified plan for moving Atlanta into the future. This would include existing Commissioner positions as well as new Commissioners of Housing and Transportation and related staff.
2. Establish a long-range development action plan for my administration which will be based on public input, department and Council priorities and world class benchmarks to guide our work. I will track the progress of this integrated action plan, and all of my administration's priority goals, through a user friendly online dashboard to ensure that we are meeting deadlines and that we are being fully accountable to the public.
3. Assemble a legislative package for the 2018 session to include recommendations on property tax assessments; responses to pre-filed and anticipated legislation and other bills that departments and City Council might recommend.
4. Launch a Parks Task Force to create a coherent plan for maintaining our parks, acquiring green-space, and linking a network of proposed trails into an integrated system we can be proud of.

5. Prepare an RFP for a public/private partnership to simultaneously build 5 lines of already-approved transit lines that will be operated and linked to our current MARTA infrastructure.
6. I will create a culture in City Hall - from the top down - that focuses on openness, service, and stewardship of public resources. This will include timely responsiveness to open records requests, audits and investigations. We will increase the transparency of public information to world-class professional standards and expand the capacity of our city Auditing Department to perform routine as well as special audits as requested by City Council and the Office of the Mayor. I will completely rebuild our Procurement and Building Permit Departments to ensure state of the art technology, best practice policies and procedures and restore confidence in the ethics and business practices of our city government. Ethics training will be a mandatory and regular requirement for all staff working with and for the City of Atlanta. City employees will be encouraged to bring any concerns about ethics or the improper use of city resources directly and confidentially to an independent ethics officer. I will work with the Atlanta City Council to ensure that the ethics policies in the operations of our own offices are clear, transparent and up to date. Finally, I will obey the law at all times and will assume complete and total responsibility for all activity and operations at City Hall.

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?

When I take office, I will immediately audit our procurement process as well as all restricted funds to ensure money that should be dedicated to particular capital outlays is being accounted for appropriately, instead of being swept into our general or reserve funds. We want to budget responsibly and conservatively, but we also do not want to hold funds that could be used to solve some of Atlanta's immediate problems without assuming any debt.

I will analyze our reserve fund to ensure we stay well in compliance with our city ordinance requirements, while exploring if any additional surplus should go to deficit fund reduction and urgent, one-time capital needs that have been languishing, like new police and fire training facilities, and land acquisition for new parks and housing.

As Mayor, I promise to post expenditures online in alignment with best practices.

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

The recent tax assessment shock in Fulton County will return next year unless city, county and school board officials get together and prepare a package of legislative updates providing relief for homeowners, while ensuring sensible growth in the tax digest. Here are just a few suggestions for what we should consider now:

- Update the dozen or more existing homestead exemptions to ensure the exemptions are relevant to our current situation and that low income and senior homeowners are given solid relief.
- Evaluate the entire Atlanta tax digest to ensure that every property owner pays a minimum sustainable tax after adjustments for homestead and other exemptions are taken into account and that our current system of assessments and taxation are fair, reasonable and appropriate for our future needs.
- Some investors are holding low value properties and paying only \$25-\$50 annually after exemptions are taken. This places a burden on neighborhoods and our budget when tax payments do not cover basic services. It is also a disincentive for renovating and returning these properties to highest use. We should consider a more aggressive annual tax increase on vacant properties and land that makes up the difference in costs of services and that ultimately increases the availability of affordable housing.
- We should have open and honest discussions with Atlanta Public Schools and Fulton/DeKalb Counties to accurately project school enrollment and age/income demographics for the next decade and determine how meaningful tax relief can be offered to seniors without compromising long-range budget needs.

A package of legislation should be developed now so it is ready when the General Assembly reconvenes in January, with all jurisdictions working together to pass the necessary bills. I have led successful legislative efforts at the city, state, and federal level. This is not a heavy political lift but it is urgent. It will take cooperation and leadership at the front end to find sustainable solutions that benefit everyone before the next tax assessments go out.

I am also concerned that our current sales tax rate is one of the highest in the country now and a heavy burden for the poorest residents, workers and visitors to Atlanta. I'll review all of our revenue streams for savings, debt repayment opportunities and reallocation of resources to determine if reductions are possible in the future.

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 Atlanta's MOST, because our water and stormwater infrastructure is going to be key to our population being able to triple in size in the coming years. MOST also allows us to generate tax revenue beyond residents, from those who work and visit the city of Atlanta but do not live here. Thanks to MOST, Atlantans have had and will continue to have clean, safe drinking water and environmentally sound wastewater treatment. Without continuation of MOST, the city's past

issues with flooding and stormwater runoff that damages property and degrades water quality could return.

However, we need to ensure we spend the dollars in the most efficient and effective way and that we are transparent about our progress and what remains to be done in a way that gives people confidence in how that money is being spent. Atlanta's sales tax is among the highest in the country and that can burden the most economically challenged members of our community. This means efficiency, effectiveness, and public transparency around sales tax use is paramount.

As Mayor, I commit to our city continuing to lead on green infrastructure and incorporate best practices for stormwater management, as well as to full transparency and accountability for how MOST dollars are used.

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

I will rebuild the Procurement and Permits Departments from the bottom up to ensure that the City of Atlanta is not a “pay to play” city. When a “pay to play” system exists, it harms everyone - it leads to public distrust in government, waste of taxpayer dollars, and qualified vendors being shut out of the process. I will work to implement a one-stop “transparency” website to centralize city spending information (with downloadable spending data that can be searched by keyword, city department, or vendor). I will also have a Chief Ethics Officer to review current procurement practices, including the use of City Councilmember accounts, and to recommend and implement best practice policies to protect against all misuse of city funds.

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

I will create a culture in City Hall - from the top down - that focuses on openness, service, and stewardship of public resources. Ethics training will be a mandatory and regular requirement for all staff representing the City of Atlanta. City employees will be encouraged to bring any concerns about ethics or the use of city funds directly to the highest levels of my administration, and I will assume complete and total responsibility for any activity that happens at City Hall (the buck will stop here). Also, I will create a Chief Ethics Officer position and would formally protect the Atlanta Ethics Board from budget cuts and interference from the Office of the Mayor or City Council.

I will build a team in my administration of the most qualified and dedicated issue experts, who will be empowered to innovate and lead in their respective areas and who pledge to place the interests of city residents and neighborhoods *first* in all decisions. I will track the progress of my

administration's integrated action plan and priority goals, through a user friendly online dashboard, to ensure that we are meeting deadlines and that we are being fully accountable to the public.

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

Every solution and policy I propose in the answers to the questions in this document work together to drive robust economic development, from education to ethics in government, to innovative transportation solutions to public safety, as well as support for the arts. By committing to all of these issues, my administration can continue to foster an environment that leads to a strong economy and job growth. Maintaining relationships with our existing Fortune 500 companies and pro-actively working to attract new companies to our city can only occur if the fundamentals - an educated workforce that can afford to live and travel throughout the city - are in place.

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

Diversity has always been an essential part of the fabric of Atlanta, and people are what makes Atlanta great. But Atlanta cannot continue to be a great city if only a sliver of our community can afford to live here.

Housing affordability in Atlanta is affecting everyone - from millennials, first responders, teachers, seniors, and working families - to people experiencing homelessness. As Atlanta grows rapidly over the coming years, we need to place urgent focus on this issue if we are to continue to thrive as a city. As Mayor, I will work quickly to organize the key players, build dedicated funding sources, and ensure the creation of a targeted number of affordable housing units that are close to the services residents want, at a range of levels of income, family sizes and stages of life.

- First, I will get all key players on the same page to align resources and move quickly to address this issue head-on. That includes governmental entities (City of Atlanta, county officials, Atlanta Public Schools, MARTA, Invest Atlanta, and Atlanta Housing Authority), businesses that need employees to live close to work, the development community, issues experts and nonprofits that are leading in this space.
- Atlanta is experiencing a housing shortage relative to the city's growing economy. I will work to increase housing density, aligned with transit lines. We can grow our city, while maintaining the unique character of our neighborhoods and protecting long-term residents, along with our trees and greenspace, if we focus density along transit. I have proposed a strategic plan to complete 40-mile streetcar grid along already-approved routes to be built in eight years, to open up more corridors for residential growth and more areas where people can live within easy access of their jobs.

- I will appoint a Commissioner of Housing and create and implement a strategic action plan to meet specific and measureable production targets for affordable housing at various income levels (including for homeless individuals) that can be tracked and adjusted as market dynamics change. I will ensure that publicly owned assets like the Civic Center site and property along the Atlanta BeltLine are used to create new affordable housing options, and I will secure publicly owned land in areas of future strategic need. Public ownership allows us to enforce long-term affordability. And I will ensure that affordable housing is located in fast-growing areas that offer access to jobs, quality education, community parks, and basic services like grocery stores.
- I will focus on creating a dedicated revenue stream for affordable housing, exploring all available funding mechanisms from tax allocation districts to development impact fees to a parking tax, and create an affordable housing trust fund. In addition, I will propose a comprehensive public policy package of incentives and requirements for developers to ensure inclusionary housing development citywide.
- To protect long term residents from being priced out of their homes through rising property values, I will ensure that existing homestead exemptions are targeted and relevant, and that low-income and senior homeowners are given solid relief while protecting the Atlanta Public School system's future budget. I also will evaluate the entire Atlanta tax digest to ensure that non-resident investment property owners pay a minimum property tax after adjustments for exemptions. Finally, I will work to update legislation when the General Assembly convenes in January, in order to give Atlanta the authority necessary to take action on property tax and gentrification related issues.

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?

If our schools don't work, the city does not work. All the issues that are most important to our city – from equity, to economic development, to public safety – depend on an effective public education system.

The Mayor of Atlanta has an important role to play in public education. The Mayor should serve as a partner along with the Atlanta Public School Superintendent and School Board, convene relevant stakeholders to provide needed wrap around services for underserved students, and bring new focus and public commitment to the need to improve our school system. As Mayor, I will work with the Atlanta School Superintendent to better coordinate efforts and build trust.

- I will work to convene neighborhoods, community organizations, civic leaders, nonprofits, foundations, and state and local government agencies to identify needs in specific communities – from behavioral health services to parent outreach to afterschool programs to arts and recreation – and coordinate the efficient delivery of services. Cooperation, with clearly-defined roles, will allow all stakeholders to innovate and provide what each can do best.
- I will support recruitment and retention of a high-quality and diverse teacher workforce, by addressing obstacles such as housing costs with homebuyer programs.

- I will ensure that neighborhoods are safe from crime and that students have safe and convenient ways to get to and from school.
- I will prioritize investment in pre-K and quality child care services to ensure that all of our children get the advantages of early education.

All people want the dignity and security that comes with work and a place to call home, and local government must do everything it can to stimulate job creation, to ensure availability of affordable rental housing, and to connect people with good jobs. In addition to affordable housing policy proposals, I will propose that the City track and study the number of jobs created per year that offer a living wage and where those jobs are created. It is essential that we understand that good jobs in every neighborhood are just as important as high tech jobs in Midtown or Buckhead. Atlanta has done great work in the past of attracting Fortune 500 companies. We must continue to attract and retain these important businesses as well as pro-actively recruit other companies that create jobs for a workforce with a diversity of education levels and skills.

In Atlanta and nationwide, we have to emphasize creating a skilled workforce. There is a tremendous need in Atlanta for electricians, administrative assistants, plumbers, bioscience technicians, nursing and dental assistants, electricians, and many more types of jobs, where people can be trained in a reasonable amount of time. My administration would partner with our public and private technical schools to get people into programs that translate into jobs that can support a family.

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.

1. Build 5 already-approved transit lines simultaneously

I have proposed a plan to build a 40-mile streetcar grid, covering the Atlanta Beltline loop and other connected routes, in eight years through leveraging innovative public-private partnerships and federal dollars.

2. Complete the Atlanta BeltLine

Atlanta's 21st century public realm starts with the Atlanta BeltLine, the project that my office kicked off when I was Atlanta City Council President. I worked to build an inclusive, grassroots coalition to support this new concept for public space and mobility that was inherently focused on people. As Mayor, I will engage surrounding neighborhoods in a meaningful way and fully build out the 22-mile loop of the Atlanta BeltLine, ensuring that the project fulfills its promise to connect people and places to the benefit of everyone.

3. Connect the city regionally through solutions like high-speed rail, MARTA expansion, and a planned bike/trail network

Being able to travel within the city limits is not enough. Atlantans need connections regionally, across metro Atlanta and the state of Georgia. A regional bike and trail network is planned and, as Mayor, I will do everything I can to push for a timely, aggressive completion schedule. Additionally, I will champion and support proposals for expanding MARTA and for regional rail, especially high-speed rail, that can connect Atlanta to cities across Georgia and the South.

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?

If there is one fundamental job that a Mayor must take ultimate responsibility for, it is public safety. That means ensuring safety for everyone in our city - every neighborhood and every resident. My approach to public safety will be holistic, comprehensive and reflect the lived experiences of all our residents.

- I will work immediately to find funding for state of the art fire and police training facilities.
- I will work with APD leaders to create and implement a strategic plan to address the current recruitment and retention challenges within the department, and ensure that we can quickly move from our current level of 1,700 officers to the over 2,000 positions that are authorized. This will be critical to ensuring that our police force is prepared for the significant increase in population that will be moving into the city over the coming years.
- I will ensure that there is a quick and effective feedback loop between neighborhood leaders, residents, and my office about public safety and policing concerns. I will also create new metrics that allow the public to track how effectively my administration is responding to and addressing their concerns.
- The Mayor sets the tone and expectations for the Atlanta Police Department. I will partner with the Chief of Police to ensure APD enforces a department-wide culture of community service and respect for everyone - from providing crisis intervention and de-escalation training for all officers, to requiring implicit bias training for staff at all levels of the department, to evaluating the recent body cameras initiative.
- As Mayor, I will strongly support the work of the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform and ensure implementation of their existing and future comprehensive policy recommendations. My administration will focus on reducing recidivism by connecting returning citizens with safe, affordable housing, and employment; and providing transition planning and wrap around support from job training and placement to mental health services through public-private partnerships. And by supporting pre-arrest diversion programs, the focus of our police department will be on serious crime, while nonviolent offenses that are associated with poverty and homelessness are diverted into social services.

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?

I have previously proposed a 1/10 of a penny sales tax to go toward arts funding, which I still support, and I also would support a regional funding source. Right now, a percentage of all new construction costs at the airport is dedicated for art, which has been a successful model that should be extended to other municipal projects, building in preference for funding projects by local artists.

As Mayor, I would advocate for private-public partnerships, as modeled by other cities, to create funding opportunities for public art, including indoor and outdoor installation pieces as well as the performing arts. I would create incentives for developers building new projects in the city to create dedicated arts funding and space for art in their developments.