



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Mr. Adassa
Atlanta City Council
District 4

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.**

For over 11 years, I have owned and operated a for-profit business and consulting firm, WEST END COMMUNITY BUSINESS CENTER INC., as well as a nonprofit organization, WEST END BUSINESS & EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER LLC. Both of these institutions cover every aspect of business and community organization and development. Both organizations are centrally located within District 4. I know first-hand the unique needs of individuals and businesses within District 4.

My company's core mission is to begin, build, and maintain businesses as well as educate those interested in the possibility of business ownership and sustainability. On a micro level, I set out to serve every level of the business community, from those firms that are in its germination and infancy; to more mature companies that are looking to expand and grow. Those services include, grant writing, credit worthiness, business licenses, day to day operations and networking. These skills translate into an astute awareness of the needs of businesses to be successful and it is my belief that our local government should mirror the sovereignty and responsibility of private industry. How you care for government workers, taxes, community needs, small and corporate business needs and pensions should be similar to businesses to ensure success and longevity.

Prior to my journey into entrepreneurship, I held the title of International Tax Specialist for Bank of America Corporate. I was responsible for international economics, taxation and finance for the expatriate hires. The depth and breadth of knowledge of finances from a local, state, national and international level, allows me to establish relationships with diverse entities interested in partnering with the West End. I would exercise fiduciary responsibility to our taxpayers in any future business dealing.

Organizations of active support of candidacy

West End Community Urban Garden and Nursery - a community learning garden that serves a dual purpose of training students to study sustainability, horticulture and gardening. It is also one of the few District local garden that allows for reentry training for parolees.

DeKalb County Sheriff's Department's community outreach Bridge program - this outreach program creates a dialogue between the community elders, youth, and police and fire departments creating events for all sides to build stronger communication and relationships between authority figures within the community and their constituents.

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

My vision is an inclusive community that city officials equally serve all persons within the community regardless of income level. Atlanta residence should feel confident that despite their zip code, their concerns will be heard and adequately addressed.

Atlanta should continue to grow as an international destination in work, art, and leisure. In order to do so there should be more vision and planning to accommodate those choosing to come to Atlanta. The tragedy of the I-85 fire shows that when Atlanta comes together, we can efficiently and effectively meet community needs. That efficiency and effectiveness should be displayed, equally to all communities in Atlanta.

Atlanta should be an example of a true “melting pot” community by welcoming diverse populations and gaining from their rich experiences that they bring.

City official accessibility is key to growth in Atlanta. My goal would be to utilize modern technology to develop a direct communication line between individuals in the community and city hall.

The city should conduct community technology training programs so that individuals know how to utilize the technology properly that helps them to interactive with government and city officials better.

Individuals that serve as City Council should hold one another accountable so that we have “*One Safe Atlanta*” by increasing safety in each District.

District 4 should have Inclusive Education and Empowerment for low to medium income residents on residential tax and residential repair assistance to assist in home owner preservation in a time of the City’s exponential growth.

City Council should work with the Atlanta Public School Board to benchmark programs that are working well throughout the country and implement best practices in District 4. This would include revamping the current partnership with organizations like the Georgia Lottery Commission to hold them accountable for the communities that patronize them.

Develop within City Council and Atlanta Police Department and Fulton County police forces a community Outreach program that helps to lower rates of crime from young teens that increase during periods when school is not in session.

City Council should partner with business owners that are traditionally seen as a detriment to the community and holding them accountable to contribute positively after school programs that keep young citizens actively engaged.

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

Public Safety. Our police force is woefully funded and operating outside of their budget is unacceptable. We have to develop community outreach that bridge the community

and authoritative figures so that people feel safe at home and work.

Education and Empowerment. Knowledge and education on how rules and regulations affect our citizens. In Atlanta, there is a divide between those in power and their constituency. Developing better communication will allow for citizens to have a better understanding of how the law works and how it impacts our citizen's everyday lives. There are some people that are suffering financially and are without resources because they do not understand how programs that their tax dollars are developing, greatly affect their lives.

Infrastructure. Atlanta as whole was not prepared for the influx of the growth that it has experienced post Olympics. A conversation needs to center around developing ways to improve infrastructure to match the current and forecasted level of growth. The constant congestion means that we need to develop a realistic solution that will accommodate our needs.

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

What is best for the city is best for my constituents. As a city official I am the direct conduit to my colleagues giving my constituent an opportunity to give their concerns and solutions to me so that I can give them to other city officials so we can resolve these issues. The concerns of my constituents ALWAYS take precedence. Collectively we should first take into consideration those concerns and comparatively find/discover ways to address them competently.

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?

Despite the alleged financial impropriety and the investigation, it is commendable that the city has shown the level of financial growth which proves that some, not all areas of city governing construct, have applied financial responsibility.

In every situation there is a way to improve on what has been done. The approach going forward should be to tighten up areas that show loss, and continue to stress accountability in spending of taxpayer funds.

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

Taxation is a necessary evil. If taxation education is presented in laymen terms, the public can be clear as to where their tax dollars are going and that there is an accountability to

the taxes that are approved. For example, if a TSPLOST is approved that the FOLLOW THROUGH is done in accordance to the structure for which is voted.

Specifically in District 4, it is important for the residents to understand how tax value shift affects homeowners. No contributing citizen in District 4 should lose a home simply because of a lack of knowledge of programs that already exist to assist them

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

I am for using MOST for long term water and sewer operations, if 1) it is clearly understood by the constituents, and 2) that there is accountable for the use of those tax dollars which eliminates the possibility of waste.

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

The procurement process is clear and when followed are fair. The only changes I would support is having a specific department that is responsible for selling the opportunities available and that they remain separate from those that are evaluating the bids. This separation from solicitation and selection will provide a protective layer and help build integrity in the process.

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

There is no magical answer to this question. One human being doesn’t have the power to control the ethical nature of a department. That being said, I have a responsibility to model and uphold others to the highest degree of transparency and accountability. I would work collaboratively with colleagues to create an environment of trust and so that we hold one another responsible for any wrong doing on our watch I would also support implementing “watchdog” groups to oversee the day to day operations of not only myself, but my colleagues.

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

My priorities for developing economic strategies, is that we must first understand a nationwide perspective of what are the strongest areas of job growth and focus energy on bringing the opportunities that are applicable to our community. I would look at specific industries that are firmly establishing themselves in our market and providing additional resources for their continued growth -

e.g. -the movie industry and technology industries. Additionally, partnering with leisure, hospitality and the arts community to develop a work life balance for future residents and make Atlanta a well-balanced city to call home. A strong work force is an educated work force. City officials should have a clear understanding that education is not simply formal, but that it includes training for particular needs of small business and entrepreneurship.

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

Seeing that public funds are not allocated for development like they were many years ago I would work to create an environment that is safe and that provides for developers in the private sector to have incentives to build for those that are less fortunate, For example, Mosely Park has high degree blight where 33% of homes are unoccupied. These homes are prime for development by people committed to not only improving their own personal home but contributing back to the community, because a diverse community is the best economically based community.

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?

Specifically making District 4 more appealing to companies that employ low-to mid-skill workers will occur by starting to think about ways to alleviate the new congestion between the airport and downtown, and downtown and the outer corridor. There is no reason why District 4 cannot provide more opportunity for people traveling through Atlanta to enjoy industries such as hospitality, transportation, and tourism.

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) Beltline. It is important because of the original presentation of the idea of the Beltline was an excellent way to connect all of the various Atlanta communities without another public transportation options.
- 2) MARTA Expansion. Another area of improvement is the ability to go where you want to by one means of transportation. This would include more stops and more travel options on MARTA.

Additionally, funds should be allocated to increase the visibility and accessibility of public transportation.

- 3) Alternative travel option. Atlanta is ranked 8th in the world in traffic according to the Inrix Global Traffic Scorecard 2017, so it is imperative we stress alternative travel options when possible. These alternatives include ride share programs, bike riders, and encouraging mixed use development growth opportunities like Atlanta Station that provide for work- life intertwining without additional traffic congestion.

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?

The key to maximizing the safety potential in an urban community is bridging the gap and developing a repertoire between authorities and individuals within the community. Outreach programs that provide the adults an opportunity to engage with the authorities while modeling for the youth that relationships are a viable possibility. Relationships strengthen communities. In District 4, we should encourage the idea of community through providing leisure, art hospitality options for our constituents. Opportunities and events that cater to diverse groups like a LGBTQ Pride Day, or ethnic and cultural exchanges to make a the District 4 more inclusive.

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 know from past years' experience, that when the City has the proper amount of resources allocated for arts, the art scene was vibrant and growing. It is important that the resources to develop the Bureau of Culture of Affairs, and that the department personnel are adequately trained so that there are no shortage of international, national and local talent in the City.