

Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

**Jennifer Ide**  
Atlanta City Council  
District 6

## **CBA 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.**

To guide Atlanta to the next level as one of the greatest cities to work and live in America, we need leaders who are innovative problems solvers, who have an attitude of service to the people of Atlanta, who are not beholden to interest groups or seeking personal gain, who are responsive and effective communicators, and who have an optimism and vision for what a great city Atlanta is and what a greater city it can become. I have the experience, skill set, and temperament to be an effective policy maker, problem solver, and leader on the Atlanta City Council. With half of the Council coming on as newly elected officials, my background as an entrepreneur, lawyer, advocate, and mother will serve the City well.

In 2012, I co-founded Rimidi, a company that develops technology to transform healthcare delivery (we are an ATDC Signature Company). Working in this field, I have hands on experience in how technology can be used to solve complex problems. From traffic congestion to government transparency, technology is needed to help Atlanta overcome longstanding hurdles, and I have the background and innovative approach for guiding Atlanta on this path.

Prior to founding Rimidi, I clerked on the federal district court then practiced law at Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan (now Eversheds Sutherland) for 12 years. In private practice, I represented individuals, large and small companies, municipalities, and school systems. My practice included regulatory, commercial, employment, and land use matters, and gave me a solid understanding of the issues of the business, individual, and governmental concerns of our City. I have held leadership positions with the State Bar of Georgia, Georgia Association of Women Lawyers, and Atlanta Legal Aid, and have done extensive pro bono work representing low-income individuals and not-for-profit entities. My background in the law equips me to be a solid policymaker and ethical advocate.

I am a native Atlantan, from a family of civic leaders and volunteers. I've lived in Morningside for 17 years with my husband Matt and our four daughters, who have attended Atlanta Public Schools and Paideia. I chaired the Local School Council for Morningside Elementary School and served on the Grady Cluster Planning Committee. Before law school, I taught elementary school and worked in child advocacy. I am committed to a City that supports its children and youth and works

to provide every opportunity, from cradle to career, for success to all of its residents.

I have the support of the following neighbors and civic leaders:

- (1) Charlie Nalbene, Morningside resident and Vice President of Morningside Lenox Park Association.
- (2) Kevin Cronin & Glen Hilburn, Virginia-Highland residents and past president, Virginia-Highland Civic Association
- (3) Bobbie Hurt, Brookwood Hills resident and past president Brookwood Hills Community Club
- (4) State Senator Elena Parent, Druid Hills resident, and former Sutherland colleague
- (5) Melissa Mullinax, historic Midtown resident; parent of two children who attend Atlanta Public Schools; and Senior Advisor to Mayor Kasim Reed

I am running for City Council to represent the intown neighborhoods encompassed in District 6. It is important to me to have the broad support of current and past civic association leaders and business people in these neighborhoods. These individuals support my vision and mission of ensuring that growth is smart and enhances our historic neighborhoods. Senator Parent and I practiced law together for many years, and I look forward to working with her again as a member of the Atlanta delegation of the Georgia General Assembly. Melissa Mullinax is a friend and advisor who has a deep understanding of the needs and concerns of the city both as a constituent and member of the current administration, and I value her confidence in me to lead the city forward.

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

Atlanta should be one of the greatest cities to live and work in the country. No matter what party of the City we are in, we all want the same things- access to good jobs, strong schools, and healthy, safe places to live.

Great, livable cities have many things in common, including active citizen involvement, access to diverse and affordable housing options, greenspaces and environmental sustainability, a growing and diverse economy, reliable city services for residents and businesses, and a balanced budget and solid financial condition. We are on the right track on many fronts, but have significant hurdles in others, such as housing and economic mobility.

What does Atlanta need to take the city to the next level? My vision for the city is one grounded in (1) smart development, (2) ethical and effective government, and (3) collaboration with partner governments, business, and the not-for-profit sector to expand opportunity for all.

(1) Through smart development, the City can expand access to jobs, improve citizens' health and quality of life, and accommodate future growth without negatively impacting our quality of life.

Smart development means having a vision and being proactive in what our business districts, neighborhoods and commercial sectors look like. Rather than just building buildings, we need to be developing communities. The City should play an active role in shaping Atlanta's growth, with strong commercial sectors and development in or near residential neighborhoods protecting their character, while making them stronger and connecting neighbors. Particularly along the Beltline and in other TADs, we need to focus on how development should play a role in supporting the public good and the core components needed for a community—access to housing, jobs, health, and education.

Smart development will include working hand-in-hand with MARTA to prioritize the expansion of public transportation in the city. An expanded and improved transit system is necessary to alleviate traffic congestion, shorten commute times between job centers and areas of the city without meaningful access to them, and keep millennial workers and attract new business to Atlanta. Atlanta needs an expanded rail backbone, as well as more appropriate bus service and additional "last-mile" options. In addition to MARTA, Atlanta needs to work through its backlog of infrastructure projects to ensure that our roads, bridges, sidewalks, and bike lanes are functional, and we need to be good stewards of the Renew Atlanta and TSPLOST funds as we do so.

Finally, smart development means implementing technology to make Atlanta efficient, sustainable, safe, and accessible. From traffic sensors to water leak detectors to logistics systems to license plate readers, Atlanta can and should improve its city services, public safety, and business efficiencies through technology.

(2) Atlanta has emerged from the recession and is on solid financial footing. City residents have voted for an expanded tax burden for transportation and infrastructure projects. The next City government must be good stewards of the

City's finances. Citizens deserve to have full visibility into the city's finances and decision making. Technology not only makes this possible, it makes it easy. Working with a new Council and Mayor, I believe we can make Atlanta's financial and other service-delivery data available online and in a searchable format like so many other big cities across the country (e.g., Checkbook NYC). Citizens deserve to be able to see, in a detailed manner, where their tax dollars are being spent. Increased transparency and accessibility will go a long way in ensuring that public dollars are being spent in an ethical and efficient manner.

(3) Atlanta does not operate in a vacuum. Encompassing both Fulton and DeKalb counties, and having an independent school system (APS), Atlanta must cooperate and collaborate with its sister governments to fully serve its residents. Atlanta must also work with state and federal agencies on issues such as transportation. Finally, the City has a long history of working collaboratively with the business and philanthropic communities, and this should continue.

To address needs and disparities of our residents in the areas of education, health, and income, the City must partner with the entities providing direct access to ensure that the delivery of services is holistic and the most effective. In education, for example, I feel strongly that the dysfunctional relationship between the City and the Atlanta Public School Board must be repaired. The challenges facing APS and Atlanta's students are too great to be solved without the support and collaboration of the City. Our futures are intertwined and we have to work together, whether this is in supporting the expansion of early childhood education in the City, ensuring that after school programming is coordinated with school curricula, or partnering workforce services with the school system to make sure every student has a path to graduation and beyond. I worked with Dr. Carstarphen and the APS school board when I chaired the Morningside LSC, and would be committed to a positive, collaborative relationship with APS. Likewise, City leaders must build relationships with Fulton and DeKalb county leaders, as the counties play a substantial role in the health and welfare of citizens. Finally, it is important that City leaders liaise with the General Assembly on issues ranging from transportation, funding mechanisms, to non-discrimination, and are a guiding voice for issues important to the growth and sustainability of the City.

As a City Council member, I commit to being the bridge that convenes the groups and the Administration on an ongoing basis as we build trust and solve problems together. Atlanta is a great city. With a forward-looking vision that it can be one of the best places to live, work, and learn, we can make it even greater.

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

**(1) Promote Greater Equity and Economic Mobility--**No matter who we are or where we live in the City, we all want the same thing- good schools, safe neighborhoods, and quality housing. Unfortunately, Atlanta has significant disparities across all of these areas, and an abysmal degree of economic mobility. To address these inequities and alleviate the poverty we have in our city, we need to invest both in people and places.

***Investment in people:*** Workforce development is a critical component of addressing poverty and disparities in the city. Today, if you are born poor in Atlanta, chances are you will remain poor. We need to work with our partners in education to improve high school graduation rates and pathways to careers and ensure that we have a workforce program that trains and connects individuals with the jobs that are in available and in demand with local employers. This will take a comprehensive approach and coordination with Atlanta Public Schools, DeKalb County Schools, Fulton and DeKalb counties, the Technical College System, local colleges and universities, and AWDA. Education and job training are essential to economic mobility. We must have positive, collaborative relationships with our partners in education and make sure that, where the City provides wraparound services, such as afterschool programming or transportation, that they support the holistic educational needs of our youth.

The City should look to work done by the Federal Reserve and other thought leaders on how to transform workforce development and develop best practices. Workforce programs need to focus on opportunities for meaningful economic mobility, be aligned with the needs of local employers, and be data-driven so that we are matching training with available opportunities.

***Investment in places:*** I applaud the current council and mayor for passing the \$40 million housing opportunity bond. These bonds will present a key funding opportunity to address homeowner renovations and loans to promote affordable and workforce housing development. The city should continue to explore the Homeless Opportunity Bond to raise the funds to construct smaller shelters around the City complete with wraparound services, such as the Commons at Imperial Hotel.

In addition, inclusionary zoning is one of the most effective means of providing affordable housing, without significant cost to government. The 2016 Affordable

Housing Ordinance is a step in the right direction by requiring any multi-family residential property for lease that receives a subsidy, grant or incentive from a development authority or public entity doing work in the City of Atlanta to set aside affordable units. We are way behind on beltline workforce housing. Our affordable housing policies must support development of affordable housing, not just for single individuals but housing for families as well. We also need to consider whether the current ordinance serves the very-low income.

Expanding inclusionary zoning to private development should be considered. Incentives, such as density bonuses, reduction in set-back requirements, expedited approval processing, are critical to the success and legality of inclusionary zoning.

Innovative thinking in housing development can also be a tool in targeting health discrepancies. Atlanta has a 13-year differential in life span across zip codes that are only a few miles apart. Development that includes gardens, recreational facilities and/or greenspace, and retail including health clinics could play a key role in addressing this disparity. We should look at ways to incent public good, such as space for early childhood education and grocery stores in new developments. Supporting a healthy population is not only the right thing to do for our residents, but also for having a productive work force.

Finally, Atlanta must voice a strong opposition to any movement at the state level towards discriminatory legislation couched as religious freedom acts. We should not stand for discrimination, and as North Carolina now knows, it would take us backwards and be very costly.

**(2) Expand Transportation Options**--The City is on the precipice of significant growth, and we will not be able to accommodate this growth without a negative impact on our quality of life unless we expand transportation options. Our highways are packed, and this often results in overflow to our intown streets. We need a better mix of public transit options and streetscape designs that make commuting more efficient, walking and biking safer, reduce cut-through traffic, and make school zones safer for our children. We need to expand public transportation to connect residents to job centers. The citizens of Atlanta have put their trust in the City and MARTA with the MARTA SPLOST, TSPLOST, and Renew Atlanta funding, and we must prioritize these projects to bring economic growth and prosperity, be transparent about decision making, and be good stewards of this funding. A City of Atlanta Department of Transportation that would plan and implement the City's transportation projects, working closely with MARTA, could greatly facilitate these objectives.

**(3) Restore Trust in City Government--**With the procurement scandal looming over Atlanta, restoring trust in our elected officials and City workers is essential, both to ensuring citizens that we are good stewards of the city and in retaining and attracting business. Restoring trust will require self-examination to determine where the system has allowed dishonesty and favoritism, and the implementation of additional checks and balances. In addition, after identifying and addressing any weaknesses, the City needs to go above and beyond in making its finances, employment, and procurement processes as transparent as possible. Steps I would take toward these goals include: fully cooperating with any and all investigations, having the City Attorney and auditor provide a review of all improprieties for the past 5 years (what happened, why, and what remediation has been done), commissioning an audit of procurement procedures, mandating ethics training for City employees dealing with procurement, contracting, and other sensitive matters, then moving forward, making the City's finances and service delivery data searchable on line so citizens can hold us accountable.

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

Council members must get to know each other and parts of the City beyond our council district borders. I will commit to spending time with my colleagues in their districts, at least one new district each month, on an ongoing basis. And I will invite my colleagues to spend time getting to know me and District 6 at events and in residents' homes. I believe building a personal relationship is central to building trust and being able to work through the difficult decisions that will come before the Council. Likewise, with my constituents, communicating with them on a regular basis about what is happening in other areas of the city, and with regard to citywide issues such as finances and transportation is important to ensuring that District 6 residents are a part of the vision of the City and its growth and prosperity.

My background as an attorney has taught me how to listen, learn and digest facts, and find "win-win" solutions. I am an adept problem solver who is able to work with people with divergent opinions and help them find common ground.

**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 has successfully come out of the recession and has been able to grow its reserves and obtain upgraded bond ratings from all three ratings agencies (AA+), the highest rating the City has had in 40 years. We need to stay this course, which requires a balanced budget, revenue diversification, and a reserve that considers anticipated capital expenditures for systems at or near their useful lifespan.

The T-SPLOST and Renew Atlanta bonds present the opportunity for Atlanta to do much needed infrastructure work, and we need to ensure that we are good stewards of this funding. We must assure appropriate oversight, including adding processes to assess risks of fraud and significant change, while ensuring a pro-business environment.

We need to continue to address the issues that impact the financial outlook of the city, including above average pension obligations, above average unemployment, and above average poverty. We also need to continue to look for inefficiencies in our systems to see where resources could be used more wisely.

While Watershed great work in complying with the consent decrees, there is still work to be done to get its financial house in order. As a result of the consent decrees, we have ended up with some of the highest water rates in the nation and being highly leveraged and with a much lower bond rating than the city overall. Without additionally burdening the rate payer, we need to ensure that we are planning for the capital expenditures that will be required to a system that has in many areas exceeded its expected lifespan.

From the FY2018 budget report, the city appears to be in a very strong financial position. The rainy-day fund is significant, the credit ratings are high and city services are being delivered without an increase in property tax. That said, I think the City Council needs more information on the details of the city's finances in order to be more effective policy makers.

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

Tax revenues are obviously an essential source of revenue for the City, and I support a system that balances the tax burden between City property owners (property tax) and commuters and visitors (sales tax) as Atlanta provides services to many more people than those residing in its boundaries. Those who don't live in the city, but benefit from its services should pay their fair share.

This year's Fulton County tax assessments highlighted the critical need for a taxing authority to show value in its activities and to communicate well so taxpayers understand the need, fairness, and value for their tax payments. When individual's tax freezes are not respected, when the valuations are significantly higher than market value, or when increases in one year are upward of 40%, people lose faith in the system. That being said, while reverting to the 2016 digest may have been the only solution that could be accomplished within the window of time available, it has only pushed the problem of creating an accurate and fair tax digest to next year. Fulton County must begin now in developing a plan for next year's assessments. Part of that trust-building is for the tax assessor's office to be very professional and transparent. Our citizens will pay for value and if they are being treated fairly. It must address issues raised this year such as whether there should be a cap on the size of an increase in a single year, and whether additional relief is needed for senior citizens who may be at risk of being priced out of their homes. While the county controls the assessment process, the City of Atlanta should communicate and collaborate with the county on addressing these issues.

With regard to sales tax, I support the MOST, TSPLOST, and MARTA SPLOST but feel that with a sales tax rate of 8.9% now within the City, we must be mindful that Atlanta's tax rate does not become regressive. I would like to see the City explore a funding mechanism for the arts and greenspaces, but recognize that there is a limit to an acceptable sales tax burden. License and impact fees can also play a role in supporting city services as well.

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

I think the MOST tax is a fair and effective way to spread the burden of paying for upgrades to Atlanta's water and sewer system to the more than 500,000 workers and visitors within the city who impact the system but don't live within the city and therefore don't pay a water bill. Without the revenue generated by the sales tax, water rates would substantially increase for city residents and many of the necessary infrastructure upgrades to the water and sewer system would not be possible.

I think the four-year authorization of MOST by voters allows for evaluation of the city's progress toward the mandates of the consent decree and should be continued. The current MOST is set to expire in 2020. The City will have to obtain authorization from the State to put the MOST out for a referendum vote in

2020. City Council and the next mayor should make this a priority in working with the General Assembly.

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

As a City Council Member, I would undertake a comprehensive review of all recent audits completed by the City's Auditor to determine the current state of the procurement department. I would ask the city attorney and auditor to provide a review of improprieties over the past 5 years - what happened, why and what remediation steps have or need to be taken. If existing City audits are lacking, we should commission an internal audit of procurement procedures by an independent firm.

It is essential that our citizens feel that they can trust their city government and that they have a voice. It is likewise important in attracting businesses to our city to be a leader in ethical practices. Providing a fair, competitive procurement process is essential. Atlanta needs to commit to full transparency on procurement and adopt the best-in-class policies identified by the National Institute for Public Procurement.

An external oversight committee for procurement practices would make sense. In addition to that, when “emergency procurements” happen in the field because of natural disaster, City Council should have immediate review of those purchases once the disaster situation is resolved.

Transparency and availability of the City’s financial data should also be a priority for the next council and mayor. Other cities such as New York with its Checkbook NYC have done this with great success.

Atlanta’s Board of Ethics does important work in addressing ethics complaints, and we need to ensure that all seats are filled by stakeholders, including the APAB seat. Greater oversight of the City’s procurement process is required to ensure that conflicts of interest are avoided and there is an equal competitive playing field. To that end, I support oversight by an external body to ensure best procurement practices. In addition, ongoing ethics training is essential.

As a lawyer, I am skilled in designing laws, regulations and the right culture to assure best in class systems. I would like to lead the City’s efforts in revamping and strengthening its ethics practices.

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

If elected, I will ask the City Council President to create a special task force on ethics and transparency and I will volunteer to chair this taskforce. What is needed is a best in class compliance system with whistle blower protections and a culture of empowerment for those who see something that is not right. The task force would form an advisory committee from the corporate world to help identify best practices. This will include implementing new ethics and procedure training for City employees who handle sensitive financial matters.

City Council should move quickly to enact a comprehensive policy on open data and work with the Mayor, COO, CFO and City Attorney to make most city datasets available online in a searchable and usable format. Department of Planning recently upgraded its online search portal, but we should continue expanding on this. Providing open data for crime, watershed, and city services would be another plus. Working in the high-tech field, I am a fan of open data and allowing people to innovate around it to provide solutions to problems in our everyday lives.

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

First, we need to ensure that we retain and expand the footprint of our existing business base. We will get the highest ROI on supporting our existing companies. We need to ensure that we are providing the services that they need—whether this is in business loans, international trade meetings, or improving licensing, permitting, and other business services at City Hall to ensure that we do not lose existing business to other cities.

Second, we need to focus on our entrepreneurs and startup industry. My greatest contribution will be in the area of making Atlanta competitive with Silicon Valley, Boston and the other few cities that have built strong technology start up eco systems. Georgia Tech, Emory and other Georgia learning institutions have spawned some very successful technologies, but the early stage financing and associated service industries are still way behind Silicon Valley and Boston. I know this space well and will work with our educational institutions, the city, the state and the private sector to keep our wonderful startups in Atlanta with the proper funding and support services.

Third, we need to offer additional support and services to small businesses. Small businesses make up 64% of net new private-sector. Invest Atlanta, the City's economic development arm, does a great job in supporting large corporations, but we need to look for other ways to be more supportive of Atlanta's small businesses and entrepreneurs. First, the city needs to streamline and update its operations with regard to business licensing and permitting. For small businesses, spending several hours downtown filing paperwork can have a real economic impact. Memphis is a good example of what we could do. Its Smartstartmem program helps entrepreneurs start their business in a day. Second, the City needs to expand its outreach to small businesses. The resources event for small businesses impacted by the bridge collapse is a good start, but IA should have an ongoing commitment to small businesses. In Memphis, the Memmobile pilot program supported small business in turning trucks into shops- essentially taking the idea of food trucks to retail and services. We should look to these kinds of innovative programs to grow and support out small businesses.

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

This is a very challenging political issue that must be addressed. No matter who we are or where we live in the City, we all want the same thing- good schools, safe neighborhoods, and quality housing. Unfortunately, Atlanta has significant disparities across all of these areas. To address these inequities and alleviate the poverty we have in our city, we need to invest both in people and places.

Affordable housing is a difficult issue getting a lot of attention, but not having one clear cut solution. First, we should look to the cities that have done this well, acknowledging that state law may impact what solutions are viable in different regions. Next, we should consult with subject matter experts such as City for All and the Urban Land Institute. Finally, there is a real need to educate our community as to the critical need to have high quality neighborhoods for all of our citizens. This is not just an issue for the low-income community. San Francisco demonstrates how the middle class can be driven out of their neighborhoods. I would spend time with the Atlanta Housing Authority and other governmental agencies involved with this issue as well as the business community.

I applaud the current council and mayor for passing the \$40 million housing opportunity bond. These bonds will present a key funding opportunity to address

homeowner renovations and loans to promote affordable and workforce housing development.

Inclusionary zoning is one of the most effective means of providing affordable housing, without significant cost to government. The 2016 Affordable Housing Ordinance is a step in the right direction by requiring any multi-family residential property for lease that receives a subsidy, grant or incentive from a development authority or public entity doing work in the City of Atlanta to set aside affordable units. We are way behind on Beltline workforce housing, and we must remain focused on this goal as additional development continues on the Beltline.

Our affordable housing policies must support development of affordable housing, not just for single individuals but housing for families as well. We also need to consider whether the current ordinance serves the very-low income.

Expanding inclusionary zoning to private development should be considered. Incentives, such as density bonuses, reduction in setback requirements, expedited approval processing, are critical to the success and legality of inclusionary zoning.

**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?**

A well-educated workforce is key to Atlanta's prosperity. Partnering with the business community to understand what skills are needed for their workforces today and in the future is key to building a thriving economic community where businesses have access to the skills they need and there is economic opportunity for our citizens. Atlanta's unemployment rate is 5.7% versus the national average of 4.4%, there is clearly opportunity in this area. We need smart policies that provide pathways between our education systems and employers.

Federal workforce dollars coming to the state are dispersed to 5 different workforce boards in the metro region (Atlanta, Cobb, Fulton, DeKalb, ARC). The city receives approximately \$7M per year to pay for individuals to get job training and support salaries for on the job training. The Atlanta Workforce Development Agency has been mired in corruption for years and remains ineffective. A complete overhaul of the agency is needed in order for the federal workforce dollars allocated to be spent wisely. A unified, region-wide office, run by top-notch staff utilizing best practices, would be a much better approach. Employers do not want

to have to work with 5 different boards with different sets of rules and procedures in order to access training and recruitment support. Several years back, the state of Georgia re-organized the workforce development office, moving it from under the Department of Labor and making it a division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development. I believe the City should make a similar move.

Of course, the problems of unemployment are so often linked to education. The new Administration and Council must develop a better working relationship with Atlanta Public Schools. The relationship between the city and APS has deteriorated to such a critical point that we need to prioritize that relationship. I was serving as the chair of the local school council at Morningside when Dr. Carstarphen came on board and was able to work with her productively on Morningside and Grady Cluster issues. I would welcome the chance to reach out to her as a City representative to offer a restart to that relationship. Atlanta Committee for Progress should make healing between the two systems a priority.

Having a collaborative relationship with Atlanta Public Schools (and DeKalb County School System) is essential to this end, and we need to see where the city can support its students where issues such as stable housing and transportation may get in the way of education. We need to improve our APS graduation rate from where it currently stands at 71%. Atlanta must take a cradle to career approach to supporting its children and youth.

Atlanta should look at the approach used by the City of Los Angeles- Youth Source- that is a partnership between workforce development and education systems. A young person seeking employment support should also be offered an education plan, whether that is to complete high school, or pursue post-secondary education. This is an example where breaking down barriers instead of departments within government remaining siloed better serves residents. We need to assess where we can more creatively coordinate existing services to create synergies and accelerate change.

Invest Atlanta is a well-run economic development agency with a record of success for the city and companies recruited to locate in the city. I believe AWDA should become a department within Invest Atlanta whose role would then be to directly connect employers with trained or trainable employees and to facilitate better use of the federal workforce dollars available by sub-contracting with non-profit agencies within the region who have a track record of success.

**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.**

Atlanta cannot be hamstrung by its \$900 million infrastructure backlog. The T-SPLOST, MARTA SPLOST, and Renew Atlanta bonds provide much needed funding sources to be able to move forward in implementing a comprehensive transportation and infrastructure plan, and we must be good stewards of these funds and accomplish the proposed projects in a timely and cost-effective manner. While there are many important transportation and infrastructure needs, I would push to see these three as high priority:

**(1) Synchronization of traffic signals--**Atlanta has terrible traffic congestions. Implementing technology such as synchronized traffic signals will provide much needed relief and could be commenced on an expeditious basis. It is important that the City begin making tangible progress on its infrastructure projects to demonstrate to the taxpayers that it is indeed acting as a good steward of the bond and tax revenues, and doing a project such as traffic light synchronization that can be implemented in a relatively short time frame compared to larger projects would be a very good first step. The City is currently piloting a traffic light synchronization project on North Avenue. We should take the findings of this pilot, adjust as necessary, and begin implementing the technology city wide in areas of high traffic congestions.

**(2) MARTA light rail—**Having a strong transit backbone is key to attracting business and millennials, as was seen with Mercedes Benz decision to relocate to Atlanta. I work at Tech Square, which is an example of successful multi-modal transportation, from broad, safe sidewalks, to protected bike lanes and stations for MARTA relay bikes, to city and university buses, as well as MARTA rail. Under Keith Parker's leadership, MARTA's financial condition and operations have improved dramatically, without increasing fares. The passage of the MARTA referendum was a well-deserved vote of confidence for MARTA. MARTA must continue to expand its footprint.

Light rail within the City is the first step in expanding the transit backbone. In deciding which light rail projects to prioritize, a decision must be made as to whether the Beltline will be a transit project, or a system of walking/biking trails connecting greenspaces. There is good thought leadership on this question that needs to be considered in making this decision and moving the Beltline forward. Another complexity of prioritizing light rail projects is the proposed Emory

annexation, which would allow for the “Clifton Corridor” rail. Emory is the 2nd largest employer in the region and the Emory area is the only employment center in the region without direct access to the highway or to MARTA rail. Adding a rail line to the Emory area would provide access to jobs as well as access to a center of innovation and thought leadership. This project is not without its complexities, and is tied to the annexation of Emory into Atlanta, but I believe it would have high utilization and would bring significant opportunity with it.

### **(3) Continued Expansion and Improvement of Hartsfield-Jackson**

**International Airport**--Having a world-class airport has been a key driver to Atlanta’s growth. Hartfield Jackson is within a 2-hour flight of 80% of the US population, which makes it a critical component in the city’s economic competitiveness. It is an essential asset in recruiting new companies, such as Mercedes-Benz, to Atlanta, and retaining existing companies such as Porsche. The airport sets us apart, and we need to maintain that competitive advantage. The 4 other airports in the top five (Beijing, Dubai, LA, Seoul, and Shanghai) are growing faster than Atlanta, so we need to be proactive to retain our ranking.

Just last year, City Council approved ATLNNext, which is the airport’s new development program. It consists of a series of projects over the next 20 years designed to boost capacity, renew and replace existing facilities, and enhance the airport’s aesthetic appeal. The work is projected to cost more than \$6 billion dollars, and City Council must hold the airport accountable to the plan, schedule, and budget.

In addition, to passenger services, the airport’s cargo services are vital to economy, driving both jobs and revenue. This is an area where we have room for even greater growth. The city should provide the necessary support for the airport to meet its 20-year master plan to remain at the forefront of air travel and transportation.

### **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?**

In meetings with the Atlanta Police Department and residents, there is very strong support for the Video Integration Center. This has been the result of a good partnership with business, civic groups, the Atlanta Police Foundation, Council members, and the APD. I would like to see this program expand.

Police retention is a significant issue for the City. I would open a dialogue with APD on what additional resources it needs for its officers to feel safe and fully able to conduct their jobs in a safe manner. This may include a faster rollout of body cameras for Atlanta Police Department.

Partnerships with the CIDs is critical, including the ambassador program implemented by Central Atlanta Progress / Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, Midtown Blue, etc. The City and Council members also need to continue to have a strong relationship with the Atlanta Police Foundation.

**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?**

The arts and culture are an important sector of our economy and our ability to recruit young adults, companies, and events to the City. Tourist attractions are essential to our convention traffic and tourism, and they make our city more livable. We need to look for ways to increase public funding for the arts in Atlanta, which has been largely supported by business and philanthropic groups. We should look to see what other cities with strong arts communities have done to ensure diverse, reliable funding streams, both for public art and to support local art organizations. I support pursuing authorization for a small incremental sales tax for arts funding as was considered last year. I also think that the City should review whether the hotel/motel tax could be used more broadly to support cultural institutions and the arts. Finally, the City should support and encourage public art through other mechanisms such as impact fees and development incentives. We should look at programs such as the City of Palm Springs Public Arts Commission that requires the inclusion of public arts or assesses development fees.