

Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Howard Shook

Atlanta City Council

District 7

Survey Questions/Answers

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

Four terms on the Atlanta City Council; service on all 7 standing committees (including 3 years chairing Utilities and 5 chairing Finance); Council President Pro Tem; Atlanta Budget Commission; Co-Chair of Council's Select Committee on Pensions; Mayor Reed's Pension Reform Panel; Chair of the Atlanta-Fulton County Water Resources Commission; Co-Chair of Mayor Reed's Commission on Waste & Efficiency, Buckhead Community Improvement District Board of Directors.

Having no challengers as of this date I am not campaigning, and thus haven't sought 2017 endorsements.

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

We should be the pre-eminent City of the new south, enriched by a continuing tradition of social/political tolerance and collaboration. The airport's dominance must be maintained, and we must further foster our ascendance as an intellectual property powerhouse.

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

A) Remove any doubts about sustainable access to an adequate water supply; to be accomplished by 1) winning the remaining 'Water Wars' disputes; 2) not flagging or failing to convert 'the quarry' into a 30-day emergency supply; 3) completing the upgrade of pipes critical to downtown's existence.

B) Atlanta's aging public infrastructure. While the projects supported by the recently adopted Renew Atlanta bonds & TSPLOST sales tax hike will help, the I-85 bridge collapse and water main ruptures illustrate the fragility of key systems upon which our health, safety, and welfare depend.

C) Improve the effectiveness of, and trust in, our public schools. As I oppose the idea of bringing APS under municipal control, I believe that a grass-roots community effort is the best (if most elusive) change agent.

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

I have the responsibility to support the policies that do the most long-term good for the most people, provided that such policies are supported by, and do not harm, the district I represent. I believe other councilmembers would describe me as a good listener and consistent supporter of Atlanta's many

communities. Experience dictates when and where lines should be drawn between compromise and a polite but firm 'no thanks.'

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 difference in our financial stability from my arrival on Council is night and day. The last two administrations and the Councils they worked with successfully implemented a ERP system, weathered the Great Recession, built a strong cash reserve, balanced budgets, moved to within one notch of AAA bond ratings, and restructured our pension plans. I'm convinced that beyond the current upgrade of our ERP system (which is underway), of far greater importance is having a prudent money manager in the mayor's office, a top-drawer team in the Finance Department, and an inquisitive but disciplined Council.

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

I am most proud of having never voted to increase property taxes. I totally reject the idea that the City should refrain from the roll-backs we always enact. The machine has yet to be invented that can even measure my lack of trust in the assessment process.

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

The voting public has consistently seen the wisdom of supporting this revenue stream, as it spreads the cost to non-residents who benefit from the system. It has been announced that another extension isn't contemplated, and its termination will have three benefits: A) kept promises provide their own benefits; B) the sustained availability of this revenue has diminished pressure to look for long-overdue cost control measures; and C) our overall sales tax rate is extremely high. I have always advocated for a water/sewer impact fee and believe that if combined with a more disciplined & efficient Department, the system and needed improvements can be adequately funded.

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

The recent and highly-publicized City procurement controversies promote one of my fundamental views about municipal governance (shared by our Internal Auditor): No amount of money spent on systems & software can bullet-proof a process if two or more strategically situated employees collude to defeat it. Believe it or not, most of our existing procurement code comes straight from the ABA's Model Procurement Code. We must also take care not to adopt theoretical 'safeguards' that further extend what is already an indefensibly long (read: costly) process.

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

I have supported efforts to enhance the City's ability to investigate ethics violations, and will continue to urge that guilty employees not simply be terminated but prosecuted (the failure to do so being one of my biggest frustrations).

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

I dislike watching various governments spend fortunes in an endless cycle of cannibalism (in which companies play the role of manipulative children) and yet I dismally conclude that Atlanta is either going to compete or it's not. I would feel better if: A) there was a better relationship between Invest Atlanta & the Council; B) public dollars targeted truly under-invested areas (not Buckhead); and C) more of an effort was made to strengthen the shortcomings that allow others to target us.

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

In order to accomplish more than the adoption of a 'feel-good' but unenforceable new code section, I favor a thorough review of policy outcomes implemented by others before committing significant resources and/or regulations. There should be clear expectations about what such a policy will and won't be designed to accomplish, and buy-in from those upon whom any financial burden would fall. Employer-assisted housing should also be studied. Affordable units should be located near transit, and should not be overly concentrated.

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?

The history of Atlanta's Workforce Development Agency is so checkered that a good start might be a public/private partnership or a complete outsourcing. The best outcomes produced by other municipalities should be catalogued and emulated.

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.

A) Continue to upgrade our sidewalks, bridges, and streets (Renew will only touch a third of our backlog).

B) Continue upgrading our drinking water system.

C) Max out the efficiency of our street system by employing the latest in signal technology.

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

- A) Hold juveniles accountable for their depredations.
- B) There are ways to turn criminals around, but they require unusually committed authority figures—find & deploy them.
- C) Those who can't/won't stop ruining people's lives must be incarcerated (they might indeed come out and take up where they left off, but while they're in they won't be committing ANY crimes).
- D) Use Public Safety impact fees to purchase/deploy cameras & LPRs.
- E) Better police recruiting.
- F) Local governments should establish a joint pay scale, which will calm the existing disparities in the market.

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

Maintain the existing City set-aside for art funding as part of public projects. Implement the adopted art project program funded by the Renew bonds. Work with the hold-outs under the Gold Dome who thwarted last year's sales tax referendum effort.