



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Michael Julian Bond
Atlanta City Council
Post 1 At Large

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.**

In my electoral terms on the Atlanta City Council, I have been a prolific legislator—authoring, coauthoring and passing record numbers of meaningful legislation for the citizens of Atlanta. The total number of legislation passed by me is over 1700 pieces—more legislation per term than any other Atlanta city councilmember in the Council’s history.

In my first two terms as a representative for Council District Three, I doubled the amount of Community Development Block Grant funds invested in my district to more than \$25 million. During this time, I also led the fulfillment of the City’s 30-year promise to rebuild the historic Washington Park Natatorium, and secured over \$130 million for the creation of the Westside Village on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. It is the largest single investment in the African-American community in Georgia. More streets, sidewalks, and infrastructural deficiencies in District Three were repaired than in any other district.

Most recently, I have championed affordable housing and community development initiatives including the Summerhill Community Trust Fund (capitalized at \$5 million), the Affordable Housing Impact Statement, the \$50 million Homeless Opportunity Project, the Westside Tax Abatement for indigenous residents—a 20 year property tax abatement program, and most recently, pending legislation to be included in the City’s 2018 Georgia General Assembly legislative package to cap annual property tax increases for homesteaded residential properties and commercial real estate. I have also introduced or passed public safety measures to eliminate aggressive panhandling, create a Public Safety Improvement Fund, and establish a Public Safety Compensation Commission.

I have served as a national board member of the American Diabetes Association’s (ADA) Community & Volunteer Development Committee, and as a board member of the ADA’s Atlanta Chapter. I am a founding member of the ADA’s “Fathers’ Day Council” Atlanta Committee. I have served on the boards of the East Lake and Ollie Street YMCAs, and I am a charter board member of the Centennial Place YMCA.

List Five Active Supporters:

- a. The Honorable Andrew Young, former Mayor, City of Atlanta
- b. The Honorable Ted Jackson, Sheriff, Fulton County (GA)
- c. The Honorable Roy Barnes, former Governor, State of Georgia
- d. Mr. Doug Dilliard, business executive/developer
- e. The Honorable Nan Orrock, GA State Senator

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

My vision for the City of Atlanta is one of continued strong, smart growth in our economic, affordable housing, community development, and transportation interests that is balanced and equitable. As you will see below, I have already begun the research, planning and implementation phases of measures to bring my vision to fruition.

Expansion of the Atlanta Beltline

We must let the future planning of the Atlanta Beltline be guided by its original priority of transporting people. Along with parks and trails, the Beltline loop needs to create greater connectivity to ensure that people can get to all of parts of the city by utilizing diverse modes of transportation, whether that’s walking, biking, or linking to transit sources including other “first and last mile” means as envisioned by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA).

To aid balanced development of the Atlanta Beltline, I introduced legislation currently held in committee to create housing and commercial enterprise zones to help keep existing property owners from being priced out of their communities.

Affordable Housing for All and Eliminating Homelessness

In April 2017, the Atlanta City Council approved an ordinance that I introduced to establish a trust fund to benefit the communities around Turner Field. The trust will collect a portion of the proceeds from the sale or lease of city properties in Mechanicsville, Peoplestown, Pittsburgh, Summerhill, and a portion of Grant Park. The funds will then be used to finance affordable housing, job training, and community development projects in these neighborhoods.

To further address the development of new affordable housing stock, I recently introduced an ordinance to amend the City of Atlanta’s policies governing the sale of surplus real estate, to allow, in areas where feasible, surplus City-owned properties to be used to develop affordable housing units. The legislation would enable the City to sell real estate to pre-qualified developers (it will target non-profit developers) for \$1 to eliminate the key barrier to the development of affordable housing— the cost of land. By helping developers avoid the high costs of land acquisition, the legislation will make such development more

feasible and help families at zero to 30 percent AMI, the income bracket of Atlanta families with the greatest unmet housing needs. In the other areas, the City can also create housing enterprise zones that would support the purchasing of housing stock in select neighborhoods and for first-time homebuyers.

I was also proud to author the legislation behind the City of Atlanta's recent major step toward eradicating homelessness. In July 2017, the Atlanta City Council authorized Invest Atlanta to issue its revenue bonds to fund the new Homeless Opportunity Project, a massive three-year effort to reduce underemployment, unemployment and resulting homelessness in Atlanta. The \$26 million bond from Invest Atlanta will be added to a \$25 million donation from the United Way of Greater Atlanta. Over the next three years, the \$50 million in funds will be used to create 364 new homeless shelter beds, provide 254 homeless youths with housing interventions, and provide permanent homes for 500 homeless individuals and 300 homeless families.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that in recent years, Atlanta has decreased the number of homeless individuals by 52 percent. However, according to anti-homelessness nonprofit Partners for Home, over 3,500 men, women and children in Atlanta are still in need of shelter. We must continue to work to eradicate homelessness in our community until all residents have permanent housing.

Transportation

The City of Atlanta has been active in its pursuit of developing, funding and implementing smarter transportation options and rebuilding our infrastructure. In 2015, the City initiated the Renew Atlanta Bond program, after winning over 70 percent of the support of Atlanta's citizenry. The program will fix roads and bridges, build more than 30 miles of complete streets projects and bicycle lanes, and will synchronize Atlanta's traffic signals for the first time. Because of our strong credit rating, the City was able to fund the \$250 million in bonds at historically low interest rates.

During the 2016 session of the Georgia General Assembly, Senate Bill 369 was passed. This bill allowed the City of Atlanta to vote on a public referendum to increase the local sales tax by an additional ½ penny to support MARTA expansion plans. The Atlanta City Council voted and the measure was passed by Atlanta citizens in November 2016. The projected revenue from this approved referendum is approximately \$2.5 billion for transit-related enhancements for MARTA and the Atlanta Beltline.

Finally, we also need a light rail system that will serve as "spokes in the Beltline's wheel," thereby providing more passenger routes inside the city limits. I fully support the investments and comprehensive approach to transportation planning projects in the Atlanta Regional Commission's 2040 Plan. This plan views transportation planning not only through

the lens of land use best practices but also contemplates the impact on the environment and economy.

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 – Public safety remains one of the most critical concerns for the city of Atlanta. Crimes committed by youth and gang activity continue to plague residents of the city. While the number of violent crimes has dropped, thefts and related property crimes have remained high. These property crimes and some high-profile violent crimes have created a perception of rampant and escalating crime in city neighborhoods, thereby producing anxiety and fear that leaders must address.

Maintaining a fully staffed police force that is well-compensated is one key to addressing the city's public safety challenges. Atlanta's public safety personnel (Fire, Police and Correction officers) should be the highest paid in the state of Georgia, if not the region. To address salary concerns and attrition, I introduced legislation to create a Public Safety Compensation Commission to define equitable salary numbers, perform annual or biannual salary analysis and make regular recommendations to the City Council and Mayor to ensure that public safety personnel salary data is always current. Salary and benefits remain among the top reasons that attribution is high for these departments. We must ensure that public safety personnel can afford to make a full career with the City of Atlanta, and protect the City's investment in these personnel by paying competitive, equitable and living wages.

Affordable Housing – As I mentioned in Question 2 above, I recently introduced an ordinance to amend the City of Atlanta's policies governing the sale of surplus real estate, to allow, in areas where feasible, surplus City-owned properties to be used to develop affordable housing units. The legislation would enable the City to sell real estate to developers for \$1 to eliminate the cost of land as a barrier to the development of affordable housing. By helping developers avoid the high costs of land acquisition, the legislation will facilitate the construction of housing options that are accessible to Atlanta's low-income families. In the other areas, the City can also create housing enterprise zones that would support the purchasing of housing stock in select neighborhoods and for first-time homebuyers.

Transportation – The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) stated in 2010 that Households in the Atlanta region spend more on transportation each year than any other metropolitan area. After 50 years of lost opportunities to solidify transit in the region, solutions to the region's transportation problems are limited and costly due to land use and acquisition in already developed areas. As the economic engine of the region and the state of Georgia, Atlanta bears the brunt of this burden. I support an integrated system of transportation

both inside and outside the city of Atlanta, working in partnership with other governments around the region. In order to manage current needs and future projected growth (1 million more cars), the Atlanta region must create coordinated transportation linkages that get people out of their cars. The General Assembly's 2015 Transportation Funding Act and recently passed T-SPLOST bills in 2012 and 2016 around the state are great starts but more aggressive support of transit (not just transportation projects) are desperately needed.

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

The very nature and structure of the Atlanta City Council requires collaboration and partnership with Council colleagues. As an At-Large member, I represent the entire city and regularly partner to achieve the needed 10 votes to adopt legislative proposals. Recent examples include partnering with Councilmember Carla Smith to win approval of a \$5 million trust fund for the Summerhill Neighborhood; working with Councilmembers Ivory Young and Clela Winslow to pass a tax abatement for Westside homeowners; all members joined together to support a Housing Opportunity Bond and a referendum for a new homestead exemption that limits the increase in tax assessments for homestead properties to three percent (3%) for city of Atlanta and Atlanta Public School system property taxes.

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 of Atlanta's financial standing is strong and in the best position it has been in decades. The bond rating was upgraded to AA+, making Atlanta the envy of most municipalities in the nation. We have passed eight balanced budgets which included eight ad valorem tax roll backs, and our reserve fund increased from \$7 to \$175 million in during this same period. We have also solved the city's pension quandary by restructuring the plan, resulting in a \$25 million savings per year.

Recognizing that the City of Atlanta has local controls that some major cities do not, policymakers must use their power to create new sources of revenue in addition to property and sales taxes. In today's economy where e-commerce drains brick-and-mortar retail sales taxes and the consumption of goods is increasingly becoming the consumption of services, all cities must create diverse tax bases to assure long-term stability and growth. One option the City of Atlanta should pursue is to request authorization by the Georgia General Assembly to capture taxes from e-commerce/online sales—a rapidly growing industry.

Having tight management controls over financial processes, more frequent audits and ensuring that processes are more transparent for the public will build on our current and future financial success.

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

I believe in conservative fiscal management of public dollars and am proud to say that in my 16 years of public service, I have never voted for a property tax increase. The City of Atlanta Government has proven in the past eight years that it can manage service delivery well without raising taxes. With this in mind, I introduced legislation to cap annual increases in ad valorem taxes for homesteaded residential and commercial taxes to three percent per year.

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 proud to note that upon returning to office in 2010, the first legislation of mine to pass (10-R-0218) was a call for the creation of a municipal option sales tax. I believe that after the expiration of the current one-penny sales tax which is paying for consent decree-ordered improvements, the one-percent tax should be repurposed to fund long-term water and sewer operations. The projects should be placed on a referendum ballot for the scrutiny of the voters and rate payers for each potential renewal. The oversight of these projects should mirror the process for the Renew Atlanta Bond program.

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

To address "pay to play" challenges, I would augment the current procurement process to provide for greater transparency to the extent that it is possible under law. For example, the City could have the names of employees who participate in bid selection committees published to encourage greater accountability and transparency. Lists including the names of companies or individuals bidding on projects can also be made public at an appropriate point in the process. In all cases, propriety information would be protected and in the case of sealed bids, those requirements would be upheld. Bid conferences could also be established and live-streamed for public consumption and transparency. Finally, the City must strictly limit emergency requests-for-proposals (RFPS).

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

I am a strong believer of ethics and transparency and have been a long-time supporter of the Ethics Office. I recently approved legislation for a request-for-proposals to secure a company to place all financial transactions online for real-time viewing by the public.

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

There are several economic development strategies that I support. As the creator of the Atlanta Development Authority, Westside TAD and the sponsor of the legislation that enabled the development of Atlantic Station, I firmly believe in tax allocation districts to attract new companies and industries to bring jobs to Atlanta. This option can be layered with other phased incentives including municipal fee waivers and employment credits when hiring city residents. Additional job stimulation incentives can be offered for businesses that revitalize dilapidated buildings and areas.

In 2016, I introduced an ordinance (16-O-3130) that established a commission to collaborate with leaders from the business, government, and education sectors to review best practices from around the country and provide recommendations on creating, growing and retaining “New Economy” jobs in the city of Atlanta. Emphasis is placed on high-growth industries that are on the cutting edge of technology and are a driving force on economic growth such as healthcare, food service, financial and information technology. Related to the importance of the technology sector in our region is the City’s AT&T Spotlight pilot initiative. I sponsored this initiative, which includes the North Avenue “smart city” corridor that is testing numerous technologies—in partnership with Georgia Tech—that will generate jobs and data-driven solutions for traffic management, public safety and produce savings for the city’s taxpayers.

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

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surplus real estate, to allow surplus City-owned properties be used to develop affordable housing units. The legislation would enable the City to sell real estate to pre-qualified developers for \$1 to eliminate the key barrier to the development of affordable housing— the cost of land. By helping developers to avoid high costs of land acquisition, the legislation will make such development more feasible and help families at zero to 30 percent AMI, the income bracket of Atlanta families with the greatest unmet housing needs. In the other areas, the City can also create housing enterprise zones that would support the purchasing of housing stock in select neighborhoods and for first-time homebuyers.

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?

Given the significant gap in skills needed by high-growth, high-tech employers and low-to-mid-skill persons who are unemployed or underemployed, an integrated approach to job training and secondary and collegiate education is required. The Atlanta Public School System must revamp its curriculum to meet the needs of youth on a collegiate track and those choosing to immediately join the workforce. The employment needs of the 21st century requires that APS strengthen STEM education and related experiential learning. Partnerships between K-12 educational units and collegiate institutions as well as education and business sector partnerships should be developed to expand and reinforce learning opportunities in STEM education, apprenticeships and training. Worker readiness for 21st century new economy jobs requires partnerships that are built on employer-informed knowledge. This knowledge can be shared with education curriculum designers and worker training developers to ensure job readiness and improve economic and social mobility for workers in Atlanta and throughout the United States.

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. **Bellwood Quarry** – I introduced legislation (14-R-4239) that authorized the creation of the Bellwood Quarry Redevelopment Review Council. The purpose of the review council was to provide the City with formal comments on the redevelopment of Bellwood Quarry. The quarry was purchased in 2006 for use as both a recreational space and a raw drinking water storage facility, which is important because the facility—when completed—will afford the city with an additional 30 days of drinking water during emergencies or technology failures. We currently only have three days’ worth of reserve water. Protecting the city’s

water is a top priority. An added benefit is the 350 acres of park space, which abuts the Bankhead MARTA station and West Midtown will provide for a comprehensive transit-oriented development and support further economic growth.

- b. **MARTA Expansion** – The City must support the completion of MARTA’s Clifton Corridor, Proctor Creek, West Line to Fulton Industrial Boulevard, and the expansion of rapid bus service in documented underserved areas of the city. These transportation projects are important and ranked first because they are foundational in improving mobility in the region and supporting job growth and sustainability.
- c. **Renew Atlanta Bond Program** – With only \$250 million leveraged for the first phase of the city’s infrastructure improvement program, the City must continue to address the remaining deferred capital repair and replacements. Phase I addressed the most critical infrastructure needs and 2016 T-SPLOST revenue will augment funds for some surface projects. The next administration should reassess and confirm the prioritization of projects, but the work must continue and the backlog should be eliminated.

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?

Maintaining a fully staffed police force of 2,000 officers is the top strategy for addressing real and perceived safety issues in Atlanta by residents and visitors alike. Working in partnership with the Community Improvement Districts, Neighborhood Planning Units, civic associations and business associations like Central Atlanta Progress and Midtown Atlanta, the City can render community policing practices that best fit the needs of the respective areas.

In addition, I would ensure that legislation (12-O-1324) I authored in 2012 to curtail aggressive panhandling would continue to be enforced. The adopted legislation was introduced to deal with repeat offenders who were arrested under an earlier passed ordinance to address the issue. The Atlanta Police Department noted that 78 offenders were arrested and quickly released more than 400 times. The 2012 law made it illegal to monetarily solicit someone who is within 15 feet of a building entrance or exit, or who is standing in line to enter a building or event facility. Panhandlers are prohibited from continuing to ask for money after they have been told “no” and are not permitted to touch people from whom they are asking money. The legislation applies equally throughout the city, making no special provisions for tourist areas, but it is especially helpful in these areas. It sets minimum penalties of 30 days in jail for a second conviction and 90 days after a third conviction.

Listening to the challenges faced by our public safety officers is key to crafting legislative remedies that provide real-life, practical solutions that will offer effective tools to help the officers do the job they are sworn to do.

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 create the non-sectarian soul of any society. The vibrancy and spirit of a community is molded by its arts and cultural life. The City of Atlanta currently mandates that one percent of each construction contract be dedicated to the development of public art. To enhance this effort and support arts organizations, the City should dedicate one to two percent of each annual budget to the funding of the arts. I supported legislation included in the City's 2017 state legislative agenda that would have given the City the option to hold a referendum to levy a sales tax percentage for the funding of arts organizations. This measure did not pass the Georgia Legislature.