



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

**Deborah "Sister" Williams**

Atlanta City Council

District 4



### 2021 Candidate Pre-Interview Questionnaire

*Please type your response to questions in the field provided. Please limit answers to 300 words or less.*

**1. Briefly describe your qualifications for this office and why you have chosen to run. In addition, please identify up to 5 organizations or individuals who are actively supporting your candidacy and why you believe their support is important.**

MY 30 years experience as a Nonprofit Executive Director CEO ,community leader . organizer and a public servant working with Atlanta City Governments " Keep Atlanta Peachy Clean " I was appointed to this seat by Councilwoman Winslow and received to community leadership award. I have been awarded two Phoenix awards. I have worked with all the City departments and Staff ,The department of agriculture supporting Local Food Systems and Urban Farming. I have experience in grant writing. I worked with the DOT, by writing a CDBG grant to have 14 sidewalks installed for senior homeowners. I have experience in writing permits I worked with Bonnie Ramsey Jackson and got 3 Bus shelters installed Atlanta's West End community on R.D.A. , and Joseph E Lowery. I worked with Fulton County D.A. Mr. Paul Howard to stop teenage trafficking. I developed the West End Neighborhood Association WENA. I have been the President for 12 years writing agendas and chairing meetings working with the NPUT on executive board working with Zoning and Public safety. I also worked with Zone 4 police to host National Night Out Neighborhood Watch annual fight against crime . My non-profit REEDEMED offers court ordered community service to parolees, students, and PAD Police Alternative Diversion (housing the homeless). Partnering with Park Pride has allowed me to adopt two parks and received grants to maintain them.

I am running to complete the work I started in 1993. I need a larger platform to implement my 30 years experience, working in Atlanta and my West End community to be a sustainable community.

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

- A. Gentrification- tax reduction for homeowners, also implement policies that slow down displacement, ie.
- B. Youth engagement- Promote youth entrepreneurship with community support
- C. Police accountability- End qualified immunity, malpractice/liability insurance

**3. Describe your leadership style and an example of a strategy you have used to motivate others and deliver results.**

My leadership style is transformational, I inquire about people's hopes, dreams, and wishes. I then take action towards unified goals and try to motivate and engage stakeholders who share a unified vision. Use resources that have proven beneficial over time and replace systems and processes that aren't working.

**4. Trust in the City's service delivery and responsiveness is waning. What improvements would you make to these core service functions to restore public trust and improve quality of life for citizens and businesses in Atlanta?**

Hire qualified personnel.

I would see where information could be shared with the public that comes from systems that are already in place. An example would be real-time status updates and a public facing list of 311 service requests. This would allow for more transparency, accountability, And useful feedback from the public. We Have some great systems in place currently like 311 which could be improved upon. We don't need to reinvent the wheel.

**5. What are your views on the Buckhead cityhood movement? What actions will you take related to this issue?**

I would support more training for officers and a budget to hire more officers.

The main reason they want to leave is because of crime. To stop crime we must implement policies that close the gap between the haves and the have nots.

**6. What is your philosophy on taxation in the City of Atlanta? What future funding streams do you believe are needed to pay for the things we need to grow? How should these opportunities be evaluated?**

Residents 75 and up should be exempt from paying taxes.  
Public and private sources should be utilized for funding ie Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms One Atlanta 1 billion dollar housing plan. We just have to make sure the funds are used properly when we secure them. Allocate money for 1st time home owners.  
Annual audits of all city departments.

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

Enforce the Atlanta Board of Ethics which is an independent city agency that is charged with bringing the City of Atlanta into compliance with the Code of Ethics.

**8. Describe your philosophy as to the City of Atlanta's role in implementing public safety reform. Which strategies should be prioritized, and if elected, how will you work to advance them? What partnerships are necessary to achieving success?**

The City of Atlanta needs to grant the The Atlanta Citizens Review Board subpoena power, in response to undesirable behavior from officers.

(Priority) Atlanta needs more training for officers that is more community policing focused and that looks to help officers adjust to Atlanta's changing diverse demographics.

I would work to Change Ordinance to:

End Qualified immunity

Police bond themselves, Citizens do not need to pay for police misconduct,

Charge an officer with tampering with evidence, if they are found to turn off body cam during an arrest.

Partnerships between the City of Atlanta and State Legislators.

**9. What role should diversion and policing alternatives play in the City's broader public safety strategy? How are these programs evaluated and funded?**

A large role in first responders dispatch To evaluate situations and bring balance to The problem and the person. The police are not needed for many non-violent calls. Atlanta (Police Alternative Diversion) PAD appears to be a good solution. I do not know how PAD is evaluated. Programs like PAD are supported by individual donors, and the following funders: City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Heising-Simons Foundation, and Open Society Foundations.

**10. What role should the City of Atlanta play in economic development? What is your perspective on urban redevelopment tools as the City competes for jobs, talent, and its share of economic growth?**

The city of Atlanta should make licensing, permits, and compliance easier to understand. Opportunity zones should have incentives for companies doing business in those areas i.e. paying employees a livable wage and a certain percentage of hiring within the community .

**11. What role should the City of Atlanta play in addressing economic mobility and the racial wealth gap? Which tools and strategies would your office advance, if elected?**

The city needs to work with Atlanta Public Schools (APS) to teach financial literacy at a younger age.

The city needs to invest in Atlanta's Economically disadvantaged community by ensuring businesses have a streamlined process to receive funding from the SBA and CDBG, by adding more financial literacy mentorships and resource and information centers.

**12. As we emerge from the pandemic, what are the major challenges facing the City for economic recovery? How will your candidacy address them?**

Inflation. Property owners being paid up by renters  
Support a livable wage.  
The City of Atlanta needs to ensure that we get our portion of the CARES act.

**13. What strategies would you implement to improve the City's supply of affordable housing? What are the barriers to succeeding on this front and how will you work to overcome them?**

Build Income based condominiums. Some barriers are people's background checks and credit rating. I would work to overcome these barriers by assisting more people with Credit repair And criminal record expungement.

Continue forth with Mayor KLB's One Atlanta housing plan for 1 billion dollars  
Her plan calls for building 20,000 homes. I would instead push for spending the billion on down payments for first time home buyers of refurbished homes, that fit a certain criteria  
For a \$300,000 home a down payment of 3.5% would equal \$10,500. If we spent the entire 1 billion on down payments that would equal 95,238 homes.

**14. What strategies would you implement to protect residents from being displaced from their communities, as housing prices continue to rise and eviction moratoriums expire?**

Provide Senior homeowners with a tax exemption from school board tax.  
Grandfather in homestead tax reduction  
Income based housing with renters assistance for working families .  
Work with the Land bank and Hud down payment assistance for first time home buyers to prevent displacement.

Create a bill similar to California bill 1079 prohibiting investment firms and banks from buying homes  
Community Land Trusts  
Inclusionary zoning and linkage fees (community investment)  
Strengthen the NPU's with community benefit agreement

**15. What improvements, if any, need to be made to transparency and oversight on the More MARTA program? How should candidates for city appointments to the MARTA board be vetted and approved?**

Annual audits of services provided. Candidates for city appointments to the MARTA board should be vetted and approved by evaluating if goals are being accomplished in candidates current position.