



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Rebecca King
Atlanta Mayor



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.

Serving on five different committees, NPU B, Livable Buckhead, CLEAR, North Buckhead Civic Association led me to the assessment that a lot of the committees are meeting and suggesting items or processes that the city should already be providing. As a small business owner and a board member of multiple non-profit boards gives me the well rounded view of what it takes to manage and build teams to achieve the success of a strategic plan and rejuvenate the city. The city is in dire straits and this is a leadership problem. Having Buckhead leave the city of Atlanta would be detrimental to the fabric of Atlanta and is not a situation that I would like to see happen. Bottom line the city needs to be proactive and not reactive. Our insurance rates are going to climb if we do not address these issues.

David Mitchell, Anita Patterson, Ben Howard, Mike Calder and Jennifer Durkin

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

Crime, Infrastructure and City Services

For Crime, I would start by hiring a new police chief that will be community focused, technology focused and training focused.

Our Police force needs to have the best training facility in the region. Police officers that have to wait months to take courses hinders our officers having the best resources. Courses for dealing with mental health, de-escalation techniques and fugitive chasing are needed quickly. The Pre Arrest Diversion (PAD) Program needs to run 24 hours and 7 days a week. Currently the program operates Monday through Friday 7-7. Crime doesn't operate certain hours or days. The PAD program should not be voluntary if there is a law on the books that someone has broken. The point of the PAD is not to be arrested. There shouldn't be an opportunity to turn down the program. If you turn down the program, then the Officer should follow their sworn duty to protect and defend by arresting the individual. Current technology would enhance the officer's ability to determine on the spot if an entity is operating without current appropriate licenses or if the owner has properly represented the business entity in license filing applications. Lastly, the city needs to continue to add appropriate personnel to be able to adequately staff departments and continue to add departments since the city continues to grow and is in a flux of traffic accidents, added visitors, and added crime (perceived or real.)

City departments need to publish and maintain reserve studies on buildings and any infrastructure that the city by charter has to maintain. Reserve studies should show the amount needed in a budget to properly maintain buildings, roads and technology. Those departments should also maintain map showing each year the updates to the accomplished items, the work deferred, and any additional needed funds to complete the project item.

City Services need an overhaul. Utilizing the major companies headquartered here and the colleges and universities to assess the efficiencies of the service and the return on investment. The North part of the city could possibly need its own hub of services so that all services do not have to drive through traffic to start and end their day.

3. Describe your leadership style and an example of a strategy you have used to motivate others and deliver results. [For Mayoral Only] As Mayor, what will your process be in vetting and selecting your staff and Cabinet leadership?

Building teams of people that are leaders in their fields are how I recruit for boards that I am involved in if there are not people already in positions that bring value for their perspective. Giving people space to do their job and to give their expertise is important in building trust and teamwork. Analyzing from the top and bottom are critical to a successful organization.

As Mayor I would be looking for people that have been successful in private and public partnerships. Individuals that have run logistics for companies, planning for catastrophe management and supply chain analysis. Proven leadership that demonstrates efficiencies and how to manage a business, but with the ability to be flexible and to be compassionate.

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?

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

As a resident of Buckhead I think it would be detrimental to the city of Atlanta. Unfortunately, it is a real movement that I believe can happen. Strengthening our police force, fire department and city services so that people can see what they are receiving for the taxes that they are paying to the city of Atlanta. Too many neighborhoods have hired private security as well as many businesses. Showing immediately that crime and homelessness will be addressed would garner confidence and hopefully, encourage people not to vote to incorporate a city. Swift action and accountable actions that are trackable can give residents the reason to stay in the city. Zoning that is too dense needs to stop. Residents are extremely upset with rezoning and if it continues on the path to create more density residents are going to secede from Atlanta. From the Buckhead resident perspective nothing built has shown affordable housing so new projects with multiple units that bog down traffic coupled with visible violent crime has unfortunately created a perfect storm to given neighbors a reason to band together and assess whether it is the time for them to leave the city.

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?

Taxes are not equivalent to the services or even the complete lack of services provided. My condo building pays \$30,000 for a "solid waste fee" that is specifically printed in the city charter that it cannot be paid for. This is the second time that the city has "studied" how to charge property owners for a service that is not provided in any shape or form. The property owners already pay for their own service. The city has wasted multiple dollars on lawsuits and studies for something that is simply stated in the city charter.

The fire and rescue department needs to charge for service calls. In your insurance policy there generally is a provision that pays for a service call if there is a fire. Those dollars could be used to manage the wear and tear of equipment. The city provides the service and the call should take care of the usage of the equipment. Since the dollars are used for equipment that line item could move to the line item for hiring of more personnel or padding for the salaries that are there with additional certifications.

If the police department is not charging for service calls for traffic accidents it should. There is a payment for the police report, but again there is usage of equipment and people passing through on the interstate are not paying toward the service of Atlanta keeping a well qualified force.

Any new development in the zoning and planning department needs to address impact on any infrastructure or service that the city provides. Any service from life/safety to water and sewer should show the cost and impact to the current infrastructure. Taking a lot that has three toilets on it and adding 300 is a significant strain to the system. Not only does it affect hard infrastructure the increase of life/safety personnel and additional schools needed are not addressed.

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

Procuring software that can manage and track transactions will be paramount. It is my understanding that police officers can still accept currency and utilize a paper system for licensing. There should be no reason that Atlanta with a city of this size and Fortune 500 resources should be in the dark ages with any technology. Even a google form would be better in some departments than what is utilized now. It is always good to have a back up system, but then should immediately be accountable online. There is no way to completely negate unethical behavior no matter what you do so having a good working environment, open relationship and financial incentives should help quell unethical behavior.

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?

Better training for our police officers, hiring the correct ratio to population and paying enough so that they do not have to work multiple jobs. Hopefully, having a complete roster of police officers if a mental health day is needed an officer can take the day. Community outreach needs to continue and encourage the community not to put police in the reactive mode. They are unfortunately, called due to a situation that has gotten out of control and they have to react. That reaction could result in the death of someone. More community work around conflict resolution would be helpful starting in schools. That conflict resolution could have worked on my street instead of a shootout occurring due to fireworks that were out of control. Had the police been able to respond sooner to help quell a situation it would have been a better outcome than police responding to gunshots and damage to property occurred. Fortunately, there was no loss of life.

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

There is a need for policing alternatives. As I mentioned before those policing alternatives should not be voluntary. Sometimes people are not healthy enough to make a good decision and need wrap around services so that they do not continue to break the law. A rotating door of a police department is not a good use of resources and could harm the person more than help them. The number of incidences that are resolved without an arrest or that don't reoccur should be a significant indicator of success. Arresting someone five times in one day is not helpful for a minor offense. Funding should be a public and private partnership. Businesses that can offer support could possibly show a reduction in hired security and lessen the line item for loss prevention. Insurance rates and taxes could be reduced. Therefore, the business has effectively justified the return on investment. Foundations can manage those items that the city cannot be to everyone and relieve the city to manage the items required by virtue of the city charter.

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?

Being a good partner and utilizing Invest Atlanta hand in hand with a partnership of colleges and universities to “incubate” businesses. Job training could be handed off with financial support to the colleges to manage. This would lessen the city’s retirement system and would show long term savings in many line items of the operating budget.

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?

Again, I think that this is a private and public partnership. I would ask companies to review their current workforce and analyze what racial wealth gap is there. Then ask the company if it could narrow the gap to certain percentages if their employees go to additional training, enroll in college or evolve into a different vocation. For the public pointing to the path of a college degree, home ownership, a vocation or entrepreneurship and how that could narrow the gap. Created mentoring opportunities at companies that are here in Atlanta and ask that companies provide video series on their websites that discuss different jobs with different income levels and how to take the path to that job to increase someone’s wealth.

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

The city's sales receipts for taxes could go down so running an efficient government is a must. Efficient government and services will give people the opportunity to trust their city again. Quality of life will go up and the city will be a better partner for business. Businesses will want to move here and by addressing crime people will feel safe enough to get out and keep the economy moving.

Opening city government so that in person meetings occur so people are not afraid to be around each other. The human connection is extremely important and critical to being together again.

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?

Housing can be in all parts of the city so promoting different neighborhoods for development instead of packing density in one zone would create a well rounded city. Rotating stock of affordable housing that is on the market should be assessed. Helping people to advance out of affordable housing by job training, education or changing vocations should be offered. Leaving affordable housing could be a goal, too. Property taxes should be evaluated in the current structure. You might be able to afford the house, but the taxes can keep you from purchasing.

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?

Working with Invest Atlanta, private foundations and commercial entities to help residents refinance or receive a moratorium from payments for a specific timeframe would help protect residents from being displaced. Lobbying Congress to change penalties for withdrawal of 401k's or any other financial savings product so that the resident could withdraw funds without penalties would be a top priority. Currently, in order to use 401k funds residents have to be in foreclosure to be allowed access and have to take a 20% penalty. Going to foreclosure costs the resident more money that they need to evolve out of their financial crisis.

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?

By posting on the MARTA website any board opportunities and the roles that are needed for a successful board should help the transparency. Adding "rider" seats to the board would open the meetings. Those "rider seats" could be the general public that truly use MARTA at a high percentage their only transportation. Additionally, the city council if they don't already should announce open positions, show resumes of those considered and give reasoning for their appointments. I found board minutes and agendas with a quick search so that to me is always a great step in transparency.

16. Describe your philosophy on the City's current infrastructure backlog. If elected, what strategies will you pursue to ensure forward progress is made? How would you expedite project delivery in the City?

The city is not in great shape. This week I lost a tire to a pothole and in speaking to a number of other people they have lost multiple tires where the tire didn't even make it to its average life expectancy. Open transparency on the city's website as I mentioned above with a tracking plan by something as simple as a google document or maybe something more complicated with a ticket tracking system. A map with pinpoint software that can show by a "hover or highlight" the needed update and if it is in process or completed. Buildings that have reserve studies will give the city a needed plan and path to achieve structural integrity and the needed financial support for each building by year. Expediting project delivery would depend on the project. Contracting out projects as well as "in house" should be assessed for each project. What is most efficient from a time standpoint as well as financial standpoint.

17. How important is sustainability to Atlanta's continued growth and vitality? What sustainability initiatives have been most successful in Atlanta to-date and how build you upon them?

Sustainability is very important to Atlanta's continued growth and vitality. They are germane to quality of life and continued success of Atlanta as a major city. Recycling, the tree canopy, composting, and walkability are key. An article that I read recently in Science Daily discussed the benefits of a tree canopy and how it can be used to keep an area cool therefore less energy was used and a cost savings was realized. Communicating that effectively could bring more tree advocates to the discussion instead of dividing a community. Recycling and composting can keep our landfills lowered there by costing the city less. Incentivizing instead of penalizing citizens would help garner support for programs.