



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

C.T. Martin
City Council President

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.

I have served on the Atlanta City Council since 1991. My body of work consists of providing professional services in a number of areas including education, social services, enfranchisement, voter rights, government (local, state, and federal), and private business enterprise. I have chaired nearly every city council committee, including the Human Resources Committee, Transportation Committee, and Public Safety Committee. Two of my greatest achievements were the opening of a mini police precinct in the M. L. King/ Adamsville community, organizing the Citizens on Patrol during the 1996 Olympics, and secured the funding/land acquisition for the 20 million dollar Adamsville Natatorium and Gymnasium.

I am proud to be supported by Atlanta luminaries such as Former Georgia Governor Roy Barnes, Henry "Hank" Aaron, Former Mayor and Ambassador Andrew Young, Presidential Medal of Freedom Award Recipient CT Vivian, Sally Warner, Michael Trotter, and Civil Rights leader Lonnie King in addition to the Atlanta Business League. My supporters span the history of our city. Each of them have played a significant role in the economic and social fabric of Atlanta and speak to the breadth of my experience.

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

My vision is simply to have an Atlanta that works for everyone. The city was very different when I was elected in 1990. Over the years we have experienced multiple mini recessions along with the Great Recession nearly 10 years ago. What those economic downturns taught us is that the city is not equal. While all of Atlanta's citizens hurt during these dips, some hurt more than others. For Atlanta to truly be

great and to better sustain itself, we need as diverse an economy as possible. Hubs of economic activity need to be established in each part of the City, rather than just downtown or Buckhead.

I would implement this diversification by working with the mayor and appointing committee chairs who are committed to this vision. With the mayor and the right leadership on Council, we can work with groups like the Metro Chamber and the Atlanta Business League, among others, to grow economic development south of I-20. Further, we understand the connection between transit and development, so I will appoint Transportation Committee chairs who will work to ensure the additional taxes voters approved last year (TSPLOST- .4% and MARTA- .5%) are used as promised and enhance east-west connectivity.

Public Safety is a paramount issue as well. As chair of the Council's Public Safety-Legal Administration Committee for numerous years, I have worked on some of the most pressing issues the City has faced. Yet I have also seen how the day-to-day challenges faced by our public safety agencies greatly affects the lives of our citizens and visitors. One such challenge is police and firefighter response times outside of downtown. Both have improved but both departments want even greater improvement in this area. With our city extending to Cobb County to the west and into DeKalb County to the east, we must ensure that our residents, regardless of where they live, are safe and can trust that they will receive a prompt response if it is needed. The way we achieve this is by working to increase the size of our police and firefighting forces so that we can reduce response times. A key part of our recruitment is ensuring pay parity with other departments in the region and by making sure there are regular equipment upgrades.

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

From my perspective, the three greatest challenges our city faces are:

- 1) A population boom. Conservative estimates state that Atlanta's population will double over the next 30 years while the region's population growth will extend beyond that. This growth will put additional pressure on our water supply, roads, housing and infrastructure. We have to be ready

which means continuing to use our MOST and working with the state to clean our water and ensure enough water flow. In addition to our infrastructure bonds and SPLOST money, we must find a way to fund our infrastructure backlog which, in 2015, totaled close to 1 billion. As City Council President, I will work to implement a long-term vision with benchmarks to make sure we are moving as needed. I will also seek to continue the presence of the position on ARC so that the city has as many voices advocating for it as possible.

- 2) Public safety. The crime rate has decreased since I was first elected, however, our police force has fallen to below 1700 officers on the street. In addition, AFRD still, in some cases, is not staffing a minimum of four firefighters per apparatus. I will work to fund recruitment and retention efforts to increase the size of both the police and fire departments, which will become increasingly important as our population grows.
- 3) Traffic Congestion. The City's traffic problem is the result of several variables: 1) the number of people who live and work in the city each day; 2) the limited use of other modes of transportation (we are a car-centric city), and 3) the limited availability of different modes of transportation. The intra-city population is only going to continue its growth. Through zoning we can help direct where that growth takes place to help ease congestion. The second two are linked. Right now MARTA does not pick up or drop off where people need to go. Their own data shows that less than 60% of the population lives within ½ mile of a MARTA stop. The city and MARTA are working to change that and I will hold both accountable for increasing accessibility. The other challenge is how frequently MARTA services its routes. Traveling during off peak hours is extremely difficult. These work together to keep us car dependent, when we really need to be able to walk/bike to/from a mass transit center, take transit to where we are going.

4. As City Council President, how will you add value to city council? How will you approach your relationship with the mayor? How will you articulate any potential disagreements with the mayor?

The City Council President only votes in the case of a tie. With 15 member of council, this is a rare occurrence. Therefore, for the president to be effective, they must be consensus builders both with the council and, given our form of government, with the mayor's office. Specifically, my approach will be:

- 1) Work with the mayor and the Council to develop a Unified Vision for Atlanta. If the Mayor's Office and the Council start on the same page, it will create a spirit of good faith that will carry the government through tough times and will ensure that every part of the city receives what it needs.
- 2) Appoint committee chairs who are committed to fulfilling the vision outlined in the document.
- 3) Be an advocate for individual Council Districts with the Mayor's Office and the State on key issues for the Districts.

I am known as the Dean of the Council. I earned this respect from my colleagues due to my longevity and ability, even as district councilmember, to impact legislation. I have extensive leadership training through the Outward Bound Executive Leadership Program as well as leadership training at various universities. With the new mayor and numerous new councilmembers, I offer a steady hand and experience necessary to build consensus and keep the city moving forward.

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 financial state of the city is strong. Nine years ago, we saw bond downgrades, an underfunded pension liability, and only \$7 million in reserves. However, the last eight years have seen a turn around that includes successive bond rating increases, a pension fund that restored our financial standing, and an approaching \$175 million in reserves.

The challenges are how to keep the momentum going and how to expand who benefits from the overall success. Our current toolbox has worked, however, I believe the city needs even more flexibility from the County and State to make decisions on taxation, especially property tax assessments.

Beyond sound stewardship of what we have gained over the current Administration's two terms, I believe we can grow our base reserves. Increased cooperation with the State can lead to increased access to State resources. And as we explore solutions to regional problems such as mass transit, that should also open the way to regional financial assistance from counties and other service recipients.

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

The property tax, a mainstay of local government, is the subject of continual controversy. But in fact it is a fair, democratic, stable, and efficient source of local revenue. The property tax generates millions per year in local revenue, making it a critical source of funding for schools, police and fire protection, and other public services.

To maintain fairness and stability across groups of homeowners, certain exemptions must be available, such as: homestead, senior citizen and for developers who construct affordable single and multi-family housing. I also propose that the City continues to roll back millage rates in an effort to prevent the high cost to homeowners of increased property assessments.

As we saw recently with property tax increases, that now have been frozen, the County had not done assessments for several years. There is a history spotty and lax property tax assessments in Fulton County. The lack of regularity and accuracy in their assessments results in less reliable revenue for the City and spiking property taxes that can be affordable for many homeowners.

We need to ensure that assessments are done accurately, frequently and that exemptions are properly applied to homeowner tax bills.

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

The MOST continues to be supported by Atlanta’s voters. We saw this last March when residents voted overwhelmingly, by 85 percent, to continue the MOST for another four years. Voter have no reauthorized it three times since 2004. Had it not passed, our ratepayers would have seen their water/sewer bills rise by some 30 percent over the next four years. Local Option Sales Taxes are authorize in 29 state and cities and each one uses these taxes to help pay for the costs of their water/sewer systems. I believe this tool is a good way to defray water/sewer costs for the City’s residents. Because it is a sales tax, the half a million and more visitors and workers who come to the City everyday also pay for the use of our water/sewer infrastructure. By doing so, the burden on our ratepayers is decreased but we can continue to cover our bond payments and operation costs.

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

It is clear that changes are needed. The steps needed are:

- 1) Understanding how “pay to play” happens within the process. This means mapping every opportunity for inappropriate and/or unlawful influence and then assuring those entry points are monitored and mitigated.
- 2) Implementing regular, no less than annual, criminal AND financial background checks on those in positions to influence the process to identify those who are most vulnerable to being compromised.
- 3) Increasing transparency. I support transparency with communications between applicants and the relevant City personnel.
- 4) Increasing contract audits and rotating the auditors to ensure that the terms are being met.

The integrity of the City’s procurement process is important. People must have faith that we are doing things honestly, above board, and with integrity. Rebuilding trust with the public, our business community, and current and future contractors if of vital importance to me and will be a priority.

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

Three critical actions are needed, including:

- 1) Placing the City's budget online in a searchable format
- 2) Strengthening whistleblower programs
- 3) Regular audits of City departments

As I stated in the previous question, trust, integrity, and transparency must be at the forefront of how the City is run. Without the public's trust, any action we take as a government is undermined. I am committed to making sure we are worthy of their trust.

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

Our current strategies are working well. With a few tweaks, we can do even better.

- 1) Tax Allocation Districts. The results of TADs have been mixed and vary by area. We need shorter periods with more frequent accounting of TAD dollars to make sure they are being spent and spent in the right way.
- 2) Encouraging geographic diversity is where development happens. Equitable development must take place. It will benefit the City as a whole.
- 3) Working with entities committed to economic development to help each sector of the city develop a marketing plan and catalog their resources so that developers are more likely to do work in those areas.
- 4) Exploring and advocating for the creation of more Community Improvement Districts that allow local business areas to have more control and voice in the growth and development of their areas.
- 5) Strengthening the capacity of local business and merchant associations.

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

This is one of the great challenges facing Atlanta. As we continue to be a destination city and region, the price of housing will continue to increase and outpace the average salaries. We cannot become New York or San Francisco, particularly when considering we do not have the legislative tools at our disposal that those two high rent cities have. With that in mind, I would work with the mayor to hold entities like the Beltline to their initial promises, with currently underway and future developments to increase both the number and length of affordable units at various levels of Average Media Income and, for current homeowners, I support tax exemptions such as a senior tax exemption to help ease the burden of increased assessments. Last, I believe the city should explore expanding items like the Land Bank and community land trusts so that the public owns the land rather than private developers. This will allow the city to keep prices affordable.

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?

I have been involved with federal workforce development programs since the early 1970s when Congress passed the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). It later became the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and is now the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Through all its iterations, I have advocated strongly for job training for at-risk youth and low skilled, unemployed adults. In fact, early in my City Council career I was instrumental in finding funding and operationalizing the first mobile career coach for youth in Atlanta.

However, since the 1990s, we have seen federal funding for workforce development drop by more than 30 percent. Yet the great need for workforce training is still with us as a City. We must find ways to continue this important training.

I believe Atlanta is leading the way by creating the kinds of partnerships we are seeing on the Westside. The Westside Works program, City of Refuge, and other similar programs can fill the gap that the federal government has left.

We also need to approach job training and employment from the point of view of the employer. Determining what industries are hiring and growing in the City and in the region will help us decide which types of training to offer. Getting someone into a career and not just a job is the goal. Registered apprenticeship programs are one of the best ways to do this. Not everyone is going to go to college. But training in a trade such as plumbing, carpentry, or welding can lead to middle class earnings. This is the path the City should take to help its struggling youth and unemployed citizens and I will advocate strongly for such programs.

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.

- 1) Water. With our population set to double, we must ensure that we have more than an adequate supply of clean water.
- 2) Transit. We must maximize the opportunity taxpayers gave us when they approved the additional .9% sales tax for roads and transit. This means completing the Beltline, improving East-West connectivity, making the Streetcar useful and making it easier to move throughout the city.
- 3) Sidewalks and light synchronization. I group these two together because they affect pedestrian safety. Further, together these improvements will ease traffic congestion.

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?

We need to increase the size of our police force and firefighters. As mentioned above, we have fallen below 1700 uniformed officers on the street and there are still trucks with only three firefighters on them. Both departments desperately need new training facilities and pay parity with their colleagues in neighboring jurisdictions.

In addition, I will advocate for increased coordination between our various police departments. Within the city of Atlanta, each university has their own police as does the Atlanta Public School system. We need to share information and work to better coordinate responses.

Given Atlanta's geographic location, I support creating facilities that can be shared by the City, Cobb/DeKalb/Fulton counties. This will defray costs and ensure state-of-the-art training across departments.

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?

I supported the current Administration's effort to create a dedicated penny sales tax for the arts. Although it failed this year, I will continue to be an advocate at the State Legislature to make sure we achieve this. At the same time, I believe in working with the business community to create a fund that will disperse money annually via a competitive grant process. The City has the will to support the arts, we have to be innovative in making it happen. I commit to working with the next Mayor to ensure that art is a priority throughout the City.