



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

Andrea Boone
Atlanta City Council
District 10

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 was Chief of Staff to District 10 Councilmember C.T. Martin for nineteen years and I served just under eight years as the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Constituent Services. I have built strong and trusting relationships with the residents, neighborhoods, businesses, and community-based organizations in District 10, as well as throughout the City. I also have a deep knowledge of the City's legislative and bureaucratic processes. Getting things done quickly, correctly, and effectively are hallmarks of my work.

Working in both the executive and legislative branches of city government, I have a broad and thorough knowledge of all city policies, including budgetary, tax, and planning. As head of a citywide office, I drafted eight annual operating budgets, managed a staff of 15 and oversaw the delivery of human and social services in every part of the City. I have collaborated and problem-solved with residents, elected officials, business leaders, community activists and department heads on vexing issues in every part of the City.

My candidacy has been endorsed by Hank Aaron, Father Austin Ford, Congressman John Lewis, Councilmember C.T. Martin, and State Senator Horacena Tate.

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

The City of Atlanta has seen tremendous growth. We are in an extremely strong financial position and are attracting new businesses and residents every day. I believe Atlanta needs to continue on this path. Therefore, I will support the continuation of policies that strengthen the City's finances. I also see the need for making sure that we do not lose the diversity of our city. This includes making sure all parts of the City have affordable housing, reliable transportation, high-performing public schools, access to amenities such as grocery stores and high-speed internet, parks, and recreation centers. I support policies that will promote and sustain equitable and inclusive economic development across the City, but particularly on the south and southwest sides of the city.

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

Transportation: We need an interconnected transit system that includes MARTA, the BeltLine, and the streetcar.

Public Safety: There needs to be a greater focus on community policing programs. Getting the police more visible in communities and building trust between APD and residents is key to community safety. I will promote community safety partnerships like the program

rolled out in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles where this type of policing saw violent crime fall by upwards of 50 percent.

Housing and Homelessness: We need to continue adopting inclusionary zoning and housing policies and working and building public-private partnerships to stem the negative effects of gentrification (e.g. the recently launched Anti-Displacement Tax Fund Program administered by the Westside Future Fund).

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

First, I will listen to my district residents and business owners. I will host work sessions out in the community to bring information and people together. These would include roundtable discussions where residents and business owners can voice support, opposition or concerns. City Council would need to thoroughly study and understand the issues before making a final decision. Work sessions that bring subject matter experts, city departments, Councilmembers, residents and the business community together will also be necessary. Communication about the issue must be timely and open. Based on these various inputs an informed decision can be made.

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's financial position is strong and it needs to remain that way.

Best practices that we should continue and strengthen include:

Asset Inventory. Continual updating of the listing and condition of all our capital assets so we can determine the best and most prudent way to maintain them or dispose of them in a way that benefits taxpayers.

Long-Range Planning for Pension and Other Post-Employment Benefit Costs. We need to continue to analyze and determine how to meet the future costs of employee pensions and other benefit obligations. It is vital to keep our promises to city employees and to manage tax dollars efficiently.

Budget Reserve. We need to maintain, if not increase, our reserves to protect against a need to reduce City services or increase revenues due to emergency expenses, such as weather-related events, or to pay for ongoing operational needs such as replacing outdated or aging equipment (e.g. garbage trucks, fire trucks, street sweepers, etc.).

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

The recent events with Fulton County underscore the importance of timely and accurate property tax assessments. I do not support raising the millage rate, but we must work with the county assessor's office to ensure assessments are being conducted yearly so that homeowners and business owners are able to budget for increases in their property values and taxes. I believe that our current sales tax rate should not go any higher or it may discourage businesses from locating or remaining in the City.

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

I support the MOST. It has provided a reliable revenue stream for the water/sewer infrastructure upgrades required by the federal consent decree. However, our ratepayers have some of the highest water/sewer bills in the country. They must see relief from these high bills and one way to do so is to continue to extend the MOST. By spreading the cost to others beyond City residents, we can lessen the burden on our ratepayers.

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

Yes. There is absolutely no excuse for a lack of trust in our procurement process. Citizens must feel we are protecting their hard-earned tax dollars. Therefore, I would support a dedicated audit team that monitors the procurement process for potential fraud and abuse. Current procurement practices need to be thoroughly reviewed and updated. The current procurement process is lengthy and burdensome for many businesses wanting to contract with the City. As such, we are less competitive for contracts and therefore we are spending more tax dollars than is necessary when procurements must be cancelled for lack of bidders. Our bid packages are upwards of 500 pages and require bonding payments that often eliminate the ability of smaller businesses to compete for contracts. If we streamlined the bureaucratic process and strengthened accountability and internal controls, I think we would see a more efficient, open and ethically sound process.

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

There really is nothing more important than citizens feeling that they can trust their elected officials and the departments that manage city services. I support accountability measures to ensure the spending of city funds is legal and ethical. I will support policies and legislation that does this. I also support increasing the budget of the independent auditor to allow for more audits of city departments and processes, including City Council. I also support a strong and independent Ethics Board.

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

In addition to the successful local, regional and global approach that has been advanced by the City and Invest Atlanta, I believe a recent report from the Brookings Institution sets

forth some guiding principles that would help Atlanta move towards an even greater inclusivity when it comes to economic growth. Some of those include:

Focusing on data that measures who is benefitting from job and wage growth to determine if living standards are rising for the working poor and middle class.

Increase a “grow from within” approach to recruiting firms, which can be done by identifying key local and regional industries and increasing their impact on the City’s economy.

Make investing in job training a top-level focus. Workforce development, through federal programs that the City implements and through public-private partnerships (like City of Refuge and Westside Works), is necessary and valuable for the growth of a strong middle-class. We need a strong middle-class for the City to thrive.

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

I will support anti-displacement programs and policies, such as the Anti-Displacement Tax Fund Program in the English Avenue, Vine City, Ashview Heights and Atlanta University Center communities. I will also support developing a report on best practices for establishing Displacement Free Zones within areas impacted by gentrification. I will also support inclusionary zoning as a way to increase affordable housing, such as the ordinance passed by Council in May 2016, requiring developers who receive incentives or subsidies from Invest Atlanta to set aside 10 and 15 percent of housing units for people making 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively, of AMI. I believe these types of policies are moving us in the right direction.

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?

To be successful, workforce development must be seen as part of regional economic development, which means jobs need to be employer driven. We need to focus on those businesses that are growing and in need of employees and then train people to work in those industries.

The Atlanta Workforce Development Agency has been long overlooked and underutilized. The federal funding that the City receives, which is about \$7 million a year, clearly needs to be utilized more efficiently and effectively, however, if done so, it is a great resource. AWDA should be hosting weekly job fairs and collaborating with Invest Atlanta and the Metro Atlanta Chamber to recruit and train employees for new and growing business.

There must also be public-private partnerships such as what is happening on the westside with the Blank Foundation’s Westside Works program. These types of programs need to be replicated throughout the City’s low-income, high-unemployment areas.

Additionally, the use of registered apprenticeships for skilled labor (e.g. building trades like carpentry or welding) can be as valuable as a college degree.

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.

Accessibility of transit (MARTA) is critical to get people from the southside (where unemployment is high) to the northside (where jobs are located).

Support of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). A TOD is a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use community near a transit station that provides relief from automobile-dependent lifestyles for residents and workers, enabling them to drive less and ride transit more. TODs provide people with options so they can choose where to live, work, play and mingle. In the most successful TODs, transit stations integrate seamlessly into the community.

Lifting the restriction on the use of state motor fuel tax funds for transit. Although this is an issue at the State level and would require action by the General Assembly, this is an issue that transcends districts. We must find a way to fund mass transit with very limited revenue, opening up the gas tax would help do this.

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?

The City has a great program in COPS. And there can be even more of an effort to create stronger community-police relationships. An innovative and successful approach is Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), seen throughout Britain, and implemented in Los Angeles.

CSPs focus on relationship-based policing and community safety issues that matter most in each local neighborhood/community. The mission of a CSP is to use relationship-based policing strategies to build trust between law enforcement and the community, leading to decreased crime and a real feeling of safety in a community. This requires long-term relationship development through consistent and regular community partnering and input.

In Los Angeles' Watts community, this community-based violence reduction model was implemented and has shown remarkable results. Since 2010, violent crime is down 57 percent in Imperial Courts, 54 percent in Jordan Downs and 38 percent in Nickerson Gardens – housing projects in Watts.

In District 10 there are requests for more foot patrols. The importance of this type of police visibility in the community, paired with the development of relationships between beat

officers and residents and local businesses cannot be over-stated. I will work closely with APD to establish regular foot patrols throughout District 10 and urge the same city-wide.

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?

Atlanta has thriving grass-roots and high-end arts scenes. As well, we have a number of great arts organizations, such as the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund, the Georgia Council for the Arts and the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, that provide millions in grant funding to individuals and organizations every year. Still, much more is needed to grow the arts in Atlanta. Arts and culture definitely add to a city's economic strength and growth. In fact, a report in the *Economic Development Quarterly* found that Atlanta's arts community and organizations generated over \$1 billion in revenue. The arts also adds to the livability of a city. I will support continued public-private partnerships and City-based funding for the arts. I also will support introducing after school art, music, and theater programming at the City's recreation centers for youth, adults and seniors.