



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

LaTarsha Holden
Atlanta City Council
District 11

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.**

My life experience as a former homeless woman with six children who went from a GED to a PhD after dropping out in the tenth grade. My various leadership trainings from Dr. King Non-Violence Training, Advocacy Training, Child Trauma Training, Youth Spark Training (Sex Trafficking), Several Community Leadership Trainings, Peace Making Circle Training. A community advocate for twelve years and five years of being a small business owner in a male dominated field in residential contracting. As a former residential contractor, I've managed several projects such as the Washington Lofts, Earthlink, Habitat for Humanity just to name a few. I know how critical it is to build on a firm foundation. My training in energy efficiency with South Face Energy Institute shows my concern sustainability. I started my training with South Face around 2002 in energy code training, building efficiency and Earth Craft House Renovation training.

Sylvia Webb – Founder of 40 Girls and Some Shoes

Attorney Antavius Weems – Weems Law Firm

Dr. Yolanda Snipes – Lee Sadie Productions

I believe their support is important because they are outstanding citizens in Atlanta. They bring valuable support to the media industry, non-profit arena, law and influence to the residents of Atlanta

2. What is your vision for the City of Atlanta and how would you implement it? Please be specific. Atlanta is becoming more diverse, a portfolio of environmental sustainability, a city where dreams come true with the growing movie industry and the cutting edge for relocation for big corporations.

My vision for Atlanta is to build up the middle class, ensure that job training and economic opportunities are available for low income residents. Build a relationship with APS so that all children have access to equality education no matter what their economic background. I would

love to see that every family have access to decent affordable housing. I would also like to ensure that communities are safe, clean and thriving.

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- First, we need to treat violence as a Public Health concern.**

Employ more officers, but we need to reach the consciousness of parents. We can't lay everything on teachers and police officers, this is a community issue and it's time to come together. Create a gang unit with APD that focuses on hot spots and hot people that can prevent or reduce violence.

Instead of approaching violence from a crime and security angle which focus their actions on law enforcement only will not be productive. While justice and police have an important role to play, repression only is counter-productive if not combined with development interventions that look at the drivers of violence, and tackle things like skills and education of youth, socio-economic inequalities and access to communal services. Work with the justice system to put a program in place while detained and that will assist them when they are released. Young males between 10-29 yrs. old get involved in criminality and it needs to be clearly diagnosed and complemented with a treatment plan that involves the family and community. Instead of giving them probation partner with organizations that can provide training and resources for them.

*Education-As a former high school dropout that has went from a Ged to a PhD student I understand the importance of getting an education. Every child should have the right to learn in a safe environment, presented with adequate curriculum that will prepare them to compete globally. It is imperative that a relationship is built with APS to ensure our children are afforded a decent education. My goal is to improve public education by supporting the Atlanta Board of Education's efforts and by linking school improvements with neighborhood revitalization.

*Job Training Programs - For district 11 I would like to see better opportunities for low income residents. Atlanta's top incomes grew faster than any other US city between 2012-2013 while its lowest wages remained stagnant, making it the most unequal city in America for the second year in a row. The city's richest 5% makes roughly \$288,159 per year while its poorest 20% bring in just under \$15,000. I believe in partnering with businesses to bring jobs to the residents of District 11, provide a career center in District 11 that would provide job training programs as well encourage small business start-ups. Atlanta City design predicted that Atlanta would see a significant growth by 2020. The problem is although the jobs are coming many people would not be able to take advantage of the incoming jobs due to lack of education and training. It's time to bridge the gap and provide the necessary opportunities to help build the middle class.

4. As a City Council member, how would you manage collaborating with your colleagues on difficult citywide issues versus representing your own constituents? I believe in multi-sector collaboration between different sectors and individuals can solve problems that affect the whole community. A multisector collaboration can solve “Systemic” problems. When solving a systemic problem, you can’t cure one leaf without treating the whole tree. I believe in creating a synergistic environment which is based on cooperation rather than competition. I will collaborate with others, because we can achieve more when people come together, pool their resources and assist one another. Standing as a symbol of change and hope I know the urgency of working together to make it better for those involved.

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? I believe the City is in an excellent financial standing. I would adopt a financial policy which can improve the credibility of city councilmembers and the public’s confidence. Adopting meaningful financial policies ensures that councilmembers are providing sound financial management for the city. As the adopted policies are consistently applied to financial decisions, the credibility and integrity of city council members are oftentimes improved. Financial policies can save time and energy for both the city council and the city’s administrative staff, because 80% of the decisions that city council members make relate in some way to finance. If financial policies are in place, the amount of time at council meetings spent on financial issues can be minimized.

6. Please describe your philosophy regarding property tax assessments and municipal taxation. My philosophy regarding property tax assessments is to ensure that taxes are actually paying for proposed projects its to improve the city and the quality of life for its residents. It becomes a problem for me when residents cannot see where their tax money is going. I do believe residents said have adequate time to adjust if there is a tax increase.

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 in favor of MOST to help fund water and sewer infrastructure improvements. It is critical to the residents of Atlanta to have access to clean water. It will also prevent residents and business owners from seeing a spike in their water bills.

8. Would you change the current procurement process to protect against “pay to play”? If so, what changes would you support? Public procurement is one of the government activities most vulnerable to corruption. Focusing solely on one step in the process leave other areas vulnerable.

* I would enhance the efficiency and transparency of public procurement.

* Improve monitoring mechanisms.

* I believe that transparency in public procurement not only promotes accountability and ensures access to information, it also serves as an important role in leveling the playing field for businesses and allowing small and medium size enterprises to participate on a more equal footing.

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

It's imperative to have the trust of the constituents. I will ensure that resources are used to provide services that meet the needs of the constituents. Citizens should be able to see how the government is spending their tax money, what services are being provided, and how government officials are working to improve the community. I believe ethics training should be done quarterly with all city employees. Quarterly audits will be executed by an external source. I will ensure that transparency amongst all City employees will be enforced and that everything be documented in each department.

10. What economic development strategies would you prioritize to ensure the City of Atlanta captures its fair share of future job growth? With several major companies with relocation and expansion needs, it is advancing Atlanta's position as a digital hub. Mercedes-Bez, NCR/Financial, Honeywell and General Electric will be creating 10,000 plus jobs and generating over \$5 billion in investment in our region. I would ensure that training for entry level jobs would be made possible for low-income residents to be able to compete for the influx of jobs that is coming to the Atlanta area. I would also ensure that these big corporations are giving back to the community back to school drives, holiday giving to needy families). I will also partner with Invest Atlanta to ensure that the economic development strategy is being implemented.

* **Economic Development Focus: Expand Programs for Job Creation and attract and Retain Workforce Talent in the Community.**

* **Economic Development Incentive Funding Plan- Develop specific incentive programs for new Employment that address both low-moderate income jobs and high paying jobs.**

* **Educational Focus: Partner with several technical colleges and universities to enroll prospect students and assisting with the enrollment process. Education is one of the biggest components in competing in the job market and boosting the economy.**

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

First the city needs to acquire land which will give them power on what is built and where. We need market rate housing to give subsidized housing a fighting chance. When there are more jobs and fewer homes, we don't have to say "supply" or "demand" to predict the result: when high-income and low-income people compete for the same homes, high-income people win, by driving up rents until no one else can afford them. When the gap between new jobs and new homes grows wider and wider, forcing the high – and low-income to compete for the same increasingly insufficient number of apartments. Even large amounts of subsidies can't be effective if market prices stay out of control.

We need more subsidized housing, but also more market-rate housing construction, to ease the competition between high and low -income renters for the same apartments, slow rapid price increases and give housing subsidies a fighting chance to fill the remaining gap.

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?

One of the first things on my list is to put a career center in District 11 that would provide job training as well offer assistance for residents to start their own businesses. I will also partner with colleges to assist in enrolling those who wants to further their education. I would also like to see a quarterly report on applicants and what services was provided as a form of accountability with workforce development.

- Put together a consortium of representatives or groups from business, government, education and non-profit organizations that are formed to create career pathways that align training programs for high-quality jobs.
- Conduct analyses of sector -specific training and education needs of both industry and workers.
- Build partnerships and integrate a wide variety of resources.

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. Campbellton Rd. has historically suffered from disinvestment. Everest College is the only development project in this tax allocated district. For the past thirty years that I've lived in the Campbellton Rd. area there has been no economic development.
2. Affordable Housing – with gentrification on the rise affordable housing is very important to me. I know how crucial it is for children to live in a stable environment.
3. Highway interchange improvements. – with the influx of people continuing to relocate here investing in our highways will reduce the time being stuck in gridlock traffic.

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? Safe neighborhoods and safe streets are key components of urban livability that must be preserved as the city grows. When criminals see residents that cares about their community, it deters them from committing criminal activity. Provide:

- More visible police officers
- Have smaller precincts within the districts
- Safe bus stops
- Safe & Well-maintained parks
- New Lighting

I will partner with APD and Parks & Recreation to ensure the city is well maintained.

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?

First, it's important to understand the benefits arts bring to the government and citizens. Express that a strong arts sector is an economic asset that stimulates business activity and attracts tourists. To highlight that it's also an educational asset. Stress the importance that the arts are central to community resilience and history. The arts are a recovery asset that support jobs, stimulate commerce, stabilize property values and provide other economic benefits.

- Passing percent-for-art legislation encumbers a percentage (usually .5 to 2) of publicly funded capital improvement projects per year for the commissioning of public artworks, which will usually be sited in, on, or adjacent to the building or project being constructed.
- Solicit developer participation to take stock of the public and private investment occurring in Atlanta. Include art in the incentive package given to developers.
- Seek grants from foundations, including those from National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment Humanities.
- Parking meter revenue
- Tax large-scale events and festivals to pay for art.