



Below is the unedited questionnaire response of:

**Joyce Sheperd**  
Atlanta City Council  
District 12

## 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 am the incumbent of District 12 and have served 13 years. I have worked to bring economic development, public safety, transportation, youth and senior support to my community. I am continuously working for a better quality of life in the city of Atlanta by working to address blight, trash, code violations and pet education to name a few. Some of my accomplishments for my district include: Bringing Porsche North American Headquarters, The Atlanta Beltline/Westside Trail, Fort McPherson Redevelopment, Screen Gems, and the George Adair School Redevelopment. Advocating funding for the New Zone 3 Police Precinct. ATV Legislation that now disallow ATV Vehicles on the streets of Atlanta, New Scrap tires Laws and more. I supported the Renew Atlanta funding and the Tsplost which will enhance Marta, provide more sidewalks, street resurfacing, bike lanes, new traffic signaling and ADA accessibility. I am supported by Mayor Kasim Reed, Jerome Russell, Scott Taylor, Larry Dingle, Michael Hightower & Gary McGaha -President of Atlanta Metropolitan College and Ernestine Garey.

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

My vision for Atlanta is a city where everyone can live together, work together, be proud of where we live and nourish from our viability as a great city that is continuing to grow! We must make sure that we understand all aspects of that growth. We need to ensure we have an educated workforce. We need to make sure that people can afford to live in our city through affordable and balanced housing. We must make sure that companies provide a wage that will allow individuals and families to support themselves without living in poverty. We must continue to bring great companies and economic development to our city. We have to make sure we can protect our city and provide great service in all aspects for the quality of life that citizens deserve.

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

Balanced economic development, a trained and skilled workforce and affordable/ workforce housing are the three greatest issues facing the City of Atlanta. We must address geographical economic growth to lift all communities in the city, in particular the underserved communities. If this does not happen, we will continue to face the current issues of crime, blight and disarray throughout the city which is caused

by people not having education, training or skills to survive and live decently. The city must work to create a strong collaboration, training and workforce plan through Atlanta Worksource, technical schools, colleges, companies and other avenues to address this major issue. We must provide tools and education for families and youth. The city must also be aggressive in providing tools that will bring development to areas where developers are not pursuing. Tools such as Tax Allocation Districts, Tax Incentive, Infrastructure improvement, Redevelopment plans and more. We must provide affordable housing where residents from all walks of life can live. The city has passed some legislation on affordable housing but it still remains unbalanced. We need to address inclusionary zoning, take a more thorough look at affordable and workforce housing across the city and educate our citizens on affordable and workforce housing. There are a huge amounts of preconceived notions on this topic.

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

By researching and getting all facts on the issues at hand, listening and discussing the issues from a city and district perspective while gaining understanding of the impact of the issue from a city and district level to build consensus and come to a resolution.

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?

As an incumbent, I am proud of our financial stability as a city. We have balanced the budget over a very consistent period and have a strong reserve and rating as a city. The council has worked with the executive branch to bring tools and resources to improve our revenue and stability; such as pension reform, the Blue Ribbon Efficiency Commission, where I was actively involved and more. The city should always research additional tools to ensure we are managing our finances to the fullest degree.

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

I am in support of municipal taxation. It is the major tool that provides revenue for the city to conduct day to day operations such as the police department, the fire department, public works and so much more. I have huge concerns on how and what tool the Fulton County Tax assessor is using to assess our tax. There is a lack of a fair transparency process for tax assessment across 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?

The MOST tax is critical to Atlanta in correcting and improving our water infrastructure system. Atlanta water division is under a consent decree by the federal government as a result of contamination of our old and broken water infrastructure. We have corrected the major issues but are still working to correct all issues that pertain to our water infrastructure. The MOST tax is a critical tool in continuing to correct and improve our water system. I also support an assessment of our water system as repairs are completed to determine if we need to keep this tax as our city grows. We also need to assess other ways that are being used to keep improving and supporting our water infrastructure.

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

Yes, if there are loopholes in the city’s system that allows bribery, it is imperative that we create a process of accountability. I recommend that an outside firm with expertise in this field be brought in to audit and address these concerns. The firm should bring back findings, recommendations and corrective actions and the city should follow those recommendations.

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

I would continue to support the City of Atlanta Independent Ethics Board that is already in place. We also need to put a process in place to address transparency of all departments and employees across the city.

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

I would prioritize ensuring the City of Atlanta is financially stable and in high rating to attract major companies and businesses that have the ability to bring jobs to the city. In addition, I would support Invest Atlanta financially and strategically as the economic development authority that works to bring these companies to the City of Atlanta. The city needs to create a plan in collaboration with Invest Atlanta, Workforce Development agencies, educational institutions, ARC and more to understand our job growth projections and create a plan to implement this plan.

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

I supported the legislation for 15 % of affordable housing to be allotted to developers seeking an incentive from the city for build out of housing in the city and the Atlanta Beltline affordable housing requirements. However this is not enough, there needs to be a more comprehensive discussion on how and where we provide affordable housing throughout the city of Atlanta. I would support a larger percentage of affordable housing with a discussion of a formula supporting a plan. There needs to be a discussion of inclusionary zoning. We also need to provide livable wages so that people can afford to pay for adequate housing. There needs to be education on affordable housing between residents, housing developers and the city. There are a huge amounts of misperceptions of the term 'Affordable Housing'.

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 recommend that we create a workforce development commission that would bring forth a major strategic plan to address the needs of low to mid skill workers. This commission should include the city of Atlanta Workforce division, colleges, technical institutions, Atlanta Public Schools, small businesses and corporations, Invest Atlanta and all invested in the quality of our workforce as a city. The strategies should address work skills, soft skills, family and social issues, criminal issues, training and a process to partner with corporations and businesses to obtain employment. A follow through of what works well and what does not and how we fix the issues. This commission should have committed dates, returns and funding (very similar to the Homeless Commission commitment).

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) Support and continued funding of Marta Strategic plan for expansion and enhancement throughout the city and metropolitan Atlanta area.
- 2) Continued Infrastructure improvements of Atlanta streets via the Tsplost, Renews Atlanta and other funding.
- 3) Completion of The Atlanta Beltline which will also include Light Rail. Marta is the major form of transportation throughout the city for people without cars. There needs to be a decrease in cars and traffic congestion on our streets.

We must also address the sustainability and health of our community as a result of car pollution. Improvements to Marta will support ADA accessibility and faster and more efficient service including air pollution. Atlanta streets have not been upgraded in years. We must improve our city streets and infrastructure grid. This is critical to the continued growth and redevelopment of our communities. This includes street resurfacing, sidewalks and installation improvement, upgrades of our traffic signaling structure and new streetscape plans to name a few. The Beltline Project is also major as an enhancement to the city's transportation system. While this project is not only creating greenspace and economic development across the city, it will also create another form of transportation throughout the city in addition to Marta. Light rail installed on the Beltline will provide alternate route for citizens to move across the city and will be a tremendous help in addressing our traffic problems. I find this to be a progressive traffic enhancement for Atlanta.

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?

I support a strong and consistent base of trained and experienced officers deployed across the city. These officers should be trained in all aspect of community relationships. There needs to be a division of officers whose focus should be community policing. They should be dispersed throughout communities and in critical and strategic areas. We must create a partnership with the Atlanta Police Department, park and recreations centers, YMCA's, The Boys and Girls Club, neighborhoods, businesses, apartment communities, youth, churches and foundations to address the social and crime problems in our communities. There must be funding to support these efforts.

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 recommend funding from the city in partnership with other companies and citizens to support the arts. Research should be conducted on what others cities have accomplished with their art programs; create a non-profit Art Commission that would facilitate and define art installation in the city and do fundraising in collaboration with funding from the city. We need to make sure there is a balance of artist, citizens, institutions and companies from across the city who will serve on the art commission.