

2021 Atlanta Candidate Full Survey Responses



DOUG SHIPMAN **GRADE: A+ SCORE: 102**

ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

[HTTPS://DOUGSHIPMAN.COM/](https://dougshipman.com/)

1. Do you mention BeltLine rail or other mass transit on your website?

"Yes"

2. I have a transit-transportation advisor on my campaign staff.

"I will in the near future"

3. I consider light rail along the BeltLine.....(check as many as apply.)

"long overdue., a vital part of Atlanta's transit plans., one of the ways we can slow and ease displacement of existing residents., the way we can increase density and affordable housing., a way to focus density and new development in areas designed for density and transit., part of the solution to reducing parking around the BeltLine., crucial to bringing transit equity to historically under-served communities."

4. Atlanta's Streetcar Plan (including the BeltLine light rail loop) is seen as the start of a comprehensive light rail network. Is building that network -- including the BeltLine -- a top transportation/transit priority for you? How high on your list of priorities is it?

"Among my Top 3"

5. The Streetcar East Extension currently in engineering evaluation by MARTA will result in the first build of rail on the BeltLine. What are the most important fixes to the streetcar that you would urge MARTA to make as it is extended and travels 1.4 miles of Beltline to Ponce City Market?

"Increase frequency of service (15 minute intervals are current service headway), Dedicate lanes to the streetcar while in the street., Improve and create access to MARTA rail stations in both directions., Close portions of streets to cars downtown and in O4W so that pedestrians and cyclists are safer in the shared right of way."

6. MARTA's current timetable calls for completing the 2.25 mile streetcar extension to Ponce City Market in 6-7 years. What best describes your position?

"I'd like to see this happen in 3-5 years."



7. The 2019 More MARTA Program names both the transit projects and their type (light rail, bus rapid transit, rail station improvements, etc.) Do you support implementing the More MARTA Program?

"No"

8. Do you agree with MARTA's timeline of sometime in the 2045-2050 range to complete More MARTA?

"No"

9. When should light rail on the city-owned parts of the BeltLine, often referred to as the "J", be completed? These are sections A, G, D, B, and C in the More MARTA map.

"2030-2035"

10. The right of way for the 6.5 mile remainder of the 22-mile loop on the NW side of the BeltLine is not yet acquired by the city. What best states your thoughts on closing the loop? Check all that apply.

"We need to reach agreement to secure the right of way with the railroads as soon as possible., The Mayor needs to lead on this., We need state DOT and legislators to broker a deal with the railroads., Without this northwest section, the BeltLine won't reach its full potential."

11. Please feel free to elaborate on your answers above to more fully reflect your thoughts and your vision for transit in Atlanta and specifically for BeltLine rail.

"I believe we need to revisit the MORE MARTA plan in order to align with our needs coming out of Covid and aligning with where we see growth and affordability needs. I also believe that the Mayor must lead from the City (with key help from the State) on the right of way in the NW corridor given the current existing organizational/funding structure of the Beltline AND given the potential role of federal assistance."

12. The BeltLine rail project gained international attention because of its potential benefits while connecting communities, delivering a world-class transit system and reduce car dependency. Critics say The City of Atlanta and MARTA deliver too little, too late. Can you paint us a picture of the vital role BeltLine rail will play in helping Atlanta deal with its anticipated growth and other significant challenges?

"Beltline rail will allow connectivity as originally envisioned in the plans for the Beltline. Without transit the Beltline is really a series of sections-- any day a person might explore a mile or two but with transit the entire loop becomes accessible from any other point as well as being a viable connection to MARTA and other transit across the entire city.

Beltline rail also allows for total life affordability-- multiple studies have show that affordability in the Atlanta metro is significantly hindered by transit options, costs and time and Beltline rail would allow a truly carless option for many residents. Beltline rail can also contribute to a much more sustainable and lower carbon future as efficient travel can replace carbon intensive travel."

13. In your view, how does reliable transit, and specifically BeltLine rail, improve quality of life?

"Yes- fundamentally Beltline rail and reliable transit expand the ways to explore and live in the city. The ability to move between neighborhoods opens up cultural experiences and relationship building, affordable transit lowers total cost of living and increases affordability, reliable transit makes accessibility easier for those with disabilities as well as older residents. Reliable transit also creates a greater sense of shared experience, shared community and less isolation."

14. Wherever the BeltLine trail is completed, property values rise dramatically, causing displacement of long-time residents at an alarming rate. BeltLine rail was imagined to be built simultaneously to the trail, and envisioned to help residents stay where they are. On the east side it is too late, but most of the rest of the trail is not yet built. We can still accelerate transit construction, particularly on the south and west sides. Do you see yourself as leading on this issue?

"Yes"

15. In addition to transit, what zoning and housing policies are needed to reduce the rate of displacement?

"Parking minimums needed to be addressed and lowered/eliminated in areas

ADU construction needs to be encouraged allowed

Land trust usage and funding needs to be expanded

Length of tax abatements (extending them to longer terms) in exchange for more and greater affordability in new developments needs to be an option and deployed

Additional incentives for greater density"

16. More MARTA is the largest transit expansion program in the city's history. Will you press for re-examination of ridership estimates using industry-standard best practices that include a variety of ridership models?

"Yes"

17. If not, why not?

"

18. What have you done to champion BeltLine rail? When? What will you do next?

"I live near the Beltline Eastside trail in 04W. I have long donated to the Beltline Partnership, I have worked to support Art on the Beltline in my role at the Woodruff Arts Center, I led a company who moved offices to Ponce City Market and then engaged our workforce in support for the Beltline. As I have campaigned I have talked extensively about the importance of transit and specifically the role that Beltline Transit will play in boosting affordability."

19. Adding four Infill MARTA stations to the existing rail network would maximize efficiency and connectivity and spark transit-oriented development. Though MARTA studied them in 2007 and ABI includes 3 of the 4 in its 2018 BeltLine sub-area master plans, they are not in the More MARTA plan. These proposed stations are at Boone Blvd. (W), Hulsey Yard (E), Murphy Crossing(S), and Amour (N). Should funding be prioritized to study them again?

"Yes"

20. How does Transit Equity figure into your candidacy? Will you urge MARTA to demonstrate a commitment to it by conducting the engineering study required to build rail on the south and west Beltline segments as soon as possible?

"As a resident near the Eastside trail (and buying our home in 2010 prior to the Beltline's Eastside Trail launch) we have all witnessed what happens as the Beltline opens and the speed at which change occurs. Transit equity and the role of transit in affordability is both well studied as a positive force and witnessed as a negative force when absent on the Eastside trail. Equity and how we grow in ways that do not continue the significant and systemic poverty we have seen in Atlanta for decades is a key part of my vision for Atlanta and transit is a key component of addressing these ongoing issues.

Yes-- I believe building rail on the south and west portions quickly and alongside the trail development in those geographies is vital to an overall vision of equity in Atlanta."

21. How will you ensure the entire BeltLine vision -- which features light rail transit, trail, and green railbed set in a greenway of trees and plants -- remains intact? What steps will you take so Atlanta's residents -- not just developers-- get the maximum benefits?

"When I led the building of the Center for Civil and Human Rights- we developed a set of "must have" items that were non negotiable, we shared those broadly with the public and funders and ensured they were always included in renderings and other materials. I believe the same must be done for the Beltline- a set of principles that everyone understands and eventually supports that must be included in any specific plans. I believe these must include transit and greenway elements.

I will then work to make sure these are never excluded and must be a part of any option sets or analysis as inputs- not options and remind all stakeholders of these commitments."

22. How will you ensure that Atlanta Beltline Inc., which understands the entire BeltLine vision, has both enough decision-making authority and accountability to achieve it?

"In order to ensure Atlanta Beltline Inc. is successful we must continually make sure it is adequately funded, it's Board is representative of a broad array of stakeholders including residents in neighborhoods the Beltline touches, that the Mayor and City Council must approve Beltline plans and that Beltline Inc. has a clear set of objectives and metrics they must report and deliver upon."

23. How can the city council Transportation and Community Development committees do a better job advancing BeltLine rail? Do you hope to serve on one of these committees? Please elaborate.

"As City Council President I would appoint the Committee Chairs for both of those committees. Their positions on transit overall, Beltline rail and issues of transit equity would play a major role in my appointments. I also believe we need far greater transparency and a consistency of data to communicate progress and challenges on our major initiatives. I plan to hire a analysts specifically tasked with

producing consistent and public data related to equity, transit and our major projects including the Beltline.”

24. In 2016, voters overwhelmingly approved the More MARTA tax to complete BeltLine rail and other transit projects by a historic margin of 71%. More than \$250 million has been collected in More MARTA sales tax so far. In addition to no progress on actual transit construction, the public hasn't seen leadership, accountability or transparency from the City Council and the Mayor's office. What do you think the reasons are for this? (Check all that apply)

“Gentrification caused many to think the BeltLine was the problem, which eroded support for rail., Accelerating displacement caused the city council to focus on affordable housing instead., MARTA did not apply for grant money to begin construction as soon as they could., There were not enough champions for BeltLine rail in the City Council., There was not enough cooperation among the council, Mayor, ABI, and MARTA.”

25. Is an accelerated delivery of transit under More MARTA primarily a leadership issue or a money issue?

“Some of both, but more a leadership issue.”

26. Please explain what you would do to resolve this?

“The most important issue with driving delivery of transit under More MARTA is transparency and alignment on priorities and plans and then relentless oversight on behalf of all parties. Unfortunately leadership has both changed priorities/objectives too often and failed to work hard enough to build citizen support and alignment. I would be clear on my priorities and work tirelessly to build stakeholder and community support to drive pressure and expectations for delivery of transit in a timely manner.”

27. What additional sources of local funding would you support?

“Amend the BeltLine SSD to use funds for BeltLine rail construction., Renew the TSPLOST with specific funds designated for BeltLine rail., Lobby the ARC, State Legislators & others for (flexing) of federal highway funds., Create new special assessment districts around future infill MARTA stations., Amend the SSD to tax both undeveloped and developed property.”

28. The Biden Administration has made funding transit a priority. Atlanta could see hundreds of millions in federal transit funding. Do you agree that building light rail on the south and west sides should be the next BeltLine build priority? (The yellow highlighted areas on the map) Why or why not?

“Yes”

29. Why do you think Atlanta and MARTA are not in line to receive billions in federal funding from the Biden Administration that cities like Phoenix, Los Angeles, St. Paul, Washington DC, San Jose, will in the 2022 budget? How would your leadership ensure Atlanta doesn't miss these opportunities?

"I believe we are not in line because we do not have the combination of timely delivery in the past combined with concrete and well developed plans for the future. Other areas have better track records and more fully developed plans for execution. While I cannot change the past- I will work very hard to both push timely development of detailed plans and build stakeholder support for clear and prioritized objectives. It is also vital that state and federal leaders are engaged often and in detail so they understand the objectives for federal funds and can advocate on Atlanta's behalf-- I would spend a significant amount of my time as City Council President building and maintaining relationships with regional and state officials so that Atlanta needs are clear and working relationships with other municipal officials are intact."

30. Do you believe the More MARTA-Atlanta IGA should be amended to require approval by the City Council?

"Yes"

31. If yes, please outline legislation that you would introduce if elected. If no, please explain your position.

"I would propose that the City Council be required to approve the plan without the ability to offer amendments- a simple approve or not approve vote. This would allow the Mayor and other entities the ability to negotiate the deal but give the City Council who represent all of the city and various neighborhoods the opportunity to have oversight and approval rights given the extensive impact and funds involved with the More MARTA projects."

32. Is BeltLine rail the City's Project or MARTA's? Who should determine the priorities, timeline and sequencing? Check all that apply.

"Atlanta BeltLine Inc. (ABI), The City Council, The Mayor"

33. Please explain your response.

"The project is fundamentally a City of Atlanta project with MARTA delivering the vision on behalf of City leadership. Therefore- ABI should provide the expertise and recommendations with the Mayor and City Council providing leadership, approval and oversight of the project on behalf of the residents of Atlanta."

34. Since others have failed, what would be your approach to make those negotiations successful? And who needs to be at the table?

"I would quickly establish direct relationships with the various entities as well as working to align with the new Mayor on key objectives and approaches for the negotiation.

I also believe we need to engage our federal leadership (eg Congressional and Senate leadership) and State of Georgia officials to assist in the negotiations. I would do the work of sharing the reasons for the need to reach new agreements and then make it a key objective of my office as City Council President to drive that consensus (much like former City Council President Cathy Woolard did in the early days of development of the Beltline)."

35. What will convince the freight railroads to grant rights of way for BeltLine Rail, the Emory Clifton Corridor, and MARTA infill stations so that they can connect to existing transit?

"A combination of direct engagement, potential financial incentives and engagement from state and federal officials."

