

2021 Atlanta Candidate Full Survey Responses



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GRADE: A SCORE: 93

ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE POST 3

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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.

"Yes"

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

"long overdue., a vital part of Atlanta's transit plans., a solution to traffic and air pollution., 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., Install priority signalization technology so that the streetcar is prioritized over other traffic., 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'm going to work to push MARTA for a faster timetable."

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?

"Yes"

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 City Council 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.

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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?

"Equity, unequivocally is required to address systemic and institutional inequality in the City of Atlanta. Transportation represents a critical part of an agenda that has equity at the center. How people move neighborhood to neighborhood and community to community is about transit. Consequently, the BeltLine rail can expeditiously improve connectivity in a way the affords redress to economic disparities, bridge Southwest and Southeast to Northwest and Northeast."

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

"Reliable transportation is the superhero of any person who does not have a car :-)
(i.e. any alternative to automobiles). If in fact we are able to create an affordable path to reliable transportation for those who are lower to median income earning person, a transformational opportunity is presented {as transportation is often the barrier to getting to a, "good job"}."



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?

“Housing Policy/Affordable Housing

First, I think it is important that we support a national search and dedicate assets to hire a top leader in housing to implement our One Atlanta Housing Affordability Action Plan. This person/plan will guide our efforts to provide permanent and affordable housing and appropriate the \$100M of new bond funding to create and preserve affordable housing. I support the strategies outlined in the One Atlanta Housing Affordability Plan that call for prevention of involuntary displacement, expansion of property tax programs, and targeted outreach to vulnerable communities to increase participation in housing affordability programs. Prioritizing the preservation of affordable housing through intergovernmental collaborations, partnerships with nonprofits/foundations and housing developers to create land trusts and property donations for housing to target low/moderate income families will go a long way. Further, we will need to be thoughtful about exploring existing city-owned properties to help supply 14,000 more affordable housing units and public-private development partnerships to create affordable, quality housing and thriving communities.

The displacement of single-family homeowners and seniors in heritage neighborhoods by taxing them out of their homes must stop. I support: 1) helping legacy residents repair and maintain their homes; 2) providing resources to seniors to assist with taxes; and 3) supporting multi-level partnerships that offer affordable homeownership opportunities to unsheltered/homeless individuals and families. Barriers to affordable housing must be removed including: 1) housing investors holding on to properties to later sell them significantly higher than valued; 2) city inefficiencies in tracking down absentee property owners and efficient permitting; and 3) legacy homeowners selling their homes at less than valued to developers who often demolish the property to make room for market-rate housing unit(s) {which reduces affordable housing inventories}. Overcoming these barriers requires improving zoning, addressing technology inefficiencies, implementing strategies from the Housing Affordability Plan, and introducing community-based homeowner education programs throughout the city. Decreasing displacement further requires strategies that include advocating for policies that set aside a percentage of tax revenues from rising property values to be reinvested into low-income housing, provide rental assistance to stabilize families impacted by the long-term impact of the pandemic, and spearhead community education and engagement in gentrifying neighborhoods to explore moratoriums that allow for thoughtful planning around preservation of neighborhoods. Moreover, as moratoriums expire, Atlanta must offer

longstanding homeowners in gentrifying communities' options and protections from predatory lenders and investors.

Lastly, we must anticipate and plan for displacement. I would seek to partner with United Way, the private sector and philanthropists in the City to create and fund a 90-day safety net point of capture for displaced individuals and families with children needing immediate housing and pathways to stability that allow bridge children to schools, learning, and a sense of normalcy.

Zoning

I support inclusionary zoning to support a wider distribution of affordable housing and bring people of diverse incomes and backgrounds together. According to the city of Atlanta's Inclusionary zoning tracker, there are less than 400 IZ units in the city, and I plan to increase the number of dedicated affordable units by augmenting the incentives for developers to supply units at rents below the 80th percentile of the area's median income.

We must increase the types of housing to support differing types of family structures and encourage income diversity in our neighborhoods. Especially as the supply of affordable housing in regions of North Atlanta faces increased strain, we must allow for alternative forms of housing to be constructed by-right and limit red tape barriers.

Atlanta is currently 60% single family zoning, we need to allow ADUs in these areas and support the construction of missing middle housing. I support updating zoning ordinances in single-family zoning areas to once again allow accessory dwelling units city wide for the purpose of long term rentals. I also plan to advocate for building code reform to better accommodate for our current technological capabilities with respect to development, support acquisition funds so that affordable housing developers can afford to build housing, and institute multifamily gap financing programs.

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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 have actively supported the agenda and vision. What I envision to do next as a City Council member includes advancing with expedience the execution of BeltLine Rail Now."

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?

"Equity is at the center of my campaign. Transit equity remains critical. I will urge MARTA to demonstrate a commitment to building rail particularly South and West wherein there exists an opportunity to bridge the most socio-economically marginalized, to the parts of the city that remain the most economically advantaged."

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?

"Atlantans have -- again and again -- committed to the full realization of the BeltLine vision, including with their tax dollars. We can settle for nothing less than all of the components of the BeltLine -- including and especially rail -- in every part of our city. I will work tirelessly as a representative of Atlantans to insist that we do everything necessary to do so. The most important step that I will take will integrate inclusivity to ensure that public awareness is increased and utilization is maximized."

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?

"We have unfortunately lost sight of the founding of Atlanta BeltLine Inc. as an empowered authority to draw upon the talent and resources of our city government to expedite the implementation of the BeltLine in collaboration with the private sector and other parts of the public sector. I will work with my colleagues on City Council to return ABI to this role, including restoring the balance of power with MARTA. MARTA is an important partner to carry out the vision, but we cannot cede to it whether and how transit happens on the BeltLine."

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.

"It would be my pleasure to serve on either or both committees. Whether or not I serve on those committees, I will advocate for them to prioritize equitable implementation of the BeltLine -- including rail -- as a powerful transformational opportunity for our city. The BeltLine is not a priority over others in the City -- it is, in fact, the tool we have to help realize other opportunities."

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)

"There is, "some" truth in all the above statements -and, ... collectively we lost sight of the authentic vision {no blame} of the BeltLine in general and transportation more specifically in relationship to equity."

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?

"As stated in an earlier answer, I would advance robust advocacy and leadership to balance leadership and money."

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

"As a member of City Council I would love forward to studying all of these option to make a determination at that juncture of what would be the most advantageous. I do not have comfort in definately identifying any of the above as, "best options""

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?

"Absolutely, 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 am known to be a, "diplomacy whisperer". My understanding is that there is discord amongst the organizations positioned to partner and receive funding. My leadership would shuttle the diplomacy necessary to get to the end game of positioning recipients for this funding."

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.

"Legislation would integrate key proposals {contained in More MARTA} for City Council to review, revise {wherein necessary}, and move forward for approval"

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)"



33. Please explain your response.

“Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. was created to steward this process. They can determine the priorities, timeline and sequencing {and engage feedback to ensure that the recommendations they make are inclusive}.”

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

“As a State Registered Neutral, my approach would include shuttling diplomacy {i.e. collecting the voices of all involved}, identifying intersections of agreement of consensus, brokering discord, and finding the path the agreement. ALL involved have to be at the table. Successful execution requires buy in -and- as such necessitates stakeholder agreement and investment.”

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?

“Freight rail has to move goods through the region and simultaneously pivot in the direction of opportunities for the future. The most compelling argument is that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, it will be economically profitable, and engaging a trajectory of equity requires expansion in a visionary direction.”

