

2021 Atlanta Candidate Full Survey Responses



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ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 5

KATIEFORATLANTA.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.

"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 5"

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?

"Improve and create access to MARTA rail stations in both directions., Install priority signalization technology so that the streetcar is prioritized over other traffic."

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 Mayor needs to lead on this., 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.

"As the city continues to build and grow we are running against the clock to implement transit in a way that won't cost unnecessary tax dollars. The infrastructure dollars coming down the pipeline presents the city with a unique opportunity to make major investments in rail and other transportation infrastructure."

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?

"In order to handle the influx of people expected over the next 10-20 years we will need to move away from single occupancy vehicular travel as our primary mode of transportation. Requiring every citizen to have a vehicle because they cannot get around the city without one is making our property more expensive, our environment less healthy, and our neighborhoods less dense with fewer amenities. The Beltline offers a unique opportunity to change that quickly, which is what is needed at this time."

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

"There are significant portions of the city that currently do not have reliable public transportation access. These neighborhoods are either underserved or unattainable. This lack of connectivity across the city exasperate the effects of redlining and racist housing policy that has plagued our city with increasing inequity. By allowing our neighborhoods to connect we are creating economic opportunity while mitigating our environmental impact."

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?

"1) Institute an additional exemption or expand the homestead exemption for residents who live within a half mile proximity to the beltline and are below the median income threshold.

2) Offer legal aid services and critical home repair services to legacy residents city wide.

3) Implement inclusionary zoning policy city wide, while making sure that the fines or fees for noncompliance outweigh the cost of building market rate housing.

"

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 am the only candidate who uses a bike/public transit as my primary mode of transportation. While I do not make many campaign promises, I have promised to either take the Marta Bus or my bike to city hall when we finally are back to in person meetings. I have included BeltLine rail on my website and as a key part of my platform. As your next District 5 city council woman I will advocate for the plan to be implemented as soon as possible."

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?

"I Need more information"

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?

"We must serve our most marginalized citizens first because they are the people who need transit the most. Not only that, with the south and west side of the beltline being less developed it makes financial sense to go ahead and put in the rail simultaneously as we build out the rest of the trail."

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?

"Neighborhood engagement is key to this plan. We must give neighborhoods the tools they need to advocate for themselves so we can utilize the voice of the collective to drown out the voice of the well connected (aka the developers)."

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 must offer our citizens clear communication and transparency. If we do this it will not be our council that holds the city accountable but our citizens. As our employers the citizens are the most powerful force in terms of accountability."

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.

"I think that most people in the city support the idea of Beltline Rail Now!, but they don't feel the city is fulfilling their basic duties (i.e. waste pickup, sidewalks, road repair, etc.). The biggest thing we can do to move this project forward is get back to basics on resolving this cities service and infrastructure issues. If we can make citizens feel confident in their government, they will empower us to take on large scale projects. I would love to serve on the Finance or City Utilities Committee for these very reasons. If we can prove that we can spend money wisely and fulfill our basic services we will have the support we need to get this project completed."

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)

"MARTA did not understand the project's urgency and put it on the back burner., The Council needed strong mayoral leadership to advance BeltLine Rail and didn't get it., There were not enough champions for BeltLine rail in the City Council., There was not enough cooperation among the council, Mayor, ABI, and MARTA., I've mentioned it before on this survey, but the city does not seem to be capable of fulfilling its basic services."

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?

"Put more information in the hands of the electorate through various forms of public engagement. Work with the Mayor's office to put an execution plan in place with an attached timeline."

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

"Amend the BeltLine SSD to use funds for BeltLine rail construction., Lobby the ARC, State Legislators & others for (flexing) of federal highway funds., Seek parking revenue from public parking/parking taxes."

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. The South and West sides are less developed than the north east sides making it financially more viable to implement. It is also the area that would be most served by this connection."

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?

"City council needs to work with our congress and senate representatives to have them be a part of this conversation so they can advocate in DC on our behalf."

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.

"

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

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

33. Please explain your response.

"I would like to see a joint committee of MARTA, ATLDOT and ABI come together and propose a timeline to the mayor and city council for their input and approval."

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

"In order to successfully negotiate with the railroads for right of way access we must invite all stakeholders to the table including community members, state and federal representatives and related city department representatives."

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?

"I do not know the answer. I will work to find out."

