



## Candidate Questionnaire for Atlanta's 2025 Citywide Elections

### Section I: Personal Background and Motivation

- Full Name: Michael Julian Bond
- Office Sought: Post One, At-Large
- Campaign Website and Social Media Handles: BondforATL.com

Brief Biography (max 250 words):

I have served Atlanta as District Three Council Member (1994–2001) and as Post One At-Large representative (2010–present), becoming the most prolific legislator in City Council history with more than 1,700 bills passed. In both seats, I have authored and co-authored record numbers of meaningful legislation that have positively impacted every neighborhood, NPU, and Council District.

I have championed affordable housing and community development initiatives across the city. This includes requiring the City to analyze and make available all City-owned parcels for affordable housing development, creating the \$5 million Summerhill Community Trust Fund, establishing Affordable Housing Impact Statements, and sponsoring the \$50 million Homeless Opportunity Bond. I also authored the Westside Tax Abatement for indigent residents—a 20-year property tax relief program—and passed the floating homestead exemption, which caps annual property tax increases for homeowners at 3% or the CPI, whichever is lower.

Beyond housing, I secured \$150 million in reinvestment funding for District Three, rebuilt the historic Washington Park Natatorium and Tennis Center, and identified funding for the C.T. Martin Natatorium, now a premier recreation facility in the Southeast. I created the Westside Tax Allocation District that enabled the nationally recognized redevelopment of Atlantic Station, led the first comprehensive street repaving in 50 years, improved sidewalks along MARTA routes, and removed abandoned crime houses to make neighborhoods safer.

Throughout my service, I have remained committed to building stronger, more equitable communities and ensuring that all Atlantans share in the city's growth. I am proud to have earned the endorsement of all living former mayors of Atlanta.

## **Section II: Priorities**

1. What are your top three priorities if elected?

Public Safety, Affordable Housing, Transit and Transportation

## **Section III: Public Safety**

2. The Atlanta Public Safety Training Center has sparked both support and opposition throughout our city. How do you view the Public Safety Training Center's role in shaping the future of public safety, and how would you ensure it serves the needs of both first responders and the broader community?

I was a firm supporter of the Public Safety Training Center (PSTC) and believe that it was a necessary improvement that the City had to make. Since the PSTC has opened, morale is up, recruitment is up, applications are up and most importantly, the retention of officers is up and steady. For decades, APD had been the “trainer” for the region’s law enforcement. New recruits received the best training in the Southeast region from APD—always the #1 or #2 police academy in the country. Unfortunately, due to poor working conditions or lower salaries, the recruits would leave after just a few years, taking APD’s investment elsewhere—the biggest drain on staff. That has changed now. Overall, this world-class training center will help attract the best and brightest potential law enforcement leaders for our future public safety needs. Building on these improvements with ongoing competitive salaries is essential to maintaining this positive turnaround. As the leading public safety advocate on the City Council, I will ensure that future investments in modern technology, crisis intervention training, community outreach training, and staff salaries are sustained.

## **Section IV: Transportation and Infrastructure**

3. Traffic congestion, caused by delivery trucks and rideshare vehicles, physically blocks travel lanes on major roads like Peachtree and Piedmont. How can we ensure that this dangerous practice stops?

I passed legislation that requires pickup zones for rideshare services at special events, which has worked well where implemented. I would recommend expanding this throughout the city as a regular practice, given the proliferation of rideshare businesses, and as density grows in town. In addition, as street-facing, new construction is built, the City can require that delivery and rideshare lanes be drawn into the development plans just as we require a certain number of parking spaces per square foot of the development.

4. What is your vision for revitalizing the Lindbergh area and addressing the visible blight along Piedmont Road, a key gateway into Buckhead? How would you work with city agencies and law enforcement to improve safety and aesthetics in this high-priority corridor?

The Lindbergh area, including the transit-oriented “Uptown Atlanta,” a 47-acre mixed-use district around the Lindbergh MARTA station, is a prime opportunity to expand the benefits of a transit-oriented development (TOD). I would recommend that a Special Public Interest District (SPI) be established for the Lindbergh area, allowing the City and Buckhead community, together, to determine the specific, future residential and business needs and desires of the Lindbergh area. This community-driven planning process would also have the opportunity to address public safety and blight—factors that often go hand in hand. Engaging the private sector on activating vacant and unused property can also be addressed as a public-community issue.

Reducing crime through the design of new structures might be one consideration. Pairing that with proper lighting and “eyes on the street” (flock cameras and officers) reduces unsafe spaces and discourages crime. Encouraging property owners to enroll in the City’s video integration system, which allows APD to see external incidents outside their properties, is recommended.

I would also suggest that an Atlanta Police Department mini-precinct provide heightened patrols and robust code enforcement of vacant properties be implemented. Much like other parts of the City, I would recommend that workforce housing for APD officers be included in any existing and new housing developments.

5. Buckhead lacks sufficient sidewalk infrastructure, particularly in some residential neighborhoods and near schools, making walking uncomfortable and unsafe for many residents. While progress has been made in the commercial core, large portions of the community remain disconnected. What specific policies or funding strategies would you support to accelerate and incentivize sidewalk construction throughout Buckhead?

I would support reprogramming of CDBG funds, prioritizing development impact fees, diverting fees from commercial building permits to a special trust fund in areas adjacent to schools, and using any housing or commercial building code fines and penalties in the geographical area to build sidewalks near schools and in residential areas.

## **Section V: Education - Atlanta Public Schools (APS)**

6. Many schools throughout Atlanta are currently facing significant under-enrollment. As part of the ongoing Facilities Master Plan, the APS Board is considering recommendations for school consolidations and redistricting by late 2025. Specifically, APS has circulated a recent plan under community review that outlines various scenarios that could repurpose and consolidate existing facilities. What is your position on potential school closures or consolidations within APS? How do you believe these changes could impact schools in Buckhead, which currently experience some of the highest enrollment levels in the district?

I believe that this type of review should be completed regularly, perhaps after each decennial census. Atlanta Public Schools has a capacity for 70,000 students, but currently enrolls only about 50,000. Many schools in the south and west sides of Atlanta experience costly under-enrollment. Potential savings should go to the direct benefit of students. Consolidation can be a justifiable strategy for those specific areas. School investment should follow growth.

The Buckhead schools experience high enrollment. I understand that APS is proposing to repurpose Jackson Elementary & Smith Elementary Schools. I have also heard about the unification of dual campuses. Generally, I believe in smaller class sizes for effective instruction and learning. I am interested in how the community feels about these proposals, and look forward to following the process.

## **Section VI: Watershed**

7. Considering the recurring and increasingly severe flooding events along Peachtree Creek, what specific policies or infrastructure investments would you advocate for to mitigate future flood risks and protect vulnerable neighborhoods? How will we pay for these?

Over the decades, several attempts have been made to address the flooding and water runoff at Peachtree Creek, including upgrades currently underway for the construction of a 15-million-gallon storage tank and a 75-million-gallon pump station. The North Fork Storage Tank and Pump Station are expected to serve as a key capacity relief project for the Peachtree Creek Basin by 2027. The timely completion of this project, which experienced early delays due to the pandemic, is important to residents along this floodplain. Additionally, the City can examine sustainability initiatives that have been successful in other cities. Some cities have begun using permeable concrete, subsidizing sump pumps and the floodproofing of homes, and mini-water parks (where appropriate). Utilizing

resilience or green infrastructure bonds could pay for new initiatives to mitigate flooding and runoff in residential areas.

8. The city has experienced multiple water main breaks and wastewater spills in recent years. What specific policies or oversight mechanisms would you support to prevent future infrastructure failures?

For the water system as a whole, I would propose an ongoing survey and repair program that assesses and catalogs all parts of the water system, including the age and lifespan of the equipment. We can no longer afford to only make improvements when there are system failures. A repair and replacement schedule should be based on assessment findings and related factors. The system needs to adjust for growth and density related to new in-town developments. Changes in zoning and large-scale land use should always trigger an evaluation of the system. This will allow residents and businesses to know what to expect when work schedules are forecasted far in advance of construction disruptions. Standardizing the evaluation, maintenance, and repairs will help to alleviate future problems and maintain a healthy water system.

### **Section VII: Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO)**

9. Buckhead contains the majority of Atlanta's tree canopy and has seen significant community concern regarding the finalized Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO). How would you balance the need for development with the goal of protecting Atlanta's urban forest, especially in rapidly growing neighborhoods? What new policies or solutions, if any, would you support to strengthen the Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO) code enforcement process, currently managed by the Arborist Division within the Department of City Planning?

I sponsored tree protection ordinances to preserve our canopy and have been the lead Councilmember on the tree protection ordinance. Procedurally, I passed legislation to move the City Arborist's review of development plans from the back of the construction process to the front. This procedural change saves money and time, and often, more trees. It helps all stakeholders and is proving successful.

### **Section VIII: Final Thoughts – How Buckhead can Help the City of Atlanta**

10. In what ways can the Buckhead community actively support the priorities you've set for your district or post within the City of Atlanta? Where do you believe Buckhead



can have the most meaningful impact in advancing Atlanta's overall growth, prosperity, and quality of life?

The Buckhead community is a model of civic and business engagement. The community's cooperation with state, county, and municipal governments is well established and functioning. Iconic business and civic leaders such as former Mayor Sam Massell, Councilman Sydney Marcus, and Councilwoman Barbara Asher were stalwarts in helping Buckhead and the entire city of Atlanta prosper and grow. They helped further mint the "Atlanta Way." The Buckhead community should be emulated around Atlanta for its civic engagement. Many commercial and residential areas have well-attended civic meetings to discuss transportation (traffic), zoning, and public safety matters. Some neighborhoods have neighborhood watches and subsidize public safety patrols. The Buckhead community is Atlanta's definitive live, work, and play area for these reasons. I would want to continue building upon these traditions and purposeful, cooperative relationships that benefit all of Atlanta. So goes Buckhead, so goes Atlanta.