



Candidate Questionnaire for Atlanta's 2025 Citywide Elections

Section I: Personal Background and Motivation

- Full Name: Charles Bourgeois
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Brief Biography (max 250 words):

Charles Bourgeois is a Morehouse man, husband, father, service entrepreneur, and fearless advocate running for Atlanta City Council District 9. With two decades of impact in hospitality and civic action, he's mobilized thousands to vote, built iconic brands, and now fights for safer streets, housing access, and true community investment. His campaign cry 'The Power of US' is a call to protect the soul of the Westside with equity, action, and bold leadership.

Section II: Priorities

1. What are your top three priorities if elected?

1) My top priority is infrastructure; particularly roads, sidewalks and storm water drains. Doing an audit of what needs to be done is step one, developing innovative solutions to fund infrastructure expansion is step two. Step three is to launch a transparent infrastructure repair tracker that's fully open to the public, providing real-time updates on project timelines, contractors, and budgets. The platform will also allow residents to directly submit repair needs, ensuring community voices guide priorities. By giving constituents clear visibility into roadwork and repair progress, we can build trust, improve accountability, and bring much-needed clarity to how our infrastructure dollars are spent.

2) My second priority is decreasing 911 response time and increasing safety. I will look to create mini substations, strategically placed in areas with frequent response delays or repeat 911 calls. These substations will bring officers closer to the community while also expanding the Police Alternatives Division, adding more behavioral health specialists and non-violent responders to cover a broader range of non-emergency calls. By combining proximity with smarter, more compassionate response options, we can strengthen public safety for all residents and keep crime rates consistently below the city's annual averages.

3) The third priority is reducing property taxes and providing programs for stronger schools. By investing in neighborhoods that fall directly under Buckhead but share overlaps in city services we can narrow the tax gap over time. As those communities contribute more to the city's budget, the burden on Buckhead decreases. This translates into stability; which is a big contributor to keeping our school districts intact. Additionally, we need to review additional ways to reward legacy residents for leaving roots in our communities. Prioritizing tax relief by tenure of residence and not just age at 65. Homeowners who have lived in their property for 20 years or more would be eligible for permanent or reduced rates, ensuring relief is tied to tenure and loyalty to the community — not just the age of the resident.

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 believe the Public Safety Training Center is a good thing. However, it should be positioned as the cornerstone of Atlanta's public safety strategy. It should host regular community engagement initiatives, including violence prevention workshops, youth mentorship programs, and neighborhood safety education, building strong, trust-based partnerships between residents and public safety agencies. By investing in continuous professional development, de-escalation techniques, and mental health training, we can deliver higher-quality service, reduce unnecessary enforcement escalations, and strengthen public trust.

This approach transforms the Training Center into a dynamic hub for workforce development, community collaboration, and operational excellence, enabling Atlanta to provide effective, efficient, and equitable public safety, reduce reliance on private security, and ensure that every neighborhood is safe and supported. As crime decreases and training deploys across all essential service workers, first responders should be rewarded for their participation in these programs and scaled benchmarks.

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?

Traffic congestion caused by delivery trucks and rideshare vehicles blocking lanes on major roads like Peachtree and Piedmont isn't just an inconvenience — it's a public safety hazard. To stop this dangerous practice, we need a multi-pronged approach: increase and enforce clear delivery and loading zones with stricter penalties for violations, expand off-peak delivery programs to reduce daytime congestion. We should also partner with businesses and rideshare companies to incentivize compliance and explore dedicated curb space for pickups and deliveries. Additionally once these practices are implemented, we should look to impose strict penalties to violators.

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 needs a combination of targeted cleanup, streetscape improvements, and public-private partnerships that invest in façade renovations, landscaping, lighting, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. I would work closely with city agencies — including Public Works, Code Enforcement, and Planning — to ensure vacant lots, dilapidated buildings, and illegal dumping are addressed swiftly and efficiently.

Additionally where space is effective on blighted parcels we should look to purchase these lots to look for enhanced landscape and signage as the entry/gateway into Buckhead. Lastly, I would collaborate with Atlanta Police and the Police Alternatives Division to increase visible patrols, expand behavioral health and non-violent response units, and create community-based safety programs that engage residents and businesses.

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?

Missing sidewalks are a mobility and safety issue, especially near schools and in residential neighborhoods where walking or biking should be safe and accessible. To address this I would look to impose and increase impact fees on new developments to

contribute to sidewalk construction or improvement as part of permitting, ensuring growth benefits public mobility.

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 am strongly against redistricting of schools in APS especially with schools that are high performing like Brandon or North Atlanta. Unfortunately many schools in Atlanta are underperforming, under-enrolled and under-funded. APS has identified a solution to a tax base issue along the southern side of our district and city. As the tax gap widens, providing quality education for our impoverished population becomes harder and harder. Instead of “letting APS work it out” the city of Atlanta needs to strongly advocate, plan and support program support of those families and students in need. In Buckhead I believe that we may experience overcrowding in schools that may not prioritize children first. Unfortunately I believe that if these changes don't fall in the desired outcome of the Buckhead neighbors then we may lose a crucial part of our tax base as many neighborhoods may look to move out of Atlanta. If we lose our tax base, Atlanta loses and our local business struggle.

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?

I will conduct a comprehensive flood vulnerability map and prioritize drainage upgrades based on the areas most at risk. The plan will include tangible, visible steps for residents, such as replacing aging pipes, expanding stormwater retention capacity, and increasing curb inlet capacity to safely disperse floodwater. By focusing on neighborhoods where water currently pools in the streets, we can improve safety, protect property, and ensure that stormwater infrastructure keeps pace with the challenges our community faces. I



would create Atlanta’s first Green Solar and Water Bond; this bond would raise upfront capital to install solar panels on public buildings, schools, and community centers, as well as develop solar microgrids in underserved neighborhoods. Savings from reduced energy costs and potential revenue from community solar programs could repay investors over time, making it a self-sustaining investment that would be used to solve our water problem city wide – especially in Buckhead.

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?

We need to create new ways to scale and grow and solve our infrastructure and energy problems. We also need ways to fund these projects. As previously stated creating the first ever Green Solar and Water Bond would be a self-sustaining investment that would be used to solve our water problem city wide – especially in Buckhead.

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 believe development and conservation can coexist when we hold developers accountable and strengthen enforcement of the Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO). This means increasing resources for the Arborist Division to ensure consistent inspections and penalties, creating a transparent public tracking system for tree permits and violations, and incentivizing developers to preserve mature trees through density bonuses or expedited permitting for projects that maintain or enhance canopy coverage. I would also explore expanding reforestation requirements and community tree-planting initiatives to ensure that every new development contributes to a greener, safer, and more resilient Buckhead. By combining strong enforcement, clear incentives, and community engagement, we can support smart growth while safeguarding the urban forest that defines our neighborhoods.

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?

I believe Buckhead is the heart beat of the city. Without Buckhead the city falls short. I believe a Community Benefit Agreement between developers, and business to ensure that new development delivers tangible benefits to the historically under-resourced parts of District 9 could be very impactful. I state this because the largest problem we have in 30318 (from Bankhead to Buckhead) is the stability of the District. A more stable district means stronger communities no matter what part of the District you live in