



## Candidate Questionnaire for Atlanta's 2025 Citywide Elections

### Section I: Personal Background and Motivation

- Full Name: THAD FLOWERS
- Office Sought: ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL – DISTRICT 7
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Brief Biography (max 250 words):

Thad Flowers is a seasoned professional and dedicated community leader running for Atlanta City Council. Born and raised in Atlanta, he combines private-sector leadership with extensive public service experience.

Thad began his career in public service while earning his political science degree at Tennessee State University, working for an U.S. Senator and later an U.S. Representative on Capitol Hill. These roles gave him firsthand knowledge of federal policy, legislative processes, and constituent engagement.

In 2019, Thad brought his expertise home as District Chief of Staff to Atlanta City Council. He managed daily operations, coordinated legislative and policy initiatives, and served as a key liaison between constituents, city departments, and external organizations. His tenure was marked by organizational improvements, responsive constituent services, and impactful community outreach.

Complementing his government service, Thad built a 15-year career in the automotive industry, advancing to General Sales Manager for an Atlanta-based Fortune 500 firm. He oversaw all variable operations, led sales teams, mentored staff, and consistently delivered growth and customer satisfaction.

Today, Thad serves as a Senior Public Affairs Specialist, guiding public outreach, government relations, and communications for major transportation and infrastructure projects that shape Atlanta's future. He holds an Executive MBA from Georgia Tech's Scheller College of Business.

Thad's vision for District 7 centers on stronger infrastructure, safer neighborhoods, and responsible fiscal management to deliver lasting community benefits.

### Section II: Priorities

1. What are your top three priorities if elected?

When elected, my top priorities will be public safety, smarter infrastructure, and responsible fiscal stewardship. I will work to ensure our police and fire departments have the resources, training, and staffing they need while also expanding community-based approaches that address homelessness and mental health so that Buckhead remains safe and compassionate. I will focus on improving how we move around the city by pushing for better traffic signal coordination, stronger sidewalk and bike networks, and faster delivery of capital projects. Finally, I will use my private- and public-sector experience to make sure taxpayer dollars are managed responsibly by advancing transparent budgeting, strengthening procurement practices, and investing wisely in city services without unnecessary tax increases.

**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?

The Public Safety Training Center should be seen as an investment in the future of public safety and in the people who protect our neighborhoods. Atlanta's first responders deserve modern, well-equipped facilities that prepare them for today's challenges, from advanced firefighting and emergency response to community-centered policing. The center is also a vital asset in the City's efforts to recruit and retain the best public safety professionals in the country. At the same time, it must serve the broader community by ensuring that training emphasizes accountability, de-escalation, and transparency so that public trust grows alongside preparedness. I would work to ensure community input is ongoing and that the recommendations of the South River Forest and Public Safety Training Center Community Task Force are fully implemented. Neighbors should see tangible benefits through public reporting, open lines of communication, and access to certain facilities and green spaces for civic use. I believe the Training Center can strengthen safety while building confidence and trust between first responders and the communities they serve.

**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?



Vehicles blocking travel lanes is not only inconvenient, it's unsafe. Solving this problem requires a mix of smarter policy and practical enforcement. The City and our state partners must consistently enforce lane-blocking violations so drivers know the rules are taken seriously. Technology can also help by using sensors or cameras to monitor problem areas and guide enforcement. I also support creating more designated loading and pickup/drop-off zones near busy corridors like Peachtree and Piedmont so vehicles have a safe, legal place to stop. With thoughtful planning and accountability, we can keep lanes clear, reduce gridlock, and make our streets safer for everyone.

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?

Redeveloping Lindbergh is one of Atlanta's greatest economic development opportunities. The area is uniquely positioned with direct access to Georgia 400, the Connector, and MARTA's busiest hub, all within minutes of Buckhead's premier retail destinations and Midtown's Piedmont Park. My vision is a sustainable, mixed-use project that creates smart density, fosters entrepreneurial growth, and establishes a vibrant activity center that showcases Buckhead as the Southeast's premier community to live, work, and visit.

This includes much-needed mid-market condominiums and townhomes for young professionals and downsizing empty nesters, thoughtfully designed to complement nearby neighborhoods such as Peachtree Park and Pine Hills. I also envision a retail and restaurant hub inspired by Ponce City Market to support small businesses, along with greenspace along Peachtree Creek and the BeltLine connector to Brookhaven's Peachtree Creek Greenway, creating natural amenities the area currently lacks.

Revitalization will also improve safety by eliminating vacant land and abandoned properties that often attract crime. I will work with APD and Buckhead-area partners to expand patrols, enhance lighting, and use technology to deter illegal activity.

Long-term, I see Piedmont Road matching the aesthetics of Peachtree with landscaped medians and improved design. In the short term, I will advocate for stronger code enforcement, faster remediation of neglected properties, and coordinated beautification through landscaping, public art, and upgraded sidewalks. I will also press the City to hold property owners accountable while leveraging public-private partnerships to attract additional investment.

Done right, revitalizing this corridor will improve quality of life for residents and businesses in Lindbergh and strengthen one of Buckhead’s most visible and important gateways.

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?

To accelerate sidewalk construction in Buckhead, I support dedicating a greater share of allowable bond funds to fill gaps, especially near schools, parks, and transit, and creating a Sidewalk-Only Bond Program within the next infrastructure package. Developers should also be required to include sidewalks in new projects, ensuring growth contributes to connectivity. While historical planning policy and neighborhood preferences intentionally omitted them, sidewalks must now be treated as essential infrastructure, shifting maintenance responsibility from current homeowners to the City, or offering cost-sharing programs that ease burdens on residents. Streamlined permitting can help neighborhoods move projects forward more quickly.

Equally important is accountability—transparent project tracking and clear prioritization criteria based on safety, connectivity, and equity will ensure sidewalks are delivered where they’re needed most. Public-private partnerships should be leveraged by engaging Buckhead businesses and civic organizations to co-fund improvements, while also pursuing Safe Routes to School and Transit grants. Finally, every road resurfacing or capital project should include sidewalks, paired with traffic calming, crosswalks, and ADA ramps, so that each investment builds safer, more walkable corridors across the community.

#### **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?



The changes affecting Buckhead schools under the current APS proposal are deeply personal for me. I attended Sarah Smith’s Old Ivy campus and Sutton’s Powers Ferry campus, both of which would either close or face major changes under this plan. While it is unlikely to find a solution that satisfies everyone, I believe the current proposals lack the meaningful input from parents and residents that is necessary to build community support.

Some of the options simply do not make sense. For example, schools like Brandon that already operate as two campuses and will continue to do so should not be disrupted at all. And it is hard to imagine how putting kindergartners and eighth graders in the same space could be effective. Ultimately, these proposals risk breaking up stability in Buckhead schools while failing to deliver the cost savings or efficiencies that should be the point of consolidation.

I believe APS must approach this process with greater transparency and collaboration, guided by the principle that every school decision should strengthen—not weaken—our communities. Buckhead’s schools are some of the most successful and highest-enrolled in the district, and any changes must protect that success while ensuring equity across the city.

## **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?

Flooding along Peachtree Creek is a growing threat to homes, businesses, and public safety. We must upgrade stormwater systems, expand green infrastructure, and restore natural floodplains to better manage heavy rainfall. This means investing in culvert and drainage upgrades, permeable surfaces, and new greenspace, while also pursuing projects like connecting District 7 to the Peachtree Creek Greenway that improve resilience and quality of life.

Funding should come from a mix of local stormwater fees and capital funds, federal and state resiliency grants such as FEMA’s BRIC program, and contributions from developers building along the creek, including affordable housing projects on Garson. With smart planning and shared investment, we can protect vulnerable neighborhoods, preserve property values, and make Buckhead more resilient.

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?

Atlanta's recent water main breaks and wastewater spills underscore the urgent need to modernize our aging infrastructure. Much of our water system is decades past its intended lifespan, and continuing with a patchwork, emergency-repair approach is no longer acceptable. I support a long-term capital plan that prioritizes replacing high-risk mains and pipes, upgrading treatment facilities, and investing in resilient materials and technology to meet future demand.

In addition to capital investment, the City must improve transparency and accountability. While the Department of Watershed Management already provides quarterly updates to Council, I would push for more accessible public reporting, stronger independent audits, and performance benchmarks tied to funding. Leveraging state and federal infrastructure grants will also be critical to reduce the burden on local ratepayers. With smart planning and modernization, we can prevent costly failures, protect public health, and provide reliable water service for every neighborhood.

### **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?

Buckhead contains the majority of Atlanta's tree canopy, and as development pressures increase, we need a proactive approach to protecting our urban forest while still allowing for responsible growth. I believe the key is to channel new housing and mixed-use projects into our commercial corridors and transit areas, while setting stronger retention targets in interior neighborhoods and along sensitive areas like Peachtree Creek. Development should begin with thoughtful site design, not tree clearing. That means requiring plans that preserve healthy perimeter and stream-buffer trees, protect root zones, and minimize grading before any demolition or building permits are issued. To ensure we don't lose ground, I support tracking canopy by watershed and district and using the Tree Trust Fund



to prioritize new plantings in flood-prone areas of Buckhead where they also provide stormwater benefits.

Equally important is strengthening enforcement so the Tree Protection Ordinance actually works in practice. The Arborist Division needs more staff, with dedicated weekend enforcement and authority to issue immediate stop-work orders when violations occur. Contractors should be held accountable through mandatory registration, a public registry of violations, and suspension of privileges for repeat offenders. I would also push for digital documentation of removals, random audits, and escrow or maintenance bonds on large projects to guarantee replacement trees survive. Finally, annual canopy monitoring through aerial imagery or LiDAR, paired with a public dashboard of removals and replacements, would create real accountability. By closing loopholes, keeping fees meaningful, and giving our arborists the tools to act quickly, we can balance growth with preservation and take a proactive stance to ensure Buckhead remains the green heart of Atlanta.

### **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?

Buckhead is the South's premier community to live, work, and visit, and it has a unique opportunity to lead Atlanta's growth and prosperity. To achieve this, we must ensure Buckhead receives the quality service delivery that residents and businesses pay for, from public safety to infrastructure to city services. Strong, reliable service in Buckhead not only sustains this community but also strengthens Atlanta as a whole.

With its strong commercial base, vibrant neighborhoods, and unmatched tree canopy, Buckhead can serve as a model for balancing economic vitality with quality of life. Its greatest impact will come from driving smart infrastructure investment, advancing walkable and connected development, and maintaining safe, thriving neighborhoods that attract families and businesses.

Additionally, public-private partnerships in Buckhead have already shown how community stakeholders can work together effectively. Expanding this model can create a stronger Atlanta where every community shares in the benefits of growth.