



Candidate Questionnaire for Atlanta's 2025 Citywide Elections

Section I: Personal Background and Motivation

- Full Name: Dustin Hillis
- Office Sought: District 9 (incumbent)
- Campaign Website and Social Media Handles: www.voteDustinHillis.com

IG/FB/X: Dustin4ATL

Brief Biography (max 250 words):

I bring a strong record of public service, professional expertise, and community leadership to the Atlanta City Council. My career as an ICU nurse, including serving in Emory's Serious Communicable Disease Unit during the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak, sharpened my ability to respond under pressure and serve others with dedication. I hold degrees in microbiology, nursing, and a master's in public administration. Before serving on Council, I served in leadership roles in my neighborhood association and also worked for my Council predecessor.

Since being elected to Council in 2017, I have secured a number of projects both citywide and for my District. This includes securing more MAF dollars than any other Council district, doubling the City's yearly commitment to parks/rec/trails, and working with the Mayor to begin delivering long-delayed projects like Fire Station 22, Howell Mill Complete Streets, and a neighborhood sewer replacement project. My accomplishments have been recognized nationally, including the National League of Cities' "Centennial Under 40 Impact Award." I also have a depth of committee experience, having served on each.

I am running for re-election to continue delivering on the fundamentals Atlantans expect: safe neighborhoods, reliable infrastructure, thriving parks and trails, affordable housing, and responsive government. I am honored to have the financial support & endorsement of the Atlanta Professional Fire Fighters, the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, and the Atlanta REALTORS Association, which are endorsements I have proudly secured each of my three campaigns for my Council seat.

Section II: Priorities

1. What are your top three priorities if elected?



My top issue is enhancing the city's commitment to upgrading our long-neglected infrastructure. The City and ATLDOT must get "back to the basics" when it comes to transportation infrastructure by resurfacing our roads, repairing and improving sidewalk and bike networks, and upgrading intersections to make the more efficient. All resources should be leveraged, including working with our CIDs and other partners, to ensure a much faster project delivery timeframe.

A close second is continuing the City's expansion of our parks, greenspaces, and trails. In my first 8 years, we have added or activated over 400 acres of parks and greenspace in District 9 and are in the process of adding multiple miles of trails. In my Buckhead neighborhoods, this has included the City's first dock access to the Chattahoochee River via a new dock at Standing Peachtree Greenspace on my border with District 8, as well as the City's imminent purchase of the Galloway Athletic Fields along Defoors Ferry Road. My goal is to have every City resident within a safe 10-minute walk to a park or trail destination.

Lastly, I want to keep up the substantial improvements to public safety that have occurred under the current City Council, Mayor Dickens, and Chief Schierbaum. We will continue to add officers to our police force and firefighters to our fire department, as we also continue the rebuilds of multiple aging precincts/fire stations, restore our police and fire fleets, and continue to add officers and firefighters to serve our City.

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?

As a strong and longtime supporter of our police officer and firefighters, I strongly stand by my advocacy and votes to support our state-of-the-art training facility. Police and fire have already made great strides in both their academy pipelines and retention - a combined product of the PSTC, long-needed wage increases, and pension reform.



I am an advocate for continuing to extend the recruitment pipeline, including outreach to APS and other schools, including colleges, to establish an official paid cadet program with tuition assistance and conditional job offers. I believe we should also add even more fast-track lateral academy options for experienced officers/firefighters/paramedics. APD and AFRD should establish clear and achievable goals for both sworn and non-sworn personnel to be achieved within the next five years - including adding another police zone/precinct with smaller beat sizes throughout the city, as well as additional fire/medic stations in areas with long-known extended response times.

I also support further expanding administrative and non-sworn work roles, such C.A.R.E. Units in every zone and more non-sworn staff to monitor the tens of thousands of cameras throughout the City and to continue the marked improvement in E911 call-taking times.

We also need to fully implement that park and trail plan laid out during the development of the training center.

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?

ATLDOT needs to implement and fully enforce parking ordinances, especially on highly traveled arterials and collectors like Peachtree and Piedmont. This is an essential element when City Council considers the new pending parking legislation/contract.

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?

For any specific measures for this area, I would defer to the District councilmember, but it would ideally be the same for any other area of the City. Our homeless task force and multi-department code enforcement officers should focus on problem areas aggressively to



resolve blight and make the area welcoming and inviting, while ensuring a high level of care for those persons needing rapid housing and services.

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 support focusing the next bond and TSPLOST renewal on basic infrastructure, namely catching up on roadway resurfacing that has been underfunded for decades and repair/infill of sidewalks where needed. It is vital to ensure neighborhoods are safely connected to commercial areas, schools, and parks. I will continue to work with my neighborhoods and NPUs on a District 9-specific list to have ready once such funding is identified and approved by voters.

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?

While APS is fully-governed by its own voter-elected Board of Education and City Council has no direct purview over it, this is obviously of concern to Councilmembers across the City and our constituents. I will continue to hear those concerns, connect voters with the one district member and three at-large members of the Board of Education which they specifically elect, and engage the Board members myself as APS works through this decision. Unfortunately, as has been pointed out in the meetings that voters and I have attended, this has been an



issue for well over a decade and is now coming to a head due to continued yearly overspending and a cutback of state/federal education monies. I also express a high level of support for keeping schools in the well-run North Atlanta cluster intact – that includes urging APS BOE to keep Bolton Academy and the District 9 portion of E. Rivers in the NA Cluster (which my opponent is actively campaigning against in neighborhoods within those attendance zones) and leaving Brandon with a separate primary campus.

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 support evaluating DWM-based fees, which have not been changed in over 15 years. This will relieve the burden off ratepayers and taxpayers. I also support developing and implementing a reasonable stormwater utility, which will go directly to supplementing MOST and other funding in order to more rapidly implement the hundreds of stormwater improvement projects needed across the City. Unfortunately, Atlanta remains one of the few cities in the metro area that does not have a stormwater utility. I look forward to implementing one and seeing the prioritized improvements across the City, including along Peachtree Creek and Proctor Creek and their multiple tributaries.

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?

I have already identified City Utilities as my top request for a 2026 committee chairmanship because fixing DWM infrastructure is urgent. District 9 hosts core assets—the RM Clayton WRC, the Chattahoochee & Hemphill WTCs, and the Shirley Clarke Franklin Reservoir & Pumping Station—so I see the issues up close across wastewater, drinking-water distribution, and stormwater. For years, the federal consent decree has focused attention on sewers, but the distribution system and stormwater have too often been afterthoughts.



We must continue essential sewer projects while turning equal—if not greater—attention to the aging water distribution network. That means a risk-based replacement program for large and small mains, aggressive valve and hydrant renewal to shorten/lessen outages, and modern leak detection through advanced metering and pressure management. At our plants and in the field, we should deploy modern sensors and condition-based maintenance to prevent failures instead of reacting to them.

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 supported the legislation updating the TPO. Both sides were left somewhat upset by the outcome, and that is really our job as legislators – to find a middle and reasonable ground to settle on. If too strict a TPO was adopted that severely restricted development rights on private properties, it would quickly find its way in our state’s court system, and would likely be found to be unconstitutional and entirely thrown out if too strict. We certainly do not want that to occur. I do see the need for more resources and improvements in our current enforcement system, including and starting with more arborists in both the Department of City Planning (private property trees) and the Department of Parks & Recreation (public property trees) to greatly improve enforcement of our TPO – seven days per week.

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 can play a vital role in supporting priorities that strengthen public safety, infrastructure, and neighborhood quality of life. By working in partnership with its city leadership, Buckhead can help champion investments in modernizing our public safety facilities, expanding community policing initiatives, and supporting programs that reduce crime across Atlanta. Buckhead’s business and civic leadership can also continue to contribute to citywide prosperity by advocating for economic development, fostering entrepreneurship, and supporting workforce opportunities that benefit residents in every district.

Additionally, Buckhead’s voice in advancing regional transportation improvements—such as safer streets, expanded transit, and better connectivity—can ensure Atlanta remains competitive and livable. Ultimately, the most meaningful impact will come from collaboration: Buckhead using its resources, influence, and partnerships to strengthen the city as a whole, while advancing our shared goals of safety, growth, and quality of life for all Atlantans.