

Questions from the Westview Votes Committee: Answers by Kim Scott, Candidate for Atlanta City Council District 4

1) Would you be transparent about your Council budget? How?

Yes, I believe the community should be informed on the council budget. The budget would have its own meetings so that I can discuss and answer questions about the budget. I would share real time updates about the budget via my website and social media sites and via community groups.

2) What is your stance on displacement of legacy and low-income residents? How would you enact policy to support those residents and prevent displacement?

I believe that we can plan for future growth and development without displacing our neighbors. As a city councilperson, I will work to bring stable, diverse, and affordable housing into the City. This includes developing policy to protect our legacy and low income residents. Building a resilient neighborhood infrastructure that would protect families, communities, businesses and schools from climate, financial and social changes requires thoughtful and strategic use of government funds and resources. I support a cabinet position that solely focuses on housing and housing affordability. I also support and would legislate for the City of Atlanta to create a housing affordability plan that includes all ages, demographics and income levels. I previously fought for and would have legislation that helps our legacy residents with their tax bills and with protection from significant property tax increases. I previously worked on the Fulton County Homestead exemption taskforce to eliminate the need for seniors to reapply at ages 62, 65 and 70 for senior exemptions and to increase income limits so that eligible retired seniors could qualify for the exemptions. I would continue this work and develop legislation on this issue.

3) Do you support the Policing Alternatives and Diversion Initiative (PAD)? What role do you see diversion and alternative to policing initiatives, such as PAD, playing in building a new approach to community safety and wellness? Currently, PAD is only .5% of the public safety budget, so how can we financially support it to ensure success?

I am a supporter of PAD and other Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) programs. In my crime plan on my website, I have a number of community policing initiatives that encourage more programming like PAD. The role I would like to see diversion and alternatives to policing initiatives, such as PAD, play is to become fully integrated into the city's public safety strategy and the city fully fund the initiative. The police should focus on serious incidents and PAD and other alternatives could focus on quality of life concerns and low level offences or ordinance violation. I would call for the analysis of 911 calls, reported incidents and violations for 5 years to identify the areas where policing alternatives are feasible. The city council could follow the plan used by PAD in developing its 311 Community Referral Expansion. PAD studied 3.5 years of 911 call data, co-hosted virtual listening sessions with other organizations, surveyed City of Atlanta residents, and convened stakeholder working groups.

4) Will you hold monthly town halls and allow input from constituents before voting on controversial matters that affect our daily lives for years?

Yes I will be holding monthly town halls and community chats. I will also be sending out a newsletter to keep the community updated on general and high level issues at city council meetings and in the community.

5) What would you like to see improved regarding pedestrian safety and how would you enact that plan? For example, how would you address the Cascade Corridor? Would you add speed bumps and sidewalks to the budget, or support continuing to use the General Budget funds for those overdue improvements?

First we should start by adding more street lighting. The City of Atlanta's Department of Transportation study with GA Tech found that there was a historic underinvestment in certain areas of the city. For the Cascade corridor and other identified high use, high injury or high impact areas, I would look at the budget to see what is allocated and what is the timeline for implementation. I'm an advocate of complete Streets for Cascade which would give us lighting, new sidewalks and street repairs including drainage and not just repaving. I would give priority to high injury and high crime. Second, in areas where we are experiencing high injury and fatalities, we should look at sidewalk availability in neighborhoods as well as speed limits, street calming and street design. The city should have a line item for street calming and sidewalks. Neighborhoods are changing and to maintain safe and inviting neighborhoods, the city should invest in the best practices that are not only good for pedestrians but good for the entire community. I would also meet not only the ATL DOT but Public Works as well as work with GDOT to recommend funding for new sidewalks, repair of crumbling infrastructure and during implementation of new capital improvement projects. I would also recommend an on call contract with qualified sidewalk and transportation vendors projects to meet immediate and emergency community needs. I also would support and propose a coalition that includes the City of Atlanta Department of Transportation, MARTA, the Georgia Department of Transportation (as needed), the Neighborhood Planning Units, and other community organizations and neighborhood groups to discuss the placement of crosswalks and the actual walking and driving patterns of the community.

6) What steps will you take to decriminalize current city ordinances that disproportionately target black and brown people and poor people?

I would study the data, host community listening sessions, and convene stakeholder working groups. I would propose legislation to repeal or modify legislation as needed and work with my fellow city council persons to get it passed. In areas where the data is not available, I would propose legislation to capture data that gives the city council a full picture of the impact of city ordinances. I would propose a data dashboard to provide greater clarity around enforcement of laws period.

7) Westview residents love our trees, but they can be prohibitively expensive to maintain, which has created dangerous and even fatal situations for our beloved neighbors. What can be done to not only plant new trees, but maintain existing trees on public and private property?

As Chair of NPU-T, this last Planning grant disbursement included a set aside allocation of money to study the impact of trees on the quality of life of our residents. Meaning downed trees on, tree roots that have uprooted our sidewalks, etc. I would advocate that a portion of the tree recompense money be allocated for people that can't afford tree removal and repair services to their home. I also support parts of the revised Tree Ordinance that deals with how trees are evaluated and the timeliness of the process.

8) The proximity of I-20 creates airborne contaminants, which has been proven to shorten life spans, endanger children in their third trimester, and generally hurt the long-term health of residents. The highway transects our neighborhood in a way that historically was not allowed in more affluent areas of Atlanta. How would you address this inequity, and the effects of similar environmental racism that subtracts 20 years from our collective life expectancy?

Environmental social justice issues especially around noise, air pollution and water to name a few not only take advocacy but experience and relationships with intergovernmental agencies to mitigate these issues and their impact on our community. Of which I have experience working with not only the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. I worked on the environmental planning contract where we had to meet Federal reporting requirements for work completed in and around I-285 for the 5th runway at the Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport. I've also agreed to work with our neighborhoods to petition the Georgia Department of Transportation for a sound barrier along I-20 from Mozley Park back to the West End neighborhoods.

9) Incredibly frequent power outages plague residents, residents working from home, and local businesses alike. They routinely disrupt our economic and physical wellbeing. How do you plan to lessen this burden on us?

In NPU-T we developed a communications plan with the Southern Company or Georgia Power for scheduled plans and long term outages. By implementing their current Capital Grid program to upgrade their facilities in our neighborhoods we should see less frequent power outages. I also served on the Mayor's office clean energy task force and worked with the Partners for Southern Equity where we looked at a resiliency hub within NPU-T for temporary power during a weather emergency. I will continue this work by building a relationship with the Southern Company and our digital infrastructure cable/internet companies to ensure we don't have these issues moving forward.

10) We have had issues for years with excessive street flooding, which damages homes and creates sudden expensive repairs. How do you plan to fix this problem?

In my past work as an Engineer & Project Director with the City of Atlanta I spent 7 years working on solving flooding issues in Atlanta in the Federal consent decree where I strongly advocated against the use of eminent domain. In our community I've worked on minimizing flooding in Ashview Heights, West End, providing comments on the City's latest stormwater ordinance and advocating for stormwater control as a development requirement in our neighborhoods. Moving forward, I plan to work with the Department of Watershed Management to ensure that they complete the projects federally mandated to stop flooding in our neighborhoods, get a stormwater ordinance passed that meets the needs of the community and extend our bonding language to allow us to do more stormwater related projects.

11) The current public transportation options create unfavorably long commutes for residents. Long commutes have been shown to have a heavy burden on quality of life, from healthy family relationships to stable mental and physical health. Atlanta is due to receive sizable federal funds from the CARES Act this year. Specifically, which public transportation projects will you support to relieve these long commutes? How will you also improve MARTA to serve our neighbors with these already approved federal funds?

Transportation is a major issue for the City of Atlanta. Citizens of Atlanta who drive, walk, bike, have a disability or ride MARTA should have safe travel options. As a city that is a commuter and a city that holds many large events, we should have multiple transportation options for our neighbors, workers, visitors, and students. The City of Atlanta's Department of Transportation plan outlines a project timeline for improvements. When elected, I would first get a current status of the projects, the budgets, and the timelines. I would recommend we give priority to high injury, high usage, and high crime areas. As the City of Atlanta's transportation plan clearly outlines the challenges which include long commutes, I would look at the plan and ask if it is creating actual sustainable, healthy modes of transportation for that target demographic and then recommend the creation of measurable outcomes in the transportation plan for specific vulnerable populations to include youth and children, people with disabilities, the elderly, and those who don't have access to a car. MARTA could be improved by adding routes, upgrading the MARTA facilities, growing partnerships with Atlanta Public Schools to increase age appropriate student riders and to decrease the number of school buses during rush hour traffic.

12) Studies show that a common denominator of police officers that use excessive violence is a history of domestic violence. Will you support screening for prospective police officers to disqualify them if they have domestic violence priors?

Yes

