


Abundant Housing Atlanta Candidate Questionnaire Responses (2025)

District 9

Dustin Hillis

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What policies do you believe would be the most impactful in advancing the premises outlined in the Atlanta City Design?

I share the Atlanta City Design vision that growth, if planned well, can strengthen our city and make it more inclusive. To prepare for 1.2 million residents, we must expand housing options while preserving affordability and protecting legacy residents. Policies like inclusionary zoning, the Westside Park Housing Affordability Overlay (the expansion of which I authored and is currently pending), and targeted tax relief help achieve this.

We should encourage mixed-income, transit-oriented development and invest in parks, sidewalks, stormwater systems, and public safety to support new growth. By prioritizing affordability, diversity, and strong infrastructure, we can turn growth into an opportunity to build a more vibrant, equitable Atlanta.

What is your position on increasing the types of housing (duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, cottage courts etc.) that can be built by-right (i.e. without re-zonings)?

I support allowing missing middle housing—duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, cottage courts, and ADUs—to be built by-right across more neighborhoods. These gentle-density forms expand affordability, promote walkable, amenity-rich neighborhoods, and ensure diverse housing options for seniors, young families, and others. By removing zoning barriers and simplifying permitting, we unlock housing supply without public subsidies while preserving neighborhood character. Coupled with thoughtful investments in infrastructure, transit, and community engagement, this approach helps unlock accessible, inclusive growth and ensures more Atlantans can live near opportunity-rich neighborhoods.

What parts of your district do you see as priority areas for more dense housing? Please be specific: specific neighborhoods, cross streets, etc.

The continued buildout (finally!) of the old Bowen Homes parcel, continuing the development of West Highlands (including redevelopment of the former, long-abandoned Gun Club Park), old Hollywood Courts, Jackson Pkwy corridor, and the Marietta Blvd corridor. I would also like to see a riverfront mixed-use development along the Chattahoochee that includes affordable housing from Hollowell Pkwy up to near the forthcoming Proctor Creek Trail corridor.

Are there any parts of your district where you think housing growth should NOT be allowed? Please be specific: specific neighborhoods, cross streets, etc.

None immediately come to mind.

What are you hearing from your potential constituents about their hopes, fears, aspirations, and frustrations about this potential growth?

I think the biggest fear about continued growth, borrowing from the popular phrase "We too big!", is solely due to the City's failure over multiple decades to improve, or even keep up with, its infrastructure. People see crumbling roads, areas with no sidewalks, sewer spills, water main breaks, intersections with terrible level of service (LOS) ratings, unrepaired bridges, etc. and they think we are beyond our capacity, which just is not the case. The City must come up with a firm plan to improve and keep up with infrastructure, not just with bonds and TSPLOST/MOST, but with continued investments from the general fund as well.

Oftentimes, proposed developments that could help increase housing supply - including the affordable housing supply - for the City are met with intense local opposition. How will you balance the opinions of existing local neighbors with the overall needs of the City?

Again, while there are true "NIMBY's" out there who just do not want to see new development, much of the referenced opposition I hear is infrastructure related. If the City would develop a firm, deliverable plan to improve its infrastructure, I feel much of this would be decreased.

I pride myself on attending neighborhood and NPU meetings on such matters, and while I do not actively advocate for one way or another given it will likely eventually come before Council as a voting item, I do provide true facts and correct misstatements about what specific project could and could not bring to a certain area.

How should we fund our local affordable housing trust fund? Please be specific about which local sources Atlanta should consider.

Closing the severe gap in affordable housing for families earning \$30,000 or less requires a dedicated, reliable funding stream for Atlanta's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. My colleagues and I have notably pushed back on the administration's past efforts to either not fund the fund, or only partially fund it, in multiple budgets.

I support directing in-lieu fees from inclusionary zoning policies and community benefit agreements directly into the Trust. We should also dedicate a share of revenues captured through Tax Allocation Districts, namely the Perry-Bolton and Hollowell/MLK Corridor TADs within D9, as has been done with the BeltLine, and supplement this with periodic housing bonds and a baseline General Fund appropriation. Additionally, lease income and proceeds from city-owned land should flow into the Trust, alongside a portion of PILOT and community-benefit payments tied to major development deals. Together, these local sources create a sustainable, legally sound funding base to deliver deeply affordable homes in amenity-rich neighborhoods.

Every analysis of our City that looks at our needs by neighborhood identifies a divide, where some neighborhoods are amenity-rich (jobs, restaurants, grocery stores, medical services) and lack a high supply of affordable housing, while others lack many of those same amenities but offer relatively more affordable housing. How will you create City-wide policies that reflect these differences?

I believe our housing policies must reflect the very different realities across Atlanta's neighborhoods. In amenity-rich areas that lack affordable homes, we should allow more housing types by-right—such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units (depending on and respecting the current character of the neighborhood)—reduce unnecessary parking minimums, and use inclusionary zoning to secure affordable units near jobs and transit.

In neighborhoods that already provide more affordable housing but lack amenities, we must focus on bringing public investment to improving transit, building sidewalks, expanding parks, and ensuring grocery access in food deserts; supporting small business corridors; preserving and rehabbing existing homes; and providing tax relief and home-repair programs for long-time residents through Invest Atlanta and other programs. Citywide, I will also prioritize anti-displacement protections and the strategic use of public land for mixed-income housing (such as forthcoming Gun Club Park in D9 and the under construction rapid housing project at Hemphill WTC), so growth expands opportunity without pushing people out.

As the City continues to observe thousands of Atlantans experiencing homelessness each year, how will you approach preventing bouts of homelessness and rehousing your constituents?

While homelessness is more concentrated in areas outside of District 9, it is of course a serious issue that deserves the attention of every elected official. We must continue our work to prioritize rapidly scalable shelter and supportive services throughout the City, including the currently under construction housing upon former DWM property adjacent to Hemphill WTC. The City will need to continue funding much of this out of general fund or other local/state dollars that are available, given the current state of federal agencies and grant money with organizations like HUD.

The City of Atlanta has begun implementing some innovative solutions to its homelessness problem, including using shipping containers as temporary shelter. How will you ensure that these efforts are able to grow and that neighborhoods across the City are part of the solution to our homelessness problem?

The single biggest improvement we can make is creating a multi-governmental Housing First Board—modeled on the Fulton County/City of Atlanta Justice Policy Board I co-chair that oversees the Diversion Center. Homelessness is regional, not just Atlanta's issue. Too often, metro police and sheriffs departments transport unsheltered residents into the city instead of serving them locally. A regional board would put every jurisdiction at one table for policy, funding, and accountability, ending finger-pointing and aligning resources to move people quickly from street to housing.

The board should include Fulton, DeKalb, Clayton, Cobb, Gwinnett, the City of Atlanta, and nearby municipalities. A top priority would be a unified, 24/7 low-barrier bridge-to-housing system tied to master-leased permanent supportive housing and rapid-rehousing units, so placements happen within days. Funding should follow a clear formula—population, PIT counts, service utilization—with multi-year IGAs for stability. Operatively, we would run one coordinated main center with on-site medical & behavioral health care and other resources.

Accountability is non-negotiable. The board should adopt anti-dumping MOUs and transport protocols—no transfers into Atlanta without verified placement or services—and require each jurisdiction to expand local outreach and shelter/housing capacity. Public dashboards would track placements, exits to permanent housing, returns to homelessness, and costs.

Are there other policies you will advance to promote housing stability for existing residents?

The above response contains a new idea, so I would want that aforementioned board to fully evaluate solutions and funding mechanisms from multiple jurisdictions. They would then work to enact and oversee those goals and objectives.

111 Moreland Ave: In 2023, the Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League's (RCIL) overwhelmingly voted in opposition to a proposal to build 42 homes for formerly homeless individuals (more details on the project here).

Incumbents: how did you vote on this proposal?

Non-Incumbents: given the information in the articles above, how would you have voted on this proposal?

Support

In 2025, City Council voted on a mixed use development proposal on Amsterdam Walk, which included retail and 1,100 apartments, including over 200 affordable apartments, in the Virginia Highlands neighborhood near the Beltline.

Incumbents: how did you vote on this proposal?

Non-Incumbents: given the information in the articles above, how would you have voted on this proposal?

Support

In 2022, a project, "Edgewood for Everyone," was proposed to build 48 homes on Whitefoord Ave. in the Edgewood neighborhood, 25% of which would have been priced at 60% area median income without government subsidy. A small group of neighbors loudly opposed the project during the Organized Neighbors of Edgewood zoning committee, resulting in the developers abandoning the proposal. Instead, they built housing that aligns with the existing zoning: 6 homes priced around \$900K each.

Do you believe that this is the preferred outcome?

No

Why do you/do you not believe this is the preferred outcome? What alternative process do you believe these kinds of projects should follow to result in a preferred outcome?

While I am not as familiar with this proposal since it did not make it to Council, I would have liked the developer to power on through the official process, taking it to the NPU, ZRB, and have meetings with individual Councilmembers to go over the rezoning. It is unfortunate it did not meet the same approval as Amsterdam Walk and 111 Moreland.

Why is housing affordability personal to you?

Housing affordability is deeply personal to me because it shaped my own upbringing. My mother gave birth to me at 17, later raising three children largely on her own while enduring abusive and unsupportive husbands. We moved from an apartment to a modest ranch house, and eventually into my grandmother's home after my parents' divorce just to make ends meet. At times we relied on programs like WIC for food assistance. When my mother secured a stable, well-paying job years later, our lives improved—but affordable housing was vital to our physical & mental health and our survival. I want every Atlantan to have that same foundation of stability and opportunity.

What work have you done to advocate for housing?

My single most marked impact was probably the sponsorship and passage of the Westside Park Housing Overlay, which I now have authored legislation to expand westward (and rename given the renaming of the park itself). While they were technically not required to because they submitted their plans before the passage of the overlay, I held a developer of a nearby large development to both a for-rent and a for-sale affordability requirement.

I have also supported multiple pieces of legislation over my eight years that expanding the number of affordable housing available (or coming) to both my district and the city. I was also a strong pusher and advocate for AH and the City to work together and seek federal funding through HUD to finally redevelop the long-vacant Bowen Homes parcel.

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about you as we consider our endorsement?

Serving District 9 has been a high honor, and I remain committed to ensuring every Atlantan has access to safe, affordable housing in thriving, inclusive neighborhoods. My record shows results—protecting legacy residents, expanding affordable housing options, improving public safety, and investing in infrastructure.

I believe thoughtful growth, rooted in equity, is the key to Atlanta's future, and I will continue working tirelessly to deliver policies that strengthen every community. I would be honored to earn the Abundant Housing Atlanta endorsement and to keep building a more affordable, vibrant Atlanta together.

Charles Bourgeois

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What policies do you believe would be the most impactful in advancing the premises outlined in the Atlanta City Design?

I believe we must reimagine housing policies in Atlanta with a “Pro-People” approach. I strongly support reform legislation that expands opportunities for homeownership through smaller, more attainable housing options. This means raising height caps, reducing setbacks in R-4/R-4A, allowing for-sale ADUs with split parcel limitations, and increasing multi-unit allowances citywide. These reforms will help us build homes that aren’t just labeled “affordable,” but are truly attainable—smaller, lower-cost homes that meet the needs of today’s families. In 2025, households are smaller than in past generations, and we must ensure that housing policies keep pace—so residents aren’t overburdened, but supported in building stable, sustainable lives.

What is your position on increasing the types of housing (duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, cottage courts etc.) that can be built by-right (i.e. without re-zonings)?

I strongly support expanding the types of housing—duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and cottage courts—that can be built by-right across Atlanta. These “missing middle” homes are not just alternatives to single-family houses—they are a powerful tool for affordability. Their smaller size means lower construction and land costs, making them more attainable for working families. By increasing the supply of these housing options citywide, we can directly relieve price pressures, expand choices for modern households, and ensure Atlanta keeps pace with the needs of its people. Updating our zoning to allow missing middle housing by-right is not optional—it is essential to keeping Atlanta inclusive, affordable, and ready for the future.

What parts of your district do you see as priority areas for more dense housing? Please be specific: specific neighborhoods, cross streets, etc.

There are vast areas of District 9—particularly in Carey Park and Almond Park—where thoughtful development and greater density are both needed and possible. These historically challenged neighborhoods hold hundreds of acres of untapped potential. With a Pro-People approach, we can create smaller homes and multi-home communities that bring new life and opportunity to these spaces. I invite anyone to visit 1187 Second St., Atlanta, GA 30318, to see firsthand the wide-open land and possibilities that exist. I am bullish on Northwest Atlanta, and I believe the future of our city is being written right here on the Westside.

Are there any parts of your district where you think housing growth should NOT be allowed? Please be specific: specific neighborhoods, cross streets, etc.

I believe the northern side of District 9—particularly along the Howell Mill and West Marietta corridor—has been overdeveloped. This area already faces serious strain from traffic and limited transit infrastructure, and adding more density without proper support only makes matters worse. While I am a strong advocate for attainable housing, the rising prices in this part of the district show a lack of focus on people’s needs. Development must be balanced and thoughtful, and in this

corridor, it's clear we need to pause density and invest in transit and infrastructure before adding more. I'm not against housing growth—far from it—but growth here has gone too far without the supports our community deserves.

What are you hearing from your potential constituents about their hopes, fears, aspirations, and frustrations about this potential growth?

My constituents are clear: they're worried about rising rents, rising taxes, and growth that's outpacing our infrastructure. Too many families have already been pushed out of the city and priced out of living inside the perimeter. As previously mentioned -- along the Howell Mill and West Marietta corridor, people see overdevelopment without the transit and infrastructure to support it—and the fear is that other neighborhoods on the Westside will follow the same pattern. That fuels frustration, but also determination for a pro-people-housing approach that prioritizes gathering spaces and walkability. Neighbors want a Pro-People vision for growth: attainable housing, balanced development, and real investment so families can stay and thrive in their communities. We are tired of being pushed out by large developers.

Oftentimes, proposed developments that could help increase housing supply - including the affordable housing supply - for the City are met with intense local opposition. How will you balance the opinions of existing local neighbors with the overall needs of the City?

This is always a real challenge. Right now, we are navigating the tension between affordability and density while also listening to older neighbors who are resistant to change. We address this by investing in the infrastructure and transit needed to support increased housing supply and greater affordability. Often, opposition comes from a desire to protect existing lifestyles and traffic patterns, but growth cannot be self-limiting. By building strong pillars of investment alongside new housing, we ensure development is sustainable and benefits the whole community. Supply and support must go hand in hand—short-sighted solutions won't work.

How should we fund our local affordable housing trust fund? Please be specific about which local sources Atlanta should consider.

Atlanta can leverage innovative, progressive strategies to fund affordable housing while building a sustainable, equitable city:

- 1) A penny tax on large commercial developments would capture a portion of the value created by major growth and dedicate it directly to affordable housing initiatives, ensuring that rising property values benefit longstanding residents and communities most in need.
- 2) A new solar infrastructure bonds, financing renewable projects—such as solar panels on public buildings, schools, and community centers—while directing a portion of proceeds toward affordable housing. This approach not only advances climate-smart energy solutions, reduces long-term utility costs, and creates local jobs, but it also creates a sustainable funding stream for housing, linking environmental responsibility to economic and social equity.

By combining these tools, Atlanta can ensure that development is both progressive and inclusive,

expanding access to safe, attainable housing while building a resilient, climate-conscious city for all residents.

Every analysis of our City that looks at our needs by neighborhood identifies a divide, where some neighborhoods are amenity-rich (jobs, restaurants, grocery stores, medical services) and lack a high supply of affordable housing, while others lack many of those same amenities but offer relatively more affordable housing. How will you create City-wide policies that reflect these differences?

I am propose creating a development overlay "30318 Legacy Heritage Zone" across historic sections of District 30318 that requires developers to contribute directly to community amenities, infrastructure, and schools as a condition of scaled residential development.

Under this policy, contributions would be based on unit count, ensuring that builders either fund or construct public-use amenities, allocate resources to a dedicated Community School Support Fund, or invest in essential infrastructure such as roads, stormwater systems, or local street improvements within the zone. The goal of this overlay is to strengthen partnerships with NPUs, giving neighborhoods a direct voice in guiding development while promoting stable, equitable, and resilient communities in areas that need investment most.

By tying growth to tangible community benefits, this policy ensures that as District 9 develops, particularly in the underserved portion -- residents see direct improvements in quality of life: amenities, infrastructure, and educational opportunities.

As the City continues to observe thousands of Atlantans experiencing homelessness each year, how will you approach preventing bouts of homelessness and rehousing your constituents?

I believe the city should propose an additional "Work for Housing" program overlay investment where unsheltered residents are employed to clean and maintain our streets, parks, and public spaces. Participants would receive a living wage, access to job training, and supportive services, creating a pathway from homelessness to stability and permanent housing.

This approach accomplishes three goals at once: improving and cleans our public spaces, providing meaningful employment, and addressing the root causes of homelessness by connecting residents to housing, healthcare, and social services. By tying work opportunities to comprehensive support, we can empower residents, reduce barriers, and create measurable outcomes, while fostering dignity and self-sufficiency.

The City of Atlanta has begun implementing some innovative solutions to its homelessness problem, including using shipping containers as temporary shelter. How will you ensure that these efforts are able to grow and that neighborhoods across the City are part of the solution to our homelessness problem?

The approach of clustering container homes on underutilized lots creates thriving micro-communities that foster safety, accountability, and dignity. This approach not only reduces shelter reliance and homelessness but also maximizes land use efficiency, provides a pathway to permanent housing, and connects residents to workforce and social support, creating measurable, long-term impacts on individual stability.

To grow this initiative, I will identify and prioritize underutilized land, including vacant lots, underused parcels, and city-owned properties, particularly in areas with high housing demand but limited traditional development. At the same time, I will champion streamlining zoning and permitting by advocating for by-right approval for micro-community developments and flexible zoning for tiny homes and container units. Removing bureaucratic barriers will speed construction, reduce costs, and allow these communities to scale, ensuring more residents can access safe, affordable, and supportive housing options.

Are there other policies you will advance to promote housing stability for existing residents?

To promote stability in existing residents, I am looking to create a “Westside Tenure Protection Ordinance,” which adjusts property tax relief not just based on age, but on length of residency.

Under this policy, residents who have lived in their home for at least 20 years would be eligible for permanent or reduced tax rates, recognizing tenure rather than just age. The goal is to preserve neighborhood identity while supporting generational wealth building, ensuring that long-time Westside residents can stay in place as property values rise.

111 Moreland Ave: In 2023, the Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League’s (RCIL) overwhelmingly voted in opposition to a proposal to build 42 homes for formerly homeless individuals (more details on the project here).

Incumbents: how did you vote on this proposal?

Non-Incumbents: given the information in the articles above, how would you have voted on this proposal?

Support

Please provide any rationale or considerations for how you voted / would have voted on 111 Moreland Ave.

I am in strong support. Homelessness is not in the city's charter so we must do what we can to support. Voting "YES" on the development of 42 homes for formerly homeless individuals on Moreland Avenue not only addresses homelessness but also brings about positive outcomes in public health, safety, economic efficiency, community stability, and aligns with proven housing strategies.

In 2025, City Council voted on a mixed use development proposal on Amsterdam Walk, which included retail and 1,100 apartments, including over 200 affordable apartments, in the Virginia Highlands neighborhood near the Beltline.

Incumbents: how did you vote on this proposal?

Non-Incumbents: given the information in the articles above, how would you have voted on this proposal?

Support

Please provide any rationale or considerations for how you voted / would have voted on Amsterdam Walk

While this mixed-use development proposal may bring increased traffic, I would have supported it because the project is necessary to provide the density that supporting commercial outlets need to thrive—density that goes beyond single-family homes. I would also have used this as a reason to lobby for immediate transit rail access to the area. We cannot shy away from the opportunities that responsible density brings; we must embrace growth boldly and ensure Atlanta develops in a way that is both vibrant and sustainable.

In 2022, a project, "Edgewood for Everyone," was proposed to build 48 homes on Whitefoord Ave. in the Edgewood neighborhood, 25% of which would have been priced at 60% area median income without government subsidy. A small group of neighbors loudly opposed the project during the Organized Neighbors of Edgewood zoning committee, resulting in the developers abandoning the proposal. Instead, they built housing that aligns with the existing zoning: 6 homes priced around \$900K each.

Do you believe that this is the preferred outcome?

No

Why do you/do you not believe this is the preferred outcome? What alternative process do you believe these kinds of projects should follow to result in a preferred outcome?

This was not the best outcome. I emphasize this because we are constantly balancing affordability and density—and when we choose too little density, homes ultimately become unaffordable. The ideal outcome would have been an additional round of proposals that led to meaningful compromises on both sides. I also believe we need to empower the voices of residents through the NPU, giving them more than just an advisory role in these decisions to help find a middle ground. Six homes priced at \$900K each is simply unbelievable, and it highlights the urgent need for smarter, more balanced development.

Why is housing affordability personal to you?

Housing affordability is personal to me because I understand firsthand how challenging it can be to own a home. Recently, while knocking on doors in my district, I made a point to connect with renters along the West Midtown corridor, where I once lived myself. Visiting these apartments and speaking directly with residents keeps me grounded, helping me understand their struggles and

relate to the everyday reality of people in a city where officials sometimes whisper that “renters don’t matter” or that “their voices don’t count.” I disagree.

I don’t come from immense wealth, but I know everyone starts somewhere, and returning to the places where we begin is refreshing and humbling—a reminder of why housing affordability must be a priority for all.

What work have you done to advocate for housing?

I haven’t done formal advocacy work specifically focused on housing, but I have led multiple marches, dating back to 2017, against the displacement of residents along Northside Drive prior to the construction of the Mercedes-Benz Stadium to raise awareness about the issue. Additionally, I have been consistent in supporting housing proposals through NPU meetings, voting in favor of initiatives that make housing more attainable for residents.

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about you as we consider our endorsement?

I am a pro-people advocate who believes that Atlanta should serve the needs of everyone, not just the most influential. I’m running because District 9 is currently a tale of two districts—those with the greatest needs are receiving the least support. Large portions of our community are being priced out, while impoverished areas continue to struggle with food deserts and limited resources. We cannot shy away from our progressive priorities. The city needs new voices on council to make this a reality. More of the same is exactly what has led us to the challenges we face today.