

Keisha Lance Bottoms

Mayoral Forum on Greenspace Responses

1. What do you believe is the single most pressing issue impacting Atlanta's urban forest and greenspace, and how would you solve that issue?

The most pressing issue impacting Atlanta's urban forest and green space is apathy. We continue to lose more and more green space and trees every year and as Mayor, I will make addressing this issue a top priority. We simply have to find a balance between economic growth, development, and our quality of life. Communities have to know why it matters to them....whether it be because asthmatic children will have better health or simply property values will increase, there are a number of reasons that we all should and must care. Moreover, green space improves the overall quality of life for us all.

2. The community is frustrated with widespread tree destruction and removal on teardown/infill sites. Would you support tree ordinance changes that limit impervious surface and total clear-cutting?

I share that frustration and would support an ordinance that addresses those concerns.

3. How would you get the development community on board with growing and building our city while protecting our greenspace?

I will explore creative ways to incentivize the development community to help grow and build our greenspace.

Parks are a critical part of the quality of life that attracts new business and new people to our city. While some in the development community may find protecting our free space somewhat burdensome on the front end, I am certain the overall benefit to their bottom line will be well worth the effort. Balance is key.

If we see our parks as an investment in our city's future, then we must protect that investment and future with the proper amount of maintenance. It has to be a priority. To allow our parks to grow in disrepair is to turn a positive investment that attracts prosperity to our city into a negative for our communities.

4. As Mayor, what would you do to evaluate the current state of maintenance of our park system?

I will conduct a walking audit of our greenspace, as well as solicit public and private feedback on what the wants and needs are of each of our parks.

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5. How would you make the case for increased funding for park maintenance? Are there specific funding sources you would consider for park funding aside from general funds?

I have sponsored budget Amendments to improve our parks and will continue that investment as Mayor. I will work with the State to create a mechanism for setting aside a percentage of property sales to go towards the acquisition and maintenance of greenspace.

6. Do you believe we need more parks and protected greenspace? Are you in favor of convening a new Parks and Greenspace Task Force?

Yes and yes. I live in the only NPU in the City without designated parks and green space and know firsthand the need for more within many of our communities.

7. Providing specific details, how would you develop a plan for our city that includes both future growth and our urban forest?

As Mayor, I will work with public and private stakeholders to thoughtfully balance and plan for growth and protection of our urban forest. I will convene a Task Force that will be charged with exploring and making recommendations on this issue.

8. How do you see the City's role changing as maintenance of the Atlanta BeltLine becomes a more prominent issue?

The City will likely have to allocate more funding towards maintenance, while continuing to work with public and private partners to maximize a dedicated funding source.

9. What is the likelihood that the City will increase its commitment to maintenance of the BeltLine as this is critical to securing philanthropic support to make the Atlanta BeltLine a reality?

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10. What would you do in your first 100 days as Mayor to preserve and maintain the City's parks and greenspaces?

I will conduct a walking audit, as well as solicit input from public and private stakeholders.

11. The city of Atlanta relies on Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River for high quality drinking water. And, when completed, the Bellwood Quarry will provide 30-days of emergency water supply for the city. What can the city do to cultivate a "culture of conservation" to ensure the city's water supply, wastewater, and storm water management are resilient?

The engagement of young people is key. I will work with the schools, YMCA, Girls and Boys Club, churches, etc. to create an in-depth conservation education program geared towards children. Quite often, genuine concern and messaging from our children resonates "up" to adults in a much more meaningful way.

12. The city of Atlanta holds the permit to the largest wastewater treatment facilities in the southeast, but does not treat its effluent to the highest quality for return into the Chattahoochee River. Will your administration invest in the health of our river and upgrade its wastewater treatment capabilities to current technological standards?

Yes.