



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: ***Pam Harris***

Age: ***47***

Family: ***Wife and 2 children (ages 6 & 9)***

Hometown: ***Altadena, California***

Lived in Oakland since: ***1999***

Education: ***Bachelors - Vassar College; Masters - UC Berkeley School of Journalism; Fulbright Scholar***

Occupation: ***Nonprofit Finance Consultant***

Employer: ***Self***

Political experience: ***Elected Delegate, California Democratic Party (Assembly District 18)***

Notable affiliations: ***Former Boardmember, East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club; Congresswoman Barbara Lee - Mildred Parish Massey Legacy Award, California Assemblymember Rob Bonta - Social Justice Champion Award***

1. What do you see as the greatest challenges when it comes to providing residents with a livable, affordable and safe community?

### ***Gridlock***

***Right now, gridlock and conflict hamper the Oakland City Council's capacity to achieve results. Camps and factions create divides and make forward motion difficult. I am not a city hall insider and am not a part of that history. I plan to work from a place of values, with a commitment to service, and a sound moral compass, rather than out of allegiance to any faction. Leaders must always put the people of Oakland and values first. I also plan to work closely with community groups, labor, business leaders, and constituents to help amplify their voices, understand their concerns, and take action on their behalf in every channel I can.***

***Creating partnerships to break through that gridlock is critical. It requires dedication to what you want to achieve, the confidence and humility to listen to a***

***potential ally who might agree with you on one point while disagreeing with you on everything else, and the ability to focus on moving the work forward on the thing you do agree on. Too often, people refuse to listen to someone else's ideas because of who is doing the suggesting—the lack of trust leads to gridlock and a defensive “us vs. them” mentality. As a City Councilmember, I will seek opportunities to collaborate with allies of all kinds to achieve the vision of an Oakland that lives up to its promise as a progressive beacon.***

### ***Housing & Homelessness***

***People are dying cold and unsheltered on our streets, and we have not invested in housing and infrastructure in the way that's needed. Housing is a major issue and an enormous challenge to all but the wealthiest. We desperately need to invest in developing housing that is accessible to people of various income levels. Teachers, white collar workers, blue collar workers, students, elders, recent arrivals, and long-time residents need to be able to live and work in Oakland.***

***We need to stop criminalizing our homeless neighbors. This means we need to set up more dedicated safe camp and RV parking areas, and work with our homeless neighbors and allies to ensure everyone has access to safe housing where they are free from harassment by others. We need to rethink the way we interact with homeless individuals and provide the services they need. I believe our budget should be an expression of our values, and an affirmation of our common humanity. Although the Council has taken steps to provide funding for the homeless and underhoused in our city, we still need to look at how we are spending those dollars. Does it make sense for three officers to respond to a merchant call about a mentally ill homeless person sleeping in a doorway, or can we hire a mental illness/homeless case worker at a lower cost, freeing our officers to do the safety work that's so desperately needed?***

### ***Budget***

***Our budget is a direct reflection of our values. As a financial services provider for non-profits and community-based organizations, I am intimately familiar with what it means to incorporate values into budgets. We are all fighting for a small piece of the pie. My first priorities will include looking at how we spend our dollars, where they can be better utilized, and where we might find new revenue sources. Our officers are running up large amounts of overtime responding to issues of homelessness and to unemployed youth on corners. If we invested in youth services and social workers instead, we would save money, as well as provide more appropriate responses. Maintenance and preventative measures must be prioritized so we stop kicking the can down the road. We need to recognize the value, not just the cost, of the community services in which our city invests.***

2. What is the biggest opportunity for your district or city during the next four years?

***Housing is a human right. The crisis we are in is one that's been decades in the making, and now we are seeing the results of a perfect storm. High unemployment rates for African Americans in our city, the rent being “too damn high”, NIMBYism, and a long-standing ill will by our elected officials toward our neighbors who are now forced to live under highway overpasses and in parking lots is the crisis of***

***the day. I got into this race because I saw the body of a dead homeless man on my way to work. We must do better.***

***We need to grow the number of housing units we have in Oakland. I am a strong believer in upzoning. This means increased housing and infrastructure around BART, BRT, and AC Transit lines and in other areas that have traditionally not been high-density housing areas. In my district, that may look different than it does downtown Oakland. It means looking at three or four story buildings replacing questionable motels along MacArthur Blvd. It also means, allowing homeowners to upgrade their properties into multi-family homes.***

***We also must streamline the permitting process and create a standard for what it takes to do business in Oakland. Community Benefit and Project Labor Agreements in our city are currently a piecemeal process. I would like to work with community groups across the city, labor unions, and other stakeholders to create a basic Community Benefit and Project Labor Agreement that must be met to build in the City of Oakland. If a developer wants to expedite, use city land, not include affordable units there would then be additional conversations and benefits that would kick in.***

***But first and foremost, we must first preserve deeply affordable housing by supercharging the efforts to grow community land trusts and housing cooperatives in Oakland and other mechanisms to ensure that currently affordable housing remains affordable into the future. We also need to recognize that housing takes many forms, from temporary to transitional to permanent, from SROs to RVs to single-family homes. We need to preserve and create more housing options across the spectrum. This includes taking a look at what land is owned by the city, county, and state and providing long term leases to non-profit affordable housing developers.***

3. Describe your commitment to your district or city leading up to your bid for office.

***I am a Fulbright alumna and an Ivy League educated woman, who holds a masters degree from the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. That said, these degrees are not what make me uniquely qualified to be Oakland's next D4 council member. My dedication to community and service is what qualifies me to contribute to the Oakland City Council. When I graduated from Vassar College—the first in my family to graduate from college—and my classmates went to work for Wall Street, I went to work with people living with physical and developmental disabilities. I've served in the non-profit and philanthropic sectors, with increasing levels of leadership. I've worked in the areas of healthcare, affordable housing, and the arts. I'm a small business owner in our city providing non-profit organizations with support in financial management including budget development, budget oversight, and fiscal planning. I know how budgets work and how to ensure they are a reflection of our shared values.***

4. Silicon Valley and the Bay Area are at the center of global, technological advancement. How do you see technology's role in changing the lives of both longtime residents and transplants?

***Oakland is a dynamic, resource-rich city and a hub of innovation. We must leverage the innovative thought partners in our city to look at creative solutions to the challenges we face. This means incorporating breakthroughs in green tech into our infrastructure projects, working with software developers to streamline our city services and how we communicate with the public, and partnering with our school district to ensure our children have the technological skills needed for the future. This also mean ensuring that Oakland is a place where all are welcomed, know they matter, and are able to afford to live here from newcomers to those who have lived here for generations.***