



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

**Name:** Natasha Middleton

**Age:** 50

**Family:** I'm a proud mother of a 21-year old son.

**Hometown:** I grew up in San Francisco but consider Oakland my hometown.

**Lived in Oakland since:** 1993

**Education:**

- San Francisco State University, San Francisco — Bachelor of Arts, African American/Black Studies (emphasis in Urban Studies) (1995)
- Mills College, Oakland — Master of Public Policy, Master's Policy Report: Priority Based Budgeting – A Model for the City of Oakland's Long Term Fiscal Sustainability (2013)

**Occupation:** Management / Policy Analyst

**Employer:** Alameda County Probation Department

**Political experience:**

- Vice Chair / Commissioner, City of Oakland Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Oversight Commission (Measure Z) — Appointed position (2016–2018)
- At-Large Board Member, League of Women Voters-Oakland (2014–2016)
- Council Aide - Policy Analyst & Community Liaison, City of Oakland, Office of Councilmember Libby Schaaf (2013–2013)
- 2012 Democratic National Convention Delegate, Congressional District 13

**Notable affiliations:**

- Co-Organizer, Feed the People Burritos Project (Sharing healthy, home-prepared food with homeless people) (2017–2018)
- Board Member, Women's Daytime Drop-In Center (2013–2014)
- Board Member, Vice President of Fundraising, Montera Middle School Parent Teacher Organization (2010–2011)
- Board Member, Vice President, Family Violence Law Center (2002–2004)

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

Today, seniors are pushed out of their homes and families are priced out of our neighborhoods. Young girls are bought and sold for sex on International Boulevard. The shootings never seem to stop. Oakland's economy is booming, yet young people of color need jobs.

I'm running for City Council, District 6, because we need a change. We need leaders in City Hall who will prioritize our needs, not fight each other. That's why I have detailed plans for improving our district.

My neighborhood safety plan focuses on removing abandoned vehicles, fighting illegal dumping, addressing blight, and cracking down on human trafficking.

My community and economic development plan focuses on revitalizing commercial corridors, adding more small businesses and more community centers with after-school tutoring programs, and continually promoting District 6 to new businesses and opportunities.

We are experiencing and witnessing a homeless crisis in our City. My District 6 Homeless Action Plan includes "hands-on" attention to immediate needs, a weekly homeless count, and a Navigation Center.

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

I believe that with the right leadership, our district can make huge strides. We've fallen behind other parts of Oakland – especially in employment and job creation. But I see that as an opportunity for growth. Where others see blight, I see affordable properties that can house non-profit organizations, equity-based entrepreneurial opportunities, and community/learning centers with proven after school and tutoring programs.

If our leaders put aside the distractions and focus on moving District 6 forward, we won't have to wait for more opportunity; we can make it happen ourselves by investing in our people and creating a vibrant community in which small businesses can thrive.

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

I have lived in Oakland for over 20 years and in District 6 for 9 years. As a resident and as a mother, I have seen both staggering transitions and stagnation occur in my neighborhood and surrounding areas of the District. We have needed a change for quite some time – and I decided to run for this office because we need someone else to make decisions that will be effective in the long term.

I believe you can judge a candidate by their commitment to public and community service.

My time and service as a Commissioner on the Public Safety Services Violence Prevention Oversight Commission (Measure Z) taught me a couple of lessons:

First, the work we do in service is both important and impactful in our decision-making, which affects the daily lives of the youth and adults who are engaged in programs and receiving services to better their lives; and

Second, the first responders, the police, firefighters and community-based organizations, volunteers and community residents of Oakland continue to do the work to help those in need, while keeping our communities and families safe.

I take the aforementioned lessons seriously with the understanding that community members need leadership that stays connected to them on a daily basis.

Not only is this important for District 6, but also for City Council. Our ability to make decisions as a body with fellow councilmembers for the entire City of Oakland rests on our willingness to legislate and work with the Mayor, City Administrator, and Staff to make real progress on the issues that challenge us.

I have a strong public policy background and education, and a record of civic and work experience. I have served on several non-profit boards: Family Violence Law Center, Women's Daytime Drop-in Center, and the League of Women Voters - Oakland. This service has granted me a deeper understanding of community needs, while also interacting with government leaders and public and private sectors.

As a former Commissioner for the Public Safety Services and Oversight Commission, I interacted with local elected officials, providing oversight and helping to solve problems to make sure that Measure Z funds were allocated effectively.

I work in government now, as a management analyst and policy expert at the Alameda County Probation Department.

All of these experiences have shown me that we need more consensus-building and rational problem-solving in city government. As a strong leader willing to stand up for my beliefs and my constituents, I know there is a place for tackling problems head-on– but not without a sound strategy and objective.

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?**

We are in a time of great transition. Technological innovations are allowing people to live longer, work faster, learn more and, for some, become wealthier.

Yet, too many people are being left behind as their jobs become replaced by automation, pushed out of their homes as prices escalate, or pushed into poverty because they lose their health insurance or other support systems.

We can’t stop technological progress, but we can backstop our people – by investing in job-skills, job-training and re-training. We can look at the total cost of these innovations – including the human cost – and insist that those that are benefiting the most, pay their fair share of those costs. And we can commit to positive change at the same time as we commit to protecting those at risk of being left behind.