

## Orinda's City Engineer is at the Core of What's Happening

By Andrea A. Firth



Janice Carey, Orinda's City Engineer

Photo Andrea A. Firth

Just back from a week-long Alaskan cruise, Janice Carey, Orinda's City Engineer, has little time to stop and chat and share her vacation photos of the whales. Long days and some nights are part of managing the workload for Carey and the two half-time engineers that comprise Orinda's Engineering Department. "There's a lot going on with trying to comply with City Council's number one priority—to address Orinda's infrastructure needs," notes Carey. To address this priority, Orinda currently has over twenty infrastructure projects related to roads, drainage, and bridges in the works, and these projects fall under Carey's jurisdiction.

"Engineering is the steward to overseeing the infrastructure plan," states Carey. "I manage the Capital Improvement Plan, development review, the Storm Water Improvement Program, traffic engineering, and ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] compliance," she adds when asked to further describe the responsibilities of her role in the City's Management team.

Despite the size of the job, Carey seems immune to the pressure and capable of tackling the many engineering challenges that face Orinda as they

City works to fix the decaying infrastructure most evident in the crumbling roads. Diminutive in stature and quiet in nature, Carey has been working with and for the City of Orinda for over seven years. She worked as a contract employee through a private firm hired by the City for two years, then moved onto the City's payroll as a Senior Engineer for three years, and has served as the City Engineer for the past two years.

Although she admits to playing with Legos as a child, she attributes that interest to having two brothers. She notes that her affinity for numbers and linear thinking were what made engineering a good fit. Carey received her Engineering degree from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo and previously worked for the cities of San Ramon and Concord.

In addition to the implementation and oversight of the City's Five-Year Infrastructure Plan, Carey has played a significant role in finding creative ways to pay for the City's infrastructure needs. The current Moraga Way repaving project has been funded through two federal state transportation grants that Carey pursued. The City also received \$175,000 toward the repavement of the road through a grant awarded by the California Integrative Waste Management Board. "The asphalt that is being used incorporates recycled rubber tires—a greener product. It also has the added benefits of providing a quieter ride, and it stays darker longer," she explains.

Carey notes that conducting the paving of Moraga Way at night helped to avoid a major disruption of the daytime traffic on the road. "The process went fairly well because the weather cooperated," notes Carey. The rubberized asphalt used in repaving Moraga Way required warm temperatures to be poured, so June's unseasonably warm weather made nighttime paving possible.

With her many years' experience as a civil engineer, Carey understands the process of integrating the needs and wants of various groups when working on development and improvement projects. "It is part of working in a public agency environment," she says. "Not everybody can win, but there may be a winning solution." Further, the level of community interest and involvement in the City's development impresses her. "It's very nice working in Orinda," states Carey. "It's a sophisticated community, and they bring a strong knowledge base to the table."

When not at work Carey enjoys baking and gardening. She proudly displays flowers from her garden on her desk, which is piled high in architectural plans and roadway maps. Although she notes that she does not get to these hobbies as much as she would like to, with a calm smile, she turns her attention to the next engineering task at hand.