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## Fixing Orinda's Failing Roads-Who Pays?

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How to fund the fix of Orinda's worst-in-the County roads remains an unanswered question for both the City Council and residents, and it appears the problem will only get worse unless something is done. "At the current funding level, our roads are going to further deteriorate," stated Richard Nelson, Vice Chair of Orinda's Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission (CIOC), in his comments at the July 7th City Council meeting. "We need to look very deeply across a range of options. The problem is probably worse than what people realize," added Nelson.

Residents of Crest View Drive were also present at the Council meeting hoping that the City staff had found a way that their pot-hole pitted local road could qualify for urgent repair funds. "It's a daily quality of life issue driving up and down our road," stated resident Diana Stevens. According to Orinda's Director of Public Works and Engineering Chuck Swanson, Crest View Drive does not qualify for the annual pavement management program, because it is classified as a local street. Access to

street repair funds through the City's urgent repair program

appeared to be a dead end for Crest View travelers as well. "[Crest View] doesn't fit with the urgent repair policy," stated Swanson. "We have other streets that are even worse."

Swanson's report to the City Council then focused on the question of how the City will address streets that urgently need repair but that are not eligible for repair based on current policies and available funds. One option presented was the creation of street specific Special Assessment Districts similar to the Lighting and Landscape Districts present in parts of Orinda.

"We spent quite a bit of time reviewing special assessments districts," stated the CIOC's Nelson, who noted that these special assessments have been implemented successfully in other areas. But it is not an easy fix according to Nelson. "Residents have to agree to being taxed and how they are going to be taxed," he stated. "It can be divisive. You end up with some streets fixed while others are not."

"We need creative thinking to solve our problem," stated Nelson. "Are you willing to pave half if the City paves half?" he added as an example. Allowing neighborhoods to raise funds for street repairs and City/neighborhood cost sharing were other options discussed. Ultimately the discussion segued to the discussion of a citywide bond. Road repair bond measures have been placed before the voters twice in recent years and failed by a narrow margin.

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