



# Orinda Civic News

## Public Meetings

### City Council

Tuesday, August 7, 7:00 pm  
Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

### Planning Commission

Tuesday, August 28, at 7:00 pm  
*Tuesday, August 14 cancelled*  
Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

### Finance Advisory Committee

Wednesday, August, 22 at 6:00 pm  
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,  
City Hall, 22 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

#### City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org  
Phone (925) 253-4200

#### Chamber of Commerce:

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## Police Report

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Maureen Wilbur

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# Orinda City Council Approves 10-Year Plan to Fix Roads and Drains

## City hopes voters back sales tax increase

By Laurie Snyder

At its July 17 meeting, the Orinda City Council paved the way for Orindans to make their voices heard again regarding the City's aging infrastructure by adopting a 10-year "Roads and Drainage Repairs Plan" and authorizing staff to place a half-cent sales tax hike measure on the November ballot.

If voters approve the initiative, Council members say Orinda's 92.5 miles of paved public roads would gradually be restored from their current overall Pavement Condition Index (PCI) ranking of 49 (poor) to a good rating of 70. (Entirely new roads are assigned PCIs of 100.)

According to staff reports, the City's policy has been to focus its limited pavement rehabilitation dollars – about \$2.3 million per year out of a roughly \$10 million total City budget – on arterials, collectors and school routes because those streets have the most impact on residents. As a result, Orinda's 64.3 miles of non-private residential streets have dropped to an even lower PCI of 37 – poor or very poor condition.

The "City would need to spend an estimated \$52 million (in today's dollars) on pavement rehabilitation over a 10 year period," reads the staff report, in order "to bring the City's entire public road system (arterials, collectors, school routes and non-private residential roads)" up to the good PCI of 70.

Phase one would be supported by the proposed half-cent sales tax in-

crease with funding for phases two and three covered by \$19.8 million bond or parcel taxes in 2016 and 2020. The final phase would cover ongoing maintenance.

Although revenue generated by this tax increase "cannot be committed to a specific project or single purpose" since, by law, "a general sales tax must be placed in the General Fund and must be available for any and all municipal purposes," the staff report states that "this Council has expressed a desire that the money would be annually allocated for road and drainage infrastructure."

The new tax would be authorized for 10 years, would sunset in 2023, and "requires an annual audit of the sales tax, which must include the amount generated and all allocations made from the tax. Second, it requires the City Council to establish via res-

olution by April 1, 2013 a Citizens' Oversight Commission to review the expenditures or to assign these duties to an existing City Committee or Commission."

Currently, Orinda receives just one percent of its current 8.25 percent sales tax rate. In 2011, this amounted to roughly \$924,853. Staff estimates that, if voters agree to the tax hike, the additional revenue generated would rise from approximately \$540,000 in 2014 to \$702,000 in 2022.

As expected, Orinda Citizen Infrastructure Oversight Committee members spoke in support – as did residents who had previously voiced their opposition.

"I think we're moving in the right direction with the sales tax," said Vince Maiorana who also urged the Council to ensure that the ballot's wording will articulate that the fund-

ing generated will be used on roads in the worst shape.

Richard Colman again cautioned against overtaxing citizens and stated his preference that the ballot measure require two-thirds backing by citizens rather than the 50 percent simple majority being sought, but ultimately also expressed support. "I believe that fixing Orinda's roads is a high priority."

Council Member Victoria Smith prompted chuckles as she noted that Council may have witnessed a first – a meeting at which all residents presenting their thoughts did so in favor of the overarching infrastructure improvement strategy.

Vice Mayor Amy Worth and Council Member Dean Orr were chosen to draft the language that will be used for the November ballot measure.

## Multi-Phase Approach to Fund Orinda's Road and Drain Repairs

- Phase 1: 2012** Half-Cent Sales Tax Measure with 10-year sunset (appropriated annually by Orinda City Council from General Fund)
- Phase 2: 2016** \$19.8 Million Bond or Parcel Tax (enabling Orinda to draw down \$4.95 million annually for four years if passed by two-thirds of voters)
- Phase 3: 2020** \$19.8 Million Bond or Parcel Tax (enabling Orinda to draw down \$4.95 million annually for four years if passed by two-thirds of voters; raising Orinda's PCI to 70 by 2024)
- Phase 4: 2022** Extension of Half-Cent Sales Tax for ongoing maintenance (appropriated annually by Orinda City Council from General Fund)

Source: City of Orinda 10 Year Roads and Drainage Repairs Plan (Draft)

# Manzanita Bridge Replacement Project Moves Forward

By Laurie Snyder

Following a public hearing July 17 to consider the planned replacement of a crumbling bridge near the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) Orinda Water Treatment Plant, the Orinda City Council adopted the initiative's proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, and voted 4-0 to authorize staff to open the construction bidding process for the project (Council Member Sue Severson was absent).

Council members and staff recalled the amount of time and effort involved in getting this project approved by various review authorities. Public Works Director Chuck Swanson observed, "It's finally come to this.... I think we have everything ready to go."

Vice Mayor Amy Worth noted that the project is part of the larger effort to repair and upgrade all of California's bridges statewide.

Constructed over San Pablo Creek in 1937, Manzanita Bridge is now seismically unsafe with a deck located within a flood zone. When completed, the new structure will be 15 feet wider and 12 feet longer. According to the 170-page staff report, its replacement will "alleviate hydraulic, structural and alignment deficiencies, provide a five-foot higher elevation to avoid flooding and improve flood water flow, and provide a pedestrian sidewalk on one side of the bridge."

But, because this upgrade has such potential to harm wildlife – including the California red-legged frog, Alameda whipsnake, western pond turtle, dusky-footed woodrat, special status birds and bats, and the yellow-legged frog – planning has crept along at a banana slug's pace. Nearly 50 general and specific "Avoidance and Minimization Efforts" for just these animals alone have been spelled out over five pages of the "Manzanita Drive Bridge Replacement Project Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration," along with further measures to preserve trees and jurisdictional waters. Additionally, rock slope protection and landscaping are planned to limit erosion.

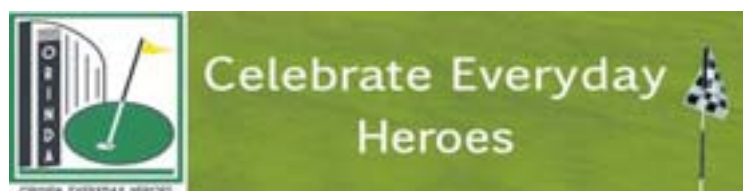
Work will initially involve construction of a one-lane bridge, asphalt concrete roadway, and grading and drainage – all temporary to provide a detour route in preparation for the removal of the existing bridge. In addition to creating a sturdier structure a chemical transfer line will be installed, for which the City will share the cost with the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

The Mitigated Negative Declaration stipulates that "all work in the creek must be done in the 'dry months' with all construction in the creek between April 15 and October 15. The current estimated work duration for the entire project is 180 working days and will likely occur over a period of two years."

Swanson indicated that he anticipates bringing a recommended project bid back for Council's approval by mid-September.

City personnel have secured State grant funding to cover

\$2,479,198 of the project's estimated \$3,022,653 cost, which is expected to cover 1.25 acres of temporary and replacement bridge sites, roadways, and landscape areas.



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