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## City of Orinda Measure L: Five Questions Answered

*By Victor Ryerson*

Measure L, Orinda's latest request for voter approval of funds to continue its work of repairing the city's roads and storm drains, appears on the June 7 Presidential Primary Election Ballot. It reached the ballot at breakneck speed after the City Council established the need for additional funding, considered various funding options, and surveyed voters to find the one that would be most acceptable. The result is a bond measure that will raise \$25 million to pay for continued work toward completion of the project after the current funding is exhausted.

The measure took form so quickly that an extensive public information effort could not be accomplished before the election. The ballots have already been delivered, and many voters are already voting by mail. In an effort to dispel any misconceptions about what the measure would do if it passes, Lamorinda Weekly has compiled the following list of questions and answers that have commonly been raised by its readers.

**Q:** How much will it cost me if Measure L passes?

**A:** Principal and interest on the bonds will be paid by levying an additional ad valorem property tax on all taxable property within the city. Once the bonds are repaid, this annual tax will terminate. The city estimates that the annual tax requirement will vary from \$20.41 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation after the sale of the last series of bonds, to a high of \$21.47 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation during other periods. These rates are estimates, and they would not be applied to the market value of properties that are taxed.

**Q:** Will the funds raised by this measure be sufficient to complete Orinda's road repair project?

**A:** No. The council debated whether to seek all of the remaining funding necessary to complete the work by proposing a single measure, and decided that such an approach would not likely be acceptable to voters. Passage of another measure will be necessary to complete the job, and funding sources for ongoing maintenance of the completed work will have to be identified as well.

**Q:** Could some of the Measure L money be devoted to repairing or maintaining Orinda's troubled private roads, which comprise about 30 percent of the city's total?

**A:** No. All of the money would have to be used for repair of Orinda's public roads and drains. Quite simply, public money cannot lawfully be used to repair private roads. Unless a privately owned road has been dedicated to public use, and the dedication has been accepted by the city or its predecessor (the county), the responsibility for repairing and maintaining the private road is that of the owner(s).

**Q:** Can any of the funds be diverted to other public uses?

**A:** No. There will be accountability safeguards to insure that the bond funds are used for their intended purpose. These include review of expenditures by the Orinda Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission, which will report to the public on the use; depositing the bond proceeds in a special fund or account; and annual public reporting of expenditures by the city manager to the City Council.

**Q:** Can the necessary road repairs and maintenance be completed with existing funds and funding sources?

**A:** No. No matter how far they are stretched, existing resources are simply inadequate to do the job. Based upon public demand, the Orinda City Council has determined that all of Orinda's roads must be improved to a level considered good to excellent, and that they should be kept that way. Existing funding is insufficient to make all of the necessary improvements, and repaired roads would deteriorate at a faster rate than they could be maintained without ongoing funding, eventually resulting in the same problems that have required development of Orinda's current program.

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