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Compromise reached: Orinda to pay \$200,000, Wilder to get sidewalks

By Sora O'Doherty

Negotiations between the Wilder Developer OGLLC and the city of Orinda have resulted in a compromise that allowed residents to support the adoption of the eighth Development Plan Amendment. The developer has agreed to remove all previously installed 3-foot sidewalks and replace them with 4-foot cement sidewalks, to install 4-foot sidewalks throughout the remainder of all the private streets in the Wilder development, and to extend the 6-foot sidewalk on Wilder Road, a public street.

The net cost to developer OGLLC of the circulation plan revisions is \$260,000, and the cost for the continuation of the 6-foot sidewalk on Wilder Road was determined to be \$70,000. The city has agreed to provide \$200,000 for costs of public park improvements at Wilder Fields Park. These costs would otherwise have been borne by OGLLC. The amount that the city agreed to pay is equivalent to half of the net circulation plan costs plus the entire costs of the Wilder Road sidewalk extension, which the city had requested. The source of the \$200,000 payment for the public park improvements is a combination of \$100,000 in unbudgeted funds owed to the city by OGLLC for park purposes and \$100,000 in general fund unappropriated reserves.

According to the staff report presented to the city council, the compensation to OGLLC was proposed as a complete settlement of the disputed costs between the city and the developer as they relate to the developer's reliance on staff-approved improvement plans that allowed 3-foot sidewalks without accessibility features such as curb cuts with slip-resistant domes. The developer had indicated that they were not willing to construct 4-foot sidewalks through the development without some contribution from the city.

Bruce Yamamoto expressed appreciation to Orinda staff for working with the developer, and to the residents of Wilder for letting the developer know what they really wanted. Madelyn Mallory, who has been active in the push for sidewalks in Wilder, also expressed heartfelt thanks to the staff for their guidance. Council Member Darlene Gee was very pleased with "a really good solution that provides great connectivity and safety." Vice Mayor Inga Miller noted that the money is coming out of the general fund, and that other things might not get done as a result. Council Member Eve Phillips said that while sidewalks are very important to Wilder residents, they are also important to the general public and the rest of the community. Mayor Amy Worth noted that some incredible projects are going into Wilder, including public amenities such as the Art and Garden Center. Introduction of the Ordinance passed unanimously and was scheduled for final approval on the May 14 consent calendar.

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[back](#)

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