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## **CIOC Deems Orinda's Roads in Crisis**

*By Andrea A. Firth*

"Orinda's roads are in crisis," said Richard Nelson, the Chairman of Orinda's Citizen's Oversight Infrastructure Commission (CIOC), as he presented the Commission's annual report at the February 15th City Council meeting. "We are at the point where something needs to be done about it," said Nelson. "Fifty percent of Orinda's roads are rated as very poor...Budgeted spending is not enough to even touch these roads that are currently in very, very poor condition," he added. Nelson and his fellow Commission members pressed the Council to increase the budget allocation for road repairs by about two-fold or risk being unable to prevent further deterioration of the larger arterials and collector streets.

Orinda's current road repair policy focuses the City's limited funds on the most heavily traveled roads. Residential streets receive only emergency repairs to address exceedingly unsafe conditions.

"The current situation is that the residential roads will go to gravel. This is the policy that we have adopted," said Commission member Alex Evans. "The cost will kill this city off," he added, "Our legacy is going to be that we let our streets kill off our city."

Evans strongly encouraged the Council to find at least \$2 million a year for the roads to ensure that the city's notoriously bad roads do not get any worse. "We can no longer dream of a big fix. The bond measures were a great idea, but they failed," said Evans. Both he and Nelson prodded the Council to look at alternate funding options.

"Public Works are doing a great job with the funds that they have" said Nelson, "But deferred maintenance can't go on forever." He suggested that if the Council was able to find additional road repair monies, resident interest in the road repair problem would increase. He did not rule out the possibility of pursuing a repair bond measure in the future.

Nelson explained that the CIOC is currently investigating the idea of benefit assessment districts to address some of the road repair needs.

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