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Orinda Projects Balanced General Fund through 2017

By Laurie Snyder

Residents attending the Orinda City Council meeting June 4 heard positive news as review of the draft biennial budget for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015 and Capital Improvement Plan for 2014-2018 continued. City leaders expect the General Fund to remain balanced through FY 2017, as property tax revenues will likely increase by 3 percent in FY 2014 and 2 percent in subsequent years.

Staff will set aside the funds needed to enable the city to complete a General Plan update by FY 2016, and will maintain a reserve of \$5 million plus 20 percent of General Fund revenues in excess of \$10 million - not including Measure L revenue, which will be accounted for in a separate Special Revenue Fund and "will be used for street and road capital projects only."

The General Fund Reserve, according to a new policy draft, has been designed to help the city "guard its citizens against service disruption in the event of economic uncertainties, local disasters and other financial hardships," and "may only be used during an emergency, such as a natural or man-made disaster, which threatens the health, safety and welfare of the City's residents, businesses or visitors, as determined by the City Council."

Merit increases for eligible staff have also been factored in - as have two newly proposed staff positions - a Planning Technician and Facilities Maintenance Worker.

During deliberations, individual council members highlighted sections of the budget which they felt needed clarification, and asked staff to make the presentation of the materials for the council's final review as clear and transparent as possible for residents. Draft versions of the budget and CIP documents are available on the city's website. The final versions of both the budget and CIP are expected to be presented for adoption at the council's June 18 meeting.

CIP 2014-2018 Highlights

Multimillion dollar outlays will continue as Orinda muscles its aging infrastructure back into shape. Just a few of the planned projects and their price tags:

- Manzanita Drive Bridge Replacement: The remaining \$2,164,860 spent in FY14 will continue to strengthen seismic and flood protection, and will be covered mostly by federal grants.
- North Lane Stormwater Mitigation: Most of the \$1,265,570 FEMA grant for this \$1,687,427 project to improve North Lane's undersized storm drain system will be expended in FY15.
- Annual Measure L Pavement Rehabilitation: The "rideability of City-maintained roads by using appropriate surface treatments, including cape seal, slurry seal, AC overlay, and repair of base failure" will finally become reality as Orinda makes use of \$650,000 to \$790,000 each year between FY14 to FY 17.
- Further road and drain repairs will be covered via additional CIP projects, including \$2,317,956 for the Annual Pavement Management Program and nearly \$2,000,000 for a variety of Miner Road-related improvements.

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