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Mayor in a minority of one on streetscape plan; traffic calming proposal postponed

By Sora O'Doherty



Although Orinda Mayor Eve Phillips voted against it, the rest of the city council fully supported approval of a draft letter seeking Measure J funds for the Orinda Streetscape Master Plan and allocation of \$50,000 in matching funds at its Sept. 5 meeting.

Phillips opposed the measure because she thinks that Orinda has enough existing plans that cannot be implemented, but Council Member Inga Miller pointed out that the city has a great outdoor living room because they planned the civic streetscape in the past.

Council Member Dean Orr explained that the measure is the vehicle for staff to seek more grants. Planning Director Drummond Buckley noted that the last time Orinda got a grant offer, the city finished the streetscape plan.

On Sept. 7 the city of Orinda received the final report from the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel, which addresses the vision for downtown Orinda, potential changes to downtown development and land use provisions, suggestions for San Pablo Creek restoration, and streetscape design concepts.

Staff will return to the city council with a report regarding potential next steps, both in terms of the process as well as the range of options that may be considered based on the findings and recommendations of ULI and the National Main Street Center, which has been conducting a parallel study. NMSC presented its final report to the council on July 5. Printed copies of the final ULI report are available for review at the planning department counter of Orinda City Hall as well as at the Orinda library.

Another matter the council considered at its Sept. 5 meeting, but decided to delay, was for traffic calming on Camino Pablo between Monte Vista Road and Bear Creek Road/Wildcat Canyon Road. Three alternatives were presented: the installation of a radar speed display sign, reducing the width of the travel lanes or installing flexible delineator posts to separate bicycles from vehicles (see image).

While the council members seemed to think that the delineator posts would be the most effective, they questioned whether they would be compatible with Orinda's semirural feel. Ultimately they decided to consider this proposal at a later date, so that it could be prioritized within the totality of the Capital Improvement Plan. The measure was requested by Reed Carter, who lives along Monte Vista Road.

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[back](#)

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