



CITY OF ORINDA

Measure R Information (November 3, 2020 Ballot)

- Measure was placed on the November 3, 2020 Ballot by a unanimous vote of the City Council.
- If approved by a majority of voters the Measure will approve a 1% Transaction Use Tax for a period of 20 years and will rescind the current 0.5% Transactions Use Tax. It is estimated to generate \$2.4 million per year.
- Voter approved and locally controlled Add-On Sales Tax measures are a common source of revenue for cities. 12 of the 19 cities in Contra Costa County have such a tax, and 6 cities including the Town of Moraga are at a rate higher than the current rate in Orinda.
- The Ordinance which would be enacted by the voters is available on the City website: <http://www.cityoforinda.org/DocumentCenter/View/2921/Ordinance-on-Transaction-and-Use-Tax-for-Submission-to-Voters>
- Copies of: City Attorney Impartial Analysis; Arguments For Measure; Arguments Against the Measure; and Rebuttals are available on the City website: <http://www.cityoforinda.org/DocumentCenter/View/2956/Ballot-Pamphlet-Info-Impartial-Analysis-Arguments-Rebuttals>
- The City has very limited sources of discretionary funding to expand programs and/or increase spending. It recently reduced the FY 2020-2021 budget including employee lay-offs to balance revenue and expenses, because of impacts from COVID-19.
- The expenditures from the new tax will be guided by annual community input and a Tax Oversight Committee, as the City Council makes final budget funding decisions at publicly noticed meetings.
- The City Council obtained significant input from the Community and identified that there are several key needs related to critical protection and safety of the general public and properties throughout the City, including:
 - Wildfire Fuel Reduction / Vegetation Management
 - Disaster / Emergency Preparedness
 - Improvements to Protect Against Flooding and Road Collapse
 - Continued maintenance of public roadways to protect the investments in the last 10 years which included over \$50 million directly funded by voter approved tax dollars.
- At a public meeting on June 30, 2020 the Moraga Orinda Fire District Chief provided written comments to the City Council providing an overview of Vegetation Management Funding challenges, accomplishments to date and on-going needs for: Fire Fuel Breaks; Roadside fuel reduction which can improve the fire break effect created by existing roadways; creation of defensible space around homes; and home hardening.
- A Financial Needs Analysis presented to the City Council used estimated costs for addressing the threat of wildfires which were broad brushed and intended to represent an order of magnitude, as opposed to a precise budget. The City has a specific inventory including: quantities, detailed condition information gathered from regular inspections, and construction cost values that can be applied to create cost estimates. While, for the Fire Risk Reduction Programs there is far less detailed information available.
- The Financial Needs Analysis found that the need to address the critical items of all types is on-going over the 20 year period, and will total tens of millions of dollars. Further, in the first 5 years of identified critical needs are projected to exceed the amount generated by the tax. This will require careful monitoring of schedules, timing of expenditures, and may require internal borrowing to fund projects.



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- The Needs Analysis Report focused on the range of highest priority public services to be funded in the first four to five years of the new tax. The expected priorities are wildfire mitigation and critical drainage repairs:
 - \$1.5 Million Roadside Fuel Reduction and Establishment of Defensible Space Along Public & Private Streets
 - This was based on input expressing a desire to see expansion of the popular Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) chipper program which partners with property owners to shred and dispose of vegetation which poses a fire risk.
 - The tax was considered a funding source to jump start spending and address a back-log of fire fuel reduction in the community, as well as a 20 year source of funding for these programs.
 - It was also identified that the new funding source could allow for grant assisted pilot projects that would serve local residents in making small improvements that would provide home hardening. Home hardening as a fire prevention measure is a key objective of MOFD
 - \$750,000 Wildfire Reduction on City Properties
 - The current City Budget only has approximately \$50,000 dedicated to fire fuel management and prevention on City owned property including public open space owned by the City. It was estimated that the City could require between \$500,000 and \$750,000 to address the back-log in the first 3-4 years and then a reduced level of funding would be required to maintain properties.
 - \$730,000 Disaster Prevention and Response Planning Programs
 - The City lacks a centralized position that is focused on all aspects of disaster preparedness for both the public and to support staff in their role as emergency service workers. The cost of this program would be estimated to require \$730,000 over the next four years.
 - \$10 Million Critical Storm Drain Location Improvements To Provide Flood Protection and Prevent Road Collapse. The CIOC Plan (Road & Drainage Repair Plan (adopted December 17, 2019, which is available at: <https://www.cityoforinda.org/DocumentCenter/View/2976/2019-Road-and-Drainage-Repairs-Plan-Adopted-12-17-2019>)
 - Identified Public Drainage locations that present the highest risk of failure will require an estimated \$10 million in the next 3-5 years.
 - The critical repairs include drains impacting major streets where a collapse of the drain could cause a roadway failure causing traffic disruption. (Major Streets impacted include: Moraga Way, Ivy / Coral Drives, Glorietta Boulevard; Orchard Road; Rheem Boulevard; Miner Road and Camino Pablo).
- The community discussion made it clear that an initial large amount of funds needs to be spent to reduce the back-log of wildfire fuel; and that this must be followed by on-going funds to responsibly implement vegetation management aimed at providing community protection from wildfires. This is not unlike the progress of efforts in recent years to rebuild deteriorating roads. One significant difference is that there are special revenue sources (Gas Taxes; Regional Transportation Funds; etc.) that can be used for on-going street maintenance.