Beginning in 2012 with passage of a half-cent sales tax measure, the City of Orinda embarked on a ten year road repair plan to improve the very poor condition of its road network. Previously the City had multiple failed road bond measures and was reduced to performing maintenance only on arterial and collector roads due to a steep funding shortfall. The City’s public roadway network of 92.7 centerline miles had a pavement condition index (PCI) of 46 which ranked as the fourth worst rating in the Bay Area.

Starting in 2014, the City began a small scale paving program around $2 million which rehabilitated two of the worst residential roads in the City using full depth reclamation; including slurry seals and overlays on several collector roads. This got the ball rolling and in June 2014, the voters of Orinda passed a $20 million bond for more road repairs.

Utilizing the sales tax funding and the first $10 million of the 2014 Bond, the City completed two more paving programs in 2015 and 2016 which rehabilitated approximately 16 miles of the worst residential roads. This helped build trust in the community that their tax dollars were being spent effectively. In June 2016, the voters of Orinda passed another $25 million bond which will result in every residential road (total of 66 miles) being rehabilitated by the end of 2019. As of today, the City network PCI has improved to 56.

Based on current cost projections, the City of Orinda is anticipating $8 million construction work in 2018, and over $11 million in 2018 and 2019. The City still needs another funding resource to complete the rehabilitation of all arterials and collectors and for long term network maintenance. It is anticipated that the network PCI will be 87 by the end of 2019, which will likely be the highest rating in the Bay Area. With some additional funding and grants, the City of Orinda expects to maintain its roadway network with zero deferred maintenance beginning in 2020, which is two years ahead of schedule.

The main reason this goal is now attainable is that the voters of Orinda trusted the City Council and Staff the funding would be used efficiently. The City has been very transparent with the road rehabilitation program. All bond measure and sales tax funds are used only on residential road/drainage repairs. The City established a Citizen Infrastructure Oversight Commission, which has seven citizens appointed by the City Council to hold monthly public meetings to openly discuss the direction of the program, in particular how to prioritize the street selection. The street selection is placed on the City Council agenda to allow for any public comment before it is approved to start the design process. The City made important strides by accelerating the construction to get better bid prices from a large economy of scale; and also utilizing a more cost effective and environmentally friendly approach of full depth reclamation versus a traditional full reconstruction.