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ConnectOrinda launch continues downtown development effort

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The ConnectOrinda launch party - intended to offer multiple efforts to get all Orindans involved in the process of improving the downtown area, consisting of the Village, the Theater District (also known as Crossroads), and the area between them, including the BART station - will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13 at the Library plaza. During the event, residents can participate in walking and biking tours and will have opportunities to express their views on downtown. Refreshments will be served and there will be a modern-day scavenger hunt where participants will use cell phone cameras to compete. The briefing booklet for the project will be available, and there will also be maps and online surveys available to the public, including a map survey which will allow respondents to comment on specific areas of downtown.

The ConnectOrinda process is working with the community to identify streetscape and transportation projects to improve downtown Orinda. Last June, the city council selected Eisen-Letunic to work with city staff to manage the streetscape master plan, later renamed ConnectOrinda. The goal of the process is to identify projects with broad community support addressing six objectives: to connect the two sides of downtown for all users, to support future pedestrian access along San Pablo Creek, to preserve Orinda's unique sense of place, to beautify the downtown, to build consensus to the final plan through community engagement and to produce grant-eligible projects that can be funded.

In August, city staff and the consultant team held stakeholder interviews with 18 community groups and six commissions and committees. The launch event is the next scheduled step in the process. Next year there will be a workshop in January during which three draft sets of projects will be presented to the community, based on the ideas generated during the launch. The community will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed projects. In May a single set of near and long-term projects that have gathered broad community support will be presented to the community for final comments. The final plan will be presented next September and will include a set of recommended projects and design guidelines for streetscape and other public improvements.

For more information, visit <https://cityoforinda.org/391/Connect-Orinda-Downtown-Streetscape-Mast>.

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