

# MEMORANDUM

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**TO: UTILITIES ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**FROM: UTILITIES DEPARTMENT**

**DATE: JUNE 6, 2007**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON ISSUES RELATED TO EL CAMINO ADVISORY VOTE**

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This is an information report and no UAC action is required.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the March 5, 2007 Council meeting, the Council certified the Environmental Impact Report for the Emergency Water Supply and Storage Project (Project) and completed the first reading of five Park Improvement Ordinances (PIOs) for the park sites impacted by the Project. Council's motion included a requirement that an advisory vote be held at an upcoming election on the use of the El Camino Park for the water storage project prior to the El Camino Park PIO taking effect. In response to this motion, staff is beginning the process for placing the advisory vote on the November 2007 Ballot and for the public outreach and education process.

## **DISCUSSION**

In preparation for the upcoming advisory vote, staff has started a series of actions aimed at meeting the requirements of filing the ballot measure and educating the public.

Since the last report to Council on this project, staff has met with the City Clerk to determine the process and timeline for placing the advisory measure on the November 2007 Ballot. The critical steps in the process that require the preparation of written materials are shown below:

- June 5 - Deadline for initiative submittals.
- August 15 – Direct Arguments are due.
- August 22 – Impartial Analysis and Rebuttal Arguments are due.

Staff will be coordinating with the Attorney's Office and the Clerk's Office on the preparation of materials and the process of identifying who will write the arguments for the ballot measure.

In addition to these activities, the planning and preparation processes for the education outreach materials have been started. The following ways of communicating with the public have been identified:

- Ballot measure information will be displayed in the Palo Alto Weekly and the Palo Alto Daily.
- An Emergency Water Storage Project web page is being prepared for the City's website.
- Utility billing inserts will include information on the project in September and October
- Scrolling messages will be placed on the Midpeninsula Community Media Center (MCMC) community public access channels mid June through November to encourage Palo Alto voters to visit the Project website for information on the Project.

Staff also plans to be available for educating the public by attending meetings of community groups. A program to prepare materials and identify the appropriate community groups is currently being developed.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

City Utility Staff will follow State law and the recommendations from the City Attorney's Office regarding staff's Project education efforts. As noted in Attachment's A & B, the City and its staff is prohibited from using City funds or public resources to influence voters or expressly advocate a specific position on a measure. Staff will be providing fair and impartial Project information through the communication methods described herein. Staff will continue to be focused on providing fair and impartial Project information to the voting public now through the November Advisory Vote. .

### **RESOURCE IMPACTS**

Project Outreach for this Project will ensure fair and impartial information regarding the use of El Camino Park for the Project. The information provided will educate the public on water emergencies and how the Project plays a vital role in developing Palo Alto's emergency water supply response plan. Emergency Planning has been identified as one of Council's top four priorities. The Project also supports Comprehensive Plan Goal N-10, Protection of Life and Property from Natural Hazards, Including Earthquake, Landslide, Flooding, and Fire. Funds for public outreach Project education effort will come from the Water Enterprise Fund.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A: City Officials and Ballot Measure Advocacy  
 B: Ballot Measure Advocacy and the Law - League of California Cities

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