TO:        HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM:      CITY MANAGER        DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES
DATE:      MARCH 15, 2004        CMR: 177:04

SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF ORDINANCE REQUIRING MANDATORY
RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR DISCUSSION OF DISPUTES
BETWEEN LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

This is an informational report and no Council action is required.

BACKGROUND
At its October 15, 2001 meeting, Council passed the Mandatory Response Ordinance which provides a neutral forum for discussing issues including but not limited to, rent increases. The Mandatory Response Ordinance amends the Rental Stabilization Ordinance by requiring landlords to provide written notification to tenants about their rights and responsibilities and eliminates the exemption of condominiums. The ordinance also requires landlords having more than one single-family home rental to register with the City.

DISCUSSION
Project Sentinel has completed its second year Mandatory Response Program Evaluation (Attachment A). The evaluation contains the following statistics:
- Number and types of contacts
- Number of cases opened, types of cases and case outcomes
- Evaluations from the parties involved
- Responses from participating mediators

Project Sentinel concludes that the program has produced a high rate of resolution, 64 percent as compared to the overall rate of resolution in the voluntary mediation program of 66.1 percent. In 2003, the resolution rate was equivalent to the resolution rate in the voluntary landlord tenant cases. Both program participants and mediators have responded positively and no retaliation claims have been brought to the attention of the program.
Project Sentinel maintains program information on its website, as well as on the City’s website. Project Sentinel has also worked with City staff to provide an updated Tenant Guide, which will include information on the Mandatory Response Program.

The City of Palo Alto, through the Community Services Department’s Human Services Division and Cubberley Community Center, continues to provide outreach to the landlord/tenant community by distributing Tenant Guides in all the libraries and community centers and Mandatory Response Program information through utility bill inserts.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

Project Sentinel administers the program for the City. It receives Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) funding of $65,641 that will end on June 30, 2005. The second year of funding for the program is currently part of the City’s budget process.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A:  Project Sentinel’s Mandatory Response Program Evaluation Annual Report
Attachment B:  Mandatory Response to Request for Discussion of Disputes Between Landlords and Tenants Ordinance

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